

**SHAKESPEARE'S DIALOGIC STAGE : TOWARDS A POETICS OF  
PERFORMANCE**

**by**

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## ABSTRACT

Shakespearean performance scholarship is arguably looking for a methodology that can integrate the study of performative work with critical analysis and theory. As an intervention in this discussion, I propose a *poetics of performance*, a term intended as a playful appropriation of Stephen Greenblatt's *poetics of culture* but one that restores the central omission of *actual performance* to his study of Renaissance subjectivity in dramatic texts. This is a systematic study of four plays, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Richard II* in productions on stage and screen between 1927-1995, arranged diachronically and in dialogic pairings (drawing on 'Bakhtinian thought'). Utilising Greenblatt's discussion of cultural exchange and symbolic acquisition, and restoring Greenblatt's omission of diachronic 'appropriation', I consider the reception of the performative work, drawing attention to interpretative patterns, and enquire into the structuring historical contingency of the Renaissance *locus*. In considering the 'iteration' of a Shakespearean text (ie: that which enables it to activate transpositions beyond its originating history) I suggest that materialist critics are responding to a valued 'art' work and that it is Shakespearean performance scholarship itself that has created the anomalous page/stage debate which it presently seeks to circumvent.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

The following abbreviations are used in the References:

<i>ELH</i>	<i>English Literary History</i>
<i>ELR</i>	<i>English Literary Renaissance</i>
<i>NQ</i>	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
<i>S. St</i>	<i>Shakespeare Studies</i>
<i>SQ</i>	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>
<i>SS</i>	<i>Shakespeare Survey</i>
<i>TES</i>	<i>Times Educational Supplement</i>
<i>TLS</i>	<i>Times Literary Supplement</i>

The following abbreviations are also used:

<i>RSC</i>	<i>Royal Shakespeare Company</i>
<i>RST</i>	<i>Royal Shakespeare Theatre</i>

## Preface

References to Shakespeare's works are from those plays separately edited in single volumes in the series, *The Oxford Shakespeare*, although the series is not yet complete. In chapter order the texts are: *The Taming of the Shrew*, edited by H. J. Olivier (Oxford, 1982); *The Merchant of Venice*, edited by Jay L. Halio (Oxford, 1993), *Hamlet*, edited by G.R. Hibbard (Oxford, 1987), and *Richard II* in *The Complete Works*, edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford, 1986). Single volumes were chosen, where available, in order that the performance script might be viewed as being activated in a dialogic relation with other texts in a wider field of Shakespearian textuality. In the single volumes of *The Oxford Shakespeare* series these 'other texts' include discussions about the existence of the text in different forms, for example, the three texts of *Hamlet*; discussions of sources and contextual issues including illustrations from the period, for example, a drawing of an Italian merchant in 1590; discussions of performance history including illustrations of productions, for example, the Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Hamlet* in 1965; and the individual editors' dialogues with the playtexts and with the ideas of other editors and literary critics through the detailed footnotes.<sup>1</sup> The editors of *The Oxford Shakespeare* argue that Shakespeare's works were revised in performance so that, for example, we can understand the First Folio version of *Hamlet* as a revision of an earlier draft. The principle of revision suggests that the playtext be viewed as participating in a discussion and responding to the contingency of performative work, for example, making cuts and additions necessary. The editors sum up their view of the plays in the 'General Introduction' to *The Complete Works*: 'Performance is the end to which they were created, and in this edition we have devoted our efforts to recovering and presenting texts of Shakespeare's plays as they were acted in the London

playhouses which stood at the centre of his professional life'.<sup>2</sup> The editors' comments record a moment in late twentieth-century stage-centred criticism where the welcome attention to 'stage' rather than 'page' might expect to receive unqualified support from Shakespearian scholars. The assumptions underpinning the authority of the *performance* script may in fact warrant further analysis by performance scholarship, a point that will be considered in this study. Essentially, however, I began this study by accepting the unqualified enthusiasm of the editors of *The Oxford Shakespeare* for the performed Shakespearian work, and this is where my discussion begins. I found the concept of a *poetics of culture* keyed to a study of Renaissance dramatic texts to be wanting unless it could also be a poetics of *actual* performance.

## References

- 1 Jay L. Halio (ed.), *The Merchant of Venice* (The Oxford Shakespeare, 1993), p. 30  
G. R. Hibbard (ed.), *Hamlet* (The Oxford Shakespeare, 1987), p. 56
- 2 Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (eds.), *The Complete Works* (Oxford, 1988), p. xxxix

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION : SHAKESPEARE'S DIALOGIC STAGE

A book, ie., a *verbal performance in print*, is also an element of verbal communication. It is something discussable in actual, real-life dialogue, but aside from that, it is calculated for active perception, involving attentive reading and inner responsiveness, and for organized, *printed* reaction in the various forms devised by the particular sphere of verbal communication in question (book reviews, critical surveys, defining influence on subsequent works, and so on). Moreover, a verbal performance of this kind also inevitably orients itself with respect to previous performances in the same sphere [...] Thus, the printed verbal performance engages, as it were, in ideological colloquy of large scale: it responds to something, objects to something, affirms something, anticipates possible responses and objections, seeks support, and so on.

(V.N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*<sup>1</sup>)

When a book is designated a 'verbal performance in print' it surrenders its pristine and apparent singularity to become the subject of another's discussion. Shakespeare's works so solidly and historically delimited as 'books' sold in many editions can be readily recognised in Vološinov's description of 'verbal performance', itself an apt appellation for a theatrical script which is enervated through discussion. My subject is the performance event on Shakespeare's dialogic stage, the conversations that make a history of cultural transmission and which, are themselves, a text. Shakespeare's dialogic stage is the 'colloquy of large scale', the big renewing conversation that hums like a spinning top with the activation of the object, the cultural object, Shakespeare. The dialogic stage does not have to include a performance event in the theatre or on film, and it seems curious to have to ask, 'What is the peculiar status of the performance event within the broader field of Shakespearian textuality?' As W. B. Worthen reminds us, the stage and stage practice are not 'the natural venue where Shakespeare's imagined meanings become realized' but one of a number of sites where Shakespearian meanings are produced in contemporary culture.<sup>2</sup> I could choose to study the

Shakespearian objects sold at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre or at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and this field of study would also constitute textuality. Indeed, as the field of Shakespearian textuality grows ever wider, it is important to be specific. To place my study on a dialogic stage is to say very little unless I can specify an area of dialogic activity; this is the theatrical and filmic work of twentieth-century production and, more precisely, work on four plays, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Richard II* (in chapter order) together spanning a period from 1927 to 1995. I am offering a *poetics of performance*, a term intended as a playful appropriation of Stephen Greenblatt's *poetics of culture* but one that restores the central omission of *actual performance* to his invigorating study of Renaissance subjectivity in dramatic texts.<sup>3</sup> It is also an attempt to evaluate how far Greenblatt's synchronic cultural study of literary texts, a method coined by others as 'New Historicism', may suggest ways of reading the Renaissance *locus* which have relevance to performative work despite such a study's status as literary criticism.<sup>4</sup>

Robert Weimann has drawn a distinction between *locus* and *platea* where the first term is associated with a place of verisimilitude; in Shakespearian drama, the throne is 'the representational locus of privileged royalty'<sup>5</sup> By contrast, the *platea* privileges the authority not of what was represented but of 'what was representing and who was performing'<sup>6</sup> The *platea* is associated with subversion, a literal and metaphorical space for clowning.<sup>7</sup> H. R. Coursen in *Shakespeare in Production: Whose History?* pushes these meanings still further: *locus* is 'what is present in the script' and *platea* 'who is producing the script'<sup>8</sup> For Coursen, *platea* becomes synonymous with 'contemporary'; 'suffice it that the overdetermination of *platea* can harm a production. One that is merely contemporary becomes almost immediately irrelevant'<sup>9</sup> Coursen's observation is contentious but suggests

a primary concern to preserve a strong connection with a source script, the Renaissance script. Coursen is cautious in acknowledging the value of a contemporary synchronic study of Renaissance literary texts as a means to understanding the *locus*: ‘New Historicists help directors to construct an equivalent to what may have been an Elizabethan/Jacobean understanding’<sup>10</sup>

Barbara Hodgdon’s *The End Crowns All: Closure and Contradiction in Shakespeare’s Histories* (1991), a seminal work in my area of performance scholarship, argues that a Shakespearian play ‘exists in multiple states – as the words constituting the playtexts, as the readings based on those texts, and as their concrete, historically particular theatrical representations, or performance texts’ which are all different though related forms of textuality.’<sup>11</sup> Hodgdon wanted ‘to situate “the play” as one part of a larger intertext’, a manoeuvre she associated with ‘the profession’s newly dominant discourse, new historicism’<sup>12</sup>

However, she was mindful that the ‘principles’ of the new discourse, in particular ‘its insistence on representation’, demanded that attention be given to how ‘present-day theatrical practice performs cultural work’.<sup>13</sup> Hodgdon draws on an intertextual ‘Elizabethan scene of reading’, linking the political situations of Queen Elizabeth 1 and that of King Richard, to consider ‘the representation of sovereignty on the stage’ and its cultural revision in performances ranging from Beerbohm Tree’s 1903 production at His Majesty’s Theatre, London to Michael Bogdanov’s 1988 production, part of the English Shakespeare Company’s *The Wars of the Roses*.<sup>14</sup> Thus although not theorised as such, Hodgdon inserts a diachronic element into her readings, a necessary step for any politically interested cultural materialist because it is the agency of subjects over time that produces change. Scott Wilson notes Louis Montrose’s description of Greenblatt’s methodology as a kind of ‘historical formalism’ that ‘synchronically isolates historical texts, or a network of intertextual links, effectively detaching

them from a diachronical history, thereby precluding his cultural poetics from ever becoming a cultural politics'.<sup>15</sup> However, perhaps it should be noted, that there now exists a large body of cultural materialist analysis of Renaissance dramatic texts, but far fewer that have included the diachronic element of actual production in the theatre or on film. Peter J. Smith makes a related point in *Social Shakespeare: Aspects of Renaissance Dramaturgy and Contemporary Society* (1995): 'Despite the fact that recent criticism has examined Renaissance theatre in terms of its materiality, there is still a reluctance to consider the political efficacy of *modern* Shakespearean production'.<sup>16</sup> In her article, 'Katherina Bound; or Play(K)ating the Strictures of Everyday Life', Hodgdon considers the cultural work of *The Taming of the Shrew* in particular the contradictory positioning of female spectators in a stunning dialogic sweep of feminist criticism, theatrical and filmic representations.<sup>17</sup> Hodgdon's interest in the reception of a performance event and in the cultural work produced inevitably lead her to sever the umbilical cord between a first text or 'playtext' and a 'performance text' which itself is *another* text. Worthen argues that Hodgdon recognises that a private reading or a public making of performance 'materializes a new work, a new play, in dialogue with the text, but not immanent in it'.<sup>18</sup> This is important to Worthen's argument that it is erroneous to think of a playtext being *realised* in performance. He refers to the sterility of the page/stage debate where the performance critic works to reward those theatrical events deemed to have recovered original authorial and authoritative insights that are somehow 'stored' in the text.<sup>19</sup> From J. L. Styan's innovative study of theatrical and modern scholarship working to discover an original performance environment to Anthony Dawson's study of theatrical 'choices' delimited by the playscript (for example three possible ways of presenting the character of Portia), Worthen scents the literary critics' ultimate goal: to validate a text belonging to an author and to interpret *its* and possibly *his* original meanings.<sup>20</sup> He suggests that:

Both “literary” and “performative” accounts share an essentialising rhetoric that appears to ground the relationship between text and performance. In a schematic sense, a literary perspective takes the authority of a performance to be a function of how fully the stage expresses meanings, gestures and themes located ineffably in the written work, the source of the performance and the measure of its success.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly Cary M. Mazer argues that Alan Dessen’s interpretation of Elizabethan stage directions is finally a way of insisting on an original authenticity which could (and should) be recreated in performance.<sup>22</sup> Mazer writes: ‘stage-centered scholarship is, therefore, perhaps the only branch of literary study where one can still practice the intentional fallacy with impunity’.<sup>23</sup> Hodgdon’s method removes the authority of the ‘mother’ work over a ‘dependent’ offspring, performance. The ‘new’ work stands by itself (and always did), and acquires meaning through its construction as an event doing cultural work. However, this leads Hodgdon finally to bracket theatrical work in order to focus on ‘historical spectators and their reading strategies’.<sup>24</sup> In her chapter on Robert Lepage’s production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, she states:

I offer neither a self-referential thick description nor a performance-driven account of the theatrical aesthetics or semiotics of either “Shakespeare’s” or “Lepage’s” *Dream*, except in so far as to note what textual and/or theatrical signs might prompt a particular reading. To do so can, to be sure, offer a certain notion of culture and of intercultural performance, but almost invariably such accounts tend to locate codes and the production of meaning in relation to the collaborative efforts of the writer-director-actor-designer and so privilege the creative processes at work within an exclusively enclosed

world of theatrical culture. Rather than assuming that the performance text itself contains or produces immanent meanings or focusing on the mark of its making and its makers, I want to consider its status as an event, constituted by the concrete conditions of its spectators.<sup>25</sup>

Hodgdon's emphasis on meaning produced at the intersection of an event with its spectators removes the necessity for investigating how (to recap on Worthen's description) the 'new work' is 'in dialogue with' the playtext. Of particular interest here are the *claims* made for that dialogue, claims that are historically contingent. Worthen notes that Dawson's focus on character produces 'choices' for a playtext 'that did not seem to be there, say, fifty years ago'<sup>26</sup> He suggests that Dawson's approach 'illustrates the problems that arise from regarding theatre as a mode of reading'<sup>27</sup> Dawson himself recorded his 'impasse' in 1991 based on a concern that new historicist strategies of reading constructed and imposed upon audiences the reception they were supposed to engage with. Of particular concern was Leah Marcus's 'reconstruction' of the reception of *Cymbeline*, based on an entry in Simon Forman's diary of 1610-11.<sup>28</sup> Currently performance scholarship, argues Worthen, is looking for "some symbiosis between theory and performance"<sup>29</sup> Dawson has pursued his earlier concerns that reading could not capture dramatic experience in an exploration of the actor's body as rhetorical instrument.<sup>30</sup>

When J.L. Styan celebrated a shift of critical perspective that emphasised Shakespeare in the theatre rather than Shakespeare on the page, he was in the end tentative about his 'revolution', and in conclusion, paraphrased a passage from the art historian, E.H. Gombrich's *Art and Illusion*:

Both actor and scholar can render only what their sense of the dramatic medium will allow, for they see what they interpret before they interpret what

they see. Their Shakespeare originates in the mind, in their reactions to Shakespeare rather than in Shakespeare himself. But as the style and idiom of their interpretation gain currency in each other's eye, so they must with audiences and readers.<sup>31</sup>

The claims made for a dialogue with a playtext (as Styan sees) are relative to contemporary theoretical frames of reference. Arguably the critical 'revolution' in Shakespeare performance studies from the 1980s, has been an altered sense of the dramatic medium as coterminous with the wider culture. This emphasis is illustrated in the concerns of the Series Editors of Manchester University Press's *Shakespeare in Performance* to differentiate contextualised readings which consider 'political, social and economic conditions of performance' from 'theatre histories'<sup>32</sup> Despite the concerns of Dawson and others to free a space away from theory for the actor, in the event, actors' performative work is not untouched by dialogic encounters with the wider culture ( granted that dramatic performative work and literary work inhabit different spheres of activity).<sup>33</sup> One need only think of Antony Sher's correlation of racism in *The Merchant of Venice* with his personal experience of apartheid in South Africa, a perspective deliberately worked into his physical performance of Shylock at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in 1987.<sup>34</sup>

The question that I posed earlier, 'What is the peculiar status of the performance event within the broader field of Shakespearian textuality?' can be answered. The status of a theatrical or filmic event lies in its singular reactivating role in the history of cultural transmission but what is it precisely that is reactivated? It is some kind of dialogue with a first text. While not forsaking Hodgson's emphasis on *reception*, it is precisely the connecting thread of history, the diachronic axis of cultural work that includes engagement with a first text that interests me. Nor do I feel we have exhausted reasons for charting the related

textual spaces of an early performance script wherein lies (as Hamlet tells us) ‘some necessary question of the play’ (3.2. 40), and the activation of a dialogue begun with a script; Claudius tells Hamlet ‘these words are not mine’ (3.2. 89-90) to which Hamlet replies wittily ‘No, nor mine now’ (91). Moreover, we do not have to abandon an interest in origins: a dialogue about origins need not be reduced to an ideological liberal humanist essentialism. Enquiring into a dialogue with an originating script does not have to mean trying to validate a once and for all intrinsically true authorial and authoritative meaning. There is another question that is still of interest: how do we understand, as Jacques Derrida calls it, the ‘iterability’ of a singular text, that which enables it to activate transpositions beyond its originating history? <sup>35</sup> To what extent is ‘iterability’ free of time? Derrida agrees that his reading of ‘the motifs of the contretemps and anachrony’ in *Romeo and Juliet* ‘lets itself off this history’ <sup>36</sup> He concedes that to read the play as a sixteenth-century text would require an understanding of ‘what is historical in the play itself’.<sup>37</sup> Greenblatt’s search for originary traces of cultural life in the Renaissance attempted such an imaginative excavation. His interest in ‘iterability’ is shown where he argues: ‘Whereas most collective expressions moved from their original setting to a new place or time are dead on arrival, the social energy encoded in certain works of art continues to generate the illusion of life for centuries’ <sup>38</sup>

Without treating ‘iterability’ as immanence, it is still possible to consider the claims made for iterability using the insights of an admittedly historically contingent practice. It is possible to stay at the point of reception and chart systematically the work of engagement with a first text by noting the production work that has been done and the patterns of performative practice that may exist. If a performance text is always a new text, a new thing, then patterns of performative work may suggest something of the limits of iterability, (for Derrida, this would be the structuring motifs) and point, in a materialist analysis, to the ‘pressure points’ of

the Renaissance locus. As an experiment I propose to correlate what could remain random readings by working with a sequence of six productions for each play and having noted certain patterns of theatrical and filmic work to show these patterns through dialogic pairings, one production in the presence of another. The reason for this is to sustain the *detail* of an intertextual dialogue (the term ‘intertextuality’ being in itself non specific) and, on philosophical grounds to uphold Bakhtin’s relation of self/other (arguably the grounds of subjectivity itself) existing in a relation of simultaneity.<sup>39</sup> In borrowing the term ‘dialogic encounter’ I wish to recover the sense of activity in the interaction of addresser and addressee as explained by Vološinov: ‘each and every word expresses the ‘one’ in relation to the ‘other’ I give myself verbal shape from another’s point of view’.<sup>40</sup> I propose to map the synchronic readings of the Renaissance locus across the diachronic sequence but the synchronic readings are not necessarily to be seen as the starting point, imposing, as Edward Pechter has argued, histories that ‘are themselves transcendental signifieds’<sup>41</sup> For example, the starting point of my chapter 2 which considers the issue of consent in *The Taming of the Shrew* was both an interest in the subjectivity of actual Renaissance women and an observation that twentieth-century performative work increasingly suggests the narrative intractability within the ‘new thing’. In this chapter, I deliberately tackle the thorny question of New Historicism’s use of (often anecdotal) historical evidence drawing on Michael Bristol’s idea of ‘forensic enquiry’<sup>42</sup> In chapter 3 my focus on the ‘alien’ status of the subject in *The Merchant of Venice* stems both from an interest in Renaissance subjectivity and an observation that performative work usually emphasises the spatial separation of Venice and Belmont so that Shylock and the Prince of Morocco are not really perceived as inhabiting the same historical Renaissance story. Here my purpose is an act of recovery, based on a postcolonialist approach. Chapters 2 and 3 both consider questions of cultural exchange and attempt, through

a diachronic study of production, to consider issues coterminous with the wider culture as both Renaissance *locus* and twentieth-century *platea*. In chapters 4 and 5 I utilise Greenblatt's concept of 'symbolic acquisition' where 'a social practice or other mode of social energy is transferred to the stage by means of representation'<sup>43</sup> Chapter 4 on *Hamlet* takes up the idea of 'metaphorical acquisition' which involves what Greenblatt describes as elements of 'distortion or displacement in theatrical representation'.<sup>44</sup> Drawing on the 'legal metaphor' of 'The Queen's Two Bodies' (described by Marie Axton) I relate representations of the split individuation of Queen Elizabeth I to the linking of Ophelia with Hamlet.<sup>45</sup> Chapter 5 draws on Greenblatt's idea of 'acquisition through simulation' involving 'histrionic elements in public ceremonials' and focuses in the introductory textual analysis on the deposition scene in *Richard II*.<sup>46</sup> In its focus on questions of appropriation in actual performance, this chapter considers three areas where issues of authority arise: in the staging of the historical cycles relative to a local region; in the preferred interpretation of a literary interpretive community; and finally in the performative work of the representing agent, the actor on the stage.

The four plays can be said to be generally representative of the Shakespeare canon; they include an early comedy, a comi-tragedy, a tragedy and a history (although *Richard II* has also been viewed as tragedy) but such a genre-based choice is hardly as important as the frequency with which these four plays have been popularised through contemporary (twentieth-century) debate and performance.<sup>47</sup> *Richard II*, although performed less often as a singular work, is of particular interest in the context of the festival cycles. Regrettably, the productions chosen cannot be said to be representative of all current Shakespearian performance work. They are mostly on English stages and include more mainstream productions by the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (previously the Shakespeare Memorial

Theatre) which preserves archival records than they do of self-styled ‘people’s theatre’ (also included in my study), for example Theatre Workshop, Free Theatre and the English Shakespeare Company. However, so-called ‘mainstream’ venues can of course produce radical as well as mainstream work in performance. The inclusion of films for the big screen as well as televised productions are chosen because of their potential to reach wider audiences and also to ensure a broad scope in my definition of performative work in twentieth-century productions.

An important part of my dialogic study was the decision to include a wide range of review material as a counter to emphasising directors’ or actors’ intentions (although they are discussed) since it was always my purpose to focus on *reception* of a work. In her earlier work, *The End Crowns All*, Barbara Hodgdon referred to the restrictions posed by her chosen discipline including the problems of access to materials and the limitations of sources chosen; she commented that archival materials such as reviews, interviews, photographs and video recordings represented ‘instances of already mediated discourses’<sup>48</sup> I share Cary M. Mazer’s view that reviews are valued *because* they are valuative, and because, ‘even the worst review speaks with the voice of its own time’.<sup>49</sup> Reviews do not try to tidy their uneven dialogues with the production and include ‘valuable’ (although seemingly extraneous) information about the weather, the cost of the seats, the funding of the company, the complaints of local traders, the government of the day and so on. In addition, they remind the performance scholar that actors may leave a company and new actors take on their roles in the course of the run; that stage business and interpretation can change; that spectators can grow restless with production designs that obscure the acting or impede the flow of the action, and, they can suggest the demands made on spectators’ attentions and seated bodies when watching a run of plays staged successively in a historical cycle.

The four chapters may be read as separate essays but as a whole they seek to develop and extend the possibilities for a *poetics of performance* on Shakespeare's dialogic stage.

## REFERENCES

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION : SHAKESPEARE'S DIALOGIC STAGE

1. V. N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929), trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (New York and London: Seminar Press, 1973), p. 95. An authorship dispute exists concerning the attribution of the ideas of three writers, Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, Pavel Nikolaevich Medvedev and Valentin Nikolaevich Vološinov. See Pam Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov* [sic] (London and New York: Edward Arnold, 1994) at pp.1-5 who prefers to retain the possibility of separate authorship whereas Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990) at pp. 16-18 attributes 'dialogism' to 'Bakhtinian thought' as a way of talking about the work of all three writers.
2. W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.38. The point is emphasised by Barbara Hodgdon whose book *The Shakespeare Trade: Performances and Appropriations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998) became available after I had finished my thesis. Hodgdon explains at page xiii that her agenda involves 'opening up a traffic between literary and theatrical cultures that resituates the study of performed Shakespeare within cultural studies, drawing on its interventionary analysis of how social relations of power are constituted, contested and changed in cultural practice. That move also entails a shift from textual to cultural authority'.
3. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 4-5. Greenblatt refers to a practice for 'understanding literature as part of the system of signs that constitutes a given culture; its proper goal, however difficult to realize, is a *poetics of culture*'.
4. Scott Wilson in *Cultural Materialism: Theory and Practice* (Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1995) refers at p.54 to Greenblatt's amazement at the success of the term; 'at the same time he claims the term and the practice it names as his own, as 'a practice rather than a doctrine, since as far as I can tell (and I should be the one to know) it's no doctrine at all' Wilson refers to Greenblatt's essay, 'Towards a Poetics of Culture', pp.1-14, p.1 in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veesser (New York and London: Routledge, 1989).
5. Robert Weimann, 'Representation and Performance: The Uses of Authority in Shakespeare's Theater', *PMLA*, 107, 3 (May 1992), pp.497-510, p.503.
6. *Ibid.*, p.503.
7. *Ibid.*, p.504.
8. H. R. Coursen, *Shakespeare in Production: Whose History?* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1996), p. xii.
9. *Ibid.*, p. xii.

10. Coursen, p. 15. I say 'cautiously' because Coursen qualifies his earlier statement by remarking 'in fact most New Historicist approaches can render only very conventional and usually unoriginal readings of the plays themselves' (p.75).
11. Barbara Hodgdon, *The End Crowns All: Closure and Contradiction in Shakespeare's History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), p.3.
12. Ibid., p. 3 and p. 20.
13. Ibid., p.20.
14. Ibid., pp.12-13, p.127, p.130 and p.148.
15. Wilson, p.54. See Louis Montrose, 'The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text' in *Literary Theory/ Renaissance Texts*, edited by Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986).
16. Peter J. Smith, *Social Shakespeare: Aspects of Renaissance Dramaturgy and Contemporary Society* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 1995), p. 6. For example, Smith argues that anti-Semitism in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice* is not only 'symptomatic' of the plays' sixteenth-century historical situation but resonates in twentieth-century productions (p.177).
17. Barbara Hodgdon, 'Katherina Bound; or, Play (K)ating the Strictures of Everyday Life', *PMLA*, 107, 3 (May 1992), pp.538-553. Hodgdon refers to a production of *The Taming of the Shrew* by Charles Marowitz (1974); Sam Taylor's film version (1929); Franco Zeffirelli's film (1966); Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate* (1953) and a 'Shrew' version in the television series *Moonlighting* (1986).
18. Worthen, pp.185-186.
19. Ibid., p.9.
20. J. L. Styan, *The Shakespeare Revolution: Criticism and Performance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) writes at page 232, 'In 1900 readers turned to the scholar to elucidate the plays: in 1970 scholarship seems suspect and the stage seems to be more in touch with their spirit' Anthony Dawson, *Watching Shakespeare: A Playgoers' Guide* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1988) argues at p. xi: 'I have tried to approach each play from the point of view of key decisions about it that actors and director must make in order to put it on stage [...] The possibilities for performance are almost limitless. Nevertheless, each play poses particular questions and challenges which performers have to face'.
21. Worthen, p.4.

22. Cary M. Mazer, 'Historicizing Alan Dessen: Scholarship, Stagecraft, and the "Shakespeare Revolution"' in *Shakespeare, Theory, and Performance*, edited by James C. Bulman (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 149-167, p.163. See also Dessen, *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
23. Mazer, p.165.
24. Barbara Hodgdon, 'Looking for Mr. Shakespeare after "The Revolution" : Robert Lepage's Intercultural *Dream Machine*' in *Shakespeare, Theory and Performance* , pp. 68-91, p.68.
25. Ibid., pp. 68-69.
26. Worthen, p.174.
27. Ibid., p.175. See also at p.175 Worthen's discussion of Harry Berger Jr., *Imaginary Audition: Shakespeare on Stage and Page* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1989). Berger argues for a reading of performance based on an interlocutory situation but admits at p. 143 that his method 'remains a *reading*'
28. Anthony B. Dawson, 'The Impasse over the Stage', *ELR*, 21 (1991), pp. 309-327, pp. 311-313. See Leah Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
29. Worthen, p.189. The comment is from Isobel Armstrong's 'Thatcher's Shakespeare', *Textual Practice* , pp.1 -14.
30. Anthony B. Dawson, 'Performance and Participation: Desdemona, Foucault and the Actor's Body' in *Shakespeare, Theory and Performance* pp.29-45.
31. Styan, p.237.
32. Graham Holderness, *Shakespeare in Performance: The Taming of the Shrew* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), p.vii.
33. See, for example, John Russell Brown, *Free Shakespeare*. New and Expanded Edition (New York and London: Applause Books, 1974, 1997). Brown argues at page 101: 'the plays we see in our theatres are very much the product of over-intellectualization and of a production- process that has much to do with highly sophisticated technical resources [...] Perhaps if there were an alternative, free form of Shakespeare in performance, the active and questioning engagements of its audience could draw forth its appropriate scholarship and criticism'.
34. The production is discussed in my chapter 3.
35. Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), pp.62-3.

36. Ibid., p.63.

37. Ibid., p.63.

38. Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.7.

39. Holquist, pp.18-19.

40. See Vološinov in Morris, pp. 49-61, p.58.

41. Edward Pechter, *What Was Shakespeare?: Renaissance Plays and Changing Critical Practice* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p.64.

42. Michael D. Bristol, 'How Good Does Evidence Have to Be?' in Edward Pechter (ed.), *Textual and Theatrical Shakespeare: Questions of Evidence* (Iowa City: University Of Iowa Press, 1996, pp. 22- 43. Jean Howard remarked astutely in 1986 on 'a spate of essays which begin with the painstaking description of a particular historical event, place, or experience and from that supposedly paradigmatic moment sketch a cultural law' See Jean E. Howard, 'The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies', *ELR*, 16 (1986), pp. 13-43, p. 39.

43. *Shakespearean Negotiations*, p. 10.

44. Ibid., p.11.

45. Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), pp.17-18.

46. *Shakespearean Negotiations*, p.10.

47. Michael Billington criticised the reduction of the Shakespeare canon in performance to plays listed as set-texts for key stage three of the national curriculum and commented ('A Prince too far', *Guardian* 18 April 1995) that since 1984 there had been three productions of both *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice* on the main Stratford stage.

48. *The End Crowns All*, p.236. Hodgdon has since written a challenging account of 'already mediated discourses' in her discussion of archival photographs in ' "Heir Apparent": Photography, History, and the Theatrical Unconscious' in *Textual and Theatrical Shakespeare*, pp.181-209.

49. Cary M. Mazer, 'Shakespeare, the Reviewer and the Theatre Historian', *S.Q.*, 36, 5 (1985), pp. 648-657, p.649 and p.658.

## CHAPTER 2

‘FORCED/ TO GIVE MY HAND’ : THE QUESTION OF  
CONSENT IN *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW*

What could it mean *not* to consent, to a first audience? The question of consent in *The Taming of the Shrew* is not generally read as an issue that might have concerned Elizabethan playgoers (although of course it has preoccupied twentieth-century feminists). It is more often viewed as part of the preliminary business which establishes the existence of a marriage. Ann Jennalie Cook argues that the play offers a ‘burlesque wooing’ in which ‘Kate’s salty refusal to accept her lover’s compliments, his courtship, or his proposal are really [...] beside the point’<sup>1</sup> She feels that Petruchio ‘slashes to the heart of things, exposing the necessities that lie behind the niceties of the mating rite’:

And therefore setting all this chat aside,  
Thus in plain terms: your father hath consented  
That you shall be my wife, your dowry ’greed on,  
And will you, nill you, I will marry you.

(2.1. 262-265)<sup>2</sup>

She argues further that Elizabethan spectators would have been interested in the *validity* of the betrothal: ‘Kate must agree to the betrothal for it to be valid, and her uncharacteristic silence - however obtained - marks her consent during the crucial moments of espousal.’<sup>3</sup>

My question is: Would Elizabethan spectators have been interested in the *invalidity* of the betrothal? Indeed could the *invalidity* be the point? A pessimistic feminist

appropriation of the play as a patriarchal tract *per se* does not allow for this possibility. The consent argument is then lost and the focus becomes the achievement of mutuality in the couple through the taming process. This can be viewed optimistically, for example where David Daniell refers to 'The Good Marriage of Katherine and Petruchio', and writes:

A special quality of mutuality grew between Katherine and Petruchio as the play progressed, something invisible to all the others in the play and sealed for them both by Kate's last speech.<sup>4</sup>

An alternative view would be to consider the final speech contentious. Penny Gay writes:

*The Taming of the Shrew* argues that the cruel treatment is for the victim's good, to enable her to become a compliant member of patriarchal society. Whether we in the late twentieth century are convinced of this depends on the way the play's world is depicted, and particularly on how Kate's astonishing last speech is spoken and received, both by her on-stage audience and by the audience in the theatre.<sup>5</sup>

*The Taming of The Shrew* was probably written in 1589-90 and the related text, *The Taming of A Shrew*, was published in 1594. In this latter text Kate consents to the marriage:

She turnes aside and speakes  
But yet I will consent and marrie him,  
For I methinkes have livde too long a maid<sup>6</sup>

In *The Taming of The Shrew* Katherina's response to Petruchio's naming of the wedding day is quite clear: 'I'll see thee hanged on Sunday first' ( 2.1. 299). She is speechless at his effrontery in claiming that a bargain has been struck. The dramatist may have relied on his audience's interest in the continuing ambiguities surrounding the constitution of a legal marriage. Through the decree *Tametsi*, of the Council of Trent (1563) the Catholic church

insisted that the validity of a marriage depended on a public ceremony before a priest and two or more witnesses, as well as a written entry in a parish register.<sup>7</sup> Ralph Houlbrooke writes:

Only slowly did the Church succeed in bringing marriage under its own control. Twelfth-century canon lawyers did not yet feel in a sufficiently strong position to insist that only marriages blessed by a priest should be considered valid, though all others were irregular in the eyes of the Church. The essential criterion adopted for judging the validity of marriages was therefore the open and free expression of consent by both parties, before at least two witnesses, whether it took place in a priest's presence or not.<sup>8</sup>

Professor Art Cosgrove describes the importance of arguments relating to consent and consummation in establishing a definition of a valid marriage.<sup>9</sup> The consensualist element was emphasised because if consummation was the essential element of a union then Mary and Joseph would not have a valid marriage.<sup>10</sup> The Paris theologian, Peter Lombard, distinguished between two types of contract, one made by words of consent in the present tense (*verba de presenti*), the other by words promising marriage in the future (*verba de futuro*): 'those who exchanged words of consent in the present tense were married, regardless of whether they had sexual intercourse or not. Promises to marry in the future created an indissoluble bond only when followed by sexual relations.'<sup>11</sup> It is of interest that *The Mary Play* from the N. town Manuscript (probably dating from the mid-fifteenth century) stages the marriage ceremony of Mary and Joseph in which each agrees to take the other in holy wedlock and a ring is exchanged but Joseph makes it clear 'þat in bedde we zul nevyr mete;/For, iwys, mayden suete, / An old man may not rage'<sup>12</sup> The consensualist argument was established following debates in the twelfth and thirteenth century:



with only a single witness present. Sometimes spousals were made on the spur of the moment, or effected in barns, streets, or fields'.<sup>15</sup> Shakespeare also teases his audience with other supposed proofs of a valid espousal contract. Ingram refers to rituals such as the exchange of gifts or tokens, the sealing of a contract with a loving kiss, and the bestowal of a ring.<sup>16</sup> Petruchio claims: 'She hung about my neck, and kiss on kiss/ She vied so fast, protesting oath on oath' (2.1. 310- 311). Petruchio then attempts to validate the 'contract' publically by taking her hand, a signal for Baptista to confirm a pre-contract by placing their hands together, 'give me your hands' (320). Petruchio urges Baptista, 'provide the feast father, and bid the guests' (318) which seems an attempt to publicise the pre-contract. Gremio and Tranio provide the partisan witnesses and Petruchio leaves with an irreverent reference to the 'rings, and things' that ritual demands. It is indeed a burlesque and a tricky matter for any litigation-minded playgoers from the Inns of Court. Katherina has still not consented.

It is possible to agree with Ann Jennalie Cook that within the patriarchal economy of the playworld Katherina's consent is 'beside the point' We cannot, however, be sure that Shakespeare's first audiences would have accepted that a valid contract was in existence. It is easy to jump too readily to the conclusion that Katherina's plight would not have evoked sympathy. Susan Bassnett refers to Louis B. Wright's study of the Elizabethan middle classes, which emphasises the importance in the period of Protestant orthodoxies on domestic harmony and a consequent severe criticism of disorderly wives.<sup>17</sup> Bassnett suggests that 'Katherina, like Adriana [in *The Comedy of Errors*], is so far from meeting that ideal that audiences were likely to have been totally unsympathetic'<sup>18</sup> This may not have been the case. Professor Cosgrave argues that 'if marriage was based on the free consent of both parties, it followed that, if it could be shown that either party had acted under coercion or

duress, the marriage would be deemed invalid'<sup>19</sup> Cosgrave cites a judgment from an Armagh court in 1488; the court decided that the woman had never consented to her husband but that she had been compelled to marry 'through force and fear which could move a constant person'<sup>20</sup> Cosgrave argues that 'the insistence on freedom of consent allowed a number of women to escape the imposition upon them of unwelcome husbands'.<sup>21</sup> Houlbrooke argues that although 'at all levels of society economic considerations [...] bulked large in the choice of partners' nonetheless 'marriage based on love and free consent was a long-established ideal.'<sup>22</sup> Houlbrooke refers to 'a remarkable paper written in defence of licences in c. 1598' which 'pointed out that they enabled individuals to escape pressure to marry in conformity with the wishes of friends and parents'<sup>23</sup> Ingram proposes that in the early 1600s many clandestine marriages were related to the evasion of social pressures against free choice and that in the early seventeenth century in Wiltshire, 'clandestine ceremonies served as a useful safety valve whereby couples could evade unreasonable family or community pressures'<sup>24</sup>

Clearly in Shakespeare's play the juxtaposition of the authorised though forced marriage with the unauthorised marriage of the younger sister must be of interest, in particular since the sixteenth century saw protestant reformers withdrawing any recognition from clandestine marriages and insisting on a greater role for parents in marriage arrangements.<sup>25</sup> A canon of 1604 stipulated that applicants for licences must enter bond that they had their parents' or guardian's consent.<sup>26</sup> Ingram argues:

In the sixteenth century the desire to safeguard parental influence [...] may have intensified. Protestant churchmen strongly denounced the selection of marriage partners in defiance of the family's wishes, and the projected *Reformatio Legum* would have made marriages contracted by children without the consent of their parents invalid.<sup>27</sup>

Shakespeare's *The Taming of The Shrew* seems to enter precisely the situation described by Ingram:

Thus throughout the period [...] an anomalous situation existed in that the Church recognised the desirability of parental consent, but did not make the validity of marriage dependent upon it lest the principle of the free consent of the couple should be violated.<sup>28</sup>

Shakespeare's play presents these ambiguities. Katherina is chosen but does not choose while Bianca insists upon her right to choose:

Why, gentlemen, you do me double wrong  
 To strive for that which resteth *in my choice*  
 ( my italics, 3.1.16-17)

Bianca's subsequent clandestine marriage to the man of her choice is ultimately validated in the play even though in the 1600s such a marriage risked prosecution. Houlbrooke defines a clandestine marriage as marriage 'without due publicity or proper authorisation'<sup>29</sup> Lucentio tells Tranio:

'Twere good methinks, to steal our marriage,  
 Which once performed, let all the world say no,  
 I'll keep mine own despite of all the world.  
 (3.2. 139 - 141)

The authority of the formal counterfeit betrothal to which the false father (The Pedant) and the false son (Tranio) bear witness, 'The match is made, and all is done ; /Your son shall have my daughter with consent' (4.4. 45- 46) is humorously undercut by the presence of a waiting priest to conduct the clandestine marriage. Biondello tells the real Lucentio: 'the old priest at Saint Luke's church is at your command at all hours' (4.4. 86 -87).

Shakespeare pushes the joke still further by asking playgoers to say whether a marriage is really established by ceremony or by consensual sexual relations. Biondello cries 'To the church take the/ priest, clerk, and some sufficient honest witnesses'(4.4. 91-2) and quips 'I knew a wench married in an afternoon/ as she went to the garden for parsley to stuff a rabbit' (96-8). The play therefore allows a form of dissidence by highlighting the anomalies of the Church's position in seeking to regulate marriage. Bianca's clandestine marriage secures a union of free consent *and* conforms indirectly to parental wishes. In marrying Lucentio, son of a rich citizen of Pisa, Bianca has chosen an ideal suitor whose family connections and financial status meet with Baptista's approval.

Bianca and Katherina do not appear to share the same autonomy in the burlesque. Since the bid made by Tranio is bogus, Bianca is legally free and not bound by the terms of the marriage contract. By contrast, the bogus espousal contract achieved by Petruchio binds Katherina. On two occasions she challenges her father: 'Call you me 'daughter'? Now I promise you/ You have showed a tender fatherly regard' (2.1. 285-86) and 'I must forsooth be forced/ To give my hand, opposed against my heart' (3.2.8-9).

Shakespeare's play explores the ambiguities implicit in the Protestant reformers' ideals and their practices. Ideally a marriage was to be based on consent and mutuality. Ingram finds from his study of 'spousals litigation' in the period 1350-1640 that:

The indications are that it was not normally considered right for parents or others to arrange marriages wholly without reference to the wishes of their children, though certainly they might vigorously assert their preferences.<sup>29</sup>

However Tudor Protestants had refused to recognise divorce. Houlbrooke argues :

For many, marriage was unhappy. Sixteenth-and seventeenth century pastoral analysis blamed avoidable failures in mutual adjustment.

Expectations appear to have been higher than historians sometimes allow. Yet there was for most of this period no divorce in the modern sense.<sup>30</sup>

This meant that in cases where parental wishes prevailed against the wishes of their offspring, consent needed to be produced retrospectively. Lawrence Stone argues that Puritans solved the problem by arguing ‘that affection could and would develop after marriage, provided that no violent antipathy manifested itself at a first brief interview.’<sup>31</sup>

For Katherina there can be no divorce despite the ‘violent antipathy’ of their first meeting. In a remarkable inversion it is Katherina who must be punished for the play’s central omission, her crucial lack of consent and *she* must bear the responsibility for producing a Puritan ideal of mutuality. The sixteenth-century consent issue is overlaid by the generic folk tale motif of the ‘shrew’ and other stories about unruly wives.<sup>32</sup> The play’s conclusion satisfies expectations that the *wife* will be beaten (sometimes literally).<sup>33</sup> However, as Valerie Wayne argues, the ‘shrew’ as a literary character was also ‘a source of great energy and fun in early English drama’<sup>34</sup> Katherina’s final speech delivers a retrospective reading of consent to the ‘Puritan’ fathers assembled at the banquet much to their satisfaction. Vincentio applauds, ‘Tis a good hearing when children are toward’ (5.2. 182). However, the retrospective strategy of this speech which satisfies most of its on-stage audience appeals differently to off-stage audiences. It subtly insinuates the history of the burlesqued exploration of sixteenth-century marriage practice that began with a rich citizen of Padua allowing a suitor to marry his daughter without her consent. Katherina’s speech recalls the various stages of the drama: the ‘woman moved’ (5.2. 142) who parried with Petruchio - ‘“Moved” - in good time! Let him that moved you hither/ Remove you hence’ ( 2.1. 194-195); ‘Too little payment for so great a debt’ (5.2. 154) recalls the promise to pay ‘one half of my lands, / And in possession twenty thousand crowns’ (2.1. 120-121); ‘My mind hath been as big as one of

yours' (5.2. 170) recalls the woman who had 'a spirit to resist' (3.2. 223) after the wedding; 'My heart as great' (5.2. 170) recalls the hand given 'opposed against my heart' (3.2. 8-9); 'to bandy word for word' recalls her anger in the scene with the haberdasher, 'I will be free/ Even to the uttermost, as I please, in words' (4.3. 79-80) -and so in words, she still is. Clearly the consent issue re-emerges as a barb to the 'supposed' appearance of mutuality given in that final speech.<sup>35</sup> Only Lucentio it seems really listens to what she is saying: "'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tamed so' (5.2. 189).

For many playgoers and literary critics in the late twentieth century the play can never recover from that first crucial omission of consent, and the history of the play's transmission is marked by the sixteenth-century dilemma of finding a retrospective strategy that would appear to produce mutuality.<sup>36</sup> In a dialogic study, it will be shown how issues of cultural exchange relative to six twentieth-century productions figure traces of a Renaissance debate on consensualist marriage practice.

### 1. What Counts as Evidence? : A Dialogic Reading of *platea* in W. Bridges-Adams's Production at the Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon (1927-1929) together with Sam Taylor's Film, 1929

As Tori Haring-Smith reminds us in her stage history of *The Taming of the Shrew*, David Garrick's influence was 'far from dead' in the early twentieth century and both the cuts and the knockabout aspects of his *Catherine and Petruchio* were transferred to fuller acting versions of the play.<sup>1</sup> Haring-Smith notes that 'Katharine grimaced, slapped, and kicked, and Petruchio chased his servants under tables, into chests, and out of windows' as directors sought to distance the play for audiences 'who were becoming increasingly sensitive to women's demands for equal rights'<sup>2</sup> W Bridges-Adams's production at the Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon 1927-9 and Sam Taylor's first Shakespearian "talkie" version starring Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks in 1929 enter this discursive space in history. In this first dialogic encounter I want to show how the issue of consent is articulated through a *platea* subversion by Dorothy Massingham at Stratford and also by Mary Pickford who saw her performance when the Stratford Players visited Los Angeles. The Bridges-Adams's production seemed to enjoy knockabout elements but evidenced also a change of direction towards a subtler more romantic comedy. Wilfrid Walter's Petruchio loved Katherina at first sight and Massingham showed that he gradually won her affections. Massingham's delivery of the submission speech took on a particular resonance in terms of sexual politics in 1928. The issue of consent is translated into an issue of author-ity in the film-making process in Sam Taylor's version with the on-screen and off-screen relationship of Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford of added interest to viewers, providing another context for Pickford's subversive wink in the banquet scene.

This particular dialogic encounter differs from the others in my study because I am able to produce evidence for a 'particularist' encounter (Pickford saw Massingham). Michael Bristol's reassessment of current methodologies in 'How Good Does Evidence Have To Be?' distinguishes what he terms 'particularist scholarship' and 'historicist research'.<sup>3</sup> He argues that 'particularist research is committed to making very precise discoveries about singular individuals and isolated events' and 'at its best provides very full evidentiary support for a modest and carefully delimited argument'.<sup>4</sup> Historicist research 'frequently attempts to support a very ambitious argument with very fragmentary and incomplete evidence. Here the big picture is what counts'.<sup>5</sup> Bristol's point is neither to extol the virtues of the particularist scholar nor to denigrate the anecdotal ploy of a new historicist but rather to ask for a serious consideration of hypothesis formation and to advocate a willingness to weigh the findings of competing theories judiciously. Bristol raises the question of what counts for evidence, remarking that in theoretical enquiry (where the natural sciences provide the most important models), 'research aims at the discovery of regularities, general laws, and causal explanations within a well-specified object domain'.<sup>6</sup> However, literary criticism might be included in the realms of forensic rather than theoretical enquiry: 'In a forensic context, by contrast, the task of enquiry is oriented to public discussion and debate, and therefore it depends ultimately on an appeal to the authority of a community'.<sup>7</sup> Such an approach allows a degree of indeterminacy to enter the discussion but indeterminacy does not invalidate claims made for 'evidence' within an agreed community. Tony Bennett enlists Marx Cousins's argument in a discussion of what constitutes historical knowledge. The example is taken from the legal process:

It might appear that the legal process attempts to establish what really happened in the past, but “really” is used in a specialized sense. “Really” is what is relevant to the law, what is definable by law, what may be argued in terms of law and evidence, what may be judged and what may be subject to appeal. “Reality” as far as the law is concerned is a set of representations of the past, ordered in accordance with legal categories and rules of evidence into a decision which claims to rest upon the truth. But this truth of the past, the representation of events, is a strictly legal truth.<sup>8</sup>

As I will show, the dialogic exploration can produce findings that may be counted as evidence for a specific form of enquiry: performance criticism.<sup>9</sup> Performance criticism acknowledges the importance of various affective and discursively produced spectatorships which we might investigate further as *possible fields of responses*. ‘Truth claims’ are made by reading performance events as events coterminous with the wider culture. It would be possible to make a ‘truth claim’ about the two productions under discussion without having the ‘particularist’ evidence that is presented here. The status of the particularist evidence alters in response to a ‘forensic enquiry’ related to sexual politics in 1928-9.

The first Shakespearian ‘talkie’ starring Mary Pickford is often singled out for her notorious wink which undercuts the submission speech. Ann Thompson writes: ‘When Mary Pickford played the part in the 1929 film version of the play [...] we are told that ‘the spirit of Katherina’s famous advice to wives was contradicted with an expressive wink’, beginning (apparently) a new tradition of ironic or ambiguous performances’<sup>10</sup> Russell Jackson argues that ‘the famous wink is in fact stronger in its effect than her vocal delivery of the speech. It might be argued in retrospect that the speech belongs to one medium, and the wink to its new

successor' <sup>11</sup> Jackson suggests that 'the wink brings the film into the modern world' <sup>12</sup> It comments on the gender values of the play for a contemporary audience and possibly comments upon Pickford's troubled real-life relationship with Fairbanks. Could we interpret the wink as a defiant gesture by 'America's Sweetheart'? In the *Shrew* story she mothers her wounded darling who appears with bandaged head rather the worse for wear after their on-screen fighting. The submission speech appeases his wounded pride. In real life did she wish to show she had the measure of Fairbanks, calling upon her public to attest to her independence and autonomy in the film business? What would be the evidence for such an assumption?

Critics argued that Pickford was miscast as Katherina but the United Artists film was popular with audiences.<sup>13</sup> The wink became Pickford's legacy to the history of *Shrew* transformations. It appears to be a very knowing wink that acknowledges a history of cultural engagement with a problematic text. It invites spectators to enthuse with Pickford on her triumph in securing a satisfying solution to the taming narrative. However in her study of cinema and spectatorship Judith Mayne cautions against 'a desire for unproblematized agency' by critics hoping to recuperate 'an idealized female subject' <sup>14</sup> Barbara Hodgdon notes that 'Kate's momentary "triumph"' is qualified by Petruchio's action in pulling her across his lap for a final kiss which is the signal for everyone to join in a song.<sup>15</sup> It is important not to isolate the wink from the film's discursive context. The completed screen product may give the illusion of closure because in its materiality (not its perceptability) it cannot change. In the theatre, performance is more readily visible as an open-ended text that may participate in contradictory discourses and these discourses may produce change. For example, during a run some stage business may be altered in response to dialogues between

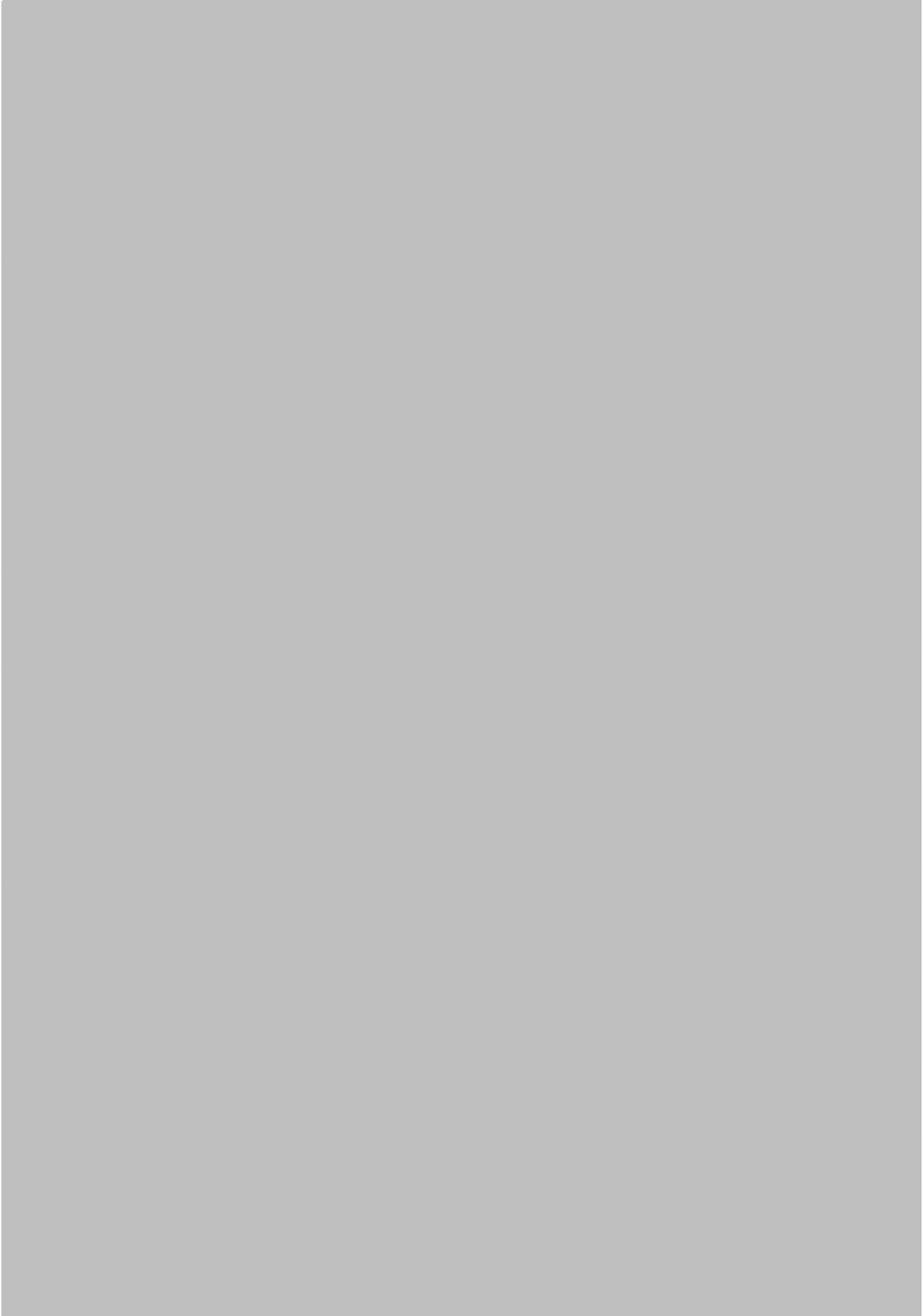
actors, directors, stage technicians, reviewers and critics.

A review of *The Taming of the Shrew* directed by Bridges-Adams in 1928 remarked on changes that had 'improved the balance of the production'<sup>16</sup> The new summer festival opened at the temporary Memorial Theatre at the Greenhill Street cinema which the Stratford players had made their home when fire destroyed the old theatre in March 1926. In April 1927 the *Birmingham Mail* described *The Taming of the Shrew* as a 'brilliant performance'; 'a great curly-locked Hectoring brigand of a fellow, Mr. Wilfrid Walter's Petruchio had every conceivable natural advantage' but unfortunately 'his fierce simulations of brutality' failed to strike 'the wonted spark' in Katharina. Alas 'some of the point was lost through Miss Esme Biddle's curious passivity. Hers was not so much a Shrew as a sulk'<sup>17</sup> The review in *Stage* concurred: 'The one flaw was that Mr. Walter's fire did not strike an answering spark in Miss Biddle'<sup>18</sup>

Particularist research indicated that there was something different about Katherina in 1928. Since the same actress also played the part in the 1929 festival season, I was interested to know how her performance was different and whether it had any connection with Pickford's performance that same year. *Stage* commented that the 1928 production had the same Petruchio in Wilfrid Walter (fig. 1) but 'a new Katharina in Dorothy Massingham' (fig. 2):

Miss Massingham is a great improvement on last year's Shrew in that her whole appearance reflects the tempestuous moods of her mind. [...] she maintains a reserve of spirit, which, as it should, leaves Katharina by no means a spent force.<sup>19</sup>

This was interesting but more interesting was a review the following year on 10 May 1929



**1** Wilfrid Walter as Petruchio



2 Dorothy Massingham as Katherina, 1928

when Dorothy Massingham again played Katherina in the Shakespeare Memorial Festival:

Miss Massingham has my best thanks not only for her portrayal of Katharina, which is rich in comedy, and for her delicate dealing with the last pre-marriage scene, but especially for her manner of delivering Katharina's final speech. At last a light has broken upon me, and I can now more than guess at its possible meaning, and also see a meaning in the whole play. The imp of mischief was ever present under Miss Massingham's honeyed spicing of the words-

"And dart not scornful glances from those eyes

To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor"

and although her clever blending of feared presumption and feared discovery at the closing-

"My hand is ready: may it do him ease"

was almost lost in the showing of an overwhelming love which here dawned over a face of poignant charm, it was not quite lost, and gave me the clue I have long sought. Katharina is not tamed at all. She has the womanly artistry, however, to know that it is far better for Petruchio to think her so.<sup>20</sup>

Is it possible to establish a link between Massingham's performance here in May 1929 and Pickford's 'wink' to camera that same year? What would it mean to do so? The Festival Company planned a trans-Canadian and American tour beginning at the Princess Theatre Montreal, on Monday October 1 1928. They were to visit various American cities including San Francisco, Los Angeles, Denver and Chicago. Their tour would hopefully create interest in the Stratford players and in the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Rebuilding Fund. *Stage* reported that the touring company would include Wilfrid Walter and Dorothy Massingham.<sup>21</sup> On 14 September 1928 the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* reported that Christmas would be spent 'in Californian sunshine, with rose carnivals at 'Frisco and Los Angeles'<sup>22</sup> On

1 February 1929, the newspaper published 'interesting letters' about the tour quoting Mr. W.H.Savery, general manager to the festival company:

Our second week at Los Angeles was a huge success. We did packed business. One woman wept at not being able to purchase a seat for 'Hamlet' Mr.Douglas Fairbanks and his wife (Miss Mary Pickford) attended a performance of "The Taming of the Shrew" <sup>23</sup>

On 26 March 1929 the *Birmingham Post* reported that members of the festival company were due to arrive in England and reported an interview with the director Bridges- Adams who had already returned: 'In Los Angeles Mr.Bridges Adams met Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. Chaplin sang old-time musical-hall songs to him.' <sup>24</sup> The director added:

The "Merry Wives" and "The Taming of the Shrew" won as much laughter as any modern farce. Notable personal successes were Roy Byford as Falstaff; Wilfred [sic] Walter, as Petruchio and Hotspur; George Hayes, as Hamlet and Richard III, and Dorothy Massingham, as Katherine in the "Shrew" <sup>25</sup>

It can be established that Pickford and Fairbanks saw Walter and Massingham in the Stratford production some time around Christmas 1928 or early January and that the director spoke with them presumably at that time. Scott Eyman's biography of Mary Pickford gives a date of January 1929 for the appearance in Los Angeles of 'the Stratford-Upon-Avon players':

Mary and Douglas saw the play and enjoyed the manner in which the knock-about aspects of the script were emphasised. They both agreed that

this was the vehicle in which they should make their long-awaited co-starring effort.<sup>26</sup>

R. Windeler in *Sweetheart: The Story of Mary Pickford* provides a different emphasis:

Mary blamed [Sam] Taylor for much of what went wrong with the movie. She said he entered the project determined on a broad comedy fashioned to the existing screen personalities of herself and Douglas, rather than asking them to grow into something more serious.<sup>27</sup>

Four months after the Stratford players' performance at Los Angeles, Reuters telegraphed (4 May 1929): 'Miss Mary Pickford and Mr. Douglas Fairbanks have arrived in New York for the purpose, they explained of selecting the cast for their forthcoming sound film version of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*'<sup>28</sup> On 19 July 1929 the *Liverpool Daily Courier* reported that 'rehearsals are in progress on *The Taming of the Shrew*, the first Shakespearean play to be made into a talkie. Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford are to be the stars'<sup>29</sup> On 10 September, nine months after seeing the Stratford Shrew in Los Angeles the film stars were reported to be due in London, 'They have just completed a talkie of "The Taming of the Shrew"'<sup>30</sup> The following month the *Daily Herald* quoted Fairbanks as saying, 'It was Mary's idea to make this picture. Mary has all the good ideas' but Pickford refuted this in her autobiography, *Sunshine and Shadow* (1956): 'I was talked into doing *The Taming of the Shrew* against my better judgment'.<sup>31</sup> It is tempting but can only remain conjecture to wonder how far the 'clue' to the submission speech delivered by Massingham had inspired Pickford to try out the 'good idea' on Fairbanks. Interestingly the *Times* reported that 'Mr Thomas Patton, Miss Constance Collier, the well-known Shakespearian actress, and Mr John Craig, a member of Augustin Daly's Shakespearian company, were the advisers to Mr

Fairbanks and Miss Pickford'.<sup>32</sup> In 1887 Augustin Daly had reshaped the play to feature Ada Rehan.<sup>33</sup> Haring-Smith writes:

Much of the praise stemmed from the critics' approval of Daly's presentation of the play as a comedy -not a farce. The *Epoch*, for example, was glad to see Rehan and Drew "mark a delicate line between the boisterousness of farce and the intelligence of romantic comedy". Reducing the slapstick allowed the characters of Katherine and Petruchio to be more fully developed.<sup>34</sup>

Could this be what Pickford meant by 'grow into something more serious' (as reported by Windeler)? The history of the wink is complicated further by Eyman's account. He argues that Daniel Frohman wrote to Pickford after she had decided on her new film suggesting that she should give: 'a broad wink to her assembled friends to let them know that she had been in control of the situation all along'<sup>35</sup> Eyman quotes Pickford's reply: "'I believe Ada Rehan had the same idea'".<sup>36</sup> The *Morning Post* pointed to a discrepancy between Pickford's reading of Katherine and her own portrayal:

Somehow when one remembers the splendour of Ada Rehan in that final submission speech and compares it with Miss Pickford's wink - a needless concession to those who refuse to take the play for what it is worth - there is no question which reading one must choose.<sup>37</sup>

Another bit of stage business from the Stratford production may have made an impression. On 13 July 1928 the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* commented on the performance of Mr. Arthur Chisholm as the Pedant: 'The way in which Mr. Chisholm throws himself, like Punch, from side to side when leaning out of the window to look down upon Mr. Oliver Crombie's righteous indignation is excellent fooling, and he carries the effect right up to the time he

makes his exit from the street of Padua, and, incidentally, from the play'.<sup>38</sup> Sam Taylor's screenplay did of course begin with a *Punch and Judy* show. Punch pleads 'I love you.' Judy hits. Punch goes down 'It's no use. It's no use. It's no use' Then Petruchio rises with a stick, 'I'll tame you. I'll tame you.' Judy puts her arms around him and then kisses him. Haring-Smith suggests that this "Induction" prepares the audience for the carefree farce to follow. Both Katharine and Petruchio carry long snake-whips; a trained dog barks in conversation with Petruchio; a servant gives orders by sneezing and pointing; and men leap through windows in fright'.<sup>39</sup>

Does it matter whether Pickford saw Massingham? This is the kind of question that Bristol proposes apropos Shakespeare and authorship. Did the man write the plays? This is a question Bristol sees as one best placed within the domain of forensic enquiry rather than the natural sciences although he sees forensic enquiry as 'aimed primarily at persuasion rather than rigorous hypothesis confirmation'<sup>40</sup> He concludes:

To account for the body of works known as Shakespeare requires a mixed and untidy hypothesis about its changing identity over time. The plays do indeed flow from a "complex social process" that is an impure mixing of Shakespeare's activity as a writer with the labors of actors, editors, printshop compositors, and other workers who have engaged with this material over the *longue durée* of his cultural authority.<sup>41</sup>

In a wider discussion about cultural production and reception we may say, "No, it does not matter" as some might argue it does not matter who wrote Shakespeare's plays. Is the use of particularist research then merely a rhetorical strategy to authenticate the discourses I propose? Is this the kind of 'tenuous' link that Greenblatt makes for Shakespeare's reading

of Harsnett as he (Shakespeare) was writing *King Lear*?<sup>42</sup> Greenblatt was of course proposing that both texts were embedded in “institutional strategies”<sup>43</sup> A rhetorical strategy can be seen to extend the scope of an enquiry. It enables questions to be asked which may have seemed irrelevant to the particularist field of enquiry. For example, what did Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks take away from their experiences of the event of theatre in Los Angeles? Additionally how might such experiences be quantifiable? Did the *Punch and Judy* motif register with Fairbanks and Pickford? Was Fairbanks being truthful when he attributed the ‘good idea’ to Mary? Did he make his comment ironically given the difficulties in their marriage? Barbara Hodgdon writes:

According to Pickford’s autobiography (and to her sympathetic biographers), Fairbanks tamed the “shrew” in real life as well as dominated her before the cameras: he not only played jokes, delayed shooting schedules, and failed to learn his lines, wildly increasing production costs, but relegated his co-starring wife (also his coproducer and cofinancier) to a lower place in the production hierarchy.<sup>44</sup>

Hodgdon quotes Pickford: ‘The making of that film was my finish. My confidence was shattered, and I was never again at ease before the camera or microphone’<sup>45</sup>

In contemporary historicist research ‘evidence for the claim of influence’ is not the whole point.<sup>46</sup> What of the ‘big picture’ that Bristol refers to? My hypothesis is that there existed a circulating anxiety about the omission of Katherina’s verbal consent to the espousal contract in this play. I am proposing that the different ways in which this anxiety is ‘managed’ can tell us something about the gendered subject in the larger cultural context of production over time. However particularist research is important because it will often resist

a master narrative. For example, I expected to find that the rise of feminism would have a greater impact on performances of *The Taming of The Shrew* in the 1970s than in the 1960s. I was not surprised to read the poster advertisement carried in the *Sunday Times* for the 1967 Royal Film Performance of Franco Zeffirelli's film, featuring a smiling Elizabeth Taylor. It was billed as 'a motion picture for every man who ever gave the back of his hand to his beloved....and to every woman who deserved it'<sup>47</sup> Yet two years earlier in 1965 a newspaper report was praising a new generation of strong women actors who trained with the Royal Shakespeare Company, for example, Diana Rigg who played the independent martial-arts trained Emma Peel in *The Avengers*.<sup>48</sup> In 1978 Michael Bogdanov made sexual politics a central issue in the Royal Shakespeare Company production but Kate (Paola Dionisotti) did not leave the stage victorious:

Its final image was of Petruchio's servant Grumio clambering across a table to retrieve the wager earned for his master by Katherina's compliance. Petruchio exited with Kate in one hand, and a cheque ostentatiously written by Baptista as an additional dowry (or rather a bonus for the success of his 'taming') in the other.<sup>49</sup>

Yet Elizabeth Taylor delivered a perfectly sincere submission speech in Zeffirelli's film and left Petruchio (Richard Burton) uncomfortably abashed with the dawn of admiration.

The 'big picture' in 1929 also offers a discontinuous narrative but there is something to be gained from sifting the evidence. I want to find out whether the issue of consent which I have argued has a contingent origin in the sixteenth century features in the choices made by directors and actors as well as in the reception of the respective productions.

In April 1927 the *Birmingham Mail* found Miss Esme Biddle's Katherina 'a much over-advertised victim'.<sup>50</sup> The *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* commented upon Mr. Wilfrid Walter as 'the chief of the newcomers':

His shrew-tamer was a character of compelling geniality. While more than adequate to the formidable task of reducing Kate to submission, Petruchio was rarely without a twinkle in his eyes, and his bluff and hearty manner gave the lie to the portrait suggested by the text, which tends to paint him as an ill-mannered and rapacious boor. When played without a sparkle of humour, as I once saw it played by an actor of general renown, the character becomes downright offensive.<sup>51</sup>

The reviewer sees that if Katherina is too much of a victim the humour of the taming is no longer tenable. A gallant, gentlemanly Petruchio can play the part with a 'sparkle of humour' in order to suggest that the 'taming' is only in jest and that its purpose is honourable. The dissatisfaction with Esme Biddle's shrew is based on this tacit understanding that Katherina must *allow* Petruchio to be viewed as having a joke at her expense. She must not unmask the joke or she will risk unmasking the play's suspect gender relations. In July 1928 the *Birmingham Mail* found Dorothy Massingham only 'exceedingly effective up to a point'<sup>52</sup> She was obviously a hit in Chicago where the *American* review (quoted in the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 1 March 1929) commented on a 'darn good show' 'Dorothy Massingham storms most effectively as the shrew, bowing spiritedly, then meekly, for her gorgeous lover'<sup>53</sup> Bladon Peake ( *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 13 July 1928) reflected on the play itself:

No matter how often one sees this comedy [...] one is always brought up with a jolt at her sudden appearance in the wedding dress. Her last words to Petruchio [...] are [...] “I’ll see thee hang’d on Sunday first”: yet, when next we see her, not only is she ready and waiting for him, but her anger is less the outburst of a scold than the hysterical fretfulness of a young girl who fears that her lover has deserted her [...] Yet we are given no reason for her change of attitude.<sup>54</sup>

Massingham is praised for having ‘brains as well as fire’: ‘Miss Massingham’s interpretation is most polished. She realises that the weak spot, not only in the part, but in the play, is the lack of a connecting link between Katharina wooed and Katharina won’<sup>55</sup> The omission is of course Katherina’s consent. Massingham is described as overcoming this omission by showing ‘that Petruchio gradually grows upon her’<sup>56</sup>

Meanwhile, in the modern world, 1928 celebrated women’s achievements. Headlines declared ‘Woman’s Big Victory’; ‘A Woman Wins’ and ‘Englishwoman’s Success’ with the ultimate accolade being ‘Woman Architect’s Triumph’:

Shakespeare, who had a high opinion of women, would probably have been glad to hear that the competition for a design for the new Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon had been won by a woman architect [...]feminists are entitled to whoop a little.<sup>57</sup>

Elisabeth Scott, a young London architect said to be the only woman entrant among 76 competitors in England and America had produced the winning design. The year 1928 saw the removal of the educational and property qualifications attaching to the granting of the vote for women in 1918, ostensibly making women and men politically equal. A report in *Nation*

in December 1928 was headed: '1928 The Year of Women: Triumphs in Many Professions'<sup>58</sup> Press reports referred to the achievements of Elisabeth Scott, the architect, and in medicine Dr Justina Wilson who was the first woman to take her seat as F.R.C.P. (Edinburgh).<sup>59</sup>

This linking can have no ground on the basis of particularist research but as part of the 'big picture' provides an interesting cultural context because the discourses opened up in the public domain in 1928 are relevant to the issues being concurrently staged. For example the *Bolton Evening News* commented in January 1928:

While two education conferences were discussing yesterday the problems of girl education it was announced that a brilliant young Englishwoman had been selected as the winning architect in the designs for the new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. There is a close connexion between the two subjects. What should girls be taught? Nine men out of 10 would reply that they should be given a specialised training for married life.<sup>60</sup>

On the Memorial Theatre stage that summer the tamer Petruchio would be wholly in agreement while Dorothy Massingham would slyly undercut the basis of his supremacy. As *Nation* reviewed 'The Year of Women' at the close of 1928, Mary Pickford would be anticipating seeing Massingham's performance and would soon be thinking of her own.

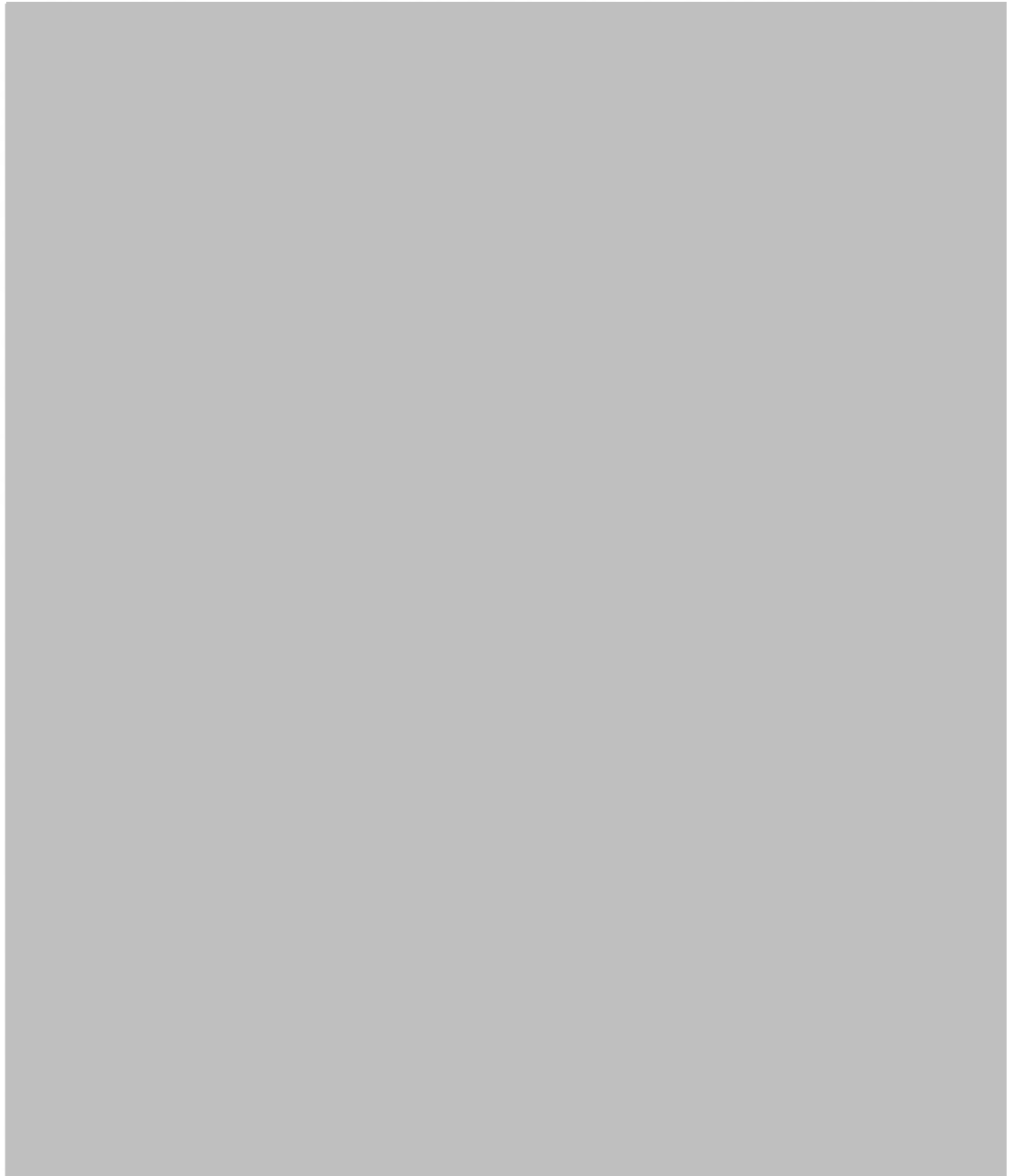
The evidence I have produced so far establishes a possible link between stage and screen transformations. However the idea of there being a measure of autonomy in the final wink might be too simplistic since the notion of her resistance is built into the screenplay much earlier when Baptista and Petruchio hatch the marriage. Pickford looks out of the window after Petruchio's hasty exit on horseback and appropriates the language of the taming strategy found in Garrick's version: 'Look to your Seat, *Petruchio*, [...] / *Cath'rine* shall tame

this Haggard; - or if she fails, / Shall tye her Tongue up, and pare down her Nails' <sup>61</sup> She follows this spirited response by chasing her father with a whip. This tends to undercut the more unpleasant aspects of the 'wooing' (fig. 3) in which her consent is coerced. The *Daily News* observed:

When Katherine's father and Gremio peep into the hall to see how the mad wooing is progressing they see Katherine sitting on Petruchio's lap, with her head on his shoulder. Their amazement is comic because we know that Petruchio has his hand over her mouth and has imprisoned her kicking legs within his own.<sup>62</sup>

The debasement of Petruchio's infamous taming soliloquy is reinforced when she appears on the balcony on their wedding night and overhears him speaking the line 'Thus have I politicly begun my reign' (4.1.159) to a favourite dog. Her knowing look primes the spectator for her reversal of tactics when she sets out to tame Petruchio. He kicks over a stool and then throws it to wake her; he sings or bellows loudly at which she sits up and applauds him. He opens the window to the stormy elements and she opens the other breathing in the fresh air. Finally she throws a stool which hits him on the head and he falls to the ground dazed. She gathers him in her arms 'Oh Petruchio...Oh beloved...' Fairbanks now recalls the blustering wooer rather than the tyrant, 'Have I not in my time heard lions roar?' (1.2.194) at which Katherina says 'Come' and supports his weight. Then smiling she tosses her whip into the fire.

Yet as Ann Thompson points out many versions have played up the brutality while also appearing to soften it. John Lacey's *Sauny the Scott, or The Taming of the Shrew* (c.1667) inserted a scene in which the wife's refusal to speak is construed as toothache and a



**3** Petruchio (Douglas Fairbanks) attempts to woo Katherina (Mary Pickford) in Sam Taylor's film, 1929

surgeon is summoned to draw her teeth.<sup>63</sup> By the time Pickford's Katherina takes up her wounded darling in her arms the coerced kiss (when they first meet), the coerced espousal and the coerced wedding in which Fairbanks stamped his authority have done their work. A quarter of the 68-minute film is taken up with a wedding scene. Petruchio/Fairbanks delays the proceedings (an echo of Pickford's complaints that he delayed rehearsals) by munching an apple and then trying to get rid of the apple core. Katherina/Pickford is summoned to await his pleasure and indeed viewers too must wait as the scene entails 'long periods of silence' noted by *Vogue* :

When at regular intervals, the characters go dumb, it becomes painfully clear that either no new scenes should have been introduced or the adapter should have had the courage to jettison the whole of Shakespeare's text and to compose whatever words he required.<sup>64</sup>

These problems may be attributed fairly to the transitional stage of the new talkie negotiating its passage from silent film as well as the 'double' existence of the film in both silent and sound versions. However the wedding scene is a compensatory move for the absence of Katherina's consent in the playtext. It is a strategy carried over into the Zeffirelli version and its purpose is to overcome the 'weak spot' referred to by the reviewer of Massingham's performance as 'the lack of a connecting link between Katherina wooed and Katherina won'

In the 1929 screenplay Fairbanks predictably stamps on Pickford's foot so that the requisite 'Ooooo!' can be construed to mean 'I do' and in Zeffirelli's version Burton uses the simpler and more effective measure of stopping Taylor's verbal protest with a forceful kiss. On stage the play is able to produce this moment of disjunction when Gremio reports the wedding of the doubly silenced bride. Petruchio silenced her by reporting her words as evidence of their

mutual playacting, claiming she had agreed to the espousal, ‘ ’Tis bargained ’twixt us twain being alone/That she shall still be curst in company’ (2.1. 293-4). Gremio’s reporting of the wedding again distances her voice. It may be that a wedding ceremony could not legally have been performed on stage. Richard Findlater notes that in 1543, four years after the dissolution of the monasteries, ‘the content of the drama was first regulated - in a negative sense -by the State’ with a view to preventing any challenge to the authorized religion.<sup>65</sup>

The insertion of the wedding scene in Sam Taylor’s screenplay capitalises on film-goers’ fascinations with the marriage of the squabbling stars and invites comment on Petruchio’s/Fairbanks’s control of Katherina/Pickford. On screen the apple-munching performance must be thoroughly observed by all before the service can begin (fig. 4). Off screen, ‘Doug would dawdle doing his daily calisthenics and morning sunbath [...] while Mary and the crew waited and fumed’.<sup>66</sup> Pickford, a shrewd businesswoman, estimated that the delays cost 30 dollars a minute.<sup>67</sup> The *Observer* had no doubts:

None of the Fairbanks pictures has ever nominally been directed by Fairbanks, but the fact remains that the Fairbanks spirit has dominated them, that they are all stamped with his own stamp, that his choice directs and governs them, and his figure dominates, often without intention, all the others on the screen. Even in “The Shrew” you cannot get away from Fairbanks. Mary Pickford has as much to do, and does it with a little more than her usual acting quality, but it is not in any sense her film. You feel that Fairbanks was behind every moment of the production, behind the choice of cast, the ideas, the motives, the selection of technicians and auxiliary workers, the whole



**4** The wedding scene in Sam Taylor's *The Taming of the Shrew*, 1929

movement of the thing. Where it fails he is to blame; where it succeeds he is to be praised.<sup>68</sup>

Pickford thought she failed: 'I have no qualms about admitting that Katharina was one of my worst performances'.<sup>69</sup> Pickford was unable to develop the part as she wanted. One reason might be that 'if Mary wanted a retake, because she was unsatisfied with her performance, Doug would snap at her in front of the working company that idolized them and refuse to do it'.<sup>70</sup>

In my study, the 'big picture' is the cultural context in which transformations of *The Taming of The Shrew* commonly elide the consent issue (a historically contingent omission) through various strategies mostly aimed to convince audiences that mutuality has been achieved in the married couple. Pickford's 'wink' is a floating signifier, hinting at both mutuality and discord, reaching out into the modern world of modern women in 1929. Ultimately it rebounds on the actress, suggesting that she has not been serious at all but has treated the wooing and the wedding as one big joke. *Stage* concluded: 'As an utterly irresponsible slap-stick entertainment it will be welcomed by all who understand the value of a good honest laugh, and care little how it is obtained'<sup>71</sup>

Particularist research can be used to underwrite the 'big picture' as historians frequently do but the 'big picture' can also shake our confidence that the small picture tells the whole truth. Particularist research can establish that Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks attended a performance of *The Taming of the Shrew* by the Stratford-upon-Avon festival company at Los Angeles. This information may commonly be used to fill in 'historical background' and to suggest a possible source of influence for the slap-stick style of comedy adopted by Sam Taylor for his film. However, by reading the stage production and the film

dialogically and by adopting a new historicist concept of cultural *exchange*, it is possible to see how Dorothy Massingham and Mary Pickford *acquire*, for the stage and screen, representations of women's struggles for equality in 1928-9. Thus the *dialogic* encounter between these two productions emphasises issues of *platea* (albeit through a negotiation of the Renaissance *locus*). By foregrounding history through a diachronic and dialogic encounter, the evidence of a contingent connection between these productions in 1929 produces a fresh reading. The fact that Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks attended the Stratford players' production suggests only that they *watched* the same performance at the same time but we cannot assume from this that they *read* the performance identically. Indeed Mary Pickford's concerns about playing the part of Katherina would suggest otherwise.

