

# SHAKESPEARE AND CANADA

REMEMBRANCE OF OURSELVES



Edited *by*  
Irena R. Makaryk & Kathryn Prince



Shakespeare and Canada:  
“Remembrance of Ourselves”



Edited by  
**Irena R. Makaryk and Kathryn Prince**

Reappraisals: Canadian Writers  
University of Ottawa Press 2017





uOttawa

The University of Ottawa Press gratefully acknowledges the support extended to its publishing list by Heritage Canada through the Canada Book Fund, by the Canada Council for the Arts, by the Ontario Arts Council, and by the University of Ottawa.

Copy editing: Robbie McCaw

Proofreading: Susan James

Typesetting: CS

Cover illustration and design: Bartosz Walczak

### Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Shakespeare and Canada : 'remembrance of ourselves' / edited by Irena R. Makaryk and Kathryn Prince.

(Reappraisals : Canadian writers ; 38)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Issued in print and electronic formats.

ISBN 978-0-7766-2441-9 (softcover).--ISBN 978-0-7766-2442-6 (PDF).--

ISBN 978-0-7766-2443-3 (EPUB).--ISBN 978-0-7766-2444-0 (Kindle)

1. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616--Appreciation--Canada.
2. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616--Stage history--Canada.
3. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616--Adaptations. 4. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616--Criticism and interpretation. I. Makaryk, Irena R. (Irena Rima), 1951-, editor II. Prince, Kathryn, 1973-, editor III. Series: Reappraisals, Canadian writers

PR3109.C3S525 2017

822.3'3

C2017-900724-6

C2017-900725-4

© Irena R. Makaryk and Kathryn Prince, 2017, under Creative Commons License Attribution—Non Commercial Share Alike 4.0 (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Printed in Canada

Canada

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ix
Shakespeare and Canada: “Remembrance of Ourselves” IRENA R. MAKARYK AND KATHRYN PRINCE	1
“Theatre is not a nursing home”: <i>Merchants of Venice</i> of The Stratford Festival C. E. MCGEE	11
Intercultural Performance and The Stratford Festival as Global Tourist Place: Leon Rubin’s <i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i> and <i>Twelfth Night</i> ROBERT ORMSBY	27
Stratford, Shakespeare, and J. D. Barnett IAN RAE	49
Counterfactual History at The Stratford Festival: Timothy Findley’s <i>Elizabeth Rex</i> and Peter Hinton’s <i>The Swanne</i> PETER KULING	71
“Who’s There?”: <i>Slings &amp; Arrows</i> ’ Audience Dynamics KAILIN WRIGHT	79
Race, National Identity, and the Hauntological Ethics of <i>Slings &amp; Arrows</i> DON MOORE	97
Performing “Indigenous Shakespeare” in Canada: <i>The Tempest</i> and <i>The Death of a Chief</i> SARAH MACKENZIE	111
Shakespeare, a Late Bloomer on the Quebec Stage ANNIE BRISSET	127
Mediatic Shakespeare: McLuhan and the Bard RICHARD CAVELL	157
Shakespeare and the “Cultural Lag” of Canadian Stratford in Alice Munro’s “Tricks” TRONI Y. GRANDE	177

Table of Contents

Beyond (or Beneath) the Folio: Neil Freeman's Shakespearean Acting Pedagogy in Context TOM SCHOLTE	199
Rhyme and Reason: Shakespeare's Exceptional Status and Role in Canadian Education DANA M. COLARUSSO	215
The Truth About Stories About Shakespeare . . . In Canada? DANIEL FISCHLIN	241
Contributors	263
Index	267



## List of Illustrations and Figures

“Theatre is not a nursing home”: <i>Merchants of Venice</i> of The Stratford Festival C. E. MCGEE	11
Figure 1: Production Photograph of Douglas Rain (Shylock), <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , Avon Theatre, 1996. Photo by Cylla von Tiedemann, courtesy of The Stratford Festival Archives.	12
Figure 2: Production Photograph of Frederick Valk (Shylock), Charlotte Schragger (Jessica), Ted Follows (Launcelot Gobbo), <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , Stratford Tent, 1955. Photo by Donald McKague, courtesy of The Stratford Festival Archives.	14
Figure 3: Production Photograph of Susan Coyne (Portia), <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , Avon Theatre, 1996. Photo by Cylla von Tiedemann, courtesy of The Stratford Festival Archives.	19
Figure 4: Production Photograph of Seana McKenna (Jessica), Ernest Harrop (tailor), Patruska Sarakula and Holly Dennison (ladies in waiting), <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , Festival Theatre, 1984. Photo by David Cooper, courtesy of The Stratford Festival Archives.	22
“Who’s There?”: <i>Slings &amp; Arrows</i> ’ Audience Dynamics KAILIN WRIGHT	79
Figure 1: The New Burbage Theatre Festival’s gift shop sells stuffed Shakespeare dolls in the series’ first episode.	83
Figure 2: The advertising firm, Froghammer, insults New Burbage Theatre Festival’s subscriber base in the second season.	85
Figure 3: Charles Kingman (William Hutt) plays the role of King Lear and is on his own quest for self-knowledge as he seeks the answer to the series’ pervading question, “Who’s there?,” with the help of Oliver’s ghost (Stephen Ouimette).	87
Figure 4: The final season’s production of <i>King Lear</i> (with the title character played by William Hutt) is markedly minimalistic and takes place on a bare stage in a church.	90