## 2. 'And Will You, Nill You, I Will Marry You' : Anti-Romantic Readings in Franco Zeffirelli's Film *The Taming of the Shrew* (1966) and Michael Bogdanov's Royal Shakespeare Company Production at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1978

In May 1978 a playgoer complained to the *Stratford Herald* that the Royal Shakespeare Theatre's 'experimental' production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, directed by Michael Bogdanov, fell below the required standards of an internationally famous theatre company.<sup>1</sup> The playgoer lamented the passing of 'the good, if-not-so-old, days of the 60s. There was the unforgettably hilarious production in 1960, with Peter O'Toole and Peggy Ashcroft ... The 1967 offering with Michael Williams and Janet Suzman was both funny and colourful'<sup>2</sup> Both of these 1960s productions presented the play as a romantic comedy and Katherina's consent could be evidenced by the end of the wooing scene. Peggy Ashcroft's Kate 'offered her cheek to Petruchio to kiss'.<sup>3</sup> Janet Suzman's Katherina and Michael Williams's Petruchio 'stood gazing at each other and the audience realized that this was love at first sight'<sup>4</sup> In that same year cinema spectators might have watched Franco Zeffirelli's screen version, which like its stage counterparts ended on a harmonious note. Elizabeth Taylor delivered her final speech with absolute sincerity, so much so that her husband Richard Burton who played Petruchio was in reality 'deeply moved' and wiped away a tear.<sup>5</sup> However I want to argue that Zeffirelli's version in 1966 (*see* figs. 5-7) is much closer in its interpretative strategies to Bogdanov's darker reading (*see* figs. 8-10) than its 1960s counterparts but that the 'star' narrative of the famous married couple may have obscured the new emphasis noted by contemporary reviewers.

On 28 February 1967 the *Sunday Telegraph* reviewed Zeffirelli's *The Taming of the Shrew*, the film chosen for the Royal Film Performance at the Odeon, Leicester Square. The reviewer speculated that:

The modern approach might be to treat it as an anticipation of the theatre of cruelty, in contrast with the style of the 90s, which was to play for sentiment and reveal delicacy beneath the rant, seeing the violent courtship as a good-natured joke by a gentleman enjoying a frolic.<sup>6</sup>

It was noted that 'this Petruchio lacks any suggestion of actual sadism' but 'is certainly no gentleman, being shown initially as both drunken and dirty'.<sup>7</sup> Penelope Houston in the *Spectator* agreed that Burton was more boorish than sadistic and in fact 'rather on the Long John Silver side'.<sup>8</sup> However she added:

No question, either, that for this Petruchio Kate's dowry remains emphatically the first of her attractions. I can't remember a production which lays more stress on the financial side of the marriage bargain. [...] For all its extravagances, this is by no means a romantic *Shrew*. Perhaps, after all, there is still one more permutation left on the play: the definitive, anti-romantic, marxist version.<sup>9</sup>

In 1978, Michael Bogdanov's production may have laid claim to such a title and, in the view of Graham Holderness, appropriated the play 'for a politically-committed socialist application to immediate contemporary issues and problems'.<sup>10</sup> However, Di Trevis's regional touring version for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1985 created a more complex interplay between social justice and sexism. Katherina (Sian Thomas) was a poor player with a baby in her arms and entered pulling the players' wagon, a visual echo of the Berliner Ensemble's

*Mother Courage*. Holderness's emphasis on 'politically committed' is important however because Bogdanov felt that Shakespeare's play knowingly confronted the gender inequalities of its time. Charles Marowitz's collage version of the play in 1973 which highlighted the horrific physical and mental torture of the 'taming' process and included a rape scene might be termed the definitive anti-romantic version. However, the totalizing view of the subjected subject arguably precluded the possibility of historical change and human agency, although Holderness cites a critic who read 'a heroic and undiminished resistance' in Kate's defeat.<sup>11</sup> Zeffirelli and Bogdanov made no case for Petruchio as the gentlemanly wooer of popular cultural expectation. Burton's wooing was described by one reviewer as 'altogether callous' while Jonathan Pryce's Petruchio was 'unscrupulous and deadly'<sup>12</sup> Both productions emphasised that Katherina's consent was *produced* for the on-screen and on-stage audience but was not freely given. Both espousal contracts were shown to be primarily cash and property transactions. Taylor's Katherina was shown to be psychologically disturbed in the earlier part of the film while Paola Dionisotti's portrayal was described in the *Listener* as 'a reversion from sadism to masochism'<sup>13</sup> Neither Burton nor Pryce showed Petruchio developing a real sense of responsibility for Katherina. *Their* 'epiphany' was shown to be belated and heavily dependent upon the resilience and integrity of the subordinate women.

Jack Jorgens has argued that in Zeffirelli's version 'the 'taming' is not the heart of the film', and in keeping with a critical emphasis on the social function of carnival, writes: 'Rather, it is the good-natured but thorough assault of Kate and Petruchio on Padua and Paduan values'<sup>14</sup> I wonder if in fact the 'taming' occurs much earlier in this screen version when Petruchio appears quite at ease with Paduan values. Petruchio tells Hortensio that he seeks 'one rich enough to be Petruchio's wife' (1.2.64) whether she be 'foul', 'curst' or

'shrewd' (66-7). Shakespeare satirises the commercial priorities of a marriage transaction through Grumio:

Nay, look you sir, he tells you flatly what his mind is. Why,  
 give him gold enough and marry him to a puppet or an aglet-baby  
 or an old trot with ne'er a tooth in her head, though she have as  
 many diseases as two and fifty horses. Why, nothing comes amiss,  
 so money comes withal. (74-78)

While an ugly shrewd woman might be chosen for her fortune or perhaps even foisted upon a male marriage partner, so too might a dirty, smelly 'mad-brain rudesby, full of spleen' (3.2.10) be foisted upon an unwilling woman. Burton portrayed a smelly drunken Petruchio, helped up the stairs and into bed at Hortensio's house whose 'wash' next morning consisted of a few dabs of rose scented water on his eyelids and behind the ears. In August 1966 Russell Braddon for the *Sunday Times* watched the film being made and reported that Burton and Zeffirelli 'have decided on "a Petruchio who is rather dirty, rather scruffy and decidedly smelly"' <sup>15</sup> The presumably comic aspects of this decision were certainly lost on David Robinson in the *Financial Times* who commented, 'His humour is all malice [...] the Zeffirelli/Richard Burton Petruchio is nastier still. He is dirty, coarse and drunken' <sup>16</sup> Bogdanov's version also sought comic effects in a bathroom scene where the drunken Sly/Petruchio was bathed in a shell-shaped tub by 'his' immaculately suited servants ('Venus' arising after a night of debauchery) and was later shown titillating photographs (fig. 8).

Bogdanov's production presented a first view of Jonathan Pryce (Sly/Petruchio) as a violent drunken man in the theatre auditorium arguing savagely with the usherette/Katherina

(Paola Dionisotti) about his ticket. Through this famous *coup de théâtre* Bogdanov made sexual politics an issue for contemporary playgoers. Pryce demolished the 'picturesque' Italianate set to reveal iron stairways and catwalks, thus effecting a symbolic assault on 'traditional' readings of the play. *New Society* found that Bogdanov's production opened up the 'tension at Stratford between the demands of pilgrims and playgoers, demands which spring from quite different ideas of what the Royal Shakespeare Theatre is there *for*'<sup>17</sup> The comments were borne out by a review in the *Stratford Herald* which demanded an explanation: 'what, in heaven's name is the RSC doing to accommodate such arrogance?' [ie: by the director].<sup>18</sup> The reviewer objected to Bogdanov's 'steadfastly grim gloss' on the play:

Directors who have no affinity with plays shouldn't direct them, moreover it's just possible that *The Taming of the Shrew* is a comedy, not a black farce- the text, the position in the Folio, stage-history, critical commentary over 300 years would seem to disagree with Mr Bogdanov.<sup>19</sup>

Jane Ellison in the *Evening Standard* disagreed:

This is the first production of *The Taming of the Shrew* I have seen which is not infected with the deadly boisterousness of the *Kiss Me Kate* variety.

Bogdanov has decided, rightly, that the play is essentially serious<sup>20</sup>

However, if the issues are serious, the play's method for raising them is through a burlesque of the espousal contract and the wooing. In this burlesque Petruchio is the instigator and therefore, on one level, appears to be a heroic figure. He assaults Paduan values by refusing to comply with social etiquette, for example in his rude haste to know the size of Katherina's dowry. Yet it may be a misconception to assume that the dramatist meant

Petruchio to be a sympathetic figure. The problem is that Katherina is not an equal partner in this burlesque but merely a player to Petruchio's performance. Had he confided the joke to her or released her later from the espousal contract then the assault on Paduan values would be complete. On another level then the reality of having a stranger enter her home, physically restrain her and convince her father that she has consented to be his legal property is the horrific story exposed through the burlesque. A 'love-at-first-sight' reading is commonly imposed by directors to side-step this issue but there is no textual evidence to support it and Katherina's final silence though commonly read as complicity may also indicate her powerlessness. Indeed Petruchio has said all that needs to be said for his all too willing listeners.

Zeffirelli and Bogdanov both give a strong interpretation of the procurement of the espousal contract. Richard Burton appraises the riches of Baptista's house and inspects the silver. Pleased with the generous dowry on offer, he makes an equally generous offer of 'all my lands and leases whatsoever' (2.1.121) in her widowhood. A reaction shot shows Baptista's eagerness to have this offer confirmed so Petruchio repeats the information. The *Evening Standard* describes 'Michael Hordern, huffing and puffing like a small shunting engine anxious to hook his shrewish daughter on to the first willing man'<sup>21</sup> In Bogdanov's version, Baptista sits at a large gilt desk, calculator to hand. The prompt-book states at 2.1.123, 'Grumio takes a contract out of case and hands it to Petruchio, who hands it to Baptista'.<sup>22</sup> Hortensio arrives to report his lack of success in teaching Katherina to play the lute. Petruchio's lines at 2.1.160-3 are cut.<sup>23</sup> This means that any sense of genuine interest in and admiration for her is removed with the loss of the lines: 'Now, by the world it is a

lusty wench./ I love her ten times more than e'er I did/ O, how I long to have some chat with her!' (2.1.160-3).

The directors add new business that reinforces the idea of control over the subjected subject. Zeffirelli adds an unbroken sequence in which Petruchio's relentless pursuit of Katherina echoes the hunting imagery of the erotic paintings in the Induction which showed Io surprised and raped by Jove and Daphne's narrow escape from Apollo. At first Taylor's Kate seems to enjoy the sport of the chase, confident that she can win on her home ground. She climbs up into the granary and heaps sacks of grain on top of the trap to stop him but Burton forces the door open. She climbs higher, retrieving the ladder but he swings across on a rope. Finally at the top of the barn she bolts a heavy door fast but he smashes through the light brickwork until the fun turns to alarm. Burton's tone is menacing as he repeats, 'And will you, nill you, I will marry you'(2.1.260). Kate sees she is cornered. Her figure is framed against the open sky as she backs out with a cry, 'I'd rather die' For a split second the viewer thinks she is going to jump and this idea is registered in a reaction shot by Petruchio who shows a flash of fear: 'my twenty thousand crowns!' The viewer then realises that the opening leads onto the roof and that Kate intends to climb across it. The element of tragedy that has crept in is quickly dispelled as they fall through the roof together, landing in the wool shearings. Burton is astride her and has her arms pinned but the witty exchanges from 2.1. 252-3 now appear to give Kate a measure of control:

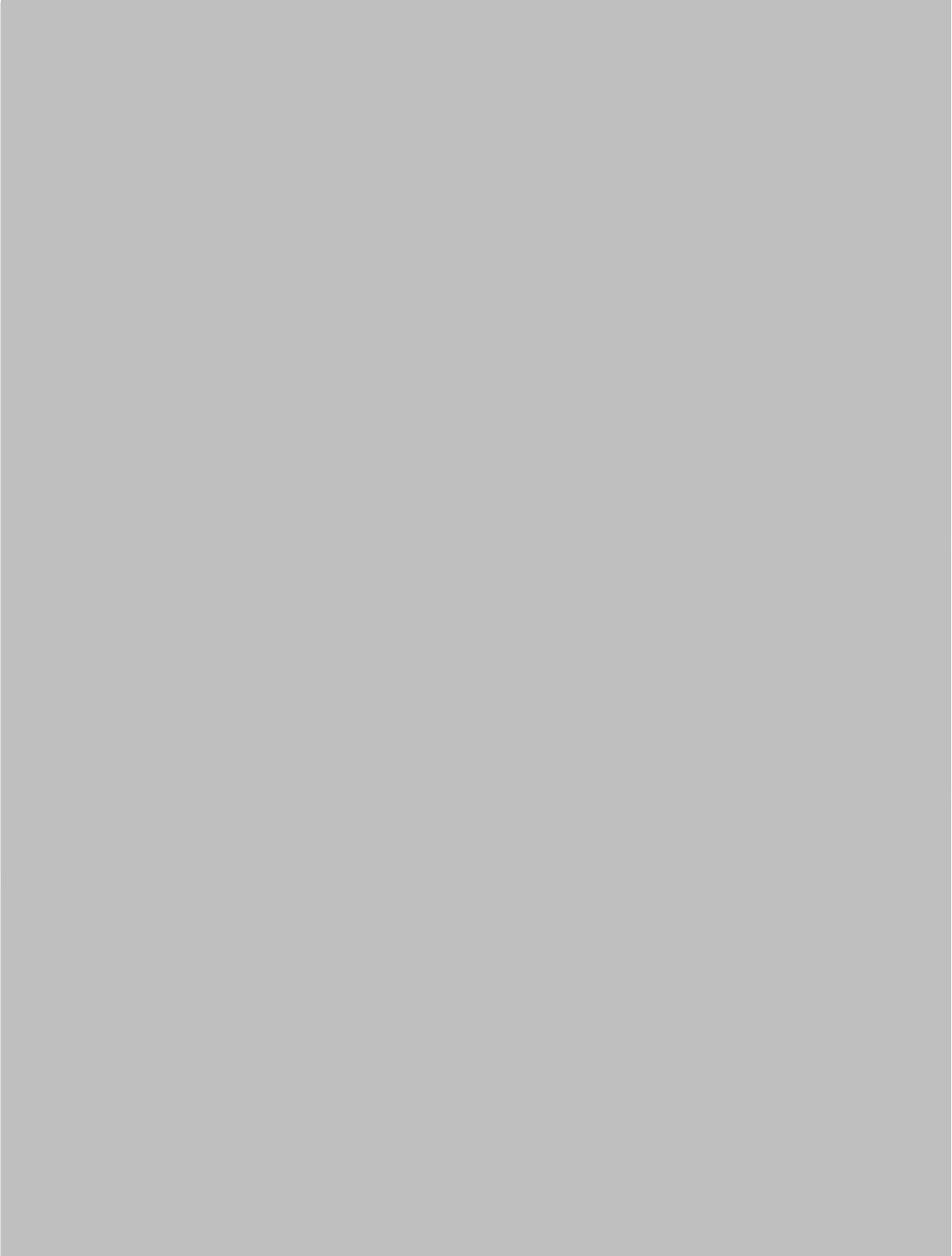
Katherina        Where did you study all this goodly speech?

Petruchio        It is extempore, from my mother-wit

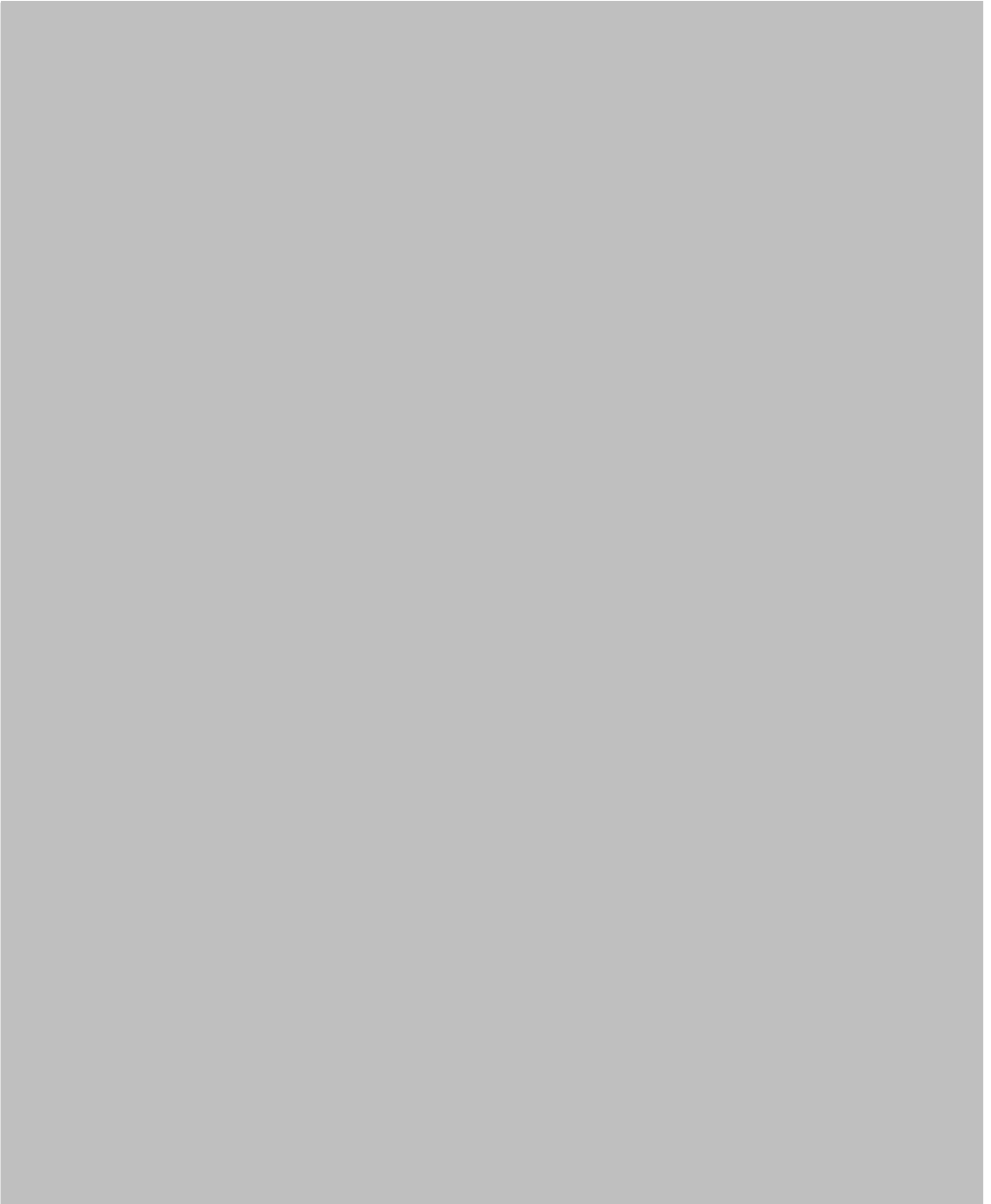
Katherina        A witty mother! Witless else her son.

However, when she climbs out of the wool, the viewer sees that she has been injured in the fall and cannot walk without pain. Petruchio's point of view is taken as we see the object of his hunt capitulate. She falls to the ground distressed and unable to rise without his help. There is a cut to the concurrent financial wrangling between Baptista and Bianca's suitors which effectively qualifies the previous shot of Petruchio's protective arm around the elder daughter. The tease of a romantic resolution is dramatically snatched as the camera cuts to a view of Petruchio steering Katherina across a gallery with her arm behind her back. (fig. 5)


The cut to Baptista and the suitors watching from below aims to capture the comic effect of their wonder and disbelief that the match has been made so suddenly. (fig. 6) Zeffirelli extends the sequence significantly by having Katherina forced to walk the length of the gallery. Petruchio actually puts pressure on the arm behind her back so that she winces. He warns her, 'Never make denial - I must and will have Katherine to my wife' (2.1. 269). Katherina is seen complying with a grimace taken to be a smile of approval by the men watching. Burton's Petruchio demonstrates complete power over the subjected Katherina by forcing her into a bedroom and locking the door. It is unclear whether Baptista and the men (from their position at ground level) see the turning of the key in the lock. Burton descends in triumph and Taylor's Kate like a regressive inmate watches through the tiny window of her 'cell' and sinks down, bringing her fingers to her mouth in comfort. I find this a particularly shocking sequence but much depends on how much autonomy the spectator attributes to Katherina/Taylor. Barbara Hodgdon argues that the film 'capitalizes on her attraction for Burton' and that when she looks out of the locked room 'an extreme close-up of one of Taylor's famous violet eyes, turns her gaze into a spectacle in which viewers meet their own voyeurism' <sup>24</sup> Hodgdon writes: 'Kate sinks into a thoughtful pose; and a smile crosses her



5 Petruchio (Richard Burton) steers Katherina (Elizabeth Taylor) across the gallery in Franco Zeffirelli's film, 1966



**6** Petruchio (Richard Burton) announces his 'success' in wooing Kate (Elizabeth Taylor) in Franco Zeffirelli's film, 1966



7 Petruchio (Richard Burton) stops Katharina's (Elizabeth Taylor) protest with a kiss at the altar in Zeffirelli's film, 1966.

face as the sound track's soft, romantic music expresses her private pleasure'<sup>25</sup> Nino Rota's romantic theme music arrests the fast bawdy action at various points in the film to suggest Kate's undeniable search for love, and Petruchio's gradual realisation that he loves her. Graham Holderness found that the 'taming' plot was 'drained of the various historical and moral significances attributed to it', because of the strong linking of the off-screen and on-screen roles:

The love-at-first-sight motif is rendered conspicuous in the film by looks and gestures, and subsequently reinforced by Kate's silent complicity in Petruchio's announcement of their wedding<sup>26</sup>

It should be remembered, however, that the dramatist gives Katherina only one final line of verbal protest in the espousal scene: 'I'll see thee hanged on Sunday first!' (2.1.288). Taylor's Katherina voices the line but is bundled inside the room and locked in, from where she repeats it. The *Financial Times* commented:

With Taylor often very touching as a sick-mad girl and Burton as a sadistic boor, the situation ceases altogether to be comic and is instead a Hammer horror in the *Gaslight* mould.<sup>27</sup>

The reviewer concluded, 'As *mise-en scène* *The Taming of the Shrew* is muddled and self-indulgent; as Shakespeare it is evasive; as comedy it is dark and cruel'<sup>28</sup>

It is interesting to note the differences between the actors' intentions and the completed screenplay. In an interview with Godfrey Blakeley in the *Weekend Telegraph* on 15 July 1966 Burton explained:

All he is interested in is her money [...]nobody tells him she is beautiful. [She] runs upstairs like a scared, excited virgin. She wants to be caught. She tips

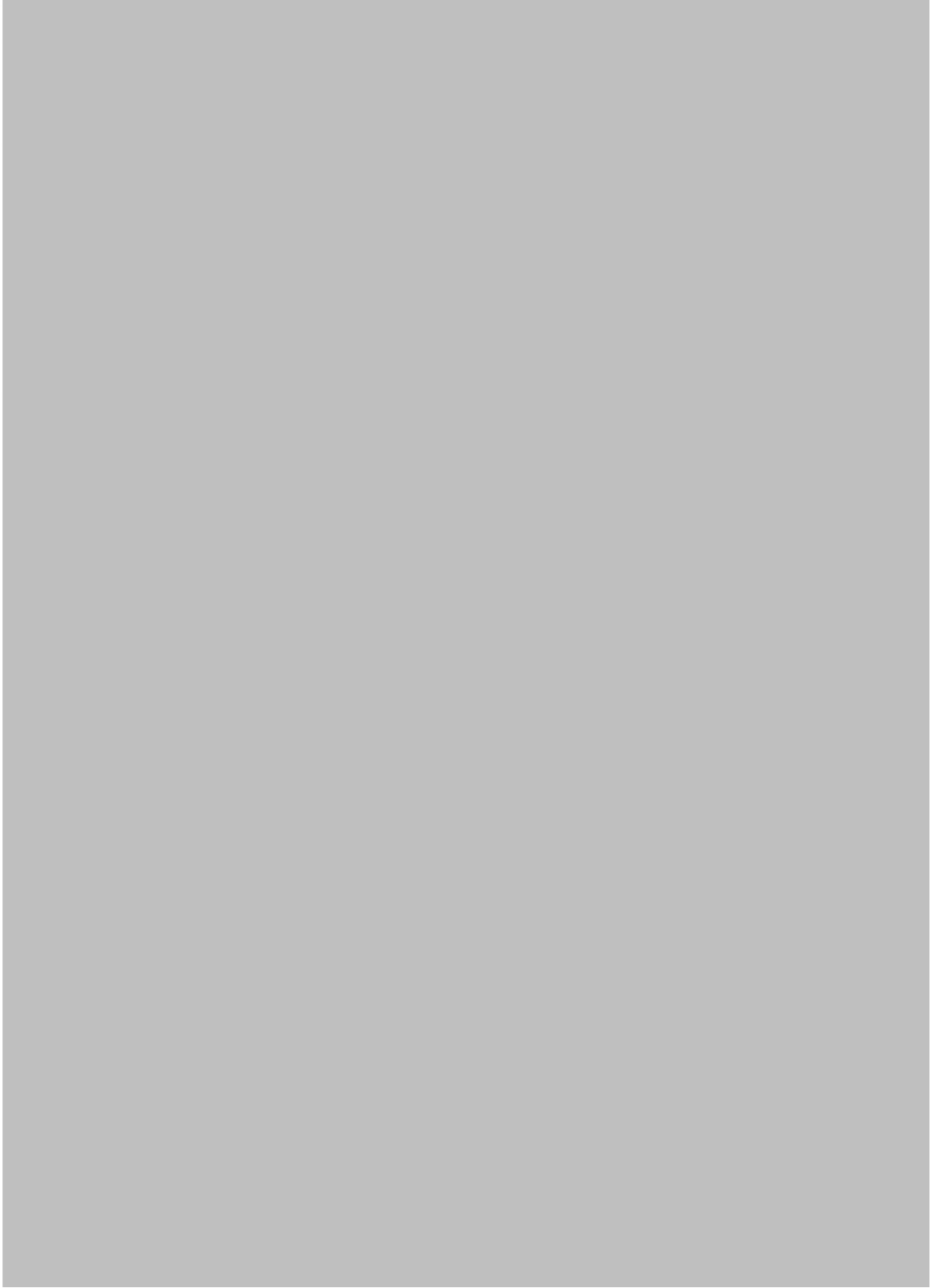
wine over him which he laps up. They charge through a farmyard, up a ladder, into a loft, where she sits on his head. They go blinding through a storm of startled bats, leap out of a window, plop through a roof, sink onto a pile of straw, scratching and fighting. After which he swaggers out to collapse back into the arms of his backers.<sup>29</sup>

In fact we do not see the business with the wine or the startled bats and crucially Petruchio does not 'collapse into the arms of his backers'. All of this business including the 'leap out of a window' smacks of the boisterous slap-stick in Sam Taylor's 1929 production. The effects of the Zeffirelli screenplay were in fact very different. It is not Petruchio who collapses but Katherina. The *Evening Standard* described the climax of the wooing scene where Burton's Petruchio 'finally strong-arms her into her bedroom with the oath "I will marry you!", the last word of which he bites off like a bullet casing'<sup>30</sup>


Michael Bogdanov similarly had Pryce's Petruchio use physical force against Katherina but this was reinforced with an accentuated Foucauldian legal process.<sup>31</sup> The contract was produced and handed to Baptista before Katherina arrived. The prompt book shows that the 'wooing' was meant to be violent. Following Petruchio's line 'Good Kate, I am a gentleman' (2.1.218), she 'slaps him across the face' at 'That I'll try' (219). The prompt-book then indicates: 'Grabs her by the arms [...] she struggles to escape, and they grapple throughout next section of the scene until he lets her go'<sup>32</sup> During the struggle 'Petruchio holds Kate's wrists', 'throws Kate on floor and crouches US of her'<sup>33</sup> He sat on the edge of Baptista's desk, announced 'Thus in plain terms- your father has consented/That you shall be my wife'(2.1.262-3) and stopped her protests by 'holding her by the wrists again' (fig. 9).<sup>34</sup> Baptista, Tranio and Gremio returned, and at this point Grumio entered on the gallery, with



**8** The freshly bathed Christopher Sly/ Petruccio (Jonathan Pryce) is shown  
titillating photographs in the RSC production, 1978



9 Petruchio (Jonathan Pryce) restrains Katherina (Paola Dionisotti) in the 'wooing' scene of the 1978 production



**10** The wedding scene in the 1978 production. From the left: Gremio (Paul Webster),  
photographer (Conrad Asquith), Petruccio (Jonathan Pryce), Katherina  
(Paola Dionisotti) and Grumio (David Suchet)

the direction, 'and waits there unnoticed'<sup>35</sup> Katherina was forced to join hands with Petruchio while a flash from the gallery revealed Grumio securing photographic proof of the witnessed espousal. The marriage contract was then signed. Dionisotti's Kate struck Petruchio and ran out, but her fate was sealed as Petruchio collected the contract from Baptista. Petruchio and Grumio exited and Baptista immediately resumed contractual negotiations for Bianca's marriage using a calculator which exploded when totalling the wealth of Lucentio's argosies. The *New Statesman* commented: 'Certainly, Bogdanov is only following Shakespeare's lead when he emphasises that it's money rather than love that absorbs many of the characters, not least Petruchio himself'<sup>36</sup> Jane Ellison commented in the *Evening Standard* (5 May 1978) :

Modern attitudes dictate sympathy for Kate's "shrewishness", fully justified in this atmosphere of 'commodity dealing' in which Kate's 'sour refusal to be sold to the highest bidder is seen as frustration and rebellion against the marriage market rather than a "devilish spirit"'

By contrast, it is Petruchio who repels us with his inhumanity, passionate for his quarry's wealth, dispassionate towards suffering.<sup>37</sup>

Both productions exposed the spurious discourse of 'wooing' which claimed to entreat the beloved patiently and with tenderness. The burlesque 'wooing' was taken to extremes in both productions; the wooing becomes grotesque when Burton's Petruchio locks Katherina in a room. Similarly Pryce's Petruchio bound her to a legal contract made under obvious duress. Thus the illegality of the espousals was strongly emphasised. However the strategies for achieving mutuality in the couple take different paths.

An interview with Elizabeth Taylor during filming explains the very different emphasis in Act 3, scene 2 on the wedding day. While Bogdanov's production suggested Petruchio's power as showmaster with its use of motorbikes, pantomime horse and brass band, Zeffirelli inserts a scene which shows Katherina choosing to make the day her own. Godfrey Blakeley in the *Weekend Telegraph* quotes Taylor:

“She is just a little dewy,” says Elizabeth Taylor “But because of the marriage, not because of him. [...] She arrives at the church wearing “the give-away-nothing expression much affected by princesses whose marriages have been arranged”. The wedding has all the trimmings: it is a real bourgeois affair, on her terms, on her home ground. The victim is Petruchio.<sup>38</sup>

This intention does of course fit the earlier thoughts about the adventurer Petruchio swaggering out ‘to collapse back into the arms of his backers’ It suggests that on the wedding day it is Katherina who takes the initiative and aims to turn the situation to her own advantage in a very material way. In Zeffirelli's screenplay Katherina emerges in her own good time although Baptista has been fussing and calling her repeatedly to come down from her room. She takes his hand and descends imperiously, richly dressed, to inspect the rich display of wedding gifts including the finest linen. However when she kisses Bianca in new-found amity she finds herself the centre of amusement. All too evidently the guests doubt that her new ‘performance’ will last. In Zeffirelli's film the wedding is a carnival affair but the high spirits fall flat when Petruchio fails to appear. The director captures this brilliantly in a take of the long line of silent weary guests flopped by the roadside in the afternoon heat. In these circumstances Katherina's rush to the altar on his arrival can be viewed as her determination to have the whole foolhardy business gone through and finished as quickly as possible. After

Burton's Petruchio has delayed the service by a coughing fit, then by pretending to fall asleep and finally by searching for the ring, he takes the marriage vows. Taylor's Kate waits until the last possible moment to say 'I do not' but the final word is lost as Petruchio stops her mouth with a long kiss. (fig. 7) She cries out, 'Oh no!' and 'Father!' but no-one hears in the general *mêlée*. The film cuts to the merriment of the bridal feast where the elder daughter's moment of triumph in finally gaining public acceptance is undercut by the mercenary motives for the marriage. She sees Petruchio pass to Grumio a large coffer of her father's gold. When Petruchio refuses to stay and carries her away from the guests she grips the walls either side of the open door and screams for her father. There is a moment when, seated on an ass in the pouring rain, she looks back and weighs her choices. She can either return to public humiliation and her father's ineffectuality or follow the man who has her father's money. Petruchio's first action on entering his own house is to fling some of the gold coins at his servants, announcing that his plan to 'wive it wealthily' has been a success.

*The Wall Street Journal* was scathing of Bogdanov's production, remarking on the 'many inconsistencies': 'most of the play is played in broad slapstick, but Mr Pryce plays Petruchio as a deadly serious character given to sadism'<sup>39</sup> *The Yorkshire Post* argued that 'the production never recovers from the ferocity of the early farce'<sup>40</sup> The comic stage business included Petruchio's arrival on 'a massive motorcycle with six red horns', a 'spirited pantomime horse', a brass band and a flashgun-happy photographer at the wedding.<sup>41</sup> Bogdanov had signalled in the Induction that spectators should be prepared to confront those attitudes that had become internalised and appeared natural. Thus the tearing down of the traditional Italianate set challenged spectators to acknowledge that their 'natural'

expectations were culturally derived. Similarly the farcical white wedding at the mercy of the British climate -all rain and umbrellas- connected the play's underlying ideas with contemporary reality. White weddings were to be viewed as pantomimes functioning as performance and entertainment while concealing the unequal power relations in the couple. The photographer's flashguns performed a necessary societal function in confirming that the event had taken place and recording who was present, in the same way that the espousal contract had been recorded on film. (fig. 10) Tori Haring-Smith commented that the production was 'filled with slapstick routines' and included 'the periodic appearance of a brass marching band playing "Another Opening, Another Show" from *Kiss Me, Kate*'<sup>42</sup> Bogdanov reference was to the continual reworkings of the *Shrew* playtext(s) which function as cultural markers of a contradictory discursive space. The title *Kiss Me, Kate* is itself a marker of closure, of mutuality achieved in the couple. But for those critics who viewed Bogdanov's slapstick as 'a riot of fun', the sounds of the hunting horns and the emphasis on hunting in the programme were sufficient clues to the underlying seriousness of the direction.<sup>43</sup> Jane Ellison noted:

Winding horns and the dismal cry of hounds reverberate through this hard and brilliant production, where the images of hunting form the play's cruel metaphor. When we, like the guests at Kate's wedding, laugh easily with the hunger in his triumph over his prey, the chill notes of the chase are never far off to make us wonder uneasily what amusement is to be had after all from blood sports.<sup>44</sup>

The problem with a subjected Kate is that the play has her married nonetheless so that unless outright hatred is the denouement some creeping form of mutuality will insinuate itself

somewhere. Bogdanov cannot escape the tensions of a historically contingent Renaissance text which is directed to a successful Puritan outcome rather than divorce. Dionisotti's Kate was a strong shrew. The *New Statesman* found her 'a hard-faced bitch with a strident voice, a mean temper and, hidden somewhere beneath, the masochism to relish Petruchio's more imaginative outrages'<sup>45</sup> Masochism may seem the only explanation for the behaviour of a coerced wife who seems to fall for her tamer but this is of course the plot Dionisotti must work with. The *Yorkshire Post* described a Kate that 'underneath the red haired termagance [sic] has natural affections. She wants to be loved but there is wariness and even fear and always ambiguity'<sup>46</sup> This may explain her supposed 'masochism' for undoubtedly she was broken brutally in the taming scenes but strove for affection from her tamer. *Plays and Players* commented: 'she arrives at his home in a filthy white dress and a man's jacket, looking like an Irish potato famine refugee at Ellis Island, her face growing gaunter by the minute'<sup>47</sup> The prompt-book shows the ambiguity of her presentation. As a plate of food was brought near her 'Petruchio holds her by the shoulders so she cannot eat'; when he destroyed the tailor's gown 'Kate weeps' and during his homily she 'puts her head on Petruchio's arm' but he 'takes his arm away'<sup>48</sup>

Bogdanov's ending aimed to restore a balance by having Kate shame Petruchio into defeat. He would be brought to acknowledge finally that his behaviour towards women was unacceptable, demeaning to them and to himself. Michael Billington reflected on the effect in the *Guardian*:

Only in the final scene, set around the green baize table in a haze of cigar smoke does Bogdanov's approach start to pay handsome dividends. Dionisotti delivers Kate's speech of submission with a tart, stabbing irony

while Pryce shame-facedly grinds his cigar butt and runs his fingers through his hair. Confronted with the logic of his own actions, he quails; and when she ventures to kiss his shoe, he instantly withdraws his foot. It is the best interpretation of this scene I remember; but one has to wade through a lot of wife-beating to get to it.<sup>49</sup>

The ‘taming’ of Petruchio could not by itself, however, lead to mutuality. The *Daily Telegraph* found another dimension to Pryce’s portrayal:

But, he also suggests, impressively, that his cruelty does not come to him easily. He is even nervous of her. And when finally Kate publicly acknowledges him as master, he listens as if in shame, and will not let her kiss his foot. The pair have fallen in love.<sup>50</sup>

This suggested that both Katherina and Petruchio had finally made their own choices, having both confronted the harsh realities of their society’s construction of gender relations. Yet the final ability of the individual to exercise autonomy was equivocal. Robert Cushman wrote in the *Observer*:

Petruchio, the winner, remembers to rake in the chips; Baptista conscientiously writes a large cheque for the reformed Kate’s second dowry. The production is intelligently ambiguous about the play’s ethics; ‘Peace it bodes and love and quiet life’ as Petruchio says, but only on masculine, mercantile terms.<sup>51</sup>

The *New Statesman* noted:

And the very last image the production offers is of the servant Grumio clambering across a table to retrieve the wager that Katherine’s compliance

has won his master, while Petruchio himself swaggers offstage with his wife hanging off one hand and a 20,000 -crown cheque from her father in the other.<sup>52</sup>

After analysing reviewers' reactions to the submission speech, Penny Gay found a good deal of confusion with most finding the play 'still an amusing farce' while others revised their first impressions when the production was revived at the Aldwych.<sup>53</sup> Gay quotes Michael Billington: 'I now see what Mr Bogdanov was driving at: a complete reversal of the roles within the play'<sup>54</sup> The production was 'entirely about the taming of Petruchio [...]what we see in the final scene is the ultimate humiliation of Petruchio by a mature, witty and ironic Kate'<sup>55</sup>

If that was the intention the actress herself was unconvinced. Gay remarks that Dionisotti 'interviewed some ten years after the production, seems to have conceded the position: 'It's not the story of Kate: it's the story of Petruchio. He gets the soliloquies, he gets the moments of change'<sup>56</sup> Despite such pessimism, I feel Dionisotti provides a liberating reading of the polyphonic dynamics of the submission speech. Her thoughts on the part are recorded in

*Clamorous Voices: Shakespeare's Women Today* (1988) :

She's talking to different people. To the women she's saying, 'This is what our role is, girls -really explore it; it's like an acting exercise. *Investigate the realities*: thy husband is thy lord. Your life is in his hands.' That's the reality. For many women that's the reality. To Petruchio she's saying, 'Is this what you want? Is this what you're asking me to do? Give us your foot... The man I was having gags with in the street, does that man want me to do this? *Who* is it who wants me to do this?'<sup>57</sup>

Dionisotti's reading of the speech was presentational rather than representational at this point, asking spectators to pause to weigh the arguments of the play. However twentieth-century spectators are not all so well trained in Elizabethan dramaturgy and will insist on reading the represented figure. Arguably the speech is the moment when the Renaissance boy player withdraws from the representation, owning the difference between his own physically youthful voice and body 'soft, and weak, and smooth' (5.2.165) and the culturally defined feminine subject required to stoop for a husband. Therein lies the 'joke' for some Renaissance male spectators while perhaps others pondered the discrepancy between mutuality as a Puritan requirement of marriage and the realities of married life. The playtext does leave questions. Not only does Lucentio ponder the outcome for Katherina and Petruchio but the wager has cast doubts on the mutuality in the other two marriages. Dionisotti's presentational reading drew on twentieth-century feminism rather than Renaissance Puritan orthodoxy. She was asking spectators to consider the issues relative to contemporary life, as first raised through Bogdanov's use of the Induction. Her reading suggested that the idea of winning or losing at the end of this play was too simplistic. It was not just a question of who tamed who. It was also a question of 'Why are we still performing this play?' and 'Where do we go from here?', both in terms of the represented married couple and the ideologies that sustain gender inequality. Dionisotti reflected:

My Kate was kneeling and I reached over to kiss his foot and he gasped, recoiled, jumped back, because somehow he's completely blown it. He's as trapped now by society as she was in the beginning. Somewhere he's an okay guy, but *it's too late*. The last image was of two very lonely people. The lights went down as we left - I following him, the others hardly noticing

we'd gone. They'd got down to some hard gambling. They just closed ranks around the green baize table.<sup>58</sup>

The sense of alienation contrasted markedly with the sense of harmony and inclusion in Zeffirelli's version. The *Weekend Telegraph* described the planned ending for the new film:

The end of the film, the banquet, is the epilogue, and Katharina's last speech the "moral" It is a set ending, as the carnival is a set beginning. All the characters assemble in an idealised atmosphere. They become different people, behave perfectly [...] Everything is in harmony like the end of a Mozart opera.<sup>59</sup>

Zeffirelli makes Katherina the centre of harmony. She pushes Bianca and the Widow forcibly into the banqueting hall but maintains her dignity and keeps an almost regal posture. The men, who have been so voluble and active in their wrangling over the marriage transactions, now listen attentively. Taylor's Katherina is their teacher but her words are also a personal tribute to Petruchio/Burton. The unwed courtesan in the gallery is moved to tears by this public declaration of the sacred mutuality of the married couple, although Katherina deliberately escapes into the crowd after giving Petruchio a passionate kiss. Russell Jackson remarks: 'The scene is a big public display of their authority'<sup>60</sup> There is no doubt that the 'stars' were playing to each other. Burton and Taylor were married to other partners when they began an affair while filming *Cleopatra* (1963). They married each other the following year. Their lifestyle was notorious. Donald Spoto writes in his biography:

By the late 1960s, Elizabeth Taylor no longer had to have great starring roles: she had only to live like a star. Her off-screen life was far more glamorous and fascinating to admirers and detractors than any script submitted.

Everywhere, the couple seemed to flaunt their extravagant wealth: together, over the decade, they earned more than \$88 million and spent more than \$65 million. They joined their names to form Taybur Productions for international movie-making, but after *The Taming of the Shrew* they never made any movies: Taybur was merely a holding company.<sup>61</sup>

Spoto argues that Taylor's role as Martha in Ernest Lehman's production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* was perhaps her greatest performance. ' "With Richard Burton," she said years later, "I was living my own fabulous passionate fantasy. In time it became too difficult to sustain ... We were like magnets, alternately pulling toward each other and, inexorably, pushing away" ' <sup>62</sup>

Zeffirelli recalls his first meeting with Burton and Taylor:

On and on they quarrelled, like Katherine and Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* ... I stopped, suddenly aware of what I was thinking: that they would be perfect in the roles if only they could be persuaded to do it' <sup>63</sup>

Hodgdon comments that Zeffirelli's film offered spectators:

A pair of jolly, thriving wooers, a model star marriage that appropriates Shakespeare to authenticate a beautiful woman's transgressive body as that of a faithful wife and to confirm the jet-setting couple's Italian, if not international, respectability.<sup>64</sup>

If Zeffirelli's screenplay ended on a note of inclusion rather than alienation, it nonetheless shared a certain structural affinity with Bogdanov's stage version. Both productions allowed the burlesque wooing to be pushed towards the grotesque. Both showed the outcome of the

wooning to be the removal of the female subject from the public world of action and her reconfiguration as an object of private consumption. She could be 'viewed' through the camera's intrusive gaze into the locked room, a fetishized object for collectors or she could be viewed and handled as a paid-for object imaged on a photograph. This exercise of power was unambiguously morally reprehensible, leading one reviewer to remark of Zeffirelli's screenplay that, 'Kate is not tamed so much as broken' and another to comment on the 'atmosphere of savagery' in Bogdanov's production.<sup>65</sup> Yet remarkably by the end of each version, Petruchio in both cases could appeal to the spectator's sympathy because he had become the erring pupil of a patient, enduring woman who could teach him how to be better. Burton's Petruchio looked insecure and abashed while Pryce's Petruchio appeared to suffer intense emotional trauma.

Productions of *The Taming of the Shrew* may also be shown to exhibit a reverse structural pattern where the actor playing Petruchio successfully indicates that he is taking 'consent' to be provisional and dependent upon his skill to free rather than capture Katherina. In the two productions that follow this strategy may be shown to work both with and without an Induction. The key to each production is an emphasis on Katherina's disorderly behaviour as self-inflicted in response to familial and societal pressures. The solution is a good psychotherapist, ie: Petruchio, who can liberate her and cure the play for the director. Mutuality becomes the crowning achievement of Petruchio's suffering for her good.

### 3. Snarling Kates and Suffering Petruchios: Coaxing Consent in Jonathan Miller's BBC Time/Life Production (1980) and Bill Alexander's Royal Shakespeare Company Production at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1992

As has been shown, consent may involve visible coercion in the 'wooing' scene, an emphasis on mercenary motives, unwashed, unworthy Petruchios and *his* final epiphany at the hands of a good, moral woman who loves him and will teach him to be better. More subtly, consent may be coaxed from the unworthy, snarling Kate who is brought to learn from her patient, suffering teacher the road to marital harmony.

For such a strategy to be acceptable to modern audiences the wooing scene must suggest that Katherina *needs* Petruchio to save her. Therefore consent to the espousal is assumed *for her own good*. Ruth Nevo's discussion in *Comic Transformations in Shakespeare* (1980) chimes in accord with both these productions it seems:

Stage-manager and chief actor, master of homeopathy 'He kills her in his own humour' as Peter says - Petruchio's play-acting, his comic therapy, provides the comic device. One of a long line of Shakespearean actor-protagonists he holds the mirror up to nature, and shows scorn her own image.<sup>1</sup>

The *Financial Times* described Miller's Petruchio (John Cleese) as 'an eccentrically pragmatic social worker' while the *Sunday Times* found Anton Lesser's Petruchio 'applying homeopathic doses of aggression' at Stratford.<sup>2</sup> Both directors emphasised Katherina's estrangement from Paduan society through her self-willed neurosis. Sarah Badel in Miller's production was "really stark mad" while Amanda Harris at Stratford was described as 'stamping round the set, her out-thrust jaw locked in a perpetual snarl'<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Miller sought to achieve Kate's complete social reintegration within a Puritan household but Bill

Alexander's production made Katherina and Petruchio 'outsider' figures. He used the framing device to make the travelling players the moral centre of the whole production. Their actor-manager (Anton Lesser) led the players in a metatheatrical outwitting of their patrons who were represented as unpleasant, irresponsible Sloane types whose behaviour was mirrored to an extent in the inner play world of Padua. Petruchio's rescue of Kate involved a rejection of Sloane values and also of Padua society, making Katherina and Petruchio ultimately subversive figures.

Jonathan Miller was criticised for cutting the Induction and for his use of naturalism, decisions he justified on the grounds of the television medium he was working with. Bill Alexander's use of the complete framing device from *The Taming of A Shrew* was felt by some reviewers to be heavy handed and in danger of sinking the inner play.<sup>4</sup> Read together, these productions do reveal surprising similarities and these similarities may be traced to an arguably reactionary engagement with sexual politics.

Chris Dunkley in the *Financial Times* connected what he saw as Miller's evasion of sexual politics with the BBC/Time-Life project as a whole:

You can see Miller's problem: though Katharina has been portrayed for 400 years simply as an archetypal shrew who is finally brought to heel by good old fashioned masculine domination, it becomes necessary when mounting the play for a worldwide television audience in the age of feminism to dig around for alternative implications if the work isn't to seem dreadfully "chauvinistic".<sup>5</sup>

This was achieved by making Kate an isolated individual with a problem, blurring the edges between individual anxieties and societal demands. The *Financial Times* remarked: 'The

story did seem less deeply misogynistic than usual, more like a single peculiar case history and less of a general attack on women' <sup>6</sup> Kirsty Milne in the *Sunday Telegraph* noted a similar direction in Amanda Harris's portrayal:

There is no question here of portraying our heroine as a normal woman whose energy and intelligence have been frustrated. Amanda Harris plays her as a termagant who steams about like the mad woman in the attic, her face set in a perpetual lockjawed scowl. <sup>7</sup>

Both productions seemed to suggest a shrewishness with its roots in individual psychology and sibling rivalry, made worse by a father who favoured one daughter more than the other. In these circumstances Petruchio took the father's place as an authority figure who happened to take Kate's part. Anton Lesser's authority was doubled by his status as actor-manager of the travelling players. At one point scripts were handed out to the Sloane 'audience' who were forced unwillingly to lend their services playing the servants in the inner play. One reviewer remarked:

Anton Lesser makes the act of acting as important as his performance in the role of Petruchio and never relaxes his dominance over the rest of the characters, including his lordly audience. <sup>8</sup>

In both productions Petruchio's good intentions for Kate were firmly established in the 'wooing scene' which merits a full discussion. Unlike Burton's brash entrance into the Minola household, John Cleese's Petruchio in the BBC production appeared almost diffident. During the scene he moved to the back of the room as the disguised Tranio urged Lucentio's claim for Bianca's hand and the unfortunate Hortensio complained of his treatment by Katherina. Petruchio observed and waited, as he would observe Kate's shrewish behaviour

and wait for her to see it too. Miller's *mise en scène* was important in recreating the *locus* world of the sixteenth/early seventeenth century through a leap of the imagination. His use of the television medium may have been misunderstood. Susan Willis interviewed Miller for her book, *The BBC Shakespeare Plays: Making the Televised Canon* (1991). She argues: 'Miller insists on the artifice of theatre or television' and quotes his own observations:

One need not use materials which are exactly the same as materials you're trying to represent; there's some sort of knight's move that you can make, that you want to indicate without necessarily reproducing them exactly. So that, for example, you can in fact build a palace out of rough plywood; as long as it's got the architectural features it needn't be an imitation of architectural surfaces.<sup>9</sup>

Stanley Wells felt that the metatheatrical element was lost with the sacrifice of the Christopher Sly episodes and that 'the consequent reduction of the play's imaginative complexity was reflected in a generally prosaic, literalistic mode of representation'<sup>10</sup> Wells writes:

We opened on a stagey Italianate market place, peripheral touches of local colour being provided by a dwarf, a juggler, an apple-eater and basket-weavers. Baptista's house had lovely interiors reminiscent of Vermeer, sunlit, uncluttered rooms opening into one another through elegant arches with some ingenious mirror effects.<sup>11</sup>

Miller must have seen this problem when he admitted in an interview with Tim Hallinan that 'as soon as you put Shakespeare on [the] box where [...] people are accustomed to seeing naturalistic events represented, you are more or less obliged to present the thing as naturally

as you can'.<sup>12</sup> However he qualified this by adding in that interview: 'you have to find some counterpart of the unfurnished stage that Shakespeare wrote for without, in fact, necessarily reproducing a version of the Globe theatre. Because there's no way you can do that.'<sup>13</sup> Willis explains that Miller's solution was a painterly one:

Part of his interest was to stretch the audience's perception of the television medium by working with the surface of its picture like a painter, sometimes adopting or adapting painterly solutions to spatial arrangements, color palate, or lighting.<sup>14</sup>

Willis describes Miller's instructions to designer Colin Lowrey:

To build the Paduan street from virtually untreated plywood using the architectural principles of Serlio's famous sixteenth-century design for a comic scene, in which the audience looks down a street in forced perspective past various building facades and archways toward a distant edifice.<sup>15</sup>

Miller used not only 'the spirit of Vermeer' but 'he also pared the setting down to boards and drapes' to represent Petruchio's house.<sup>16</sup> This would make sense in Miller's representation of the Puritan even 'Cromwellian' aspects of Petruchio's behaviour; his desire to penetrate the outward show and to discover Kate's true nature, his disdain for the 'fine array'(2.1.312), and his preference for 'honest mean habiliments' (4.3.164). Miller asks the viewer to reconstruct the intellectual thinking of the Renaissance and Early Modern periods through the iconographic detail of his sets. His painterly approach may be viewed as in itself metadramatic, drawing the viewer's attention to the construction of social reality. However, Graham Holderness accuses Miller of creating a 'bourgeois-liberal ideology' emphasising the self-absorbed individual in a reconstructed historical reality.<sup>17</sup> He refers for example to

Cleese's 'meditative self-communings' and it is true that Cleese rarely, if at all, looks to camera.<sup>18</sup> Holderness argues that by cutting the Induction Miller reveals 'an unwillingness to expose by any alienating or metadramatic devices the theatrical mechanisms of the play's construction'<sup>19</sup> To the extent that Miller focuses on a sense of 'concrete realism' there is justification for the argument but the iconography is metadramatic in that it points to the constructedness of the social world. For example, Willis describes Miller's use of a Vermeer painting '*Young Lady and Gentleman at the Virginal* (also known as *The Music Lesson*), which he reproduced exactly - furniture, fittings, and stances - in the course of the wooing scene in *Shrew* was an intellectually sportive allusion'<sup>20</sup> Sarah Badel and John Cleese act out their wooing in front of the mirror positioned above the virginal. Vermeer was working in the second half of the seventeenth century but the iconography of Miller's representation also recalls the famous painting by Jan Van Eyck, *The betrothal of the Arnolfini* painted in 1434 (fig. 11). E.H. Gombrich writes:

The young woman has just put her right hand into Arnolfini's left and he is about to to put his own right hand into hers as a solemn token of their union. Probably the painter was asked to record this important moment as a witness, just as a notary might be asked to declare that he has been present at a similar solemn act. [...]In the mirror at the back of the room we see the whole scene reflected from behind, and there, so it seems, we also see the image of the painter and the witness. We do not know whether it was the Italian merchant or the northern artists who conceived the idea of making this use of the new kind of painting, which may be compared to the legal use of a photograph, properly endorsed by a witness.<sup>21</sup>



**11** Jan Van Eyck, The betrothal of the Arnolfini (1434), also referred to as The Arnolfini Portrait (National Gallery, London)

Miller frames the 'couple' in a mirror image constructing a betrothal picture for the viewer who bears witness. The viewer cannot help but measure Kate's later protests against this iconographic construction of public and published consent. This may work in two ways. A viewer may read the mirror image as Kate's consent to marriage. As a metadramatic device the mirror alienates the constructed betrothal in a Brechtian sense, drawing attention also to the mercantile arrangement and the outward show of wealth and status that such paintings were meant to represent.<sup>22</sup>

The mercantile transaction is subtly understated. Cleeze's Petruchio reacts to Baptista's reference to twenty thousand crowns with determined restraint. The viewer infers that he finds the transaction satisfactory and will live up to his side of the bargain. The scene establishes on first sight that Petruchio likes what he sees in Katherina and that she, despite herself, is unnerved by his attentions. Despite her earlier manic howls off-set, the wooing is a much quieter affair than the Burton-Taylor screenplay and Sarah Badel's witty exchanges are given more emphasis. Cleeze makes his admiration clear at 2.1.188-9, 'and thy beauty sounded,/Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs' The psychotherapy begins in earnest with Petruchio's response to Kate's line 'If I be waspish, best beware my sting' (2.1.206). Petruchio emphasises his purpose, 'My remedy is then to pluck it out' (207) to which Badel's Katherina replies almost wistfully 'Ay, if the fool could find it where it lies' (208). She is able to suggest that only a worthy wooer will trouble to find the cause of her unhappiness and that she longs for someone who cares enough to try. Petruchio seated at the table appears in medium shot regaling Baptista and the other men with his 'success' while Katherina's reactions are shown in close-up. Petruchio rises and folds his arms tightly around her so that Baptista can take their hands before the witnesses (fig. 12). Katherina's silence can be



**12** 'Give me your hands, / God send you joy; Petruchio, 'tis a match'  
(2.1.320-321). Baptista (John Franklyn-Robbins) confirms the espousal of  
Petruchio (John Cleese) and Katherina (Sarah Badel)

interpreted as both a response to the speed of events and to her deep reflection on the unexpected personal attention she is receiving from Petruchio. Baptista's unearthly screech of joy that the match is concluded strikes an unpleasant note, suggesting that Kate had long lacked the affection she craves from her father.

Bill Alexander firmly established a metatheatrical dimension through his use of *The Taming of A Shrew*, printed 1594 and newly printed in 1992, one of a number of 'Shakespearean Originals' in the new series edited and introduced by Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey.<sup>23</sup> Without undue reverence for the 1594 version or the folio version, Alexander inserted a script of his own in the Induction rather as Bogdanov had done in his 1978 production. However, where Bogdanov's additions empowered the drunken Sly to abuse the playhouse usherette, Alexander's additions empowered 'Lord Simon's Party' to victimise the drunken Sly found collapsed outside the 'Ugly Duckling', a reference to a real Stratford 'ale house', the 'Dirty Duck', frequented by actors and playgoers (fig. 13). 'Lord Simon's Party' was variously described by reviewers as 'Sloanes', 'a gang of 1990s Hooray Henries and Henriettas', 'yuppie revellers' and 'coke-snorting young toffs'<sup>24</sup> The opening dialogue between Lord Simon Llewellyn (Dominic Mafham), The Hon Hugo Daley-Young (Dorian MacDonald), Lady Sarah Ormsby (Catherine Mears) and The Hon Peter Sinclair (Barnaby Kay) established that this was to be a play about class:

Simon           What's this? Is he dead? Is he breathing?

Hugo            He's breathing. He reeks of beer.

Simon           How beastly. Look at him lying there like a pig. How foul.

Sarah            Leave him alone, don't touch him. Simon, he's disgusting.

Peter            He's probably working class.



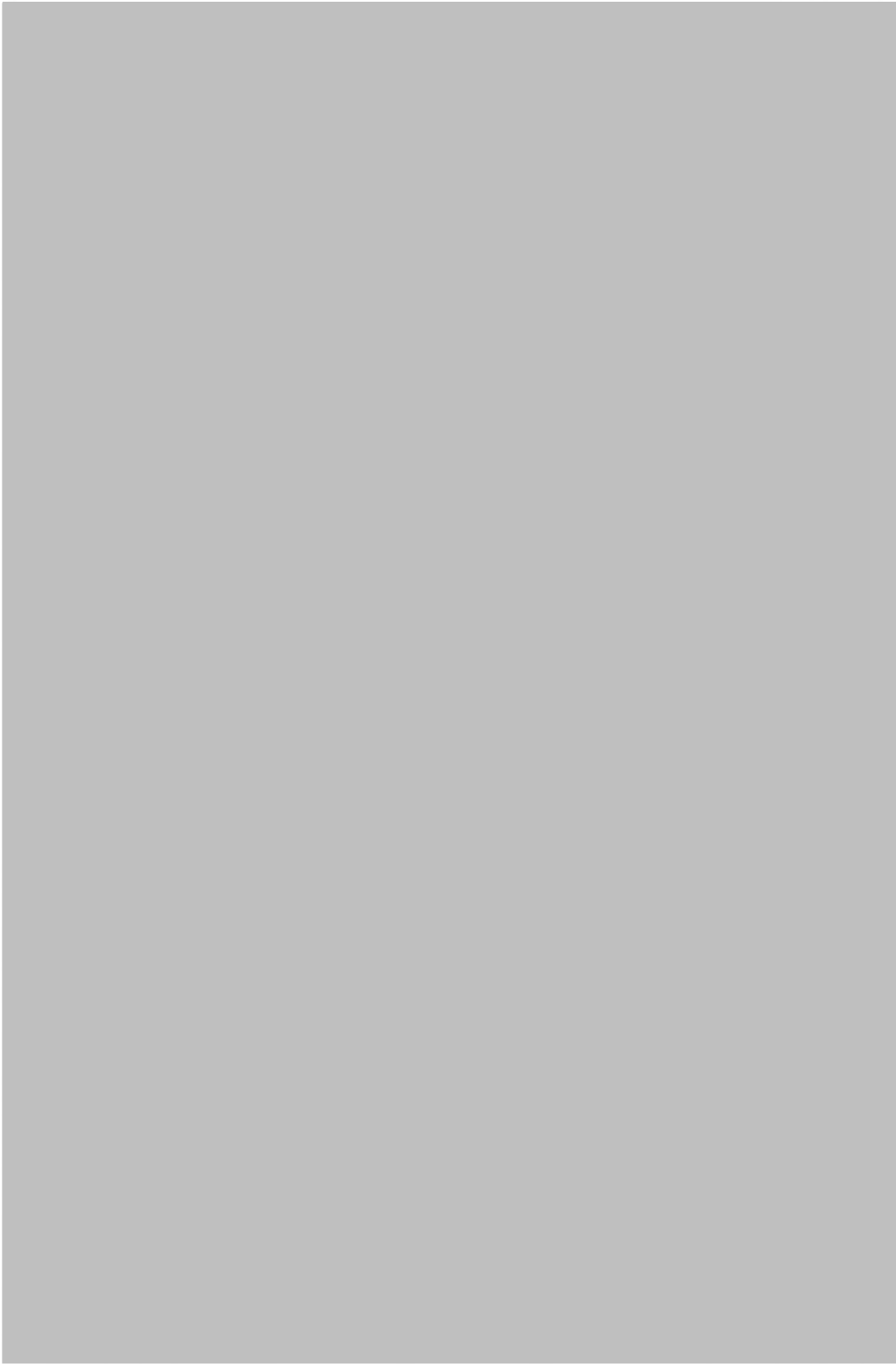
**13** Set of the 1992 RSC production showing the inn sign, 'The Ugly Duckling'

(This is a joke! They laugh)

Hugo           And he definitely smells!

Simon          How loathsome. <sup>25</sup>

Reviewers were puzzled over the play's mixed messages. *Locus* and *platea* were firmly differentiated; the represented locus of 90s wealth and status appeared to be Lord Simon's ancestral oak-panelled hall (fig. 14) while bare boards marked the *platea* for the travelling players' performance. Anton Lesser established an early class antagonism with the acting troupe's 90s patrons. Lord Simon confided patronisingly: 'One of our number tonight is a little odd [...] A friend of my father who's just turned up, not one of us exactly, probably never seen a play before' to which Lesser replied tight-lipped 'There's no need to worry'. <sup>26</sup> However, as any study of marxist-feminist issues might have told him, liberating victims of class discrimination does not automatically eliminate patriarchy.<sup>27</sup> Lord Simon's chilling pronouncement: 'The drunk needs teaching a lesson. We'll mess around with his mind for a bit' would inevitably connect with the taming strategy Petruchio planned for Kate.<sup>28</sup> In the Induction Lord Simon hurt Sarah for 'crossing' him when she recoiled at the plan to persuade Simon's brother Rupert to play drag: 'I want you to persuade my darling baby brother Rupert to dress up as a girl and pretend to be the oik's wife' <sup>29</sup> Patriarchal power extended to sadism where the most vulnerable members of this social class were concerned. Anton Lesser's Petruchio mirrored this behaviour when as patriarchal lord of his own home (after the wedding) he wreaked class vengeance on Lord Simon's party who now held scripts as his servants. The opportunity to trounce his patrons was clever and potentially funny. However the decision to kick Sarah and strike Ruth across the face showed all too clearly that the exploration of class relations had masked the issue of gender relations. Petruchio struck a



**14** Set for Lord Simon's oak-panelled ancestral home in the 1992 RSC production

blow for the rights of the poor players (and by implication the ordinary 'working man') by reinforcing patriarchal power in brutal fashion. From then on his role as actor/manager managing Kate's performance doomed the story of their marriage to one of unequal power relations and her 'liberation' to *his* triumph. The production missed the opportunity for Kate to show solidarity with her 'sisters' when Petruchio struck out at them and opted instead to show Sly's solidarity with Kate as disempowered victims of patriarchal malice. There was a touching moment when Sly moved downstage from the locus to offer the starving Kate some food but this action also confirmed Lord Simon's patronising comment that the ignorant 'oik' had never seen a play. In Act Five, Sly was alarmed at the prospect of a man being sent to prison and interrupted to exclaim, 'I say we'll have no sending to prison'<sup>30</sup> On this occasion Petruchio showed solidarity with a class victim and explained gently, 'It's all right. It's only a play'<sup>31</sup>

Irving Wardle in the *Independent on Sunday* felt that Bill Alexander's 'solution' to the play's sexual politics was 'to pin the guilt on the actors's ruling class patrons whose crass behaviour they are merely reflecting'<sup>32</sup> Benedict Nightingale in the *Times* asked: 'Why is the Sly subplot given such emphasis that it almost upstages the play itself? Is the RSC surreptitiously demanding more subsidy by showing itself lent out to county dimwits?'<sup>33</sup>

Other reviewers remarked on the metatheatricality in relation to the Royal Shakespeare Company. Michael Billington in the *Guardian* referred to the travelling players as 'an apparently unsponsored RSC mobile tour'.<sup>34</sup> Irving Wardle wondered if 'the show may be intended as a parable on the RSC's attitude to theatrical sponsorship; but that thought is better left unpursued'.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps one can interpret this as a long saga of tension between actors' perceptions of the need for artistic freedoms and the need to reach audiences of

varied composition, and the institutional constraints inevitably present in maintaining a classical acting company in the 90s. Theatre programmes offering ‘sponsorship opportunities’, and ‘corporate membership schemes’ giving companies priority booking indicate the pace of change.<sup>36</sup> Robert Hewison in the *Sunday Times* remarked:

The Royal Shakespeare Company has opened its new Stratford season with a curious self-portrait. The cast of Bill Alexander’s production of *The Taming of the Shrew* arrive on stage in their “ordinary” clothes -in fact, a carefully calculated collection of jeans, blousons, soft hats and suede boots. There they meet their patrons, a group of young hoorays, fashionably dressed in baggy black. The contrast is striking: the actors are casual, sympathetic, cuddly types. The people they have to act for are sharp, loutish and cruel.<sup>37</sup>

Petruchio’s ‘sympathetic, cuddly’ approach first emerged in the wooing scene where physical contact was kept to a minimum. Anton Lesser shared John Cleese’s approach in establishing an early admiration for Katherina. Lesser entered with manifest bravado but without looking at her as he announced spiritedly, ‘Good morrow, Kate, for that’s your name, I hear’ (2.1.178). As she replied they exchanged looks and the moment was held to establish mutual attraction. Unlike Fairbanks, Burton and Pryce, this Petruchio was determined not to restrain her by force and hesitated to use the word ‘tame’ at 2.1.265 : ‘For I am he am born to tame you, Kate’ Even Cleese held Kate’s arms tightly for the espousal contract to be established in the placing of hands with her father’s but Lesser only *asked* for her hand. In fact she spat on his. As the match was made Amanda Harris screamed her annoyance and stormed upstage to where Petruchio waited, holding a curtain aside in the *locus* for her exit, a ‘gentleman’ to

the last. As an understanding man of the 90s Lesser established his credentials with a modern audience Garry O'Connor in *Plays and Players* was obviously impressed:

I liked Anton Lesser's Petruchio enormously. He is miraculously free from male hang-ups over his own potential domination by Kate. I had always thought of Petruchio as deprived of love like Kate. But not this one. He respects women [...] Lesser asserts a kind of Italianate charm over the whole process of courtship. <sup>38</sup>

This was not a view shared by Charles Spencer in the *Daily Telegraph* who commented:

Anton Lesser plays Petruchio with an odious jauntiness that puts one in mind of Paul Daniels patronising guests on his TV magic show. He also has moments of chilling ferocity, yet the director clearly expects the audience to take Kate's final speech seriously as a touching declaration of love and devotion. Lesser's Petruchio has been so vile, however, that you want her to biff the little tyke on the nose. <sup>39</sup>

Both reviewers were right because Lesser could switch alarmingly from 'Italianate charm' to 'chilling ferocity', a disturbing echo of Lord Simon's treatment of Sarah in the Induction.

After the episode with the tailor Kate sat defeated, gloomily reflecting that she was never likely to have a beautiful gown to wear. Petruchio showed compassion by touching her hair but when Kate disputed the time of day he exploded in fury: 'Look what I speak, or do, or think to do,/You are still crossing it' (4.3.186-7).

Both Cleese and Lesser attempted to mitigate the cruelty of the taming scenes by suggesting that they too were suffering in the process of enlightening Kate. This was achieved by tilting both productions towards Petruchio's point of view. The spectator was being

persuaded to read Petruchio's intentions as serious and to judge his words and actions accordingly. Stanley Wells commented: 'We saw the taming process, properly enough, through his eyes. Apart from a few necessary moments of flamboyance and a tendency to cluck amiably from time to time, it was a deeply thoughtful performance, convincing us of the seriousness of Petruccio's intentions'.<sup>40</sup> A particularly memorable occasion in the production is described by Wells:

I thought that the finest moments of John Cleese's performance as Petruchio came in the soliloquy beginning "Thus have I politicly begun my reign [...]," lines which in the theatre are often addressed in a mood of somewhat aggressive self-defensiveness directly to the audience, a kind of challenge:

He that knows better how to tame a shrew

Now let him speak.- 'Tis charity to show.

(4.1.210-11)

John Cleese spoke them in a quiet close-up, a moment of exhausted self-communion as Petruchio yawned over a candle, serious and purposeful even in his fatigue.<sup>41</sup>

Anton Lesser sought a similar effect. Paul Taylor in the *Independent* commented: 'Lesser's vehement, overwrought Petruchio seems to be wrestling with himself as much as with his froward bride, as though obscurely anguished that his rough methods are the only ones he knows to work'.<sup>42</sup> In the Royal Shakespeare Company production the approach reached its climax in the 'sun and moon' scene where the 'overwrought' Anton Lesser rasped in exasperation 'I say it is the moon' (4.5.4.) As falteringly Kate grasped what it was he wanted

she responded with growing confidence (fig. 15). Lesser's gestures coaxed the words from her as one would coax a hesitant child to recite a poem just learned:

And be it moon, or sun, or what you please,  
 And if you please to call it a rush-candle,  
 Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me.

(4.5.13-15)

Vincentio's arrival saw Katherina and Petruchio performing to each other so that their lines became moments of mutual discovery and recognition. Petruchio's lines to Vincentio became charged with deeper meaning because he was really talking to Kate: 'What stars do spangle heaven with such beauty/As those two eyes become that heavenly face?' (4.5.31-2) Katherina threw herself wholeheartedly into the game, adding a subtext to her lines that asked forgiveness 'Pardon, I pray thee, for my mad mistaking' (49) and acknowledged her new understanding, 'everything I look on seemeth green' (47).

The kiss in the street became a public affirmation of mutual acceptance and confirmed a new espousal contract. Amanda Harris's Katherina seemed shy of Petruchio, hanging down her head after offering a quick peck of a kiss. Then reaching up to touch his face she initiated a real kiss. Romantic music accompanied their embrace and the lights dimmed for a very long kiss, held deliberately until the audience finally broke the silence with appraising laughter. As they drew close the couple faced upstage towards the 'Sloanes' on-stage audience giving a clear moral message about the value of mutuality achieved in marriage. As they turned back to the theatre audience Petruchio confirmed the new beginning by asking Kate 'Is not this well?' and on the line 'Better once than never' he took a ring from his finger and placed it on hers (5.1.124-5). This suggested that he had all along taken her 'consent' to



**15 Actor-manager Petruccio (Anton Lesser) teaches Katherina (Amanda Harris) in the  
1992 RSC production**

be provisional and that the legality of the marriage depended upon her final choice. It was an attempt at romantic closure that placed the sympathetic ‘cuddly’ players once more in opposition to the immoral self-seeking patrons. The *Independent* found difficulty ‘in believing that the harmony achieved [...] would have a beneficial effect on the toffs’ romantic relationships’<sup>43</sup> However, Oliver Reynolds in the *Times Literary Supplement* commented:

Kate’s kissing of her husband “in the midst of the street” is beautiful. Desire is born out of submission, with both the sex-war and modern pieties momentarily transcended by the body. Silence envelops actors and audience as the kiss is prolonged under the dimming lights.<sup>44</sup>

After this of course the submission speech was obviously going to be a tribute to her husband’s long-suffering patience as well as a mutual joke on the assembled guests. At one point Amanda Harris turned to Petruchio as if to say ‘Am I doing all right?’ and on the line-ending ‘external parts’ she laughed at her own skill in making up words to rhyme as she went along. The actor-manager had succeeded in producing the performance he wanted. Unlike Miller’s version, however, the couple’s mutuality did not radiate further than themselves. They were distinct outsider figures in a corrupt Paduan society where Bianca (Rebecca Saire) played up to her suitors - even the aged Gremio and initiated an affair with Tranio. Of course by demonising Bianca, the production reverted to the good old reactionary message that women fall into two categories: good wives or bad whores. One could ask, Why shouldn’t Bianca manipulate suitors to her own advantage, given her limited options in early modern society?

Miller’s production was perhaps more successful in suggesting a development in Katherina’s understanding and appreciation of Petruchio’s intentions for her. The wooing

scene had established her thoughtfulness while the marriage bargain was being made. John Naughton in the *Observer* praised Miller for ‘a brilliant piece of casting’ in John Cleese<sup>45</sup> The eccentric comic persona popular in the television series *Monty Python and Fawlty Towers* brought an unexpected gloss to the part of Petruchio. Naughton commented on the play’s achievement:

Its success was due not to a decision to treat Petruchio comically, but to Miller’s perception that the Basil Fawlty persona which is John Cleese’s most distinctive role has a terrible kind of manic seriousness. This Cleese brought with him, with the result that a steely, authentically puritanical -almost Cromwellian - character emerged.<sup>46</sup>

The production was able to suggest that Katherina glimpsed this side of Petruchio in the wooing scene, qualifying her complaint to Baptista that he wished her wed to ‘one half lunatic,/ A mad-cap ruffian and a swearing Jack’ (2.1.276-7). For mutuality to be achieved, the spectator had to accept that this Katherina wanted the Puritan patriarchal guidance that Petruchio could offer. She also needed the sense of perspective that humour cast on empty posturing. Miller’s efforts to recover a sense of a Renaissance *mentalité* was particularly interesting here and struck a chord with Shakespeare’s portrayal of Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* and Sir Toby’s rejoinder to him: ‘Dost thou think because thou art virtuous,/there shall be no more cakes and ale?’ (2.3.114-5). However Russell Davies in the *Sunday Times* was not too sure of Cleese’s success: ‘He made sense of the part, the idea being that Kate finally sees the funny side of him. But was the funny side really there? Or was he a sermonising didactic oaf of impenetrable gawkins and rather fortunate charm?’<sup>47</sup> Petruchio’s gloomy household

only reinforced a sense of Puritan oppression. Malcolm Bradbury in the *Times Educational Supplement* remarked:

Translating Katherina to the vile hovel populated with lunatic servants in which he evidently passed his days, he made it clear that what he had permanently in mind for her was a world of manic gloom.<sup>48</sup>

Bradbury also commented interestingly that ‘Cleese’s comic gift is to indicate that sexuality is horror anyway, and that all true relations are with one’s betters or inferiors’<sup>49</sup> Miller’s production certainly created a sense of repressed sexuality in the Minola household. Petruchio’s eccentricity connected strongly with Baptista’s and the thought was there that Katherina might be escaping one repressive patriarch for another. There was a kind of unhealthy hysteria about the laughter in Miller’s production which differed from the openly loutish behaviour of Burton’s drunken Petruchio or even Fairbanks’s full-throated guffaws.

When Sarah Badel’s Katherina finally discovers a funny side to John Cleese’s Petruchio she enters the game with Vincentio in earnest but the effort is too much and she explodes into hysterical laughter. The *Guardian* described her ‘lashing feebly at Petruchio as if to say “Oh, no. Stop it. Don’t.”’<sup>50</sup> Amanda Harris exercised more control here suggesting that she had at last found a part she *could* play. Kirsty Milne in the *Sunday Telegraph* commented:

She seems not crushed but excited. There is a *frisson* between them as if they have discovered a game of role-playing which both find sexually stimulating.<sup>51</sup>

However the reviewer added, ‘But it is not at all obvious to the audience how the couple have arrived at this happier state of affairs’<sup>52</sup> While it was easier to trace the development of Sarah

Badel's path to mutuality it was, in the end, a circular one. Badel's Katherina was reintegrated into a Puritan household with a reactionary message of wifely domestic virtue for 1980s viewers.

The earlier iconographic images allowed for a certain metatheatricality that might expose the constructedness of subjectivity but the final pictorial grouping of domestic harmony emphasised the unbridgeable pastness of Renaissance domestic lives. The viewer was constructed to view Katherina's choices as circumscribed by a monolithic Puritan ideology which brooked no dissenting voices. The actions of the Widow and Bianca in refusing to submit to patriarchal authority were plainly in error and Katherina's final speech would work like a catechism to bring their minds to right reason in the eyes of God. The banquet and the play ended with a Puritan hymn described by Miller in an interview with Tim Hallinan:

We've taken one of the Psalms which talks about the orderliness and grace and beauty of the family. It's one of the Psalms that would have been sung in the household after a meal in a Puritan household, and it somehow reconciles all the conflicts of the previous two hours. All of these characters have been working at odds with one another, working against one another, trying to get their own ends. Now they are suddenly brought together in what the sixteenth century regarded as *communitas*, which is the bringing together, the unifying and harmonizing of all individual desires [...] This is expressed beautifully when they all jointly sing a part song, which in itself is an expression of bringing different voices together in one harmonious performance.<sup>53</sup>

In fact this ending seemed more in keeping with Katherina's final speech in *The Taming of A Shrew* which relies on a view of Divine Creation in which man and woman are helpmeets. In that play Kate speaks of 'The King of Kings the glorious God of heaven,/Who in six daies did frame his heavenly worke' and of woman's own special place in Creation:

As *Sara* to her husband, so should we,  
Obey them, love them, keepe, and nourish them,  
If they by any meanes doo want our helpes<sup>54</sup>

Miller's ending is in one sense Puritan orthodoxy but may also be viewed as evidencing a change in marital status within it. Sarah Badel seats herself at the table on Petruchio's level as she addresses the assembly and when she speaks the line 'my hand is ready' this is taken in a metaphorical sense. She does not reach down to touch his foot but places her hand on Petruchio's hand and smiles. That mutuality might include a recognition of each other's wishes is glimpsed here as they embrace and kiss. Nancy Banks-Smith in the *Guardian* read the ending a little more cynically, remarking:

Jonathan Miller, the director of the play and new producer of the Shakespeare series, is said to seek a sixteenth-century solution and see Petruchio as a Puritan. Hum. Sort of "He for God only. She for God in him" as Milton put it? Milton's wife left him.<sup>55</sup>

Graham Holderness commented:

Miller's academic historicism has delivered a view of the play coincident with that tradition of 'liberal' domestication which has reconstructed the *Shrew* as a fable of companionate relationship. [...]Without the metadramatic potentialities of the Sly-framework, any production of the *Shrew* is thrown

much more passively at the mercy of the director's artistic and political ideology.<sup>56</sup>

Holderness argued that Miller 'denied the play any purchase on the sexual politics of the present, on the grounds that a focus on those would obscure apprehension of the historical experience'<sup>57</sup> This discussion obviously begs the question of what is meant by 'the historical experience' and quite obviously Miller sees the play at a synchronic level, the Renaissance *mentalité* being fixed at one point in time. Miller resolves the tensions within the Puritan ideological conception of mutuality in the married couple. He invites the spectator to observe the Renaissance *locus* from a distanced perspective. The problematic issue of consent is translated as Kate's problem. Her 'neurosis' is the stumbling block to marital harmony. However, as I have argued, Katherina's silence during the espousal is the textual space where a contingent social practice is played out. This space is not only synchronic but it offers a diachronic dimension to the circulating religious controversy over definitions of a valid marriage.