List of Illustrations and Figures

Shakespeare, a Late Bloomer on the Quebec Stage	
ANNIE BRISSET	127
Figure 1: Translations of Shakespeare: Montreal and Quebec City 1968–1999.	129
Figure 2: Shakespearean Presence: Montreal and Quebec City 1968–1999.	136
Figure 3: Frequency of Plays, 1968–1999.	138
Figure 4: Productions of <i>Macbeth</i> : political context.	139
Figure 5: Productions of <i>La Tempête</i> : political context.	140
Rhyme and Reason: Shakespeare’s Exceptional Status and Role in Canadian Education	
DANA M. COLARUSSO	215
Figure 1: We Are Here.	217
Figure 2: English Curriculum Displacement.	233
The Truth About Stories About Shakespeare . . . In Canada?	
DANIEL FISCHLIN	241
Figure 1: Front and back covers of “William Shakespeare’s Mix n’ Match Magnetic Wardrobe.”	243
Figure 2: Marked copy of Jacques Derrida’s essay on “Shakespeare’s Idea of Kingship.”	244
Figure 3: Splash page for the Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project (CASP) <a href="http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/">http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/</a>	250
Figure 4: Front and back cover of <i>Shakespeare Made in Canada</i> exhibition catalogue.	251
Figure 5: Front covers of two editions in the <i>Shakespeare Made in Canada</i> series published by Oxford University Press and Rock’s Mills Press.	252
Figure 6: The Sanders portrait of Shakespeare (1603).	253
Figure 7: Detail of the rag paper label on the back of the Sanders portrait of Shakespeare (1603) along with transcription.	254
Figure 8: Thomas King, friends, and the Sanders portrait of Shakespeare (1603). Photo courtesy of Thomas King.	258

## Acknowledgements

This collection is the final fruit of a project marking the four-hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's death. From January to April 2016, we oversaw more than forty separate events for diverse audiences, ranging from the sublime (*Hamlet* read in the thirty-five languages spoken by members of the University of Ottawa community) to the ridiculous (a Shakespearean insult-a-thon). What kept us from collapsing under the weight of all these activities (besides the support of our extraordinarily patient husbands) was the enthusiasm, energy, and diverse talents of our many collaborators, colleagues, and students. Among these, we would like to make particular mention of Victoria Burke, Joerg Esleben, Ann Hemingway, Tony Horava, Mariah Horner, Nancy Lemay, Cullen McGrail, Amanda Montague, Dillon Orr, Jennifer Panek, Christiane Riel, Bruce White at the ByTowne Cinema, and especially Cynthia Sugars, who co-organized the Shakespeare + Canada symposium with us. Sponsors of Shakespeare + Canada included the British Council, the British High Commission, the English-Speaking Union, Gale Cengage, the Royal Commonwealth Society, and *Shakespeare Bulletin*—along with the Faculty of Arts; the Vice-President, Research; and the central administration of the University of Ottawa. Our home departments (English and Theatre), and our colleagues within them, were enthusiastic and helpful in myriad ways. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada generously supported the entire project, including this volume. Thank you one and all for making Shakespeare 400 and Shakespeare + Canada such extraordinary experiences.

Among those who supported us throughout these related projects is Anne Sophie Voyer, whose spectacular talents as a translator, editor,



## Acknowledgements

and organizer par excellence have made this volume a pleasure to prepare (and, we hope, to read). We dedicate this volume to her—the future of the discipline.

## Shakespeare and Canada: “Remembrance of Ourselves”

IRENA R. MAKARYK AND KATHRYN PRINCE

“**M**ust there no more be done?” Laertes’ anguished cry in response to the truncated ritual performed over his dead sister, Ophelia, draws attention to the human need for the comfort of ceremonies that bring together the individual and the community in shared expressions of mourning, remembrance, or, in other circumstances, of celebration. In the anniversary year of 2016, however, Laertes would have been hard pressed to repeat his question in response to the worldwide memorializations of the four hundred years of Shakespeare’s remarkable afterlife. As theatre critic J. Kelly Nestruck accurately predicted in the New Year’s Day edition of Canada’s *Globe and Mail*, 2016 would include a “bloat” of commemorative activities.