This study of six plays in performance has also raised a question that all actors and directors must ask themselves: 'Just how important is it to stage the Induction?' In 1927 the *Birmingham Post* linked the omission of the Induction in the Stratford-upon-Avon Summer Festival to the restrictions imposed by the temporary venue: 'It is, indeed, a pity that jolly old Christopher Sly, the tinker, cannot be restored to the stage, but for his restoration we must wait for the new theatre, with its Elizabethan conveniences. It would be hard to impose it upon the stage of the Picture House where the company carries on so gallantly'<sup>58</sup> However, Tori Haring-Smith makes the point that the director Bridges-Adams staged his first *Shrew* on 21 April 1920, and 'only in that year and in his revival during 1933 did he include the

Induction' <sup>59</sup> Sam Taylor's film version in 1929 starring Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks made a token use of the Induction in the puppet show at the start. The *Punch and Judy* routine in a public square offered a clear message to husbands: women liked men who could be rough with them and tame them. Punch's initial pleading 'I love you' was mercilessly rejected and only when he wielded a stick and cried 'I'll tame you' did Judy capitulate and kiss him. As a message to 1929 moderns the film began by giving Judy or Pickford the whip hand and Fairbanks grasped the opportunity to perform the role of swashbuckling rough wooer that she appeared to want. His strong presence in the film and in Mary's view, his authoritative stance in matters of production problematises readings of the ending. Like Judy she has let go her stick or whip and embraces the man who has played her at her own game. Whether the metadramatic device worked to question or confirm cultural constructions of gender relations is a moot point. Fairbanks appears bruised but still holds the whip and Pickford who *appears* triumphant believed he had outwitted her in terms of the authority of the screen roles. With or without the *Punch and Judy* 'Induction' one could argue that metadramatic elements are implicit in the screen performances of star couples like Pickford and Fairbanks, and Taylor and Burton. Claims have been made for Zeffirelli's imaginative use of the Induction in the painted backdrops that accompany Lucentio and Tranio into the bustling world of Padua and in the use of a 'student rag' pointing up the roles of Katherina and Petruchio as Lady and Lord of Misrule. Such devices undoubtedly have metatheatrical potential. For example, a Bakhtinian reading of carnival suggests an exploration of social roles and a reversal of hierarchies. In practice it is hard to see how Taylor's Katherina could exert the power of carnivalesque when she was unceremoniously bundled into a chamber and locked in. Burton's mercenary Petruchio who

threw gold coins to his servants was hardly a subversive critic of the Renaissance marriage market. Taylor's sincere tribute to Burton in the final speech complicated their roles as Lord and Lady of Misrule since they were performing mutuality on and off-screen.

In what sense might the Induction connect with historical issues such as the question of consent in the espousal contract? Here I think Michael Bogdanov's use of the Induction was successful in linking unequal power relations to questions of consent and liberty. Parallels were drawn between the theatre usherette whose gender made her a target of abuse and Katherina's status in the wooing scene as object rather than subject. The men who ogled photographs of naked women drew on the Induction's reference to classical paintings to titillate Sly. The photographer in the wooing and wedding scenes also emphasised the turning of the subject into an object of desire. Jonathan Miller's iconographical depiction of the espousal in the mirror image had a similar effect, imaging Katherina as an object owned and displayed, raising her husband's status.

Of the six productions studied, the fullest use of the complete framing device was achieved in Bill Alexander's production in 1992. Lord Simon's Party was on stage throughout and Sly interrupted the play breaking the illusion of theatre. The Induction emphasised the contemporary world of the 'Sloanes' rather than that of the drunken working class Christopher Sly. All too easily it seems Sly forgot his working class origins and embraced the world of Thatcher's middle England but his social mobility was seen as distinctly undesirable. The comic potential in transforming identities was darkly translated into sadism. Lord Simon appeared to be making a homophobic response to his younger brother's sexuality in insisting that he dressed as Sly's 'Lady'. In the Epilogue the prompt-book directed that Rupert (Jack Waters) 'enters with Sly in his arms. He lays him down under the

pub sign, touches him tenderly, then hearing the pub door open, runs off' <sup>60</sup> The inference here was that Rupert identified with the victimised Sly, who like himself, had been practised upon and made to perform for the sadistic amusement of others. The Induction was not however successful in terms of modern-day sexual politics since Petruchio mirrored Lord Simon's behaviour in treating the Sloane women badly. Michael J. Collins noted in *Shakespeare Bulletin* that at the close of the play 'not everyone on the stage had been transformed. As Simon and Lady Sarah moved toward the exit centered at the back of the stage, he put his arm around her, but she slipped under it and went out to their right, alone, while he, with a shrug, went to the left'.<sup>61</sup> Amanda Harris's Kate could not really rise above the consequences of the metatheatrical reading which made Anton Lesser the actor-manager who would protect and liberate her on his terms. Within these constraints her performance could never truly be her own. Robert Smallwood commented on the impression made by Kate's final speech:

Amanda Harris spoke straightforwardly, simply, sincerely, stressing some of the adjectives - "true obedience," "honest will." It seemed to be a coherent statement of a way of ordering things - a coherent statement, but in a play from another age. Whether it was relevant to the persons who had been watching that play, or, indeed likely to be heeded by some of the characters who had been in it, was quite another question.<sup>62</sup>

## REFERENCES : CHAPTER 2

‘Forced/ To give my hand’ : The Question of Consent in *The Taming of the Shrew*

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1. Ann Jennalie Cook, *Making a Match: Courtship in Shakespeare and his Society* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), p.169.
2. Ibid., p.169.
3. Ibid., p.170. The question of whether ‘silence’ equals ‘consent’ is debatable. See M. Konrath, *The Poems of William Shoreham: AB. 1320 Vicar of Chart-Sutton*. Re-Edited From the Unique Manuscript in the British Museum (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. for the Early English Text Society, 1902) who notes at page 58 that ‘As to God the tacit consent of the parties to marry would suffice; but to the Church, it has to be declared in words. Dumb and deaf persons may express their consent by signs’ This was pointed out to me by Sue Niebrzydowski.
4. David Daniell, ‘The Good Marriage of Katherine and Petruchio’, *Shakespeare Survey 37* (1984), pp. 23-31, p. 28.
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10. Ibid., p. 94.
11. Ibid., pp.94-5.
12. Peter Meredith (ed.), *The Mary Play: From the N. Town Manuscript* (London and New York: Longman, 1987), p.60 (lines 868-70).
13. Cosgrave, p.95.
14. Martin Ingram, ‘Spousals Litigation in the English Ecclesiastical Courts c.1350-c.1640’ in R.B.Outhwaite (ed.), *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage*

(London: Europa Publications, 1981), pp. 35-37. Ingram refers to 'spousals'. Ann Jennalie Cook, *Making A Match* writes (p.154): 'after agreement was reached, the next stage was a formal contract, "which is also called espousing, affiancing, betrothing, or handfasting," "sponson" or "sponsalia" or simply "*Making themselves sure*". She cites Robert Cleaver, *A Godly Form of Householde Government* (1598), William Whately, *A Care-cloth, or a Treatise of the Cumbers and Troubles of Marriage* (1624); Henry Swinburne, *A Treatise of Spousals, or Matrimonial Contracts* (1686); Matthew Griffith, *Bethel, or A Forme for Families* (1633). Cook (p.170) refers to the betrothal in *The Taming of the Shrew* as an 'espousal'. I refer to 'espousal contract' to indicate the contractual basis of the betrothal.

15. Ingram, p.46.

16. Ibid., p.46.

17. Susan Bassnett, *Shakespeare The Elizabethan Plays* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1993), pp.78-9 quotes Louis B. Wright, *Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (London: Methuen, 1958).

18. Ibid., p. 79.

19. Cosgrave, p.101.

20. Ibid., p.102.

21. Ibid., p. 103.

22. Houlbrooke, p.88.

23. Ibid., p.86.

24. Ingram, pp.57-8.

25. Cosgrave, p.103.

26. Houlbrooke, p.86.

27. Ingram, pp. 47-8.

28. Houlbrooke, p.86.

29. Ingram, p.49.

30. Houlbrooke, p.119.

31. Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London, 1977), p.137.

32. Jan Harold Brunvand, *The Taming of The Shrew: A Comparative Study of Oral and Literary Versions* (New York and London: Garland, 1991), refers to thirty-five literary versions and three hundred and eighty-three oral versions of various forms of the 'shrew-taming' story from all over the world. Popular examples of the 'shrew' character are, for example, Noah's wife in the Corpus Christi cycle plays and Chaucer's literary character the Wife of Bath.

33. Brunvand argues that Shakespeare may have encountered various oral versions. Brunvand lists motifs of punishment and 'taming devices' which include 'animal hide put on wife's back and beaten', 'sandals leap out of bag to beat lazy wife' and 'Wife forced to get on a table where she is cut, salted and peppered'. (pp.98-99)

34. Valerie Wayne, 'Refashioning the Shrew', *Shakespeare Studies XLVII* (1985), pp.159-187, p. 161.

35. The source of the subplot is George Gascoigne's *Supposes* (1566). Gascoigne translated an Italian comedy, Ariosto's *Il Suppositi*. H.J.Oliver, the Oxford Shakespeare editor quotes (p.45) from Gascoigne's 'Prologue or Argument': ' "But understand, this our Suppose is nothing else but a mystaking or imagination of one thing for another". The theme of 'supposing' may be carried out right to the very end in Shakespeare's play when Katherine is called upon to perform her speech.

36. Michael West, 'The Folk Background of Petruchio's Wooing Dance: Male Supremacy in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Shakespeare Studies VII* (1974), pp. 65-73, sees the play in terms of 'sexual rites': 'One may reasonably assume that Petruchio and Kate look forward to a flexible marriage in which both partners are sufficiently secure about their sexual roles to have mastered the "delightful grace" of not being confined to them'. (p.72) Ruth Nevo, *Comic Transformations in Shakespeare* (London: Methuen, 1980) sees Petruchio as 'stage-manager and chief actor, master of homeopathy' (p.47) whose 'remedy is an appeal to Kate's intelligence' (p.49) in a psychotherapeutic process. Marianne L. Novy in 'Patriarchy and Play in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *ELR*, 9, 2 (Spring 1979), 264-280, is less convinced by those critics who see Petruchio attempting to 'teach Kate to play' in a game of 'playful cooperation'. (264) She relates 'play' to patriarchal power. David Daniell (see note 4 above) argues: 'the direction of the play, for Katherine and Petruchio is towards marriage as a rich, shared sanity'. (p.29) Peter Saccio, 'Shrewd and Kindly Farce', *Shakespeare Survey 37* (1984), pp.33-39, argues: 'the feminist concern with social roles has tended to treat the play as case history' whereas Kate learns to become 'an expert farceur' (p.37), learning 'verbal playfulness' from her husband. (p.39) Shirley Nelson Garner, 'The Taming of the Shrew Inside or Outside of the Joke' in "*Bad*" *Shakespeare: Revaluations of the Shakespeare Canon*, edited by Maurice Charney (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1988), pp. 105- 119, argues, 'no matter how you read the ending, no matter how you define the genre of the play, it is still a "bad" play' (p.106) Leah Marcus, 'The Shakespearean Editor as Shrew-Tamer', *ELR*, 22, 2 (Spring 1992), pp.177-200, comments on the use of the Christopher Sly ending to 'soften the brutality of the taming scenes' returning the play to the status of a dream, 'the wish fulfillment fantasy of a habitual drunkard' (p.178)

**1. What Counts as Evidence? : A Dialogic Reading of *platea* in W. Bridges-Adams's Production at the Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon (1927-1929) together with Sam Taylor's Film, 1929**

1. Tori Haring-Smith, *From Farce to Metadrama: A Stage History of The Taming of the Shrew, 1594-1983* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), p. 73. David Garrick first staged his three-act farce *Catherine and Petruchio* at Drury Lane on 18 March 1754. Haring-Smith writes (p.15): 'Except for the three-night run of an operatic *Shrew*, this adaptation was the sole version of Shakespeare's *Shrew* on the English and American stages from 1754-1844.'

2. Haring-Smith, p.73.

3. Michael D. Bristol, 'How Good Does Evidence Have To Be?' in *Textual and Theatrical Shakespeare: Questions of Evidence*, ed. by Edward Pechter (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), pp.22-43 (p.34).

4. Bristol, p.34.

5. Bristol, p.34.

6. Bristol p.23.

7. Bristol p.23.

8. Tony Bennett, 'Outside literature: Texts in history' in Keith Jenkins (ed.), *The Postmodern History Reader* (London and New York:Routledge, 1997), pp.219-230, pp.222-3.

9. While the contextual approach of performance criticism appears to hold out the possibility of a more 'exact science' of reading, James C. Bulman in *Shakespeare, Theory and Performance* (pp.5-6) reminds us: 'The material conditions of performance, the dynamics of audience response, the possibility of error latent in live performance, and above all the physical presence of the actors themselves, all contribute to making performance criticism more tentative -and more precarious- than other forms of criticism.'

10. Ann Thompson (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew* (New Cambridge Shakespeare, Cambridge, 1984), p.22.

11. Russell Jackson, 'Shakespeare's Comedies on Film', in *Shakespeare and the Moving Image*, ed. by Anthony Davies and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.99-120 (p.112).

12. Jackson, p.112.

13. Tori Haring-Smith, *From Farce to Metadrama : A Stage history of The Taming of the Shrew, 1594-1983* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), p.126.

14. Judith Mayne, *Cinema and Spectatorship* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p.100.
15. Barbara Hodgdon, 'Katherina Bound; or, Play(K)ating the Strictures of Everyday Life', *PMLA*, 107, 3 (May, 1992), pp. 538-553 (p.544)
16. 'Shakespeare Festival: *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Stage* , 12 July 1928.
17. 'Stratford Festival : Fine Opening with "The Taming of the Shrew"', *Birmingham Mail* , 19 April 1927.
18. 'Shakespeare Festival: The Stratford Festival', *Stage* , 21 April 1927.
19. *Stage* , 12 July 1928.
20. 'The Birthday Festival: "The Taming of the Shrew"', *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 10 May 1929.
21. 'Stratford Festival Company', *Stage* , 13 September 1928.
22. 'The Summer Festival: Further thoughts on the Tour', *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* , 14 September 1928.
23. 'The Festival Company Abroad: Interesting Letters', *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* , 1 February 1929.
24. 'Stratford Theatre Company's Tour: Big Audiences in Canada and United States', *Birmingham Post* , 26 March 1929.
25. Ibid.
26. Scott Eyman, *Mary Pickford* (London:Robson, 1990), p.192.
27. R.Windeler, *Sweetheart: The Story of Mary Pickford* (London and New York: W.H.Allen, 1973), p.161.
28. 'Shakespeare to go on the "Talkies": Mary Pickford as the Shrew', *Manchester Guardian*, 4 May 1929.
29. 'First Shakespeare Talkie', *Liverpool Daily Courier*, 19 July 1929.
30. 'Film Stars' Visit', *Daily Mirror*, 10 September 1929.
31. "'Mary" Talks of The "Shrew"', *Daily Herald*, 24 October 1929.  
Mary Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow* Foreword by Cecil B. de Mille ( London, Melbourne and Toronto: William Heinemann, 1956), p.311.

32. "'The Taming of the Shrew'", *Times*, 9 November 1929.
33. Haring-Smith, p.57.
34. Haring-Smith, p.62.
35. Eyman, pp.192-3.
36. *Ibid.*, p.193.
37. 'Shakespeare as Talk Film: Mary Pickford's Katharine', *Morning Post*, 15 November 1929.
38. *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 13 July 1928.
39. Haring-Smith, p.124.
40. Bristol, p.24.
41. Bristol, p.43.
42. Bristol, pp.32-34. Bristol considers Stephen Greenblatt's claim in 'Shakespeare and the Exorcists' that Shakespeare was reading Samuel Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* as he was writing *King Lear* (Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*,94).
43. Bristol, p. 33.
44. Barbara Hodgdon, p. 543.
45. *Ibid.*, p.543.
46. Bristol, p. 33.
47. *Sunday Times*, 19 February 1967.
48. Ann Leslie, 'Peter Hall started me on the trail', *Daily Express*, 24 November 1965.
49. Graham Holderness, *Shakespeare in Performance: The Taming of the Shrew* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 87.
50. 'Fine Opening with "The Taming of the Shrew"', *Birmingham Mail*, 19 April 1927.
51. 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre · Opening of the Spring Festival: "The Taming of the Shrew"', *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 22 April 1927.

52. ‘ “The Taming of the Shrew”’, *Birmingham Mail*, 7 July 1928.
53. ‘The Festival Company in Chicago’, *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 1 March 1929.
54. Bladon Peake, ‘The Summer Festival: The “Taming of the Shrew”’, *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 13 July 1928.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. ‘Woman’s Big Victory’, *Daily Herald*, 6 January 1928; ‘A Woman Wins’, *North Eastern Daily Gazette*, 6 January 1928; ‘The Shakespeare Memorial: Winning Theatre Design: Englishwoman’s Success’, *Times*, 6 January 1928; ‘Woman Architect’s Triumph’, *Morning Post*, 6 January 1928.
58. “1928 The Year of Women”, *Nation*, 22 December 1928.
59. *Star*, 24 December 1928.
60. *Bolton Evening News*, 6 January 1928.
61. David Garrick, *Catherine and Petruchio: A Comedy, In Three Acts. As it is perform’d at the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane. Alter’d from Shakespear’s Taming of the Shrew*, London 1756. A facsimile published by Cornmarket Press. From the copy in the Birmingham Shakespeare Library (London 1969), p.17.
62. ‘Doug and Mary in Shakespearean Farce: The Taming of Petruchio’, *Daily News*, 15 November 1929.
63. Thompson, p.18.
64. *Vogue*, 27 November 1929.
65. Richard Findlater, *Banned! : A Review of Theatrical Censorship in Britain* (London and Letchworth: MacGibbon and Kee, 1967), p.17. Virginia Crocheron Gildersleeve, *Government Regulation of the Elizabethan Drama* (1908; New York: Burt Franklin, 1961) writes at page 90: ‘the government of Elizabeth disapproved of any presentation upon the stage of “matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the common weale”’ See also John Russell Stephens, *The Censorship of English Drama 1824-1901* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) at p.100 who argues that ‘a pattern of religious censorship’ extended to ‘the deletion of all passages and phrases quoted directly from the Scriptures or even implying any such association’
66. Windeler, p. 161.

67. Windeler, p.161.

68. 'The Pictures: "The Taming of the Shrew"', *Observer*, 17 November 1929.

69. Windeler, p.162.

70. Windeler, p.162.

71. *Stage*, 21 November 29.

**2. 'And Will You, Nill You, I Will Marry You' : Anti-Romantic Readings in Franco Zeffirelli's Film *The Taming of the Shrew* (1966) and Michael Bogdanov's Royal Shakespeare Company Production at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1978**

1. *Stratford Herald*, 5 May 1978.
2. Ibid.
3. Haring-Smith, p.155.
4. Ibid., p.161.
5. Franco Zeffirelli, *Zeffirelli: The Autobiography of Franco Zeffirelli* (London: George Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1986), p.216.
6. Patrick Gibbs, *Sunday Telegraph*, 28 February 1967.
7. Ibid.
8. Penelope Houston, '*The Taming of the Shrew*', *Spectator*, 10 March 1967.
9. Ibid.
10. Holderness, *Shakespeare in Performance: The Taming of the Shrew*, p,89.
11. Ibid., p.94. See also Peter Thomson, 'Shakespeare and the Public Purse' in *Shakespeare An Illustrated Stage History* edited by Jonathan Bate and Russell Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) who writes at page 164 that Marowitz saw 'no winners' in *The Taming of the Shrew*: 'The final image of *The Shrew* is of a catatonic Kate framed by the modern couple smiling out to invisible photographers for a wedding picture'
12. David Robinson, *Financial Times*, 3 March 1967; 'Wiving It', *New Statesman*, 12 May 1978.
13. *Listener*, 11 May 1978.
14. Jack J.Jorgens, *Shakespeare on Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), p.72.
- 15, Russell Braddon, 'The Zeffirelling of the Shrew', *Sunday Times Weekly Review*, 12 August 1966.
16. *Financial Times*, 3 March 1967.
17. David White, 'Arts in Society: Stratford Shrine', *New Society*, 11 May 1978.
18. Gareth Lloyd Evans, 'The Shaming of the True', *Stratford Herald*, 12 May 1978.

19. Ibid.
20. Jane Ellison, 'A Win for Kate', *Evening Standard*, 5 May 1978.
21. Alexander Walker, 'Film : *The Taming of the Shrew*', 2 March 1967.
22. Prompt-book, 1978, Royal Shakespeare Theatre.
23. Ibid.
24. Hodgdon, p.545.
25. Ibid., p.545.
26. Holderness, p.69.
27. *Financial Times*, 3 March 1967.
28. Ibid.
29. Godfrey Blakeley, 'The Taming of Elizabeth Taylor', *Weekend Telegraph*, 15 July 1966.
30. *Evening Standard*, 2 March 1967.
31. Michel Foucault writes in 'The Birth of the Asylum' from *Madness and Civilization* of the case of a girl of seventeen who is subjected to 'a regime of strict authority' and 'tamed' after showing disorderly behaviour and bitterness towards her parents. Foucault shows how institutional practices sanctioned by authority and law bring the subject into submission. See Paul Rabinov (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 161.
32. Prompt-book 1978.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. *New Statesman*, 12 May 1978.
37. *Evening Standard*, 5 May 1978.
38. *Weekend Telegraph*, 15 July 1966.
39. Edmund Wilson, 'Britannia Still Rules Shakespeare', *The Wall Street Journal*, 23 June 1978.

40. Desmond Pratt, 'Theatres: The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon. The Royal Shakespeare Company in "The Taming of the Shrew"', *Yorkshire Post*, 6 May 1978.
41. W.T.S., 'A Riot of Fun', *Gloucester Citizen*, 6 May 1978.
42. Haring-Smith, p.119.
43. *Gloucester Citizen*, 6 May 1978.
44. *Evening Standard*, 5 May 1978.
45. *New Statesman*, 12 May 1978.
46. *Yorkshire Post*, 6 May 1978.
47. Sally Aire, 'The Taming of the Shrew', *Plays and Players*, July 1978.
48. Prompt-book 1978.
49. Michael Billington, 'A Spluttering Firework', *Guardian*, 5 May 1978.
50. John Barber, 'Original Shakespeare provokes scenes', *Daily Telegraph*, 6 May 1978.
51. Robert Cushman, 'Disorderly Conduct', *Observer*, 7 May 1978.
52. *New Statesman*, 12 May 1978.
53. Penny Gay, *As She Likes It: Shakespeare's Unruly Women* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp.107-8.
54. *Ibid.*, p.108
55. Gay, p.108.
56. Gay, p.109.
57. Carol Rutter, *Clamorous Voices: Shakespeare's Women Today*. Carol Rutter with Sinead Cusack, Paola Dionisotti, Fiona Shaw, Juliet Stevenson and Harriet Walter. Edited by Faith Evans (London: The Women's Press, 1988), p.23.
58. *Clamorous Voices*, p.23.
59. *Weekend Telegraph*, 15 July 1966.
60. *Shakespeare and the Moving Image*, p.115.

61. Donald Spoto, 'Bottles and Battles' in 'The Elizabeth Taylor Story: Part 3 Drugs, Booze and Burton', *Guardian*, 14 February 1995. Extracts from Spoto's biography, *Elizabeth: Hostage to Fame*.

62. Ibid.

63. Zeffirelli, p.201.

64. Hodgdon, p. 546.

65. *Financial Times*, 3 March 1967; Norah Lewis, 'New Style has too many Gimmicks', *Birmingham Evening Mail*, 5 May 1978.

**3. Snarling Kates and Suffering Petruchios : Coaxing Consent in Jonathan Miller's BBC Time/Life production (1980) and Bill Alexander's Royal Shakespeare Company Production at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1992**

1. Ruth Nevo, *Comic Transformations in Shakespeare* (London and New York: Methuen, 1980), p.47.
2. Chris Dunkley, "The Taming of the Shrew", *Financial Times*, 24 October 1980.  
Robert Hewison, "Shrew askew", *Sunday Times*, 5 April 1992.
3. *Financial Times*, 24 October 1980.  
Irving Wardle, 'Sex-War Turns to Class Vengeance', *Independent on Sunday*, 5 April 1992.
4. Benedict Nightingale, 'Almost sunk by a subplot', *Times*, 3 April 1992.
5. *Financial Times*, 24 October 1980.
6. Ibid.
7. Kirsty Milne, 'The Termagant and the Lion Tamer', *Sunday Telegraph*, 5 April 1992.
8. Paul Lapworth, 'Gentlemen and Players', *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 10 April 1992.
9. Susan Willis, *The BBC Shakespeare Plays: Making the Televised Canon* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina, 1991), p.109.
10. Stanley Wells, 'A prosaic transformation', *Times Literary Supplement*, 31 October 1980.
11. *TLS*, 31.10.80.
12. Tim Hallinan, 'Interview: Jonathan Miller on The Shakespeare Plays', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 32, 2 (1981), 134-145, p.134.
13. Hallinan, p.135.
14. *The BBC Shakespeare Plays*, pp.113-4.
15. Ibid., p.114.
16. Ibid., p.114.
17. Graham Holderness, *Shakespeare in Performance: The Taming of the Shrew* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 101.
18. *Shakespeare in Performance*, p. 101.

19. Ibid., p.98.

20. *The BBC Shakespeare Plays*, p.111.

21. E.H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1950 , Fourteenth edition (enlarged and reset) 1984), p.180. Jonathan Miller has included the *Arnolfini Portrait* in The 1998 Esso Exhibition at the National Gallery entitled 'Mirror Image: Jonathan Miller on Reflection' (16 September - 13 December 1998) where the exhibition plaque beside the painting reads: 'It has been suggested that it represents a marriage ceremony'

22. I note the point made by Graham Holderness who writes in *Shakespeare in Performance* (p.104): 'Visual allusions to the Great Masters do not in any sense rupture the illusions of naturalism, but rather operate to confirm the illusory 'reality' of this familiar Shakespearean world; while simultaneously, for the cultivated elite capable of recognising such allusions, stamping on the production a hallmark of high culture.' However I am thinking of Lisa Jardine's analysis of the Arnolfini painting in *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* ( London: Macmillan,1996), pp.13-14. She describes the painting as 'packed with details of acquisitiveness in fifteenth century Bruges. It invites the viewer's eye to dwell on the oriental rug, the settle and high-backed chair with their carved pommels, and the red-canopied bed, whose hangings echo the cloth and cushions on the chairs [...] This is not a record of a pair of individuals; it is a celebration of ownership [...] such paintings have been called 'realistic portraiture', but surely this misses the point. Only the face of the male subject is (possibly) real -really a portrait. The woman's figure is a perfect stereotype, virtually identical to other female figures in other paintings'

23. Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey (eds.), *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called The Taming of A Shrew* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992). The editors say in their 'General Introduction' (p.1) : 'This series puts into circulation single annotated editions of early modern play-texts whose literary and theatrical histories have been overshadowed by editorial practices dominant since the eighteenth century.'

24. *Times*, 3 April 1992.

Charles Spencer, 'Shakespeare and the Hooray Henries' *Daily Telegraph*, 3 April 1992.

Michael Coveney, 'Roaring girl in a ripping yarn', *Observer*, 5 April 1992.

Jane Edwardes, 'The Taming of the Shrew', *Time Out*, 8 April 1992.

25. Royal Shakespeare Company Prompt-book, *The Taming of the Shrew* 1992.

26. Prompt-book.

27. A very useful chapter is 'Marxist/Socialist Feminism:Reconstructing Male Radicalism' in Imelda Whelehan, *Modern Feminist Thought: From the Second Wave to 'Post-Feminism'* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995).

28. Prompt-book.

29. Ibid.
30. Ibid. The added line in the RSC prompt-book is from *The Taming of A Shrew*, Slie : I say wele have no sending to prison ( Holderness and Loughrey (eds.), p.80.
31. Prompt-book.
32. *Independent-on-Sunday*, 5 April 1992.
33. *Times*, 3 April 1992.
34. Michael Billington, 'The Shock of the Shrew', *Guardian*, 3 April 1992.
35. *Independent-on-Sunday*, 5 April 1992.
36. Theatre programme: *The Taming of the Shrew*, 1992.
37. *Sunday Times*, 5 April 1992.
38. Garry O'Connor, 'The Taming of the Shrew', *Plays and Players*, May 1992, p.47.
39. *Daily Telegraph*, 3 April 1992.
40. *TLS*, 31 October 1980.
41. Stanley Wells, 'Commentary: Television Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 33, 3 (1982), pp.261-277, p.276.
42. Paul Taylor, 'The Toffs and the Toughs', *Independent*, 3 April 1992.
43. *Independent*. 3 April 1992.
44. Oliver Reynolds, 'Kiss of Life', *TLS*, 10 April 1992.
45. John Naughton, *Observer*, 26 October 1980.
46. Ibid.
47. Russell Davies, *Sunday Times*, 28 October 1980.
48. Malcolm Bradbury, *TES*, 31 October 1980.
49. Ibid.
50. Nancy Banks-Smith, 'Say Cleese', *Guardian*, 24 October 1980.

51. *Sunday Telegraph*, 5 April 1992.

52. Ibid.

53. Hallinan, pp.140-1. John Wilders, *The BBC TV Shakespeare: The Taming of the Shrew* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1980) quotes Miller (p.26) : ‘ I did a production of *The Shrew* a long time ago at Chichester’ he explained to me, ‘and there we used a rather serious hymn about marriage by Purcell. I wanted something comparable. The use of a psalm, the use of holy music as a celebratory theme, was very important to me.’

54. *The Taming of A Shrew*, p.87.

55. *Guardian*, 24 October 1980.

56. *Shakespeare in Performance*, p.116.

57. Ibid., p.116.

58. *Birmingham Post*, 17 August 1927.

59. Tori Haring-Smith, p. 105.

60. RSC Prompt-book 1992.

61. Michael J. Collins, ‘*The Taming of The Shrew*’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 11, 2 (1993), pp.22-23, p. 23.

62. Robert Smallwood, ‘Shakespeare Performed: Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1992’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 44, 1-4 (1993), pp. 343-362, p. 346.

### CHAPTER 3

#### **'IF IT BE PROVED AGAINST AN ALIEN' : THE LINKING OF SHYLOCK AND THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO IN *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE***

It is a commonplace that the dramatic structure of *The Merchant of Venice* moves between two worlds, Venice and Belmont. It has also been noted that mercantilist values attach not only to the famous Mediterranean trading city but to Portia's world where suitors pursue the wealth and beauty of a rich heiress. Sigurd Burckhardt argues that the play is about 'circularity and circulation' with the 'two separate and mostly discontinuous realms' of Venice and Belmont working through one another.<sup>1</sup> Portia's crucial role is signalled when news of Antonio's fate reaches Belmont and she takes the initiative, hastening away to Venice in the guise of a young lawyer, Balthasar. Thus 'the bond makes possible the transfer of the action to Belmont, which then *re-acts* upon Venice'<sup>2</sup>

The Prince of Morocco seems to belong only to the fairy tale plot of the three caskets but Renaissance spectators may have leapt to an altogether different view. The first reference to Morocco's expected arrival appears just ten lines before Shylock's first entrance. Portia makes her uncomfortable reference to 'the complexion of a devil' (1.2.127). Hard upon Shylock's exit, after the 'merry bond' has been agreed, the stage direction based largely on the first quarto, is 'Enter [the Prince of] Morocco, a tawny Moor all in white'; 'all in white' suggests the ceremonial colour in Islam.<sup>3</sup> Shakespeare's playgoers may have made a very old connection going back to the time of the First Crusade: 'the linking of Muslims and Jews as enemies of the church and the faith'<sup>4</sup> Bernard Lewis writes: 'in western Europe, Jews and

Moors and, in eastern Europe, Jews and Turks were commonly named together in polemic, in exhortation, and even in regulations, local, royal, and papal, as the enemies of Christendom'.<sup>5</sup> Allan Harris Cutler and Helen Elmquist Cutler argue that the medieval roots of anti-semitism can be traced to 'the deep-seated Christian apprehension that the Jew, the internal Semitic alien, was working hand in hand with the Muslim, the external Semitic enemy, to bring about the eventual destruction of Indo-European Christendom.'<sup>6</sup> Bernard Lewis argues that while Muslims presented a military threat, Islam was not perceived as a strong religious threat.<sup>7</sup> However, Jews posed a challenge to Christianity: 'Being pre-Christian and not post-Christian, [Judaism] could not be dismissed as heresy or an aberration'<sup>8</sup>

Of the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492, 'by far the most important group were those who went to the Islamic lands, and more particularly , to the vast realms of the Ottoman Empire, in Europe, in Asia, and later also in Africa'<sup>9</sup> The Jews were welcomed in Islamic countries and were economically useful settlers in the new dominions of an expanding empire'<sup>10</sup> The Jews also benefited from the practice of Muslim jurists who 'often took the view that a forced conversion was not valid', thus allowing those Jews who had accepted Christian baptism in Spain and Portugal, to revert to Judaism.<sup>11</sup>

Cutler and Cutler cite Joshua Trachtenberg's *The Devil and the Jews* which explores the association of Jew with Muslim in early modern Europe, referring to several dramas of the period. These include Robert Wilson's *Three Ladies of London* (1584) in which a Jew 'venerates the Prophet Muhammad [sic]', and Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* where 'the Jewish archvillain Barabas is aided by his Turkish slave Ithamore'<sup>12</sup> Barabas plans to defeat his internal enemies by working with the Turks, the external enemies, though his duplicity finally ensnares him. Trachtenberg argues, 'When the Turks moved north against

the [Holy Roman] Empire in the sixteenth century, everywhere the cry arose spontaneously that the Jews were in league with them, serving as spies and in general as what we would call today “*fifth columnists*”.<sup>13</sup>

Margaret Hotine considers the Earl of Essex’s strenuous attempts in 1594 to find evidence that would incriminate Queen Elizabeth’s Portuguese-Jewish physician Roderigo Lopez of spying for the King of Spain. Hotine argues that the anti-semitism displayed at Lopez’s trial, the postponement of his execution, and the execution itself are ‘noteworthy’ (in the sense of exceptional) since ‘Jews were tolerated in late Elizabethan London’<sup>14</sup> Hotine cites an example given by C.J.Sisson ‘of a practising Jew who received a compassionate hearing in the courts when sued by a Christian, only two years later, in 1596.’<sup>15</sup> She argues there were few Jews in England and they did not practice usury; Thomas Wilson noted in *A Discourse Upon Usury* that the English moneylenders were ‘worse than Jewes’<sup>16</sup> Arguably the cause of the anti-semitism occasioned by the Lopez case was less to do with money lending and more to do with the allegation of spying and the representation of the Jew as the internal alien working with an external enemy (in this instance, the Catholic King of Spain).

Research by Richard H. Popkin reveals the presence of an actual Jewish merchant from Venice in England from 1596-1600 and establishes a link with the Sultan of Morocco.<sup>17</sup> The Jewish merchant was improperly taken as hostage in the Earl of Essex’s raid on Cadiz. Alonso Nunez de Herrera (Abraham Cohen de Herrera), born in Florence, was an aristocrat and a distinguished scholar. He became an agent for the Sultan of Morocco and was in Cadiz at the end of June 1596 on the sultan’s business. Popkin tells how Herrera wrote to Essex and to the Sultan of Morocco and was eventually released after Queen Elizabeth’s reply indicated that a mistake had been made.<sup>18</sup> Popkin’s research points to Herrera’s concern to

establish his credentials as a merchant on a trading mission for the Sultan of Morocco. Such a mission has particular significance in the sixteenth century since the Reformation enabled English merchants to defy the papal edict banning the export of munitions and foodstuffs from Christendom to the Islamic territories.<sup>19</sup> Jews and Muslims were represented as a threat to European Christendom on the grounds of faith and military expansion but such reservations were contradicted by sixteenth-century commercial practice.

*The Merchant of Venice* negotiates definitions of 'friendly' and 'unfriendly' aliens revealing the contradictory subject status of the alien in law through the eyes of Western European trading nations in the period the play was written. Shylock is defined in Act 4 as the 'internal Semitic alien' whose rights in law have been provisional. Portia tells him:

It is enacted in the laws of Venice,  
 If it be proved against an alien  
 That by direct or indirect attempts  
 He seek the life of any citizen,  
 The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive  
 Shall seize one half his goods; the other half  
 Comes to the privy coffer of the state,  
 And the offender's life lies in the mercy  
 Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice  
 (4.1.344-352)

In English law 'aliens' were 'generally those born outside the realm', though children born in England to foreign parents were not aliens.<sup>20</sup> Through Portia's speech, the play defines Shylock as an alien but possibly his daughter Jessica is not, and of course Jessica will inherit

her father's wealth. In early common law aliens had 'virtually no enforceable rights at all' but as J.H. Baker describes:

England, however, was a trading nation, and it was commercially necessary to extend protection to aliens. This protection was originally specific to individuals, and conferred by royal letters of safe conduct. The recipient of such a document was an 'alien friend' (alien amy), and the common law increasingly gave rights to these friendly aliens, as opposed to alien enemies.<sup>21</sup>

In the trial scene, the Duke seems anxious to identify Shylock as an 'alien friend'. The Duke needs Shylock to escape the ideological construction of 'stubborn Turks and Tartars' (4.1.31). Halio notes that 'Turks were classed with Jews, Infidels and Heretics'<sup>22</sup> The Duke urges Shylock to show that he merits a different type of legal treatment because the bouyancy of Venetian trading practice depended on the Jewish moneylenders' abilities to provide cheap credit. Indeed, Walter Cohen argues that, 'the Jews of Venice [...]contributed to the early development of capitalism not as usurers but as merchants involved in an international, trans-European economic network'<sup>23</sup> As Cohen argues, 'to the English, and particularly to Londoners, Venice represented a more advanced stage of the commercial development they themselves were experiencing'<sup>24</sup> English playgoers in the late 1500s (Halio gives a date of 1596-7 for *The Merchant of Venice*) may have struggled with the unpalatable fact that 'merchants were the leading usurers'<sup>25</sup> Stephen Greenblatt makes a similar point with reference to Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*:

Marlowe quickly suggests that the Jew is not the exception to but rather the true representative of his society. [...] Barabas is not primarily a usurer, set off

by his hated occupation from the rest of the community, but a great merchant, sending his argosies round the world.<sup>26</sup>

Shylock exercises the privileges of an alien merchant who can bring personal actions by pursuing the forfeit of the bond through the courts. Shylock warns 'If you deny it, let the danger light/ Upon your charter and your city's freedom' (4.1.37-8). J.H. Baker notes that between 1450-1550 common-law courts allowed friendly aliens to bring personal actions and to own personal property (including the lease of a dwelling house) but an alien could not own real property'<sup>27</sup> James Shapiro argues that despite the small numerical presence of aliens, 'roughly four or five per cent of London's population in the late sixteenth century', anxieties about their presence contributed to exaggerated reports of their numbers.<sup>28</sup> This prompted civic authorities to compile 'a census of aliens residing within London's walls'<sup>29</sup> Shapiro suggests that *The Merchant of Venice* acted as 'a cultural safety valve', deflecting 'anti-alien sentiment into anti-Jewish feeling'<sup>30</sup>

The Prince of Morocco shares Shylock's situation to the extent that he is *invited* to seek friendly alien status; he may take part in the 'lottery' devised by Portia's father and should he win, may marry Portia. Dreams of owning Belmont tease the alien wooer but legal ownership of such a property would be an unlikely outcome, making the invitation somewhat spurious. In the same way Shylock's confidence in his friendly alien status, 'I stand for judgement', proves to be a mistake. Gratiano is only too pleased to emphasise the consequences of pursuing an action at law: 'thy wealth being forfeit to the state, /Thou has not left the value of a cord;/Therefore thou must be hanged at the state's charge' (4.1.361-363). The invitation to stay as a friendly alien in Venice (England) is rescinded and in fact expulsion is the unspoken threat beneath the coerced conversion to Christianity.

Clearly, however, Shylock does not *act* like a victim in the play; his ability to preserve his internal friendly alien status through his economic activity is a mark of his success measured in the context of his own time. Shylock's determination in plying the Duke 'at morning and at night' (3.2. 275-281), his insistence on his bond according to law, and finally, the attention the case receives, 'Twenty merchants, / The Duke himself, and the magnificoes/ Of greatest port have all persuaded with him' (3.2. 277-279), all emphasise the seriousness with which the matter is viewed. Antonio recognises this:

The Duke cannot deny the course of law,  
 For the commodity that strangers have  
 With us in Venice, if it be denied,  
 Will much impeach the justice of the state,  
 Since that the trade and profit of the city  
 Consisteth of all nations.

(3.3. 26-31)

The State of Venice grants permission for the action to be pursued since, as Portia tells Shylock : 'Of a strange nature is the suit you follow, / Yet in such rule that the Venetian law/ Cannot impugn you as you do proceed' (4.1.174-6) In the same way, Portia must grant Morocco the right to 'proceed' in the trial of the caskets, despite her private fears that 'the lott'ry of my destiny/ Bars me the right of voluntary choosing' (2.1.15-16).

In the Venetian court Portia (Balthasar) begins by granting Shylock autonomy to pursue the case, casting herself as a servant of the law. Then, almost immediately, she overturns their respective positions, casting herself as the divine voice of a merciful God reminding the sinner of his Christian duty to forgive his fellow man. Mercy is 'an attribute to

God himself' and only those who seek it 'should see salvation' (4.1.192,196). Similarly, at Belmont, the trial of the caskets begins by granting Morocco autonomy to pursue his fortune with the other wooers. Portia acts as a servant to her father's will, telling Morocco that notwithstanding the rules of the lottery, 'Yourself, renowned Prince, then stood as fair/As any come I have looked on yet/For my affection' (2.1.20-22). In practice, their respective positions are reversed. Morocco appears at Belmont as 'the spectacle of the homage-paying stranger' familiar from stories of the black Magus and the legend of the Queen of Sheba's arrival at Solomon's court.<sup>31</sup> Ania Loomba argues that 'the most common form of representation of outsiders was to show them paying homage to European royalty' and she gives the example of entertainments for Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle in 1575 in which 'it was arranged that a *Hombre Salvagio* or wild man should testify to the queen's 'glorie'<sup>32</sup> Morocco's paean to Portia corresponds with the panegyric familiar from literary allusions to Queen Elizabeth, whose hand in marriage was sought in vain by admirers: 'Kinges and Kinges peeres who haue soughte farre and nye/ But all in vayne to bee her paramoures'<sup>33</sup> Morocco pays homage to Belmont's mythologised and canonised 'queen':

All the world desires her:

From the four corners of the earth they come  
To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint.  
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds  
Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now  
For princes to come view fair Portia

(2.7. 38-43)

Jack D'Amico comments on the way in which the lottery constructs a view of what is 'foreign' from the safety of what is familiar:

Portia's father creates a situation that curbs his daughter's freedom, yet allows the luxury of experience without its dangers. Since it appears that the suitors are not apprised of the test until after they have arrived, Portia has a chance to observe a number of foreigners from the safety of Belmont.<sup>34</sup>

Morocco's first lines emphasise difference, 'Mislike me not for my complexion' (2.1.1.); the allusion to 'burnished sun' offers a vaguely topographical reference which is also a trope for heat and lust. Ania Loomba argues that 'Renaissance writings on Islam emphasise three things - that it is 'cruel and bloody'; that it is 'false' because its prophet Mohammed was an imposter; and that it is sensual and decadent'<sup>35</sup> Morocco fulfils these expectations: his personal courage in the field of battle figures the Orientalist account of Islamic military might, posing a threat to Christendom, 'By this scimitar/ That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince/ That won three fields of Sultan Suleiman' (2.1. 24-6); he refers to 'some god' to direct his judgment (2.7.13) and he alludes to a test of his virility in 'whose blood is reddest' (2.1.7).<sup>36</sup> While Morocco's actions identify him as 'foreign', he also suggests the existence of another perspective, his own. The 'gentle queen' is invited to see him from the more favourable perspective of 'the best-regarded virgins of our clime' (2.1.4-12). Morocco preserves his cultural identity, 'I would not change this hue'(2.1.11). Morocco suggests that he be judged as he sees himself: 'Pause there, Morocco, /And Weigh thy value with an even hand./ If thou beest rated by thy estimation, /Thou dost deserve enough' (2.7.24-27).

Some theatre and film directors have suggested that Shylock desires assimilation within European society, but, as in the case of Morocco, the playtext offers an opportunity to

explore cultural identity itself.<sup>37</sup> Shylock draws a line at social integration: 'I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following: but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you' (1.3.33-35). Morocco and Shylock risk much by agreeing to be bound by Christian bonds. Morocco finds 'a carrion Death' in the golden casket, the terms of the lottery precluding marriage and suggesting the ending of his blood line. Jessica has converted to Christianity, establishing a similar fate for Shylock. Through Portia's mediating role at Belmont and in Venice the threat posed by the association of Jew with Muslim appears managed and resolved. Both men meet with rejection and are punished but neither is physically restrained and both are free to leave. There is a sense of reinstated autonomy in both their exits. Morocco chooses to leave quickly: 'Portia, adieu. I have too griev'd a heart/ To take a tedious leave. Thus losers part' (2.7.76-7). Morocco exits 'with his train' and to the possible direction 'flourish of cornetts' <sup>38</sup> Shylock urges, 'I pray you, give me leave to go from hence./ I am not well. Send the deed after me, /And I will sign it' (4.1.391-3).

**1. 'Playing For Laughs': Theodore Komisarjevsky's *The Merchant of Venice* (1932-1933) and Michael Langham's Production (1960), Both at The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon.**

My approach to Shylock and the Prince of Morocco has been to historicise their ambivalent linked situations as alien friends to mercantile England in the sixteenth century. I am interested in their subject positions, figured in the ideological construction of the desirable/ undesirable alien, relative to spectators. Lisa Jardine argues that the play is able to dislocate our sense of its early modern specificity because the plot 'uses the audience's emotional engagement with the characters to elicit our consent to the justice of the plot's outcome' <sup>1</sup>

Theodore (Fyodor) Komisarjevsky (Director of the Moscow Imperial and State Theatre until 1919) removed early modern mercantilist specificity in the fantasticated Harlequin world of the *commedia dell'arte* but spectators glossed this absence of specificity with an ideological specificity. The *Times* commented:

It is possible that an Elizabethan finding himself in the Memorial Theatre tonight would have recognised in Mr. Randle Ayrton's Shylock the Jew he had been accustomed to see played at the Globe. If he retained his taste for a little Jew-baiting he might have laughed uproariously at the despairing rage of the crafty alien usurer hoist with his own petard.<sup>2</sup>

Ivor Brown, writing in the *Observer*, concurred: 'Shylock is properly left in his true Elizabethan habit; he is a wicked old scamp to be detested of the audience [...] meriting all the punishment that comes his way' <sup>3</sup> These reviewers conflated the stage antics of the comic villain of 'eternal masquerade' with the historically precise spectatorship involving 'Elizabethan Jew-baiting' <sup>4</sup> This raises a question about the function of 'comedy' The *Birmingham Mail* remarked, 'comedy is the keynote of Mr. Komisarjevsky's production' <sup>5</sup>

For the *Observer*, this meant a solution to historicised spectatorship: ‘there is real delight in this translation of it to a totally unreal and timeless world’<sup>6</sup>

Michael Langham’s 1960 production starring Peter O’Toole was also ‘playing for laughs’<sup>7</sup> The programme announced, ‘A Season of Shakespearean Comedy’ and described *The Merchant of Venice* as a mature work in which ‘there is a dark side that almost spoils the fun. For as Shakespeare’s power grew, the romantic convention of happy-ever-after conflicted more and more with his sense of how men really are.’<sup>8</sup> The directorial strategy also seemed to be trying to sidestep historicised spectatorship. Peter O’Toole’s Shylock could also be ‘a crafty alien usurer’ but not ‘a wicked old scamp to be detested of the audience’ The *Spectator* described him as ‘the pedigree alien among a pack of home-grown mongrels’ with much of the humour attributed to his ability to fend off the ‘mongrels’<sup>9</sup> Richard Findlater in the *Financial Times* commented:

He incarnates the legendary Jew with a flesh-and-blood reality of coldly smiling menace, savage inner amusement and proud-felt dignity, and he makes irrelevant a heap of contemporary problems about such aspects of Shylock as the contemporary context of anti-semitism, or the influence of the revenge play, or the tragi-comic balance of the drama.<sup>10</sup>

Desmond Pratt, for the *Yorkshire Post*, described the young Leeds actor as ‘a smiling Jew with a sardonic and sly humour, confident of his superiority over others’<sup>11</sup> Playgoers were encouraged to laugh *with* him rather than *at* him. O’Toole was successful in working an audience’s emotional response, suggesting the truth of Jardine’s observation that playgoers may be manipulated more readily where individual characters are simplified through the removal of more ambiguous historical specificity.

Komisarjevsky did not seek an emotional response to Shylock but expected playgoers to see Shylock and the Prince of Morocco as figures of fun. The *Week-end Review* found ‘the frank theatricalism of the whole was charming’; Komisarjevsky made ‘a blackamoor doll of his Highness of Morocco’, while ‘Mr. Randle Ayrton’s Shylock is an excellent old rag-bag of venom’<sup>12</sup> Langham aimed for a different effect, noted by Mervyn Jones of the *Tribune*: ‘The silly, vulgar, schoolboyish gentlemen of Venice are a proper foil to alien dignity, of which we get a glimpse in Paul Hardwick’s admirable Prince of Morocco and a full portrait in O’Toole’s suffering, revenging, struggling, incessantly *feeling* Shylock’<sup>13</sup> ‘Alien dignity’ is of course a monolithic concept, the implications of which are not worked through in the production. John Gross notes Nigel Dennis’s observation that the production was a success ‘because it confirmed the critics and the audience in a sense of their own virtuousness’<sup>14</sup> The *Daily Mail* was not quite comfortable with O’Toole’s interpretation, remarking: ‘it is a truly splendid performance often one has to admit played against the grain of the writing’<sup>15</sup> A minority voice in 1932, the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, showed a similar unease with Komisarjevsky’s treatment of Shylock:

Shakespeare [...] most incongruously introduced the vein of tragedy. He created Shylock, and Shylock has ever since dominated a play that was totally unsuited for him. This Titanic figure of oppression and vengeance has conferred on “the Merchant” a dignity that does not in right or reason belong to it. [...] It is useless to treat Shylock as a rascally, and belaboured pantaloon.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly these two productions emphasised very different aspects of the text for different purposes but they shared underlying assumptions that are connected. Komisarjevsky’s

approach universalised human experience through the comic form of the *commedia dell'arte*. Langham's approach suggested an underlying humanism that was universal in spirit. Neither production escaped knowing and not monolithic spectatorships that attempted to negotiate their own historicised subject positions in relation to this problematic text. Reviewers of both productions constantly referred to the history they try to push to the margins. This would suggest that the specificity of 'alien' history was in fact an intrinsic part of Shakespeare's playtext.

C.B. Purdom, in the magazine *Everyman*, praised Komisarjevsky's production for his break with 'the Irving model': 'He got rid of every touch of realism. He lifted the whole thing to where it belonged- the region of romance and make-believe: the realm of poetry' <sup>17</sup> James C. Bulman describes how Henry Irving saw a Levantine Jew in Tunis in 1879 who inspired him to want to create his 'romantic appearance and patriarchal dignity' <sup>18</sup> However, Irving romanticised his 'gentleman' Shylock, creating 'a nobler stereotype' and universalising his experience as a plea for racial tolerance.<sup>19</sup>

The reviewer's glee that Komisarjevsky had ditched Irving's 'almost completely standardized' stage version of the play chimes with those twentieth-century scholarly sensibilities that have validated a more theatrical (non-naturalistic) approach to Shakespeare's plays.<sup>20</sup> Alan C. Dessen has analysed the non-naturalistic form of Elizabethan dramaturgy, remarking in the case of *The Merchant of Venice* that we would not expect a stage property for Lorenzo's line, 'how sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank'(5.1.54), although 'Henslowe's inventory does include two 'moss-banks' <sup>21</sup> The valorisation of non-illusionistic representation is often invoked on ideological grounds as clearing a space for new 'realisms' I think we need to approach the term 'realism' circumspectly for it is no more than a truth

claim for a way of seeing relative to time and place. As Bulman notes, Irving's approach reveals the Victorians' fascination with historical accuracy and an awareness of cultural difference.<sup>22</sup> Historicised practice in recent performance criticism also cherishes these aims. Nevertheless, a willingness to understand the plays as performance scripts has had the positive effect of returning the spotlight to the actors rather than the director's controlling vision, although one might argue that both Irving (as actor-manager) and Komisarjevsky (through his stylistic vision) both exerted powerful directorial control.

In 1933, Komisarjevsky remarked on the extraordinary changes of 'the last sixty years':

Having passed through the waves of various - *isms* - Naturalism, Symbolism, Stylism and Expressionism, the advance-guard theatrical workers in Europe came to Constructive and Synthetic-Realistic methods of production and completely destroyed the decorative principles of the painters of illusionistic perspective scenery.<sup>23</sup>

The director applauded the work of his sister 'the great Russian actress, Vera Komisarjevsky' who, together with Vsevolod Meyerhold, fought scenic naturalism by employing real painters for their sets whose task was to realise the poetic ideas.<sup>24</sup> It is possible to trace here, and in Komisarjevsky's book *The Costume of the Theatre* (1931), ideas that bear on the 1932 production of *The Merchant of Venice*. Komisarjevsky included a chapter on the *commedia dell'arte* and also a discussion of German expressionism:

As the creation of the illusion of reality is not the aim of art, the transformation of the human body becomes necessary on the stage. Such transformation is made possible by costume and the mask. The lines of the

costume which transform the natural man into a stage-man are devised to suit and to accentuate those movements which are necessary during the performance.<sup>25</sup>

Komisarjevsky gives one example of 'a doll on hinges' and it is noteworthy that reviews of his *The Merchant of Venice* refer to Portia and Morocco as dolls; the production 'draws Portia from the china-shop and Morocco, a perfect golliwog, from the toy-shop'<sup>26</sup> The stylistic intention is clear, distancing the dramatic figures from a purely psychological and social reading. In *The Costume of the Theatre*, Komisarjevsky is critical of playgoers who cannot be 'stirred by ideas' and wish only to see before them 'objects and people similar to those they meet with in their ordinary existence'<sup>27</sup> However, he adds a social comment, 'the costumes of modern revues and musical comedies, like the plays themselves, satisfy the hypocrisy, the lightness of mind, the sexual instincts, and the taste for luxury of the present bourgeois generations'<sup>28</sup> Komisarjevsky's carnival of characters are used to burlesque contemporary social values. Therefore the suggestion, based on a stylistic reading, that 'his production has no period but that of eternal masquerade' is not wholly true.<sup>29</sup>

The relationship between social satire and the *commedia dell'arte* is explored by Robert L. Erenstein who notes the opposed views of Allardyce Nicholl and A.K. Dshiwelegow. The former argues that true *commedia dell'arte* 'shows not the slightest trace of social satire', the latter 'sees the *commedia dell'arte* as concerned solely with sociocritical satire'<sup>30</sup> Erenstein historicises the Italian *commedia dell'arte*: 'in 1660 the *Ancienne troupe de la Comédie Italienne* settled permanently in Paris. Under the influence of French taste the masks changed to conform more closely to the French way of life'<sup>31</sup> Erenstein gives the example of Arlecchino who changed from a greedy, stupid servant into Harlequin (Arlequin)

a shrewd servant 'given to philosophising about life'<sup>32</sup> Erenstein argues that the *commedia dell'arte* lost its 'arte' aspect of pure art and theatrical skill; 'the more the masks degenerated to meaningless stereotypes, the more this genre became adapted to conveying the satiric intentions of authors, who could fashion the characters to suit their intentions'<sup>33</sup>

The *Birmingham Post* noted that Komisarjevsky utilised dramatic figures derived from the *commedia dell'arte*, 'Launcelot Gobbo and Old Gobbo becomes [sic] Harlequin and Pantaloon [...] the Prince of Morocco becoming a black-faced embodiment of the Captain'<sup>34</sup> However, Komisarjevsky showed his satiric intentions in an interview with the *Birmingham Mail*:

All those young men - Bassanio, Lorenzo, Gratiano, Salarino, and the rest will be put in their place. They will be shown as the dissipated, fast, bright, young people like the crowd we have in London to-day.<sup>35</sup>

In the background of the Venetian court there would be painted 'a shadowy ensemble of the court crowd -the sort of people who gloat over sensations in our present-day courts'<sup>36</sup> Shylock wanted justice and revenge but failed to procure justice because Portia 'imposes bad law'; Komisarjevsky explained, 'that scene represents the crash of justice in face of prejudice'<sup>37</sup> Komisarjevsky would 'bring out the power of that scene by having all the senators of the Doge's Court sitting round in a uniform dress, their faces covered by uniform masks'<sup>38</sup> This extraordinary view of the play argued for an uncompromising legal system. The law was the law, and albeit his evil disposition (in this production), Shylock should have his pound of flesh. Beneath the carnival gaiety lay an unorthodox view of the play.

In Belmont, Portia was the prized object everyone wanted to obtain and the suitors, including Morocco, were fools or tricksters. Jonathan Ash for *Christian World* described the stage set designed by Komisarjevsky and Lesley Blanch (fig. 16):

Away rolls his fantastic impression of Venice, all leaning pillars and crooked bridges, and up comes a tableau vivant with Portia and Nerissa posed in the garden at Belmont. The tableau does not stay at the level of the stage but continues to rise until we think that Portia lives on a roof garden. Beneath the garden, let into the wall, are the caskets, and here on the lower level

Portia's unwelcome suitors make their stupid choices while she remains unapproachably high above their heads. The audience must bear the inconvenience of two different planes of sight and sound for the sake of the symbolic descent of Portia to the level of the lover she prays may win her.<sup>39</sup>

Morocco made his 'stupid' choice after an entrance that strove for maximum comic effect. The *Birmingham Gazette* described the prince: 'black-faced and with thick, red lips, rising out of the ground under a red umbrella'; he was 'made up as the nigger minstrel with a Mexican sombrero on his head'<sup>40</sup> 'Alien dignity' did not seem uppermost in Komisarjevsky's mind, the *Birmingham Mail* commenting, 'Morocco (Mr. Stanley Howlett), usually played as a dusky paladin with a good deal of sex appeal, becomes an out-and-out blackamoor, so like Mr. Al Jolson that one expects him to drown his disappointment with a stave of "Sonny Boy"'<sup>41</sup> The orientalist discourse figured 'the dusky paladin' as exotic while, it could be argued, that 'a good deal of sex appeal' revealed a veiled negative allusion to the 'other' construction of the barbarian's lust. Morocco lost his 'alien dignity' with the pejorative use of the term 'out-and-out blackamoor', though of course both are ethnocentric



**16** 'Away rolls his fantastic impression of Venice'· stage set for Theodore Komisarjevsky's  
*The Merchant of Venice*, 1932-3

constructions of inclusion/exclusion. Jack D'Amico notes, 'the Prince of Morocco from *The Merchant of Venice* is, like Aaron [*Titus Andronicus*], a man who finds himself playing a role in Western society, but he is, like Cleopatra, a powerful figure in his own world, one who fits the pattern of the noble tawny Moor, as opposed to the villainous blackamoor'<sup>42</sup> However, Morocco escaped the ethnocentric representation of the Oriental 'other' by appearing 'like Mr. Al Jolson' As Jolson, the Jewish American popular singer and songwriter, famous for his blacked-up face in *The Jazz Singer* (1927), Morocco was a white insider in the West's entertainment industry. He invited his audience's laughter through his comic routines. The *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* remarked that Komisarjevsky 'even allows the Duke [sic] of Morocco upon finding he has chosen the wrong casket, to intone "O hell! what have we here?" just as a motorist would who had burst a tyre'<sup>43</sup>

Komisarjevsky superimposed a black-face minstrel's persona upon Il Capitano from the *commedia dell'arte*. Robert C. Toll argues that "'Ethopian delineators", as the blackfaced white entertainers called themselves, claimed that they authentically portrayed American Negroes', though in fact, as minstrels, they created theatrical masks, making themselves up 'to exaggerate Negroes' supposed physical peculiarities, putting on "woolly" wigs and painting huge eyes and gaping mouths, on their faces'<sup>44</sup> Toll historicises the success of the minstrels' entertainment in American show business in the the mid -nineteenth century, noting its relevance to 'slavery, the plantation system and the proper place of the Negro in America'<sup>45</sup> He argues that the minstrel show allowed white entertainers to act out 'images of Negroes that satisfied their patrons' and 'provided its primarily Northern white audiences with a non-threatening way to work out their feelings about race and slavery'<sup>46</sup> The minstrels' entertainment was successful because it was also 'a damned good show'<sup>47</sup> The

show 'had no script at all. Each act-each song, dance, joke, and skit was a self-contained routine that attempted to be a highlight of the performance' <sup>48</sup> These improvised routines have some affinity with the *lazzi* and *jeux* of the *commedia dell'arte* in France, described by Virginia P. Scott, where *lazzi* refers to the smaller units of stage business (the '*lazzi* of the ladder', the '*lazzi* of taking fright') while *jeu* is a comic routine with a complete structure.<sup>49</sup> The Prince of Morocco's Al Jolson persona fused the braggart Il Capitano of the *commedia dell'arte* and the minstrels' routine based on a use of frontier folk stories. Robert C. Toll writes:

Blackface minstrels also bragged about their own power and their fantastic exploits on the frontier. "Half fire, half smoke, a little touch of thunder," one minstrel character boasted about himself; "I'm what dey call de eighth wonder." Others, including "Jim Crow," claimed that they whipped their weight in wildcats, panthers, or crocodiles. Still others claimed they fearlessly sailed down the Mississippi river on the backs of alligators that had teeth like broad swords.<sup>50</sup>

Morocco boasts of his power to Portia, 'I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine/Hath feared the valiant' (2.1.8-9). For Asa Yoelson, the son of Jewish parents who fled from Russia, his 'aspect' or blacked-up face enabled him to forge a new identity in America. Jolson's biographer Michael Freedland reveals that 'when he started out he was a bundle of nerves; he escaped that by putting on the blackface' <sup>51</sup> In Komisarjevsky's production, Morocco could be identified with a white minstrel entertainer who hid his (Jewish) identity ironically beneath the mask of a black man who also could not successfully represent himself. Toll describes how black minstrels could only find success by acting out caricatures of Negroes

themselves.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless the history of black minstrelsy is receiving scholarly attention as an early form of indigenous American musical theatre.<sup>53</sup>

The link between the Jew and the Muslim in Komisarjevsky's production might be described as a narrative of denial. Both are played without a history of their own. Komisarjevsky asserted, 'I shall not have a sympathetic Shylock. The point of Shylock is revenge'<sup>54</sup> *Week-End Review* described the director's intention: 'But what of Shylock? We shall not sentimentalise him into a Type of the Oppressed Minority appealing to the League of Nations. He must be what he was, the butt of the Elizabethan crowd, a nasty old card who gets uncommonly rough justice for behaving like an uncommon ruffian'<sup>55</sup> On the other hand Komisarjevsky did not sentimentalise Belmont either. *Christian World* possibly read the director's intention correctly:

So heartily does Mr. Komisarjevsky despise the story of the caskets that he will give Bassanio no credit for choosing aright. The song "Tell me where is fancy bred", is sung into the competitor's ear by Nerissa, who puts immense emphasis on all the words that rhyme with "lead" So Bassanio's lengthy discourse on the relative values of gold and silver and lead is turned into a piece of hypocritical attitudinizing.<sup>56</sup>

Komisarjevsky painted Bassanio as one of the dissipated young men of Venice, against which he set a villain, Shylock, whose strength of purpose was to be admired (he should not have been denied justice). Komisarjevsky's relationship to Shakespeare's Jew seemed ambivalent. Possibly, by figuring him as stage villain without a history, the director could square him with his own admiration for other ruthless single-minded individuals of the 1930s who could bring some sense of order to a dissipated society. In *The Theatre and A Changing Civilisation*

(1935) Komisarjevsky reveals his admiration for Mussolini, Lenin, Stalin and Hitler whose political doctrines he describes as ‘the only ones in our time that have genuine idealistic foundations, a definiteness of aim and a constancy of purpose’<sup>57</sup> He ‘welcomes Fascism, Communism and Nazism as powerful forces which will help to open up the road towards a new life of cultured, disciplined *individuals*’<sup>58</sup> In the same work, Komisarjevsky also considers the disposal of Russians during the Communist revolution and the interment of Jews in concentration camps to be ‘very sad’ but acceptable outcomes of any ‘mass progressive movement in the history of humanity’<sup>59</sup> James C. Bulman not surprisingly finds the director’s seeming defence of Shylock in the court scene hypocritical in the light of these writings: ‘Komisarjevsky, I would submit, staged *The Merchant* as a carnival of denial and found a receptive audience for it’<sup>60</sup> However, I think we might accept that the director’s response to Shylock was an ambivalent one as were those of reviewers. Ralph Berry argues that reviewers of Komisarjevsky’s productions revealed ‘deep-seated antipathy to the new’ in the 1930s, but it would appear that many reviewers warmed to the sheer theatricality of *The Merchant of Venice*, though with reservations.<sup>61</sup> The *Observer* argued ‘the producer has every right to fantasticate to the top of his bent’ while the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* observed: ‘You can stand a lot in the way of fantasy that is hardly endurable in the way of drama’<sup>62</sup> At the same time, however, reviewers cannot have been unaware of changing events in Europe.

In February 1932, just four months before the opening of *The Merchant of Venice*, the *Birmingham Mail* reported an address given by Dr A. Cohen at Birmingham Rotary Club:

“Many members of my race,” declared Dr Cohen, “have a grievance against the writer of the ‘Merchant of Venice’.[sic] They feel that he has done my

people a grave injustice by his delineation of the character of Shylock: so much so that the Central Conference of American Rabbis has been successful in getting that play banned from the schools in many of the States.<sup>63</sup>

*Freethinker* expressed concern at events in Europe in September 1932:

The election of a congress of Jewish people to meet in 1934 to consider protection of Jews in view of their critical situation was decided on at Geneva recently. The resolution was the outcome of a conference, and special mention was made of the endangering of the rights of citizenship and the ousting of the Jews from the economic life of some European countries. This recrudescence of Jew-baiting on the Continent is extraordinary, for it shows, not only that the flames of religious hatred have only been damped down, but that much of our boasted civilisation is only skin-deep. There are European countries where Jews may not own real estate. Even in hospitable England there is even a society for the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, with an income of over forty thousand pounds yearly. [...] The mention of Shakespeare reminds us that the Jew was then an object of abhorrence in England of that day.<sup>64</sup>

The following year Komisarjevsky's production was revived with a new Shylock, George Hayes, but it was not so well received. Partly this might have been the result of cast changes. The *Birmingham Mail* remarked, 'last season's cast suited his adaptation of the material; this season's personnel yields disappointment after disappointment.'<sup>65</sup> The Gobbos (John Denis and Stanley Lathbury) came under fire: 'there was never spontaneity in the knockabout

antics’<sup>66</sup> Evidently, the *Birmingham Gazette* found the need to square the ‘fantastic pantomime’ with world events:

World events have shown us that Jew-baiting is not amusing, either for Jews or civilised persons, and that therefore Komisarjevsky was perfectly right in refusing to treat the “Merchant of Venice” seriously, and in insisting upon making it a fantastic pantomime.<sup>67</sup>

It was also observed that ‘Stanley Howlett as the Prince of Morocco and the nigger minstrel who speaks some of the most beautiful poetry in Shakespeare - was very clever in combining comedy with a dignified nobility’.<sup>68</sup> These reviewers seemed caught between two arguments, arguing, on the one hand that total comedy solved the serious implications of a problematic text and on the other that there might be a need to recover a sense of Morocco’s dignity.

In 1960 Michael Langham’s production found audiences happy to recognise in Peter O’Toole’s Shylock the noble dignified Jew of Henry Irving’s conception but such a reading was not unequivocal. In the same year *Exodus* was released, a romanticised version of the creation of Israel, directed and produced by Otto Preminger. Arnold Wesker’s stage trilogy (*Chicken Soup with Barley*, 1958; *Roots* 1959; *I’m Talking About Jerusalem* 1960), provided a more socially anchored analysis of working class communities such as the Jewish East End. A year later (1961) Stanley Kramer’s *Judgement at Nuremberg* was released, a film dealing with the prosecution of Nazis after the war, coinciding with the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem.<sup>69</sup> Langham’s production entered a discursive space where spectators might be encouraged to look for Shylock’s ‘best qualities’ but the text precludes any such reductive reading.

Reviewers read Shylock as a representative Jew or as an individual Jew: Shylock represented the suffering ‘of all the Jews since Moses’ and therefore represented his race; Shylock was not played as the representative of a race but ‘as an individual Jew whose actions make him detestable’<sup>70</sup> The *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* described the production as ‘comedy pointed against drama’, glossing Peter Hall’s thematic approach to his first Stratford season as director.<sup>71</sup> David Addenbrooke comments in *The Royal Shakespeare Company: The Peter Hall Years* (1974) that the 1960 season evidenced ‘a definite change in theatre policy. It was not just a group of five [sic] plays by Shakespeare, but a selection of plays planned as an organic sequence’<sup>72</sup> The theatre programme outlined the idea ‘to trace through a sequence of six plays, the range, development and paradox of Shakespearean Comedy’; the focus on ‘humanity’ meant that the comedies ‘are seldom purely comic’<sup>73</sup> The programme offered a brief overview of performance history, noting that ‘a new dignity of breed and bearing were given to the Jew by Macready, and by Irving’<sup>74</sup>

Like Komisarjevsky, Langham matched Shylock’s strong individualism against an effete group of Venetians. Belmont’s eighteenth century set of picturesque ruined arches and period costumes (waistcoats and knee breeches for the men) established Portia (Dorothy Tutin) in an idealised elegant age, having no apparent relevance to Shylock’s world. It might be thought that Belmont’s graceful, even ‘Watteauesque grace’ would point up more sharply the sordid, material world of Venice.<sup>75</sup> The creation of an ideal world at Belmont denied the history of Portia’s wealth and its connection to the mercantile economy of the Venetian world. Reviewers who felt the play erred on the side of Shylock’s tragic stature noted the resulting imbalance of presentation. He appeared too fine to be involved on a day-to-day basis with sordid financial transactions. The *Daily Telegraph* argued:

To begin with Peter O'Toole's Shylock is an outstanding performance in what may be called Irving's manner that is to say the version of the character in which Shylock is not merely allowed but encouraged to show his best qualities and therefore to run away with much of the audience's sympathy.<sup>76</sup>

The *Daily Mail* remarked:

He is basically so decent a person that one is constantly inclined to ask: "A usurer? Is that a job for a Yiddisher boy?" To this interpretation, Peter O' Toole brings gifts in abundance. It is a truly splendid performance often one has to admit played against the grain of the writing.<sup>77</sup>

John Russell Brown thought Shylock 'too well dressed for a miser; he walked too upright to suggest cunning or unbridled hatred; in the savagery of the court scene he was controlled'<sup>78</sup>

Critics were divided in their view of Portia's authority opposite Peter O'Toole's impressive Shylock. As Balthasar, Portia emerged from the elegant though superficial world of eighteenth-century Belmont with wit and youthful determination. The *New Statesman* thought:

O' Toole imposes on the audience a pressure of emotion and dignity which transforms Shylock from an ambiguous figure hovering somewhere between caricature and melodrama into a major tragic hero. As Portia, Dorothy Tutin did not try to compete with him. She has none of that kind of authority.<sup>79</sup>

*Stage* countered: 'Miss Tutin enters the court as a slip of a boy wearing the plainest of dark suits. From that moment, she takes over the situation and dominates the rest of the play.'<sup>80</sup>

A number of critics felt that O'Toole's Shylock was representative of a monolithic Jewish experience of persecution. The *Sunday Times* responded to Shylock as:

The representative of a religion persecuted for many centuries; and, when in one of the deepest moments of his distress he cries "I have a daughter," his thoughts immediately fly back to an ancestral memory and an ancient wrong as he names the name of Barabbas.<sup>81</sup>

The *Star* observed, 'and, all the time his eyes smoulder with the suffering not of just one Jew vested in a business transaction but of all the Jews since Moses'<sup>82</sup> Desmond Pratt in the *Yorkshire Post* feted O'Toole's performance. 'I believe it will be placed amongst our very greatest Shylocks'<sup>83</sup> He described the effect of his entrance:

Mr. O'Toole's Shylock enters tall and slow. Rather like Irving to look at but this is a smiling Jew with a sardonic and sly humour confident of his superiority over others. The famous defence of Jewry is admirably conceived and argued, lacking perhaps a mounting passion. But the hatred is one that hurts physically as well as mentally. This Shylock writhes in its unrelenting clasp. The affront to his race has been rank and he will have law honoured and judgment given.<sup>84</sup>

The review suggested ambivalence in the presentation of a romanticised Jewish dignity; Shylock appeared to represent his race but he was not like Irving: this was a 'smiling Jew' The *Gloucestershire Echo* found O'Toole's performance not wholly sympathetic: 'he is no cringing Shylock, but a man proud of his race and scornful of his enemies; though he does not quite win final sympathy'.<sup>85</sup> The *Western Daily Press* argued that O'Toole portrayed Shylock 'as a man and not as a symbol of a much-maligned race and profession'<sup>86</sup>

The production ran the risk of exonerating the individual Jew's vengeful path with reference to a monolithic Jewish history of oppression. The casting of the Prince of Morocco

(Paul Hardwick) as the noble Moor reinforced this ahistorical view of alien dignity striving to surmount prejudice. The *Daily Telegraph* referred to Morocco as ‘a sort of young Othello’, placing him at the positive end of an ethnocentric construction of the split subject, noble Moor/blackamoor.<sup>87</sup> *Stage* commented on ‘the rich voice of Paul Hardwick’s Prince of Morocco’ which ‘rings through the theatre with Robeson-like beauty of tone’, a reference to the black actor and singer whose best-known stage performances were in the title roles of *Othello* and Eugene O’Neill’s *Emperor Jones*.<sup>88</sup> Robeson was also known for his active campaigning for civil rights. The *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* noted a discrepancy between the reified mask of the minstrel and the ‘noble Moor’ persona: ‘Paul Hardwick - fighting against a nigger minstrel make-up as Morocco [seizes] sympathy with a shiver in the heat of the line “Cold indeed, and labour lost”’<sup>89</sup> The *Scotsman* found Hardwick’s Morocco ‘outstanding’ while the *Sunday Post* gave a backward glance to Komisarjevsky suggesting the inappropriateness of that director’s treatment for the 1960s: ‘Morocco should never shed his dignity, though I remember that the capricious Komisarjevsky gave to him the aspect of a beach minstrel’<sup>90</sup> The ‘great dignity’ of Morocco was emphasised in comparison with the added comic business of the Prince of Arragon’s arrival with ‘a grim old mother and assiduous tutor who push him’.<sup>91</sup> Arragon (Ian Richardson) played as a reedy-voiced schoolboy was ‘a horribly good young man, sententious to the last syllable, but faltering a bit in his well-rehearsed lesson’ compared with ‘the resonant but delicate wooing of Paul Hardwick’s Morocco’<sup>92</sup> Morocco’s serious intentions, evinced in his ‘fiery protestations,’ were in contrast to the controlled artifice of the casket scene which emulated Langham’s Ontario (Stratford) production in 1955 where he directed the caskets ‘to be carried by three maids who moved about ‘freely’’.<sup>93</sup> During the Prince of Arragon’s speech the maid holding

the silver casket ‘faints with strain and boredom’<sup>94</sup> Despite his overconfident speeches, Morocco showed his vulnerability when after snatching his scimitar from a slave (at which point everyone tried to get out of the way) he lowered the weapon and stepped downstage at the line ‘But alas the while!’ (2.1.31), as the prospect of failure occurred to him (fig. 17).

‘Alien dignity’ in both cases was associated with controlled emotion in an age of order and decorum. The *Yorkshire Post* noted:

Mr. Langham has set his production in the eighteenth century, in an age of reason in which the Jew’s case is argued, in which the defence is legitimate and moving and in which the emotion is never allowed to control the character until after the elopement [when] the Christian affront to the Jewish race has become unbearable and the path of his revenge irrevocable. It is a revenge that darkens the streets of Venice and clouds the romantic skies of Belmont; so that when Shylock leaves the court gathering around him the tattered remnants of his pride and dignity, it is a relief to turn to Belmont and see that love, beauty and music still exist in the world. Here are the artifices of mannered courtship sensitively played out.<sup>95</sup>

By setting the production in the ‘Age of Reason’, the trial scene, with its ineffective periwigged judges, could on the one hand convey and approve Shylock’s rhetorical skills and the challenge that his powerful arguments represented, and on the other, suggest that through Portia ‘right’ reason and order would finally prevail. In effect, underlying tensions and emotions that the eighteenth-century mannered society sought to control, were contained within the ideal world that Portia and Belmont represented. The *Sunday Times* remarked that O’Toole’s Shylock appeared restrained but ‘gradually the truth of the matter emerges. This



17 'By this scimitar': the Prince of Morocco (Paul Hardwick) and Portia (Dorothy Tutin) in Michael Langham's production, 1960

Shylock is not here to attack, but to convince. One recognises in him an enormous power of argument'<sup>96</sup> The *Western Daily Press* found that:

O'Toole maintains this dignity in the trial scene, while all about him are losing theirs. Coldly, calculatingly, he insists on sticking to the letter of the bond; and when Portia discovers the loophole which will save Antonio's life, he appreciates the situation instantly and with the acumen of a quick-witted businessman, asks for the money instead.<sup>97</sup>

However the *Financial Times* remarked on 'touches of over-production' when Antonio (Patrick Allen) prepared for exposure to Shylock's knife (he was stripped and manacled for execution), when Shylock tested the knife on a piece of cloth, and, when Shylock 'fainting in court and being surrounded by a pack of baying Venetians' was rescued by Portia (fig. 18).<sup>98</sup>

Ambivalence marked Shylock's exit. *Stage* remarked:

Mr. Langham has denied this masterly Shylock a memorable final exit. On the opening night, he slipped off at the side of the stage, half-masked by people who were crowding the court. Both Shylock and Mr. O'Toole deserve better treatment.<sup>99</sup>

However, John Russell Brown found that Shylock's exit had a stronger impact: 'After the collapse of his 'rights' Shylock regained some of his strength with his dignity; he laughed at the sparing of his life and prided himself still on his sense of right 'send the deed after me, And I *will* sign it'<sup>100</sup>

For the Jew and the Muslim, the keynote of the production was an ahistorical and universalised 'alien dignity', an interpretation that gestured towards undercurrents of anti-semitism which could hide beneath the surface of a polite mannered society. Both



**18** Periwigged judges look on in the trial scene of the 1960 production. From the left: Portia (Dorothy Tutin), Antonio (Patrick Allen), Bassanio (Denholm Elliott), the Duke (Tony Church) and Shylock (Peter O'Toole)

Komisarjevsky and Langham lauded Shylock's individualism against the unthinking decadent Venetians, asking playgoers either to admire his villainy or reserve judgment on his hard dealings with his persecutors. The Prince of Morocco as the Captain of the *commedia dell'arte* was meant to be an entertaining figure. In Komisarjevsky's production the Al Jolson persona dignified the generic minstrel figure with the aura of the entertainer's success, while at the same time revealing the blackface as a cover of vulnerability, fracturing the ethnocentric representation. In Langham's production Morocco was represented more as a black man, a noble Moor associated with Othello. 'Alien dignity' for Shylock and for Morocco was shown to exist as a principle of a common humanity contained within the production's structuring conceptual pattern of eighteenth-century order and reason.

**2. 'I Am a Jew' : Definitions of Jewishness in Jonathan Miller's Production at The National Theatre, 1970 (Televised Version, 1973) and Bill Alexander's Royal Shakespeare Company Production at Stratford-upon-Avon and London, 1987-1988.**

I have argued that the Jew and the Muslim were represented for the most part either as ahistorical comic figures in Theodore Komisarjevsky's production (1932-3) or as dramatic characters marked with a universalised 'alien dignity' in Michael Langham's production (1960). The setting of eighteenth-century Belmont worked as an idealised space rather than a historicised one in Langham's version. Both Jonathan Miller and Bill Alexander were concerned to locate a more specific historical context for Shylock, and both directors found themselves entering a debate about what did or not did not constitute Jewishness for their respective productions. The portrayal of the Prince of Morocco, though always escaping detailed analysis by reviewers, can be shown to be related to the early decisions made in respect of Shylock's 'Jewish' identity.