Indeed, global commemorative and celebratory events fill seven pages of the *Shakespeare Lives* website hosted by the British Council. Among these are the Globe to Globe *Hamlet* tour; the World Shakespeare Congress; the Zurich Shakespeare Festival; the Shakespeare Rose Garden in Everland, Korea; the Shakespeare in Rome Exhibition; the Shakespeare Films at the Ankara International Film Festival; the Shakespeare Festival at the Grand Opera in Warsaw; Shakespeare at the Comédie-Française; a marathon reading of Shakespeare’s sonnets in Milan; Shakespeare debates in Brazil; Shakespeare o a Tshela Showcase in Botswana; Shakespeare lectures in Abu Dhabi; the (In)Complete Works, Table Top Shakespeare in Chicago; “All the world’s a stage” exhibition in Taiwan; *I, Peaseblossom* (Shakespeare through the eyes of a mischievous fairy) in New Zealand; *Romeo and Juliet* performed

by disabled actors in Bangladesh; and Shakespeare at the Guadalajara International Book Fair.

Canada, for the most part, remained relatively quiet, absenting itself from the effusive and extensive celebrations elsewhere in the world. The Spur-of-the-Moment Shakespeare Collective and the Toronto Public Library presented the Shakespeare Microfestival in that city, while in Vancouver Bard on the Beach cheekily commemorated Shakespeare's death with a classic wake. One major exception to Canada's low-key commemorations was the four-month Shakespeare 400 project undertaken by Canada's oldest bilingual university, the University of Ottawa. Situated in the nation's capital, on the boundary between two provinces representative of English and French cultural, philosophical, and linguistic traditions (Ontario and Quebec respectively), the university was built on unceded Algonquin territory. The geography of the university thus symbolically reflects both the unique traditions and the fault lines that have shaped, and continue to influence, Canadian responses to Shakespeare. Many of these complex and often ambivalent responses are revealed in the essays contained in this volume.

Rather than necessarily pietistic and mindless, commemorative rituals are—as cultural theorists Ann Rigney (2014) and Joep Leerssen (2014) have shown—complex dynamic cultural organisms that serve many needs and ends. David Garrick's Ur-jubilee of 1769 and its extensive progeny have, over the centuries, continually demonstrated that commemorative rituals reveal as much, if not more, about the celebrants' cultural and political contexts as they do about the object of the celebration. Contemplating the past necessarily always reflects the preoccupations of the present. With their targeted, ritual engagement with history, commemorative activities in particular draw attention to issues of cultural memory, identity, ritual, and performativity—in a word, a genealogy and theatre of belonging. “Who's there?,” the question that opens and reverberates throughout Shakespeare's iconic play, is also one of the pertinent questions of this volume. Indeed, the 2016 spate of celebrations has also brought with it rich scholarly analysis that draws deeply from theories of cultural memory. The essays in Clara Calvo and Coppélia Kahn's *Celebrating Shakespeare: Commemoration and Cultural Memory* (2015), Christa Jansohn and Dieter Mehl's *Shakespeare Jubilees: 1769–2014* (2015), and Erica Sheen and Isabel Karremann's *Shakespeare in Cold War Europe: Conflict, Commemoration, Celebration* (2016) have examined the extensive and varied commemorative practices that, since the 1769 Jubilee, have helped shape our idea of Shakespeare.



These volumes do much to flesh out the extraordinary historical and geographical sweep of Shakespeare-celebration mania and assist in the task of comparative analysis of the necessity, functions, and purposes of such celebrations.

Sociologist Christel Lane observes that, while expressing and channelling “individual emotions” and “satisfying aesthetic needs,” rituals can also reveal significant fractures (Lane 1981, 19). Thus, if anniversary celebrations such as Shakespeare’s quatercentenary are, like other rituals, “vehicles of integration” (Malte 2006, 6) with community building as their goal, they are nonetheless generally not a mark of strength but, rather, of weakness. Lane argues that rituals occur when “there is ambiguity or conflict about social relations” and are “performed to resolve or disguise them” (Lane 1981, 11). Anthropologist Barbara G. Myerhoff similarly notes that ritual “is prominent in all areas of uncertainty, anxiety, impotence, and disorder” (Myerhoff 1984, 151). Shakespeare’s Claudius best encapsulates this complexity, when, in his first public speech to the court of Denmark, he forcibly brings into uneasy rhetorical union his curtailed remembrance of his brother Hamlet’s death with “remembrance of ourselves”—his new circumstance as king of Denmark and husband to Gertrude, widow of the deceased. Indeed, as Ton Hoenselaars and Clara Calvo remind us, rituals of commemoration “are no guarantees for any permanence in the individual’s afterlife, not even Shakespeare’s” (Hoenselaars and Calvo 2006, 6). Shakespeare celebrations may thus be a reflection of anxiety as well as a celebration.

Since 1953, Stratford, Ontario has been at the heart of celebrations of Shakespeare. The Stratford Festival, now the largest repertory theatre in North America and the site of annual major productions, has, not surprisingly, elicited a number of essays in this volume. Canadian values and attitudes have markedly shifted over the past half-century, a point that emerges from C. E. McGee’s essay, “‘Theatre is not a nursing home’: *Merchants of Venice* of the Stratford Festival.” He tells the story of Stratford’s nine *Merchants* and focuses on a pivotal production directed by Marti Maraden in 1996. This was the first Stratford *Merchant* directed by a woman, staged in modern dress, and set in early 1930s fascist Italy. It marked a turning point in the interpretation of several characters, notably Jessica, who emerged as a character with a complex interior life, and Portia, equally complex and capable of feeling compassion for Shylock.

Turning to comedy, Robert Ormsby examines the Stratford Festival’s “internationalist moment” in the early twenty-first century

with a detailed analysis of U.K. director Leon Rubin's intercultural *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2004) and *Twelfth Night* (2006), the former set in an Amazonian rainforest, the latter in nineteenth-century India. Ormsby's analysis encompasses the question of Canadian identity, asking what role Canada played as a nation-state in sustaining Stratford's touristic "experience." Indeed, as Joep Leerssen has argued, "the national frame" is "convenient" but it is "not the whole story of commemorations. It is also the story of the relations between groups: the municipal, the regional, and the transnational, merging together in "a pattern of interconnectedness" (Leerssen 2014, 17). The Stratford Festival's very name links it to its namesake, Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of Shakespeare.

As the dominant venue for Shakespeare productions in Canada, the Stratford Festival occupies a special place in the national imaginary. In popular culture, thinly veiled it appears as the fictional New Burbage Festival Theatre in the Canadian television series *Slings & Arrows*. Kailin Wright's "'Who's There?': *Slings & Arrows*' Audience Dynamics" and Don Moore's "Race, National Identity, and the Hauntological Ethics of *Slings & Arrows*" take us into this terrain of comedy and satire. While Wright centres on audience dynamics and the Burbage Theatre's perennial struggles between the opposing demands of artistic integrity and commercial sustainability, Moore, using Derrida's concept of hauntology, attempts to rethink Canadian theatre's ethical inheritance and "our shared Canadian notions of national identity, moral integrity, and artistic merit."

Still on the topic of Stratford, Ian Rae, in "Stratford, Shakespeare, and J. D. Barnett," dismisses the accepted "master narrative" of the creation of the Stratford Festival: that "Stratford represented the quintessence of the inorganic: a town of rude mechanicals that was suddenly catering to the continent's cultural elite and presenting itself as a bastion of Shakespeareana despite having no connection to Shakespeare beyond a few place names for parks and schools." Through his close work in the archives, Rae reconstructs a history of the town of Stratford which had, for at least a half-century before the creation of the festival, been closely connected with literature and, more particularly, with Shakespeare. Similarly, he challenges the prevailing view of postcolonial scholars who have critiqued the festival as a colonialist and corporate enterprise centring its attention on a foreign import (Salter 1991, Knowles 1995, Filewod 1996, Groome 2002).

Stratford's face has continued to change since its inauguration under a tent. Its reorientation is most notably seen by its rebranding as

the Stratford Festival, entirely omitting “Shakespeare” from its name, while continuing to stage major Shakespeare productions as well as to encourage adaptations and new works inspired by Shakespeare. Peter Kuling’s “Counterfactual History at the Stratford Festival: Timothy Findley’s *Elizabeth Rex* and Peter Hinton’s *The Swanne*” explores this genre by examining ambitious new Canadian works developed and produced at the festival, fictitious “history” plays inspired by and adapted from Shakespeare’s life and works.

Shakespeare certainly continues to inspire Canadian theatre artists, in Stratford and beyond. As Annie Brisset indicates in her detailed account of translations destined for the stages of Quebec, while the conscious development of a local alternative to translations imported from France initially served a political purpose, these translations also developed a characteristic aesthetic dimension that is discernible when they are viewed sociologically in the context of both Québécois theatre more widely and of the theatrical, literary, political, and cultural affiliations of individual translators. In this sociological analysis, someone like the Acadian novelist Antonine Maillet emerges as a figure with as much significance as the Quebec sovereigntist and dramatist Michel Garneau, though the former is marginal in the political story that the latter’s plays and translations tell. Brisset engages with recent books by Jennifer Drouin (2014) and Nicole Nolette (2015), thus expanding on and complementing the important foundational work of Leanore Leiblein that more closely focused on the political dimensions of this corpus.