In an interview with Peter Anson in *Plays and Players*, Jonathan Miller remarked, 'I have a particular interest in the character of Shylock as I'm Jewish myself and am concerned about the way the Jew has been portrayed on the stage'<sup>1</sup> Anson commented, 'one remembers Miller's own sleight-of-hand in *Beyond the Fringe* as he announced to the audience, 'I'm not a Jew, just Jewish. I don't go the whole hog'<sup>2</sup> The seemingly eternal question of what it means to be 'Jewish' was raised in an article by Jonathan Freedland regarding the 50th anniversary of the creation of Israel (*Guardian*, 7 January 1998).<sup>3</sup> The article, headed 'Let the people decide who is or is not a Jew', referred to the row between Orthodox rabbis in Israel who 'have a monopoly over all religious life' including conversions, and Reform Jews who wanted equal status.<sup>4</sup> The dispute has implications worldwide as Reform Jews strive to make it easier for would-be converts to embrace Judaism. Freedland

referred to 'a leading American Conservative rabbi and scholar, Harold Schulweis, [who] has shocked his colleagues by positively seeking out potential converts', the rabbi's message is, 'let all who want to sign up for Judaism join the Jewish people'<sup>5</sup> Freedland argued that the creation of Israel, 'the so-called Zionist Revolution' was 'a declaration that the Jews were more than a religious sect - a nation capable of determining its own future'<sup>6</sup> References to American Jewry, Anglo-Jewry as well as Jews in the Middle East remind readers that the term 'nation' is not just about geographical boundaries but rather points to a sense of responsible democratic citizenship. Freedland argued that the 'Jewish majority' rather than the 'unelected clique of rabbis' should make rules for a 'nation'<sup>7</sup> The point is that our modern sense of 'Jewish majority' recognises diversity as well as democratic pluralism. Freedland suggested: 'Jews need to adopt a looser, more modern attitude to their entire identity' and he reminded readers of Howard Jacobson's joke pertinent to 'heavily-urban' Anglo-Jewry: 'A Jew is a person who can't name a bird, a fish or a tree'<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately *The Merchant of Venice* does not offer much scope for Jewish diversity. Tubal makes only a brief appearance Jessica's role tends to reinforce the kind of anti-Semitic stereotype noted by Hyam Maccoby: 'Shylock is unmistakably a Jew - not a real Jew, but a Jew as presented in Christian religious tradition.'<sup>9</sup> Thus directors are caught in a double bind because they may, like Jonathan Miller, reject the Jew of the religious tradition but find they cannot escape making Shylock represent the invisible Jewish 'nation'. The problem is the play. He is the focal point of other people's definitions of Jewishness.

Miller decided, 'there shouldn't be too much overt characterisation of Shylock's Judaism, that's the least interesting part about him.'<sup>10</sup> Miller seemed concerned that a Judaic representation would inevitably mean caricature:

It's a mistake to have the actor playing with ringlets, beards or greasy mittens.

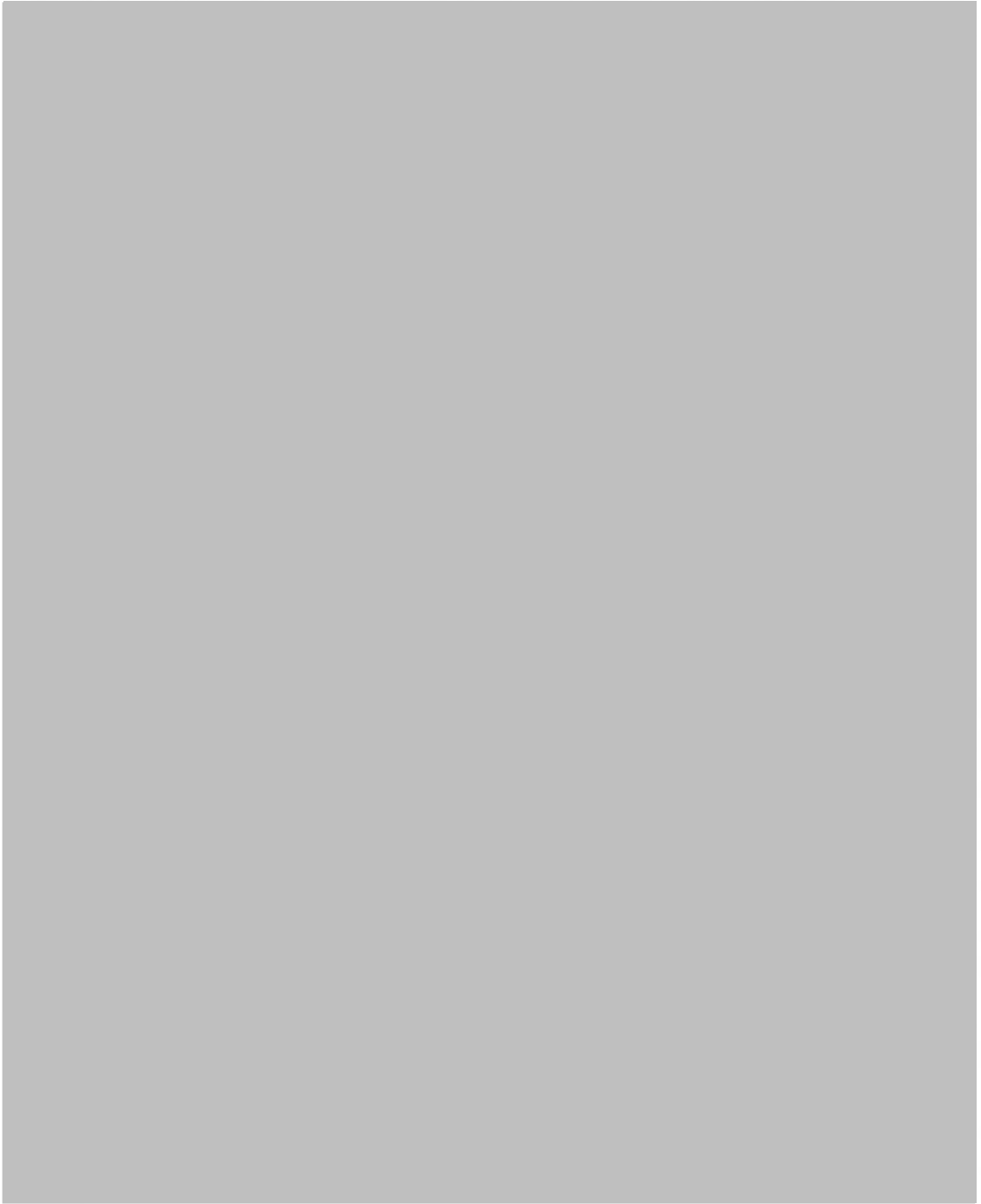
This comes from a pantomime tradition which makes Shylock into a green, money-grabbing devil shot from a hole in the middle of the stage.<sup>11</sup>

Miller needed to disabuse Laurence Olivier of his notion that Shylock's *Jewishness* needed expression through 'an elaborate make-up with a prominent hooked nose, Hassidic curls, a beard and false teeth'<sup>12</sup> Olivier rehearsed 'what he thought was a typically Jewish way of speaking English' Donald Spoto quotes Miller's later reflections: 'this would have been very vulgar [...] And being Jewish myself I could say to him, "Larry, you know this is rather a cliché not all of us sound and look that way."' <sup>13</sup> In the event, Olivier's strikingly original performance as a wealthy Victorian banker associated with the Rothschild family received an accolade from the *Financial Times* that might have pleased Miller, 'in looks he is the least Jewish Shylock ever' (figs. 19 and 20).<sup>14</sup> The *Times* remarked: 'Olivier jettisons altogether the rabbinically bearded tribal figure (on his lips the very word "tribe" approaches a sneer).'<sup>15</sup>

Miller believed that by removing the Jew of Christian tradition he could draw on Hannah Arendt's thesis that modern anti-Semitism is related to nineteenth-century capitalism and politics rather than Christianity's quarrels with Judaism.<sup>16</sup> Miller's well-judged sense of a particular Jew whose historical context was carefully delineated in *mise en scène* could not, however, escape the play's monolithic construction of the baiting of the Jew of Christian tradition. Thus the *Daily Mail* pointed out advisedly that 'the story doesn't really fit. In the 1890s the frock-coated Rothschilds did not do so badly. Nobody called them cur, wretch, devil or just plain Jew as they do to Shylock'.<sup>17</sup> The *New York Times* felt that Miller had ignored the causes of anti-Semitism in the play.<sup>18</sup>



**19 Bassanio (Jeremy Brett), Shylock (Laurence Olivier) and Antonio (Anthony Nicholls)**  
in *The Merchant of Venice*, 1970, directed by Jonathan Miller



**20** Laurence Olivier as Shylock in Jonathan Miller's production, 1970

In 1987 Antony Sher argued that ‘the racism described in Shakespeare’s text is of a particularly brutal and explicit nature’<sup>19</sup> In a brave, and what has been described as a ‘radical’ interpretation, Sher made the experience of racial abuse explicit.<sup>20</sup> His Shylock was spat at, kicked and spurned. Here *was* the rabbinically bearded figure, described by a critic in the *Bristol Evening Post*, as ‘the most Jewish Jew of Venice I have ever seen’<sup>21</sup> The *Sunderland Echo* commented: ‘the “Jewishness” is very heavily stated, not in an insultingly clichéd way but in a carefully researched portrayal of the Turkish-Jewish minority in 16th-century Venice’<sup>22</sup> In an interview with Michael Goldfarb in the *Guardian*, Sher explained that the production was set in 1620:

What that does is unleash the barbarity of the racism in the way that is exactly described in the text but which is often underplayed. When Shylock talks about being spat at and kicked that’s not something I’ve ever seen in any production of *Merchant*. I’ve never really believed that the play’s Christians are capable of that particular form of racism. But we are able to unleash that.<sup>23</sup>

Sher’s claim for a historical context of 1620 was not really explained in the interview although Gregory Doran (Solanio) later shed some light in *Players of Shakespeare 3*:

Antony Sher had chosen to play Shylock as a Levantine Turk. There were apparently three different racial types among the Jewish population in the Ghetto: German/Italian Jews, the Ponentine Jews, who had escaped the Inquisition in Portugal, and the Turks. Making Shylock an Ottoman Turk allowed the two opposing communities to have distinct cultural differences which the production could heighten. Thus the segregated Jewish quarter

might resemble a Byzantine bazaar, with the money-lenders squatting in the street clicking abacuses.<sup>24</sup>

Steve Grant in *Time Out* was not convinced and sounded a note of warning echoed by other reviewers that the 'motivation' behind the production was simplifying the historical ambivalence of Shylock's relationship to the Venetians:

Bill Alexander's production, rather inevitably, is strong on motivation and debunk, but there is a double bind here. While it helps our post-holocaust sympathies to see Sher's Jew reacting insanely to Nazi-style bullying and abuse, the truth lies somewhere else - of all places in the mediaeval or renaissance world, Venice was the one where the Semite community was more than tolerated.<sup>25</sup>

Sher's persecuted Shylock was, throughout, an alien: he was barely an 'alien friend' Michael Billington in the *Guardian* described Sher's Shylock as 'a totally unassimilated Levantine Jew' facing 'loathsome, virulent anti-semites forever spitting, quite literally, in the face of this despised alien'<sup>26</sup> Sher, a South Africa born Jew, glossed his performance with a one-man crusade against apartheid and used the theatre as a public platform upon which to make a political stand. At the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations at Stratford-upon-Avon in April, members of the Royal Shakespeare Company laid a wreath at the foot of the South African flagpole. Sher said the gesture was a tribute to those who had died for the cause of human rights in South Africa.<sup>27</sup> Bernard Levin related his experience at the Barbican:

Immediately before the performance began, the entire cast assembled on the stage, and Mr. Anthony [sic] Sher, who plays Shylock, stepped forward,

looking quite immensely pleased with himself, to read a statement no, a Statement, if not a STATEMENT.<sup>28</sup>

As Levin explained, the Birthday Performance at Stratford is preceded by a number of celebrations including the flying of the flags of all the world's nations and a procession and lunch to which every nation is invited to send a representative. Part of the 'statement' read: 'It is offensive for members of a multi-racial company to perform Shakespeare's Birthday Performance in the formal presence of a representative of the regime which supports apartheid'<sup>29</sup> Levin retorted, 'Do they really believe that South Africa's racial policies are unique?'<sup>30</sup> Levin referred to racial oppression by Bolivia, China, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Israel, Pakistan, Vietnam and others: 'If apartheid is uniquely evil, why are its manifestations ignored everywhere except in that one country? If race is the only test, why are dozens of countries which fail it excused, and only one charged?'<sup>31</sup>

Levin bridled at Sher's appropriation of the playtext for a partisan narrative of racial oppression. In fact the production's over-emphasis on a monolithic racial oppression was at odds with Sher's claim to be portraying a Levantine Jew in 1620. Shakespeare created not only the Jew of Christian tradition but the merchant Jew who had a vital role in Venice's economic life. The text grants autonomy to Shylock which explains the Venetian merchants' disquiet that his claim on the law is a valid one. Laurence Olivier's powerful frock-coated financier was in a better position to elucidate this point since his role in international banking gave him visible status. He dressed immaculately, sported a silver-topped walking cane and his house was richly furnished. His insider/outsider position was subtly inferred. In the television version, Antonio (Anthony Nicholls) and Bassanio (Jeremy Brett) came to do business with him at his home which was also his bank. When Robert Lang took over the part of Shylock

in the National Theatre production, the *Financial Times* remarked, 'Sir Laurence made him something of a social climber, but Mr. Lang's Shylock is more aware of his insurmountable position as an outsider'.<sup>32</sup> The portrayal of ambivalence, of being 'insider' (alien friend) as well as 'outsider' (alien), is I feel crucial to the play.

Bill Alexander's production emphasised Shylock's alien status by situating him 'outside' The *Financial Times* described him 'discovered in a day bed, flicking at an abacus, surrounded by scales and books, this Shylock is a gypsy Jew in a canopied lair' (fig. 21).<sup>33</sup>

*London Weekly Diary* described the Barbican Shylock:

His Jew is like a cringing, sycophantic street trader trying to persuade uninterested passers-by to buy shoddy goods. His colourful flowing Oriental robes, long unkempt hair and straggling beard and a heavy accent identify him as a man apart in Venice, a foreigner who will never conform to the social order.<sup>34</sup>

Such an extreme portrayal made it difficult for Shylock to mount an insider challenge to the Venetian court based on his 'alien friend' status in law. Instead Sher reinforced the stereotype construction of the grotesque Jew of Christian tradition who sought his enemy's blood in a terrifying ritual. Although the intention may have been to force audiences (on-stage and in the theatre) to confront their own prejudices, it ran the risk of alienating their sympathies entirely.

Michael Coveney described the effect in the *Financial Times* :

Sher presses for his pound of flesh with Hassidic fervour, suddenly bursting into Hebrew verses while donning a white shawl and bearing his miniature sabre to cut the pound of flesh.<sup>35</sup>



**21** Antony Sher as Shylock in Bill Alexander's RSC production, 1987

The reviewer in *Time Out* had noted this disjunction between the play's historicised sense of a Renaissance Venice (where the Semite community would have been tolerated) and Sher's performance of the Jew of Christian tradition (note 25) and added:

[This] hardly adds credence to Sher's climactic frenzy when, invoking the Old Testament God and spurning Portia's mercy plea, he stains a prayer shawl in blood and thus conjures up some rather unhappy ghosts in the realm of supposed ritual- murder (a crime Jews were often accused of by Adolf's own minions).<sup>36</sup>

Despite every effort to uphold the distinction between performing a type and being a type, Sher's ritual in the trial scene closed the gap. James C. Bulman described Sher's dismay when at the height of the 'ritual' the on-stage crowd screamed, then Portia stopped Shylock and the theatre audience 'spontaneously applauded'<sup>37</sup> Bulman cites Sher's comments in an interview in *Drama*: 'often, in the trial scene, when the tables are turned on me, there's a roar of delighted applause. I feel hurt by that. It's like being at a Nazi rally'<sup>38</sup>

Jonathan Miller felt he needed to get rid of the Jew of Christian tradition in order to insist on the authenticity of a social world for Shylock in the nineteenth century. Laurence Olivier portrayed an individualised Jew who was not meant to represent a homogenised Jewish nation. Here was a Jew who wore his skull cap under a silk top hat. Irving Wardle remarked in the *Times*: 'He is not a Jew of the Renaissance ghetto, but one who has come into his own in a mercantile age and can almost pass for a Christian merchant'<sup>39</sup> J.C. Trewin in the *Birmingham Post* described Olivier's Shylock as 'an alien who has sought to become as Venetian as the Venetians'.<sup>40</sup> Wardle felt Shylock was 'incurably maimed by the process of assimilation', noticeable in his incongruous speech rhythms where he appeared to copy the

intonation of the Victorian 'clubmen'<sup>41</sup> Wardle commented on Shylock's 'ghastly compound of speech tricks picked up from the Christian rich: posh vowels and the slipshod terminations of the hunting counties'.<sup>42</sup> In his first appearance in act 1, scene 3, (I refer to the televised version) Shylock is caught between the desire to use the advantage that he now appears to have over Antonio and the desire to ingratiate himself with his 'fellow' business colleagues: 'I am debatin' of my present store/And by the nee-arr guess of my memory ...' (50-51) he begins, fingering his silver-topped cane. With affected nonchalance he peruses the daily paper for current interest rates. He gives an ingratiating little laugh as he sums up the point of his story about Laban and the sheep, 'I make it breed as fast' (93). However, Olivier also suggests a *knowing* acquiescence 'Well then, it now appeeyars you need my help'(111). After accusing Antonio of spitting and kicking, Shylock intones, 'What should I say to yawr?' (117). When Bassanio becomes alarmed at the terms of the bond, Shylock rejoins, 'what should I gain/ By the exaction of the forfeitchawr'(160). By contrast Sher's pronunciation emphasised an emphatic cultural difference through a Turkish accent: 'ducats' became 'dockets'; 'Christian' became 'Chreestian'; and 'Justice' 'Jostice''<sup>43</sup>

While Olivier's performance subtly explored cultural difference through a contest for language, Bill Alexander's production exposed these conflicts as a struggle for control over actual bodies through scenes depicting physical violence. Stanley Wells described the effect of Shylock's appearance, 'he rushed in, deeply distressed, pursued by urchins, poked at with sticks, mocked by Salerio and Solanio, and with blood on his injured brow'<sup>44</sup>

It could be argued, however, that Alexander created a symbolic rather than a socio-economic locus for the persecuted Semite in the Renaissance. Miller's stage production was firmly located in the 'fin de siècle pleasures of the Café Florian on St. Mark's Square'

although the nineteenth-century realism was evoked imaginatively through literary associations.<sup>45</sup> Hilary Spurling in the *Spectator* commented:

This is the great, tarnished, iridescent city which, from its colonnades and café tables to the 'sweet, characteristic, Venetian shabbiness' of its palaces, so enchanted Henry James; his description of the Piazza might have been drawn from Julia Trevelyan Oman's paved stage, embedded on three sides in its architectural facade: 'the whole place, in its huge elegance, the grace of its conception and the beauty of its detail, was more than ever like a great drawing room, the drawing room of Europe...'<sup>46</sup>

Alexander's stage set with a chalked Star of David and an icon of the Madonna on the back wall was obviously meant to symbolise racial conflict based on religious and cultural differences (fig. 22).<sup>47</sup> The set marked an ideological space rather than a geographical locale.

Nicholas de Jongh in the *Guardian Weekly* remarked:

It is set, in Kit Surrey's massive stage design beneath a great arching Venetian bridge, upon a wooden canal-side walk, with Jewish and Christian symbols emblazoned upon the backcloth. This setting cannot convincingly suggest Belmont as well. And the Venetian mercantile atmosphere and the initial mood of melancholia, is not [sic] strongly conveyed.<sup>48</sup>

For Miller's production, the intention to ascribe well-defined architectural spaces to the action can be seen in the set drawings for the theatre designating a 'Palazzo', 'Florian's', 'Portia's salon' and 'Shylock's loggia floor'.<sup>49</sup> The linking of Belmont and Venice could be sustained through the congruity of ideas. In the Café Florian and in Portia's drawing room emotional tensions lay beneath the surface of polite manners and silver service.



**22** Ghetto setting for Bill Alexander's RSC production, 1987

John Gross objected to ‘the whole theme of assimilation and rejection’ in Miller’s production, complaining that ‘even Olivier’s magnetism could not lend credibility to a Shylock who did not grow out of either Jewish history or Shakespeare’s text’<sup>50</sup> Gross took the view that ‘Olivier’s Shylock longed for social acceptance’<sup>51</sup> This is in no way a proven point because some theatre reviews suggest that this pragmatic Shylock shared the Christians’ business world but kept aloof from their social and cultural world. Robert Waterhouse in the *Guardian* commented:

He is a prowling pedant, catching on the least sign of weakness in the opposition with wildcat cunning, working himself up into paroxysms [sic] of rage and glee; a man with his back to the wall but with plenty of power in his claws. A small town, East European Jew, charged with inherited hatred, Sir Laurence, while avoiding the typical Yiddisher accent, manages to mouth (and often spit) cantankerous alienation with every syllable.<sup>52</sup>

John Barber in the *Daily Telegraph* described Olivier’s Shylock as ‘a fierce Israelite who implacably refuses to bid for sympathy till he finally quits the stage at the end’<sup>53</sup> Barber adds, ‘No-one will forget this Shylock’s infernal dance of triumph, oddly reminiscent of Hitler at the Arc de Triomphe, when he learns that Antonio’s argosy is wrecked’<sup>54</sup> Cultural assimilation was represented as an uneven and unhappy process with Shylock ‘incurably maimed’ by it. A similar process can be identified in Tom Baker’s portrayal of the Prince of Morocco (Stephen Greif took over the role from 20 October 1971 and appeared in the televised version).

Theatre reviews (from 1970) are not detailed, variously describing Morocco as ‘recruited from a black-faced minstrel show’, ‘a wild refugee from the minstrels who draws a

shriek of panic from the two girls' and 'a property Negro, more likely to come from Liberia than Morocco'<sup>55</sup> Clive James was not impressed by the televised version (1973), remarking, 'Crippled, the evening slogged bravely on. The Prince of Morocco did a coon turn: 'As much as ah deserb! Wah, dat's de lady'.<sup>56</sup>

The National Theatre prompt-book shows that Miller conflated act 2 scene 1 and act 2, scene 6, removing the pleasantries of dinner at Belmont and making Portia (Joan Plowright) appear in control as she directs Morocco to swear an oath on the Bible agreeing to be bound by the terms of the choosing. On his first entrance, the prompt-book directs that Portia and Nerissa (Anna Carteret) 'stop and shriek as they see M'<sup>57</sup> At the line, 'I would not change this hue,/ Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen' (2.1.11-12) Morocco kisses Portia's hand and, in his enthusiasm with the 'scimitar' speech, he forces Portia upstage. Clearly, however, that initial 'stop and shriek' signalled the women's view of Morocco as a figure of ridicule rather than fear. By cutting lines 31-38, from 'But alas the while', Miller enabled Portia's line 'You must take your chance' (38) to become a tactical deflation of the boasting language of Il Capitano. This removed the suggestion in the lines that Morocco thought about the possibility of defeat. Again the omission of lines 38-59 from act 2 scene 6, beginning 'all the world desires her' cast the speech only in terms of Morocco's desires for himself and removed the contemplative poetry which placed his own suit in perspective. At his exit, the prompt-book indicates 'M strokes P's hand'<sup>58</sup> However the warmth of this apparently touching gesture is hardly reciprocated. The prompt-book indicates that Portia's 'gentle riddance' is not so 'gentle': 'Morocco: rid of !!!'<sup>59</sup>

Miller's conception of Shylock's 'Jewishness' explored complex motivations beneath a mannered social world exemplified in Olivier's alien/assimilated financier. Such complexity

clearly lay at the roots of Portia's relationship with Bassanio and becomes relevant to the treatment of Morocco. In a BBC Radio interview for *The Arts This Week* in April 1970, Miller described Portia as 'a woman of high intelligence, a great deal of command but frustrated by her wealth and by her position in a society which didn't give much role for women'.<sup>60</sup> The production suggested that the basis of Portia's partnership with Bassanio was expediency. Hilary Spurling in the *Spectator* observed:

Bassanio, though none too scrupulous and heavily in debt, is, as he explains to Portia, for all that 'a gentleman' There is something immensely seductive about this caddish streak in Jeremy Brett's Bassanio, and it is matched, in Joan Plowright's lovely, teasing Portia, by a craving as fierce as his: her need for freedom, his want of means can only intensify their mutual desire.<sup>61</sup>

Given a purposeful Portia who clearly knew what she wanted, and would ensure that she got it, the casket choosing became a tedious irrelevance. She would play out her father's charade in order to appear to be carrying out his wishes. However the choosing was heavily weighted in Bassanio's favour when under the guise of 'tea-cup etiquette' two women sang a parlour duet, emphasising the end rhyme of 'Tell me where is fancy bred' with the 'lead' of the correct casket. June Schlueter writes of the televised version:

Miller staged the musical prelude to Bassanio's choice so unsubtly that Bassanio would not have been in a more privileged position to choose had all three caskets been displayed with their lids ajar. The production not only admits Portia is cheating, but challenges its audience to resist laughing at the shamelessness with which she directs her show.<sup>62</sup>

The Christian women treated Morocco as an interloper in their social world, an entertainment for their 'show'. They drew amusement from their superiority; their shared sense of what it was to be English in the presence of the 'incurably maimed' Morocco who affected Englishness. James C. Bulman remarked:

Not the 'tawny Moor all in white' with three or four followers indicated by the stage direction, he enters alone, dressed in Victorian military regalia like a colonial officer in whom the ideal of cultural assimilation is turned to folly. His blue uniform, complete with epaulettes on the shoulders and a banner around the chest, suggests that he is the proud product of British imperialism, someone with a public school education who may do very well in his own country but should not expect to mix races with Portia.<sup>63</sup>

While Bassanio performed his part in the 'show' knowingly, Morocco seemed unaware of his entertainment value. The televised version made this apparent by cutting to a view of Portia watching Morocco from a small balcony. At the line 'pause there, Morocco' (2.7.24) the prince spoke to camera but the potential autonomy in his soliloquising was undercut by the inclusion of Portia in the frame, watching. Morocco's faulty pronunciation, like Shylock's, was a result of over-compensation in a desire to perform Englishness. Morocco pronounced 'hoo' for 'hue' and 'seelva' for 'silver'; 'What says the 'seelva' with her virgin 'hoo'?' His mispronunciation of 'qualities' undercut the personal sense of worth suggested in the lines: 'I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,/ In graces, and in 'kwa-lities' of breeding' (2.7.32-3). However, although not referred to in the National Theatre prompt-book, the televised version gave Morocco comic business that allowed him to comment upon the fanciful nature of the casket plot. On reading the scroll, 'All that glisters is not gold;/Often have you heard that

told' (2.7.65-5), Morocco paused, raised his eyes with a look of incomprehension and then continued reading. This small movement suggested that, no, he had not 'often been told' this inconsequential advice but would continue anyway. For a brilliant moment it allowed Morocco to comment on the extravagance of the casket plot, suggesting that he accepted a cultural explanation, perhaps based on English eccentricity. Thus Morocco was shown to have a view of the Christians while simultaneously being observed by them.

The Prince of Arragon was mercilessly burlesqued as a doddering aristocrat who could hardly find his way to the caskets. Audiences were encouraged to applaud Nerissa's quick thinking in moving the correct casket, when mistaking it for silver, he tried to open it. June Schlueter commented:

But in trivialising the casket plot, Miller destroys the rich connections that plot has with the rest of Shakespeare's play. We feel little of the connection among the play's several bonds and none between the comically deflated pretensions of the casket scenes and the deep essence of commitment and sacrifice in the bond plot.<sup>64</sup>

However, as I have argued, there *are* similarities in the presentation of Shylock and Morocco, related to questions of cultural identity. Olivier's Shylock does not embrace assimilation but for socio-economic reasons is forced to compromise with the Christians. He is appalled when Portia refers to him as an 'alien' at the end of the court scene because that one word revokes his status as a subject in law. He may not now claim the privileges in law of the merchant financiers of Venice, the tea-taking Victorians of the British Empire (in this production) who formed a powerful and exclusive club. Morocco's cultural identity is also defined in relation to British Imperialism and capitalist expansion in the nineteenth century but the close-up shot

of Morocco (referred to) in the televised version suggests that Morocco tolerates rather than assimilates the rules of the game.

Antony Sher established his Jewish identity through an uncompromising portrayal of cultural difference. His Ottoman Turk needed no special pleading. If he was offended, he could also be offensive. The *Financial Times* found him 'a trembling dynamo who luxuriates in the gleeful liberty of a despised underdog'<sup>65</sup> John Peter in the *Sunday Times* remarked, 'he is both servile and insolent: a combination, which with his outlandish dress and strong Levantine accent, offends all patrician sense of propriety and decorum'<sup>66</sup> Sher's manic performance in court not only offended the propriety and decorum of the Venetians but impugned their authority. Similarly the Prince of Morocco (Hakeem Kae-Kazim) unsettled order and decorum at Belmont by undermining Portia's authority. He treated her as a servant, discarding his cloak and expecting her to look after it. He drew his sword, waved it about, kissed it and handed it to Portia with obvious sexual connotations. At various points he advanced on her and forced kisses on her. She placed her hand on a Bible and crossed herself at 'swear before you choose' (2.1.40) indicating her fear lest he choose her. Through an exploration of sexual politics, the production highlighted the vulnerability of her position. However sympathies for Portia were qualified by unease at her racism. Michael Billington observed, 'Deborah Findlay's intriguing Portia is a tart, astringent figure constantly boxing people's ears and guilty, to put it mildly, of social tactlessness in dismissing Morocco with "Let all of his complexion choose me so" in front of her own black servant'<sup>67</sup> James C. Bulman described the complexity of the interpretation:

Portia is especially disdainful of the Prince of Morocco, but Alexander complicates the audience's response by making him a stereotype worthy of

her disdain. Morocco woos Portia with all the arrogance of a man who regards women as chattels.<sup>68</sup>

Deborah Findlay explained:

Both Morocco and Arragon want to dominate Portia, Morocco by machismo and Arragon by a patronizing approach. We felt that Morocco would treat a wife as his property, appropriate her physically, so there was a bit of manhandling in the scene which Portia reacted against.<sup>69</sup>

Oriental 'otherness' was emphasised throughout the production through the tantalising allure of the exotic juxtaposed with fears of barbarous deeds that threatened Christendom itself. Shylock's preparations for ritualistic murder in the courtroom were a dramatic enactment of such a threat. Similarly an element of fear was introduced into the choosing of the caskets. When Morocco finally made his choice and called for the key, Portia replied, 'There, take it, Prince, and if my form lie there,/ Then I am yours' (2.7. 61-2). In this production she handed over the key and turned away towards Nerissa. The end of the line 'then I am yours' sounded almost desperate. As she turned back slowly to know her fate Morocco lifted out a skull in both hands, whereupon Portia screamed. Morocco pulled a paper from the skull's eye socket and the audience laughed at 'I'll read the writing' when he produced a tiny scroll (fig. 23) Morocco's exit complicated playgoers' responses still further as he took his scimitar in his right hand and brought it down as if to stab himself before replacing it into the scabbard. This action suggested that his sense of masculinity (phallic power) was constructed through a sense of military honour. His failure to achieve Portia signified the loss of phallic power and the only solution, death. However, he sheathed the sword and then retrieved his cloak from



23 'I'll read the writing': the Prince of Morocco (Hakeem Kae-Kazim) in the 1987 production

Nerissa, suggesting that honour was intact and there was always another day. Summing up the interpretative strategy, John Peter in the *Sunday Times* argued:

We're clearly in a racist society. Portia's list of her suitors reeks of xenophobia, and she visibly shudders when Morocco touches her. When Shylock argues about Venetian slaves he grabs hold of a black attendant and thrusts him at the Duke: "Marry them to your heirs?"<sup>70</sup>

The production fulfilled its aims to bring out the racial tensions in the play but at some cost to the balance of the whole. Sher's improvised ritual altered the pace and balance of power in the court scene, creating some difficulties for Deborah Findlay's Portia:

The ritual included spattering blood on a sheet before Antonio's prostrate body and he [Sher] suggested that this would be a marvellous way for Portia to get the idea of 'no drop of blood' I didn't understand the scene sufficiently to counter these suggestions and so I tried to accommodate them into my motivations. This meant playing the scene in a bewildered state, buffeted by the events and grabbing onto the solution in a last desperate attempt. This may have been dramatic and therefore a very attractive interpretation, but I came to think that it was completely wrong and I had to change what I did. Portia is in control of the scene from the moment she enters.<sup>71</sup>

Findlay found the final scene almost impossible to play:

Having concentrated so much on the racism in the production, it was difficult to place this scene. Here are the men who spat at Shylock and knocked him to the ground; here is the ruling class at play. Are we expected to forget their

atrocities and be charmed by them? There was worry that the Jewish element would be forgotten in the welter of froth, and so we introduced a final image of Antonio dangling the cross above Jessica as if to say ‘you’re not really one of us’<sup>72</sup>

It is telling that the undifferentiated ‘Jewish element’ is less about Judaic-Christian controversy (the ritual was invention) than about a generalised racism, ‘you’re not really one of us’ Sher gambled that he could justify Shylock’s desire to murder Antonio by offering a historicised portrayal of an individual Levantine Jew, who was the victim of routine racial persecution. The idea sprang from Sher’s views on apartheid in South Africa:

When we read of the practice of ‘necklacing’ in the black townships we may be horrified, but can we honestly call it villainous? When a society is mad, can we expect its citizens to behave rationally? Seen in this light Shylock’s actions become perfectly natural.<sup>73</sup>

In setting out to justify Shylock’s actions, Sher wanted to show how racial hatred grows out of control and people act irrationally on the spur of the moment. Findlay explained that Portia was to appear ‘buffeted by events’ However, from his first appearance in act 1 scene 3, Shylock is shown less as a man acting on impulse than as someone reflecting on his relationship with Antonio over a long period of time. The *Daily Telegraph* accused Sher of dishonesty:

Finally, this is a dishonest performance, the actor taking it upon himself to decide that some of Shylock’s speeches are to be delivered at face value, and others not. He plays Act 1’s “How like a fawning publican he looks” as

though Shylock is joking in order to underline his sincerity in Act III's "Hath not a Jew eyes?"<sup>74</sup>

Act 1 is of course important in establishing a *version* of Judaic-Christian controversy connecting the issue of usury with an ideological construction of the Jew's perversion of scripture for his own purposes in the Laban story. Judaic-Christian tensions are important because the play makes Shylock a man able to *argue* not just *react* to events. His power of argument is associated with a Judaic tradition. Olivier's Shylock gave an ostensibly polite but considered performance as he appraised the needs of his enemies in Act 1 scene 3, suggesting contemplation. This served Olivier well later when the controlled politeness broke down and his misery over Jessica was articulated as a need to reclaim strength through his Judaism. Miller had thought Shylock's Judaism the least important thing about him but Herbert Kretzmer (reviewing Miller's production at the Old Vic) remarked in the *Daily Express*:

One of the better ideas of Miller's original but misguided production is to end it with Jessica, the Jew's daughter, not about to enter a life of silly pleasures but beginning to feel the deep inroads of guilt and doubt. In the background she, and we, can hear the eternal wail and lamentation of Orthodox Jewish prayer. It is an inspired moment, and one was grateful for it.<sup>75</sup>

This would suggest that despite the emphasis on his socio-economic function in the British Empire of the nineteenth century, Shylock's cultural identity and a sense of a Jewish history was reclaimed. However, the tendency to romanticise a monolithic 'Jewish history' through this final motif in the theatre must be countered by the production's relationship with the

contemporary 'Jewish' world. The televised version and its preservation on video cassette created anxiety. The *Daily Express* reported:

A riveting performance by Lord Olivier in "The Merchant of Venice" on American television has been widely praised. But it has also landed the British actor in hot water with nearly all America's Jewish organisations. His portrayal of Shylock has been condemned by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, a charitable organisation upholding Jewish rights. Its national director Benjamin Epstein called the programme "a disservice to American unity" And he added: "This classic anti-Semitic drama has caused incalculable harm to Jewish people over the centuries."

Joining the attack is the National Jewish Community Advisory Committee which said Shakespeare's off-hailed masterpiece "perpetuates the anti-Semitic theme" <sup>76</sup>

**3. 'The Search for Authenticity': John Caird's Production of *The Merchant of Venice* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon (1984) and David Thacker's Royal Shakespeare Company Production at Stratford-upon-Avon and London, 1993-1994.**

What do we mean by the term 'authentic'? The term recurs in discussions of the recently-opened reconstruction of the Globe Theatre. Andrew Gurr includes a sub-heading, 'The Wanamaker Reconstruction: authenticity and the convergence of expertise' in a chapter of *Shakespeare's Globe Rebuilt* (1997), edited by J.R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring.<sup>1</sup> Gurr writes, 'Confidence in the final design comes above all from the consistency with which the concept of authenticity is maintained'<sup>2</sup> In a conference paper Gurr argued, 'The main display of 'authenticity' in the 1997 season of plays was in the *Henry V* costumes' which were made in original fabrics.<sup>3</sup> In a note, 'Some after-questions about "authenticity"', he posed the question, 'How much can we say the relative success of *Henry V* compared with the others has to do with its "authenticity"? It is still a very long way from "authentic", if that means an attempt to reconstruct the original performing conditions'<sup>4</sup> I would argue that 'the original performing conditions' include not only the materiality of the working stage but the materiality of ideology and audience reception. The controversy aroused by John Caird's RSC production in 1984 revealed this fracture in our understanding of 'authenticity' Ian McDiarmid who played Shylock sought historical veracity and even researched his subject by visiting Venice and Jerusalem. He wanted to understand Shylock as a 'ghetto victim' in an authentic Venetian mercantile world.<sup>5</sup> The production, which opened on 5 April 1984, aroused the wrath of William Frankel in the *Times* (17 April) whose criticism resulted in changes to the Royal Shakespeare Company theatre programme.<sup>6</sup> Commenting on 'a series of infamous anti-Jewish writings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries' in the six-page

anthology of quotations, Frankel flared: ‘Were they included to add authenticity to the production? And does the search for authenticity justify the perpetuation of the malevolent stereotypes still capable of influencing impressionable minds?’<sup>7</sup> Frankel averred that McDiarmid played the part of Shylock ‘as it might have been in Shakespeare’s time- comic, villainous and avaricious, cruel and insolent in success, servile in defeat - everything in fact, apart from the hooked nose and devil’s costume’<sup>8</sup> Clearly this was not the director’s intention and indeed not all reviewers were incensed. J.C. Trewin remarked in the *Birmingham Post* that McDiarmid’s Shylock was ‘hardly the full scale “cormorant” the Elizabethan would have known’ but rather ‘a closely considered, very Hebraic Jew’<sup>9</sup> A spokesperson for the Royal Shakespeare Company defended the theatre programme by arguing that the quotations which began with a text from Erasmus, ‘If it is part of a good Christian to detest Jews, then we are all good Christians’, had been read out of context.<sup>10</sup> The Company later added further notes to the programme explaining that the choice of Medieval and Renaissance sources was meant ‘to reflect the ignorance, prejudice and cruelty of the prevailing opinion in Shakespeare’s day’<sup>11</sup>

While McDiarmid sought authenticity in fifteenth and sixteenth century Venice, David Thacker read ‘Venice’ as meaning a vibrant financial world and sought a modern equivalent in ‘today’s City of London’<sup>12</sup> The *Daily Telegraph* headline read ‘Shylock in the Square Mile’<sup>13</sup> Benedict Nightingale in the *Times* described Shelagh Keegan’s ‘split-level set with its steel stairs, walkways and vast slanting tubes’ and remarked, ‘this is hardly a Venice of gondolas and guitars or, for that matter, palazzos and Doges’<sup>14</sup> Shylock was first seen ‘in his shirtsleeves in front of his laptop’ in a high-tech business world of computers, mobile phones, faxes and credit cards.<sup>15</sup> However, while some reviewers pointed out the

contradictions of the updated version - 'why are all these yuppies using so many words?'- Thacker's interpretation was perfectly sound.<sup>16</sup> After all, it is very likely that Shakespeare transposed English contexts to Italy. I have referred in the early part of my discussion to Walter Cohen's argument linking the commercial worlds of Venice and London. For many London playgoers in the sixteenth century, Venice provided the locus that captured imaginatively a context for their own mercantile experience; we might call this an 'authentic' context. David Calder, who played Shylock, felt a contemporary context was perfectly reasonable, and explained to Heather Neill in the *Times*:

Every time Shakespeare is put on it's an interpretation. The fact that the plays are still done means that Shakespeare is still alive; he is not a piece of porcelain which might crack.<sup>17</sup>

Alastair Macaulay in the *Financial Times* remarked on 'the revealing audacity of Thacker's production which makes us see Shylock and Venice with new eyes'<sup>18</sup>

The respective roles of the Prince of Morocco ( Hepburn Graham in 1984 and Ray Fearon in 1993) were played quite differently in each production. Interpretative decisions were related to different conceptions of Belmont, which seemed subsumed to the Venetian locus in Caird's production, but was distinguished as a mythical healing world in Thacker's version.

From the best of motives Ian McDiarmid sought Jewish 'authenticity', explaining to John Higgins in the *Times* that Shylock would be 'just as Jewish as I can make him, although I am not a Jew'<sup>20</sup> McDiarmid argued that 'any actor playing a Jew has a responsibility to the Jewish people and also to the audience to do some research'<sup>20</sup> As argued in the previous

section, the encompassing terms 'Jewish' and 'Jewish people' are problematic, a point that Thacker's production was mindful of. Not all Jews are Zionists, or even recognise the state of Israel. When David Calder's Shylock adopted extreme measures, Tubal (Nick Simons) made it clear that he would share no part. Shylock's actions had gone one step too far. The *Independent* remarked, 'Shylock's fellow Jew, Tubal, is driven to disown him'<sup>21</sup> Caird's production did not make this distinction for a modern audience, looking for a sense of authenticity in the past and arguably underestimating the relentless pressure of the present. McDiarmid explained in *Players of Shakespeare 2* that from the outset he made one stipulation: 'the production should be set in Renaissance Venice'<sup>22</sup> The search for 'Shakespeare's Jew' (McDiarmid's expression) appears to have been linked to an idealistic pursuit of an authentic Judaic tradition. McDiarmid visited Venice and Israel:

I encountered Mea She'arim, an uncompromising pocket of individuality. Here, about one thousand ultra-Orthodox Jews live the life of the Polish 'shtetl' Here too live the extremist sect called the Neturei Karta, who do not recognise the state of Israel, as its proclamation was not preceded by the coming of the Messiah. The men dress in long black frock coats, with tieless white shirts and let their hair grow long over their ears into carefully curled ringlets called 'peyot'<sup>23</sup>

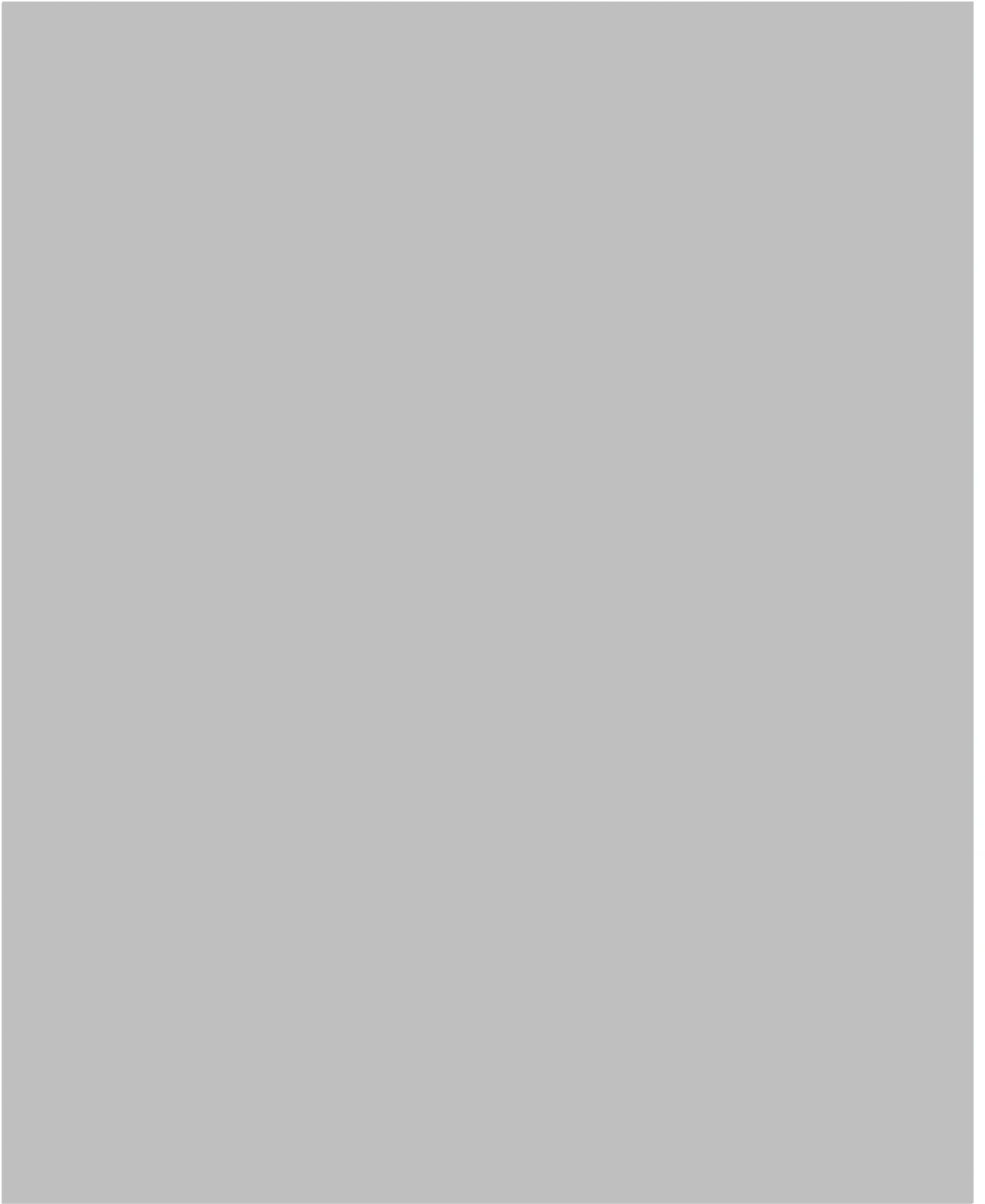
McDiarmid reflected on his visit to Venice, 'In the city of Venice, the past seems so tangible that any intimation of the present seems anachronistic. American Express seems the ultimate absurdity'<sup>24</sup> Thacker's production took the opposite view. The cover of the 1993 theatre programme displays a pile of gold coins; the emphasis in this production was on making money in the city. In a world of 'pushy young men on the make' it seemed perfectly natural

to see Antonio ( Clifford Rose) ‘settling the bill for a boozy business lunch with his gold credit card’<sup>25</sup> Both productions, in fact, seemed to be trying to identify Shylock’s role within an ‘authentic’ commercial world and to critique capitalism.

Lisa Jardine’s exploration of mercantilism and commodities in *Worldly Goods* lends support to Caird’s much-maligned set, designed by David Ultz, and described by Martin Hoyle in the *Financial Times*: ‘the show is almost stolen by the sets, rich hangings in patterned red and ochre, whose hint of the Orient recalls Venice’s Eastern Empire’<sup>26</sup> Jardine’s ‘Prologue’ includes analysis of *The Annunciation with St Emidius* (1486), a large painting by Carlo Crivelli:

This virtuoso painting is every bit as much a visual celebration of conspicuous consumption and of trade as it is a tribute to the chastity of Christ’s mother [...] The Virgin Mary’s surroundings gather together desirable material possessions from across the globe. They announce with pride Italian access to markets from northern France to the Ottoman Empire. Here is a world which assembles with delight rugs from Istanbul, tapestry hangings from Arras, delicate glass from Venice, metalwork from Islamic Spain, porcelain and silk from China, broadcloth from London. The artists has represented with loving-care the covetable commodities which by the mid-fifteenth century could be procured for ready money.<sup>27</sup>

Ultz’s designs were criticised as ‘bizarre and outlandish’, although, Martin Dodsworth in the *Times Literary Supplement*, saw the point: ‘the effect is sumptuous: the wealth of Venice manifest in an oriental interior’ (fig. 24).<sup>28</sup> However, most reviewers commented unfavourably on the enormous period pipe organs complete with players, and the



**24** Set design by Ultz in John Caird's RSC production, 1984

extraordinary mechanical arms controlling the caskets. The writer in the *Leamington Spa Courier* indulged in a more personal view: 'I feel that whoever dreamed up these life-sized ornamental tea urns should be taken outside and shot at dawn'<sup>29</sup> However, the same reviewer also noted Shylock's economic function in this stage world of sumptuous commodities:

It is not an overstatement to say that most of the European economy in the Renaissance rested in the hands of the Jews, and nowhere more so than in Venice. [...] Ian McDiarmid's performance is a colossal piece of virtuoso acting, the like of which one rarely sees. He flutters, black-garbed around the red and gold richness of the stage, a constant reproach to the glittering playboys whose extravagances his ducats underwrite.<sup>30</sup>

Jardine researched the practice of 'underwriting' She refers to 'an elaborate collection of financial arrangements, stimulated by the growth in the exchange of goods and services' in the fifteenth century.<sup>31</sup> She describes the transactions of the Augsburg merchant Jakob Fugger in 1491 who lent the future Emperor Maximilian more than 200,000 florins to finance his wars and in return was given exclusive rights to profitable copper and silver mines.<sup>32</sup>

Although the thematic conception in Caird's production made sense, the realisation of 'Shakespeare's Jew' was fraught with contradiction. If Shylock was linked with the Fugger bankers he would appear to be a man of great wealth and power but the production wanted to show that he was a ghetto victim. His autonomy was severely restricted, symbolised in the pointed yellow hat that he was forced to wear. McDiarmid had visited the Jewish Quarter, the Ghetto Nuovo, in Venice and commented: 'I was fascinated to see that all the windows looked inward towards the square. None looked outward to the city and the sea beyond. So, I

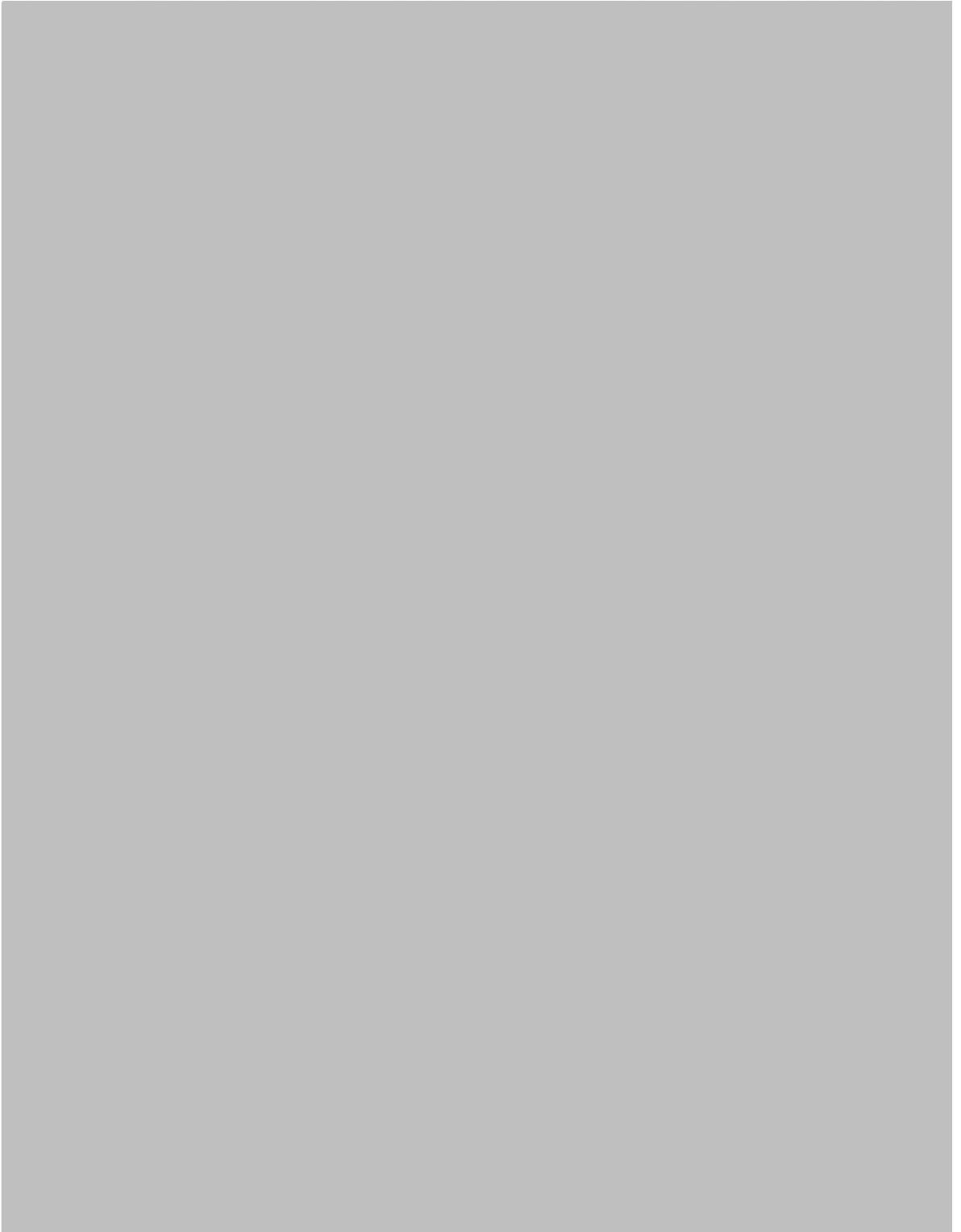
extrapolated, the Jew was not permitted to look outwards'<sup>33</sup> Caird's production made Shylock a prisoner of his own success; he was trapped by the Venetians' economic dependence. McDiarmid imagined how Shylock's meeting with Antonio would take place in 'an opulent salon; a monument to wealth and privilege'.

A dunce's cap peeped through the curtained walls. 'Three thousand ducats-well.' The Jew stands in traditional garb, black silk coat, red hair, ringlets, his beard shaped, as if to emphasise his vulpine features, blinking in amazement at this Aladdin's cave of capitalism. The exotic outsider is permitted a glimpse of 'civilised' Christian society. Allowed, for once, to remove his ugly yellow 'badge', he reveals his 'yarmulke' and gleefully sets about subverting the conventional morality, satirising the hypocrisy of 'Christian values' in terms of profit and loss.<sup>34</sup>

Of course there is no indication in the playtext where this scene takes place but the general direction of the action suggests a sense of Bassanio and Antonio seeking out the merchant usurer whose help they need. Indeed it appears that Bassanio has already found Shylock and enters with him. There is much to be gained in establishing the autonomy of the 'outsider' as Miller did by having the 'bank' within Shylock's home or as Sher did by having his own demarcated place on the streets of Venice. In both cases playgoers are invited to take Shylock's point of view as he observes the Christians who need his money. Caird's version may have been too subtle. It could be argued that in reversing the point of view Shylock's first entrance suggested his inferior status; he is 'permitted a glimpse' of the opulent salon. However, the theatre audience was being asked to view Shylock through the eyes of the decadent Christians and *at the same time* see the Christians as Shylock saw them. The

*Financial Times* and the *Guardian* capture the Christians' view of him; Shylock's appearance is grotesque, 'a cabbalistic figure in a pointed yellow hat'; he is 'encased in thrifty gaberdine [...] a despised alien' (fig. 25).<sup>35</sup> The *Times* described the Christians: 'the Venetian blades are an interchangeable group of bespangled youths'<sup>36</sup> They were dressed in 'variations on matador costumes plus cod-pieces' in sequined white and rose except for Antonio, a melancholy figure in sequined black.<sup>37</sup> The grotesquerie recalls Komisarjevsky's fantastication, tying the actors to an exploration of ideas through a dominating stylistic conception. Martin Dodsworth's remark that 'the whole cast needs to feel more at home with the play' was revealing.<sup>38</sup> Antonio (Christopher Ravenscroft) was described as 'oddly unexpressive' while Frances Tomelty's Portia had 'an intense, hard-driven quality that makes her playfulness a trifle heavy-handed'.<sup>39</sup>

Nicholas Shrimpton found that 'any sense of ideological distinction between Venice and Belmont was impossible when a single, sumptuous set was used for both places'<sup>40</sup> On reflection, McDiarmid agreed that the designer had 'unintentionally , created an imposition'<sup>41</sup> Martin Hoyle remarked: 'Three man-sized urns are trucked into Belmont on cranes to do duty for Portia's caskets. The designer Ultz in characteristic mood has placed automata inside: a creaking skeleton, a winking jester, and a waxwork Portia'<sup>42</sup> Michael Billington commented in the *Guardian* that apparently Portia's father was 'a singularly malign practical joker'<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, the Prince of Morocco (Hepburn Graham) did very little with the role. The management of his defeat, however, was of interest. The disembodied booming voice of Portia's father admonished the failed suitors with the appropriate verses, usurping their autonomy as 'readers' of their own fate. The sonorous voice of Portia's father disabled the suitors' responses and functioned as the voice of Empire and of patriarchal control.



**25** Ian McDiarmid as Shylock in the 1984 production

Stylistically the set suggested the power of spectacle and ritual to overwhelm the subject, having an ideological function like the Jacobean masque. Thus the very visible mechanical structures overhead were metaphorically associated with the invisible networks of power which linked Shylock's economic function with Morocco's representative function as exotic outsiders (fig. 26). Shylock peeped into the 'Aladdin's cave' of oriental riches, a mythologising account of commodities imported from the material world where the Muslim prince would in reality exert power and influence.

However if the disembodied voice of Portia's father represented patriarchal control she seemed hardly to be suffering from this consequence. Irving Wardle commented in the *Times*:

Worst among the principals is Frances Tomelty's Portia, a confident, insensitive bachelor girl who begins by making gleefully malicious fun of her suitors, and finally takes vengeful pleasure in making Bassanio squirm over the lost ring. Anything less like a woman in love or a girl reluctantly bound to the will of a dead father it would be hard to imagine.<sup>44</sup>

The production was criticised for 'interpretative failure' and Wardle concurred, 'the production adds to the distortion in the Morocco scene where Portia, after triumphantly declaring "Let all of his complexion choose me so", goes out affectionately, arm in arm with her black Nerissa (Josette Simon).<sup>45</sup>

David Thacker's production had a strong interpretative direction which arguably overcame the contradictions implicit in its chosen locus, the City of London. The director explained:



26 'A carrion Death': the Prince of Morocco (Hepburn Graham) opens the casket in the 1984 production

It was just after Black Wednesday when the stock exchanges went haywire and it seemed such an anarchic few days in which people's lives were effectively destroyed or ruined, the value of money dominated everything and it suddenly occurred to me that this is essentially what happens in "The Merchant of Venice".<sup>46</sup>

There were problems in such a transposition. Charles Spencer in the *Daily Telegraph* remarked wryly, 'And what of the crucial difference between the Jew and the Christians? Are we meant to accept that Antonio's business empire has been built without benefit of interest on loans?'<sup>47</sup> Neil Smith in *What's On* described designer Shelagh Keegan's set as 'a yuppie dystopia not a million miles from the Lloyds' Building or Canary Wharf, a maze of silver columns and metallic stairways'; here David Calder's Shylock wielded financial 'clout' while Antonio (Clifford Rose) represented 'the kinder face of finance' (figs. 27 and 28).<sup>48</sup> Smith quipped, 'I mean, could you see *your* bank manager offering you an interest-free loan to woo the partner of your dreams?'<sup>49</sup> The designer also recognised the problem of 'getting' out of Venice and into Belmont'<sup>50</sup> Thacker argued:

I don't think that Belmont exists in reality. It is a spiritual place rather than a tangible one. It would be a crude reduction of the play to set it in a country house somewhere in Ascot. It's richer than that and I don't think it should be limited in a naturalistic way.<sup>51</sup>

The designer used lighting and a screen to 'set Belmont in a fluid rather than a fixed world'<sup>52</sup>

While *What's On* could not reconcile 'the Arcadian environs of Belmont' with smart suits, silk ties and cellular phones, John Gross remarked in the *Sunday Telegraph*:



27 Shylock (David Calder) greets Antonio (Clifford Rose) in Act 1 of David Thacker's 1993 RSC production  
as Tubal (Nick Simons) and Bassanio (Owen Teale) look on



**28** Shelagh Keegan's set suggests a public world of high finance against which the private space of Shylock's domestic world resonates

There is no problem with the scenes set in Portia's house in Belmont, but then Thacker rightly judges that in contrast to Venice they are virtually timeless. The action there is presented as formal and highly patterned; it takes place against an abstract backdrop, an enormous window-pane ruled into squares.<sup>52</sup>

Judged by the yardstick of naturalistic 'authenticity' incongruities could certainly be found in the production. Bryan Cheyette complained, 'By the second half of the play, the naturalism of the Thatcherite 1980s is unable to contain the mythic baggage which accumulates around Shylock as he, in this production, is turned insane by the inexplicable betrayal of Jessica'<sup>53</sup> However, I have argued earlier that Elizabethan playgoers may have appreciated the *imaginative* recreation of London's mercantile city in Venice. I feel David Thacker was right when he argued that contemporary society in his production was 'a metaphorical world of high finance' where, if Venice was the 'heart of capitalism', Belmont 'becomes the soul which Venice has lost'<sup>54</sup> It is possible I feel to accept the naturalistic dislocation that occurred when Shylock retrieved a long knife from his briefcase in the trial scene, by reading the multiple associations that attached to the mythic symbolism of the knife. Such symbolism drew on a cluster of ideas including Judaic identity and circumcision; the wounding of the sacrificed Christ, and the carrying out of retributive justice in a cause. Benedict Nightingale in the *Times*, observed of the 'City' locus:

It is a place where aggrieved money-men are more likely to stab each other in the back with metaphoric knives rather than slice bits off one another with real ones'<sup>55</sup>

Nightingale added dryly, 'we are used to making such leaps of imagination with RSC productions these days' indicating a tension between Elizabethan dramaturgy and contemporary staging.<sup>56</sup> One could argue though that the dislocation produced by the knife was interesting in itself because it made spectators think afresh about what the knife represented and the history of that representation. If the knife was viewed in naturalistic terms without its history of representation then the trial would be reduced to a local quarrel between individuals. The marking out of Antonio's exposed flesh with a felt-tip pen produced a similar dislocation; it worked through a juxtaposition of the material (the plastic marker) and the esoteric (cabbalistic 'writing'). Without the symbolic context (which in no way denied the materiality of history) Cheyette's criticism that the 'tenaciously anti-semitic message' had surfaced would in this case have some validity: 'if even an assimilated and cultured Jew can become a bloodthirsty skull-capped and gaberdined racial killer, then how can we possibly trust any of them?'<sup>57</sup> It is therefore worth enquiring how this transition was made plausible in Thacker's production. Indeed to accept the director's sense of 'authenticity' in this production spectators needed to accept the slippage between naturalistic and mythic worlds, a strategy which was indeed signposted in the structure of Shakespeare's playtext. Irving Wardle described his first impressions of Calder's Shylock:

Genial, shrewd and totally lacking in Hebraic trademarks, Calder's performance picks up from where Olivier's Edwardian Shylock stopped. This Jew is indistinguishable from any other Western businessman: and the line of the production is that it is only the loss of Jessica that drives him into vengeance.<sup>58</sup>

Michael Billington (*Guardian*, 5 June 1993) commented: ‘ in this closed financial community David Calder’s uneasily assimilated Shylock is clearly a prosperous outsider tolerated for his expertise’<sup>59</sup> This accorded well with David Calder’s own thoughts on Shylock which Heather Neill recorded in the *Times*:

There are real enough differences between the Venetian Christians and Jews, but Calder sees Shylock as making “a genuine unsentimental drive to change the situation. He is serious about his identity: he is not for integration but for co-existence”<sup>60</sup>

Crucially ‘the key to the change wrought in this successful, reasonable person is the elopement of his daughter Jessica with a Christian, and incidentally, a good deal of money. [...] he feels utterly betrayed’; moreover, the complicity of the young Christians makes ‘his attempts at equal co-existence look foolish’<sup>61</sup> Thacker’s production tackled contemporary racism but it was less overt than in Alexander’s production. Where Sher’s Shylock was the victim of routine physical abuse, Calder’s Shylock suffered the ‘simply casual, unthinking, shallow prejudice’ of the ‘crass city slickers’<sup>62</sup> David Nathan in the *Jewish Chronicle* referred to a friend’s observation at Stratford:

“Jews are so respected in the City,” he said, betraying a charming naivety, “that that kind of thing couldn’t happen there.” “The Guinness trial,” I murmured, “the polite, deadly, sly, anti-Semitism of the financial and political establishment.” Calder is fine, decent, dignified, a serious man with deep emotions, whose home life is a comfortable chair and a sonata on the record player. But inside he is a powder-keg brimful of insults until he can take no more.<sup>63</sup>

The *Daily Telegraph* remarked on the ‘marvellously touching little scene in which we see him in his own home, gazing tenderly at a photograph of his dead wife’<sup>64</sup> As noted by George L. Geckle in *Shakespeare Bulletin*, ‘his key speech is not the usual one--”Hath not a Jew eyes?--but rather his response to Tubal’s information about Leah’s ring: ‘ it was my turquoise, I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.”<sup>65</sup> Drawing on this portrayal of a Shylock of deep emotions, the production could make sense of his excessive path of destruction. The change in the inner man was translated theatrically into a change from smart business suit, silk shirt, tie and fashionable braces to tieless white shirt, gaberdine suit, yarmulke and a Star-of-David pendant. This was a clever utilisation of Renaissance drama’s exploration of subjectivity as a discrepancy between the inner and outer person. Hamlet linked the ‘customary suits of solemn black’ with the ‘dejected haviour of the visage’ and the ‘moods, shows of grief’ and ‘actions that a man might play’ (1.2.79-84).<sup>66</sup> Katharine Eisaman Maus argues that Renaissance drama explores a connection between subjectivity and legal process. She argues that ‘the English jury system, unique in Europe, made local lay people not only onlookers but participants in the revelatory process’<sup>67</sup> Thus ‘the problems of interpreting persons’ was pertinent to the law and the stage: ‘What can be seen on the stage is only part of the truth, an evidence of things not seen, or not entirely seen’<sup>68</sup> Thus, in a crude analysis, Calder’s Shylock donned the clothes associated with a Judaic tradition and his extremism was emphasised for us by Tubal’s rejection of this form of Judaism. On the other hand, Calder’s carefully sustained performance in the earlier scenes of the reasoned, shrewd, cultivated businessman jarred with such a presentation, suggesting that there were ‘things not entirely seen’ Michael Billington’s reference to ‘a closet Jew spurred to revenge’ denied the complexity of Calder’s performance.<sup>69</sup> It rather

suggested that Shylock had perpetuated a lie in the public world, by denying his *Jewishness*.

Peter Holland remarked:

Calder's approach to Shylock was extremely clear and logical. He began as a man desperate for assimilation - no skullcap for him - his voice cultured and anglicized except when he mocked the stereotype Jew his visitors expected to find ('Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last' 1.3.124). His statement 'I would be friends with you, and have your love' (1.3.136) was totally sincere and he really could not understand their gentile contempt.<sup>70</sup>

I would suggest that Calder's Shylock showed early on that yes, he did wish to dispose of the Yiddish stereotype that he could impersonate for a joke. However, he did not deny his own sense of having a separate cultural identity which is why he chose co-existence rather than assimilation. Calder's Shylock could symbolically act the part people expected him to play (rather as Sher's Shylock chose to do) but he also suggested that these outward shows did not express all there was to tell about him. Russell Jackson commented: 'David Calder's Shylock seemed at first to have been thoroughly assimilated into Gentile society, as emphasized by the presence in his first scene of Tubal, who, unlike his friend, wore a yarmulke.'<sup>71</sup> However, 'the loss of Jessica was the turning point in this Shylock's life and in the production as a whole' and his 'carefully cultivated urbanity left him; the assimilation had been revoked'<sup>72</sup> The rigidity of purpose he assumed, could not prevent a sob of pain in the trial scene at the thought of his daughter Jessica. However, to achieve this more sympathetic Shylock it may be the case, as Arnold Wesker has argued, that Thacker had re-jigged and imposed on the play.<sup>73</sup> Benedict Nightingale remarked of the Barbican production, 'Calder cuts a somewhat harder, more formidable figure in the early scenes than at Stratford last year;

but he is still much more sympathetic than the text demands' <sup>74</sup> Alan Dessen argued that Thacker 'took the refashioning of Shylock farther than any other production I have seen' <sup>75</sup> He described 'the major rewriting' in 3.1:

Most obviously, the two halves of the scene were reversed, with the Shylock - Tubal section coming first (although without the "fee me an officer" punch line), to be followed (rather than preceded as in the received text) by the taunts from Salerio and Solanio. The famous "Hath not a Jew eyes?" speech was, therefore, generated or "motivated" not only by the venom of the Venetian Christians (as scripted by Shakespeare) but also by the news of Jessica's escapades (news which in the Quarto follows the speech). <sup>76</sup>

Dessen noted that the cuts which included Shylock's reaction to the loss of his money, 'Fourscore ducats at a sitting, fourscore ducats!' (3.1. 98-99), made Salerio and Solanio's mocking account seem unfair. <sup>77</sup>

In a chaired discussion with David Thacker, reported in the *Guardian*, Arnold Wesker commented, 'I think that my wish to write a new play is a more honest approach to the problems [...] I have not adapted Shakespeare's play. I've used the same three stories to write a completely different play' <sup>78</sup> In *The Birth of Shylock and The Death of Zero Mostel* (1997), Wesker charts the rise and fall of his play, *Shylock*, whose star, Zero Mostel, died on 8 September 1977 after giving one preview performance in Philadelphia. Wesker reflects 'upon why the major state theatres in London have resisted presenting the work' despite its initial success in Stockholm's Royal Dramaten Theatre and despite its partial success on Broadway without its star (it folded after four performances).<sup>79</sup> Wesker asks: 'Why is there such resistance? I am beginning to suspect it is other than artistic. 'Leave us the Jew,' the

theatre establishment seems to be saying, 'we need to be allowed the pleasure of forgiving the Bard's Semitic villain whom we hate. Tamper with him not.'<sup>80</sup>

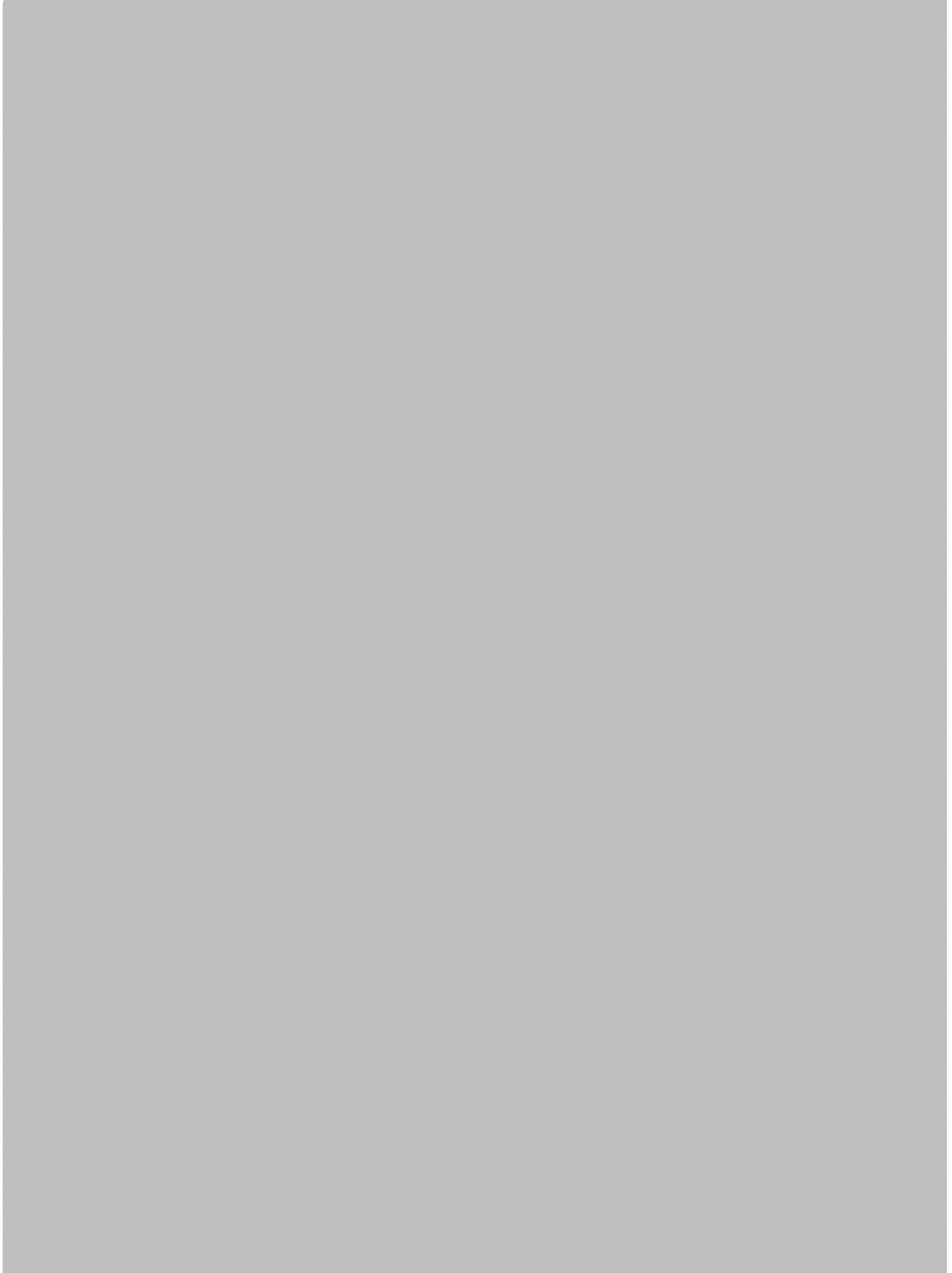
Thacker's attempts to soften the play's racism, for example by cutting Shylock's line 'If I can catch him once upon the hip'(1.3.43), was not confined to Venice but also extended to Belmont. Portia ( Penny Downie) did not say 'Let all of his complexion choose me so' upon Morocco's exit. In fact she was particularly sensitive to his hurt feelings. In some respects the casket scenes were rather unusual, Paul Lapworth remarking in the *Stratford-Upon-Avon Herald*, 'those who fail the test, Ray Fearon's Morocco and Robert Portal's Arragon, are brilliantly conceived portraits of mistaken attitudes to life. Their discomfiture held the audience spellbound with scarce a hint of a laugh'<sup>81</sup> Penny Downie was mindful of Ellen Terry's understanding of Portia:

Portia is the fruit of the Renaissance, the child of a period of beautiful clothes, beautiful cities, beautiful ideas. She speaks the language of inspired poetry.

Wreck that beauty and the part goes to pieces.<sup>82</sup>

Deborah Findlay had obviously struggled with the cynical portrayal required of her in Bill Alexander's production, and Frances Tomelty's insensitive Portia was unable to connect with her hapless suitors. Penny Downie decided, 'you cannot play this part with a sense of cynicism. It is not part of Portia's make-up. To make sense of the person that she is in this 1993 version any signs of cynicism or prejudice have been jettisoned'<sup>83</sup> Downie was aware, however, that modern audiences would be alert to feminist and post-feminist questions- 'would a modern woman allow herself to go through the sort of barter system that the casket scenes present?'<sup>84</sup> It was decided that Portia should wear a full-length black evening dress, it was to be 'a dress of mourning- and a statement in itself - a black wedding dress too' (fig.

29).<sup>85</sup> The dress could suggest Portia's loyalty in mourning her father as well as the imposition of her father's will on his daughter's freedom. It was also an elegant dress, recalling an earlier era, far removed from the nineties scene of disco revels in London when Jessica (Kate Duchêne) eloped. Belmont was a slower world, 'a place of reflections. There are no fax machines in Belmont! It is a place where you can be free if you choose to be so'<sup>86</sup> In effect, both Portia and the suitors would be liberated by submitting themselves to the trial of the caskets. Thus Bassanio (Owen Teale) would arrive as an unregenerate fortune-hunter but through the experience of Belmont would be shown to reverse 'his old order of priorities to celebrate inner virtue above all else'<sup>87</sup> He would be 'bereft by love rather than by the prospect of money'<sup>88</sup> Similarly, 'Penny Downie's restrained Portia and Debra Gillett's bubbling Nerissa wait like vestal virgins for princes to kiss them into life and love.'<sup>89</sup> Calder argued that Portia found love and learned to take responsibility: 'Her function is to battle for Shylock's humanity and she fails. Shylock is a man deeply flawed'<sup>90</sup> This view strikes a chord with Portia's treatment of Morocco and Arragon who were given the freedom to test themselves without being judged. Their failure to choose the correct casket was to be viewed as a learning experience but Portia took responsibility by sharing their disappointment as human beings, who like herself, sought love and acceptance. When Morocco entered he touched her face, a recognition of her beauty and a gesture of warmth rather than aggressive acquisition (as in Sher's production). Portia's line, 'Yourself, renowned Prince, then stood as fair' (2.1.20) was spoken with genuine warmth. Morocco did not produce an actual sword at the line 'By this scimitar'(25), altered to *the* scimitar, allowing the rhetorical language to appear ardent if somewhat exaggerated but certainly not inviting derisive laughter. During the speech Morocco gestured with his hands to give emphasis but spoke with dignity. As she



**29** Portia (Penny Downie) stands in front of the softly lit screen, designed to create a 'fluid' set for Belmont

advised him of the terms of her father's will, 'Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong/ Never to speak to lady afterward/ In way of marriage' (40-3), Portia spoke solicitously, advanced towards him and offered her hand. The prompt-book shows that the word 'choice' in Portia's line 'Now make your choice'(2.7.3) was underlined, in keeping with the production's view of Belmont as a place of liberation.<sup>91</sup> Portia's line, 'The one of them contains my picture, Prince./ If you choose that, then I am yours withal' (2.7.11-12) ,was spoken with absolute sincerity. At this sign of encouragement Morocco clapped his hands and knelt. The production enabled the playgoer to see a little drama unfolding in the choosing as Morocco paced between the caskets and at the line 'some god direct my judgment'(13) breathed out heavily in nervous anticipation. At the line 'this mortal breathing saint' (40) he drew out a handkerchief to wipe perspiration from his brow and in the nervous gesture of bringing his arms to the back of his neck, showed that he was undergoing a thoroughly emotional experience. The audience's laughter at 'O hell! What have we here?' (63) was a natural relief of tension but the scene ended in pathos. Portia seemed visibly affected by Morocco's ordeal and moved forward in sympathy but his resolute quick exit told its own story. Portia showed a similar concern for Arragon.