A slightly different trajectory can be discerned in regards to Aboriginal contexts for Shakespeare in Canada. As Sarah Mackenzie suggests, while Canada’s relationship to its First Nations hardly merits the moniker “post-colonial,” never having moved through a decolonizing phase, and while Shakespeare in Canada has too often related to aboriginality through cultural appropriation, Yvette Nolan and Kennedy Cathy MacKinnon’s *Death of a Chief*, their 2005 adaptation of *Julius Caesar*, can be seen as a landmark production that reclaimed Shakespeare in ways reminiscent of the Quebec sovereignty movement’s discovery of his works a generation earlier. Against a backdrop of picturesque and atmospheric quasi-indigenous elements in earlier Canadian productions of Shakespeare, *Death of a Chief* reverses the direction of cultural appropriation.

Francophone and First Nations perspectives are now as central to Canadian Shakespeare as those of Northrop Frye, Marshall McLuhan, or Margaret Atwood, thanks in no small part to Daniel Fischlin’s monumental Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project. Indeed,



it is in some ways now a fiction to anatomize Canadian Shakespeare according to group identity and affiliation; the kind of crossover and cross-fertilization captured in Fischlin's contribution to this volume is everywhere to be seen. Atwood's response to *The Tempest*, her 2016 novel *Hag-Seed*, covers some of the same emotional and ideological territory that Mackenzie associates with Canadian performances of that play, but with social-justice aspects that could be linked to *Death of a Chief* and some of the *Merchant of Venice* productions in McGee's essay. With Brisset's sociological approach in mind, there is also, perhaps, an underlying ecocritical perspective that connects with Atwood's dystopian novels, not least through Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* (2014), with its travelling troupe of Shakespearean actors roaming the post-apocalyptic Great Lakes area.

Ecocriticism is certainly an emerging area of Canadian Shakespeare, one in which the pressing concerns of society at large converge with our field. In November 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appointed Canada's first Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna. With climate change firmly on the national agenda, particularly following the devastating forest fire in Canada's controversial oil sands during the spring of 2016, ecocriticism will likely continue to inspire scholarly and artistic responses to Shakespeare.

Given its political leadership in climate change and its embrace of ecocriticism as an academic approach to literature, Canada may continue to have a significant impact on global scholarship, resulting, perhaps, in renewed interest in Northrop Frye's "green world." As Troni Grande suggests, Frye's impact on Shakespeare Studies has been vast and enduring. Using Frye as a jumping-off point, she analyses Canadian author and Nobel Prize-winner Alice Munro's short story "Tricks," with its Stratford Festival setting and Shakespearean themes.

Neil Freeman has also had an enduring impact on Shakespeare in Canada and beyond. As Tom Scholte suggests in his paper, Freeman's approach to actor training, grounded in a controversial interpretation of the First Folio's significance, has influenced North American Shakespeare training in ways that supersede the Folio disputes that have tended to overshadow his contribution in academic circles. Through the work of Freeman's former students, many now pedagogues and practitioners themselves, this practical and interpretive aspect of Canadian Shakespeare flourishes.

While Freeman's legacy and Frye's endure, Marshall McLuhan, Frye's colleague and intellectual nemesis, requires some recuperation as

a Shakespearean. McLuhan is best known for his work in media theory, but Richard Cavell in his essay traces the strong Shakespearean underpinnings of his work, particularly the theory of remediation that, Cavell demonstrates, is derived from McLuhan's reading of *King Lear*.

Given the long tail of McLuhan's work, perhaps his remediation or a Frye-tinged ecocriticism are properly Canadian responses to the dilemma explored in Dana Colarusso's paper on Shakespeare's place on the high-school curriculum. Partly because of his traditional ubiquity in secondary teaching, Shakespeare has remained firmly anchored in Canadian culture, but perhaps, as Colarusso's findings suggest, not for much longer.

While Shakespeare is required reading in many provinces, the current Ontario high-school curriculum encourages but no longer absolutely requires that Shakespeare be taught at all. Although there are good reasons why teachers may continue to choose Shakespeare, that choice is theirs to make, and Shakespeare thus competes with other authors whose relevance to students the teacher must determine anew each year. At the University of Ottawa that choice is the student's: the Shakespeare requirement has been quietly reduced from two courses to one in the Department of English, while the Department of Theatre requires none at all.