Bryan Cheyette read Morocco's performance differently, associating the anti-semitism he found in Calder's portrayal of Shylock with an ethnocentric positioning of Morocco. If Calder's cultured and assimilated Jew could become a crazed racial killer, then Morocco would also reveal a barbarous propensity to revert from culture to nature:

The distrust of the supposedly assimilated foreigner is unashamedly carried over into the casket scenes by Thacker. When the Prince of Morocco (ably played by Ray Fearon) visits Portia (Penny Downie), he does so with a

perfect Oxford accent, and he has all the comic poise of the mock-Anglicized Englishman. This civilized appearance soon disappears when he fears that he might lose Portia. As with Shylock, he reverts to type and atavistically collapses to his knees so as to pray to “some god” to direct his “judgement”.<sup>92</sup>

The prompt-book shows that Morocco kneels at the end of Portia’s line, ‘then I am yours withal’ which I have interpreted as a homage to her tribute followed by a fervent prayer that God will direct him in his choice.<sup>93</sup> Portia’s solicitousness at the close of the scene would suggest that a racist reading is not really tenable. Portia followed her sympathetic treatment of Morocco and Arragon by a final show of feeling at Shylock’s defeat. However, the decision to ‘soften’ Portia did not go unchallenged. Michael Billington urged:

Isn’t it time we also had a harder look at Portia? Penny Downie plays her, with glowing intelligence, as a decent woman visibly upset by Shylock’s forced conversion to Christianity. But isn’t there something a bit sinister about the way Portia sets the trap for Shylock telling him his suit’s so strong “that the Venetian law cannot impugn you as you do proceed”? It’s a bit late for hand-wringing when she is the one who leads him on with a blatant lie.<sup>94</sup>

Billington seemed to prefer the production after its transfer to the Barbican

Penny Downie’s Portia has toughened up her act a bit since the Stratford premiere. Then she was too much the traditional romantic heroine. Now she leaves Bassanio in no doubt as to his financial dependence: “since you were dear bought, I will love you dear”<sup>95</sup>

Paul Taylor also saw the London version, commenting on Downie's performance in the *Independent*:

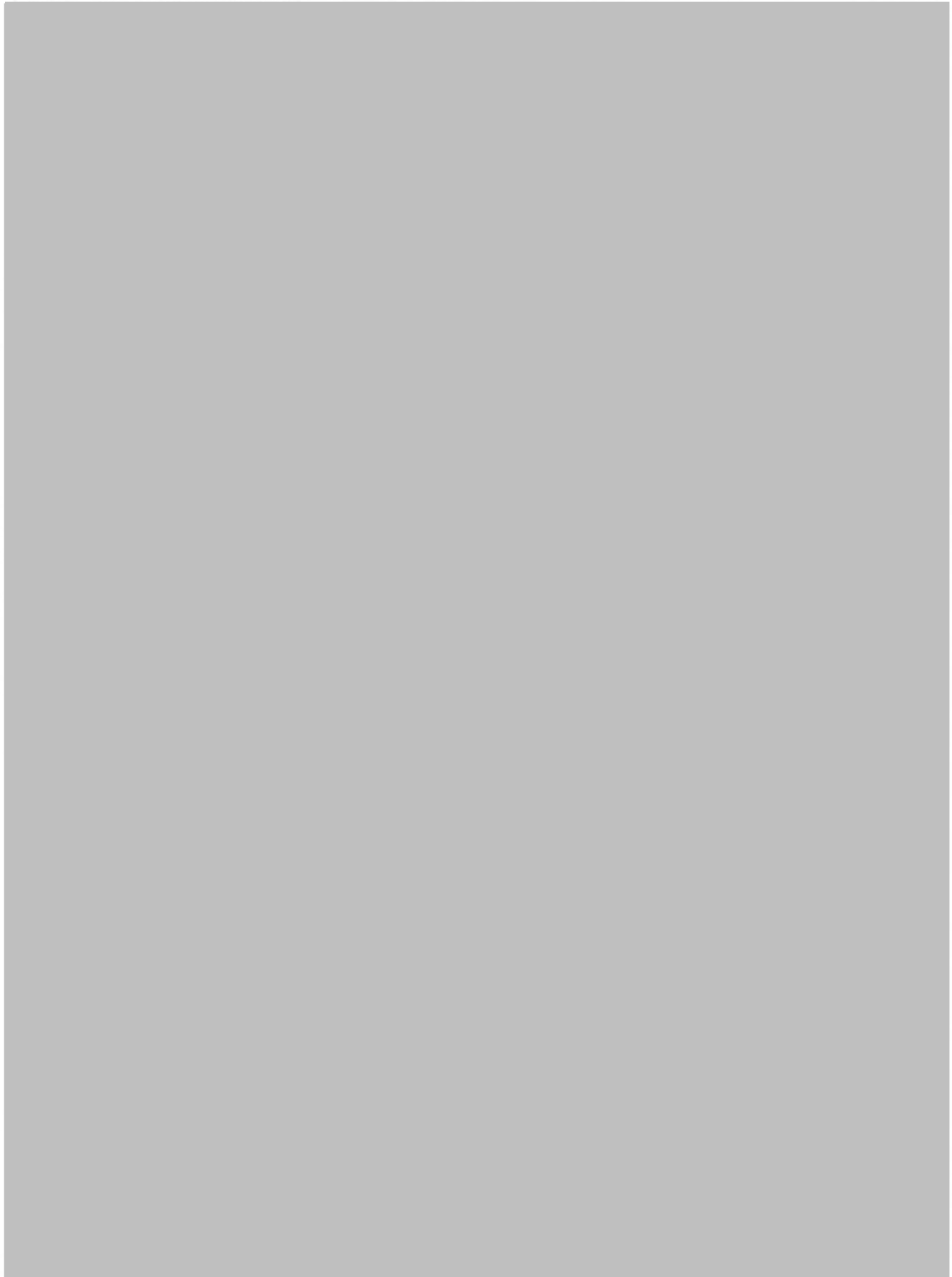
Significantly, in the court scene, the vindictive tenacity with which she eventually pursues Shylock seems to catch her off balance, as if springing from some hidden source it momentarily fazes her to recognise'.<sup>96</sup>

Robert Gore-Langton, reviewing the Barbican production for the *Daily Telegraph* referred to 'Penny Downie's tender if self-serving Portia'.<sup>97</sup>

It would seem that the play's inherent incongruities rose to the surface. However Calder's Shylock laid a claim to playgoers' sympathies that gave the trial scene a new perspective. The *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* commented, 'the final unforgettable image of Act Four is David Calder's speechless broken Shylock alone in Venice' (fig. 30).<sup>98</sup> It was possible to be moved by Calder without applauding Shylock's actions because of the perspective granted through Tubal's point of view. Tubal acted like a 'Chorus' figure enabling spectators to see the discrepancy between Shylock's achieved co-existence in the financial world of the City and the distortion of personal revenge. Peter Holland remarked:

Thacker increased Tubal's presence in the play. He was onstage in 1.3 when Bassanio and Antonio come to borrow the money from Shylock. David Calder's Shylock really did not have the 3,000 ducats available (1.3. 51-4) and Tubal's whispered offer solved the problem: 'Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,/ Will furnish me' (55-6).<sup>99</sup>

Tubal's withdrawal of support registered for the playgoer the need to distinguish Judaism from the falsified 'Jewish' creed of Christian tradition. As Holland noted: 'When Shylock announced 'I will have the heart of him if he forfeit' (3.1. 117-18) he put his hand firmly on



**30** David Calder as Shylock, costumed to represent a Judaic tradition, wears a gabardine suit, yarmulke and 'Star of David' pendant in the 1993 production

an open book, a prayer book I presume, on his desk and Tubal registered horror at this abuse of religion.<sup>100</sup>

If the struggle for 'co-existence' in Venice had proved vain, the prospect of finding it in Belmont was by no means clear cut. Michael Billington observed, 'there's a fine moment when her [Portia's] social poise is suddenly thrown by discovering her enemy's daughter Jessica, drifting around in her garden'<sup>101</sup> The production also gave another twist to Shylock's alienation by paralleling this with Antonio's final sense of exclusion at Belmont. At the end of the trial scene Shylock was knocked to the ground. Left alone, he crawled to the chair in which Antonio had sat during the trial. Shylock finally rose slowly clutching this chair and then abruptly he faced the audience. At the close of the Belmont scene Portia and Bassanio attempted to draw Antonio into their new-found amity by taking his hands but the final image was of Antonio, a sad homosexual, left on his own centre stage. The old adversaries had fought tremendous emotional battles and had been defeated.

While Caird superimposed Belmont onto a world of Venetian commodities in Ultz's opulent set, Thacker attempted to clear a space for a different kind of world, a spiritual world at Belmont. Caird's production was staged in 1984 at the height of monetarist policy-making during Thatcher's term of office. Thacker's production in 1993 was at enough of a distance to reflect on Thatcher's 'yuppie' culture (as Bill Alexander's *The Taming of the Shrew* did in 1992) and to present a critique of capitalism that could also imagine new possibilities. Thacker argued, 'Belmont offers us something that can renew and reform. It allows the quality of mercy to spread throughout the whole civilization and heal'<sup>102</sup> A discernible difference in the sympathetic treatment of Shylock and Morocco

suggested a will to achieve this, as well as a new sensitivity to emotional as well as political responses to questions of 'alien' co-existence in British cultural life.

**References: Chapter Three**

**'If it be proved against an alien' : The Linking of Shylock and the Prince of Morocco in *The Merchant of Venice***

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69. *Guardian*, 5 June 1993.
70. Peter Holland, ‘Shakespeare Performances in England, 1992-1993’, *Shakespeare Survey* 47 (1994), pp. 181-207, p. 197.
71. Russell Jackson, ‘Shakespeare Performed: Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon 1993 - 4’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 45, 1 - 4 (1994), pp.332 - 348, p. 341.
72. Ibid., p. 342.
73. Claire Armitstead, ‘The Trial of Shylock’, *Guardian*, 13 April 1994.
74. *Times*, 12 April 1994.
75. Alan C. Dessen, ‘The Image and the Script: Shakespeare on Stage in 1993’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 12, 1 (1994), pp. 5-8, p. 6.
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 Wesker set his play *Shylock* in the Jewish Ghetto of Venice, making Shylock (a loan banker) and Antonio (a merchant) old friends. Wesker writes: ‘But how could such friends enter into an absurd bond for a pound of flesh? Research showed that no dealings could be entered into with a Jew without contract. This becomes one of the pillars late on in the play. Antonio

needs to borrow three thousand ducats to lend to his godson. Shylock would prefer to give him the money without a contract, but Antonio points out that the laws of Venice do not permit this' Arnold Wesker, *The Journalists: The Wedding: Feast: Shylock*. Penguin Plays (London: Penguin Books, 1974-1977; Penguin: 1980-1990), p.182.

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## CHAPTER 4

**'THE QUEEN'S TWO BODIES' : OPHELIA AND THE SUCCESSION QUESTION  
IN *HAMLET***

Marie Axton has written about 'The Queen's Two Bodies', developing an argument raised first by Ernst Kantorowicz in *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (1957). Kantorowicz explored an idea of kingship found in Edmund Plowden's *Reports* (collected and written under Queen Elizabeth I) that 'the King has in him two Bodies, viz., a Body natural, and a Body politic'<sup>1</sup> English crown lawyers argued that a decision made by Edward VI, Elizabeth's predecessor, in respect of a lease of lands of the Duchy of Lancaster remained valid although the King acted while not yet of age.<sup>2</sup> Queen Elizabeth had wanted to invalidate the grant in order to 'give the land to someone of her own choosing'<sup>3</sup> The grant of land by Edward VI was upheld because:

His Body natural (if it be considered in itself) is a Body mortal, subject to all Infirmities that come by Nature or Accident, to the Imbecility of Infancy or old Age, and to the like Defects that happen to the natural Bodies of other People. But his Body politic is a Body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government, and constituted for the Direction of the People, and the Management of the public weal, and this Body is utterly void of Infancy, and old Age, and other natural Defects and Imbecilities, which the Body natural is subject to.<sup>4</sup>

Marie Axton explores the significance of this idea in relation to the succession question, showing how Plowden utilised the concept to press the 'right of succession of Mary Queen of Scotland' <sup>5</sup> The English Parliaments had repeatedly urged Elizabeth I to marry and produce an heir and to name a successor. By making the 'Body politic' separate from the 'Body natural', the Crown lawyers emphasised the continuance of the Body politic for the 'Direction of the People' over and above the claims of the Body natural, that is the body belonging to the individual ruler. As Axton notes, 'Kantorowicz sees the resultant political theology as an inevitable part of the process which led to the Puritan Revolution'.<sup>6</sup> Kantorowicz finds a very precise articulation of the legal concept of the King's Two Bodies in Shakespeare's *Richard II*. He argues that Shakespeare 'eternalized' the metaphor: 'he has made it not only the symbol, but indeed the very substance and essence of one of his greatest plays: *The Tragedy of King Richard II* is the tragedy of the King's Two Bodies' <sup>7</sup> Referring to the idea of 'The Queen's Two Bodies', Axton writes:

It was because the future stability of the realm seemed at stake during the succession controversy that a legal metaphor defining the relationship between sovereign and perpetual state reached out beyond the courts of law to influence writers, polemicists and playwrights <sup>8</sup>

Axton relates the 'legal metaphor' to *Gorboduc*, Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, Greene's *James IV*, Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, *Henry V*, *King Lear* and his poem *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. Taking *Hamlet* as a case study, I want to explore Greenblatt's idea of cultural exchange as 'metaphorical acquisition', by utilising Axton's concept of the 'legal metaphor' of 'The Queen's Two Bodies'.<sup>9</sup> Axton clearly views the public theatre as enabling political questions to be asked, 'the public stage of the 1590s was the freest open forum for political

speculation'.<sup>10</sup> Greenblatt's concept of 'metaphorical acquisition' on the other hand, suggests that public stages 'acquire' and process political questions so that they are articulated through less obvious and more distorted forms of representation. His references to 'distortion' and 'displacement' draw on Freudian concepts including Freud's distinction between 'the *manifest content of the dream*' and the censored '*latent dream-thoughts*': 'dream-images have to be regarded as something distorted, behind which something else must be looked for, something *not* distorted, but in some sense objectionable'<sup>11</sup> Historians and literary critics have studied the ways in which Queen Elizabeth I was represented in the period and have drawn attention to what was perceived as the anomalous (and, possibly 'objectionable'), concept of the 'King' in a female body. I want to consider how a legal metaphor that defined a 'split' subject as 'Body natural' and 'Body politic' might appear in displaced or distorted form in *Hamlet* (a play written around 1600, at the height of the succession crisis) through the split individuation of Ophelia and Hamlet.

Feminist critics have struggled to establish any sense of autonomy for Ophelia and her dramatic function has mostly been explained relative to Hamlet. Jacques Lacan's tortuous explication of 'The Object Ophelia' describes how Ophelia becomes 'the phallus, exteriorized and rejected by the subject as a symbol signifying life'<sup>12</sup> More recently Michele Pessoni gives an imaginative account of Ophelia as Jung's *Kore* Figure: 'the mysterious maiden/mother who has the power of creating life' but is also perceived as a threatening figure to men.<sup>13</sup> For Pessoni 'Hamlet sees in Ophelia the anima which he must either incorporate into his own psyche, or be forever possessed by'<sup>14</sup> She is 'a dreamlike creature used as a tool for the development of the male psyche'<sup>15</sup> Elaine Showalter quotes Lee Edwards 'Ophelia literally has no story without Hamlet'<sup>16</sup> Showalter resisted Lacan's

theorising of the 'Object Ophelia' and sought instead to write the history of Ophelia's representation. She argued that while it would be wrong 'to make her a tragic center' and 'to re-appropriate her for our own ends', it was also unacceptable to 'dissolve her into a female symbolism of absence' or to make Ophelia 'Hamlet's anima', reducing her to 'a metaphor of male experience'<sup>17</sup>

My argument is that we do not have to lose a sense of Ophelia's autonomy by agreeing that she is inseparable from Hamlet's individuation. We can redefine that individuation as a split site, explicable in a 'metaphorical acquisition' of 'The Queen's Two Bodies'. The 'Body natural' is not to be viewed as an essentialist position, delivering Ophelia to the culturally assigned role of 'natural' mother and wife. The 'Body natural' within the legal metaphor described, is the agent of the 'Body politic' upon whom power devolves (for example, Queen Elizabeth I). Hamlet represents the continuance of the 'Body politic', the potential for rule.

It has been argued that in order to maintain the stability of the body politic Queen Elizabeth I's natural body was mythologised in the cult of the Virgin Queen. Susan Doran catalogues the arguments:

Her virginity allowed her to be cast in portraits and literature as the moon goddesses Diana, Phoebe and Cynthia, as well as Astraea, the virgin who in Virgil's poetry had once presided over the Golden Age and would return again to restore it. Her virginity also enabled her to exploit the coincidence of her birth date, 7 September, with the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary and claim a symbolic kinship with the mother of Christ. These public personae were obviously incompatible with marriage.<sup>18</sup>

However, the demythologised natural body posed a threat to the 'Body politic' and became an object of speculation because the taking of a husband might undermine Elizabeth's authority or at the very least increase the likelihood of factional rivalries at court. Carole Levin charts some of the wild stories in evidence during her reign:

In 1580 an Essex laborer, Thomas Playfere, stated that Elizabeth had two children by Lord Robert; he had himself seen them when they had been shipped out at Rye in two of the queen's best ships. The next year Henry Hawkins explained Elizabeth's frequent progresses throughout the countryside as a way for her to leave court and have her illegitimate children by Dudley - five all told. [...] a widow named Dionisia Deryck claimed that Elizabeth "hath already had as many children as I, and that two of them were yet alive, one a man child and the other a maiden child, and the others were burned" <sup>19</sup>

Other rumours included stories about Elizabeth's inability to bear children and a story that her predecessor Edward VI was not really dead and would return.<sup>20</sup> Levin argues that 'Elizabeth attempted carefully to fashion the way people perceived her and to present herself as king as well as queen of England'.<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth addressed her troops at Tilbury in a famous speech including the memorable lines ' I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and a king of England too' <sup>22</sup>

Gradually during this century actresses have made Ophelia a more potent force at the Danish court and some directors have presented her sexuality as a disturbing and threatening undercurrent in the body politic. In 1965 Glenda Jackson certainly broke the mould of the nineteenth-century romantic Ophelias in a production directed by Peter Hall at the Royal

Shakespeare Theatre. Penelope Gilliatt ( *Observer*, 22 August 1965) commented: ‘ Glenda Jackson is the first Ophelia I have seen who should play Hamlet’ ( Jackson portrayed a powerful Queen Elizabeth I in the BBC television series, *Elizabeth R.*).<sup>23</sup> A reviewer described Jackson’s Ophelia as ‘a highly-sexed young woman’<sup>24</sup> The disturbing presence of the ‘Body natural’s’ sexuality is a theme in Tony Richardson’s production (1969) starring Marianne Faithfull as Ophelia and more recently Helena Bonham-Carter’s performance in Franco Zeffirelli’s film version (1991).

I hope to show that in performance the natural sexual body is an object of surveillance and arouses fear and anxiety but also operates as a site of *platea* subversion. Laertes figures Ophelia as a potent symbol of desire: ‘Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister’ (1.3. 33) and ‘best safety lies in fear’ (43). Hamlet warns Polonius not to let his daughter ‘walk i’ th’ sun’ (2.2. 184) for ‘Conception is a blessing. But not as your daughter may conceive - friend, look to’t’ (185-5) Hamlet attacks the demythologised ‘Body natural’ in a violent confrontation with Ophelia in the nunnery scene, declaring, ‘we will have no more marriages’ (3.1.148). He suggests that even the chaste virgin cannot escape malicious representation at Court:

If thou dost marry, I’ll give thee this plague for thy  
dowry: be though as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou  
shalt not escape calumny.

(3. 1. 136-138)

Carole Levin cites an inflammatory tract by Cardinal William Allen in his 1588 *Admonition to the Nobility and People of England*, which aimed to reap support for Philip II’s proposed

invasion. Levin writes: ‘according to Allen, Dudley is not Elizabeth’s only lover, and the older she gets, the more debased is her court. :

With “divers others, she hath abused her bodie against God’s lawes, to  
the disgrace of princely majestie, and the whole nation’s reproache, by  
unspeakable and incredible variety of luste”<sup>25</sup>

Hamlet tells Ophelia: ‘To a nunnery go, and quickly too’ (3.1.141). Ophelia’s only soliloquy may be viewed as her unwitting moment of *platea* subversion where she comments for the theatre audience on the fatal instability at the heart of the ‘Body politic’. She links its disintegration in Hamlet, ‘th’ expectancy and rose of the fair state’ (153) whose mind is ‘like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh’ (159) with her own precarious situation, ‘O woe is me/T’have seen what I have seen, see what I see’ (161-162). In her mad scenes Ophelia redirects the slanderous misrepresentations: ‘Young men will do’t, if they come to’t, /By Cock, they are to blame’ (4.5. 59-60).

It is interesting to recall Hamlet’s diatribe against women’s ‘paintings’ He tells Ophelia: ‘I have heard of your paintings too, well enough. God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another’ (3.1.143-5). Susan Bassnett cites Sir Roy Strong’s comparison of the Ditchley portrait of 1592 with a portrait of the young Elizabeth of c.1545:

The cheeks once filled with the bloom of youth have become sunken and  
rouged; the eyes have the penetration of one for whom life has been an  
increasing battle of wits; the lips are thin and mean; the face wrinkled, almost  
haggard in appearance; in short the young girl has become the great Queen  
whose genius has guided victoriously the destinies of a people over thirty

years [...] a visionary figure towering above her realm of England, an image of almost cosmic power.<sup>26</sup>

‘Visionary’ representations contradicted the Queen’s actual physical appearance in old age, described by a French ambassador: ‘Her bosom is somewhat wrinkled [...] As for her face, it is and appears to be very aged. It is long and thin, and her teeth are very yellow and irregular[...] many of them are missing, so that one cannot understand her easily when she speaks’<sup>27</sup>

The ‘Body natural’ is subject to ‘old Age, and other natural Defects and Imbecilities’ In her madness, Ophelia ‘speaks things in doubt/that carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing’ (4.5.6-7) When she speaks she renews the bawdy quibbling she shared with Hamlet when they were last seen together at the play. She is a lonely figure, dwelling in her songs on sexual love ( ‘Young men will do’t’), and also on broken promises (‘you promised me to wed’ 4.4.59-62). Her lines echo the nunnery scene where Hamlet refused to accept Ophelia’s ‘remembrances’, claiming ‘I never gave you aught’ (3.1.95-8) but also admitting ‘I did love you once’ (3.1.115-6). The first lines of Ophelia’s song, ‘How should I your true love know/From another one?’ (4.5.23-4) recall lines from Sir Walter Raleigh’s poem ‘Walsingham’ The lines are: ‘How shall I know your trew love/ That have mett many one’<sup>28</sup> Helen Hackett observes, ‘The speaker goes on to lament his abandonment by this mistress, presumably Elizabeth’.<sup>29</sup>

Susan Doran found that Queen Elizabeth had less control over politics and policy-making than earlier studies of the monarch suggested. Thus when Elizabeth ‘appeared to be close to accepting the hand of her favoured suitors, first Robert Dudley and then Francis of Anjou in 1579, the active opposition of some leading councillors convinced her that it

would be definitely unwise and perhaps disastrous to proceed with the match.<sup>30</sup> Similar strictures are made to Ophelia by Polonius who is also motivated by a sense of self-preservation at the start of the play.

Ophelia's breakdown brings with it renewed threats to the 'Body politic' She warns Claudius 'My brother shall know of it', referring to the conspiracy that appears to surround her father's death (4.5.67-70). Almost immediately Laertes bursts into the court in an attempted coup. A messenger brings the news:

The rabble call him lord;  
 And, as the world were now but to begin,  
 Antiquity forgot, custom not known,  
 The ratifiers and props of every word,  
 They cry 'Choose we! Laertes shall be king.'  
 Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,  
 'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king.'

(4.5. 99-105)

The 'rabble' have chosen their own successor, over-ruling custom and precedent.

In 1599 the Earl of Essex, although forbidden to do so, returned from his failed command in Ireland and burst into the Queen's court at Nonesuch. Elizabeth unsure of his motives or whether he had an army managed to control the situation by arranging a future meeting. He was sent from the Court and committed to Lord Keeper Egerton's charge at York House.<sup>31</sup> The rabble's cry 'Laertes shall be king' reasserts the legal metaphor of the 'King's Two Bodies', the 'Body politic' held in perpetuity to direct the people, an immortal body undiminished by the death of the 'Body natural'

Ophelia enters and her songs have turned from sexual love to death. She recalls her father's irregular burial:

They bore him barefaced on the bier,

Hey non nony, nony, hey nony,

And on his grave rained many a tear-

Fare you well, my dove.

(4.5.166-169)

Ophelia's death is also viewed as irregular, a topic of discussion by the gravemaker: 'If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out of Christian burial' (5.1.22-5).

The Priest buries Ophelia reluctantly, fearing her death was suicide and her soul therefore lost:

Her death was doubtful;

And but that great command o'ersways the order,

She should in ground unsanctified have lodged

Till the last trumpet.

(5.1.216-220)

Hamlet is first to note the 'maimed rites' and to comment 'this doth betoken/The corpse they follow did with desp'rate hand/ Fordo it own life' (209-211). The significance of an 'unsanctified' burial has particular resonance at the time the play was written. In 1598 Peter Wentworth's tract urging Elizabeth to call a Parliament and to settle the succession was published, having been in circulation in manuscript since 1587.<sup>32</sup> Levin argues that the tract, *A Pithie Exhortation to her Majestie for establishing her successor to the crowne*, suggested that unless Elizabeth acted quickly 'she courted the wrath of God and the enmity of her people after her death'<sup>33</sup> Levin writes 'Her very body would be scorned and mistreated'<sup>34</sup>

The 'Body politic', like an immortal Christian soul, could depart the 'Body natural' in peace but the unsanctified natural body of a monarch filled spectators with anxiety. Wentworth's tract reads:

We beseeche your Majestie to consider, whither your noble person is like to come to that honorable burial, that your honourable progenitours have had [...] Wee do assure ourselves that the breath shall be no sooner out of your body [...] but that all your nobility, counsellours, and whole people will be up in armes [...] and then it is to be feared, yea, undoubtedlie to be judged, that your noble person shall lye upon the earth unburied, as a dolefull spectacle to the worlde <sup>35</sup>

The Priest in *Hamlet* tells Laertes, 'We should profane the service of the dead/To Sing sage requiem and such rest to her/As to peace-parted souls' (5.1. 227-9).

At the end of the play, knowing he is dying, Hamlet does what Elizabeth's anxious subjects had urged her to do throughout her reign: he relinquishes the potential 'Body politic' by naming a successor. Hamlet who had 'the voice of the King himself for [his] succession in Denmark' (3.2.323-4), as Elizabeth had the 'voice' of *her* father Henry VIII (the 'voice' synonymous with the handing on of the autonomous 'Body politic'), finally confirms, 'But I do prophesy th'election lights/On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice' (5.2.308-9). Thus the tensions residing in the split individuation of the 'Body natural' and the 'Body politic' appear resolved.

**1. 'The Insolence of Office' : Revolution in the Body Politic. *Hamlet* directed by Peter Hall in 1965 at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre ; Tony Richardson's Production at the Round House, London in 1969 and a Film Version by Woodfall Film Productions, 1969.**

Ophelia's role in these productions is strikingly different despite superficial similarities in their direction. David Warner's *Hamlet* was 'Chekov's [sic] eternal student' in Peter Hall's 'determinedly social production' in 1965.<sup>1</sup> The *Sunday Telegraph* quoted Hall's view of the prince as 'a modern young radical paralysed by "an apathy of the will so deep that commitment to politics, to religion or to life is impossible"' <sup>2</sup> The Establishment figures at Elsinore were described as 'unusually tough, steely and ruthless manipulators' <sup>3</sup> Penelope Gilliatt in the *Observer* noted that 'when David Warner emphasises the phrase about "the insolence of office" he seems to be speaking for a whole de-bunking generation' <sup>4</sup>

In 1969 the *Daily Express* described Nicol Williamson's *Hamlet* in Tony Richardson's production: 'He wears his lip in an almost permanent curl of contempt - an interpretation not very different from the contemporary *Hamlet* offered by David Warner several seasons ago' <sup>5</sup> In fact Williamson's 'anti-establishment drop-out' (as described on the sleeve of the video cassette of the film version) gave a very different performance from Warner's. The productions may usefully be read in relation to the socio-cultural turbulence of 'the Sixties', a period described by Robert Hewison in *Too Much: Art and Society in the Sixties 1960-75* as having 'passed into myth more quickly than the period that preceded them' <sup>6</sup> The differences of interpretation may be charted through a reading of the body politic in the productions. The 'Establishment' was clearly identified in Peter Hall's production through Brewster Mason's performance as Claudius, a shrewd and able politician. The theatre programme provided a summary of Peter Hall's discussions with the company in rehearsals and this included comments on the role:

Claudius ranks very high in the league of Shakespearean rulers - a superb operator who hardly ever loses his nerve. He is a better actor, in the play scene, than the players themselves. [...] He is aided and abetted by his chief councillor, Polonius, who is not a doddering old fool but the kind of shrewd, tough, establishment figure you can still meet in St James's; a man who sends himself up, and uses his silly humour as a weapon. Hamlet sees through both these men. He sees that as politicians they have to lie and cheat. And Hamlet refuses this. The young must feel this about their rulers even when there is no crime in question. They must believe that the millenium [sic] could come tomorrow if power were in the right hands.<sup>7</sup>

Many young people identified with Warner's Hamlet. In August 1965 the *Birmingham Post* reported:

Several hundred people, mainly young students, last night bedded down outside the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, hoping to get tickets for tonight's opening performance of *Hamlet* [...] (only the first 100 are assured of seeing the play)<sup>8</sup>

The paper published pictures showing the students camping outside the theatre. The students identified with a Hamlet described by J.C.Trewin as 'the picture of a rather scruffy undergraduate' and by David Nathan in the *Sun* as 'a student prince who would look more at home in the London School of Economics'<sup>9</sup> The *Sunday Mercury* commented: 'David Warner, the youngest Hamlet of our times, mirrors the 60s' defeated youth. This gangly, blinking, introverted young man hides his grief and insecurity under clown's hat and khaki students' habit' and, of course, the famous long scarf.<sup>10</sup> A number of reviewers referred to

Hall's observations in the theatre programme on what he termed 'this disease of disillusionment [which] stops the final, committed action':

It is an emotion which you can encounter in the young today. To me it is extraordinary that in the last 15 years, the young of the West, and particularly the intellectuals, have, by and large, lost the ordinary, predictable radical impulses which the young in all generations have had.

You might march against the Bomb. But on the other hand, you might not. You might sleep with everyone you know, or you might not. You might take drugs, you might not. There is a sense of what-the-hell-anyway, over us looms the Mushroom Cloud. And politics are a game and a lie, whether in our own country or in the East/West dialogue which goes on interminably without anything very real being said. This negative response is deep and appalling.<sup>11</sup>

Warner's Hamlet could only 'act' through a 'refusal to act', a problematic gesture, but one which made sense in relation to Herbert Marcuse's theory of 'repressive tolerance' in *One-Dimensional Man*. Marcuse argued that 'under the rule of a repressive whole, liberty can be made into a powerful instrument of domination'<sup>12</sup> Hewison refers to Marcuse as 'the new father-philosopher of the underground' and notes, 'his case was that affluence had created a freedom from want that left mankind as the passive instrument of a dominating system'<sup>13</sup> Todd Gitlin describes the book's impact in *The Sixties: Years of Hope. Days of Rage*:

We were drawn to books that seemed to reveal the magnitude of what we were up against, to explain our helplessness. Probably the most compelling

was Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, with its stark Hegelian dirge for the Marxist dream of an insurgent proletariat: a book of the Fifties, really, though not published until 1964 (paperback 1966). Gradually its reputation swelled among the New Left for its magisterial account of a society that, Marcuse argued, had lost the very ability to think or speak opposition, and whose working class was neutered by material goods and technology. Some unimaginable radical break, some "Great Refusal", was apparently impossible but deeply necessary.<sup>14</sup>

In his refusal to cooperate or compromise with the corrupt court at Elsinore, Warner's Hamlet could be viewed as acting out Marcuse's sense of a necessary gesture against a repressive Establishment. Anthony B. Dawson discerns a similar approach to the part of Ophelia by Glenda Jackson. He describes Jan Kott's suggestion that she consciously opted for 'disengagement', and finds her situation linked closely to Hamlet's; the 'wary lovers' were connected to 'the inchoate rebellion of mid-1960s youth that the production as a whole aimed to reflect'<sup>15</sup> However, John Moore in the *Daily Worker* viewed Jackson's performance rather differently: 'Glenda Jackson's distinctive Ophelia is wed to the Establishment unable to share in Hamlet's spirit of defiance'<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the reviewer thought Jackson's unusually strong Ophelia was critical of Hamlet's 'disengagement' Penelope Gilliatt's comments in the *Observer*, that Jackson displayed 'all the qualities of a great Prince' and 'is the first Ophelia I have seen who should play Hamlet', suggest that Ophelia might be viewed as acting positively in the face of Hamlet's 'negative response', his 'disengagement'<sup>17</sup> Such a reading could explain how her 'engagement' might connect her with the 'Establishment' in this production but the *Daily Worker's* response to Ophelia touched upon a wider issue:

Was 'disengagement' the only effective answer to the repression of advanced industrial society? Warner's 'disengaged' prince and Jackson's strong, protesting Ophelia might be viewed in relation to Marcuse's 'two contradictory hypotheses: '(1) that advanced industrial society is capable of containing qualitative change for the foreseeable future; (2) that forces and tendencies exist which may break this containment and explode the society.'<sup>18</sup> 'Forces and tendencies' did indeed exist in 1965 and, as Hewison argues, 'the first tensions were experienced at the London School of Economics in 1966' over the appointment of Dr Walter Adams who 'was criticized for his alleged cooperation with the illegal and racist Rhodesian Government over the arrest of students and the expulsion of Lecturers'<sup>19</sup> Hewison describes how the issue 'gave a focus to the more general demands for student participation in university government' and 'a similar pattern of events was to be repeated at sixteen other colleges and universities by June 1968'<sup>20</sup>

While Hall's production of *Hamlet* identified an 'Establishment' against which 'forces and tendencies' were beginning to muster through a 'Great Refusal', Tony Richardson's *Hamlet* came after the heady days of May and June 1968 when student protests in the Latin Quarter of Paris had escalated into a general strike and a series of wildcat strikes and occupations, together involving more than 10 million workers.<sup>21</sup> Adrian Brookholding-Jones in the *Tablet* commented on 1 March 1969 that 'the strict political framework which made Peter Hall's production in 1965 for the RSC so memorable does not inform Tony Richardson's present production at the Round House'<sup>22</sup> Anthony Hopkins's portrayal of Claudius was felt to be part of the problem:

Usurpers, in order successfully to usurp, must (as Peter Hall so perceptively realised) be strong men, clear-headed and masters of the situation. Anthony

Hopkins's Claudius behaves as a besotted lecher without an idea in his head but to go to bed with Gertrude who, as Judy Parfitt plays her, appears as a beautiful, cold, rather silly woman, selfish enough perhaps to have caused the whole messy imbroglio merely to change bedfellows. The power game and the sense of danger, so essential to the plot, are ignored.<sup>23</sup>

In the film, the famous bedchamber scene shows Claudius and Gertrude holding 'Court' in bed, 'a couch for luxury and damned incest' (1.5.83). The 'nunnery' scene has Hamlet (Nicol Williamson) with Ophelia (Marianne Faithfull) who lies in a hammock. In the film, close-ups of 'talking heads' often against dark surroundings suggest both the conspiracy and confines of Elsinore. Bernice Kliman remarks: 'Richardson packs frames with heads, sometimes on two levels vertically, sometimes in depth'<sup>24</sup> She describes the effect:

Pushing against the limits of the tight shots, Richardson uses exclusions to imply that the frame could reveal more than it shows. The camera is not afraid to lop off whole bodies. By making the frame a keyhole, as it were, the filmmaker suggests a larger world beyond, a world we are eavesdropping on.<sup>25</sup>

The business of state is shown to be of secondary importance to the pursuit of personal pleasure as a disembodied hand enters the frame to apply wax to a document while Claudius and Gertrude exchange self congratulatory smiles.<sup>26</sup> The corruption at the heart of Denmark is imaged through synecdoche in the reclining king and queen who hold court in a four poster bed that fills the frame. The bed is covered with food and two dogs. Claudius and Gertrude listen distractedly to Polonius's 'discovery' of the cause of Hamlet's madness but are really more interested in each other. Kliman suggests that 'the sumptuousness of the *mise en scène*

implies moral disorder' <sup>27</sup> While the 'court' suggests corruption, the hammock appears a subversive though ambiguous 'Sixties/Seventies' space associated with a youth movement that had flowered, raged and withdrawn into an ironised private world (John Lennon and Yoko Ono held their famous 'bed-in' at the Amsterdam Hilton between 25 -31 March 1969). <sup>28</sup> As Todd Gitlin writes of 'the currents of 1967':

There were tensions galore between the radical idea of political strategy - with discipline, organization, commitment to results *out there* at a distance - and the countercultural idea of living life to the fullest, *right here*, for oneself, or for the part of the universe embodied in oneself, or for the community of the enlightened who were capable of loving one another - and the rest of the world be damned (which it was already).<sup>29</sup>

Richardson's stage production adopted a political strategy through its manifesto of 'Free Theatre' (described below). However, knowledge of the 'behind-the-scenes' context serves to ironise the theatrical event. The manifesto offered a sense of 'organization, commitment to results *out there*' but as the recollections of Marianne Faithfull attest, the production of *Hamlet* was achieved against a privatising of public space *right here*. Marianne Faithfull has been described as 'the ultimate male fantasy a convent girl set loose into the dark world of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, with no one to protect her' <sup>30</sup> Andrew Duncan interviewed Faithfull in the *Radio Times* (December, 1997):

She starred in Chekhov's *Three Sisters* with Glenda Jackson, and as Ophelia with Nicol Williamson in *Hamlet*. (They used to make love in his dressing room before every performance, manipulated by the director Tony

Richardson, she says.) At the time she was having an opportunistic affair with the Stones' drug dealer.<sup>31</sup>

Duncan comments, 'Her singing today has a lived-in rawness which draws from her addictions, an attempted suicide by swallowing 150 barbiturates in 1969, and myriad relationships.'<sup>32</sup>

Tony Richardson's production was staged at the Round House in Chalk Farm, a Victorian railway shed in old Camden Town where at a cost of £20,000 to £25,000 workmen 'hastily installed the bare necessities of a theatre: seats for 500, raked high on three sides of the stage, adequate sound equipment, and lighting.'<sup>33</sup> Free Theatre had a manifesto, described in *New Society*:

Firstly, there is to be an attempt to restore "what is most unique in theatre - its presence." "It is just this presence," the manifesto declares, "that the proscenium theatre has weakened and debilitated." A revolution is needed "to destroy, finally and completely, the form of the proscenium theatre and the social habits that go with it." Secondly, there is to be a reduction of prices. "We believe that ideally all performances should be completely free. This is obviously for the future, but we are trying to make a beginning by having a large number of cheap seats"<sup>34</sup>

In his autobiography, *Long Distance Runner: A Memoir*, Richardson explained, 'I didn't want to do a conventional proscenium production; I wanted to find a space that would permit a simple and free staging'<sup>35</sup> Richardson aimed 'to do a classic performance that allowed total freedom to the actors and the text' and he sought to achieve this through a design for the production that 'was really designing a theatre'<sup>36</sup> Richardson described the process:

We decided to confine ourselves to the inner circle. We hung thick black drapes from the gallery down between the columns. We built a low semi-circular stage, and curving seats on three sides, so that it was like a half circus ring within a circle, and we suspended baffle-boards above the stage and audience to confine the sound. It all began to come together. It was an exciting space that needed no scenery as such. With entrances possible from all sides, and a few raised blocks if we needed sitting areas, action could be swift, and angles and acting-areas could change constantly.<sup>37</sup>

Jacques Poteau in the *Montreal Star* commented:

Movie director Tony Richardson, who produced the play, is aiming mainly at young audiences who fear the theatre is not for them [...] For Hamlet he exploits a circular auditorium, discarding decor but using ingenious lighting and a background of pillars and black curtains which set off bright Elizabethan costumes<sup>38</sup>

Although Free Theatre had envisaged offering playgoers free performances this was not achievable in the short term. B.A. Young in the *Financial Times* reported, 'The expensive seats at the Round House are very expensive (from £5 down) but they are not very numerous. The majority of the house is given over to the cheap seats, which cost from 2s 6d'.<sup>39</sup> However by 1969 there was a sense of *déjà vu* in the political message of Free Theatre.

Ronald Bryden of the *Observer* remarked:

Within weeks of last May's student riots, Paris designers were marketing chic barricade modes in black leather. Since then, the banner of revolution has evidently been run up flagpoles in a good many advertising backrooms, and

any day now should bring the first TV exhortation to tear down the Bastille of old consumer habit and hail a new, revolutionary era in margarines. That's the spirit, I think, in which to read Tony Richardson's manifesto for his new Free Theatre, with its talk of destroying "finally and completely the form of the proscenium theatre and the social habits that go with it", in the programme to his *Hamlet* at the Round House, Chalk Farm. The product itself, as unveiled last Monday before the Prime Minister and other revolutionary leaders, isn't noticeably radical.<sup>40</sup>

Albert Hunt in *New Society* found the arguments in the manifesto 'both patronising and naive' and took issue with the idea that a 'revolution' was needed to destroy the effects of 'proscenium theatre and the social habits that go with it':

To assume that what keeps young people out of the theatre is simply "social habits" is to take a generalised, trivial view of what shapes young people's tastes. The young people Tony Richardson is trying to attract know what they want, and they're prepared to spend time, money and energy in getting it - as is shown by the crowds when Arthur Brown, the Who or the Pink Floyd are performing. If they don't make the same effort to go to the theatre, it's because they're not interested.<sup>41</sup>

Richardson commented, 'When it opened in February 1969, *Hamlet* was an enormous hit and received international plaudits (even *Time* reviewed the show). Nicol was recognised as his generation's Hamlet; without illusions, yet humorous and ironic, capable of instant rage and mockery, and with a sad, existential resignation'<sup>42</sup> However, the production had its problems; Richardson describes how Nicol Williamson was 'erratic in performances and

walked off or interrupted the show several times - to the consternation of the stage management and company, but to the titillation of audiences, who loved to participate in these kinds of drama of temperament.<sup>43</sup>

I have described the playtext's desire for a revised subject position at the level of the body politic, that is for an actual person able to combine the body natural and body politic, as understood in the legal metaphor of 'The Queen's Two Bodies' R.B. Marriott in *Stage and Television Today* saw Glenda Jackson's Ophelia in 1965 as 'belonging to Hamlet's world of disillusion' creating 'a new and important emotional tension between the two'<sup>44</sup> However, most reviewers had difficulty reconciling Jackson's view of her role with their own. The *Birmingham Post* remarked: 'For once she is no frail lily. It is unexpected to hear a fierce retort to her father when he asks her if she believes Hamlet's tenders of affection'<sup>45</sup> The *Sunday Mercury* commented: 'I do not think Glenda Jackson's brittle Ophelia will be welcomed by the majority. She destroys another prized image of the innocent, spurned virgin, the fragile flower. Instead we see a near-mature woman not unwilling to be used as a political tool.'<sup>46</sup> The *Daily Telegraph* observed: 'Ophelia as played by Glenda Jackson is a new character altogether in my experience a brisk young lady of the court entirely sophisticated'<sup>47</sup> Milton Shulman in the *Evening Standard* described Glenda Jackson's 'bottled-up, neurotic Ophelia' as 'novel' but unable to rouse pity in her madness.<sup>48</sup>

Clearly most reviewers interpreted Ophelia's strength and aggression unfavourably and were unable or unwilling to read her distinctive autonomy as a point of resistance in the body politic and a counterpoint to Hamlet's ineffectuality which was signalled from his first appearance. Stanley Wells commented on the effects of Act one Scene 2:

The court party was guarded by five halberdiers, splendidly costumed; there were four additional “counsellors”, two groups of three seated secretaries and attendants, two or three other attendants, and a stage band of six or seven trumpeters and drummers.[...] The king rose, so all the court rose. [...] The director was firmly establishing Claudius as the “expert politician” [...] and the court as a splendidly organized, smooth-running bureaucratic machine. And in the midst of it, imprisoned between Claudius and Polonius, self-conscious, intimidated, and acutely uncomfortable, was Hamlet. It was an immediate interpretative emphasis on a Hamlet cowed by political responsibilities.<sup>49</sup>

The production set reinforced the idea of an oppressive military state. The *Times* commented:

This Elsinore is not a dream castle honeycombed with Gothic corridors, but a busy centre of Government and social glitter opulently reflected in the tapestries and marble floors of John Bury’s set. The cold war with Norway gets full emphasis -the first thing that strikes the eye being a massive cannon trained on the stalls: and when Fortinbras appears - a blond demigod in silver breastplate - it is like the sun coming out. Hamlet himself, trapped in this hive of bustling militarism and courtly display, is from the start in a condition of existential panic.<sup>50</sup>

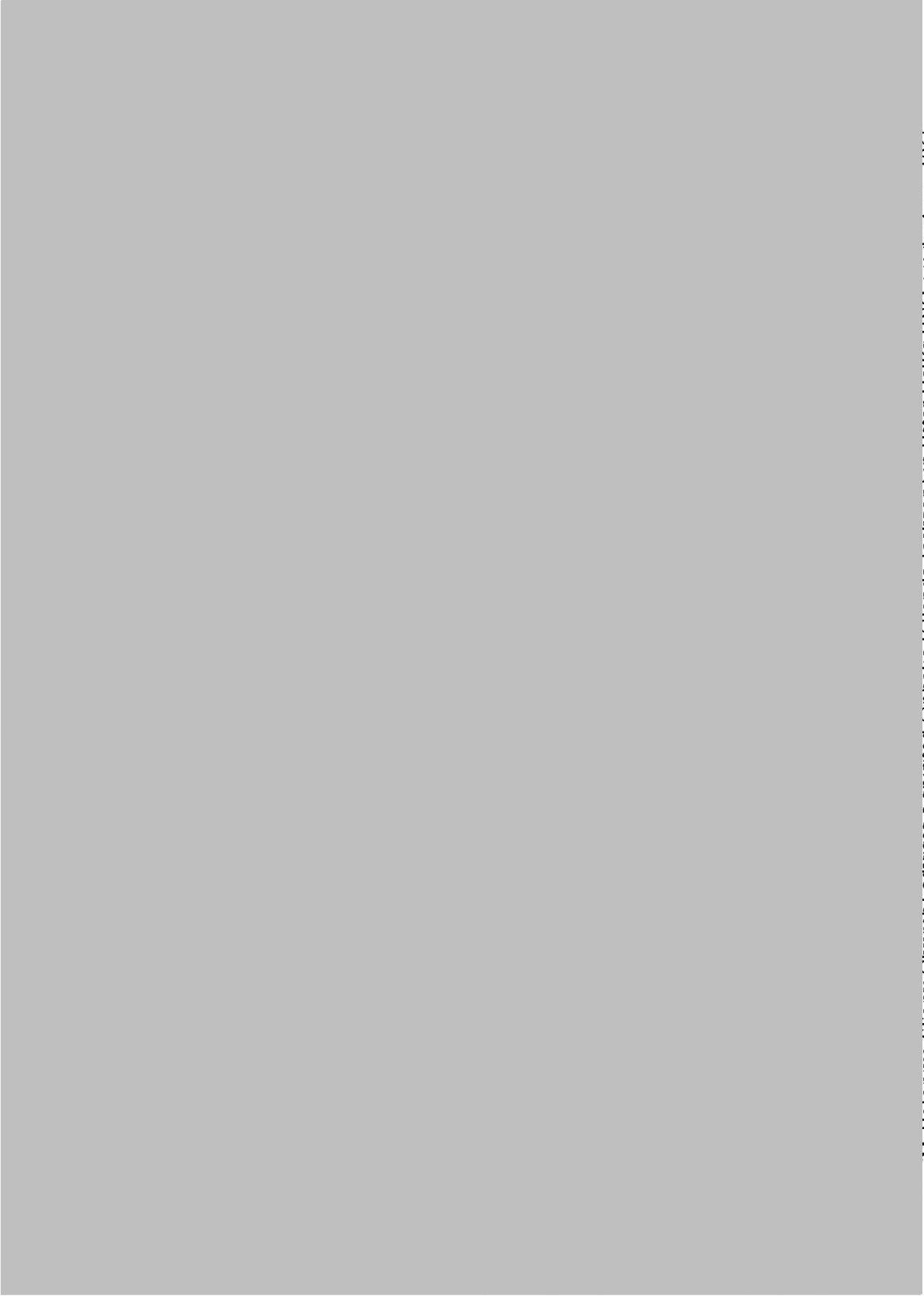
Harold Hobson in the *Sunday Times* captured the effects of Hamlet’s stage presence:

When Mr. Warner speaks the great soliloquys [sic] he comes to the front of the stage and rakes the first few rows of the stalls with ravaged eyes, searching distractedly for a comfort that is not there or anywhere. Besides

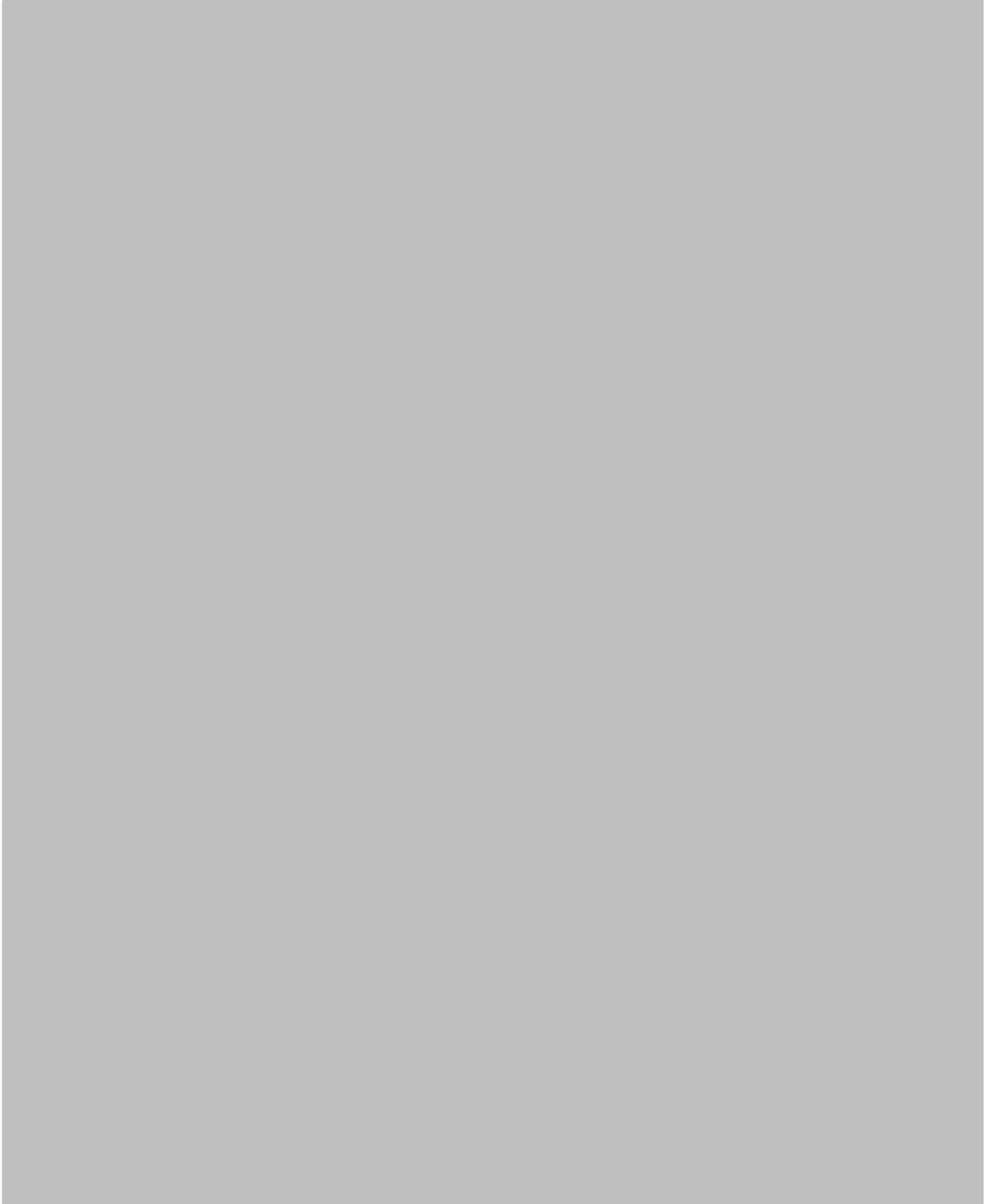
the enormity of his private sorrow, affairs of state are a secondary consideration.<sup>51</sup>

In contrast, as Penelope Gilliatt observed, Glenda Jackson made Ophelia ‘exceptional and electric, with an intelligence that harasses the court and a scornful authority full of Hamlet’s own self-distaste’<sup>52</sup> Jackson did more than gesture at hopelessness. She displayed her anger at complacency. Gilliatt remarked: ‘Polonius - Tony Church - seems like Ophelia’s grandfather instead of her father, and his crafty politicking under a smokescreen of guffaws is anathema to her’(fig. 31).<sup>53</sup> While the *Times* remarked on a Hamlet who ‘has no clear identity’, Glenda Jackson played Ophelia with the sense of purpose she evidently displayed as Charlotte Corday, the counter-revolutionary who stabbed Marat in Peter Weiss’s *Marat-Sade* in the Theatre of Cruelty season in 1964.<sup>54</sup> Thus Ophelia supplied what Hamlet lacked: political will. Hamlet was ‘an incomplete Prince’ who ‘must goad himself to princeliness’ (fig. 32).<sup>55</sup> Penelope Gilliatt’s comments suggest how the mad scenes gave Ophelia the opportunity to voice a protest, something that Hamlet seemed unable or unwilling to do (fig. 33):

When she says “Pray you, mark” to the twittering Gertrude in the mad scene, she shouts the words as though she could do murder, drumming a heel on the floor and lifting her upper lip in a rictus of contempt. The speech when she is alone after “Get thee to a nunnery” is jagged with pain; “blasted with ecstasy” is hideously screeched, not bleated, and the mood is spiked with a suicidal sarcasm. In Peter Hall’s specifically social production, where Hamlet’s chief disability is that he cannot connect, the performance stands out extraordinarily. It is full of rancour and fiercely unsentimental, the only Ophelia I have ever seen that has in it the real, shrivelled, shrewish roots of



31 Polonius (Tony Church) advises a spirited Ophelia (Glenda Jackson) in Peter Hall's RSC production, 1965



**32** Ophelia (Glenda Jackson) and Hamlet (David Warner) in Peter Hall's production



**33** Ophelia (Glenda Jackson) with Gertrude (Elizabeth Spriggs) in Act 4, scene 4 of the 1965 production

madness. It is executed with the sort of attack that is usually thought of as a quality of male acting, much more so than Hamlet himself.<sup>56</sup>

The *Sun* remarked that Peter Hall had 'surrounded the weak vacillating Hamlet with a circle of strong characters'<sup>57</sup> In this production Ophelia took on the role of a prince while Hamlet continued his 'Great Refusal'. However the production suggested that repressed anger had a cost. The prompt-book shows that Hamlet slapped Ophelia's face with the words 'I say we will have no more marriage'<sup>58</sup> R.B. Marriott in *Stage and Television Today* commented:

Today, in behaving as if they want to know nothing, could not care about anything, the young show their deep concern for life. Their violence is the great noise they make in a time when there are [sic] no faith, no hope, no meaning to be found. When this memorable Hamlet has failed to act within the terms of the life in which he has been brought up, he goes into a rage.<sup>59</sup>

The reviewer described how Hamlet lashed out at Laertes and stabbed the King in a 'vicious' attack.<sup>60</sup> The *Sunday Telegraph* observed that Hamlet 'giggled when the poison circulated and expired smiling at the thought of the muckup he had bequeathed to Fortinbras'<sup>61</sup> The *New Statesman* commented: 'This Hamlet's dying burst of laughter can be interpreted, if you like, as an existentialist's discovery, *à la Kott*, that the universe is absurd and history a trap'<sup>62</sup>

It was Richardson's production, however, that followed the 'scenario' described by Jan Kott in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (1964) in which three young boys Hamlet, Laertes and Fortinbras, and one young girl Ophelia 'are all involved in a bloody political and family drama'<sup>63</sup> The *Observer* remarked:

Williamson's performance, and Marianne Faithfull's Ophelia, a small white seraph secretly eaten by an unnamed disease, belong to that youth-oriented 'Hamlet' outlined by Kott: the story of four young people - Hamlet, Ophelia, Laertes, Fortinbras - whose lives are poisoned by the world their parents have made.<sup>64</sup>

However, while Peter Hall's production had emphasised Fortinbras's role, Richardson removed it to the margins. In Hall's production Hamlet's 'disengagement' defined him, as against the 'engagement' of his *alter ego*, the triumphant Fortinbras, whose two appearances were 'staged with lavish pomp and heavily pointed as key events in the story'<sup>65</sup> In Richardson's production, Hamlet was not 'disengaged' but displayed the qualities of a leader. The *New Statesman* remarked that here was a Hamlet, who would 'in happier days [...] be organising a student revolution at Wittenberg', and who was 'contemptuous of all dishonesty and sham'<sup>66</sup> The *Observer* described Hamlet as 'a spoiled believer' who 'joins hands with John Osborne's heroes'.<sup>67</sup> Like David Warner, Nicol Williamson addressed his soliloquies to the audience but their keynote was hostility rather than defensiveness and uncertainty. Harold Hobson felt Williamson's Hamlet spoke *at* the audience: 'It is almost as if he expected us to contradict him - to say, for example that the Everlasting has *not* set his canon against self-slaughter. In his voice there is a special note of insistence'<sup>68</sup> Hobson added:

Mr. Richardson's attitude to the conventions is not offensive; but it is on the offensive. He is against the proscenium arch; he is against the bourgeois and class-conscious audience. This Hamlet therefore is constantly on the attack, not only against the court, but also against those of us who are equally

against the court. It is audience- involvement of a remarkably subtle kind, and makes this “Hamlet” unlike any we have seen before.<sup>69</sup>

Ophelia, Laertes and Hamlet formed a trio bound in mutual and sexual bonds of affection. Marianne Faithfull’s Ophelia kissed her brother on the mouth in Act 1, scene 3 in what might be interpreted as an incestuous embrace. The production also established that she and Hamlet were lovers (fig. 34). Peter Lewis in the *Daily Mail* described how Hamlet’s relationship with Ophelia was suggested in the stage production ‘by having “Get thee to a nunnery” delivered as they lie clasping each other like lovers’<sup>70</sup> In the film version, Hamlet treats Ophelia with open displays of affection, making the line ‘Get thee to a nunnery’ part of young lovers’ sparring conversations. B.A. Young in the *Financial Times* described the effect in the theatre:

When he has told Ophelia “I loved you not” and she replies “I was the more deceived” he kisses her and advises her, for her own good, “Get thee to a nunnery” As he takes her in his arms he catches sight of the lurking Polonius in the background; at once his affection evaporates and he darts all those offensive insults at her, believing her in league with her father.<sup>71</sup>

This scene is particularly effective in the film version where a reverse angle shot shows Polonius and the King spying on them. The camera cuts to a view of Hamlet gripping Ophelia’s wrists viciously as his affection turns to rage. Another reverse angle shot when he leaves her shows Ophelia’s face lifted towards the hammock’s ropes, as she speaks ‘O what a noble mind is here o’erthrown!’ (3.1. 151) through her tears. The last lines of her speech, ‘That unmatched form and feature of blown youth/ Blasted with ecstasy. O woe is me/ T’have seen what I have seen, see what I see’ (3.1. 160-2) were cut, keeping the emphasis on the prince’s madness, rather than Ophelia’s distress.



**34** Hamlet (Nicol Williamson) with Ophelia (Marianne Faithfull) in the 'nunnery' scene of the film version of *Hamlet*, directed by Tony Richardson, 1969

This was a production that could make sense of Hamlet's response to Ophelia's seeming perfidy because their relationship had a deeper significance in the context of a counterculture that sustained its own radical impulse in the 'right here' Marianne Faithfull's Ophelia was described as 'wayward and beautiful, very conscious of her sexuality' and, having 'a simple, forlorn quality'.<sup>72</sup> The implied sexual relationship with Hamlet was felt to make her madness more touching than if she had played a sexually innocent girl.<sup>73</sup> In her mad scenes Ophelia's presence discomfited the court. The film shows her entering the space between the two thrones, creating a symbolic point of resistance in the body politic as she charges the King, 'My brother shall know of it' (4.5.68). The scene cuts to Laertes' insurrection, the sound of musket fire and noise of the rabble. Laertes spits at Gertrude and holds a dagger to the king's throat. Ophelia enters with her herbs and at the line 'Fare you well, my dove'(4.5.169), she embraces Laertes, recalling the mutual farewells of brother and sister at the start of the play, their subversive kiss, and by association, her free embraces with Hamlet in the hammock. Ophelia's spoken line thus creates a thread that links Kott's tragic trio, Laertes, Ophelia and Hamlet in a dangerous alternative world of subversion and resistance. This was clearly a Hamlet who foresaw death in his line 'We defy augury' (5.2.166). The final image of the film version was his head tilted backwards to recall a skull, marking the end of worldly actions and ambition and returning the playtext to the story of personal rather than political struggle.

Both stage productions and the film version owned a revolutionary impulse derived from the energies and events of the 'Sixties' Although Richardson's interpretation was said to be *not* politically informed, Hamlet's personal struggle belonged to a political world. The political hovered at the edges of the personal, for example in the tight shot described by

Kliman: 'Hamlet encounters Fortinbras's army (4.4) [...] six soldiers and a horse fill the frame all in medium close shot as a substitute for the wide spaces that film would seem to call for' <sup>74</sup>

Mervyn Jones in the *Tribune* argued that Peter Hall gave far too much emphasis to the idea of a political drama, 'an interpretation which has long been regarded as old hat in Moscow'.<sup>75</sup>

He felt the stage production might be retitled *Fortinbras, Prince of Norway* (Fortinbras was played by Michael Pennington): 'He has not many lines, but he is made to speak them incredibly slowly and occupy the stage far longer than Shakespeare intended. Indeed, at the end of an exhausting evening, there was nobody left in my row by the time he got to "Bid the soldiers shoot"' <sup>76</sup>

Both Laurence Olivier and Franco Zeffirelli remove the political dimensions entirely, choosing to concentrate on the oedipal readings that have been made from Freudian analysis. The relationship between Ophelia and Hamlet becomes secondary to the acting out of oedipal vengeance upon the father figure ( as in Olivier's 1948 film version) or the emphasis may fall even more strongly on the incestuous desire for the mother figure (as in Zeffirelli's screen version, 1990). The dialogic reading in the section that follows considers Ophelia's function in these versions.

## 2. 'Go and Quickly Too. Farewell' : Losing Ophelia in Oedipal *Hamlets*. Laurence Olivier's *Hamlet* (1948) and Franco Zeffirelli's film (1990)

In his provocative analysis of the play, the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan asks, 'What is the point of the character Ophelia? Ophelia is obviously essential. She is linked forever, for centuries, to the figure of Hamlet'<sup>1</sup> The 'link' proves to be a role in the formation of Hamlet's subjectivity. Ophelia is '*O-phallus*', representing an object of desire in a 'fantasmatic relationship' that Hamlet conjures and then rejects.<sup>2</sup> Lacan describes how from the 'nunnery' scene 'Hamlet no longer treats Ophelia like a woman at all.'<sup>3</sup> Oedipal readings of the play on film cannot deal satisfactorily with the role of Ophelia, the 'body natural' of my thesis, the autonomous agent in the 'body politic' Famous psychoanalytical readings of *Hamlet* have been psychoanalytical readings of Hamlet, pushing Ophelia to the periphery of *his* vision. Glenda Jackson's fierce Ophelia in Peter Hall's production enabled an audience to see Hamlet through her eyes: she demanded his commitment. Marianne Faithfull's Ophelia was close to Hamlet in Tony Richardson's version, both as lover and playfellow. Nicol Williamson's Hamlet turned the hurtful smart of the line 'Get thee to an nunnery' into almost a term of endearment. In Shakespeare's source, the Nordic tale, recorded in the *Historiae Danicae*, the beautiful young woman chosen to waylay Amleth and betray him to the King agreed to help Amleth instead. She was in fact a companion of his childhood.<sup>4</sup> The effect of the Oedipal emphasis noted in Laurence Olivier's film version in 1948 and Franco Zeffirelli's more recent screenplay (1990) is to skew the play so that Ophelia must be rejected much more forcibly than is usual. In both versions Hamlet's treatment of Ophelia is particularly callous. Olivier's Hamlet knocks her to the ground (fig. 35). Gibson's Hamlet hurls her against a wall. Both productions cut Ophelia's soliloquy so



**35** Hamlet (Laurence Olivier) rejects Ophelia (Jean Simmons) in the 'nunnery' scene of *Hamlet*, 1948

that Hamlet's belief in her treachery is the final word. What matters in these films is what Ophelia *represents* to Hamlet. Olivier's camera retreats up a spiral stair, leaving Ophelia at the foot of a stairwell. The camera takes Hamlet's point of view, appearing to retreat into his head so that the voice-over 'To be or not to be' is an indexical link with the state of his mind after her betrayal. Zeffirelli follows Olivier's rearrangement of the early texts here by having the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy *after* the nunnery scene. As Kathleen Campbell notes in her discussion of the Q1 structure in Zeffirelli's film, variations in the scene order suggest 'a more cruel and calculating Hamlet'<sup>5</sup> This is particularly the case in Zeffirelli's version because we do not see Hamlet with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern just before the nunnery scene, an encounter which may have helped to suggest his suspicion of Ophelia's motives.<sup>6</sup>

Both productions eschew the political dimension of the play and concentrate instead on the family tragedy and the course of Hamlet's revenge. It is interesting that the exclusion of the political seems to go hand in hand with the diminution of Ophelia's role. We may turn that round to ask, 'Does Ophelia have something to do with the political in the play?' It has been my argument that she does. In fact, I want to show that in both these versions, Ophelia is still a subversive figure at the heart of the body politic, able to suggest the fracture within the relationships at Elsinore that will inevitably have consequences without, ie: in the wider political world that the directors choose not to show.

It is a seeming paradox of the directors' approaches that oedipal readings, far from producing an indecisive neurotic prince suffering the weight of unconscious conflictual emotional baggage, produce instead decisive all-action heroes. Zeffirelli chose Mel Gibson for exactly those qualities he saw in the *Mad Max* and *Lethal Weapon* movies. Neil Taylor writes:

Zeffirelli saw him in Richard Donner's 1987 film, *Lethal Weapon*, in which Gibson plays a suicidal young detective. 'There was a scene in which there's a kind of "to be or not to be" speech. Mel Gibson is sitting there with a gun in his mouth but he can't pull the trigger. When I saw that I said *This is Hamlet! This boy is Hamlet!*'<sup>7</sup>

The *Evening Standard* described Gibson's interpretation as 'a far cry from the effeminate, philosophical Inaction Man so beloved of British Theatre directors'<sup>8</sup> In fact the 1948 reviewers of Olivier's film made the same point. They congratulated the director on escaping psychoanalytical interpretations. Olivier prefaced his film with a voice-over explanation: 'This is the tragedy of a man who could not make up his mind' but as Caroline Lejeune noted in the *Observer* :

He nullifies his own thesis by never, for a moment, leaving the impression of a man who cannot make up his mind; here, you feel rather, is an actor-producer-director who, in every circumstance, knows exactly what he wants, and gets it.<sup>9</sup>

The *Guardian* concurred:

This was a film of action; this Hamlet, too, could be swift and violent. This was, somehow a unified and purposeful film; this Hamlet was more than usually like a brilliant leader of men.<sup>10</sup>

Dilys Powell in the *Sunday Times* commented wryly: 'The Freudians, of course, are quite broken at the thought of a Prince instead of a case'<sup>11</sup> The *Daily Mail* sheds some light on the reviewers' association of psychoanalytic readings of *Hamlet* with a legacy of nineteenth century morbidity and a twentieth-century sense of alienation:

It is not the between-wars Piccadilly neurotic which some actors have given us. Nor the pale, Third programme poetry-reader with an Oedipus complex into which psychiatrists have gleefully turned him. This is an unmistakably noble prince, with passion rather than petulance. A man of the most extreme sensitivity, who might also have captained Elsinore at Rugger. <sup>12</sup>

The reviewers' reluctance to read a Freudian interpretation into Olivier's film in 1948 seems surprisingly at odds with more recent criticism. Peter Donaldson refers to Olivier's meeting with Ernest Jones, 'a prominent British psychoanalyst' prior to the Old Vic production, directed by Tyrone Guthrie and Olivier in 1937.<sup>13</sup> Jones rose to become President of the International Psycho-Analytical Association. He wrote 'The Oedipus Complex as an Explanation of Hamlet's Mystery' in *The American Journal of Psychology* in 1910. This appeared in book form as *Hamlet and Oedipus* in 1949. Donaldson asserts with confidence:

Laurence Olivier's film of *Hamlet* (1947) announces itself as a psychoanalytic, Oedipal text. The phallic symbolism of rapier and dagger, the repeated dolly-in down the long corridor to the queen's immense, enigmatic, and vaginally hooded bed, the erotic treatment of the scenes between Olivier and Eileen Herlie as Gertrude all bespeak a robust and readily identifiable, if naive, Freudianism. <sup>14</sup>

Donaldson adds a note that a Freudian reading had been observed by the reviewer in *Atlantic Monthly* in May 1949.<sup>15</sup> However it is noteworthy that reviewers' immediate responses were to reject Freudian interpretations forcibly and indeed to ridicule psychoanalytical readings per se. In February 1948 *Punch* reviewed *Hamlet, by William Shakespeare, with a Psycho-analytical Study by Ernest Jones, M. D.; Drawings by F. Roberts Johnson* (Vision

Press)' The reviewer commented: 'So far as Dr. Jones is concerned, *Hamlet* is simply a patient's dream, conscientiously recorded for submission to the patient's analyst'.<sup>16</sup> The *Sunday Times* also reviewed the book:

Dr. Ernest Jones, who now occupies the eminent position of President of the International Psychological Association, when writing about Shakespeare's play "Hamlet" is as much out of his depth as I should be writing about the latest text-book on Medical Psychology. [...] The psychiatrist's answer is that Hamlet's delay, for which he sometimes reproaches himself, is due to his subconsciously envying his uncle: that he would have liked to marry his mother himself, and indeed that he is reluctant to kill Claudius because he identifies himself with him, so it would be a sort of suicide. [...] Dr. Jones has overlooked the fact that he is a character in a drama. It seems almost insulting to his intelligence to point out, but I must, that if Hamlet, once satisfied that his uncle had really murdered his father, immediately took advantage of his proximity to run a sword through him, there would have been no play!<sup>17</sup>

The *Guardian* reviewed Salvador de Madariaga's *On Hamlet* in May 1948, remarking with asperity: 'When Mr. De Madariaga begins to define Hamlet's ego he is lured by the specious congruities of abstract systems of psychological doctrine'<sup>18</sup> Possibly the reviewers' hostility to the concept of a neurotic prince lay in a subliminal desire (to employ a concept from psychoanalysis) to see Olivier as the all-action hero he presented so powerfully in *Henry V* (1944). References to 'virility' and 'derring-do' in the *Hamlet* reviews borrowed a sense of Englishness and English victory after the Second World War.<sup>19</sup> Reviews also evidenced a desire for success of the British film industry glossing Olivier as its leader: 'The British film

industry can hold up its head again' and 'a British movie masterpiece artistically ahead of any Continental or American production I can recall'<sup>20</sup> Donaldson has given a psychoanalytical explanation for Olivier's desire to represent a virile active prince. (This is discussed later) However the *New English Weekly* noted a downside to the 'all-action' *Hamlet*. So purposeful and powerful was the hero it presented, that the other *dramatis personae* fell by the wayside. Shakespeare's Hamlet revealed 'an awareness that he is matched with a more than human fate. He knows that he is no hero' but Olivier failed to portray this awareness:

I found it impossible to believe in this pictured Hamlet. He is earnest yet without melancholy, superficial in irony, sentimental but without true feeling and strangely coarse in fibre [...] Sir Laurence [...] is all hero no matter how he disguises. He conquers everywhere and everyone Polonius [sic], the Queen, Ophelia, Claudius. [...] The other performances were all of necessity geared to that of Hamlet [...] it remains only a picture of Hamlet, a one-dimensional surface story.<sup>21</sup>

Reviewers remarked on the same structural effect in Zeffirelli's screenplay. The *Scotsman Weekly* found the simplified text worked and was 'surprisingly successful' but 'in the inevitable textual simplification, the political, ethical and cosmological resonances disappear'<sup>22</sup> While 'action is thrown into sharp relief', the ambivalent undercurrent in human relationships disappears, for example, 'the half-loving, half-intrusive way' that Claudius and Gertrude set Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to work on Hamlet.<sup>23</sup> The 'one-dimensional' story referred to by the reviewer of Olivier's film repeats itself in Zeffirelli's version:

The pairing [sic - *paring?*] of the text eliminates a multitude of connections between the characters, meetings and mutual references, so that the Court of

Denmark seems a rather arbitrary, alienated place in which isolated individuals clash at random. This is no bad thing. But the characters suffer. Laertes, deprived of much of his relationship with his sister, comes to seem a mere mechanism of revenge; Ophelia is there just to go mad.<sup>24</sup>

The structural similarities of the two screenplays impact on Ophelia's performance and I would like to suggest why this might be the case. Both versions privilege the domestic tragedy and the revenge elements over and above the political. The *Evening News* described Olivier's interpretation of Hamlet: 'His prince is no madman but a "gentle son" faced with the horrid task of revenge for his father's murder.'<sup>25</sup> The oedipal interpretation seeks to overcome the split in Hamlet's individuation which I associate with Ophelia with reference to 'The Queen's Two Bodies' Hamlet in both these versions is a fully autonomous agent able to reintegrate 'body natural' with 'body politic' These versions have produced a prince who can lead men, fight successfully and avenge his father's death. While the Renaissance texts evinced a vacillation and anxiety at the heart of the body politic, these twentieth century film texts purpose to enact the drama of the oedipal crisis by revealing it in action. Both these Hamlets demonstrate an aggressive sexual power over their mothers, preparing the spectator for the inevitable violent attack on the interloper in the mother/son relationship. Donaldson describes how in Olivier's film 'Hamlet and Gertrude kiss like lovers' and 'wrestle on the bed as anger shades into sexual assault'<sup>26</sup> The *Independent* commented: 'Zeffirelli also tackles the Oedipus theme with a certain thoroughness. Hamlet all but rapes Gertrude in her chamber'.<sup>27</sup> These versions for their own reasons seek to establish the masculine appropriation of a culturally resonant text *Hamlet* which has 'suffered' feminine contamination in performance. Reviews of these productions define Hamlet through the physicality of the male body and its

fitness to rule, figured through phallic domination. Olivier's Hamlet is described as 'a virile man, a prince, athletic in body' while Gibson is 'the muscular star of three Mad Maxes and two Lethal Weapons'<sup>28</sup> Reviewers seem reassured that Hamlet 'could be swift and violent' (Olivier) and physically active, 'a man who leaps up and down stone staircases with agility' (Gibson).<sup>28</sup> Thus the film versions continue to enact a Renaissance anxiety : the overcoming of fears arising from the representation of the body politic (the King) in the body natural , the female body, of the Queen. The directors seek to purge Hamlet of 'effeminacy' Thus Zeffirelli defends his casting of Gibson:

I needed a man attractive, solid, strong and cruel sometimes, angelic at other times, a smile of Satan... All these colours in one palette. Not a little dehydrated violet. [...] People keep going back to the prince of incertitude, totally lacking virility - even women played him in the nineteenth century, Sarah Bernhardt, Garbo was going to play him. There have been *virile* Hamlets like Nicol Williamson's, but these don't seem to have left any imprint on the audience's imagination; the effeminate idea has been too pervasive.<sup>30</sup>

Donaldson describes a young Olivier who 'suffered from doubts and questions about his sexual orientation and "effeminacy" and, as a nine-year-old schoolboy, suffered a near-rape on a staircase of his school.'<sup>31</sup> Zeffirelli's childhood was marred by the trauma of sleeping in the bed of his tubercular mother: 'he shared not only his father's visits but also, vicariously, the resultant love-making' and at times his mother would 'cling to [him] as if trying to draw warmth and health from the being she had made'<sup>32</sup> Zeffirelli adamantly refused to entertain any other story in *Hamlet* but that of his incestuous love for his mother:

He did not really love his father; that was a secondary character in his life.

Ophelia? No, there is no love-story possible there, he is always uncertain, ambiguous - *because his heart is not come out of his mother's womb! There is no safer place in all the earth!* <sup>33</sup>

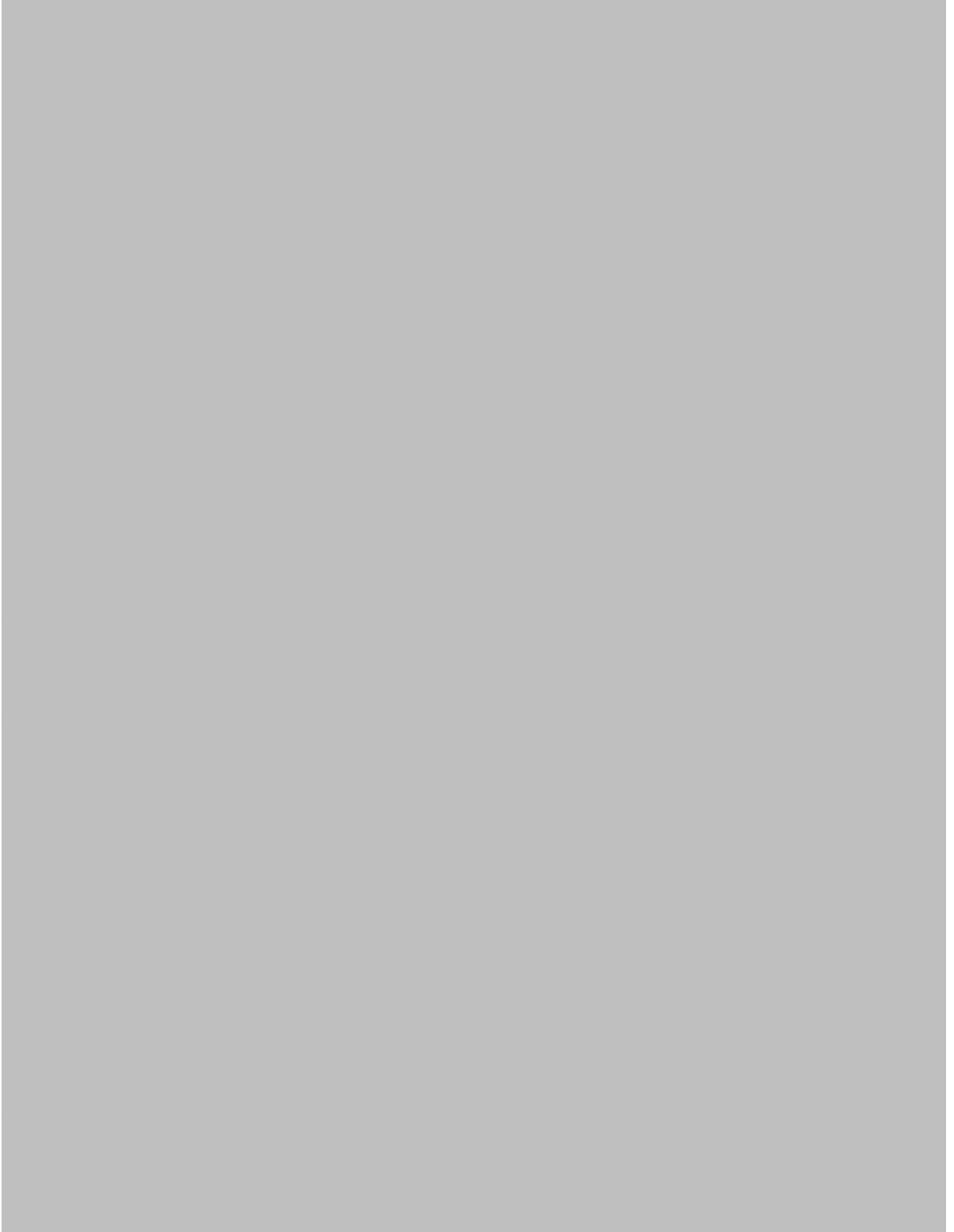
Part of the story the directors are telling involves a repudiation of the feminine that they are also drawn to. Hamlet *must* appear virile and this over-emphasis betrays the directors' awareness and anxiety about the functioning of the feminine in Shakespeare's play. This makes Ophelia's peripheral designation of particular interest.

Olivier's film is resonant with symbolic associations and he establishes Ophelia (Jean Simmons) as observer of the body politic early in the film. Ophelia observes the prince seated in his chair of state in the empty court. He is 'th' observed of all observers quite, quite down!' (3.1.155). As Hamlet becomes aware she is watching and turns towards her, Polonius (unseen by Hamlet) calls Ophelia away. Hamlet may mistake her action as a withdrawal of loyalty but the camera has established Ophelia's point of view, as knowing observer. She has been thwarted in her desire to make the connection between them stronger. Act 2 scene 1 reinforces the impression that Ophelia possesses knowledge relating to Hamlet's instability. Instead of having her seek reassurance from Polonius, the camera cuts to Ophelia's thoughtful expression as in voice-over she recalls what she has witnessed in her chamber, 'Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced' (2.1.79). The spectator draws the conclusion that Ophelia will seek out Polonius *after* some reflection on Hamlet's strange behaviour rather than rush to see him out of fear and distress. Olivier's version of the 'Mousetrap' again makes Ophelia an early observer of events. When the player King is poisoned the camera cuts from a view behind Claudius (Basil Sydney) matching his position as spectator to a

close-up of the King gripping the sides of his throne and craning forwards transfixed. The camera shows Hamlet observing the King and cuts quickly to Ophelia observing Hamlet watching the King. She is the first to register the connection between the events Hamlet has set in motion and its effect on the King. Olivier uses a succession of reaction shots from the courtiers and in particular from Horatio marking the players' performance and their effect on Claudius who rises, gasping in terror, 'Give me some light' (3.2.253). Hamlet pushes a flaming torch into his face and laughs. The court is gripped by a sense of panic as the King struggles to get clear. Women clutch each other in fear as everyone rushes to the staircase amidst screams and general confusion. The scene conveys the court's terror in the face of disintegration in the body politic. When the King leaves its centre, chaos and confusion reign.