If teachers and students continue to find Shakespeare worth choosing, it will be because his plays give them something that they value, whatever that may be. As the papers in this volume collectively and variously suggest, part of that value lies in his ability to offer us "remembrance of ourselves." The fact that this line is spoken by a character whose personal gain comes at a high cost, and with significant collateral damage, suggests that there is a warning as well as an homage in the title we have selected for this book. Claudius gives short shrift to the "wisest sorrow" of mourning in order to focus on his own advancement. Shakespeare's plays offer a remembrance that supersedes this kind of egocentricity, connecting Canadian readers and spectators with others, in Canada and beyond. The stories we tell about Shakespeare, Daniel Fischlin reminds us in the closing essay, are always, but never only, about ourselves.

## WORKS CITED

- Atwood, Margaret. 2016. *Hag-Seed*. Toronto: Knopf.
- Calvo, Clara and Coppélia Kahn, eds. 2015. *Celebrating Shakespeare: Commemoration and Cultural Memory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Drouin, Jennifer. 2014. *Shakespeare in Quebec: Nation, Gender, and Adaptation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Filewod, Alan. 1996. "National Theatre, National Obsession." In *Canadian Theatre History: Selected Readings*, edited by Don Rubin, 424–31. Toronto: Copp Clark.
- Groome, Margaret. 2002. "Stratford and the Aspirations for a National Theatre." In *Shakespeare in Canada: 'a world elsewhere'?*, edited by Diana Brydon and Irena R. Makaryk, 108–36. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Hoenselaars, Ton and Clara Calvo. 2010. "Introduction: Shakespeare and the Cultures of Commemoration." *Critical Survey* 22 (2): 1–10.
- Jansohn, Christa and Dieter Mehl, eds. 2015. *Shakespeare Jubilees: 1769–2014. Studien zur englischen Literatur*, 27. Münster, Germany: LIT.
- Knowles, Ric. 1995. "From Nationalist to Multinational: The Stratford Festival, Free Trade, and the Discourses of Intercultural Tourism." *Theatre Journal* 47 (1): 19–41.
- Lane, Christel. 1981. *The Rites of Rulers. Ritual in Industrial Society: the Soviet Case*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leerssen, Joep. 2014. "Schiller 1859. Literary Historicism and Readership Mobilization." In *Commemorating Writers in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, edited by Leerssen and Ann Rigney, 24–39. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Leerssen, Joep and Ann Rigney. 2014. "Introduction. Fanning out from Shakespeare." In *Commemorating Writers in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, edited by Leerssen and Rigney, 1–23.
- Malte, Rolf. 2006. *Soviet Mass Festivals, 1917–1991*. Translated by Cynthia Klohr. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Mandel, Emily St. John. 2014. *Station Eleven*. New York: Knopf.
- Myerhoff, Barbara G. 1984. "A Death in Due Time: Construction of Self and Culture in Ritual Drama." In *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle. Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, edited by John J. MacAloon, 149–178. Philadelphia: A Publication of the Institute for the Study of Human Issues.
- Nolette, Nicole. 2015. *Jouer la traduction. Théâtre et hétérolinguisme au Canada francophone*. Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa.

- Rigney, Ann. "Burns 1859: Embodied Communities and Transnational Federation." In *Commemorating Writers in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, edited by Leerssen and Rigney, 40–64.
- Salter, Denis. 1991. "The Idea of a National Theatre." In *Canadian Canons: Essays in Literary Value*, edited by Robert Lecker, 71–90. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Sheen, Erica and Isabel Karremann, eds. 2016. *Shakespeare in Cold War Europe: Conflict, Commemoration, Celebration*. London: Palgrave Pivot.