Zeffirelli reduces Ophelia's autonomy through the use of overhead shots, casting her as a figure constantly under surveillance. Hamlet looks down on Ophelia (Helena Bonham-Carter) from the battlements as Polonius counsels her against a relationship with the prince. The scene where Hamlet surprises her in her chamber takes place in a sewing room, watched by Polonius from above. However, Helena Bonham-Carter's Ophelia establishes early on a resolve to conform to her father's wishes but keep her own counsel. This Ophelia is perplexed by Hamlet's behaviour but perhaps unlikely to run to Polonius in distress. Zeffirelli cuts immediately from a shot of Polonius spying on Hamlet and Ophelia to his audience with the King and Queen. Before the nunnery scene Gertrude (Glenn Close) kisses Ophelia's brow, wishing her good speed in her mission to discover Hamlet's thoughts. Gertrude then leaves with a backward glance, indicating her unease at the deception played on her son. As Polonius and the King scurry for cover, a shot of Hamlet looking down from the battlements suggests he has seen them. Hamlet intends to thwart them by walking

right past Ophelia who twice must use her wits to detain him. The *Evening Standard* found Zeffirelli's oedipal interpretation 'leaves little room for Helen Bonham-Carter to manoeuvre as Hamlet's love interest'.<sup>34</sup> However within the constraints of a version which cuts lines in the nunnery scene and removes her soliloquy, Bonham-Carter's resistance to patriarchal bullying is remarkable. She meets Hamlet's verbal assaults with a level eye as she challenges, 'Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?' (3.1.110-11). Hamlet grips her jaw viciously and hurls her against the wall but this Ophelia does not crumple and sob out loud. The exchange with Hamlet ends with a long shot from above showing her bending to retrieve the pendant he had hurled at her. Her suffering is acute and restrained. There is no attempt to soften Hamlet's cruelty as Olivier had done with the business of kissing a lock of Ophelia's hair after flinging her to the ground. Zeffirelli's version compounds Hamlet's callous treatment of Ophelia in the 'Mousetrap' scene where lines are transposed from the nunnery scene. Hamlet's bawdy innuendos are met with a naive acceptance by Jean Simmons's Ophelia but with restrained annoyance by Helena Bonham-Carter's Ophelia who knows exactly what he is suggesting and has good cause to feel insulted rather than entertained at this point. The film establishes Ophelia's awareness of her own sexuality in the sewing room (fig. 37) where she enters singing snatches of a song from the mad scenes, 'Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day/All in the morning betime, /And I a maid at your window'(4.5. 47-49) In the 'Mousetrap Scene' Gibson's Hamlet plays on Ophelia's feelings mercilessly. Having deliberately elicited her interest with a long searching look, this Hamlet enjoys meting out rejection ('Get thee to a nunnery') which Ophelia must suffer in silence because of the public nature of the occasion (Ophelia sits at the centre of the court with Hamlet alongside the King and Queen). Where Olivier associates Ophelia with the court's



**36** Ophelia (Jean Simmons) in her mad scene, observed by Gertrude (Eileen Herlie), Claudius ( Basil Sydney) and Laertes ( Terence Morgan) in the *Two Cities* film, 1948



**37 Ophelia (Helena Bonham-Carter) and Hamlet (Mel Gibson) in the sewing room**  
in Franco Zeffirelli's film of *Hamlet*, 1990

gradual realisation of a failure in the body politic, Zeffirelli isolates Ophelia. The court seems unaware of the danger Hamlet invites as he climbs over seats, desperate to view the King's every reaction. The scene continues to connect Ophelia with Hamlet. In fact she receives the brunt of Hamlet's sadistic pleasure. He returns to her full of triumph, 'Believe none of us. We are arrant knaves all. To a nunnery go, and quickly too'(the lines are transposed from 3.1.129-130 and 3.1. 141). Giving her a final passionate kiss, he leaves with a curt, dismissive 'Farewell' It was difficult to believe this Hamlet's outburst at the graveside, ' I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers /Could not, with all their quantity of love,/Make up my sum' ( 5.1.259-60). However Gibson's savage, physical abuse of Ophelia allowed Bonham-Carter to play her mad scenes with a relevant sexual response.

In appearance, Simmons's Ophelia was described as 'sweet and pathetic' in her long white dress.<sup>35</sup> Her sexuality is mystified in a romanticised version of madness, suggesting the pity of her disordered thoughts. Her long fair hair is strewn with the flowers she has picked distractedly and her distress is always eloquent and appealing (fig. 36). In an analysis of a preproduction script Bernice Kliman notes how the film eliminated a shot of Simmons's Ophelia 'reaching for Horatio's dagger (much as she had playfully reached for Laertes' dagger in 1 iii, both gestures possibly for Freudian effect) and trying to kill herself on the spot'<sup>36</sup> This decision removed the explicit sexual associations of the mad songs. As Kliman shows:

Cutting this shot also eliminated the first two stanzas of the Valentine's Day song, sung here. Indeed, the film de-emphasizes what remains of the song [...] because Ophelia sings the last two stanzas while other action distracts us from marking the words; for the first of these stanzas she is off camera and

for the second she is walking away from the camera while Horatio and the sailors in the foreground watch. The filmmakers thus avoided confronting the implications of this song sung by the chaste, innocent girl that Jean Simmons depicts.<sup>37</sup>

Bonham-Carter's Ophelia by contrast appears on the castle ramparts with dishevelled hair, her dress torn and mud-stained (fig. 38). She accosts a castle guard who is on duty. Ophelia fingers his lips, presses close to him and moves her fingers down his body so that the suggested sexual contact embarrasses him. Her actions make explicit the meaning of lines from her mad song, 'Young men will do't, if they come to't/ By Cock they are to blame'(4.5.59-60). The scene cuts to Gertrude who has been watching from a chamber window. Gertrude appears distracted and begins to descend the staircase, in response to Ophelia's importunate repeated cries of 'Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?' (4.5.21). Where Eileen Herlie's Gertrude greets Ophelia with ready sympathy, Glenn Close's Queen shows fear. Ophelia charges up the staircase in an accusatory tone and throws out her arms threateningly. Gertrude backs away and tries to escape by taking another staircase. Ophelia is determined to pursue her and beats her to the staircase, preventing her escape. Claudius enters and Gertrude rushes to him for protection. Bonham-Carter's Ophelia sinks to the ground in distress but looks directly at the King, a smile forming as an idea occurs. She rises satisfied and tells him, 'My brother shall know of it'(68), kissing the Queen's hands before leaving. A long shot shows her crumble in misery against the palace walls and sink to the ground. Horatio gathers her in his arms and carries her away. Bonham-Carter's Ophelia represents a sturdy challenge to the corrupt body politic. She begins her sexual 'assault' on the castle guard and then 'storms' the castle, figuring the assault on Elsinore that Laertes



**38** A dishevelled mad Ophelia (Helena Bonham-Carter) appears on the castle ramparts in this still from Zeffirelli's film, 1990

made ineffectually a little later. Ophelia's aggressive entrance cowers Gertrude, 'the beautiful majesty' and in an interesting twist, the second mad scene finds her occupying the Queen's throne. Thus she effects symbolically the 'usurpation' of the Queen's role.

Bonham-Carter's Ophelia seems a much stronger figure than Simmons's but Zeffirelli's direction undercuts Ophelia's point of view. Hamlet watches her conversation with Polonius after Laertes embarks for France. Her 'report' of Hamlet's 'antic' disposition is translated as diegesis with Polonius watching. Gertrude watches Ophelia accost the guard. The directors' penchant for overhead surveillance of Ophelia's body extends to our final view of her drowned in the brook. Olivier's film by contrast shows the 'antic' disposition from Ophelia's point of view and this re-emerges powerfully in the mad scenes. Instead of framing Ophelia's entrance into the court through the eyes of her observers, Olivier's camera moves with Ophelia. This enables the spectator to see what she sees as she enters through the familiar arches and follows the sounds of a noisy quarrel between her brother and the King. As Jack Jorgens notes, 'a moving camera implies a shifting point of view, and *Hamlet* is above all a play of ambivalent and shifting points of view'<sup>38</sup> At one point she breaks away from the King and Queen to place rosemary on Hamlet's chair, 'Pray, love, remember' (4.5.178). When she leaves the court finally she reaches an archway and sinks down. A close-up shows her genuflecting with the line 'And of all Christian souls, I pray God' (4.5.200). She has granted herself absolution. Her eyes stray towards the court she has left as the idea grows stronger. She is resolved and gives her final blessing, 'God buy you'(200). Simmons's Ophelia suggests that her final act is an autonomous one: she has decided to take her own life. In these circumstances, the Priest's concern that 'her death was doubtful'(5.1.

217) takes a new emphasis, recalling Levin's argument about the profound anxieties provoked in the image of the dead Queen Elizabeth's body.

Olivier described his film as an "Essay in Hamlet", deliberately exploring some aspects at the expense of others. The cuts include Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and Fortinbras. Olivier described his sets as 'abstractions', linking with an idea of 'timelessness': 'We have purposely planned the film with spacious, empty sets. No piece of furniture appears on the screen unless it plays a necessary part in the film'<sup>40</sup> By 'necessary', Olivier seems to mean symbolic, for example Hamlet's chair and Gertrude's large canopied bed. Anthony Davies comments also on 'the shortness and scarcity of outdoor shots', which make it 'difficult to fix the time of day at any point'<sup>41</sup> Olivier's direction establishes Elsinore as the claustrophobic world of Hamlet's mind but lyrical theme music follows Ophelia to her sewing bower from where glimpses of the countryside can be seen through the windows. Bernice Kliman argues that 'the emptiness of the sets (and the absence of the amenities of daily life) certainly run counter to cinematic convention but help Olivier achieve a theatrical style which he expands with his travelling, tracking camera'<sup>42</sup>

In a theatre, of course, a spectator can *choose* to watch an area of the stage and any part of the set. Kliman suggests that Olivier's use of deep focus photography aimed to replicate the theatrical experience. It 'seems to allow us to see all the actions and reactions in a shot, not merely those of the major figures, just as we view blocking on a stage set'.<sup>43</sup> However, as Kliman cautions, 'in reality, however, the director guides the viewer's attention in both media'<sup>44</sup> Olivier implants the idea of Ophelia's point of view from the scene where she is sewing in her chamber and her identification with the prince continues after the burial.

Kliman notes that when Claudius and Laertes return inside after the funeral the herb on the arm of Hamlet's chair is still there.<sup>45</sup>

David Impastato suggests that Zeffirelli's film makes a symbolic identification with sunlight and Hamlet's spiritual awareness, noting that 'sunlight is a constant reference in the film'<sup>46</sup> In my view the sunlight creates a disjunction in a film that, like Olivier's, attempts to focus on an 'inner' psychological world rather than a naturalistic world beyond Elsinore. In the absence of the political dimension and the loss of the threat from Norway, the spectator is uncomfortably aware of the created location in Zeffirelli's version. Jonathan Romney in *Sight and Sound* commented:

The castle designed by Dante Ferretti (in fact, a composite of Shepperton sets with three British ruins) is singularly lacking in atmosphere. [...] Elsinore scarcely seems a real place, much less a symbolic one, and comes across as a standard-issue mediaeval castle, as opposed to the infinitely extendable Piranesi labyrinth of Olivier's 1948 version.<sup>47</sup>

In Olivier's version, Ophelia's world beyond the castle is a symbolic place representing what is natural, herself, the flowers, the brook. In Zeffirelli's version Ophelia's escape from the castle walls emphasises realism rather than symbolism, as she runs out across an expanse of open countryside. Olivier's version could suggest that Ophelia's symbolic space could not be disconnected from the world of the court. At the beginning of the mad scene the camera cuts to a view of Ophelia looking at her reflection in the stream and *then* running across a bridge and *into* the castle where her identity is defined. In the Zeffirelli version Bonham-Carter's Ophelia removes herself from the world of the court and runs

*outside* into the freedom of the countryside. The camera cuts from a view of her body in the stream, to the distant cliffs, linking her death with the return of the prince across the sea.

Despite shortcomings, both films establish the importance of Ophelia and the challenge she represents. Reviewers tend not to look for Simmons's autonomy in the role, reading her performance as entirely 'schooled' by the master Olivier and missing the effect of the shifting point of view. Simmons may have contributed to this impression:

I have never acted in Shakespeare on the stage or seen it played. In fact I have no stage experience at all [...] All I have learned is the result of Larry's tuition in the studio'.<sup>48</sup>

The *Observer* commented on 'a nice schoolgirl Ophelia' while *New Cavalcade* felt she was 'a nice young girl among grown-ups'.<sup>49</sup> Olivier's direction doubles a sense of mastery: he masters the part of Hamlet who masters Ophelia and he masters Simmons's performance as her director. The effect is to suggest limited autonomy indeed for Simmons and by extension Ophelia in the play. The *New Statesman and Nation* seems to stand alone in dedicating its review to Simmons's Ophelia and also in noting the effect of Olivier's cuts on the role:

Within the complex, loose-ended action of *Hamlet*, one drama, that of Ophelia, comes out with a clarity I have never known from the stage or for that matter, the text. [...] We don't, as in the theatre, ignore or lose sight of her for too long [...] Miss Simmons's mad scenes (she acts them very simply; her beauty does the rest) are the most affecting I have known; in fact this is the first time, in my experience, that the shock of Ophelia gone mad has moved and not embarrassed. [...] Only two pieces of vulgarity have marred this story of Ophelia: one when the speech "O what a noble mind is

here o'erthrown" is cut so that she may sob her heart out instead on a flight of steps, and the other when, still humming to herself, she glides on her back downstream.<sup>50</sup>

Helena Bonham-Carter's performance was praised by a number of critics. The *Scotsman Weekend* remarked: 'Helen Bonham-Carter has strength beneath those wide wet eyes, desire beyond redemption. She is no pullet. She has hawk's blood in her veins'<sup>51</sup> The *Spectator* was similarly impressed:

The only character who is touching - and sexy too - is Helena Bonham-Carter's Ophelia. This is a miraculous performance, unsentimental, brusque even, but heart-rending [...] Zeffirelli wanted a modern prince who wasn't 'a wimp' He has certainly got a modern Ophelia who isn't a drip.<sup>52</sup>

*Sight and Sound* found 'the only lead to carry real interpretative weight is Helena Bonham-Carter's Ophelia, no wilting innocent but a young woman whose obstreperous pique is more than a match for the humours of her father and her lover'<sup>53</sup> Helena Bonham-Carter commented of her role: 'I didn't want to portray Ophelia as a weakling or a victim. She is vulnerable because a lot of the circumstances surrounding her life suddenly lose stability'<sup>53</sup> Jan Stuart in *Newsday* noted the connection made between Ophelia and the Queen: Zeffirelli plays up the interactions between her and Gertrude, vividly implying the second of two overlapping relationships with Hamlet as the hub'<sup>54</sup> The final strong image of Ophelia is as representing ruler, enthroned, but this image is shadowed by the transgressive disorder of her wayward and threatening sexuality. The intriguing connection with the strong Tudor monarch Elizabeth I and the anxieties surrounding her sexuality are thus sustained.

In the final part of my discussion I want to consider two versions of *Hamlet* that have brought Ophelia from periphery to centre, emphasising the importance of her relationship to a destabilised political world.

### 3. From Periphery to Centre: The Presence of Ophelia in Grigori Kozintsev's *Hamlet* (1964) and Adrian Noble's *Hamlet* at the Barbican and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1992-3

In the previous section I discussed the diminution of Ophelia's role in two 'Oedipal' *Hamlets*. In this section I wish to further a discussion of the legal metaphor of 'The Queen's Two Bodies' through a close study of the centrality of Ophelia in two productions. The *New Statesman* commented in January 1965 that Ophelia was really 'the key presence' in Kozintsev's widescreen version which centred on 'one simple visual metaphor: "Denmark's a prison"'.<sup>1</sup> Dilys Powell in the *Sunday Times* noted that 'the Queen recedes a little from the foreground', sharpening the effect of Ophelia (Anastasia Vertinskaya) as 'a prisoner, an innocent forced into the mould of a disciplined puppet'.<sup>2</sup> The *Monthly Film Bulletin* remarked: 'Perhaps, the most striking single element in the film [...] is its treatment of Ophelia [...] the film contrives to move Ophelia from the periphery towards the centre'.<sup>3</sup> This decision followed another: Innokenti Smoktunovskiy's *Hamlet* was to be a man of conscience faced with the unenviable task of rooting out corruption in a 'real' social and political world. The *Financial Times* commented:

Hamlet, already suspicious and resentful of his mother's remarriage, learns the truth about his father's death from the ghost. Thereafter Hamlet's central problem is less that of bringing himself to the point of doing the ghost's bidding than how to manage his relations with the king and the king's court.<sup>4</sup>

Kozintsev shows some indebtedness to Olivier, in the visual reference of the turbulent sea and voice-overs for soliloquies, emphasising Hamlet's alienation and inner torment. However, for Kozintsev, Elsinore was no abstraction as it was essentially for Olivier. Kenneth Tynan in the

*Observer* described it as ‘the most convincing Elsinore that I have ever witnessed on stage or screen’, adding:

Kozintsev populates it, never letting us forget that a royal castle is like a vast hotel which somebody has to run: hence, in the background of almost every scene, we see servants and court officials going about their business.<sup>5</sup>

Adrian Noble’s production, starring Kenneth Branagh as Hamlet, adopted a similar strategy for the theatre. The *Times* described a Hamlet whose father’s death ‘inspires him with genuine grief, not Oedipal angst’ and who inhabited an apparently real familiar world as well as a symbolic one.<sup>6</sup> This was a world where grey filing cabinets stood in Polonius’s office and where the Edwardian court celebrated the festive season with a Christmas tree. It was amid this domesticity that the director chose to emphasise the disintegration of a corrupt court through the symbolic presentation of Ophelia as sacrificial victim. The *Observer* commented: ‘if Denmark is a prison, it is also, finally, a graveyard. The stage is littered with pink garlands and funereal mounds’<sup>7</sup> The piano on which Ophelia (Joanne Pearce) was seen ‘hammering out discordant accompaniments to her mad songs’ remained on stage amid the decaying funeral wreaths for the final scenes of the play.<sup>8</sup> The *Guardian* described her as ‘a sad, childlike figure’ in a ‘poisoned world’<sup>9</sup>

It is interesting that the oedipal *Hamlets* (described in my earlier discussion) seemed to produce Ophelias with a marked sense of autonomy. In her mad scenes the camera took Jean Simmons’s point of view and she rose in stature as she decided to embrace death. Helena Bonham-Carter’s assault on the court and her harrying of the Queen also suggested an insistence that responsibility be taken, that blame for corruption had to lie somewhere. Paradoxically Ophelia’s autonomy is reduced as she is moved from periphery to centre by

Kozintsev and Noble. *Freedom Press* found Ophelia had a ‘marbled doll-like quality’ in Kozintsev’s film version (*see* figs. 39-41) <sup>10</sup> The *Spectator* remarked:

In this populous, masculine world Ophelia makes sense as a puppet taught to twitch the right social way, whose precarious balance is toppled by events too violent for it.<sup>11</sup>

The spectator first sees Ophelia at a music lesson, repeating the clockwork movements she has been taught. Shostakovich’s powerful musical score includes the clear tinkling notes of a clockwork doll motif for Ophelia. The music returns in the first mad scene where, dressed in mourning clothes, she moves her arms into position and exits to the same small halting steps of the dance. In Noble’s production Ophelia played a piano which symbolised self-expression and freedom. At the end of the nunnery scene, while Polonius and Claudius discussed sending Hamlet to England, she sat at the piano but Polonius closed the lid to stop her from playing. The piano remained on stage in the final section of the play symbolising Ophelia’s spirit or presence.

In both productions Polonius was a patriarchal figure. Kozintsev shows Ophelia waiting dutifully while Polonius (Yuri Tolubeyev) advises Laertes (S. Oleksenko) on his future conduct. She sits at her father’s feet while he questions her about Hamlet. The scene ends when she kisses her father’s ring in obedience and recommences the clockwork movements of the dance lesson. Kozintsev defines Ophelia’s childlike innocence through *mise en scène*. She is shown alone in her pretty bed chamber, retrieving a framed picture of Hamlet from under her pillow. She re-reads the inscription (from 2.2. 115-8) on the back of it:

Doubt thou the stars are fire,

Doubt that the sun doth move,



**39** Hamlet (Innokenti Smoktunovsky) is observed through the balustrade by Ophelia (Anastasia Vertinskaya) in Grigori Kozintsev's *Hamlet*, 1964



40 Ophelia (Anastasia Vertinskaya) returns in her mourning clothes to the scene of her rejection by Hamlet



**41** Ophelia (Anastasia Vertinskaya) gives her 'herbs' to Laertes ( S.Oleksenko) in Grigori Kozintsev's *Hamlet*, 1964

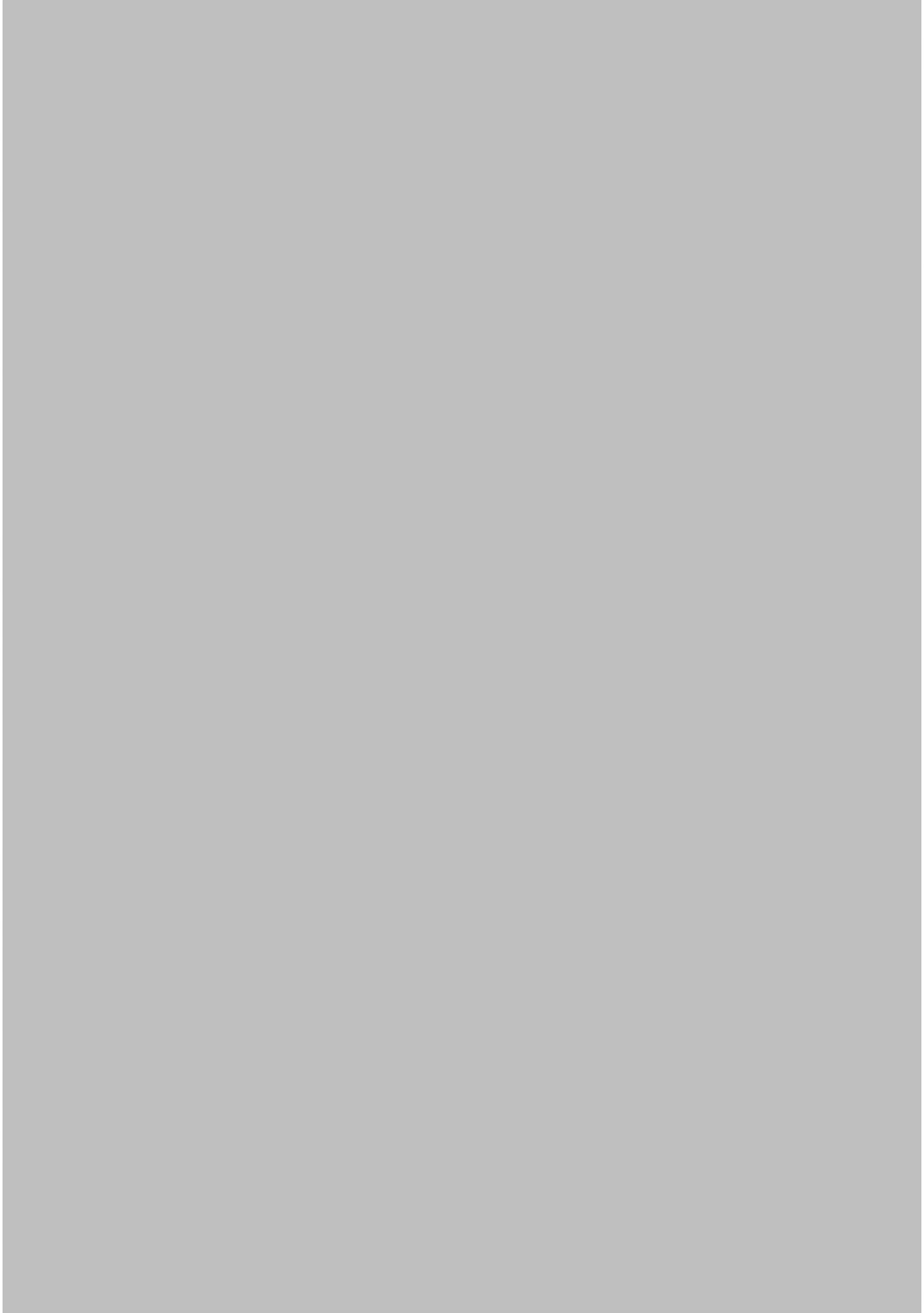
Doubt truth to be a liar,  
 But never doubt I love.

Kozintsev, like Zeffirelli, shows Hamlet's antic behaviour in 2.1. through narration. The scene cuts to Polonius giving money to Reynaldo and as the camera pans past a birdcage, Ophelia enters in alarm to seek reassurance from her father. The birdcage suggests her imprisonment, a motif associating her plight with Hamlet's. The film's opening sequence shows Hamlet on horseback riding towards Elsinore in haste having received news of his father's death. Black flags of mourning hang down the castle walls. Hamlet crosses the drawbridge, dismounts and enters the castle to seek his mother. They meet in a silent embrace, while we glimpse Claudius watching them. Sombre music accompanies the raising of the drawbridge and the lowering of the steel portcullis, suggesting that Hamlet has entered a prison. It is noticeable in this version how often meetings that appear private and personal are in fact being overheard or watched. Waiting women watch Ophelia in 2.1 and the scene cuts to a view of the 'mad' Hamlet seated on the ground leaning against a pillar while courtiers watch with curious unease from a distance.

Adrian Noble's production (*see* figs. 42- 44) also defined Ophelia's brittle innocence through *mise en scène*. Benedict Nightingale in the *Times* commented that Ophelia's 'pea-coloured bedsit' fitted her father's description of a 'green girl'.<sup>12</sup> John Peter in the *Sunday Times* remarked: 'she lives in a bedroom which is still partly a nursery; the way she restlessly tries to look at home in the world suggests a gnawing insecurity'(fig. 42)<sup>13</sup> Russell Jackson in *Shakespeare Quarterly* referred to the toys 'stowed on top of the wardrobe (they included a doll's house, perhaps appropriately for the Ibsenish setting)' <sup>14</sup> Samuel Crowl in *Shakespeare Bulletin* commented:



**42** Polonius (David Bradley) advises Ophelia (Joanne Pearce) in her 'nursery' bedroom  
in Adrian Noble's RSC production, 1992



**43** Hamlet (Kenneth Branagh) and Ophelia (Joanne Pearce) in the 'nunnery' scene of Adrian Noble's production, 1992



44 Ophelia (Joanne Pearce) gives herbs to Laertes (Richard Bonneville), Claudius (John Shrapnel)  
and Gertrude (Jane Lapotaire) in a decaying Chekhovian world

Noble's approach emphasized the domestic over the political, family over state. He set the play in the period before World War I, seeking to capture its affinities with Ibsen and Strindberg and Bergman: "I have always been interested in Scandinavian art and culture, which have a strange mixture of rich, domestic warmth and remote, cold starkness - like the Bergman films."<sup>15</sup>

Joanne Pearce's Ophelia kept a picture of Hamlet by her bed and carried around a little suitcase containing his love letters. Like Kozintsev's reading, this Ophelia possessed no private space in Elsinore. After being frightened by Hamlet's strange behaviour she sought Polonius (David Bradley) in his office. He put his topcoat over her and led her out like a small child. The *Independent* described this action as, 'paternal over-protectiveness and infantilising domination registered sartorially', adding, 'that she would end up donning the entire outfit worn by her father [...] at the time of his murder was a fairly safe bet'<sup>16</sup> The suggestion of 'infantilising domination' was reinforced in the 'nunnery scene' when Polonius and Claudius invaded the 'nursery' to hide in Ophelia's wardrobe and to spy on her meeting with Hamlet.

These versions both established a strong connection between the defeat of Ophelia (the 'Body natural') and the instability and even disintegration of the body politic. In Kozintsev's version there is an even stronger connection between Hamlet and Ophelia as pure souls sacrificed in a corrupt world. This reading derives from Pasternak's translation of *Hamlet* which he saw as a drama of self-denial with Hamlet elevated to Christ-like stature. Eleanor Rowe in *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, comments 'Pasternak's Hamlet (in the translation) is a dedicated, self-sacrificing hero' while Ophelia is idealised and sexual references are muted.<sup>17</sup> Rowe considers Pasternak:

Focuses on the pathos of her situation, conveying a sense of sorrow at the destruction of a fragile and precious beauty. Thus Pasternak tends to simplify Shakespeare's Ophelia, reducing her to a relatively one-dimensional, innocent victim. This idealization of Ophelia as victimized purity is certainly in the mainstream of Russian literary treatment.<sup>18</sup>

In Kozintsev's version Hamlet's renunciation of Ophelia in 2.1 and in the 'nunnery scene' seems a poignant acknowledgment that she, like him, will not escape the consequences of what is 'rotten in the state of Denmark'. His treatment of both women is restrained (compared with Mel Gibson's performance, for example) and sexual references are muted both in the closet scene and the 'nunnery' scene. In this version Hamlet and Ophelia share a spiritual love while Claudius (Michail Nazwanov) is established as corrupt in mind and body. *Films and Filming* described his performance: 'From the start his eyes gleam with lust and guile, and gradually his suave, calculating and malevolent manner stains the drama'<sup>19</sup> As Ophelia returns to her dancing the camera cuts to the clockwork figures on the castle clock which includes the figure of Death. Hamlet prepares to meet his father's ghost while the castle is taken over with Bacchanalian revels. Claudius and Gertrude are seen making a quick exit and the 'bloat' king closes the door in eager anticipation of sex. By muting the sexual references in the 'nunnery scene', the film mitigates Hamlet's unwitting murder of Polonius for which he grieves by suggesting that he is less to blame for Ophelia's decline into madness. The film establishes that Ophelia and Hamlet are trapped in a prison state from the start. *The Spectator* commented: 'it is a fortress and prison more than a palace: deep-walled and menacing, with a life at once promiscuously crowded and wretchedly lonely'<sup>20</sup> Kozintsev

went to great lengths to achieve his effects. The *Daily Worker* described the filming in January 1964:

We were descending to the very edge of the Black Sea for the last location shots of "Hamlet" which started production just a year ago. A wide-screen black-and-white film of three hours duration, made with a £3,600,000 (nine-million-rouble) budget, it is due for release in the spring, to coincide with celebrations of Shakespeare's 400th birthday. [...] Most of the film was shot in Estonia. Four months were spent building a full-size castle on the Baltic coast, not a replica of Elsinore, but the castle Shakespeare described and needed in his play. Into this setting were being woven scenes shot on location in the Crimea, using real streets and entrances of the medieval town of Chifut Kale - and for the ghost scenes - the battlements of a Genoese fortress at Sudak.<sup>21</sup>

Kozintsev's sense of the play world included an emphasis on its political and social organisation, 'Hamlet is tormented by what is happening in the prison-State around him'<sup>22</sup> The director aimed to convey the 'prison-State' by defining the roles of those who worked within it:

The play is not a tragedy set in abstract space. Shakespeare gives us a detailed description of a State in which children are educated as Polonius would have them, in which there are careerists like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Into this State, where everyone swims with the stream, there comes a person who is against all this.<sup>23</sup>

In an interview, Kozintsev revealed that he had received ‘thousands of letters from people all over the country, asking about the film and discussing the play and its problems’.<sup>24</sup> These included a letter from an eighteen-year-old worker who wrote: ‘Hamlet was a man who could have lived comfortably, but who renounced everything because he wanted to get to the truth’.<sup>25</sup> The letters point to the importance placed on *Hamlet* in Russian history and the association of Hamlet with dissidence and radicalism. In *Shakespeare Time and Conscience*, Kozintsev traces changing approaches to *Hamlet* in European history and rejects the ‘hamletism’ derived from German thinkers. Michael Hulse notes in his ‘Introduction’ to Goethe’s *The Sorrows of Young Werther*:

The proto-Romantic cult of the genius exempt from the customary rules and judgements of society was characteristic of German writing of the *Sturm und Drang*, and once it was coupled with that sentimental, melancholy sensitivity which was known as *Empfindsamkeit* it produced an intellectual and emotional mood in which everyone (as Goethe put it in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*) could be the Prince of Denmark.<sup>26</sup>

Hamletism cast Hamlet as a poet, ‘a man who understands the evil of the contemporary social structure, but who is unable to strike out against its cause’.<sup>27</sup> As Kozintsev writes ‘the sorrow of the Russian Hamlet of the 1830s was replete with somber [sic] poetry and angry power’.<sup>28</sup>

Over time ‘poets, philosophers and scholars used Hamlet as a symbol of European culture as a whole, and, with his help, they mourned its demise’.<sup>29</sup> Kozintsev relates the play’s relevance to the aftermath of two World Wars and, particularly sharp in Russian memories, the tyranny of Stalinism. He writes: ‘“Justice” and “humanity” now acquire a special, contemporary meaning. This is why for us the meaning of Shakespeare’s tragedy lies not in

the inactivity of its hero but in the tragedy's provocation to action. *Hamlet* is a tocsin that awakens the conscience.<sup>30</sup> Neil Taylor relates the film's origins from a 1954 production staged at the Pushkin Academic Theatre of Drama in Leningrad :

The seeds of that production probably go back at least nine years to discussions about the play which Kozintsev was then having with Meyerhold's most talented disciple, Nikolai Okhlopkov. When, by a coincidence, Okhlopkov came also to direct the play in 1954 (at the Mayakovsky Theatre), his set was dominated by a huge metal grille that clearly indicated that Elsinore was a prison.<sup>31</sup>

Kozintsev makes Ophelia's tragedy a catalyst for Hamlet's 'provocation to action' even though of course Hamlet does not see the mad scenes. Ophelia represents the imprisoned spirit, the pure good part of humanity that lacks the strength to fight for its freedom. Hamlet must strike a blow for freedom on her account. This is why the burial scene is particularly poignant. Kozintsev shows the corrupt court keeping their distance from the coffin as Ophelia is given her 'maimed rites' but Hamlet kneels by her coffin, placing his face close to hers. The lines normally directed to Laertes ' I loved you ever. But it is no matter' (5.1. 280) seem in this private moment to be spoken to Ophelia.

The *New Statesman* described Ophelia as 'pale and subjugated' from a first view of her in the dancing lesson.<sup>32</sup> The spectator is prepared for Hamlet's renunciation of Ophelia in the 'nunnery' scene because Kozintsev shows the seeds of suspicion growing in the prince's mind in his audience with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Following this, Hamlet's relationship with the Players seems more restrained than exuberant and the scene builds to a climactic moment when they depart. Kozintsev cuts to a view of the back of Hamlet sitting

on the players' covered wagon, a crown from their props hanging from the roof. Hamlet roars 'We'll hear a play tomorrow' ('We'll ha't tomorrow night', 2.2.528) and pulls himself out of the wagon with a fiercesome scream which cuts to the tempestuous sea crashing on the rocks below. The 'To be' soliloquy at the water's edge is the anti-climax to this earlier ferocious burst of anger. It suggests despair and also the human difficulty of translating powerful emotions into purposeful action. Hamlet returns to the claustrophobic castle in calmer spirit but immediately walks into renewed deception. The camera cuts to a view of Polonius who has Ophelia by the hand, instructing her 'walk you here' Ophelia is framed by the rays of sunlight from a tall stained glass window, suggesting a holy place. Both she and Hamlet are figured as noble spirits sacrificed to evil human contriving. Ophelia sees Hamlet through a balustrade. A frame shows Hamlet at first unaware that she is watching him (fig. 39). When he looks around, a reaction shot shows his view of her through the spindles. The alternate shots echo Olivier's use of the arches. In Kozintsev's version the balustrade suggests an obstacle to their union, an obstacle that figures prison bars, the portcullis and the birdcage. Hamlet knocks the proffered ring to the ground and grabs her wrist, pulling her round suspiciously as he looks around the hall. He holds her against the balustrade and places his cheek tenderly next to hers at the line 'I did love thee once', prefiguring his action at her graveside. Kozintsev cuts from the tender moment to a view of the King and Polonius who scuttle for cover. Hamlet tests Ophelia, 'Where's your father?' There is a cut to a view of the sun's rays through the stained glass. At her betrayal, 'at home, my lord', Hamlet lowers his head sadly and pushes her away. Ophelia's speech at this point is cut, which is appropriate to a reading of her as more acted upon than acting: she is made a figure unable to reflect on her own position. Her isolation is reinforced when Polonius denies her fatherly comfort. He tells

her, 'what Lord Hamlet said; We heard it all' and exits hurriedly with the King. Polonius displays the same disregard of Ophelia's feelings after the 'Mousetrap' scene when poignantly she seeks his support but he brushes her aside.

Kozintsev conveys realism in countless small touches that heighten the tragedy because they cast Hamlet's and Ophelia's struggles in a material social world that is impervious to them. Life goes on. Ladies-in-waiting carry the Queen's gowns which are revealed hanging in orderly fashion behind the arras where Polonius hides and is killed. Kenneth Tynan in the *Observer* noted, 'For once, the incestuous couch actually looks slept in [...] we get increasingly the sense of a household scared, disordered and beleaguered'<sup>33</sup> Kozintsev's screenplay is able to work simultaneously on a number of levels. The real portcullis is also a symbol of imprisonment and the recurrent image of the seagull is a symbol of freedom and spirituality.

Adrian Noble's production similarly conveyed a sense of realism through naturalistic touches of everyday routine; 'in her bedroom, she [Ophelia] freshens her armpits'<sup>34</sup> The playworld was also a symbolic one, described in the *Guardian* as 'a disintegrating Edwardian world filled with a poignant Chekhovian melancholy'<sup>35</sup> Branagh was not afraid to draw out the humour in the prince's 'antic disposition', particularly in parodying Polonius's dry civil-servant-like self importance. In an interview with Samuel Crowl in *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Branagh explained:

I wanted to be clear that this Hamlet puts on his antic disposition, which is why we used the straitjacket in the fishmonger scene; it's a prop that goes with his double-talk, and it made - waving the straitjacket's flapping arms as I walked backwards away from Polonius - a visual image for the bloody

difficult line you struggle with, “you, sir, should be as old as I am if, like a crab, you could go backward”<sup>36</sup>

Hamlet was similarly invigorated in his meeting with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, speaking in an affected high voice, perfectly in command of his own performance. Although he was depressed, it was also in a spirit of ‘play’ that he greeted Ophelia in the ‘nunnery’ scene. She held out her hand to in comfort and they embraced. At the line, ‘Go thy ways to a nunnery’, she laughed, taking the idea as a joke. The prompt-book shows an earlier ‘play’ idea: ‘Ophelia pulls blanket over Hamlet-makes a den’ but I did not see this in performance and reviewers make no mention of it.<sup>37</sup> He kissed Ophelia but then pushed her away with the dawn of realisation, ‘Where’s your father?’ At the line ‘chaste as ice’ he threw her bedclothes off the bed in fury and hurled her little suitcase on the ground. Hamlet pushed Ophelia down onto the floor and groped between her legs suggesting her sexual perfidy. Then he crouched over and kissed her. Joanne Pearce gave a sensual emphasis to ‘sucked the honey’ in Ophelia’s speech, ‘O, what a noble mind’ There was a clear rationality breaking through her despair at ‘see what I see’, as though, through the violent encounter, she drew adult insights into their relationship and saw danger in their situation. Upon Hamlet’s exit, Claudius and Polonius came out of hiding from the wardrobe. At the King’s decision to send Hamlet to England, Ophelia began to play her piano but (as referred to earlier) Polonius prevented her.

The *Times* found Branagh’s scenes with Pearce ‘particularly forceful; a tender cuddle followed by a burst of rage in which she gets hurled to the floor and his old love letters ripped up; another desperate clinch after which he spits in her face’ (fig. 43).<sup>38</sup> Although not an oedipal interpretation, Branagh’s performance brought oedipal overtones into the closet scene where at one point he grabbed his mother and feigned copulation at the line ‘when the

compulsive ardour gives the charge' (3.4.78). Noble's production suggested the emotional rage produced in a family of distorted relationships and many reviewers commented on this aspect of domesticity, some relating it to strife within the British royal family. Michael Coveney in the *Observer* argued that the production could be read 'as a defence of the Prince of Wales, an unofficial but carefully planned promotion of the dilemma of the modern monarchy'<sup>39</sup> Branagh had of course consulted Prince Charles in preparation for his role as King Henry V at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in 1984. The *Observer* remarked: 'Branagh's Hamlet, like Prince Charles is an incorrigible loner and can only trust his chums like "adder's fangs" And there now seems a real possibility that the heir to the throne, like Hamlet, will not make the grade'<sup>40</sup>

Noble's production suggested an insularity in this world of domestic tribulation while Kozintsev's version was an epic story in a wider sweep of history. In Noble's version Ophelia seemed something of a misfit, sharing some responsibility for her failure to survive domestic pressures. There are unhappy though intriguing retrospective associations to be made here relating to media representations of the plight of Diana, Princess of Wales. The *Observer* commented of Joanne Pearce's performance: 'This girl seems to be suffering from absolutely everything this side of bulimia'.<sup>41</sup> The *Sunday Times* found Ophelia 'wilful, unstable and fretfully unconventional'.<sup>42</sup> Joanne Pearce's Ophelia was made a product of and acted within 'the stiff formality of the Elsinore court' in a 'penetrating, almost Chekhovian exploration of family life'<sup>43</sup> The symbolism of Kozintsev's film isolated Ophelia as a pure soul, to some extent removed from the corruption around her, but Joanne Pearce's powerful performance conveyed a young woman trying to find a space within it.

Vertinskaya's Ophelia is dressed in her mourning attire by waiting women who lock her into an iron corset. Imprisoned in body and mind, she shares Hamlet's psychological sense of the 'prison-State' described by Kozintsev. In returning to the scene of the 'nunnery' encounter with the stained glass window, her movements recreate their meeting. She moves to the balustrade (fig. 40) and a reverse angle shot shows Gertrude watching her as Hamlet had done through the spindles. At the line, 'Good night, sweet ladies', Ophelia exits up the flight of steps that Hamlet had taken. A long shot shows the tiny figure of Ophelia emerging onto the battlements accompanied by the soft refrain of her mad song. Her close symbolic union with Hamlet defines the sense of loss in the sacrifice of the 'Body natural'. For her second mad entrance the camera picks her out in long shot from the point of view of Laertes looking down from the gallery of the Great Hall. She wears a simple shift and enters barefoot to the tinkling music that now defines her presence. Palace guards fill the Hall, following Laertes's insurrection. A soldier places a blanket over her shoulders. She picks up spent twigs from the huge fireplace and distributes these 'herbs' to the embarrassed soldiers (fig. 41). One of the guards restrains a prisoner with bound hands. Ophelia does not recognise Laertes and exits singing. The scene effects a powerful symbolic representation of the 'Body natural' destroyed by the corrupt power of the 'Body politic'. Ophelia's exit leaves a vacancy at the centre which Hamlet, the 'rose of the fair state' will be unable to fill. The film reinforces this sense of a vacancy by showing Ophelia's room, now empty. A cut to her body floating on the water suggests the 'watery grave' rather than the flowers. A further cut to the remaining ripples on an empty stretch of water connotes her death and a view of a seagull flying symbolises her release from imprisonment.

Joanne Pearce's Ophelia conveyed more of a struggle for sanity in Adrian Noble's production. After the interval, spectators returned to find the stage set covered over with an enormous grey dustcloth. Ophelia shuffled in with an importunate cry of 'Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?' Russell Jackson commented:

Her own antic disposition was every bit as confrontational as Hamlet's: Ophelia, wearing her father's jacket and trousers and bloody shirt, recalled the figure she had cut earlier when she was distraught at Hamlet's odd behaviour and Polonius had enveloped her protectively in his greatcoat.<sup>44</sup>

In contrast to Vertinskaya's symbolic dance, Joanne Pearce beat her chest repeatedly suggesting a pathological symptom of madness. The *Daily Telegraph* commented: 'Joanne Pearce charts the decline of Ophelia from sexy good humour to raving insanity with a no-holds-barred intensity'.<sup>45</sup> While Kozintsev conveyed Ophelia's inability to withstand the corruption of the body politic, Noble's production gave her autonomy by making her an agent of discovery. The *Daily Telegraph* described 'the marvellously dramatic moment when Ophelia removes an enormous silk dust-cover to reveal toppled furniture and masses of dried funeral wreaths', creating 'memorably strange and disturbing images'.<sup>46</sup> The *Independent* described the effect as revealing 'a world of stark disorder and impending death'.<sup>47</sup> To the King's enquiry 'How do you, pretty lady?', Ophelia gave a fierce retort, 'Well, God 'ild you!' Her mad song, 'Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day' was given a sexual definition when she placed a hand between her legs and sank to the floor. She accompanied a fierce rendition of 'Young men will do't' with physical jerks suggesting copulation, an echo of Hamlet's actions in the closet scene. At the line 'An thou hadst not come to my bed' she sobbed pathetically. There was a definite threat in the line 'My brother shall know of it' and

her exit with the grey 'shroud' around her associated her death with her revelation of the corrupt centre at the heart of Elsinore. H.R. Coursen remarked in *Shakespeare Bulletin*: 'she was a Chaplinesque clown in floppy shoes, a "fool" in that she brought uncomfortable truths to the shallow court'<sup>48</sup> Her voice alternated between a soft inflexion for the ballads and fierce retorts, indicating a struggle for a sense of autonomy through directing her anger outwards. In her second mad scene she crossed to her piano and accompanied her songs amid the decaying wreaths and upturned furniture. After distributing her herbs she was cradled centre stage by Laertes and at the lines 'withered all when my father died' and 'No, no, he is dead' she appeared rational in her acceptance, making her distress poignant (fig. 44).

In both productions there was a direct correlation between the visibility of Ophelia or symbolism connoting her presence (the bird flying away from Elsinore in Kozintsev's film and the piano remaining on stage in Noble's production) and the revelation of instability in the body politic. Jack Jorgens noted that of a number of scenes added without lines, there was 'Ophelia's being harnessed into mourning' and 'Hamlet's journey on the road back to the castle past a war-torn village' which I would suggest are intrinsically linked.<sup>49</sup> Jorgens adds that 'dramatized in the film but narrated in the play are 'Claudius's court revels, Hamlet's visit to Ophelia's bedroom, her body floating in a pool'<sup>50</sup> The metonymic shot of Ophelia 'being harnessed into mourning' connects the psychological imprisonment associated with Hamlet to the military instruments of control necessary to enforce and maintain the monarchical State. Kozintsev retains the political element of *Hamlet* so that the issue of rule is pertinent. A strong military presence is sustained through shots of palace guards, their horses, armour, the men pushing the huge wheel that moves the portcullis, the sound of

cannon fire, the cut to a soldier reading out the King's proclamation and the sense of an outside threat making fortification necessary. The shot of Ophelia's 'harnessing' is followed a little later by a cut to Fortinbras's army, which recalls the strong visual scenes from Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) where the advancing Russian army carried tall pikes. Like Eisenstein, Kozintsev shows the horses trampling through muddy puddles. Kozintsev retains the Captain's comment from Q2 that 'Truly to speak, and with no addition,/We go to gain a little patch of ground/That hath in it no profit but the name' (4.4.17-19).<sup>51</sup> Hamlet watches the soldiers and in voice-over remarks on the 'two thousand men' who approach 'imminent death' (4.4.60). The scene is important because Kozintsev emphasises not only the world of the rulers at Elsinore but the world of the ruled; soldiers must obey commands whether they be just or not. The additional scene noted by Jorgens of Hamlet's journey past a war-torn village sustains the emphasis on the ruled who suffer the brunt of political decisions.

John Collick argues that 'by creating a montage-based visual patchwork of images culled from the Constructivist theatre and Eisenstein's work, Kozintsev rejected the psychological introspection of Olivier's film'<sup>52</sup> Collick sees a parallel with the achievements of the novelist Dostoyevsky who explored the psychology of his character's motivations and actions but who 'still retained a strong sense of the individual's position in society'<sup>53</sup> Thus it could be argued that the subjugation of Ophelia in the 'harness' conveys a Foucauldian idea of 'body' as a site of struggle between competing discourses (here discourses of power and subjectivity) located within the mind of the subject living in a particular society. This form of psychological subjugation relates to actual human bodies, subjects of a ruler in a State. As the funeral procession approaches Ophelia's grave, a guard on horseback rides into a group of peasants watching, enforcing State control of the proceedings. Thus Kozintsev's screenplay

makes the question of legal succession an issue that must be resolved. Fortinbras's army is an invading army and the military funeral granted to Hamlet is a further sign of control of the succession as well as dues paid to a royal prince. Hamlet's body is carried past the troops on an interlocking bed of swords draped with a flag and his journey out over the drawbridge through the opened portcullis may suggest personal spiritual freedom but also further subjugation for the ruled. Kozintsev cuts to the ordinary peasantfolk watching the transition of power from one monarchical form of government to another, returning the play to its Renaissance locus and the succession question (and recalling the proclamation from the new ruler, Claudius, to the assembled peasants at the start of the film).

The Royal Shakespeare Company production made a strategic decision to include the political elements in *Hamlet*, a decision announced in their theatre programme:

The text used in this production is the New Cambridge Shakespeare, which is a conflation of the full Second Quarto and First Folio texts. Specially bound rehearsal copies were provided for the company's use by Cambridge University Press.<sup>54</sup>

The *Observer* commented that the conflation 'plays with a fine sweep and momentum for a full four-and-a-half hours'<sup>55</sup> Russell Jackson noted in an analysis of the textual choices in Kenneth Branagh's film of *Hamlet* (1996), that 'the decision to use a "full" text came from his [Branagh's] conviction that the story is told to its best advantage in this version'<sup>56</sup> It is of interest now to read Branagh's comments in March 1993 after the success of Adrian Noble's production: 'there are 60 films based on *Hamlet*. I do not know whether the world needs another. It would be great but it would be hard to raise the money'<sup>57</sup> In the 'Introduction' to the published screenplay of his full-length film version (1996), Branagh reflected: 'My

attempts to finance a film version had been in motion since the opening of *Henry V*, but the perpetual reluctance of film companies to finance Shakespeare had frustrated each attempt' (the release of Franco Zeffirelli's film in 1991 would have made it more difficult for Branagh to persuade film companies to invest in a full-length version).<sup>58</sup> However, in 1995 Castle Rock Entertainment finally agreed to finance the film.<sup>59</sup>

Noble's production captured the claustrophobic effect of political intrigue within the court without the sense of relativity available to the screen director, for example in Kozintsev's shots of the peasantry and the marching soldiers. In contrast to the epic sweep of the Russian screenplay, Noble's stage production seemed deliberately insular with its focus on the royal figures seen in their domestic world. The production lifted the veil from off royal mysticism for the spectator, allowing an insight into domestic troubles, figuring the role of the British tabloids in recent years. The *Sunday Times* commented on Branagh's appearance:

You notice the almost obsessive care with which he is dressed. His shoes have a high shine: his black topcoat, collar and tie are neat; his short fairish hair is immaculate. The very sobriety of his attire suggests something almost defensive if there is a chink in this armour, nobody must see it.<sup>60</sup>

The reviewer suggested that 'to retreat behind the fortifications of dress and impeccable manners' is a defence.<sup>61</sup> The formal attire also suggested the remoteness of the royal prince; the distance of a Prince Charles from those outside the royal circle. This was a Hamlet we were privileged to be getting to know. Branagh moved within the locus world of the court, a far remove from the platea position of David Warner's disaffected 60s student. The succession question, already noted by reviewers in their references to Prince Charles, was

embedded in a contemporary narrative about restoring the strength and unity of the House of Windsor.

Noble directed this to effect in the closet scene where the Ghost of the old King Hamlet moved towards, rather than away from Gertrude and Hamlet. First the Ghost sat in a chair by the bed and then extended a hand to Hamlet, framing Gertrude in a reunion of the family. Before leaving, the Ghost put his hand tenderly to Gertrude's face. Usually the Ghost of Hamlet's father functions at a remove from the material world. His dread pronouncements and his warnings connect with a wider view of evil as having consequences in the elemental world. Noble's 'family reunion' domesticated the Ghost and reinforced the emphasis on the particular rather than the general. This particular royal house was threatened with extinction. The entrance of Fortinbras with his grey-coated soldiers and the inventive sound of the train that would transport them, seemed of lesser consequence.

In this insular Chekhovian family, Ophelia's revelatory gesture in showing the ruined world beneath the cover had a strange timely resonance with the story of Diana, Princess of Wales. The responsibility for Ophelia's descent into madness (illness) was clearly linked to her domestic environment as well as a political one. In fact the production drew the political and the domestic together, suggesting the invasion of the private world by the public role. The *Guardian* commented: 'In the end this is a production that manages to unite the political and personal; to show Hamlet wrestling with an intractable moral problem in a poisoned world'<sup>62</sup> Polonius is never shown off-duty with his daughter in *Hamlet*. In Noble's production the idea of the public role invading private space was graphically illustrated when Polonius and Claudius hid in Ophelia's 'nursery' wardrobe in order to spy on Hamlet. The arrival of Fortinbras granted a new perspective. Ophelia had removed the cover off this

strange disintegrating ruin of a royal house and the new monarch bade his soldiers carry out Hamlet's body across the debris of the old royal world. Ophelia's piano remained symbolically among the old wreaths and ruins suggesting her slender personal challenge from within the royal court and the memory of that challenge which she bequeathed. Hamlet's body was taken out upstage into a cinematic space of light and smoke as the soldiers were bid to 'shoot'. The heavy music of the military drums then changed to the plaintive notes of the piano keys, returning the production to thoughts of Ophelia, linking the succession question to feelings of loss and uncertainty. However, the production attempted to overcome these final suggestions of instability in the body politic, through an attempt at closure described by Russell Jackson:

At the end of the play, when Hamlet was borne out by the four captains appointed for the task, the backcloth rose to reveal a path seemingly stretching to infinity and the Ghost standing with outstretched arms to welcome his avenger. It was a disappointingly sentimental way to frame a production full of sharp and uncompromising ideas and performed with an energy and pace that justified its length.<sup>63</sup>

Peter Holland commented in *Shakespeare Survey* on the production's 'frequent obviousness of design':

The space at the rear beyond the cyclorama, a space marked as a world beyond, was the entry-route for the players and for Fortinbras and his army, in both cases apparently at the Elsinore railway station, where Hamlet appeared to be leaving Denmark for England by the boat-train. It was also the direction in which the funeral procession headed at the end where,

as the cyclorama lifted again, the ghost could be seen with outstretched arms welcoming his most loving son. Such evident structuring, such over-emphatic underlining worked against the production's flow, enforcing a pattern of formal articulation rather than the energies of events that more readily shaped the performances.<sup>64</sup>

To the extent that 'the energies of events' had successfully moved Ophelia from 'periphery to centre', casting shades of ambiguity over the final outcome for the royal household, the 'reunion' of father and son reduced the narrative complexity.

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## CHAPTER 5

**'FETCH HITHER RICHARD' : SHAKESPEARE'S REVISION OF HISTORY IN THE DEPOSITION SCENE**

In the previous section I have suggested that the legal metaphor of 'The Queen's Two Bodies' may be read as an example of 'metaphorical acquisition', described by Stephen Greenblatt under a general heading of types of 'symbolic acquisition', where 'a social practice or other mode of social energy is transferred to the stage by means of representation'<sup>1</sup> Greenblatt also refers to a type of symbolic acquisition he calls 'acquisition through simulation' of which 'many of the most resonant instances involve more complex simulations of the histrionic elements in public ceremonials and rituals' (in this part of my study the 'simulation' refers to the deposition scene in *Richard II*).<sup>2</sup> Greenblatt suggests that examples of simulations might include 'the spectacular royal pardons that were understood by observers to be theatrical occasions'.<sup>3</sup> Philip McGuire describes how James I orchestrated the reprieve of three men convicted of treason in the Bye plot in 'one of the most spectacular demonstrations of his capacity to combine justice and mercy'.<sup>4</sup> Each man was brought separately to the scaffold facing imminent death but was rescued when 'a messenger from the king battled through the crowd and reaching the scaffold at the last moment, halted the proceedings'<sup>5</sup> The example of the Bye plot suggests that the state has *appropriated* the scaffold for ideological purposes, using the aesthetic power of the spectacle to produce a particular response in spectators. Steven Mullaney argues that a weakness in Greenblatt's

approach to a ‘poetics of culture’ is a failure to engage with a ‘politics of culture’ and to address questions of *appropriation*:

Thus in his recent study of the Shakespearean theatre, focused upon the forms of cultural capital produced when objects, ideas, ceremonies and cultural practices were displaced or otherwise transferred from one cultural realm to another, his emphasis is upon a generalized ‘social energy’ and, in the case of the stage, the *aesthetic* empowerment produced by such circulation and negotiation. The potential ideological force of such displacements from the proper to the improper is largely ignored; circulation and acquisition are key metaphors, but appropriation is not.<sup>6</sup>

Mullaney argues that ‘it is misleading to collapse theatrical representation into the “theatricality” of sovereign power’<sup>7</sup> He cites Louis Montrose’s view that ideology should be viewed as ‘heterogeneous and unstable, permeable and processual’<sup>8</sup> Montrose argues that Queen Elizabeth’s summer progresses formed ‘an extraordinarily elaborate and extended periodic ritual drama, in which the monarch physically and symbolically took possession of her domains’<sup>9</sup> However Montrose envisages an active social exchange: ‘the symbols of celebration could be manipulated to serve simultaneously a variety of mutual interests and self-interests’.<sup>10</sup> Thus, ‘the progresses and their entertainments did not serve the interests of the Queen and her government exclusively; they also proffered occasions and instruments to those in pursuit of honors, gifts, and pensions, influence and power’.<sup>11</sup>

The quartos published in Queen Elizabeth’s lifetime all lack the full deposition scene from Act 4 scene 1. It has been argued that their excision from earlier quartos can be explained as an act of censorship by the Master of the Revels. Queen Elizabeth drew an

analogy between King Richard's situation and her own, and is reported to have said to William Lambarde, the keeper of the records of the Tower, 'I am Richard II, know ye not that?'.<sup>12</sup> The Essex conspirators apparently agreed to pay the players an additional £2 to perform a play about the deposing of Richard II on the day before the uprising in February 1601.<sup>13</sup> The deposition scene finally appeared in print in 1608 (five years after Elizabeth's death) when it was published by Matthew Lawe in the fourth edition (Q4) 'with new additions of the Parliament Scene, and the deposing of King Richard, as it hath been lately acted by the King's Majesty's Servants, at the Globe'.<sup>14</sup> The reference to 'the King's Majesty's servants' is a reminder that the scene had been staged by the acting company who now enjoyed the royal patent of King James I. It is also the earliest proof that the full deposition scene had been performed on stage.

Janet Clare argues that critics and editors 'have been hesitant about discussing the full implications of the scene's omission and what we may deduce about the state's fear of the theatre as an arena for inflammatory spectacle'<sup>15</sup> She notes that the Arden editor, Peter Ure, and the Cambridge editor, Andrew Gurr, both tend towards the view that the deposition scene was likely to have been performed in Elizabeth's lifetime but was cut from the printed versions for political reasons.<sup>16</sup> Clare argues that the phrasing of the 1608 advertisement 'makes a strong case for its recent restoration to the play'.<sup>17</sup> The text of the 1608 quarto which evidences mislineations and verbal errors suggests 'a hasty transcript' released to the printers with no evidence of their having consulted a fair copy prepared for stage use.<sup>18</sup> The inference is that the 'new additions' had only recently appeared on stage following the lifting of censorship in the reign of James I. David M. Bergeron has argued for the possibility that the 'new additions' were added in the 1608 text and that 'they were indeed new'.<sup>19</sup> Thus in

different ways Clare and Bergeron acknowledge the likelihood that a different political climate allowed the printing and staging of a deposition scene to be judged less dangerous around 1608. I would like to explore the possibility that the key participants represented in the drama - the King, the Lords and the Commons in Parliament, could be viewed as having a more equal share in the *appropriation* of the simulation around 1608. To put this another way, the retelling of the story of King Richard's arbitrary rule, deposition and death might no longer be viewed as polarising the positions of ruler and ruled (as it might have done on the eve of the Essex rebellion). Instead, in the context of James's succession, the simulation could be viewed as serving a variety of interests simultaneously.

Paola Pugliatti argues that Shakespeare's 'main contribution to the historiography of his time' consisted in the practice of 'a problem-oriented, multivocal kind of historiography that probed into events in depth rather than in extension'<sup>20</sup> However, she suggests that Tudor historians were not concerned with enquiry so much as 're-writing' and 're-telling' based on available and already known accounts.<sup>21</sup> Thus 'the guarantee of the text's reliability [...] was entrusted to openly declared intertextuality rather than to engagement in historical research'.<sup>22</sup> Pugliatti comments on a 'remarkably stagnant historiographical tradition' which relied on versions of events 'repeated and reproduced again and again'.<sup>23</sup> Pugliatti suggests that Shakespeare 'could not significantly alter the substance of those events without jeopardising the truth-effect of his plays'.<sup>24</sup> Conversely, Shakespeare could substantiate the authenticity of his history through a re-telling that drew on the known 'true' versions. The editors of *The Oxford Shakespeare* write: 'Shakespeare introduced no obvious topicality into his dramatization of Richard's reign, for which he read widely while using Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577, revised and enlarged in 1587) as his main source of information'.<sup>25</sup>

Stanley Wells suggests that Shakespeare ‘may have been directly influenced too by an earlier chronicle, that by Edward Hall, first printed in 1548, which begins at precisely the same point as Shakespeare’s play - the quarrel between Bolingbroke and Mowbray’ (*The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York*).<sup>26</sup> He may also have drawn on a number of other sources, including two French chronicles, Jean Créton’s *Histoire du Roi d’Angleterre Richard II* and the anonymous *Chronique de la Traison et Mort de Richard Deux roi d’Angleterre*; Lord Berners’s translation of *The Chronicles of Sir John Froissart*; an anonymous play, *Woodstock*, and Samuel Daniel’s narrative poem (published 1595) *The First Four Books of the Civil Wars Between the Two Houses of Lancaster and York*.<sup>27</sup> Pugliatti suggests that Shakespeare could gain ‘respectability’ for a ‘politically dangerous activity’ (writing for the public playhouses) by making his stories appear ‘to be connected to the core of historical orthodoxy’ while at the same time introducing other elements.<sup>28</sup>

In *Richard II*, Shakespeare adds a full deposition scene that never happened in history; explanations for this added element tend to be dramatic and aesthetic considerations.

H. Newbolt (ed. 1912) commented:

This is the climax of the play [...] Historically, Richard was interviewed by Henry and by the Commissioners in the Tower; he was never allowed to appear before Parliament at all. But if the deposition were not to take place upon the stage, the main point of the play would be lost: both Richard’s character and Henry’s would lack the supreme moment of their development and their contrast. Richard, therefore, must be brought to Westminster Hall.<sup>29</sup>

John Dover Wilson (ed. 1939) remarked: ‘All sources locate this in the Tower, before the meeting of parliament ... For dramatic purposes it was necessary to transfer it to parliament’.<sup>30</sup>

Stanley Wells writes, ‘the technique is operatic, Richard holding the centre of the stage in what is virtually a solo *scena* [...] he is the deviser, director, and central performer in the rite of renunciation which forms an emotional climax to the play’.<sup>31</sup>

Scholars dispute the effects of the ‘additions’ to the disposition scene. Peter Ure finds that Bolingbroke ‘is actually in very imperfect control of his leading actor’, that is, Richard, who takes centre stage and draws our sympathy.<sup>32</sup> David M. Bergeron comments, ‘however brilliant Richard may be in his appearance in Act IV, nothing that he says or does advances the narrative development of the play’.<sup>33</sup> However, Pugliatti suggests that an added ‘element’ may fulfil a function other than a dramatic or aesthetic one, ‘a function that may, in some cases, be read as an instance of divergence or even dissension from the official version of events’.<sup>34</sup> I would argue that aside from the aesthetic and dramatic effects of the full deposition scene, it also effects a revised version of historical events which might serve a number of interests.

There is a processional entrance to Parliament at the beginning of Act 4: *Enter, as to Parliament, Bolingbroke Duke of Lancaster and Hereford, the Duke of Aumerle, the Earl of Northumberland, Harry Percy, Lord Fitzwalter, the Duke of Surrey, the Bishop of Carlisle, and the Abbot of Westminster*. The scene begins with the accusations and counter accusations over Aumerle’s part in Gloucester’s death, followed by the entrance of the Duke of York who brings news of Richard’s abdication. York proclaims Bolingbroke King Henry IV. Bolingbroke responds, ‘In God’s name I’ll ascend the regal throne’ (4.1. 104), at which point the Bishop of Carlisle accuses Henry of treason in his famous speech espousing the Divine Right of Kings but is himself arrested. Richard was never called to Parliament to speak for

himself, a point raised by the Bishop of Carlisle (and used by Shakespeare) in Froissart's *Traison et Mort* (1401-2):

My lords, you have well and truly heard the accusations that my lord the duke has made against King Richard; and it appears to me that you are about to give judgement, and to condemn King Richard, without hearing what he has to answer, or even his being present [...] wherefore I declare that you ought to bring King Richard in presence of the full parliament to hear what he has to say, and to see whether he be willing to relinquish his crown to the duke or not.<sup>35</sup>

The occasion of the speech is disputed but the sentiments echo a concern noted elsewhere. In *Hardyng's Chronicle*, John Harding, 'soldier, diplomat, and lifelong servant of the Percy family' claims he heard the Earl of Northumberland say 'that the said King Henry had made King Richard resign his right to him in the Tower of London under threat of imprisonment and in fear of his life'<sup>36</sup>

It would appear that Richard was captured and taken to the Tower of London and that following meetings in the Tower on 28 and 29 September 1399, the record of the king's resignation was presented to the assembled estates in Westminster great hall on 30 September.<sup>37</sup> Historian Chris Given-Wilson argues that Henry could well have presented the estates with a *fait accompli*, 'it is in fact entirely credible that there was no *public* opposition to Henry's plans in this assembly'.<sup>38</sup>

Shakespeare has the Bishop of Carlisle put the case for giving Richard leave to speak in Parliament, based on an argument for the Divine Right of Kings:

And shall the figure of God's majesty,

His captain, steward, deputy elect,  
 Anointed, crownèd, planted many years,  
 Be judged by subject and inferior breath,  
 And he himself not present?

(4. 1. 116 - 120)

It could be argued that Shakespeare's 'new additions' could be appropriated to serve what might appear mutually exclusive interests within an important debate about sovereignty and the law in the years 1603-1610. The omitted lines in the deposition scene amend the chronicle versions so as to regulate the proceedings of parliament while at the same time representing the authority of the mediaeval king within a revised (post-Tudor) form of sovereignty. Historian Michael A.R. Graves describes the pre-Tudor relationship of the monarch to Parliament as 'King and Parliament', a phrase meant to emphasise their separateness.<sup>39</sup> The King 'remained outside and apart from parliaments'.<sup>40</sup> Gradually this relationship changed; Henry VIII 'secured his objectives through Parliament', and 'King-in- Parliament' became 'the sovereign authority in England'.<sup>41</sup> Graves suggests the two-way nature of the relationship:

Parliaments remained, in 1558 as in 1529, an essential line of communication between Crown and governing class. This was a two-way process of consultation, advice and information on matters both of high policy and local concern. The occasion of a Parliament also enabled ambitious careerists to seek out patrons, catch the monarch's attention and, by a loyal and able performance, launch themselves on a career in royal service.<sup>42</sup>

Shakespeare's deposition scene simulates the 'sovereign authority' of 'King-in-Parliament' through Richard's retrospective presence in Westminster Hall (and Bolingbroke's silent witness). Shakespeare begins the deposition proceedings by regularising the chronicle versions and answering the case for Richard to be brought to Parliament. Bolingbroke tells York:

Fetch hither Richard, that in common view

He may surrender. So we shall proceed

Without suspicion.

(4.1. 146 - 148)

Richard acknowledges the presence of individuals in the assembly who have courted his favours in return for their support. His words emphasise the two-way nature of the relationship: 'Yet I well remember/ The favours of these men. Were they not mine?' (4.1. 158 - 9). The occasion of Parliament is, as Graves suggests, an opportunity for 'ambitious careerists' to seek the monarch's attention. Northumberland now stands in such a relationship with Bolingbroke.

The proceedings of the first Parliament of the reign of James I between 19 March and 7 July 1604 extend a welcome and confirmed the 'lawful and undoubted succession' of the new monarch.<sup>43</sup> They also reveal a concern that the union of the 'famous and ancient realms of England and Scotland' will not alter the fundamental laws of the English nation, laws which guaranteed the estates of the nobility.<sup>44</sup> Records of the proceedings confirm that:

His most excellent Majesty [...] hath vouchsafed to express many ways how far it is and ever shall be from his royal and sincere care and affection to the subjects of England to alter and innovate the fundamental and ancient laws,

privileges and good customs of his kingdom, whereby not only his regal authority but the people's security [...] are preserved.<sup>45</sup>

The balance between 'regal authority' and 'the people's security' is the crux of Shakespeare's play (for 'people' read 'nobility') and in Elizabeth's reign the stormy question of the succession threatened that 'security' which is why Parliament repeatedly urged the Queen to marry.

At the close of Act 3 scene 3 in *Richard II* there is a sense of inevitability about Henry's succession. It seems that Richard accedes to the demands of the conqueror, and will accept the legal sanction of Parliament in confirming his abdication and setting a date for Henry's coronation; as one critic remarks, 'There is no question of what "London" means. it is dethronement for Richard and coronation for Bolingbroke'.<sup>46</sup>

Richard:       What you will have I'll give, and willing too;  
                       For do we must what force will have us do.  
                       Set on towards London, cousin: is it so?

Bolingbroke:   Yea, my good lord.

Richard:       Then, I must not say no.

*Flourish. Exeunt.*

(3.3. 204 - 208)

The Gardener's scene that follows reinforces this view of succession by conquest but also suggests that Henry's actions are legitimised by the support of a monarch's chief power holders, members of the aristocracy. The Gardener tells the Queen: 'King Richard he is in the mighty hold/ Of Bolingbroke (3. 4. 84 - 85) and 'in the balance of great Bolingbroke, /

Besides himself, are all the English peers' ( 3.4. 88- 89). At Berkeley Castle Bolingbroke threatened to use force to regain his lands:

If not, I'll use the advantage of my power,  
 And lay the summer's dust with showers of blood  
 Rained from the wounds of slaughtered Englishmen;  
 The which how far off from the mind of Bolingbroke  
 It is such crimson tempest should bedrench  
 The fresh green lap of fair King Richard's land.

(3. 3. 41 - 46)

Fear of the implications of rule by conquest surface in a fourteenth-century account of King Richard II's deposition. Doubts are revealed in the text of the *Record and Process* where Thomas Walsingham appears to have added some significant information about Bolingbroke's intentions:

He had proposed to claim the kingdom by conquest, but Lord William Thuring, justice, said that this was quite impossible, for by doing so he would arouse the anger of the entire population against him. This was because if he claimed the kingdom in this way, it would appear to the people that he had the power to disinherit anybody at will, and to change the laws, establishing new ones and revoking old ones, as a result of which no one would be secure in his possessions.<sup>47</sup>

The full deposition scene in Shakespeare's play corrects any impression of conquest and forced abdication by inviting participants on-stage and in the theatre to witness and affirm the stages of parliamentary procedure by which Richard is legally deposed. This

removes any doubts about the new King's authority to change the law of the land, the same issue that seemed important to establish in James's first parliament and an issue which resurfaces in 1607-8 over the issue of unparliamentary taxation. In 1607 Dr Cowell, Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge published a book which is said to have incensed the House of Commons.<sup>48</sup> It argued the case for absolute monarchy, setting the King above the law. Cowell argued: 'I hold it incontrollable [incontrovertible] that the King of England is an absolute King'<sup>49</sup> The occasion of the publication may have been fuelled by Bate's case on the subject of unparliamentary taxation in 1606. The Judges argued the case for the King's power which was 'double, ordinary and absolute' despite objections that impositions could not be made on a subject without parliament.<sup>50</sup> Cowell argued:

And though at his coronation he take an oath not to alter the laws of the land yet this oath notwithstanding, he may alter or suspend any particular law that seemeth hurtful to the public estate ... thus much in short because I have heard some to be of the opinion that the laws be above the King.<sup>51</sup>

After the de-coronation Richard asks, 'What more remains?' (4.1. 212) and Northumberland insists that Richard read out a list of the charges made against him:

Northumberland (*giving Richard papers*)

No more but that you read

These accusations and these grievous crimes

Committed by your person and your followers

Against the state and profit of this land,

That by confessing them, the souls of men

May deem that you are worthily deposed.

(4.1.212 - 217)

There is no doubt that one of the key 'grievous crimes' was that of arbitrary taxation. Shakespeare grasps this nettle at the start of the play when Richard is desperate to raise money to finance war in Ireland:

We are enforced to farm our royal realm,  
 The revenue whereof shall furnish us  
 For our affairs in hand. If that come short,  
 Our substitutes at home shall have blank charters,

(1.3. 44 - 47)

The issue of excessive and arbitrary taxation was not of course new in 1608 when the fourth quarto was printed but clearly was an issue of increasing importance that had not been resolved. Certainly by the time of James I traditional sources of finance were inadequate to meet the needs of seventeenth-century government. The historian Christopher Hill writes:

To pay for the Spanish and Irish wars at the end of her reign Elizabeth had sold crown lands worth over £800,000; she still left James debts to pay. Revenue from lands in James's first year was three-quarters of what it had been a dozen years earlier. The King ended both wars; but he still had to sell land valued at £775,000, and so income from crown lands fell by another twenty-five per cent between 1603 and 1621, despite improved management.<sup>52</sup>

Although revisionist historians argue for 'a general climate of co-operation' between Elizabeth and Parliament it is not surprising that James I fell back on the royal prerogative in the face of Parliament's intransigence and at a time when 'the wealth of the propertied

classes in the country was increasing rapidly'.<sup>53</sup> Disputes over impositions (including the great debate on impositions in 1610) and the extent of the royal prerogative continued in the reign of James I and Charles I with the resulting crisis of legitimation and revolution.<sup>54</sup>

The simulation of deposition in Parliament in 1608 could serve a variety of interests simultaneously. It mirrors the importance of the participants represented, the peers of the realm and the Commons. Northumberland urges King Richard to read the papers listing the grievances or else 'the Commons will not then be satisfied' (4.1. 262). At the same time, the King represents his case and he equates his power to command with his power to raise revenue:

An if my word be sterling yet in England,  
 Let it command a mirror hither straight,  
 That it may show me what a face I have,  
 Since it is bankrupt of his majesty.

(4. 1. 254 - 257)

The point is made by one of the judges, Baron Clarke, in *Bate's Case* on the subject of unparliamentary taxation:

As it is not a kingdom without subjects and governments, so he is not a king without revenue... The revenue of the crown is the very essential part of the crown, and he who rendeth that from the King pulleth also his crown from his head, for it cannot be separated from the crown.<sup>55</sup>

**1. 'Placed in Its Proper Sequence' : Historical Cycles and The Appropriation of Stratford-upon-Avon Stages. *Richard II* in Anthony Quayle's 'The Cycle of the Historical Plays 1951' at The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, and The Royal Shakespeare Company's *The Wars of the Roses* Cycle, Directed by Peter Hall, John Barton and Clifford Williams, 1963-1964**

Steven Mullaney argued that Greenblatt's *poetics of culture* failed to engage with a *politics of culture* and needed to address questions of *appropriation*. In this section I will consider issues of cultural exchange arising from the appropriation of Stratford-upon-Avon stages for a retelling of English history through Shakespeare's historical plays, performed as cycles. In 1951 Anthony Quayle directed the second tetralogy (*Richard II*, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, and *Henry V*) as 'The Cycle of the Historical Plays', as part of the Festival of Britain celebrations. A programme note directed that the four plays were probably 'planned by Shakespeare as one great play' and presented not only 'a living epic of England through the reigns of the three kings but also a profound commentary on kingship'<sup>1</sup> In 1963 Peter Hall and John Barton directed an adaptation of the three *Henry VI* plays together with *Richard III* as *The Wars of the Roses*. They added the second tetralogy in 1964 to create a cycle of seven plays to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. A programme note headed, 'The Cycle of a Curse', read: 'As Orestes was haunted in Greek drama, so Englishmen fight each other to expunge the curse pronounced upon Bolingbroke's usurpation of the tragically weak *Richard II*'.<sup>2</sup> In Quayle's production Michael Redgrave played a dilettante king who had alienated his power base, the nobility, in an England conceived as a stratified society united in a common desire for stable monarchical rule. The 1964 cycle showed the unstable King Richard (David Warner) emerge through deposition and death as a Christ figure, appropriated as a mystified point of origin to account for the political evils of the nation. Harold Hobson reviewed the opening night for the *Sunday Times* (19 April 1964). He referred to Hall's view that 'placed

in its proper sequence' the single play *Richard II* took on 'a more cataclysmic significance'.<sup>3</sup>

Hobson noted:

The deposition of Richard is seen, not as in any way excused by the tyrannical vagaries of his rule, but, quite simply and unforgiveably, as a crime against God. It is a guilt which can never be washed away'<sup>4</sup>

Hobson argued that Anthony Quayle had 'somehow missed the central significance of the series, and ended with the House of Lancaster in triumph' (a programme note in 1951 refers to Henry V as 'the true hero of the whole play').<sup>5</sup> In Hobson's view, it had been left to Peter Hall, John Barton and Clifford Williams 'to see as a whole this terrible drama of retribution in which the good are rightly punished by the wicked for the sins of their fathers'.<sup>6</sup> Ostensibly a more political reading of the history plays (and analogous to contemporary political events in 1964) the 'drama of retribution' was arguably apolitical, and as Robert Shaughnessy has observed, enacted 'a secularised mystery cycle, a universal drama of fall, decay and corruption with no hope of redemption in this world or the next'.<sup>7</sup>

Interpretative choices concerning the meaning of the deposition become significant in hindsight when considered in the wider context of cultural exchange. Key questions such as, 'Whose interests *on-stage* did the simulation of deposition serve?', as well as, 'Whose interests *off-stage* did the simulation serve?', point to the need to quantify audience experience. In *English Shakespeares: Shakespeare on the English stage in the 1990s* (1997) Peter Holland suggests that academics hardly ever take into account 'the profound implications of audience measurement'.<sup>8</sup> He argues:

The proper understanding of cultural consumption, of Shakespeare as consumerist product, would necessitate a much more exacting measurement

of the varieties of audience and their discrepant perceptions than anything currently available'.<sup>9</sup>

In my view, festival productions in Stratford-upon-Avon could prove useful markers of 'discrepant perceptions' because of the larger sample of people involved in or affected by festival activity, compared with non-festival performance events. Such activity offers the researcher potential evidence not only of the aspirations of mainstream culture but also of divergent or possibly counter-cultural responses. However, it is important that questions of appropriation distinguish (wherever possible) between narratives relating to the town, Stratford-upon-Avon, located in a geographical region and having a local population, and hegemonic narratives designating Stratford as a symbolic cultural space for Shakespeare.

Ruth Ellis has documented the history of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, a project made possible through Charles Edward Flower's gift of a riverside property to the Town Council. Flower, a brewery proprietor, together with the Shakespeare Memorial Association (formed in 1874) wanted a memorial 'to include a theatre for "occasional performances of Shakespeare's plays" and also a library of dramatic literature and an art gallery for relevant pictures and statuary'.<sup>10</sup> However, such local enterprise was rewarded with curious disdain by some of the London press who considered that Stratford had no right to claim Shakespeare for a regional theatre. The *Daily Telegraph* protested against 'the whole paltry and impertinent business', arguing that the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre governors had 'no mandate to speak in the name of the public or to invest with the attribute of a national undertaking a little mutual admiration club'.<sup>11</sup> Ruth Ellis records that early productions drew audiences 'mainly from Stratford and district'.<sup>12</sup> When fire destroyed the theatre in 1926,

opponents of a regional theatre argued, ‘that Stratford should hand over its insurance money and anything else collected for the Memorial to the National Theatre Committee’.<sup>13</sup>

In 1951 Stratford’s regionality was seized upon as significant to a mainstream cultural narrative of inclusivity that was necessary to the mythology of ‘our island’ story. Margaret Shewring remarks that the staging of the history cycle in 1951 enabled Stratford ‘to make a significant contribution to the nationwide celebrations’.<sup>14</sup> Shewring cites Alan Fairclough’s report in the *Daily Mirror* ‘extolling the fact that “Every Briton can be proud of the way the Festival of Greater Britain, not just of London, has opened here [in Stratford-upon-Avon]”’; Fairclough continues:

This is the first of twenty-three local Festivals all over the country.[...] These are the plays which speak unashamedly of “This happy breed of men.” “This demi-paradise”. “This England” - the right Festival theme.<sup>15</sup>

The Warwick Advertiser’s report, however, constructs the local event as appropriated by mainstream culture :

There was very much of a London first night atmosphere about the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre last Saturday for the opening of the season. High-powered arc lamps for television purposes dazzled the arrivals in a foyer that was packed to capacity by people pushing and straining to see theatre personalities arrive. Amongst the latter were Sir Laurence and Lady Olivier, Miss Diana Wynyard, Mr. Robert Helpmann, Miss Margaret Leighton, Miss Dorothy Dickson and her daughter Dorothy Hyson, who is the wife of the theatre director Anthony Quayle.<sup>16</sup>

*Berrows Worcester Journal* described the extensive alterations made to the theatre at a cost of £80,000. The stage was widened ‘to achieve a new intimacy between actors and audience’; the addition of 135 new seats would accommodate around 30,000 customers a year; refurbishing included over 4,000 yards of rich fabrics ‘designed exclusively’ at a Warwickshire Mill’; the scheme included 16 additional dressing rooms, a green room for the actors and a new electronic switchboard for the stage lighting.<sup>17</sup> The theatre also offered a live orchestra. The opening night was broadcast on the Home Service and the event was featured by Ivor Brown in the *Radio Times*:

On Monday, St George’s Day and Shakespeare’s birthday, the Home Service presents Michael Redgrave in the Stratford-upon-Avon production of Shakespeare’s “Richard II” [...] It was always Shakespeare’s opinion that a strong monarchy was necessary to hold together a community which was not yet unified as a nation as we understand the word, but rather a clutter of uneasy, quarrelsome, and unscrupulous baronial groups. By rough methods the kings did hammer England into a nation.<sup>18</sup>

The ‘nation’ theme embraces discrepant experiences as John Barber notes in the *Daily Express* (26 March 1951):

The Oliviers, Margaret Leighton and Dorothy Dickson were among stars who got up late yesterday after champagne-partying in Stratford at the Easter opening of the season. Outside the theatre, queuers had shivered on camp-beds all night.<sup>19</sup>

David Addenbrooke observes that ‘in the fifties, Anthony Quayle rejected the idea of a permanent company for Stratford on the grounds that the great West End stars would never

join such an organisation'.<sup>20</sup> The reviewer's description of the visiting stars' 'champagne partying' reinforces this sense of a social world set apart from the immediate locality (granted that queuing in the cold is the prerogative of anyone who can afford tickets).

Robert Hewison has analysed cultural history in the period and refers to Michael Frayn's 'brilliant essay' on the Festival, part of which he quotes:

Festival Britain was the Britain of the radical middle classes - the do-gooders; the readers of the *New Statesman*, the *Guardian* and the *Observer*; the signers of petitions; the backbone of the BBC. In short, the Herbivores, or gentle ruminants.<sup>21</sup>

Frayn found 'there was almost no one of working-class background concerned in planning the Festival, and nothing about the result to suggest that the working classes were anything more than the lovable human but essentially inert objects of benevolent administration'.<sup>22</sup> Barbara Dorf commented, 'very much of the Festival was alarmingly like a private club'; she argued, 'the more one looked, the more one asked oneself: the Festival of Britain? *Britain?* Whole vital areas of Britain were apparently ignored - the Midlands, the North - unless one counted some pleasing if prissy Wedgwood china as representing Midlands industry'.<sup>23</sup>

Michael Hattaway thought the 1951 cycle 'backward - rather than forward-looking', commenting that 'the "Elizabethan style"' sets by Tanya Moiseiwitsch 'were designed to create a kind of illusion that turned politics back into romanticised history'.<sup>24</sup> The set recalled the 'rough timbers of an Elizabethan playhouse', and comprised 'a skeleton framework of wooden steps, rostra and bridges' (fig. 45).<sup>25</sup> Ruth Ellis observed that the conditions of the Elizabethan stage afforded 'plenty of opportunity for exciting effects of colour, grouping and movement'.<sup>26</sup> The permanent set helped construct the past as a story of continuity and



45 The set designed by Tanya Moiseiwitsch for 'The Cycle of the Historical Plays',  
directed by Anthony Quayle at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1951

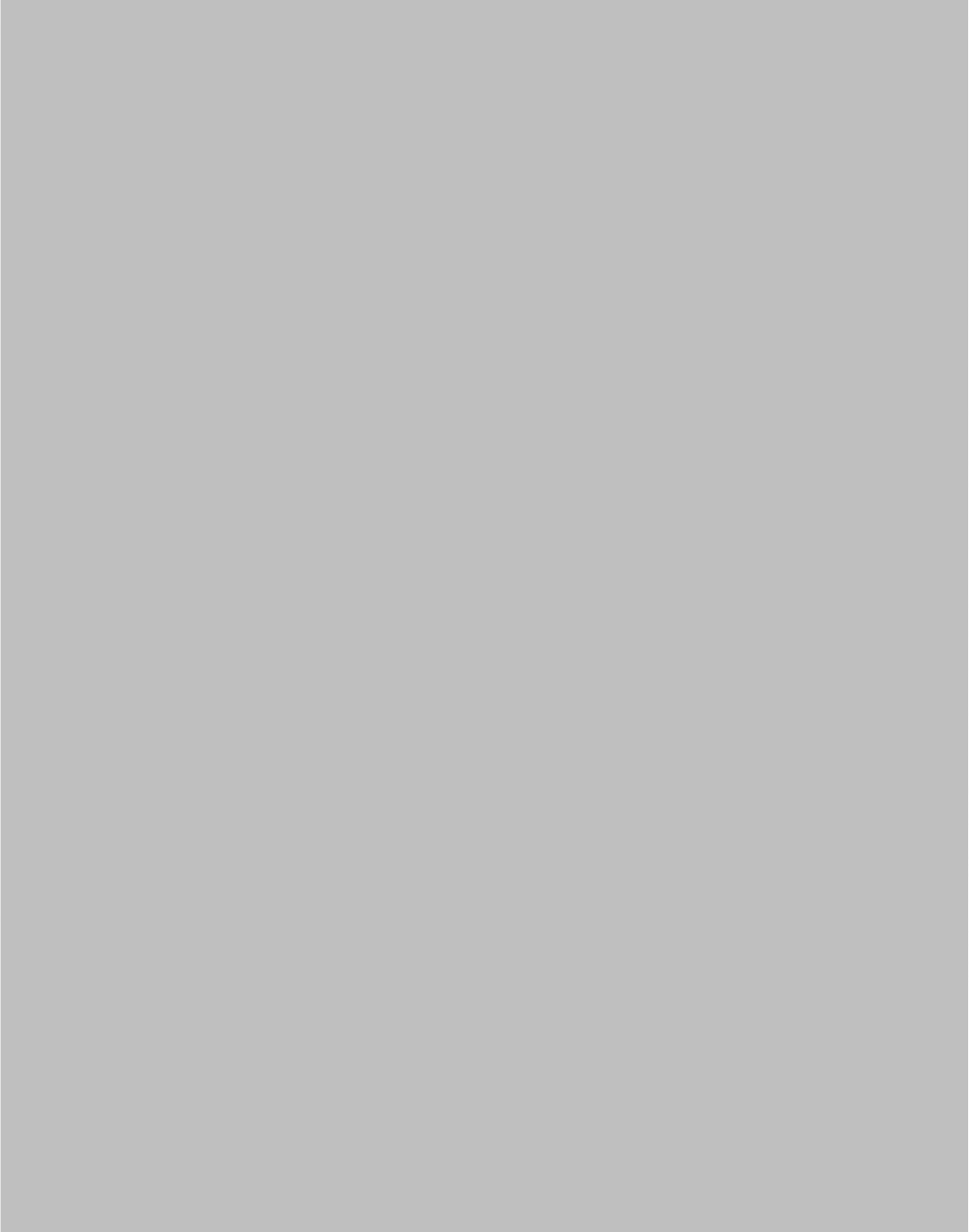
achievement despite the internal strife of Richard's reign and King Henry IV's domestic trouble (Bolingbroke and King Henry IV were played by Harry Andrews). King Richard's appearance on the 'bridge' for the lists at Coventry in a scene of colourful pageantry could be recalled when King Henry V (Richard Burton) entered above triumphant for his coronation at Westminster (figs. 46 and 47).

With hindsight, Dennis Kennedy credited Moiseiwitsch with designing a set that was 'flexible and useful but that continued to demonstrate the irreducible dilemma of the proscenium theatre for Shakespeare'<sup>27</sup> Kennedy observed that the attempt to disguise the proscenium with billowing curtains at the top and sides of the arch 'did nothing to alter the receding perspective placed on the stage proper', leaving the spectator with 'pictures of an Elizabethan stage rather than the thing itself'<sup>28</sup>


Michael Hattaway argues that the productions 'were built around a conservatizing ideological programme', probably influenced by E.M.W. Tillyard's *Shakespeare's History Plays*, 'a black book for radical critics'.<sup>29</sup> This view can be supported but I would argue that there is also evidence of discontinuous *reception* that punctures the numerous reports of success for the 'conservativizing' ideology of the Festival of Britain. In addition the cultural appropriation of *Richard II* nicely points up *on stage* the fractured reading of the unified 'Britain' proposed *off-stage*, that is, culture and society in 1951.

J. Dover Wilson and T.C. Worsley collaborated on a book to mark the event of the 1951 historical cycle at Stratford. T. C. Worsley argued that the political scenes 'must be heavily weighted, for it is they which are to provide the continuity'<sup>30</sup> He wrote:

When the play is played separately, it is customary to diminish the audience's sympathy with Bolingbroke by making him arrogant and over-weening,



46 King Richard II (Michael Redgrave) appears on the bridge for the lists  
at Coventry in the 1951 production



47 Hal (Richard Burton) arrives on the bridge for his coronation as King Henry V  
in act 5, scene 4 of *Henry IV Part 2* of the historical cycle, 1951

giving him an unsympathetic touch of hauteur, and by correspondingly heightening our sympathy for Richard. In the cycle this process must be reversed. The Richard must not engage too predominating a share of our sympathy (and those first two acts where he is exhibited as a petulant spiteful adolescent have their use here), while the Bolingbroke must, in contrast, win us by his dignity, nobility and virility.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, Bolingbroke's success was to be viewed in relative terms, being 'himself only a usurper' who commanded the throne 'by virtue of nothing but force of arms'.<sup>32</sup> T.C.Worsley's description of King Richard and his court in the 1951 production delineated the actors' roles in terms of regional difference and suggested a rift between the moral values of court and country:

The elegance of the royal party now calls attention to the fact that the nobles, by contrast, are plain men, dressed in russets and dull reds and greens: dressed plainly, but not meanly. It is, in fact, the kind of plainness of which plain men are proud. While the epicene king and his followers are dandies, dressed in pastel pinks, light blues and golds. They parade their jewelry[sic]; they are frenchified. The plain men's plainness may easily be imagined to be a kind of unspoken protest against this frippery.<sup>33</sup>

Regional differences of dress, manners and speech appeared to be differentiated but in fact were appropriated for a narrative of national identity that transcended differentiation. All of these differences were celebrated as the same kind of 'plainness' or moral worth:

The king speaks in an affected mince. Gaunt, whom he first calls out, answers him in an unaffected regional accent. Accidents of casting will not

allow the regional accent to be accurate: and Gaunt's Welsh may at first strike strangely on the ear. But it soon ceases to, and the point a very good one -remains ( it is to be underlined later): the speech of the nobles in their different local pronunciations reminds us that at this time they lived away in their own provinces retaining the manners and customs and individuality of their own localities. They come to London, most of them, only when they are summoned on affairs of State.<sup>34</sup>

Thus the production appeared to celebrate a stratified English society, calling attention to rank and regional differences but the reference to the 'individuality of their own localities' did not include the common folk. The idealised 'plainness' of the nobility signified a right-thinking elite and an idea of consensus, enabling a spokesperson to emerge to represent them. This of course was Bolingbroke, who was not as plain as they, since he outranked them and had royal blood but he could be represented as representing *them*: 'He is of the court, but not of *this* court. Spiritually he belongs with the plain men - is a young man of the old virtues. He has their nobility without their plainness; and out of it he despises the king'<sup>35</sup> The *Times Educational Supplement* described the 'despised king': 'Mr Michael Redgrave, to begin with, gives us Richard as a knowing, languid, luxurious, effeminate, frivolously vicious, irresponsible, and arbitrary trifler'.<sup>36</sup> In these circumstances, as Ruth Ellis remarked in the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 'Harry Andrews's powerfully persuasive Bolingbroke becomes a kind of deliverer' (fig. 48).<sup>37</sup>

The prompt-book shows that when York (Michael Gwynn) bid Bolingbroke 'Ascend his throne, descending now from him, / And long live Henry, of that name the fourth!' (4.1. 102-3), the salutation was taken up by Northumberland ( Alexander Gauge) as a cue to the



48 Bolingbroke (Harry Andrews) and King Richard (Michael Redgrave) in the deposition scene, 1951

House of Commons to ratify the deposition; the direction reads ‘all repeat line twice’ on his lead.<sup>38</sup> Consensus was shown to be achieved only after due deliberation. At first the speech for divine right by the Bishop of Carlisle (Duncan Lamont) caused a rising murmur of concern to spread in Westminster. This suggested that the momentous step of deposition was deeply felt before Northumberland stepped in decisively to charge and arrest the bishop.

The *Nottingham Guardian* reinvented this dramatic world of the regional ‘plain men’ *off-stage* creating a picture of festival activity that would sustain the mythology of Stratford as symbolic microcosm of a nation united in a single purpose:

The broad tones of the North, the clipped vowels of the South, and the easy, indeterminate speech of the university, the public school and the B.B.C. mingled over lunch and afterwards made their way to the shrines to fall silent while their owners surveyed the relics of England’s greatest poet.<sup>39</sup>

For the most part the historical cycle was reported within a linguistic economy that constructed the spectator as willing to play their part in the ‘cheer-up effort’ of ‘The New Elizabethan Age’<sup>40</sup> Adrian Forty comments:

The epithet ‘A Tonic to the Nation’, coined apparently by Gerald Barry, the Director General of the Festival, expressed the establishment’s view of the function of the Festival; but seen in the light of contemporary politics, and also with the hindsight of the way in which the relative affluence of the fifties was used to delude the population into believing that Britain’s economic health was sound, it might be more appropriate to describe the Festival as “A Narcotic to the Nation”<sup>41</sup>

Roy Strong commented, ‘Colours were supposed to match the mood of 1951: ‘cheerful’. It was the age of a lick of red, white and blue paint over anything to give it a quick face-lift’.<sup>42</sup>

In March 1951 the *Warwick Advertiser* remarked that for many Stratford playgoers ‘the chief interest was see how this season’s leader of the company, Michael Redgrave, fresh from triumphs in the film studio, would shape’<sup>43</sup> Ken Smith and John G. Drummond noted in the *Sunday Chronicle* that British cinema-goers were still unable to see Michael Redgrave in the film *Mourning Becomes Electra* (despite its worldwide release) because the exhibitors felt that the subject was “too stark and grim for the British cinema-going public.”<sup>44</sup> A concern that Britain should remain ‘cheerful’ is evidenced in T.C. Worsley’s remark in *New Statesman*: ‘to temper what might otherwise seem a rather austere group for the Festival year, Mr. Michael Benthall is to produce Michael Redgrave in *The Tempest*.’<sup>45</sup>

A ‘cheerful’ outlook is noticeable in the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*’s report of March 1951; hotels and cafes had no complaints’ despite ‘cold winds, frequent downpours, and even an occasional snowstorm’<sup>46</sup> The Memorial Theatre had played its part: ‘ “The weather was unusually bad, but even so we were extremely busy”, a *Herald* representative was told at a leading hotel, “I think, however, that it was due to the Theatre; if we had had to rely on ordinary visitors we should have had a very slack Easter.”’<sup>47</sup>

In September 1951 the same newspaper told a different story; its verdict was that the Festival had been a ‘failure’ because the town of Stratford had been ‘given a role out of all proportion to her size’<sup>48</sup> While other towns had directed their efforts to the local population, Stratford had prepared for thousands of visitors who never materialised:

The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre makes Stratford unique among English towns: how otherwise could she have been given so exalted a position in the

Festival scheme. It was, perhaps, natural therefore to plan a programme that ran for the greater part of the Theatre season. But events have proved it a bad mistake.<sup>49</sup>

The *Daily Telegraph* reported that hotel owners and traders in Stratford complained the season was ‘the most disappointing for eight years. The counter-attraction of the Festival of Britain in London and over-publicity of the amount of tourist traffic in Stratford are blamed’<sup>50</sup> Mr. Hubert Jones, secretary of the Hotels and Caterers’ Association told their correspondent: ‘The impression has been spread that the town is full, and so there have been fewer applications for rooms. One hotel owner has had the worst season for 20 years’.<sup>51</sup> The *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* reported another criticism, ‘many of the events have been too highbrow’<sup>52</sup> A story about five Stratford-upon-Avon postmen who complained to their union after being assigned a duty of queuing for theatre tickets for important delegates suggests a discrepancy centring on perceptions of the Festival’s claims on a local population. One of the postmen was ‘particularly annoyed’ because on the previous day ‘he had queued in vain for two hours in an effort to obtain circus tickets for his family’<sup>53</sup> The *Evening Standard* reported that more than 332, 000 people had attended the Stratford season, ‘£132, 000 has been taken at the box-office- a record. But it means only a small profit, say the Governors; alterations to the theatre cost £90, 000 and production costs have eaten up most of the balance’.<sup>54</sup> Brian Harvey gave his view of the festival in the *Birmingham Gazette*, ‘Stratford has given us in 1951 a solid rather than a brilliant season. Except in a few instances, the acting has hardly kindled great excitement’<sup>55</sup> Lord Iliffe, President of The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre described the Festival of Britain season as ‘the most successful in the theatre’s history’.<sup>56</sup>

In 1951 the deposition scene represented a moment of internal crisis, valiantly overcome through the plain man's spirit. On stage, regionality was celebrated and appropriated for a narrative of shared community in a united English nation. However, the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*'s observation that 'other towns had directed their efforts to the local population' (referred to earlier) suggested the existence of competing claims for a definition of 'local activity' and 'local community'. By the 1960s the meaning of 'community' took on a new significance. Robert Hewison argues that the period 1960-63 evidenced 'an awareness that a sense of community had been lost'; this related to 'social and cultural anxiety which underlay the flush of affluence'<sup>57</sup> Hewison refers to Raymond Williams's argument that 'the so-called popular culture purveyed by television was spurious'<sup>58</sup> Williams remarked in *Communications* (1962) that ' "in the worst cultural products of our time, we find little that is genuinely popular, developed from the life of actual communities. We find instead a synthetic culture"'<sup>59</sup> In *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) Herbert Marcuse referred to modern society as a society of 'false needs': 'the people recognise themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment'<sup>60</sup> Hewison quotes Peter Townshend from the Who: "' You've got to be drastic and violent to reach the audience now. They've been getting too much *given* to them"'<sup>61</sup>

In 1963, Hall and Barton were attempting to 'reach the audience' with their 'drastic and violent' *The Wars of the Roses*. In the original 1963 programme, Peter Hall's programme note, headed 'Blood Will Have Blood', argued the case for reading Shakespeare's history plays as 'an intricate pattern of retribution, of paying for sins, misjudgements, misgovernments', all arising from the deposition of King Richard.<sup>62</sup> Hall maintained:

Richard II was a weak and sometimes a bad king, ungoverned, unbalanced; he could not order the body politic. Yet for Shakespeare, his deposition is a wound on the body politic which festers through reign after reign, a sin which can only be expiated by blood letting.<sup>6</sup>

Hall remarked in an interview for *Plays and Players* (May, 1964):

Really I feel the present tendency to examine violence or to write plays about ritual murder or the lusts of Man and all that. It's an indication of the questing cynicism of our age, that we no longer believe that Man is anything like as civilised as Man kids himself he is.<sup>64</sup>

Michael Hattaway comments that, 'critics at the time were astounded by elements of barbarity'; he refers to 'the moment when Queen Margaret smears the face of the captured Duke of York with a napkin stained with the blood of his slaughtered son Rutland', evoking comparisons with the writings of Antonin Artaud and the fashion for "theatre of cruelty".<sup>65</sup>

Sally Beauman suggests that the influence of Artaud on the work of the Royal Shakespeare Company could be seen as early as 1962, for example, in Peter Brook's *Lear*.<sup>66</sup> She refers to 'the ferment of indignation created first by the LAMDA work, and then by the Aldwych season of 1964' (this included Brook's production of Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade*).<sup>67</sup>

I would like to explore the idea that in 1964, against a theorised crisis of community and an inertia fostered by consumerism, King Richard's deposition could represent a violent breach of faith, destroying old loyalties and morality. The concluding note from two pages of 'Excerpts from conversations between the play's directors about *Richard II*' in the RSC programme reads:

Chaos, however undesirable, was not Tyranny. A nation could no more depose a king for his Vanity than a family could commit its head to an asylum for his vainness. Bolingbroke, whatever the sincerity of his motives (and they are ultimately questionable), was not justified in deposing Richard. His act was unthinkable. His retribution was inevitable. He knew this. The play cannot stop therefore with the murder of Richard.<sup>68</sup>

Harold Hobson's description of David Warner's performance in the *Sunday Times* suggests a symbolic rather than a political representation of the king.

Little emphasis is placed on the luxuriousness of Richard, or his irresponsibility. He is almost from the beginning the majesty of God among men. First, in his triumph, he glows in a glory of golden light; then, as his time of trial approaches, he puts on the spotless, white garment of Christ; finally in his defeat and death he is in rags and poverty. But always rebellion against him is blasphemy.<sup>69</sup>

Hobson added that 'for much of the performance [Richard] looks like the gentle figure in Holman Hunt's *Light of the World*'<sup>70</sup> Robert Speaight remarked in *Shakespeare Quarterly* that 'in all the early scenes Mr. Warner should have done more to alienate our sympathies'.<sup>71</sup>

A number of critics thought that Warner had wrongly imported his sensitive and moving portrayal of King Henry VI into his performance. However, W.A. Darlington in the *Daily Telegraph* found, 'Mr. Warner's picture of a weak man trying to pass himself off as a strong one in a society where strong men abound was well-nigh perfect. The impression was made instantly in the contrast between the shambling walk up the steps of the throne and the loud over-confident voice in which he first spoke'<sup>72</sup> The King's overthrow by the 'strong men',

including David Waller's 'ugly, aggressive figure of Northumberland', was reinforced when Richard knelt before Eric Porter's steely Bolingbroke at 'God save King Henry' and later, from a kneeling position, proffered the crown (fig. 49).<sup>73</sup> J.C. Trewin commented in the *Birmingham Post*, 'throughout and especially as the "Silent King" in Westminster Hall, Mr. Porter acts the relentlessly unemotional Bolingbroke magnificently'.<sup>74</sup>

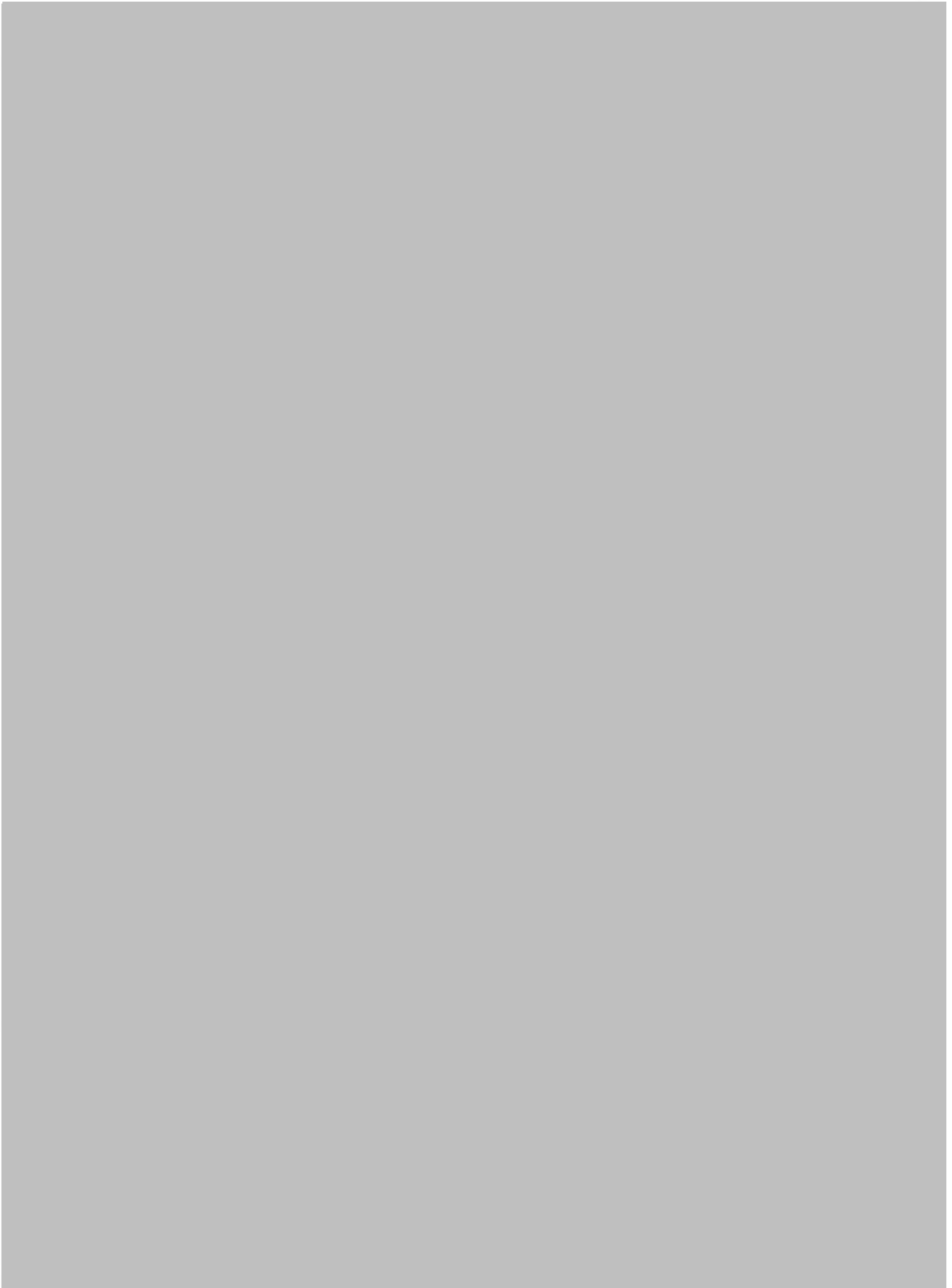
Hall intended to make strong contemporary parallels. He told Frank Cox in *Plays and Players*, 'I think we have to face the fact that we are at 1964 and we cannot avoid it'.<sup>75</sup> John Gardner in the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* observed:

Continually, throughout the sequence, one is forced against analogies with the times in which we live - new order is ever rising and bursting to take control; ideologies are at loggerheads; there is a nervous wrestling for power; corruption and intrigue bombard the solid atomic core of government; the country sits precariously on a colossal powder-keg, smoking Indian hemp and being very careless with the matches.<sup>76</sup>

The reviewer referred to 'the struggle for power within the Conservative Party and the assassination of President Kennedy', adding:

To me the whole cycle became dreadfully clear last week while I was watching the plays between hearing newscasts telling of the Russian change of power, the narrow victory of the Labour Party and the explosion of Red China's first nuclear device.<sup>77</sup>

Peter Hall acknowledged the influence of Jan Kott's concept of history as an impersonal 'Grand Mechanism': 'I read a proof copy of Jan Kott's book, *Shakespeare Our*



49 King Richard (David Warner) kneels before Bolingbroke (Eric Porter) in the deposition scene, 1964

*Contemporary*. His analysis of the staircase of power in the histories was a great support to our production'.<sup>78</sup> Hall added:

I realised that the mechanism of power had not changed in centuries. We also were in the middle of a blood-soaked century. I was convinced that a presentation of one of the bloodiest and most hypocritical periods in history would teach many lessons about the present'.<sup>79</sup>

John Bury's set design gave Hall the 'strong visual image' he needed: 'a cruel, harsh world of decorated steel, cold and dangerous. The armoury of Warwick Castle was our inspiration'.<sup>80</sup> John Bury summarised his theme in a programme note:

*Richard II*: the overgrown garden of England, the court a tarnished jewel.

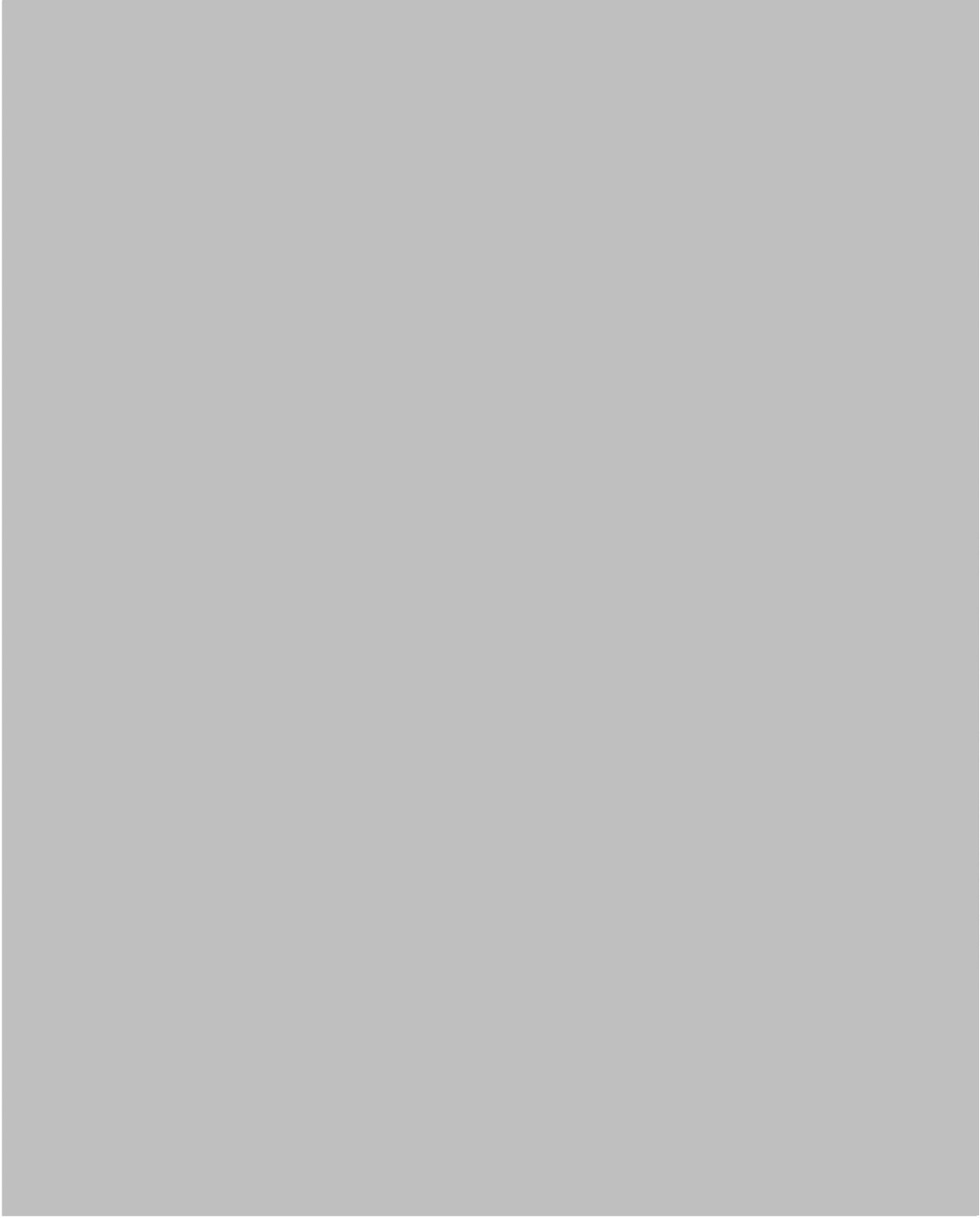
*Henry IV*: the introduction of the steel palace, the countryside grown rusty.

*Henry V*: the polished steel of England; in France, a golden court and countryside

*Henry VI*: a stone saint dominates the English court

*Edward IV*: the sun-covered golden drapes in a brief moment of flamboyance before *Richard III* and the bunker.<sup>81</sup>

Ronald Bryden observed in the *New Statesman*: 'the wooden rusticity of Richard's kingdom was replaced by steel and armour: an iron age of war and political despotism was dawning' (figs. 50 and 51).<sup>82</sup> Dennis Kennedy quotes Phillip Hope-Wallace's description in the *Guardian* in 1963 of 'two huge iron-clad doors which slice into or grip the action like the cruel jaws of a vice'.<sup>83</sup> Kennedy notes that 'the walls could pivot as well as slide along a curved track' offering flexibility in the scene changes, while the stage floor 'now seen by the entire audience because of the rake, was given varied treatments, from metal to bare planks to



**50** John Bury's set design for King Richard II's rustic kingdom, 1964



**51** John Bury's set design in act 1, scene 3 of *Henry IV Part 2*  
with the huge iron council table

painted design’<sup>84</sup> A huge iron council table dominated the stage where power politics was actualised through the self-seeking protagonists; they conspired, fought and carried out acts of murder, revenge and betrayal. Yet, one could argue, this atomised view of society was achieved through a corrective focus, deliberately sought by the director Peter Hall : the creation of a synthetic version of ‘community’ on-stage through the appearance of a large permanent company working together.

Sally Beauman writes, ‘the linchpin of Hall’s artistic policy was the creation of a company: ‘ “I was clear from the outset”, he wrote in 1964, “that I would contribute little unless I could develop a company with a strong permanent nucleus”’<sup>85</sup> Beauman argues that unlike the Moscow Arts or the Berliner Ensemble, ‘doctrines, whether artistic or political, were to be avoided’<sup>86</sup> However, as Robert Shaughnessy observes, the appropriation of Stratford stages by Hall and Barton served an ill-defined though no less real political intent:

Having seized the apparatus of Shakespearean production and turned it against the traditionalists in the uncompromising, taboo-shattering Kottian terms of relevance and modernity, the alienated intellectuals of the middle class could claim a degree of cultural (if not political) power -even if this power manifested itself in the form of anti-politics. Read in this light, the carnage and mayhem of *The Wars of the Roses* become understandable: in a meaningless, tedious universe the sadistic or murderous act comes to figure as existentialist self-affirmation, not least (and maybe at most) as a demonstration of mastery over the theatre audience.<sup>87</sup>

John Gardner’s comments in the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* suggest the aesthetic power of the spectacle and, at the same time, its removal of a political history:

This is the great trick of Peter Hall's interpretation of these Histories. In the long run, audiences are not concerned with the curse on Bolingbroke or the family tree produced in colour in a glossy programme. They are not bothered about the Order of Kingship or pictures of actors in rehearsal. But they are swept into the stream of all history. In one gush of high, popular entertainment, the people in stalls and circle are at once dramatically pinioned and mentally forced to see great events in the violent shape of passionate personalities at grips with political ends.<sup>88</sup>

Hewison includes Hall with the 'young meteors', a young ambitious, successful group of people referred to by Jonathan Aitken in 1967, who 'chose to present themselves as "classless"'.<sup>89</sup> Hewison writes:

"Classlessness" manifested itself in social gestures, from the "classless" accents of Cliff Richard, David Frost or Cathy McGowan (all evolved in order to broadcast on a mass medium), to Peter Hall's decision to stop printing the RSC's posters and programmes with special billings for the stars. Instead, the cast appeared in alphabetical order. Hall said in 1963: "We don't want to be an institution supported by middle-class expense accounts. We want to be socially as well as artistically open."<sup>90</sup>

Beauman remarks, 'young actors were attracted by the increasingly democratic, anti-hierarchic structure, and the opportunity for rapid promotion to major parts if they showed talent'.<sup>91</sup> Hewison argued that the attempt to promote "classlessness" was really symptomatic of an emerging class-fraction.<sup>92</sup> The 'young meteorites' were attempting 'to escape the categories of class' because the old class categories no longer explained their

position: ‘the members of the classless society were in fact a new “talent class”’.<sup>93</sup> Alan Sinfield analyses the position of the RSC in the 1960s by referring to a concept of ‘culturism’: ‘the belief that a wider distribution of high culture is desirable and that it is to be secured through public expenditure’.<sup>94</sup> He argues that ‘left-culturism’ was diversionary; it may not have had much impact on the working class, ‘its ostensible concern’, but did ‘help to construct a dissident intelligentsia’.<sup>95</sup> As Beaman observes, Hall and Barton were ‘products of the Cambridge English school’ and together they fostered a house style based on an intellectualised approach to the text, including attention to structure in verse speaking.<sup>96</sup>

In 1964 the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s birth was a world event with celebrations including a ‘Siberian “Shrew”’ and a version of *Measure for Measure* in Arabic at Tunis Municipal Theatre.<sup>97</sup> The Duke of Edinburgh flew in to Stratford by helicopter to visit the new Shakespeare Centre and to open a £130,000 Shakespeare Exhibition. The *Birmingham Post* headline (10 February 1964) declared: ‘Stratford prepares for the invasion’.<sup>98</sup> Levi Fox, Director of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust described the 400th anniversary as an event ‘of immense significance, not only for Stratford, but for British prestige’.<sup>99</sup> A special birthday lunch would be attended by about 750 diplomatic representatives and other guests.

It is difficult to assess with any kind of accuracy the degree of local involvement or the composition of theatre audiences (although the actor, David Warner hailed from Leamington). Reports that ‘the Girls’ Grammar School situated at the 15th century Shuttery Manor is to stage *Twelfth Night* on its Tudor lawn’ or of ‘the doings of the Boy Scouts, the choral societies, the amateur athletic societies and the numerous folk dance festivals’ may or may not be cancelled out by contradictory reports of local indifference.<sup>100</sup> The *Birmingham Post* reported:

It is remarkable that more than half Stratford's population has no interest at all in the coming of visitors or in Shakespeariana. One can meet Stratfordians who have never been inside the Birthplace or the Theatre. In recent months the town has been severely criticised, for the Corporation, over the years, has not given a single penny to support the Theatre, apart from £100 towards the original building.<sup>101</sup>

However Rosemary Merson in the *Lancashire Evening Post* said she personally doubted the 'claimed indifference' of local people, 'as most of them have seen a great proportion of his plays' (though, again, this seems conjecture).<sup>102</sup>

To conclude, one could argue that Hall was able to appease his intellectual quest for 'community' in the gathering together of 80 company players 'the largest ever assembled at Stratford' (indirectly offering employment at Stratford to a team of backstage workers).<sup>103</sup> The deposition of King Richard played its part in a wider narrative of appropriation and cultural exchange, and could be viewed as a product of 'left-culturism'. As Beauman points out, 'the RSC was under-financed, and continuing to draw on falling reserves; the *Wars of the Roses* and the History cycle that developed out of them the following year were vital to the company's future, and to its attempt to increase its grant'.<sup>104</sup> In March the *Daily Telegraph* reported that the theatre had accepted an Arts Council grant of £80,000 for the 1964-5 financial year but had expressed concern that the grant was not enough.<sup>105</sup> In June 1964 Christopher Hollis of the *Spectator* penned a sonnet based on local tradesmen's complaints that the Centenary celebrations had brought fewer tourists than expected. The last two lines read, 'Self-schooled, self-scanned, thou had'st esteemed it better/ Had they but given a grant to the Theatre'<sup>106</sup>

**2. 'The True Richard Music' : The Authority of The Actor in *Richard II*. Dialogic Readings of Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop Production at The Theatre Royal, Stratford East, 1955; The Royal Shakespeare Company's Production Directed by Barry Kyle, 1986-1987; The English Shakespeare Company's *The Wars of the Roses*, 1986-1989; The Royal Shakespeare Company's 1990-1 Production Directed by Ron Daniels; and Deborah Warner's Production at the Royal National Theatre, 1995 and on tour 1996.**

I have proposed that a *poetics of performance* would engage in Vološinov's 'ideological colloquy of large scale' where the object of study is the conversation between performance events in a diachronic field of Shakespearian textuality. As the thesis draws to a close, I suspect that the key question of appropriation is the most fruitful direction for further study. In this final section I want to push the question of appropriation in a different direction by considering issues of cultural exchange in relation to five actors playing King Richard in the deposition scene. I want to show how reviewers ( a specific and perhaps not altogether representative group of playgoers), academic writers and theatre audiences, may withhold as well as grant an actor authority through preferred readings that appropriate the performance event and are ideologically grounded. Although the five productions enter one dialogue, I have subdivided the discussion under two headings.

**i. 'The True Richard Music' :The Authority of the Actor in Four Productions of *Richard II***

The quotation in the title is taken from a study of Shakespeare performances in 1985-1986 by Nicholas Shrimpton for *Shakespeare Survey*. Shrimpton referred to Jeremy Irons at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre: 'He could perhaps be said to have acted better than he spoke, since his soliloquies rarely achieved the true Richard music'<sup>1</sup> The reviews of the first four productions in my discussion often obsessively trope the actor's performance in terms of

music. The commonplace reason for this is partly explained in Richard Dutton's introductory comments on the play in *Shakespeare: A Bibliographical Guide*:

*Richard II* is the most distinctively lyrical of Shakespeare's histories, written entirely in verse, with a high proportion of rhyme. These qualities have been central to its critical reputation this century, from the aestheticism of Pater (1889) and Yeats (1903), which saw in the soliloquizing Richard an artist-poet (a tradition epitomized in the theatre by a number of productions with John Gielgud in the role), through the New Critical enthusiasm for the play's rich and sustained threads of imagery, to an identification of the mannered style with a conscious "medievalism"<sup>2</sup>

Despite the obvious contingent references here to a 'critical reputation' and an acting 'tradition' attributed to the first half of this century, reviewers and writers of scholarly articles from the second half of the century have steadfastly used the poet-king/Gielgud reference as an ideal 'para-text' for the play.<sup>3</sup> The acting in the deposition scene is viewed as a key test of whether an actor's performance is commensurate with Gielgud's. Margaret Shewring refers to a review of Gielgud's performance at the Queen's Theatre, London (*Times*, 7 September 1937): "the key to Mr. Gielgud's interpretation of the part" lay in the moment when Richard looks into the mirror: "All his playing is a movement towards this climax, and, after the fall, a spiritual search beyond it."<sup>4</sup> Shrimpton thought Irons failed the 'music' test; the reviewer therefore qualifies his description of the deposition with the word 'however': "The compulsively self-destructive quality of Richard's fall was, *however* [my italics], brilliantly conveyed and he made the deposition scene a masterpiece of fatalistic taunting"<sup>5</sup> The reviewers' dialogue in the four productions frequently frames a validation of the actor's

authority in the part with reference to success or failure in delivering the play's 'poetry' but what the reviewers mean by this is not so clear. Andrew Gurr refers to poetic form in the play where he notes that rhyming couplets can impose 'a ceremonious formality' in the scene between Gaunt and the widowed Duchess of Gloucester.<sup>6</sup> Peter Ure criticises the identification of poetry with the King (Richard was of course a patron of the arts):

The poetry in Richard is there because he is a character in a poetic drama, not because Shakespeare thought that Richard II lost his kingdom through a preference for blank verse over battles.<sup>7</sup>

Stanley Wells suggests how form and role are read together: '*Richard II* is the most purely lyrical of Shakespeare's histories- perhaps of all his plays- and the role of King Richard is the most lyrical among the tragic heroes.'<sup>8</sup> From this latter view, it appears that the actor has a responsibility to convey a literary tragic lyricism that is inherent to the artistic form of the play. This 'authoritative' view of the work is frequently taken as a given by reviewers who do not see it as a *concept*. Rather, alternative interpretations are labelled 'concepts' and are viewed as disabling the actor's authority in the role.

In 1955 Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop set out to open a dialogue between their performance event at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East where Harry Corbett (fig. 52) took an anti-lyrical view of Richard as a crazed tyrant, and the Old Vic production (directed by Michael Benthall) where John Neville was viewed as the new Gielgud (figs. 53 and 54).<sup>9</sup> Cecil Wilson (*Daily Mail*, 19 January, 1955) enthused:

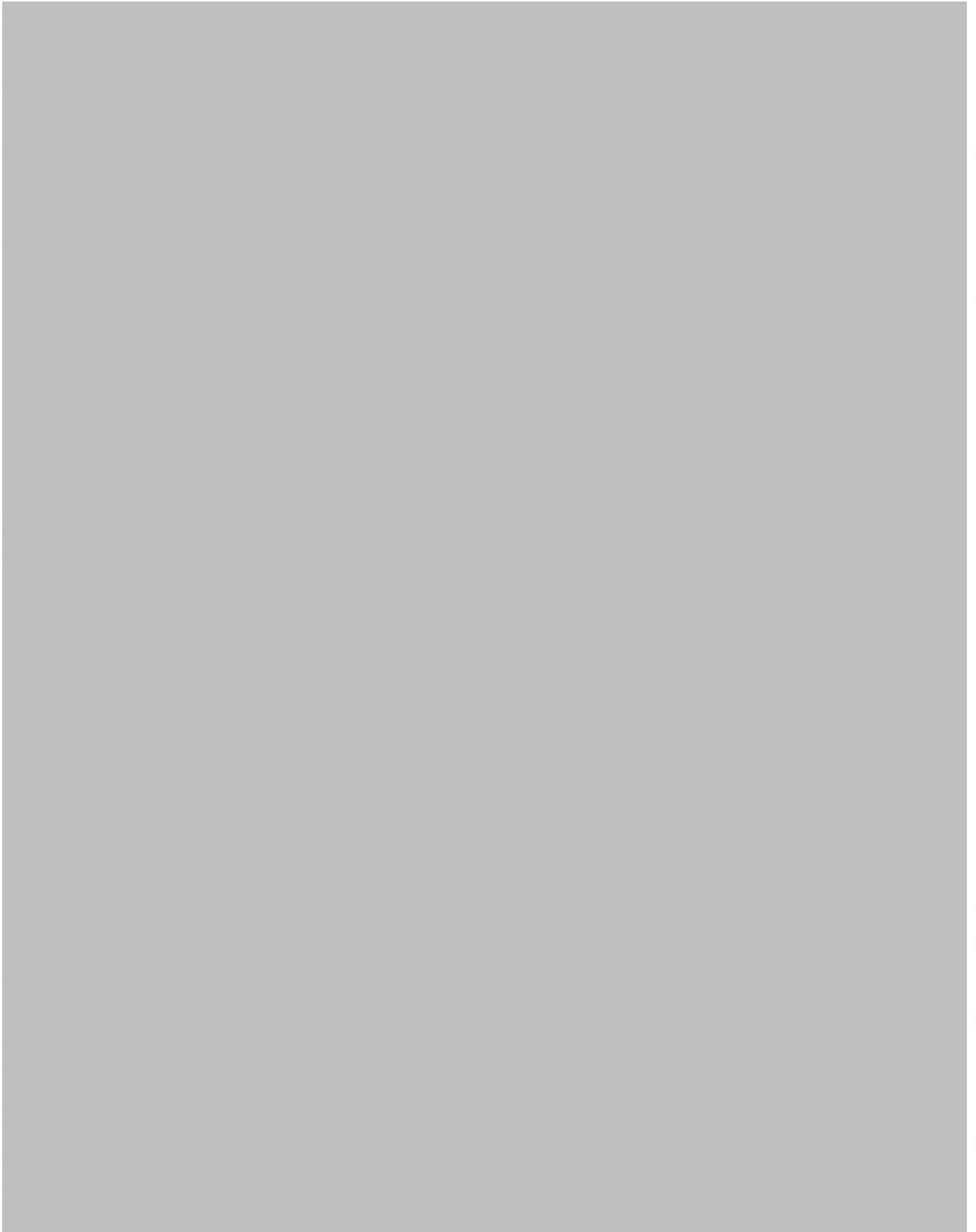
It seemed uncannily as if the Old Vic had turned back the clock about 20 years. This Richard's noble profile, the proud toss of his head, and the rich



**52** Harry Corbett as King Richard II in Theatre Workshop's production



**53** Peggy Ashcroft as Queen Isabel and John Gielgud as King Richard II at the Queen's Theatre, 1937



54 John Neville as King Richard II at the Old Vic, 1955. From the left: Green (Murray Hayne), Bagot (Nicholas Amer) and, far right, Aumerle (Anthony White)

music of his voice might all have belonged to the young Gielgud who won his Shakespeare colours at the theatre.<sup>10</sup>

However, in Harold Hobson's view (*Sunday Times* 23 January 1955) the similarity was not altogether fortuitous:

He has the same self-pitying smile, so sadly bright, the same stretched nerves, the same soaring voice, the same pale commanding look. The same? Well, very nearly the same. That, at present is the trouble with him. As Richard he does nothing that is not written bigger, deeper, more splendidly in Sir John.<sup>11</sup>

If the Old Vic lost points by its staleness of interpretation, a stale production was marginally preferable to an anti-lyrical (and Marxist) reading. Philip Hope-Wallace (*Guardian*, 21 January 1955) commented on Theatre Workshop's 'conscientious endeavour to read an egalitarian sermon into this "tragedy" of the too imaginative king'<sup>12</sup> The reviewer thought the Old Vic production was 'a very ordinary specimen' of Benthall's work but commented that the verse was spoken in 'a most exemplary fashion by John Neville, a young actor with a fine ear for the elegaic cadences of the part'<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Tynan (*Observer*, 23 January 1955) dismissed Corbett's portrayal of the king's 'frenzy of effeminacy' and raving madness as 'a highly effective rendering of a totally false idea'<sup>14</sup> Tynan looked for the definitive lyrical reading he could not find but hoped Neville would achieve later:

Mr. John Neville, at the Vic, takes firm steps in the right direction. He overweens, rejoicing in the manipulation of power; his sneer is steel and unforced, and his voice, like Sir John Gielgud's in the same role "feels at each thread and lives along the line." He fails only where he could not have succeeded: he has no gift for pathos, and the vital later speeches coldly

congeal. None the less, this is a clear diagrammatic outline for the definitive performance, as yet unseen.<sup>15</sup>

Harold Hobson offered an even-handed view of Theatre Workshop's achievement, praising Corbett's disturbing portrayal of a mad tyrant but felt Richard's verse could not be spoken as 'the uncontrolled, racing, fluent fancies of a lunatic'.

It is not until the second part, when Mr. Corbett has to deliver Richard's incomparable series of rhapsodies on the mystique of royalty, that it suddenly becomes clear, that the line adopted by the director, Miss Joan Littlewood, though intellectually stimulating and defensible, is theatrically untenable.<sup>16</sup>

Anthony Cookman (*Tatler*, 2 February 1955) criticised the 'ordinariness' of the Old Vic production with its 'trumpets flourishing and banners aswirl' and offered some praise to Theatre Workshop: 'at least the *mis*interpretation [my italics] was strong-nerved'.<sup>17</sup> Stephen Williams (*Evening News*, 19 January 1955) thought Harry Corbett 'may possibly be nearer the Richard of history' because the historical king was 'undoubtedly suspected of insanity' but 'John Neville in Waterloo-road, speaking in a voice uncannily like Sir John Gielgud's, is nearer the Richard of Shakespeare'.<sup>18</sup>

Barry Kyle's production for the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in 1986 posed a problem for a number of reviewers who welcomed its apparent (and arguable) lack of a concept but again found the actor (Jeremy Irons) wanting. Michael Billington (*Guardian*, 12 September 1986) found it 'reassuring to enter the Royal Shakespeare Theatre to be confronted by what might be an illustration from the medieval Book of Hours'.<sup>19</sup> He praised the 'robustly old-fashioned production that sees the play in terms of the decline of a picture-book Plantaganet England'.<sup>20</sup> The *Birmingham Post* (11 September 1986) agreed: 'Let me say at

once what a pleasure it is to have a straight and well ordered revival that never gives way to the lure of false experiment'.<sup>21</sup> Don Chapman (*Oxford Mail*, 11 September 1986) embraced 'a revival of *Richard II* that is mainstream Shakespeare'<sup>22</sup> The 'mainstream' interpretation enabled these reviewers to confirm the authority of the actor in the role despite perceived shortcomings in his vocal delivery (in much the same way that reviewers in 1955 had credited Neville with the authorised role). The set design by William Dudley reinforced an ideal medievalism against which Jeremy Irons gave an elegaic performance as the martyr king (figs. 55 and 56). Martin Hoyle (*Financial Times*, 7 May 1987) enthused:

William Dudley's Book of Hours set suggests a chronicle with its crenellated masonry, blue sky and tapering finials (The abdication scene almost reproduces exactly the famous illuminated manuscript).<sup>23</sup>

The *London Daily News* referred to the set design to explain the actor's 'problem':

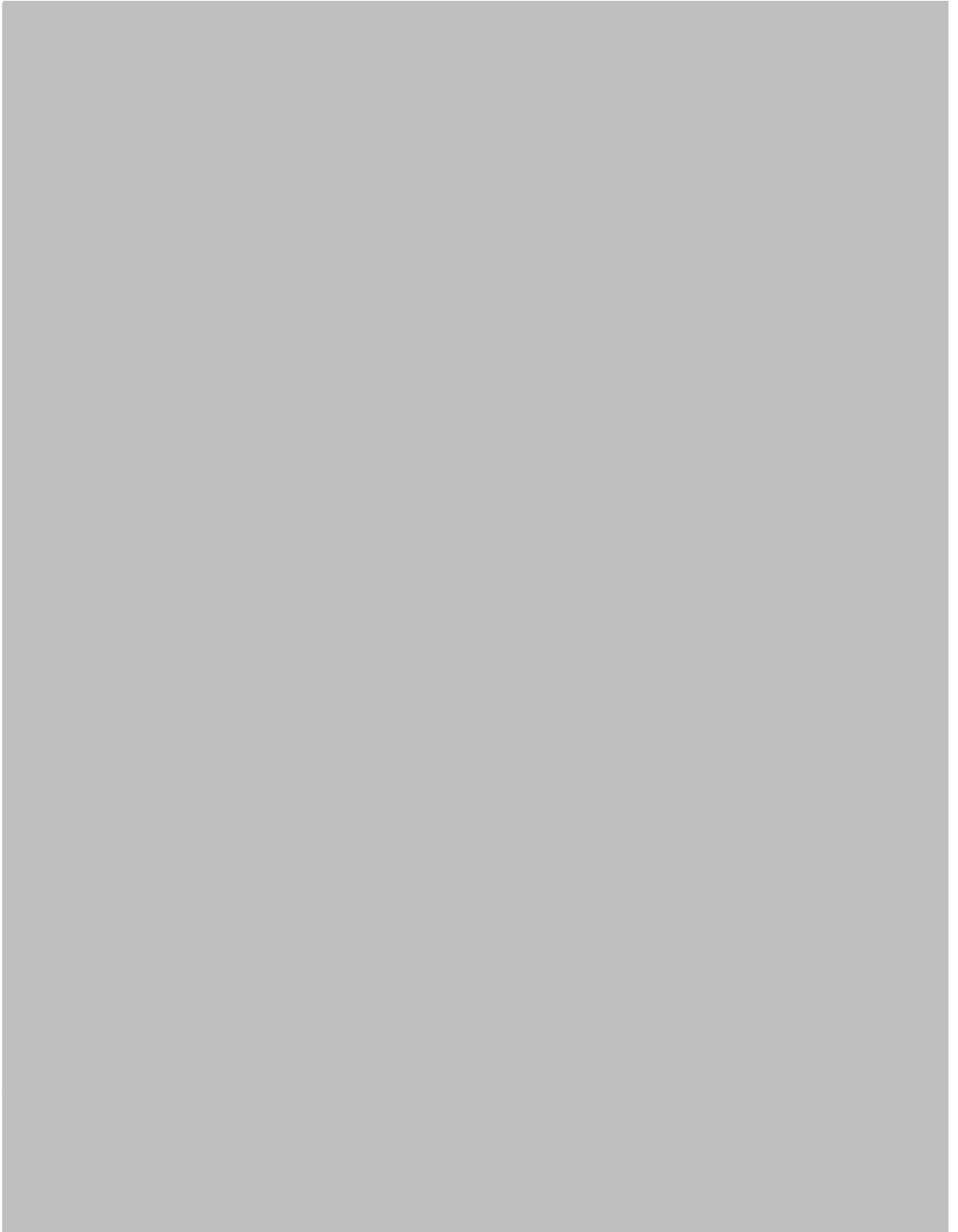
The problem is that William Dudley, paying homage to Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, has devised sets and costumes that ravage the eye and senses. Lacking an actor of vocal perfection (Gielgud would just do) the human elements -blood, sweat and tears- cannot live up to Dudley's exquisite vision of Medieval England as illuminated manuscript.<sup>24</sup>

Michael Coveney (*Financial Times*, 12 September 1986) was not won over by the interpretation, commenting, 'unless the play is treated as a documentary tragedy in a nation on the skids, one loses much of the poetry and most of its heart'<sup>25</sup> Coveney seemed to suggest that 'poetry' had more to do with issues and ideas than poetic diction.

It is noticeable that reviewers often find themselves having to renegotiate definitions of 'poetry' in order to speak approvingly of unorthodox (or properly, not claiming to be



**55** The medieval set design by William Dudley for Barry Kyle's  
RSC production, 1986



56 Bolingbroke (Michael Kitchen) observes the martyr king (Jeremy Irons) in the deposition scene of Barry Kyle's elegaic RSC production of *Richard II*, 1986

‘authoritative’) performances. Eric Sams (*TLS*, 24 February 1989) referred to a programme note for the English Shakespeare Company’s *The Wars of the Roses* (1986-9) where the historian J.L. Bolton ‘naively explains’ that “the first thing to realize about Richard II is that he was not a tragic figure, as Shakespeare makes him out to be, but a tyrant”<sup>26</sup> Sams argued that Michael Pennington’s portrayal of the ‘tyrant’ king (the production also associated Richard with ‘Beau Brummell dandyism’) was ‘sensibly drawn from the poetry, not the life, and very affectingly too’.<sup>27</sup> The reviewer sought to defend the popularised, modern and eclectically costumed production (which toured worldwide) against detractors who ‘will say that the result is a stock repertory company patronizingly catering for school parties with such kid stuff as the banner saying “Fuck the Frogs”, which is designed to reveal the true spirit of Agincourt’<sup>28</sup> Sams admitted, ‘of course, the mainly young audiences loved it; and so, on the whole, did I’.<sup>29</sup> Pennington’s attention to the ‘poetry’ could therefore afford proof of the actor’s seriousness in the role and allows its authorisation. In this production, the actor’s seriousness could counter the director Michael Bogdanov’s assertion that he would not treat Shakespeare’s works reverentially. Bogdanov’s intention was to release the ideas from a statically delivered verse form, as Heather Neill observed in the *TV Times* (March 1988):

[Bogdanov] urges actors to speak *to* another person rather than declaim, to be naturalistic. The music of the words even (or perhaps especially) in the case of a much-anthologised piece must be second to the thoughts and feelings.<sup>30</sup>

The *Scotsman* recuperated Pennington’s strong performance through the authoritative discourse of ‘music’:


Richard’s soliloquies are full of dreams, Pennington’s voice now the viola, now the cello; now a lyrical glide, now a hectic skate across the strings [...]

Richard weaves strategies with words. How remarkably he leans into the phrase “Seize it” as he dangles the crown before the new chief executive in a deposition scene brilliantly conceived as an austere Edwardian board-meeting.<sup>31</sup>

Pennington was nonetheless dissatisfied with his performance, believing that he lacked sensitivity in the deposition scene and was ‘too closed off, too cruel’ (fig. 57).<sup>32</sup> He saw the problem as partly the context of the history cycle which needed him to establish ‘the petty tyrant’ (as Corbett had done in a single version in 1955) early on, making it difficult to invite sympathy in the later scenes.<sup>33</sup>

Corbett’s Marxist view of Richard, and Pennington’s neo-Marxist interpretation were anti-lyrical in the sense that the need historically to depose a tyrant was foregrounded over and above the king’s tragedy; his personal sense of losing his role and identity. It would be easy to deduce that by straying from an ‘authoritative’ poetic and lyrical reading, the actors had forfeited definitive success in the role of Richard. However the ghost of the ideal para-text was in many ways laid to rest in the RSC 1990-1 season when Ron Daniels directed Alex Jennings as a despot in ‘the year of tyranny’, an anti-lyrical reading which a number of reviewers fumbled to applaud.<sup>34</sup>

The theatre programme banished the poet-king from a double-page spread of quotations on historical tyrants including Adolf Hitler, Idi Amin Dada, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, and Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu (executed December 1989, some months before the RSC production opened). A centred quotation in red type from Christopher Hibbert read: ‘Mussolini would have liked to have been a poet just as Hitler would have liked to have been a great painter - most dictators, it seems, are artists manqués’<sup>36</sup> Art was



**57** Michael Pennington as King Richard II in the deposition scene of the  
English Shakespeare Company's production

associated with a distorted version of reality, the dictators feeding off illusionary visions of themselves. Michael Coveney (*Observer*, 11 November 1990) described the effect of a huge, extravagant baroque Guido Reni backdrop (fig. 58), which mythologised Richard's 'tragic' downfall through the story of Atalanta stooping to retrieve Hippomene's apples:

The sinister anachronisms of costume and weaponry are suggested within a classical false white proscenium, no less than in the Reni pictorial analogue of Bolingbroke's ascendancy, an image of victory through flight from a diverted opponent. Atalanta stoops just as Richard, the glistening phaeton, descends.<sup>37</sup>

The large white proscenium enclosed the action in a picture frame, distancing Richard from playgoers' sympathies. Harry Eyres (*Times*, 13 September 1991) responded:

Daniels's production has apparently been inspired by historical research revealing that Richard conducted a tyrannical reign of terror: this is expressed by blank-faced crossbowmen pointing their weapons at the audience, and may be accurate, but is not in Shakespeare.<sup>38</sup>

Michael Billington was clearly unhappy (*Guardian* 9 November 1990), 'plangent lyricism is banished from the start' and 'a concept was being imposed'<sup>39</sup> However, first thoughts developed into a struggle to enjoy the anti-lyrical reading in Billington's review for *Country Life* (22 November 1990):

Can the play sustain the interpretation Mr. Daniels puts upon it, showing an England moving from a dark, medieval autocracy under Richard to a pseudo-legitimate modern tyranny under Bolingbroke? The answer has to be "Yes" and "No"<sup>40</sup>



Jennings obviously impressed him: ‘in the Deposition scene at Westminster he taunts Bolingbroke [Anton Lesser] with “Seize the crown”, as if playing a last, desperate card. The further Richard falls, the better Mr. Jennings becomes ...’<sup>41</sup> In the early scenes Richard appeared like a spoilt schoolchild, jealously guarding his favourite ‘toys’, the orb, sceptre and crown which he took out of the ‘toy-box’. This box was carried into Westminster for the coronation where Bolingbroke looked on in exasperation (fig. 59). When Richard slyly offered up the crown, Lesser started back, as though the act of touching it constituted blasphemy. Andrew St George (*Financial Times*, 9 November 1990) commented, ‘in the deposition scene, the tension between Bullingbrook’s *realpolitik* and Richard’s petulance turns the play’s debate between right and fitness to rule into urgent, compelling theatre’<sup>42</sup> Katherine Duncan-Jones in the *TLS* struggled to give praise; ‘this reading is too crude [...] Bushy and Bagot are shot on stage with pistols’, but, ‘Jennings, a damaged, wide-eyed archangel, develops a manic self-preoccupation which is increasingly compelling’ and ‘he copes expressively with Richard’s tireless eloquence’<sup>43</sup> Rex Gibson (*TES* 23 September 1990) realised that the production could not be cast in the shadow of ‘traditional expectations’ but was ‘an invitation to radically rethink Shakespeare’s most lyrical play’<sup>44</sup> He commented:

Gone are poetry, lyricism and chivalric romance. Gone too are celebratory visions of England as a precious stone set in a silver sea. Daniels gives us instead a brutally modern world of *realpolitik*. Bristol becomes Bucharest, a bleak, cold, concrete warehouse where summary execution by pistol shot is the fate of the old régime. Every character’s verse turns to prose. The



59 The deposition scene in the 1990 production. From left to right: Northumberland (Paul Jesson), King Richard ( Alex Jennings) and Bolingbroke (Anton Lesser)

familiar arias are declared flatly, emphatically, factually. They become recitals of bureaucratic reason rather than descants of personal emotion.<sup>45</sup>

Charles Osborne (*Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 1990) described Jennings's Richard as 'a magnificent achievement, owing little to any of his distinguished predecessors in the role' and observed:

For the brittle elegance of Gielgud, the neurotic self-pity of Redgrave, or the melodious verse-speaking of John Neville, Jennings substitutes in the play's opening scenes a suspicious watchfulness which later blazes into fierce outbursts of temper, before, at the end, a bleak self-knowledge takes over. Jennings brings the complex character of the King to life more completely than any other performance of the role I can recall.<sup>46</sup>

It will be clear from my overall analysis of appropriation that the questions, 'Whose interests does the deposition serve *on-stage* and *off-stage*' have been cast in a new discussion that has less to do with representation (what is represented on stage) and more to do with the authority to speak. The reviewer and academic writer can mute the voice of the actor by appropriating his/her work for an ancillary discourse that is grounded in a debate about the authority of Shakespeare. Perhaps without realising it, a reviewer can appropriate the performance event, measuring the actor's success against the invisible para-text or preferred reading that rewards the writer with the authority to speak. This author-ity is ultimately grounded in a literary interpretative community to whom (not surprisingly) the written word and especially the 'poetry' penned in an early Shakespearian text might have a value *a priori* release into performance. The true ground of the dialogue becomes visible where the reviewer attempts to

accommodate an 'illegitimate' reading with the unexpected success of the actor in the role, as the case of Alex Jennings's performance shows.

## ii. “Bifold Authority” in Deborah Warner’s *Richard II*

In this chapter as a whole I am considering Mullaney’s argument that a *poetics of culture* cannot be a *politics of culture* without addressing questions of appropriation. I have shown through a discussion of the appropriation of Stratford stages how a historicised approach is needed in order to analyse issues of cultural exchange diachronically (for example, the cultural history of Stratford as *locus* for Shakespeare). In a further study, I have shown how a diachronic analysis of review material relating to four productions can reveal strategies of appropriation related to the cultural authority of Shakespeare in a literary critical interpretative community. In this final section I want to bring this on-going dialogue to a case study of a particular production where the actor was viewed as subversively appropriating both the role and the stage for her own feminist political agenda through the exercise of a ‘bifold authority’ (a term used by Robert Weimann and explained below). A version of my argument appeared in *Shakespeare Bulletin* (Winter, 1997).<sup>1</sup> Carol Rutter’s subsequently published article in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, ‘Fiona Shaw’s *Richard II*: The Girl as Player-King as Comic’ drew on her interview with Fiona Shaw and is enlightening on the deposition scene. She suggests that Shaw’s estrangement of the role because of her gender allowed comic effects which were construed as undermining the seriousness of kingship. Shaw commented:

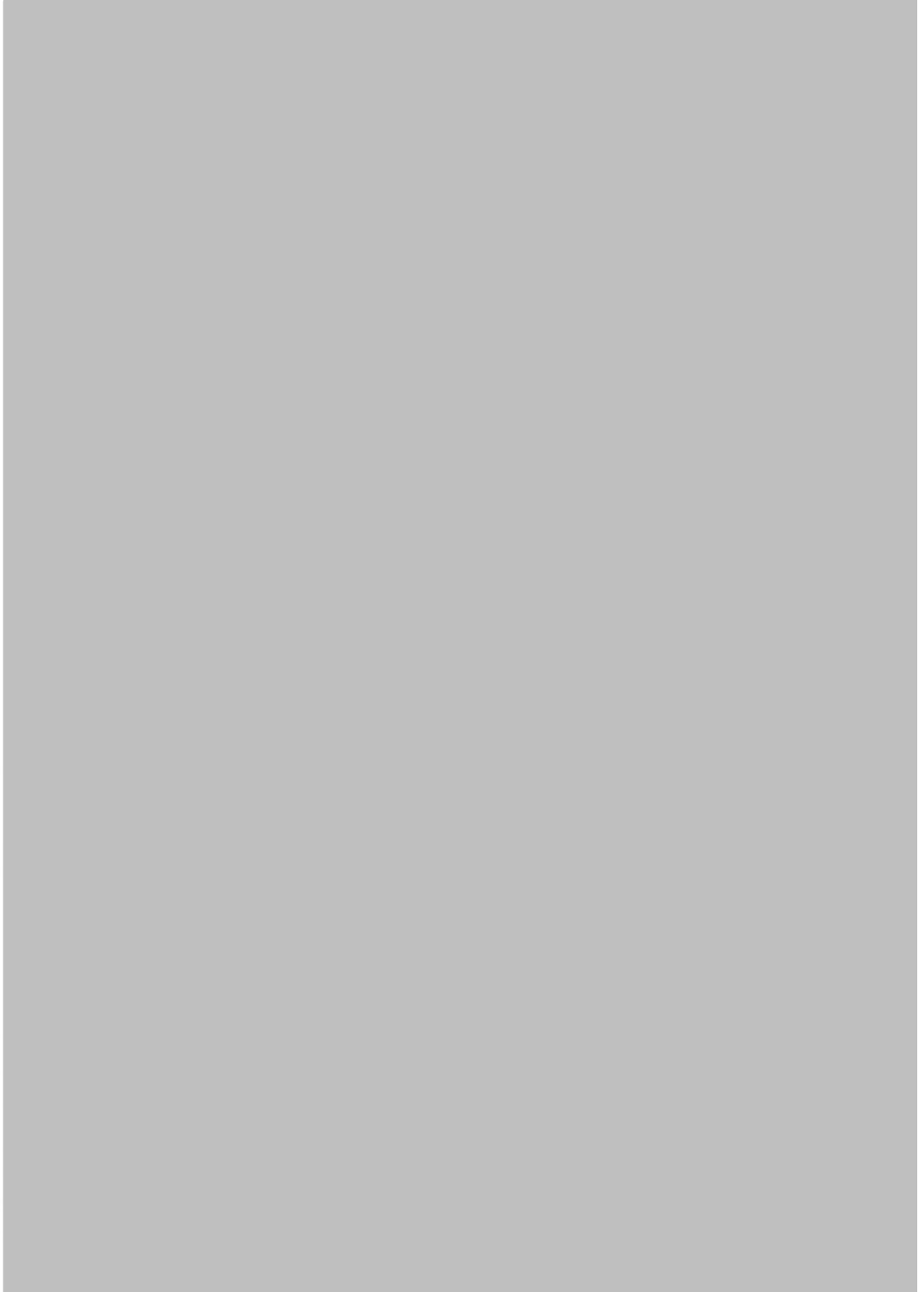
“If a man had been doing what I was doing in the part, reviewers would have been thrilled. But a woman playing that sort of thing was more than a little sacrilegious. You can’t have a girl playing a king and then acting like being a king isn’t serious. Because it’s *very* serious *as we men know!*”<sup>2</sup>

In Chapter 1, I referred to Robert Weimann’s distinction between *locus* and *platea* where the first term is associated with a place of verisimilitude while the latter is a non-privileged

popular space, non-illusionistic, near the audience. Weimann instances the example of the throne in Shakespeare's plays which is 'the representational locus of privileged royalty'.<sup>3</sup> By contrast 'the *platea*-like dimension of the platform stage - the bustling space of theatrical "sound and fury" [...] privileged the authority not of what was represented (in historiographical and novelistic narrative) but of what was representing and who was performing'.<sup>4</sup> The *platea* was associated with subversion, with disguise and clowning; 'all helped potentially to undermine whatever respect the represented loci of authority invoked for the Elizabethan audience'.<sup>5</sup> Weimann suggests that an actor may exercise a 'bifold authority' by working both with and against the authority of what is being represented, creating a discontinuity. He offers the example of an actor of a low social order who represents royalty (the *locus*) of authority but who can also be seen to be enjoying 'representing royally' and 'playing powerfully'.<sup>6</sup> Drawing on an insight from Jean Howard, Weimann argues, 'in contrast to much of the modern theater, the representing agents and the represented objects of drama were not of the same social order. There were tensions and gaps in experiences between roles and actors'.<sup>7</sup> I want to show how discontinuity became apparent in the modern theatre at the level of the representing agent, Fiona Shaw, who played King Richard in Deborah Warner's production at the National Theatre in 1995 and then on tour (fig. 60).

Many British critics had problems with Warner's production. Rhoda Koenig in the *Independent* was not amused:

The casting of Fiona Shaw as Richard II is not so much a triumph for feminism as one might think. When Sarah Bernhardt played Hamlet, she was criticised by some reviewers for being too bold a style that arose from her



**60** Fiona Shaw as King Richard in Deborah Warner's production, 1995

intelligent interpretation of the prince [...] Shaw's Richard, however, is a stereotypical girlie. Though crowned at 10, Richard was 30 during the events chronicled by the play, and unlikely to be such a giggling prat.<sup>8</sup>

*Time Out* remarked: 'What's interesting is that so much of Richard's behaviour might be described as stereotypically female: indecisive, emotional and craving approval. Shaw can play these qualities to the hilt'.<sup>9</sup> The *Sunday Telegraph* headline declared unequivocally: 'Away with this suck-a-thumb', a response to Shaw's portrayal of the king as a gawky youth who played hide-and-seek behind the throne of England, sucked his thumb, was playful in his reactions to the Court, throwing cushions and appearing like 'an emotional 11-year-old surrounded by adults' (Benedict Nightingale, *Times*, 5 June 1995).<sup>10</sup> However, Shaw told Jack Kroll in *Newsweek* that her approach was not 'a feminist or feminine gesture [...] I play Richard not from my gender center but from my imaginative center'<sup>11</sup> She told Christian Tyler in the *Financial Times*, 'this play could not have happened 10 years ago because it would have been *only* feminist'<sup>12</sup> A programme note from Marjorie Garber's *Vested Interests* presumably aimed to nudge Shaw's critics in the right direction:

Consider such canonical moments [...] in the history of drama as the ancient Greek theater; the public theater of the English Renaissance; Kabuki and Noh theaters in Japan; the Chinese opera. This is a short list which could easily be made longer. But it is enough to give the sense that transvestism and theater are interrelated, not merely "historically" or "culturally", but psychoanalytically, through the unconscious and through language.<sup>13</sup>

Garber points to the *presentational* aspect of theatre which draws attention to the construction of subject positions. Ultimately transvestism is subversive because it disables familiar identifications of culturally assigned gender roles.

Richard Hornby (*The Hudson Review*) found Shaw's portrayal 'illuminating' and commented (with reference to Garber's thesis) upon the ' "cultural relativism" of our own time [which] sees acting in terms of personality; the actor is supposed to play only himself or herself on stage or in film'.<sup>14</sup> Michael Coveney in the *Observer* saw that:

Shaw's reading implies an unavoidable element of objectivity which both distances her performance from the core of the play's meaning and intensifies the "third person" manner in which she talks about her status: "What must the king do now?: must he submit?" In playing the king as a woman, she complicates the medieval notion of a man anointed to a role he can hardly fulfil'.<sup>15</sup>

Shaw's presentational style subverted *locus* authority and her subversion was reinforced through the *platea* resonance of the traverse staging where playgoers faced each other in close proximity to the players. Paul Taylor in the *Independent* described the effect:

Hildegarde Bechtler's set a beautiful long, narrow, wood and gold traverse stage which bifurcates the Cottesloe with the audience sitting on either side in what could be cathedral stalls or jury boxes -has been rightly praised for the way it heightens a sense of the play's formal patterning and imparts a vivid, sport-like urgency to the aborted tournament at Coventry.<sup>16</sup>

On the one hand playgoers entered cathedral stalls, a *locus* of authority because a holy place which emphasised the sacred nature of kingship. John Lahr in *The New Yorker* noted, 'the

chanting of Latin, the flicker of candles, and the smell of incense'.<sup>17</sup> In addition at one end of the traverse stage 'a gauzy curtain separates an "off-stage" royal-court area, with gilt floors and walls' <sup>18</sup> Fiona Shaw's King Richard appeared swathed in bandages (which puzzled some critics) suggesting the 'embalmed' body of a holy ritual and the mystical presence of the 'Body politic' Christian Tyler (*Financial Times*) commented that Shaw 'dressed like a royal mummy to underscore [...] the sanctity of the medieval monarch'.<sup>19</sup> While *locus* authority distanced the personage of the king, playgoers were drawn into the drama as eavesdropping spectators at the very centre of power politics. York ( Michael Bryant) addressed the spectators or "jurors" in his *platea* position of choric commentator, presenting the arguments for and against unqualified allegiance to a divinely appointed monarch. His address produced a curious disjunction of style. Irving Wardle ( *Independent*, 9 June 1995) commented, 'York's leisurely performance as a confused old man at his wit's end makes everyone else look artificial' <sup>20</sup> John Lahr remarked upon 'a beautifully cadenced, elegant piece of comic plain speaking' <sup>21</sup> Discontinuity was remarked upon by Sheridan Morley (*International Herald Tribune*, 7 June 1995) who felt the three elder-statesmen seemed to have 'wandered in from a more orthodox Old Vic staging circa 1956' while Shaw and David Threlfall (Bolingbroke) seemed to be 'acting out some post-modern French movie about role-playing and ambiguous sexuality in power games' <sup>22</sup> Plainly Shaw was *not* viewed as appropriating the *platea* by seeking a rapport with spectators as York's role enabled him to do. Criticism of Shaw's manipulation of her gender may have been fuelled because the authority of the *locus* was so carefully prepared in this production. As Rutter observed:

A king who clowned around caught everybody out. She made the grown-up anti ritual of royal resignation that York and Northumberland were so

seriously attempting to improvise nothing more than a parlor game, a farcical charade, child's play.<sup>23</sup>

Deborah Warner's production was feted in France where the crude 'gender-bending' construction of Shaw's performance by many British critics was replaced by an appreciation of a different style of theatre. Rupert Christiansen (*Daily Telegraph*, 27 January 1996) observed that Warner 'has become a figure in cultured Paris' and:

[Her] spare, clean patient style seems to fit into the French and European tradition of theatre more than our own [...] Pared of empty rhetoric and spectacle, Warner's approach has a close kinship to that of the gurus of Parisian theatre - Peter Brook [...] Ariane Mnouchkine and Patrice Chéreau.<sup>24</sup>

Ariane Mnouchkine directed Théâtre du Soleil in a production of *Richard II* in 1982-4 drawing on kabuki theatre. Malcolm Page quotes Mnouchkine: 'the history plays are about ritual, about divine legitimacy Western theater doesn't have a form to depict this. It has one convention: realism'.<sup>25</sup> Alistair Macaulay *Financial Times* (6 June 1995) recognised in Shaw's performance the 'Pierrot'; she presented 'a witty, charming but melancholy boy king' but her 'exaggerations cancel out her expressiveness'<sup>26</sup> Arguably, however (as in the *commedia dell'arte*), it was through the stylised gestures that the dramatic figure could be identified Paul Taylor felt that 'the clowningly exhibitionist man-child mirrors more than subliminally the psychological confusions caused by the identity crisis of a King's dual nature'.<sup>27</sup> Shaw's portrayal of the child in the adult conveyed ideas found in postmodern psychoanalytical literary criticism. Shaw created an almost pre-oedipal or 'semiotic' stage for Richard as though the human figure represented was not ready to assume an identity in the 'symbolic'

domain of language, culture and society ( I use ‘semiotic’ and ‘symbolic’ as understood in the writings of Julia Kristeva and Jacques Lacan).<sup>28</sup> Shaw told Christian Tyler:

I suppose I’m playing into the notion that this pupa has been so fed royal jelly that it has no beard, is soft and female from a life of never having to function as a human -either male or female.<sup>29</sup>

Shaw’s ‘pupa’ suggested an androgynous being unable to make the required leap that culture and society demanded. There was something innocent and sacred about the games the ‘pupa’ played. Like the Pierrot, the human figure conveyed actions and feelings without guile, delighting in its freedom to play, yet vulnerable and likely to be hurt.

Richard’s vulnerability was suggested from the opening scenes. Before the tournament could commence Bolingbroke asked to say his farewells to his King. Richard removed the crown for this intimate moment of leave taking as the two cousins kissed on the lips. The combatants took up positions but the clamour of preparations unnerved Richard. As the climactic strains became unbearable, he threw his warder down and seemed to collapse.

In this production, the deposition scene was not so much the overthrow of a tyrant: it was the end of the pupa’s world of play. The nobles sat along the traverse sides of Parliament, making playgoers behind them an extension of the Commons. Richard entered with the crown in a basket. He placed the crown on the ground between himself and Bolingbroke, turning the line ‘Here cousin, / seize the crown’ (4.1. 171-2) into a game. Both clapped hands and retrieved it. Richard still held on to his prize as Bolingbroke urged, ‘Are you contented to resign the crown?’ (190). The king moved upstage towards the throne, *locus* of authority to make the decoronation speech. He moved purposefully downstage to crown his cousin,

proclaiming, ‘ “God save King Henry”’ (210). Richard prostrated himself before Bolingbroke, then rose, stepped back and raised his hands in prayer. Northumberland (Struan Rodger) urged Richard to read out the accusations to the Commons, casting playgoers ranked on either side of the traverse as the King’s dissatisfied subjects. At this point Richard rose majestically to challenge Parliament’s right to depose a divinely appointed king. Addressing the whole assembly (including participant playgoers), Richard drew upon the mystical *locus* authority (established through ritual at the start of the play) to insinuate that members of the House, like ‘Pilates’ (230), had delivered their king to his ‘sour cross’(231). Richard approached Bolingbroke and her voice rose at the line, ‘And water cannot wash away your sin’ (232). Placing a hand on Threlfall’s back, Shaw swung round, arms outstretched, to ‘crucify’ the king on Bolingbroke’s body, symbolising personal betrayal (by her cousin) and public betrayal by Parliament. It seemed that the ‘pupa’ claimed a political role precisely when that role had been taken away. Recalling their affection as children, Richard sought an embrace, kissing her cousin Bolingbroke repeatedly. Bolingbroke removed the crown and stood, the prize dangling from his hand as Richard was taken to the Tower. He laid the crown upon the throne - in reality only an object (as Richard’s games clearly demonstrated) before proclaiming the day of coronation. The Bishops reached up to douse the candles, symbolically extinguishing the sacred light of kingship (the ‘Body politic’ in Richard) as the assembly exited Parliament.