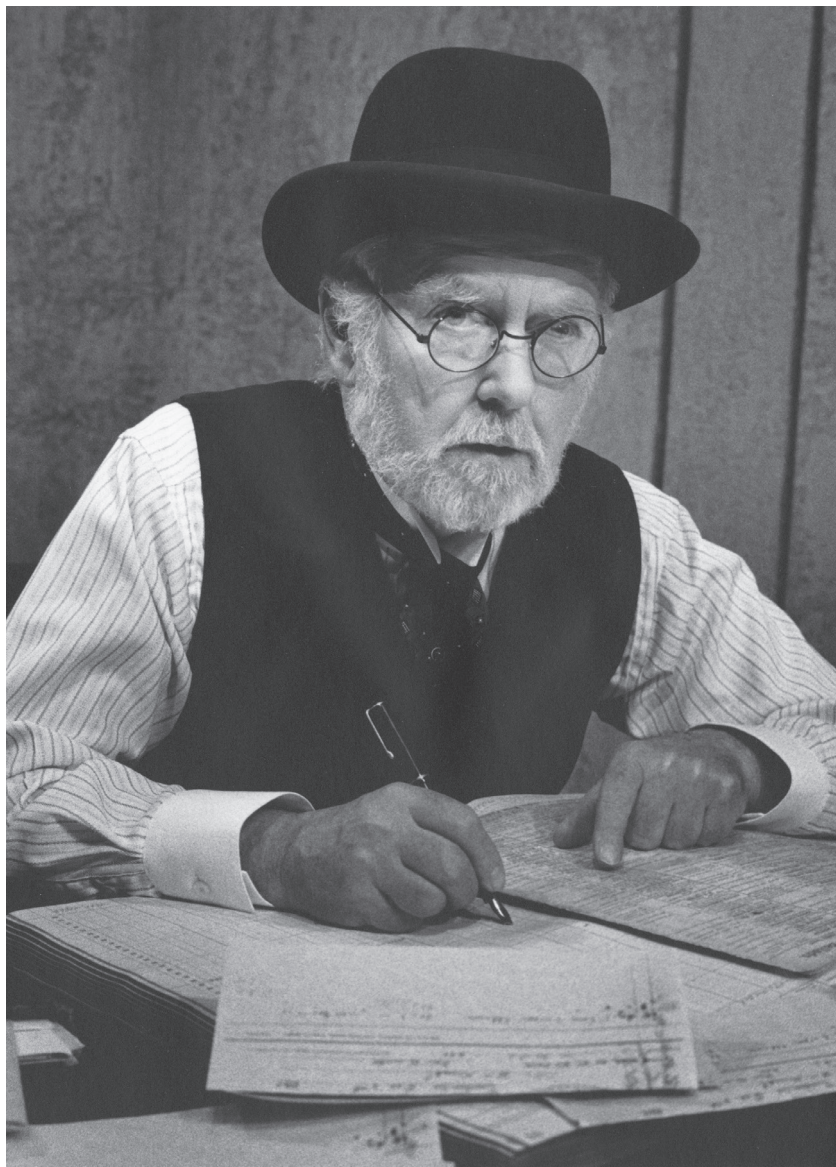
# **“Theatre is not a nursing home”: *Merchants of Venice* of The Stratford Festival**

C. E. MCGEE

**T**he Stratford Festival *Merchant of Venice* at the Avon Theatre in 1996 was a turning point in the history of productions of that play there with a series of “firsts.” The sixth Stratford production of this play, the 1996 *Merchant* was the first to be directed by a woman, Marti Maraden. For the first time at the Festival the play was set in the modern period: Fascist Italy 1933, when that country was, outwardly at least, still one of the most open, diverse, and tolerant in Europe, but on the brink of brutal change. For the first time, Shylock and Antonio looked alike.

Unlike earlier productions in which Shylock’s costumes were identified explicitly as “ethnic” or “fancy ethnic,”<sup>1</sup> in this production both Shylock and Antonio were dressed as businessmen, so that a newcomer to Venice might well ask, “Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?” (*The Merchant of Venice*, 4.1.170).<sup>2</sup> And for the first time, Portia and Jessica became (or in fairness to the many sensitive, skillful actors who have played those parts), *obviously* became, complex, ambivalent, ultimately incomplete characters.

In 1995, Marti Maraden lobbied for the opportunity to direct *The Merchant of Venice* or *The Taming of the Shrew*,<sup>3</sup> partly because other theatres had decided that these plays were too “politically incorrect” to be staged. As Stratford’s artistic director Richard Monette defended the decision to include *Merchant* in the 1996 season, Maraden explained her approach to members of the Stratford Festival’s board and worked with



**Figure 1:** Production Photograph of Douglas Rain (Shylock), *The Merchant of Venice*, Avon Theatre, 1996. Photo by Cylla von Tiedemann, courtesy of The Stratford Festival Archives.

the Canadian Jewish Congress on preparing students to see the show. The board was especially concerned about the ill effects of a production of the play. In 1984, students had thrown pennies, candies, and wads of paper at Jewish students in attendance and had hurled verbal insults at them outside the theatre.<sup>4</sup> About two years later, the Waterloo Region District School Board restricted study of *Merchant* to upper years and, later, cancelled trips to see the 1989 production; the Durham District School Board did the same.<sup>5</sup> CBC Radio had put the Festival on the defensive that year by broadcasting a report that the Canadian Jewish Congress was attempting to censor Stratford’s production,<sup>6</sup> a report linked in the rumour mill to Michael Langham’s decision to cut the forced conversion of Shylock. Langham had come to the conclusion that modern audiences, unlike Elizabethan ones, simply would not accept the conversion as a salvific act of charity; instead, “to us in the 20th century,” he said, “it is appalling even to consider forcing someone to convert.”<sup>7</sup>