This was a fascinating performance in which the ‘pupa’ or ‘Pierrot’ , a subversive innocent figure, tried out a role as if to please but was unable to succeed. This meant that the audience was forced to consider what constituted the role of king. Playgoers were being asked to take part in an experiment which was what Warner and Shaw wanted. Some

reviewers, however, were unhappy with Richard's child-like mannerisms; the *Guardian* (5 June 1995) thought it 'improbable that he would wink at his one-time followers at Westminster'.<sup>30</sup> Matt Wolf (*Variety*, 12-18 June 1995) criticised 'some silly stage business: Richard skips about and winks, sucks his thumb, and plays pat-a-cake with Bolingbroke (David Threlfall) prior to handing his cousin the crown'.<sup>31</sup> Paul Taylor appreciated the symbolic presentation of platonic doubles: 'the near-twinship, as well as kinship, and the haunted mutual fascination, brings out the way these characters inversely reflect each other'.<sup>32</sup> John Lahr described the production quite aptly as a 'contest of love and fear in the body politic': 'Bolingbroke folds his cousin in his arms as Richard sobs, "I have no name, no title" It's a huge moment, which Shaw and Threlfall play off love, not hate'.<sup>33</sup>

Shaw did not purpose to use the history of her gender in her presentation of Richard but that is not to say that an acknowledgement of her gender was totally absent. In an interview with Claire Armitstead (*Guardian*, 31 May 1995) Shaw commented on the play:

There's something about the vocabulary, a texture that's male: all that talk of love and glory. Richard thinks he's a god. What is fantastic, as a woman, is being allowed to play with the existential contradictions of the universe: being the supreme nothing and supreme something. To be playing with the theatre of mankind rather than just joy or grief; with the idea that salvation is one's relationship to death rather than to marriage. There's nothing in the theatre for women that addresses that so directly.<sup>34</sup>

Shaw, herself a philosophy graduate, seemed to suggest that she could use the role to ask the larger questions about life and the universe (often appropriated as 'masculine' questions) free from cultural identification of her sex.

Surprisingly the ‘pupa’ seemed unable to escape the representational reading of a woman actor playing the part of the king. John Mullan (*Times Literary Supplement*, 16 June 1995) thought her performance ‘self-indulgent’ and argued, ‘it is difficult not to think that a woman in the part has been all too completely freed from the masculine ceremonies that shape confrontations as well as allegiances’<sup>35</sup> Mullan located a possibility mentioned by Shaw herself when she identified a masculine discourse, “all that talk of glory”. In other words Shaw’s presentation created a ‘bifold authority’ where the persona of the actor challenged what was represented. She was viewed by some critics as playing royally while taking a subversive feminist view of men in power, and mocking their power games. Maureen Paton *Daily Express* ( 5 June 1995) remarked: ‘This refreshing new approach gives us a quizzical female perspective on all those male war games’<sup>36</sup> Evidently this was not what Warner or Shaw envisaged; reviews show that they repeatedly asserted that the production was not feminist in approach. Gerald Berkowitz in *Shakespeare Bulletin* felt the cross-gender casting was ‘the least interesting element’ and suggested, ‘if one accepted that England’s ruler was a woman named Richard, the rest flowed naturally’<sup>37</sup> Peter Holland suggested that Shaw conveyed a sense of kingship that the Elizabethans would have understood:

But Shaw’s gender was never an intervention: rather, her femaleness and Richard’s boyishness combined to create a character who was in so many ways ‘not- male’, as, Shaw has argued, kings are ‘not-male’ in Renaissance political thought, their gender invisible behind their regality’<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, as I have shown, a considerable number of reviewers granted the actor a *platea* position of ‘bifold authority’ through their appropriation of the performance event for a

wider dialogue about the cultural construction of gender in the 1990s. The production was filmed for television and shown on 22 March 1997 in the BBC2 *Performance* series. A.A. Gill in the *Sunday Times* made gender construction the pith of his review:

If I had needed a symbol for the utter female domination of the box last week, I couldn't have dreamt up a better one than *Richard II* (Saturday BBC2). To confuse the already shaky hold most young people have on history, it turned out that Richard II was really a girl. He was really Fiona I, and hopefully the last.<sup>39</sup>

I agree with Carol Rutter that unfortunately Richard Bremmer's performance as Bolingbroke 'could not reproduce with Shaw what she and Threlfall had created'.<sup>40</sup> It was also the case that the presentational style of Shaw's performance did not transfer as well to the medium of television.

I began this chapter by considering Shakespeare's revision of history in the deposition scene, an argument about the Renaissance *locus*. I have, throughout my work, been mindful of those criticisms (referred to earlier), that are made of New Historicism's tendency to impose a constructed meaning upon an understanding of the *reception* of a production. Questions of appropriation may appear to have only a tangential purchase on some aspects of the 'forensic' enquiry proposed for *Richard II*, for example, the question of arbitrary taxation or the implications of rule by conquest. It is interesting, however, that all three discussions of appropriation suggest most strongly the centrality of the deposition scene to issues of cultural exchange in the twentieth-century. It was by working diachronically with the question prompted by the study of the *locus*, 'Whose interests are served?' by the simulation of the ceremonial event, that I was brought to consider that

issues of cultural authority are involved in claims made for 'ownership' of the deposition scene in the production process.

## References: Chapter 5

### 'Fetch Hither Richard' (4. 1. 146): Shakespeare's Revision of History in the Deposition Scene

All references to the text of *Richard II* are from The Oxford Shakespeare, *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), edited by Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery.

1. *Shakespearean Negotiations*, p.10.
2. Ibid., p.10.
3. Ibid., p. 10. Greenblatt explores the idea of 'spectacular royal pardons' in *Measure for Measure* in ch.5 of *Shakespearean Negotiations*.
4. Philip C. McGuire, *Shakespeare: The Jacobean Plays* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1994), p.43.
5. Ibid., p.43. McGuire refers to a seventeenth-century contemporary account quoted by Steven Mullaney which describes the reunion of the three men who each believed the other two had died: "Now all the actors" were "together on the stage (as use is at the end of a play)" and there they "looked strange one upon the other, like men beheaded and met again in the other world" (p.44)
6. Steven Mullaney, 'After the new historicism' in *Alternative Shakespeares Volume 2*, edited by Terence Hawkes (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 17 - 37, pp.28 - 29.
7. Mullaney, p.32.
8. Mullaney, p.33.
9. Louis Adrian Montrose, ' "Eliza, Queene of Shepheardes," and the Pastoral of Power' in *The New Historicism Reader*, edited by H. Aram Veesser (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), pp.88-115, p.101.
10. Ibid., p.102. Montrose refers to the Elizabethan progresses and pageants and other public spectacles as "social dramas", drawing on the work of the social anthropologist, Abner Cohen, *Two - Dimensional Man: An Essay on the Anthropology of Power and Symbolism in Complex Societies* (1974). See Montrose, pp.101-102: 'Each drama tries to effect a transformation in the psyches of the participants, conditioning their attitudes and sentiments, repetitively renewing beliefs, values and norms and thereby creating and recreating the basic categorical imperatives on which the group depends for its existence. At the same time, some or many of the participants may attempt to manipulate, modify or change, the symbols of the drama to articulate minor or major changes in the "message"'
11. Montrose, p.102.

12. Stanley Wells (ed.) *Richard II* (New Penguin Shakespeare, Harmondsworth, 1969), p.13.
13. Andrew Gurr (ed.), *King Richard II* (New Cambridge Shakespeare, Cambridge, 1984), p.7.
14. Wells, New Penguin Shakespeare, p.269. Wells writes, 'unfortunately the text of the added passages contains many obvious mistakes, and was printed probably from an unauthorized source' The editor adds that the Folio 'includes a good text of the abdication episode omitted from the early quartos' (269 - 270).
15. Janet Clare, *'Art made tongue-tied by authority': Elizabethan and Jacobean Dramatic Censorship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p.49.
16. Clare quotes Ure's view that 'political conditions towards the end of the century made dethronement of an English monarch a dangerous subject for public discussion', and Andrew Gurr's suggestion that the playhouse may always have had 'a full version of the text' in its possession. (p.49)
17. Ibid., p.48.
18. Ibid., p.48.
19. David M. Bergeron, 'The Deposition Scene in *Richard II*', *Renaissance Papers*, 1974, pp.31 - 37, p.36.
20. Paola Pugliatti, *Shakespeare the Historian* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1996), p.23.
21. Pugliatti, p.32.
22. Ibid., p.32.
23. Ibid., p.37 and p.33. Graham Holderness, *Shakespeare Recycled: The Making of Historical Drama* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992) agrees. He writes at p. 2: 'From the perspective of modern historiography, the English history plays of Shakespeare would not normally be considered historiography at all' and rely 'on tradition rather than documentary record and primary source'.
24. Pugliatti, p. 37.
25. The Oxford Shakespeare, p.367.
26. Wells, New Penguin Shakespeare, p.14.
27. Ibid., p.15.
28. Pugliatti, p.38.

29. Matthew W. Black (ed.), *The Life and Death of King Richard The Second* (New Variorum Shakespeare, Philadelphia and London: J.B. Lippincott, 1955), p.245.
30. Black, p.245.
31. Wells, New Penguin Shakespeare, p.29.
32. Peter Ure (ed.), *King Richard II* (Arden Shakespeare, London, 1956), pp. lxxx - lxxxi.
33. Bergeron, p.36. See also P. A. Daniel, 'A nonpolitical reason for omitting the deposition scene from the early quarto of *Richard II*' in Charles R. Forker (ed.), *Shakespeare The Critical Tradition: Richard II* (London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: The Athlone Press, 1998), pp. 301-302: 'the story loses nothing in completeness or intelligibility by the suppression of the passage'
34. Pugliatti, p.38.
35. Chris Given-Wilson (ed.), *Chronicles of The Revolution 1397 - 1400 : The Reign of Richard II* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp.190-1, p.191.
36. *Chronicles of The Revolution*, pp.192 - 197, p.196. The 'official' Lancastrian version of events, recorded in the *Record and Process* regulates proceedings by having Lord William Thuring, justice, 'speaking on his own behalf and on behalf of his fellows and co-proctors, in the name of all the estates and the people' come into the presence of 'Sir Richard, formerly king of England, in his chamber in the Tower of London' In this version Richard is kept fully informed of the deposition proceedings which merely formalise the Renunciation and Cession to which he had already agreed in word and writing. (pp. 168-189, pp.187-188)
37. *Chronicles of The Revolution* , p.42.
38. Ibid., p. 42. J.R. Lander, *Conflict and Stability in Fifteenth Century England* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1969), argues: 'If Richard II had been brought before Parliament and allowed to speak for himself, he might have succeeded in retaining the throne. The fact that justice had not been done through parliament may well, to some extent, explain later revolts'. (p.51)
39. Michael A. R. Graves, *Elizabethan Parliaments, 1559 - 1601* (London and New York: Longman, 1987), p.3.
40. Graves, p.3.
41. Graves, pp. 9-10. Graves comments: 'In the short-term, this development strengthened the Crown. Parliaments repeatedly demonstrated their trust and devotion when they delegated legislative authority to Henry [...] In practice Henry wielded a power unequalled by any other English monarch' (p.10)

42. Graves, p.17.

43. G. W Prothero (ed.) *Select Statutes and Other Constitutional Documents Illustrative of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I*, Fourth Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p.250.

44. Ibid., p.250.

45. Ibid., pp.251-252..

46. Brents Stirling, “Up, Cousin, Up: Your Heart is Up, I Know” in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Richard II: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Paul Cubeta (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971) pp. 91 - 7, p.93.

47. *Chronicles of The Revolution* , pp. 186 - 187.

48. *Select Statutes* , p.250.

49. *Select Statutes*, p.411.

50. Ibid., p.341.

51. Ibid., p.410.

52. Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution 1603-1714* (Wokingham: Van Nostrand Reinhold (UK), 1961; Second edition, 1980) p. 39.

53. Hill, p.42. See also Graves at p.39, ‘Orthodox historians’ describe ‘the history of parliamentary privilege and liberties and of the incidence of conflict and opposition’ as parts of ‘one historical process’; revisionists identify ‘the growth of privilege and liberties as institutional improvements in the efficiency of parliaments’

54. In the great debate on impositions in 1610 Parliament asked the question. ‘whether his Majesty may by his prerogative royal, without assent of parliament, at his own will and pleasure, lay a new charge or imposition upon merchandizes, to be brought into or out of this kingdom of England, and enforce merchants to pay the same’ (*Select Statutes* , pp.342-343)

55. *Select Statutes*, p.340.

**1. 'Placed in Its Proper Sequence' : Historical Cycles and The Appropriation of Stratford-upon-Avon Stages. *Richard II* in Anthony Quayle's 'The Cycle of the Historical Plays 1951' at The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, and The Royal Shakespeare Company's *The Wars of the Roses* Cycle, Directed by Peter Hall, John Barton and Clifford Williams, 1963-1964**

1. Theatre programme, 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. Stratford-upon-Avon: *King Richard the Second*', 1951'. The idea that the four plays were planned as 'one great play' was a view not shared by Richard David, 'Shakespeare's History Plays Epic or Drama?', *SS 6* (1970), pp.129-139, at p.129 : 'Everything in Anthony Quayle's production was focused on continuity, on the connexions [sic] and the likenesses between the plays, and their differences were studiously toned down'
2. Theatre programme, 'Royal Shakespeare Theatre: *Richard II*' 1964.
3. Harold Hobson, 'What Shakespeare Believed', *Sunday Times*, 19 April 1964.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. (see also the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre programme, *Richard II*, 1951).
6. *Sunday Times*, 19.4.64.
7. Robert Shaughnessy, *Representing Shakespeare: England, History and the RSC* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), p.47.
8. Peter Holland, *English Shakespeares: Shakespeare on the English Stage in the 1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.11.
9. Holland, p.12.
10. Ruth Ellis, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre* (London: Winchester Publications, 1948), p.7.
11. Ellis, p.10.
12. Ellis, p.15.
13. Ellis, p.52.
14. Margaret Shewring, *Shakespeare in Performance: King Richard II* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p.93.
15. Alan Fairclough, ' "Bed and Bard" for the first Festival', *Daily Mirror*, 26 March 1951.
16. 'First Night', *Warwick Advertiser*, 30 March 1951.

17. F.B.G., 'Stratford Season Opens: Michael Redgrave as Richard II', *Berrows Worcester Journal*, 30 March 1951.
18. Ivor Brown, 'Shakespeare's "Richard II"', *Radio Times*, 20 April 1951.
19. John Barber, 'Old King Richard II leaves queuers out in the cold', *Daily Express*, 26 March 1951.
20. David Addenbrooke, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: The Peter Hall Years* (London: William Kimber, 1974), p.194.
21. Robert Hewison, *In Anger: Culture in the Cold War 1945-60* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), p.56.
22. *In Anger*, p.56.
23. Barbara Dorf, 'Alarmingly like a private club' in Mary Banham and Bevis Hillier, *A Tonic To The Nation: The Festival of Britain 1951* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), p.186.
24. Michael Hattaway, 'Shakespeare's Histories' in *Shakespeare in the New Europe*, edited by Michael Hattaway, Boika Sokolova and Derek Roper (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 351-369, p. 354.
25. W.G.B.M., ' "King Richard" opens Stratford Season', *Royal Leamington Spa Courier*, 30 March 1951.
26. Ruth Ellis, 'Peeps Behind the Scenes', *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 30 March 1951.
27. Dennis Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.156.
28. Kennedy, p.157.
29. Hattaway, p.354. See the Introduction of *Alternative Shakespeares* (1985), edited by John Drakakis, at pp. 14-15. Drakakis suggests that Tillyard's view of an Elizabethan hierarchical order omitted 'any clear theoretical sense of how power functions' See also Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1943).
30. J. Dover Wilson and T. C. Worsley, *Shakespeare's Histories at Stratford 1951* (London: Max Reinhardt, 1952), 27-8.
31. *Ibid.*, p.28.
32. *Ibid.*, p.28.

33. Ibid., p.35.
34. Ibid., p.35.
35. Ibid., p.35.
36. 'The Stratford Opening: "King Richard II"', *TES*, 30 March 1951.
37. Ruth Ellis, 'Theatre Filled with People and Enthusiasm: "Richard II" rich in achievement and promise for later Histories', *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 30 March 1951.
38. Prompt-book Shakespeare Memorial Theatre 1951: *Richard II*.
39. 'The Night of the Play', *Nottingham Guardian*, 26 March 1951.
40. William Feaver, 'Festival Star' in *A Tonic to the Nation*, pp. 40-57, p.54.
41. Adrian Forty, 'Festival Politics' in *A Tonic to the Nation*, pp. 26-39, p.26.
42. Roy Strong, 'Prologue: Utopia Limited', in *A Tonic to the Nation*, pp. 6-9, p.9.
43. J.A.P., 'First night of Shakespeare Festival', *Warwick Advertiser*, 30 March 1951.
44. Ken Smith and John G. Drummond, 'Look out, Larry, there's a Redgrave on your tail', *Sunday Chronicle*, 25 March 1951.
45. T.C.Worsley, 'The Arts and Entertainment', *New Statesman*, 31 March 1951.
46. 'But for Theatre it may have been Quietest Easter', *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 30 March 1951.
47. Ibid.
48. 'Festival failure', *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 28 September 1951.
49. Ibid.
50. 'Lean Year for Stratford Hotels', *Daily Telegraph*, 22 September 1951.
51. Ibid.
52. *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 28.9.51.
53. 'Postmen Detailed for Theatre Ticket Queue', *Birmingham Mail*, 24 September 1951.
54. 'Three of Kings', *Evening Standard*, 27 October 1951.

55. Brian Harvey, 'Parade of Kings...A studio hustle for Margaret Leighton... Spiv into fairy King', *Birmingham Gazette*, 26 October 1951.
56. 'Memorial Theatre's Best Season', *Birmingham Mail*, 29 October 1951.
57. Hewison, *Too Much*, p.xiii.
58. *Ibid.*, p.11.
59. *Ibid.*, p.11.
60. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, p.9.
61. Hewison, *Too Much*, p.67.
62. Royal Shakespeare Company Theatre Programme, *The Wars of the Roses*, 1963.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Frank Cox, 'Theatre of Ritual', *Plays and Players*, May 1964.
65. Hattaway, pp.356-7. In "The Theatre of Cruelty (First Manifesto)", Artaud wrote: 'Theatre will never be itself again... unless it provides the audience with truthful distillations of dreams where its taste for crime, its erotic obsession, its savageness, its fantasies, its utopian sense of life and objects, even its cannibalism, gush out, not in an illusory make-believe, but on an inner level' From Antonin Artaud, *Collected Works* (trans. Victor Corti, London, 1968-1974), vol. 4, p.70. Quoted in Edward Braun, *The Director and the Stage : From Naturalism to Grotowski* (London: Methuen, 1982, p.184).
66. Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 274.
67. *Ibid.*, p.274.
68. The Royal Shakespeare Theatre programme, *Richard II*, 1964.
69. Harold Hobson, *Sunday Times*, 19.4.64.
70. *Ibid.*
71. Robert Speaight, 'Shakespeare in Britain', *SQ*, Vol.XV (1964), 379-389, p.381.
72. W.A.Darlington, 'Promising *Richard II* without evil', *Daily Telegraph*, 16 April 1964.
73. 'David Warner's Success in *Richard II*', *Warwick Advertiser*, 17 April 1964.

74. J.C. Trewin, 'Royal butterfly upon the wheel', *Birmingham Post*, 16 April 1964.
75. *Plays and Players*, May 1964.
76. John Gardner, 'Last Word on the Histories', *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 23 October 1964.
77. *Ibid.*
78. John Barton in collaboration with Peter Hall, *The Wars of the Roses: Adapted for The Royal Shakespeare Company from William Shakespeare's Henry VI, Parts I, II, III and Richard III* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1970), p.xi.
79. *Ibid.*, p.xi.
80. *Ibid.*, p.xi.
81. Royal Shakespeare Company theatre programme: *Henry IV Part 1*, 1964.
82. Ronald Bryden, 'The Matter of England', *New Statesman*, 24 April 1964.
83. Kennedy, p.179.
84. *Ibid.*, pp.179-80.
85. Beauman, p. 244. See also Margaret Shewring, *Shakespeare in Performance: King Richard II*, pp.99-100: 'Crucial to any understanding of the direction of the full cycle, and of the place of *Richard II* in that cycle, is the extent to which this great undertaking marked a celebration of the concept of "company"'
86. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
87. Shaughnessy, p.51.
88. *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 23 October 1964.
89. Hewison, *Too Much*, p.73.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
91. Beauman, p.266.
92. Hewison, *Too Much*, p.73.
93. *Ibid.*, pp.73-4.

94. Alan Sinfield, 'Royal Shakespeare: Theatre and the making of ideology' in *Political Shakespeare: New essays in cultural materialism*, edited by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp.158-181, p.164.
95. *Ibid.*, p.166.
96. Beaman, p. 268. See John Russell Brown, 'Three Kinds of Shakespeare', *SS 18* (1965), pp.147-155. He refers (at page 151) to the 'attempt at a uniform vocal style' where 'the speaking often echoes "ordinary speech" [...] The broken and slow delivery at Stratford is an aspect of the company's determined realism. And, unfortunately, it combats the excitement of Shakespeare's writing'
97. 'A Birthday the Whole World will Celebrate', *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 19 March 1964.
98. 'Stratford prepares for the invasion', *Birmingham Post*, 10 February 1964.
99. *Ibid.*
100. *Birmingham Post*, 10.2.64; Rosemary Merson, 'Shakespeare would have been amused', *Lancashire Evening Post*, 15 April 1964.
101. *Birmingham Post*, 10.2.64.
102. *Lancashire Evening Post*, 15 4. 64.
103. ' "History" in the Making- off Stage', *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 24 March 1964. The *Coventry Evening Telegraph* (24 March 1964) reported that 'the wardrobe department has the formidable task of providing over 1,000 costumes. Over 200 pairs of shoes will also be worn.'
104. Beaman, p.269.
105. '£80,000 Theatre Grant Accepted', *Daily Telegraph*, 25 March 1964.
106. Christopher Hollis, 'Stratford Centenary', *Spectator*, 12 June 1964.

## 2. i. 'The True Richard Music' : The Authority of The Actor in Four Productions of *Richard II*

1. Nicholas Shrimpton, 'Shakespeare Performances in London, Manchester and Stratford-upon-Avon 1985-6', *Shakespeare Survey* 40 (1988), pp.169-183, p.181.
2. Richard Dutton, 'The Second Tetralogy', in *Shakespeare: A Bibliographical Guide*, New Edition, edited by Stanley Wells (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp.337-380, p.349. Walter Pater wrote: '[*Richard II*] belongs to a small group of plays where, by happy birth and consistent evolution, dramatic form approaches to something like the unity of a lyrical ballad, a lyric, a song, a single strain of music' (Walter Pater, 'Shakespeare's English Kings', in *Appreciations*, 1889, p.195. Quoted in Andrew Gurr (ed.), *King Richard II* (New Cambridge Shakespeare, Cambridge, 1984) at page 45.
3. The reference is from the General Introduction to *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford, 1987), pp.4-5 where the editors, Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery describe the function of editing: '[...] editors emend individual words and punctuation marks, in order to remove a layer of intervening corruption. But with the other hand editors want to supply a layer of *ideal para-text* [my italics] which was never present in those early documents: necessary stage directions, consistency of speech-prefixes, regularity and readability of format'. W.B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance*, considers the similarity between editing and performance in constituting the authority of a text: 'editions resemble performances, in that a performance stages the work and asserts something about it, usually that this production is "proximate" to "something we value", some value lodged in a particular reading of the text, or a kind of value associated with a given author, or values held to be intrinsic to the (changing) nature of theatre'(p.18).
4. Shrewring, *Shakespeare in Performance: King Richard II*, p.80.
5. Shrimpton,, p.181.
6. Gurr (ed.), *King Richard II*, p.32.
7. Peter Ure (ed.), *King Richard II* (Arden Shakespeare, London, 1956), p.lxix.
8. Stanley Wells (ed.), *Richard II*, p.7.
9. Theatre Workshop first performed *Richard II* on 19 January 1954 for two weeks and revived the production to coincide with the Old Vic production on 17 January 1955 for four weeks.
10. Cecil Wilson, 'Clock Turns Back Twenty Years', *Daily Mail*, 19 January 1955.
11. Harold Hobson, ' "Richard II"', *Sunday Times*, 23 January 1955.

12. Philip Hope-Wallace, 'Two Productions of "Richard II": Old Vic and Theatre Workshop', *Guardian*, 21 January 1955. The 'egalitarian' direction is evident from the programme notes referring to Wat Tyler's Peasants' Rebellion and the inclusion of Langland's poem on the plight of a farm worker in 1394, which begins, 'His coat was of a clout that cary (coarse cloth) was called/ His hood was full of holes as he the plough followed'
13. Ibid.
14. Kenneth Tynan, 'Pair of Kings', *Observer*, 23 January 1955.
15. Ibid.
16. *Sunday Times*, 23 January 1955.
17. Anthony Cookman, 'A Problem Evaded', *Tatler*, 2 February 1955.
18. Stephen Williams, 'At the Theatre', *Evening News*, 19 January 1955.
19. Michael Billington, 'King of tradition', *Guardian*, 12 September 1986.
20. Ibid.
21. ' "Richard II"', *Birmingham Post*, 11 September 1986.
22. Don Chapman, 'Richard revisited by Irons', *Oxford Mail*, 11 September 1986.
23. Martin Hoyle, '*Richard II*: Barbican', *Financial Times*, 7 May 1987.
24. 'Visionary Violence', *London Daily News*, 7 May 1987.
25. Michael Coveney, '*Richard II*: RSC, Stratford', *Financial Times*, 12 September 1986.
26. Eric Sams, 'Aggro at Agincourt', *TLS*, 24 February - 2 March 1989. The English Shakespeare Company added *Richard II* (first performed on 8 December 1987 at the Theatre Royal, Bath, to *The Henrys* trilogy (first performed in November 1986 at the Theatre Royal, Plymouth) for their version of *The Wars of the Roses*. They staged all seven plays over a single weekend in Tokyo and toured Japan, USA, Hong Kong, Canada, Australia, Germany, Holland and France during their three-year world tour. A version of *The Wars of the Roses* was televised at Swansea in 1989 and released on video cassette by ITEL as a Portman Classic Production. See also Michael Manheim, 'The English History Play on Screen' in *Shakespeare and the Moving Image*, pp.121-145.
27. Ibid.

28. Ibid. The director, Michael Bogdanov commented: 'The Regency Style, Beau Brummell dandyism, suited our purposes; a profligate, dilettante Richard. I suspect that were we to embark on a one-off production of the play this is not the period we would ideally choose [...] Michael and I decided that we wanted Richard surrounded by music and artists, a contrast to the puritan austerity of Bolingbroke Rule. (1960s to 1980s?) It would be colourful before turning dark and Victorian' See Michael Bogdanov and Michael Pennington, *The English Shakespeare Company: The Story of 'The Wars of The Roses' 1986-1989* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1990) p. 107. Bogdanov argued that an 'eclectic theatre of expediency' was practised by the Elizabethans: 'We would free our, and the audiences' imaginations by allowing an eclectic mix of costumes and props, choosing a time and place that was most appropriate for a character or a scene' (*The English Shakespeare Company*, pp.28-9.

29. *TLS*, 24 February 1989. Not all playgoers enjoyed the experience. Bogdanov and Pennington include in their book a copy of a letter of complaint about *Henry V* from Mrs A.N. Butler to her MP, 'I strongly object, personally to any part of my taxes being used to fund such an obscene and degrading performance'. See *The English Shakespeare Company*, pp. 301-3. See also Stanley Wells, 'Shakespeare Performances in London and Stratford-upon-Avon, 1986-7', *Shakespeare Survey 41* (1989), pp.159-162 at page 162: 'As one who prefers classical to popular music, and wine in glasses to beer in bottles (let alone cans), I tend to feel got at by Bogdanov's productions; and I acknowledge, of course, that I may be the kind of person at whom he wishes to get. While I admire his concentration on theatrical values, his determination to illuminate all areas of the text, and his company's intelligent understanding and projection of Shakespeare's language, I am sometimes repelled by reductive over-simplifications and vulgarities'.

30. Heather Neill, 'This England', *TV Times*, March 1988.

31. 'An eloquent glide through history', *Scotsman*, 24 March 1988. John Castle played Bolingbroke, 'the new chief executive' in this production but Michael Cronin subsequently took over the role.

32. *The English Shakespeare Company*, p.107.

33. Ibid., p.107.

34. RSC theatre programme, 'The Life and Death of *Richard II*', 1990-1.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Michael Coveney, 'A rewardingly tricky Dicky', *Observer*, 11 November 1990.

38. Harry Eyres, 'Theatre: *Richard II*', *Times*, 13 September 1991.

39. Michael Billington, 'A mockery King of snow', *Guardian*, 9 November 1990.

40. Michael Billington, 'In the Right Hands', *Country Life*, 22 November 1990.
41. Ibid.
42. Andrew St George, 'Richard II', *Financial Times*, 9 November 1990.
43. Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Across the bias', *TLS*, 16 November 1990.
44. Rex Gibson, 'Bristol in Bucharest', *TES*, 23 November 1990.
45. Ibid.
46. Charles Osborne, 'A Richard to range among the greatest', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 1990.

## 2. ii. "Bifold Authority" in Deborah Warner's *Richard II*

- 1, Maria Jones, "'Bifold Authority" in Deborah Warner's *Richard II*', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 15, 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 28-30.
2. Carol Chillington Rutter, 'Shakespeare Performed. Fiona Shaw's *Richard II* The Girl as Player-King as Comic', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48, 3 (Fall 1997), pp. 314-324, p.323.
3. Robert Weimann, 'Representation and Performance: The Uses of Authority in Shakespeare's Theater', *PMLA* , 107, 3 (May 1992) , pp. 497-510, p.503.
4. Ibid., p.503.
5. Ibid., p.504.
6. Ibid., p.508.
7. Ibid., p.505.
8. Rhoda Koenig, 'The girl who would be King', *Independent*, 5 June 1995., p.22.
9. "'Richard II"', *Time Out*, 7 - 14 1995.
10. John Gross, 'Away with this suck-a-thumb', *Sunday Telegraph* , 11 June 1995.  
Benedict Nightingale, 'A very feminine perspective', *Times*, 5 June 1995.
11. Jack Kroll, 'Her Majesty the King', *Newsweek*, 15 January 1996, p.49.
12. Christian Tyler, 'Why a leading lady wants to play principal boy', *Financial Times* , 9 December 1995.
13. Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests, Cross-dressing and cultural anxiety* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), pp.39-40.
14. Richard Hornby, 'Cross-Gender Casting', *The Hudson Review* (Winter 1996), pp. 641-644, p.641.
15. Michael Coveney, 'When a woman's gotta do what a King's gotta do', *Observer*, 4 June 1995.
16. Paul Taylor, 'Paul Taylor defends Fiona Shaw's *Richard II* from the baying critics', *Independent* , 14 June 1995.
17. John Lahr, 'Blues for his Majesty', *The New Yorker*, 10 July 1995, pp.83-85, p.83.
18. Ibid., p.83.

19. *Financial Times*, 9 December 1995.
20. Irving Wardle, 'The Woman who would be King', *Independent*, 9 June 1995.
21. *The New Yorker*, 10 July 1995.
22. Sheridan Morley, 'Revamping of Shakespeare, 1- 2- 3', *International Herald Tribune*, 7 June 1995.
23. Rutter, p.321.
24. Rupert Christiansen, 'An elegant Parisian coup', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 January 1996.
25. Malcolm Page, *Richard II: Text and Performance* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1987), p.49.
26. Alistair Macaulay, 'Fiona Shaw as Richard II', *Financial Times*, 6 June 1995, p.17.
27. *Independent*, 14 June 1995.
28. See Julia Kristeva, *Séméiotiké: Recherches pour une sémanalyse* (Paris, Seuil, 1969) and *La Révolution du Langage Poétique* (Paris, Seuil, 1974). Kristeva identifies a domain she calls the *semiotic* which is pre-oedipal and precedes the subject's entry into the *symbolic* order, the order of language and culture referred to by Jacques Lacan. See Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection* (1966), translated from the French by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977). The 'Translator's note' on page ix reads: 'According to Lacan, a distinction must be drawn between what belongs in experience to the order of the symbolic and what belongs to the imaginary', where the 'imaginary' is understood to be 'the register, the dimension of images, conscious or unconscious, perceived or imagined' The 'real' emerges as a third term, linked to the symbolic and the imaginary'.
29. *Financial Times*, 9 December 1995.
30. 'The fuel in the crown', *Guardian*, 5 June 1995.
31. Matt Wolf, '“Richard II”', *Variety*, June 12 - 18 1995.
32. *Independent*, 14 June 1995. Of course John Barton's RSC production, 1973-4, stressed the similarities between the two men's positions. Richard Pasco and Ian Richardson played the roles of Richard and Bolingbroke alternately. Stanley Wells described the production as 'in some respects the most strongly interpretative production of a Shakespeare play that I have ever seen' (Stanley Wells, *Royal Shakespeare: Four major productions at Stratford-upon-Avon* (Manchester, 1977), p. 65. Irving Wardle, 'Effective new approach' (*Times*, 12 April 1973) commented: 'This is not a directorial gimmick, but a recognition of the two characters as fatal twins. Utterly opposed in temperament, they are forever bound

together in fortune; each gaining and losing according to what he takes from the other. Shakespeare said it all in the “two buckets” speech.’

33. John Lahr, p. 83 and 85.

34. Claire Armitstead, ‘Kingdom under siege’, *Guardian*, 31 May 1995.

35. John Mullan, ‘Privilege of gender’, *TLS*, 16 June 1995.

36. Maureen Paton, ‘Woman’s touch works wonders’, *Daily Express*, 5 June 1995.

37. Gerald Berkowitz, ‘Shakespeare Abroad: *Richard II*’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 14, 1 (Winter 1996), p9.

38. Peter Holland, *English Shakespeares*, p.251.

39. A. A. Gill, ‘More deadly than the male’, *Sunday Times*, 23 March 1997, pp. II. 2- II.3, p. II.3.

40. Rutter, p.324.

## CHAPTER 6

## EPILOGUE : TOWARDS A POETICS OF PERFORMANCE

Discovering a critical paradigm for performance criticism and theory requires a sufficiently dialectical notion of paradigm and discipline to frame our activities. New paradigms are often ghosted by their history in ways that are difficult to recognise, acknowledge and transform; to understand performance criticism through a simple opposition between text and performance is to remain captive to the spectral disciplines of the past, the disciplines of the text. Both texts and performances are materially unstable registers of signification, producing meaning intertextually in ways that deconstruct notions of intentions, fidelity, authority, presence.

W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (1997)<sup>1</sup>

Worthen's vigorous discussion of Shakespeare and 'authority' caused me to reflect on a first-year undergraduate course that I have divided into two-week slots for each of four plays; in the first week we consider the play as a text and in the second we look at performance issues. The artificial divide is a necessary one if we are to make a distinction between the art work, 'first' work (problematic with Shakespeare) or 'script' (subject to revision), and the history of cultural transmission through performance on stage and screen. There are always a few students who find the divide unbridgeable; students who see their subject as 'literature' have sometimes resented the inclusion of performance issues while students on the theatre studies programme (who also attend some of my sessions) are frustrated by the textual and editing issues. I began to see that the problem exists because the students themselves have placed a *value* on their chosen field of study; for literature students it is the 'art' work that is valued and for the theatre studies students it is 'performative' work over and above a written script. For the literature students 'Shakespeare' is a text written down. For the theatre studies students 'performance' does not have to include Shakespeare. Worthen sees the need to find 'a critical paradigm for performance criticism and theory' The terms 'performance criticism' and 'theory' could relate to any sphere of performative work, for example the female body in

performance art, but I suspect Worthen *means* Shakespeare. My study is properly named *Shakespeare's Dialogic Stage*, not *The Dialogic Stage* (which in theoretical terms would still make sense). Where Worthen refers to 'both texts and performances' as 'materially unstable registers of signification', there is still an assumption that both exist but a performance artist may have no written 'text' at all. The performative work could be the whole 'text' 'Shakespeare' then is implicit, although absent, from the quotation that begins this 'Epilogue' What Shakespeareans (I include myself here) are really talking about when they refer to 'theatre history', 'stage-centred criticism', 'performance history', 'performance criticism' and 'performance scholarship' *is* Shakespeare. 'Performance' as an area of study does not need Shakespeare but the study of Shakespeare needs the history of performance events that revalidates and recirculates Shakespearian textuality. This textuality whether a Home Service broadcast in 1951 or an internet site in 2,001 - is sustained by the value placed on the art work, the text written down. Worthen is right to point out that notions of 'authority' are really in play when Shakespeareans discuss Shakespeare; even those who value '*Alternative Shakespeares*' are only talking about 'alternative' approaches to a valued art work and its re-appropriation.

R. A. Foakes concludes his 'Epilogue' of *Hamlet versus Lear: Cultural Politics and Shakespeare's Art* (1993) with a discussion of *Shakespearean Negotiations*. He reproves Greenblatt's 'preoccupation with particulars, traces, exchanges at the margins of the culture of Elizabethan and Jacobean England', remarking that this method 'becomes a means for exerting critical power over the text and the reader'<sup>2</sup> After paying tribute to a critical impulse that has been 'stimulating and in some ways liberating', Foakes argues that it is time to recover a sense of artistic value and aesthetic appreciation: 'I welcome the challenge to the

critical tradition, but not the abandonment of any real concern with works of literature as art? <sup>3</sup>

Clearly, however, in their discussion of Shakespeare and ‘iteration’, Greenblatt and Derrida *are* talking about art. Derrida writes:

I would very much like to read and write in the space or heritage of Shakespeare, in relation to whom I have infinite admiration and gratitude; I would like to become (alas, it’s pretty late) a “Shakespeare expert”; I know that everything is in Shakespeare. <sup>4</sup>

Greenblatt also admires the aesthetic object, the work of art:

If one longs, as I do, to reconstruct these negotiations, one dreams of finding an originary moment, a moment in which the master hand shapes the concentrated social energy into the sublime aesthetic object. <sup>5</sup>

Even in the act of denying the possibility of such a ‘dream’, Greenblatt instils his methodology with a sense of loss equivalent to the loss felt by the Romantic poets in the sublimest moment of creativity:

But the quest is fruitless, for there is no originary moment, no pure act of untrammelled [sic] creation. In place of a blazing genesis, one begins to glimpse something that seems at first far less spectacular: a subtle, elusive set of exchanges, a network of trades and trade-offs, a jostling of competing representations, a negotiation between joint-stock companies. <sup>6</sup>

Greenblatt and Derrida are wrestling with a very old question: What is the relationship between life and art? The fact that it is an old question does not diminish its importance. Having rejected the liberal humanist proposition that art might teach us about life (a politically unsafe notion though possibly true ) materialist critics (like myself) appear to have become

attached to a related one, ‘How do you find the ‘life’ in the art?’ (the point being that these questions are *still* related). However, as Greenblatt suggests in *Representing the English Renaissance* (1988), ‘the work of art is not the passive surface on which [...] historical experience leaves its stamp’; rather, history is to be understood as ‘enabling condition’ of the art work.<sup>7</sup>

In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, Greenblatt argued, ‘the literary text remains the central object of my attention.’<sup>8</sup> However the ‘literary text’ was no longer solely the artistic fruit of the author who crafted the work as it was for Aristotle in his *Poetics*. Aristotle outlined a method for understanding the structure of literary texts through a classification of parts, for example the parts of tragedy: Aristotle classified these as ‘plot, characters, diction, reasoning, spectacle and song’<sup>9</sup> Greenblatt sought ‘the social presence of the world in the literary text’ through an understanding of ‘systems of public signification’<sup>10</sup> Thus Greenblatt’s definition of ‘poetics’ has more affinity with Jonathan Culler’s *Structuralist Poetics* (1975) than with Aristotle’s *Poetics* :

The real object of poetics is not the work itself but its intelligibility. One must attempt to explain how it is that works can be understood; the implicit knowledge, the conventions that enable readers to make sense of them, must be formulated.<sup>11</sup>

Greenblatt utilised Gilbert Ryle’s idea of “thick description” to explain ‘a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures’ in a given culture’<sup>12</sup> However, he connected his ‘study of the collective making of distinct cultural practices’ to his ‘specific interest in Renaissance modes of *aesthetic* [my italics] empowerment’<sup>13</sup> In his earlier essay, ‘Towards a Poetics of Culture’, Greenblatt emphasised the importance of understanding the work of art as ‘the

product of a negotiation' in a process involving 'not simply appropriation but exchange, since the existence of art always implies a return, a return normally measured in pleasure and interest'<sup>14</sup> Greenblatt revisits this idea in *Learning To Curse* (1990), noting a tendency to 'ignore the analysis of pleasure', which 'is located in an intermediate zone of social transaction, a betwixt and between'<sup>15</sup>

*A poetics of performance* stands at the conflux of competing definitions of '*poetics*'; it is a '*poetics*' that seeks to map and to classify structuring interpretative patterns of performance events (referred to by Hodgdon as 'performance texts') but it is also a '*poetics*' of cultural contingency. Interpretative patterns are not viewed as inherent to the art work but contingent upon cultural transactions. I have tried to show how a materialist critic might, at the point of reception, enquire into the structuring historical contingency within which a play was made, was subsequently produced as a printed text, and was published and circulated in the world as an art work, a literary text written down. I have been mindful of the risk of using the Renaissance locus as another ideal 'para-text' to ghost the meaning of the plays because trying to reconstruct a cultural situation has the same related methodological problems as trying to reconstruct the exact conditions of an Elizabethan playhouse: the new construction is never free of its own time. Then why should it be?

The Renaissance *locus* continues to generate 'forensic' enquiry. The enquiries I have pursued may be judged by the questions they prompt about the performed events that recirculate Shakespearian textuality. For example, how far can the 'consent' issue in *The Taming of the Shrew* have currency with new audiences? To what extent does a sense of the actor's authority disturb playgoers' engagement with a performance event? What can that disturbance tell us about the terms of the engagement? Anthony Dawson has pointed out

that there are critical insights available to readers that simply cannot be played.<sup>16</sup> It is also true that an understanding of aesthetic pleasure is not sufficiently theorised in Greenblatt's idea of 'social transaction'. However, although it may be appealing to view performance criticism as a cloud hanging over the actor who must be rescued for the sake of artistic freedom and playgoers' pleasure, in practice actors' performative work is not produced in a vacuum. Susan Bennett suggests in *Performing Nostalgia* (1996) that work needs to be done 'to understand better the implications of traditional actor training for the limits of representation that can be witnessed on contemporary stages'<sup>17</sup>

Shakespeare's dialogic stage is the field of textuality within which performance has stored for us a tangible memory of circulation: this is Shakespearian theatre history, which has been preserved in archives because of the value placed on it by *Shakespearian* performance scholars. The stage/page debate is currently being viewed as an obstacle to an understanding of Shakespearian textuality as a whole and performative activity in itself. Yet, the page/stage debate exists because of the anomaly that performative work does not need the validation of a page but that Shakespearian performance scholarship has placed its hand upon the literary art work and has decided that it does. I would argue that a postmodern erosion of distinctions between 'high' and 'low' culture has worked to free Shakespearian texts from a real or imagined ownership by a literary academy, making them not necessarily less valued but more *visible* as texts circulating and *chosen* for appropriation and exchange.<sup>18</sup> This in turn renders Shakespearian performance scholarship more visible as a not disinterested practice. It is possible that the pressure of visibility prompted Anthony B. Dawson's exasperation in 'The Impasse over the Stage' (1991) 'Finally, theory and theater have very little to say to each other, much as performance critics want to rescue, and new historicists to recruit,

performance for criticism’<sup>19</sup> Fear of ‘recruitment’ masks a desire to see performative work as the last bastion of a ‘free’ Shakespeare. However, liberal humanists have for centuries invisibly ‘recruited’ performance for criticism. Samuel Johnson, who praised Shakespeare’s ‘characters’ as ‘the genuine progeny of common humanity’ averred that the blinding of Gloucester in *King Lear* was ‘an act too horrid to be endured in dramatic exhibition’ (though, indeed the ‘act’ can be played).<sup>20</sup> Currently Shakespearian performance scholarship, visible as a practice working on its own terms, has integrated cultural materialist practice and is rather self-conscious about it, but it is in the hands of the materialist scholars that performance history as a specific field of Shakespearian textuality is likely to be preserved.

**REFERENCES: CHAPTER 6****EPILOGUE: TOWARDS A POETICS OF PERFORMANCE**

1. Worthen, pp. 189-190.
2. R. A. Foakes, *Hamlet versus Lear: Cultural Politics and Shakespeare's Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.223.
3. *Ibid.*, p.220.
4. *Acts of Literature*, p.67.
5. *Shakespearean Negotiations*, p. 7.
6. *Ibid.*, p.7.
7. Stephen Greenblatt (ed.), *Representing the Renaissance* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1988) , p. viii.
8. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 5.
9. *Aristotle: Poetics I with the Tractatus Coislinianus. A Hypothetical Reconstruction of Poetics II. The Fragments of the On Poets*, translated with notes by Richard Janko (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1987), p.8.
10. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 5.
11. Raman Selden and Peter Widdowson, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. Third Edition (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p.118. Culler refers to structuralist poetics as 'the theory of the practice of reading... To read is to participate in the play of the text, to locate zones of resistance and transparency' See Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p.259. Culler's reference to 'zones' is taken up by Greenblatt who refers to 'borders' and 'zones' as sites of meaning 'at the margins of the text' (see *Shakespearean Negotiations*, p.4 and p.7.
12. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Hutchinson, 1975), p.7.
13. *Shakespearean Negotiations*, p.5.
14. Greenblatt, 'Towards a Poetics of Culture', in H. Aram Veesser (ed.), *The New Historicism*, pp. 1-14, p.12.
15. Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990, p.9 and p.11.

16. Dawson, 'The Impasse over the Stage', p.324.
17. Susan Bennett, *Performing Nostalgia: Shifting Shakespeare and the Contemporary Past* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 153.
18. See Frederic Jameson, 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society' in Hal Foster (ed.), *Postmodern Culture* (London and Sydney: Pluto Press, 1985), pp.111-125 at page 112 who refers to a feature of a list of 'postmodernisms' as 'most notably the erosion of the older distinction between high culture and so-called mass or popular culture. This is perhaps the most distressing development of all from an academic standpoint, which has traditionally had a vested interest in preserving a realm of high or elite culture...'
19. Dawson, 'The Impasse over the Stage', p.326.
20. H. R. Woudhuysen (ed.), *Samuel Johnson on Shakespeare* (London: Penguin Books, 1989), p.122 and p.222.

(i)  
APPENDIX 1

CAST LISTS OF THEATRE PRODUCTIONS ARRANGED BY PLAY  
CHRONOLOGICALLY

(Preferred spellings in theatre programmes and theatre cast lists are retained  
Cast changes made during the run are indicated with an asterisk, ‘\*’)

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

**W. Bridges-Adams (1928)**

**Designer: W. Bridges-Adams**

**Music: Rosabel Watson**

**Cast**

Baptista	Roy Byford
Vincentio	Olivier Crombie
Lucentio	Eric Maxon
Petruchio	Wilfrid Walter
Gremio	Gordon Bailey
Hortensio	Ernest Hare
Tranio	George Hayes
Biondello	Kenneth Wicksteed
Grumio	Geoffrey Wilkinson
Curtis	Edward Wilkinson
A Pedant	Arthur Chisholm
A Tailor	C. Rivers Gadsby
Katharina	Dorothy Massingham
Bianca	Mary Holder
A Widow	Georgina Wynter

**Michael Bogdanov (1978) Designer: Chris Dyer**

**Music: Tony Haynes**

**Cast**

Haberdasher/ Photographer	Conrad Asquith
Servant	Alan Barker
Baptista	Paul Brooke
Servant	Bill Buffery
Tranio	Ian Charleson
Katharina	Paola Dionisotti
Pedant	Geoffrey Freshwater
Tailor	James Griffin
Biondello	Allan Hendrick
Lucentio	Anthony Higgins
Hortensio	David Lyon

(ii)

**(Bogdanov, 1978)**

Petruchio/Sly	Jonathan Pryce
Vincentio	George Raistrick
Servant	Ian Reddington
Widow, Curtis	Catherine Riding
Grumio	David Suchet
Bianca	Zoe Wanamaker
Servant	Ruby Wax
Gremio	Paul Webster

**Bill Alexander (1992)**

**Designer : Tim Goodchild**

**Music: Michael Tubbs**

**Cast**

Christopher Sly	Maxwell Hutcheon
The Landlord	James Walker
The Landlady	Stephanie Jacob
Lucentio	John McAndrew
Tranio	Richard McCabe
Baptista	Trevor Martin
Katherine	Amanda Harris
Bianca	Rebecca Saire
Gremio	Paul Webster
Hortensio	Graham Turner
Biondello	Andrew Cryer
Petruchio	Anton Lesser
Grumio	Geoffrey Freshwater
A Pedant	James Walker
Vincentio/A Tailor	Claran McIntyre
Rupert Llewellyn	Jack Waters
Lord Simon Lewellyn	Dominic Mafham
The Hon Hugo	
Daley-Young	Dorian MacDonald
Lady Sarah Ormsby	Catherine Mears
Mrs Ruth Banks-Ellis	Emily Watson
The Hon Peter Sinclair	Barnaby Kay

**THE MERCHANT OF VENICE**

**Theodore Komisarjevsky (1932)**

**Designed by: Komisarjevsky and Lesley Blanch**

**Music: Anthony Bernard**

**Cast**

The Duke of Venice	Gerald Kay Souper
The Prince of Morocco	Stanley Howlett
The Prince of Arragon	Eric Maxon
Antonio	Wilfrid Walter

(iii)

**(Komisarjevsky, 1932)**

Bassanio	R. Eric Lee
Gratiano	Gyles Isham
Salanio	Richard Cuthbert
Salarino	Roy Byford
Salerio	Francis Drake
Lorenzo	Ernest Hare
Shylock	Randle Ayrton
Tubal	Kenneth Wicksteed
Launcelot Gobbo	Bruno Barnabe
Old Gobbo	Geoffrey Wilkinson
Balthazar	C. Rivers Gadsby
Stephano	William Monk
Portia	Fabia Drake
Nerissa	Hilda Coxhead
Jessica	Dorothy Francis

**Michael Langham (1960) Designer: Desmond Heeley**

**Music: Cedric Thorpe Davie**

**Cast**

Antonio	Patrick Allen
Salerio	David Sumner
Solanio	David Buck
Lorenzo	Ian Holm
Gratiano	Patrick Wymark
Bassanio	Denholm Elliott
Portia	Dorothy Tutin
Nerissa	Susan Maryott
Shylock	Peter O'Toole
Prince of Morocco	Paul Hardwick
Launcelot Gobbo	Dinsdale Landen
Old Gobbo	Jack MacGowran
Jessica	Frances Cuka
Prince of Arragon	Ian Richardson
His Mother	Maroussia Frank
His Tutor	Julian Battersby
Tubal	Clive Swift
Balthasar	William Wallis
Stephano	Clifford Rose
Leonardo	Don Webster
Antonio's Servant	Roger Bizley
Duke of Venice	Tony Church

(iv)

**Jonathan Miller (1970)**

**Designer: Julia Trevelyan Oman**

**Music: Carl Davis**

**Cast**

The Duke of Venice	Benjamin Whitrow
The Prince of Morocco	Tom Baker/ Stephen Greif*
The Prince of Arragon	Charles Kay
Antonio	Anthony Nicholls
Bassanio	Jeremy Brett/ Frank Barrie*
Solanio	Michael Tudor Barnes
Gratiano	Derek Jacobi/ Ronald Pickup*
Salerio	Richard Kay/ Barry James*
Lorenzo	Malcolm Reid/ Tom Georgeson*
Shylock	Laurence Olivier
Tubal	Lewis Jones/ Alan Dudley*
Launcelot Gobbo	Jim Dale
Old Gobbo	Harry Lomax
Secretary	Michael Edgar
Servant to Antonio	Lawrence Trimble/ David Howley*
Leonardo	Alan Dudley
Balthasar	Michael Harding/ Tom Dickinson*
Stephano	Patrick Carter/ Peter Rocca*
Barber	Paul Vousden/ Lionel Guyett*
Portia	Joan Plowright
Nerissa	Anna Carteret
Jessica	Jane Lapotaire/ Louise Purnell*
Singers	Laura Sarti
Officers, servants, etc	Clare Walmesley

1970: Hugh Armstrong, Kate Coleridge, Michael Edgar, Sean Roantree, Lawrence Trimble, Paul Vousden. 1971: Lionel Guyett, David Howey, Jo Maxwell- Muller, Howard Southern, Harry Waters, Judy Wilson

**John Caird (1984) Designer: Ultz**

**Music: Ilona Sekacz**

**Cast**

The Duke of Venice	Richard Easton
Antonio	Christopher Ravenscroft
Salerio	Jim Hooper
Solanio	Ian Mackenzie
Bassanio	Adam Bareham
Gratiano	James Simmons
Lorenzo	Simon Templeman
Servants to Bassanio	Andy Readman
	Jonathan Scott-Taylor

(v)

**(Caird, 1984)**

Shylock	Ian McDiarmid
Jessica	Amanda Root
Tubal	Sebastian Shaw
Launcelot Gobbo	Brian Parr
Old Gobbo	John Rogan
Gaoler	Andy Readman
Clerk of the Court	Jonathan Scott-Taylor
Ghost of Portia's father	Richard Easton
Portia	Frances Tomelty
Nerissa	Josette Simon
Balthasar	Stephen Simms
Stephano	David Phelan
The Prince of Morocco	Hepburn Graham
The Prince of Arragon	Martin Jacobs

**Bill Alexander (1987)**

**Music: Guy Woolfenden**

**Cast**

Antonio	John Carlisle
Salerio	Michael Cadman
Solanio	Gregory Doran
Lorenzo	Paul Spence
Gratiano	Geoffrey Freshwater
Bassanio	Nicholas Farrell
Shylock	Antony Sher
Jessica	Deborah Goodman
Tubal	Bill McGuirk
Launcelot Gobbo	Phil Daniels
Old Gobbo	Arnold Yarrow
Leonardo/ Gaoler	David Pullan
Duke of Venice	Richard Conway
Officer of the Court	Akim Mogaji
Citizens of Venice	Henrietta Bess
	Susan Harper-Browne
	Kate Littlewood
Portia	Deborah Findlay
Nerissa	Pippa Guard
Balthasar	Akim Mogaji
Stephano	Laban Leake
Prince of Morocco	Hakeem Kae-Kazim
Prince of Arragon	Richard Conway

(vi)

**David Thacker (1993)**  
**Music: Gary Yershon**

**Designer: Shelagh Keegan**

**Cast**

Antonio  
Solanio  
Salerio  
Bassanio  
Lorenzo  
Gratiano  
Shylock  
Launcelot Gobbo  
Old Gobbo  
Jessica  
Tubal  
Duke of Venice  
Court Officer  
Officers  
  
Barman  
Bassanio's PA  
Portia  
Nerissa  
Balthazar  
Prince of Morocco  
Prince of Arragon  
Singer

Clifford Rose  
Tim Hudson  
Richard Clothier  
Owen Teale  
Mark Lewis Jones  
Mark Lockyer  
David Calder  
Christopher Luscombe  
Raymond Bowers  
Kate Duchene  
Nick Simons  
Christopher Robbie  
Stuart Bunce  
Christopher Colquhoun  
Daniel York  
Daniel York  
Johanna Benyon  
Penny Downie  
Debra Gillett  
David Weston  
Ray Fearon  
Robert Portal  
Tania Levey

**HAMLET**

**Peter Hall (1965)**  
**Music: Guy Woolfenden**

**Designer: John Bury**

**Cast**

Francisco  
Barnardo  
Marcellus  
Horatio  
Ghost  
Hamlet  
Claudius  
Gertrude  
Voltemand  
Cornelius  
Polonius  
Laertes  
Ophelia

Alan Tucker  
Peter Geddis  
Jeffery Dench  
Donald Burton  
Patrick Magee  
David Warner  
Brewster Mason  
Elizabeth Spriggs  
David Waller  
Murray Brown  
Tony Church  
Charles Thomas  
Glenda Jackson

**(Hall, 1965)**

Rosencrantz	Michael Williams
Guildenstern	James Laurenson
Reynaldo	Tim Wylton
First Player/Player King	William Squire
Player Queen	Charles Kay
Lucianus	Stanley Lebor
Prologue	Tim Wylton
Servant to the King	Murray Brown
Fortinbras	Michael Pennington
Captain	John Corvin
First Messenger	Robert Walker
Sailor	Ted Valentine
Second Messenger	Bruce Condell
First Gravedigger	David Waller
Second Gravedigger	Robert Lloyd
Priest	Marshall Jones
Osric	Charles Kay
Ambassador	Jeffery Dench

Councillors, servants, soldiers: Lauri Asprey, Ann Curthoys, Roger Jones, Paul Starr, Katharine Barker, Frances de la Tour, David Jaxon, Madoline Thomas, John Bell, William Dysart, David Kane, Robert Walker, Pamela Buchner, Robert Grange, Cliff Norgate, John Watts, Robin Culver, Terence Greenidge, Tina Packer

**Tony Richardson (1969)**

**Designer: Jocelyn Herbert**

**Music: Patrick Gowers**

**Cast**

Francisco	Robin Chadwick
Barnardo	John Trenaman
Horatio	Gordon Jackson
Marcellus	John J. Carney
Claudius	Anthony Hopkins
Gertrude	Judy Parfitt
Polonius	Mark Dignam
Laertes	Michael Pennington
Hamlet	Nicol Williamson
Ophelia	Marianne Faithfull
Reynaldo	Roger Lloyd Pack
Rosencrantz	Ben Aris
Guildenstern	Clive Graham
First Player	Roger Livesay
Player Queen	Richard Everett
Player King	John J. Carney
A captain	John Railton
Messenger	Mark Griffith

(viii)

**(Richardson, 1969)**

First sailor  
Gravedigger  
A priest  
Osric  
Courtiers, soldiers,  
players

Michael Elphick  
Roger Livesay  
Ian Collier  
Peter Gale

Robin Chadwick, Ian Collier, Michael Elphick, Richard Everett,  
Mark Griffith, Anjelica Huston, Bill Jarvis, Roger Lloyd Pack,  
John Railton, John Trenaman, Jennifer Tudor

**Adrian Noble (1992)**

**Music: Guy Woolfenden**

**Cast**

Bernardo  
Francisco  
Marcellus  
Horatio  
Ghost  
Claudius  
Gertrude  
Hamlet  
Cornelius  
Voltemand  
Polonius  
Laertes  
Ophelia  
Reynaldo  
Rosencrantz  
Guildenstern  
Player King  
Player Queen  
Lucianus  
Players  
  
Fortinbras  
Captain  
Gentlewoman  
Messenger  
First Gravedigger  
Second Gravedigger  
Priest  
Osric  
English Ambassador

**Designer: Bob Crowley**

Anthony Douse  
David Birrell  
Tim Hudson  
Rob Edwards  
Clifford Rose  
John Shrapnel  
Jane Lapotaire  
Kenneth Branagh  
Richard Clothier  
Peter Bygott  
David Bradley  
Richard Bonneville  
Joanne Pearce  
Ian Hughes  
Michael Gould  
Angus Wright  
Jonathan Newth  
Sian Radinger  
David Birrell  
Howard Crossley  
Tim Hudson  
Kenn Sabberton  
Virginia Denham  
Ian Hughes  
Kenn Sabberton  
Virginia Denham  
Kenn Sabberton  
Richard Moore  
Howard Crossley  
Anthony Douse  
Guy Henry  
Nick Simons

**RICHARD II****John Gielgud (1937)****Cast**

King Richard II	John Gielgud
John of Gaunt	Leon Quartermaine
Henry Bolingbroke	Michael Redgrave
Duchess of Gloucester	Dorothy Green
Duke of Surrey, Lord Marshall, Captain of a Band of Welshmen	Anthony Quayle
Thomas Mowbray, Sir Stephen Scroop	Glen Byam Shaw
Duke of Aumerle, Groom of the stable	Alec Guinness
Herald to Bolingbroke, Servant to York	Denis Carew
Green, Servant to Exton	Dennis Price
Bushey, Sir Pierce of Exton, Lord Fitzwater	Harry Andrews
Edmund of Langley, Duke of York	George Howe
Queen to King Richard	Peggy Ashcroft
Earl of Northumberland	Frederick Lloyd
Lord Ross	
Earl of Salisbury, Gaoler	Ernest Hare
Lord Willoughby, Under- gardener	Hereward Russell
Bagot	Pardoe Woodman
Henry Percy	John Ford
Lord Berkeley	Alastair Bannerman
Bishop of Carlisle	Harcourt Williams
Lady attending on the Queen	Merula Salaman
Another Lady	Genevieve Jessel
Gardener	George Devine
Under-gardener	Peter Whitehead
Duchess of York	Barbara Dillon

**Anthony Quayle (1951)****Designer: Tanya Moiseiwitsch****Music: Leslie Bridgewater****Cast**

King Richard	Michael Redgrave
John of Gaunt	Hugh Griffith

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**(Quayle, 1951)**

Henry Bolingbroke	Harry Andrews
Thomas Mowbray	William Fox
Duchess of Gloucester	Rosalind Atkinson
Duke of Surrey	Jack Gwillim
Duke of Aumerle	Basil Hoskins
Herald to Bolingbroke	Leo Ciceri
Herald to Mowbray	Ronald Hines
Sir Henry Green	Michael Meacham
Sir John Bushy	Richard Wordsworth
Sir William Bagot	Peter Jackson
Edmund Langley, Duke of York	Michael Gwynn
Queen to King Richard	Heather Stannard
Earl of Northumberland	Alexander Gauge
Lord Ross	Philip Morant
Lord Willoughby	Michael Bates
Servant to York	Geoffrey Bayldon
Henry Percy, Hotspur	Robert Hardy
Lord Berkeley	Brendon Barry
Earl of Salisbury	Peter Norris
Captain of a Band of Welshmen	Raymond Westwell
Bishop of Carlisle	Duncan Lamont
Sir Stephen Scroop	Peter Williams
Ladies attending the Queen	Marjorie Steel
	Rachel Roberts
	Hazel Penwarden
First Gardener	Godfrey Bond
Second Gardener	Edward Atienza
Lord Fitzwater	Peter Halliday
Abbot of Westminster	Peter Henchie
Duchess of York	Joan Macarthur
Sir Pierce of Exton	William Squire
Groom	John Gay
Keeper	Reginald Marsh
Lords, soldiers and attendants:	Michael Ferrey, Keith Faulkner, Ian Bannen, John Foster, Timothy Harley, Ralph Hallet, Michael Hayes, James Moss, David Orr, Clifford Parrish, Alan Townsend, Kenneth Wynne

**Joan Littlewood (1955)**

**Designer: John Bury**

**Cast:**

King Richard II	Harry Corbett
John of Gaunt	Howard Goorney

**(Littlewood, 1951)**

Duke of York	Joby Blanshard
Henry Bolingbroke	George Cooper
Aumerle	Gerard Dynevor
Thomas Mowbray	George Luscombe
Lord Berkeley	Maxwell Shaw
Bushy	George Luscombe
Bagot	Maxwell Shaw
Green	David Ludman
Earl of Northumberland	Gerry Raffles
Lord Ross	Barry Clayton
Lord Willoughby	Israel Price
Bishop of Carlisle	Barry Clayton
Welsh Captain	Gerard Dynevor
Sir Stephen Scroop	Howard Goorney
Queen to King Richard	Barbara Brown
Duchess of Gloucester	Joan Littlewood
Old Gardener	Howard Goorney
Young Gardener	David Ludman
Herald	Deirdre Ellis
Sir Pierce of Exton	Howard Goorney

**Michael Benthall (1955)****Designer: Leslie Hurry****Music: Christopher Whelen****Cast**

King Richard	John Neville
John of Gaunt	Meredith Edwards
Henry Bolingbroke	Eric Porter
Thomas Mowbray	Robert Hardy
Duchess of Gloucester	Mary Hignett
Lord Marshal	Charles Gray
Duke of Aumerle	Anthony White
Herald to Bolingbroke	Robin Barbary
Herald to Mowbray	Arthur Blake
Green	Murray Hayne
Bushy	John Wood
Bagot	Nicholas Amer
Duke of York	Michael Bates
Queen to King Richard	Virginia McKenna
Earl of Northumberland	Laurence Hardy
Lord Ross	Ronald Fraser
Lord Willoughby	Geoffrey Chater
Servant to the Duke of York	Brian Rawlinson
Henry Percy	Alan Dobie
Lord Berkeley	Christopher Burgess

**(Benthall, 1955)**

Captain of a band of Welshmen	Raymond Llewellyn
Earl of Salisbury	John Woodvine
Bishop of Carlisle	John Wood
Sir Stephen Scroop	Donald Moffat
Ladies attending the Queen	Jane Jacobs, Anne Robson, Loretta Davett
Gardeners	Job Stewart, Aubrey Morris
Sir Pierce of Exton	John Wood
Servant to Exton	Kerrigan Prescott
Groom of the King's stable	Clifford Williams
Keeper of the Prison	Robert Gillespie
Soldiers, Commons, Officers, Attendants	Nicholas Amer, Arthur Blake, Robert Gillespie, Raymond Llewellyn, Aubrey Morris, Brian Rawlinson, Clifford Williams, Robin Barbary, Christopher Burgess, Murray Hayne, Donald Moffat, Kerrigan Prescott, Job Stewart, John Woodvine

**Peter Hall, John Barton and Clifford Williams (1964)**

**Designer: John Bury**

**Music: Guy Woolfenden**

**Cast**

King Richard	David Warner
John of Gaunt	Roy Dotrice
Henry Bolingbroke	Eric Porter
Thomas Mowbray	William Squire
Duchess of Gloucester	Madoline Thomas
Sir Walter Blunt	Maurice Jones
Duke of Aumerle	Charles Thomas
Duke of Exeter	Donald Burton
Herald to Bolingbroke	Anthony Boden
Herald to Mowbray	Henry Knowles
Sir Henry Green	Jeffery Dench
Sir John Bushy	David Hargreaves
Sir William Bagot	Derek Waring
Edmund Langley, Duke of York	Paul Hardwick
Queen to King Richard	Deborah Stanford
Earl of Northumberland	David Waller
Henry Percy, Hotspur	Roy Dotrice
Lord Willoughby	John Corvin
Earl of Salisbury	Michael Rose
Captain of a Band of Welshmen	Gareth Morgan
Bishop of Carlisle	Clive Morton

**(Hall, Barton, Williams, 1964)**

Richard Scroop	Jeffery Dench
First Lady in Waiting	Katharine Barker
Second Lady in Waiting	Michele Dotrice
First Gardener	Malcolm Webster
Second Gardener	Tim Wylton
Duchess of York	Patience Collier
Sir Pierce of Exton	Philip Brack
Groom	Peter Geddis
Keeper	Ted Valentine

**Barry Kyle (1986)****Music: Stephen Oliver****Designer: William Dudley****Cast:**

King Richard II	Jeremy Irons
John of Gaunt	Brewster Mason
Henry Bolingbroke	Michael Kitchen
Thomas Mowbray	Richard Moore
Duchess of Gloucester	Eileen Page
Lord Marshal	Roger Watkins
Duke of Aumerle	Paul Venables
Sir Henry Bushy	Raymond Bowers
Sir William Bagot	Malcolm Hassall
Sir Henry Green	Robert Morgan
Sir Stephen Scroop	David Glover
Duke of York	Bernard Horsfall
Queen Isabel	Imogen Stubbs
Earl of Northumberland	Richard Easton
York's servant	Mark Lindley
Harry Percy, Hotspur	Nathaniel Parker
Lord Ross	Stanley Dawson
Lord Willoughby	Stan Pretty
Earl of Salisbury	Dennis Edwards
Welsh Captain	Roger Watkins
Bishop of Carlisle	Robert Demeger
Ladies	Jane Lancaster
	Eileen Page
Gardener	Raymond Bowers
Gardener's Man	John Patrick
Lord Fitzwater	Christopher Ashley
Duke of Surrey	Sean O'Callaghan
Abbot of Westminster	David Glover
Duchess of York	Rosalind Boxall
Sir Piers of Exton	John Patrick
Groom	Roger Moss

**(Kyle, 1986)**

Keeper at Pomfret Castle  
Murderers

Robert Morgan  
Mark Lindley  
Sean O'Callaghan

**Michael Bogdanov (1987)**

**Designer: Chris Dyer**

**Music: Terry Mortimer**

**Cast**

King Richard II	Michael Pennington
Queen Isabel	Eluned Hawkins/Francesca Ryan*
John of Gaunt	Clyde Pollitt
Henry Bolingbroke	John Castle/Michael Cronin*
Duke of York	Colin Farrell
Duchess of York	Lynette Davies/Ann Penfold*
Duke of Aumerle	Philip Bowen
Thomas Mowbray	Michael Cronin/Jack Carr*
Duchess of Gloucester	June Watson
Duke of Exeter	Ian Burford
Earl of Northumberland	Roger Booth
Hotspur	Chris Hunter/Andrew Jarvis*
Earl of Salisbury	Ian Burford
Lord Ross	John Dougall
Lord Willoughby	Charles Dale
Lord Berkeley	Stephen Jameson
Earl of Westmoreland	Ben Bazell
Bishop of Carlisle	Hugh Sullivan
Sir John Bushy	Sion Probert
Sir John Bagot	Paul Brennen
Sir Henry Greene	Michael Fenner
Sir Stephen Scroop	John Darrell
Sir Piers of Exton	Andrew Jarvis/Jack Carr*
Servants to Exton:	Simon Elliott
	Stephen Jameson
Welsh Captain	Barry Stanton
First Herald	Andrew Jarvis
Second Herald	John Darrell
First Gardener	Michael Cronin/Stephen Jameson*
Second Gardener	John Tramper
Third Gardener	Philip Rees
Lady	Mary Rutherford/Jenifer Konko*
Servingman	Stephen Jameson/Philip Rees*
Groom	Clyde Pollitt
Keeper	John Tramper

**Ron Daniels (1990)**  
**Music: Orlando Gough**

**Designer: Antony McDonald**

**Cast**

Richard	Alex Jennings
John of Gaunt	Alan MacNaughtan
Henry Bullingbrook	Anton Lesser
Thomas Mowbray	Mike Dowling
Edmund of Langley, Duke of York	David Waller
The Duchess of Gloucester	Margaret Robertson
A Sister of Mercy	Penny Jones
Thomas, Duke of Surrey	Michael Bott
Edward, Duke of Aumerle	Linus Roache
The First Herald	Jamie Hinde
The Second Herald	Callum Dixon
Sir Henry Green	Vincent Regan
Sir William Bagot	Andrew Havill
Sir John Bushy	Dominic Mafham
Isabella, the Queen	Yolanda Vazquez
The First Lady-in-Waiting	Lucy Slater
The Second Lady-in-Waiting	Rowena King
Henry, Earl of Northumberland	Paul Jesson
Lord Ross	Alec Linstead
Lord Willoughby	Richard Avery
York's Serving Man	Shura Greenberg
Harry Percy	George Anton
The Lord of Berkeley	Bill McGuirk
A Welsh Captain	John Hodgkinson
Bishop of Carlisle	John Bott
Sir Stephen Scroope	Bernard Wright
Gardener	Alec Linstead
His Man	Jamie Hinde
A Boy	Callum Dixon
Lord Fitzwater	Dominic Mafham
Sir Piers Exton	Vincent Regan
His Man	John Hodgkinson
Abbot of Westminster	Richard Avery
Duchess of York	Marjorie Yates
Groom	Callum Dixon
Keeper	Ross Harvey

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**Deborah Warner (1995)**

**Designer: Hildegard Bechtler**

**Music: Arturo Anneschino**

**Cast**

Richard II	Fiona Shaw
John of Gaunt	Graham Crowden
Henry Bolingbroke	David Threlfall
Thomas Mowbray	David Lyon
Duchess of Gloucester	Paola Dionisotti
Lord Marshal	John Rogan
Edward, Duke of Aumerle	Julian Rhind-Tutt
First Herald	Jonathan Slinger
Second Herald	Jem Wall
Sir Henry Green	Henry Ian Cusick
Sir John Bushy	Nicholas Gecks
Edmund Langley, Duke of York	Michael Bryant
Queen Isabel	Brana Bajic/ Sian Thomas*
Earl of Northumberland	Struan Rodger
Lord Ross	Richard Bremmer
Lord Willoughby	John McEnery
Duke of York's Serving Man	Jem Wall
Sir William Bagot	Danny Sapani
Harry Percy	Jonathan Slinger
Sir Stephen Scroop	Jude Akuwudike
A Welsh Captain	Danny Sapani
Earl of Salisbury	David Lyon
Bishop of Carlisle	John Rogan
First Lady	Paola Dionisotti
Second Lady	Elaine Claxton
Head Gardener	John McEnery
First Gardener's Man	Henry Ian Cusick
Second Gardener's Man	Jem Wall
Lord Fitzwater	Jude Akuwudike
Thomas, Duke of Surrey	Nicholas Gecks
Abbot of Westminster	Richard Bremmer
Duchess of York	Paola Dionisotti
Sir Piers of Exton	Richard Bremmer
Exton's Man	Henry Ian Cusick
Keeper	John McEnery

(i)  
APPENDIX 2

FILMOGRAPHY ARRANGED BY PLAY CHRONOLOGICALLY

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

**Director:** Sam Taylor, 1929  
**Production Company:** Pickford Corporation/Elton Corporation

**Cast**

Katharina	Mary Pickford
Petruchio	Douglas Fairbanks
Baptista	Edwin Maxwell
Gremio	Joseph Cawthorn
Grumio	Clyde Cook
Hortensio	Geoffrey Wardwell
Bianca	Dorothy Jordan

**Director:** Franco Zeffirelli, 1966  
**Production Company:** Royal Films International/Films Artistici Internazionali

**Cast**

Katharina	Elizabeth Taylor
Petruchio	Richard Burton
Baptista	Michael Hordern
Grumio	Cyril Cusack
Lucentio	Michael York
Tranio	Alfred Lynch
Bianca	Natasha Pyne
Gremio	Alan Webb
Hortensio	Victor Spinetti
Vincenzio	Mark Dignam
Priest	Giancarlo Cobelli
Pedant	Vernon Dobtcheff
Biondello	Roy Holder
Curtis	Gianni Magni
Nathaniel	Alberto Bonucci
Gregory	Lino Capolicchio
Philip	Roberto Antonelli
Haberdasher	Anthony Garner
Tailor	Ken Parry
Widow	Bice Valori

**Director:** Jonathan Miller, 1980  
**Production Company:** BBC/Time-Life Films

**Cast**

Katharina	Sarah Badel
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(ii)

**(J. Miller, 1980)**

Petruchio	John Cleese
Lucentio	Simon Chandler
Tranio	Anthony Pedler
Baptista	John Franklyn-Robbins
Gremio	Frank Thornton
Hortensio	Jonathan Cecil
Bianca	Susan Penhaligon
Biondello	Harry Waters
Grumio	David Kincaid
Baptista's servant	Bev Willis
Curtis	Angus Lennie
Nathaniel	Harry Webster
Philip	Gil Morris
Gregory	Leslie Sarony
Nicholas	Derek Deadman
Peter	Denis Gilmore
Pedant	John Bird
Tailor	Alan Hay
Haberdasher	David Kinsey
Vincentio	John Barron
Widow	Joan Hickson

## THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

**Director:**

**Jonathan Miller and John Sichel, 1973**

**Production company:**

**ATV/ ITC**

**Cast**

[See also 'Cast Lists of Theatre Productions' (1970)]

Shylock	Laurence Olivier
Portia	Joan Plowright
Gratiano	Michael Jayston
Nerissa	Anna Carteret
Salerio	Barry James
Antonio	Anthony Nicholls
Lorenzo	Malcolm Reid
Prince of Arragon	Charles Kay
Prince of Morocco	Stephen Greif
Tubal	Kenneth Mackintosh
Solanio	Michael Tudor Barnes
Gobbo	Denis Lawson
Stephano	Peter Rocca
Balthazar	John Joyce
Singers	Clare Walmesley
	Laura Sarti

(iii)

HAMLET

<b>Director:</b>	<b>Laurence Olivier, 1948</b>
<b>Production company:</b>	<b>Two Cities</b>
<b>Cast</b>	
Hamlet	Laurence Olivier
Gertrude	Eileen Herlie
Claudius	Basil Sydney
Ophelia	Jean Simmons
Horatio	Normand Wooland
Polonius	Felix Aylmer
Laertes	Terence Morgan
Gravedigger	Stanley Holloway
Francisco	John Laurie
Bernardo	Esmond Knight
Marcellus	Anthony Quayle
Captain	Niall McGinnis
Chief Player	Harcourt Williams
Osric	Peter Cushing
Priest	Russell Thorndike
Player King	Patrick Troughton
Player Queen	Tony Tarver

<b>Director:</b>	<b>Grigori Kozintsev, 1964</b>
<b>Production company:</b>	<b>Lenfilm</b>
<b>Cast</b>	
Hamlet	Innokenti Smoktunovsky
Claudius	Michail Nazwanov
Gertrude	Elza Radzin-Szolkonis
Polonius	Yuri Tolubeyev
Ophelia	Anastasia Vertinskaya
Horatio	V. Erenberg
Laertes	S. Oleksenko
Guildenstern	V. Medvedev
Rosencrantz	I. Dmitriev
Fortinbras	A. Krevald
Gravedigger	V. Kolpakor
First Actor	A. Chekaerskii
Second Actor	R. Aren
Third Actor	Y. Berkun
Priest	A. Lauter

(iv)

**Director:** Tony Richardson, 1969  
**Production company:** Woodfall Film Productions

**Cast**

(See also 'Cast Lists of Theatre Productions')

Hamlet	Nicol Williamson
Claudius	Anthony Hopkins
Gertrude	Judy Parfitt
Polonius	Mark Dignam
Ophelia	Marianne Faithfull
Laertes	Michael Pennington
Horatio	Gordon Jackson
Rosencrantz	Ben Aris
Guildenstern	Clive Graham
Osric	Peter Gale
Marcellus/Player King	John Carney
Barnardo /Player / Second Sailor	John Trenaman
Franciso/Courtier/Player	Robin Chadwick
Player/ Queen/ Courtier	Richard Everett
Lucianus/Gravedigger	Richard Livesey
First Sailor/Courtier	John Railton
Reynaldo/Courtier	Roger Lloyd-Pack
Captain/Courier	Michael Elphick
Courtier	Bill Jarvis
Priest/ Courtier	Ian Collier
Court Lady	Jennifer Tudor
Court Lady	Anjelica Huston
Messenger/Courtier	Mark Griffith

**Director:** Franco Zeffirelli, 1990  
**Film company:** Carolco

**Cast**

Hamlet	Mel Gibson
Gertrude	Glenn Close
Claudius	Alan Bates
Ghost	Paul Scofield
Polonius	Ian Holm
Ophelia	Helena Bonham-Carter
Horatio	Stephen Dillane
Laertes	Nathaniel Parker
Guildenstern	Sean Murray
Rosencrantz	Michael Maloney
Gravedigger	Trevor Peacock
Osric	John McEnery
Bernardo	Richard Warwick

(v)

**(Zeffirelli, 1990)**

Marcellus	Christien Anholt
Francisco	Dave Duffy
Reynaldo	Vernon Dobtcheff
Player King	Pete Postlethwaite
Player Queen	Christopher Fairbank
The Players	Sarah Phillips, Ned Mendez, Roy York, Marjorie Bell Justin Case, Roger Low, Pamela Sinclair, Baby Simon Sinclair Roy Evans

**RICHARD II**

**Director:** Michael Bogdanov, 1989 with television producer,  
Tim Milsom

**Production company:** The English Shakespeare Company with ITEL  
(International Television Enterprises Ltd)  
Video-cassette production: Portman Classics  
in association with Contracts International and  
Windmill Lane Productions (1990)

**(ESC/ITEL)**

**The Company:**

See 'Cast Lists of Theatre Productions'. The company listed for the ITEL production:  
Michael Pennington, Francesca Ryan, Michael Cronin, Jack Carr, Clyde Pollitt, Colin Farrell,  
Ann Penfold, Philip Bowen, June Watson, Ian Burford, Roger Booth, Andrew Jarvis, John  
Dougall, Charles Dale, Stephen Jameson, Ben Bazell, Hugh Sullivan, Sion Probert, Paul  
Brennan, Michael Fenner, John Darrell, Simon Elliot, Barry Stanton, John Tramper, Philip  
Rees, Jenifer Konka

**Director:** Deborah Warner, 1997

**Producer:** John Wyver

**Production company:** Illuminations for NVC Arts in association  
with BBC Television and La Sept/ARTE

**Cast**

See 'Cast Lists of Theatre Productions'. The cast as listed in the *Radio Times* (22-28 March 1997) was:

Richard II	Fiona Shaw
John of Gaunt	Graham Crowden
Henry Bolingbroke	Richard Bremmer
Thomas Mowbray/Earl of Salisbury	David Lyon

(vi)

**(Warner, 1995)**

Duchess of Gloucester/ First lady/  
Duchess of York  
Lord Marshal/ Bishop of Carlisle  
Edward Duke of Aumerle  
Harry Percy  
Sir John Bushy/Thomas,  
Duke of Surrey  
Edmund of Langley  
Henry, Earl of Northumberland

Paola Dionisotti  
John Rogan  
Julian Rhind-Tutt  
Kevin McKidd  
  
Nicholas Gecks  
Donald Sinden  
Struan Rodger

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