Defending the decision to produce *Merchant* was not unusual, however. Nine productions of the play have been done at Stratford, the first in 1955, the most recent in 2013—none without controversy. From the very first announcement that *Merchant* would be part of the Stratford Festival’s 1955 season, controversy arose. Some commentators called for an outright ban, affirming that the play would perpetuate the evils and suffering of those who lived through the Second World War. Others sought “an assurance that the proper interpretation will be given.”<sup>8</sup> Frederick Valk, whom Tyrone Guthrie had cast as Shylock, simply did not believe the rumours about this opposition. Valk knew something of the evils of anti-Semitism, fleeing Czechoslovakia in 1939 before “the Gestapo came searching for him” (qtd. in Valk 1958, 27). A German-born Jew, he had played Tubal in Berlin, later Shylock in Darmstadt, Prague, Glasgow, and London. The Old Vic toured that show to miners’ halls, schools, and military bases throughout England. Never had Valk encountered efforts to ban the play or control its interpretation. But he did in Canada, a fact that surprised him, given his first impression that “here was ample space for all creeds and persuasions and unrivalled opportunity to raise a new generation rid for ever of barren prejudice, which arose in Europe as much from poverty and overcrowding as from religious differences” (ibid., 53–54).

He responded with a “theoretical” statement, from which I quote in my title: “I deplore that people are beset with prejudices of all sorts and can’t bring themselves to wipe their eyes and read and think,” he told the *Ottawa Citizen* in May 1955:





**Figure 2:** Production Photograph of Frederick Valk (Shylock), Charlotte Schrager (Jessica), Ted Follows (Launcelot Gobbo), *The Merchant of Venice*, Stratford Tent, 1955. Photo by Donald McKague, courtesy of The Stratford Festival Archives.

The theatre is not a nursing home to give sedatives to biased people. The play contains the greatest plea for justice ever written. As an actor it is my profession to understand all sorts of views. It is so easy for the individual to slip into self-pity, and so fatal. Self-pity breeds arrogance and when that happens in a nation, Fascism results. What is, is; if art speaks out, it is good so (qtd. in Pettigrew and Portman 1985, 1:107–08).

Valk also rethought his conception of the role of Shylock. He had been building a character suited to the Stratford tent venue, the Festival's first home, as opposed to the playhouses he knew in Europe. His Shylock would be "a paternal man, confident of great wealth, with a caustic but by no means unjustified sense of humour . . . [a man] . . . too gentle . . . to be a menace to the living anywhere" (Valk 1958, 63).

Then he received a letter directed "to the performer of Shylock, speaking to him as to a wrecker let loose upon the New World" (ibid., 64). "From now on," he said, now angered by the opposition, "I toughen Shylock, . . . From now on I show them what Shylock is

really like . . . . And now perhaps when I have done with Shylock, the YMCA will protest. Christianity will be shown up in an unfair light, knocking him out. I toughen him” (ibid., 65).

His tougher Shylock required tougher Christians. The “mercy” that Antonio rendered Shylock was punctuated by laughter. At the phrase “that lately stole his daughter” (4.1.381), the stage manager, Jack Hutt, noted, “Laughs”; at “become a Christian” (383), “Laugh up”; at “Lorenzo and his daughter” (386), “Big laugh”; and at Shylock’s “I am content” (390), “Ant. laugh.”<sup>9</sup> Then, as the prompt book noted, “All move, descend on Shy[lock] & Tubal” and shouting, booing, and spitting drove the two Jews from the stage.<sup>10</sup> Valk’s wife recalled their son’s reaction to this moment when they attended the final dress rehearsal as a mixture of horror, disgust, and disbelief: “They threw things! They threw things!,” the boy said (Valk 1958, 66). This scene was one, in Guthrie’s words, of “sadistic vengeance” (Guthrie 1965, 103). Compared to some later productions, the laughter in Guthrie’s production was mild. In 1984, Mark Lamos had Antonio (Richard Monette) move from downstage left to a position behind Shylock at centre stage. At the line requiring Shylock’s conversion, Antonio put the crucifix that he had been wearing around Shylock’s neck and then all those at the trial crossed themselves.<sup>11</sup> Jamie Portman reported that Monette had been so appalled by the humiliation of Shylock in 1984 that he did not know if he ever wanted to go near the play again,<sup>12</sup> but when Monette directed it in 2001, he too, with Shylock huddled at centre stage, had Antonio put a cross round his neck while the rest of the company made the sign of the cross.

In contrast to Valk’s incendiary response to controversy, the most recent *Merchant*, directed by Antoni Cimolino in 2013, altered the text and added stage business so as to complicate and soften the issues. The trial scene emphasized the personal, human reason for Shylock’s desire for vengeance: when he stated “I have a daughter” (4.1.291), he produced his picture of Jessica. Tubal had accompanied Shylock to the courtroom and stood by him until Shylock indicated that the bond did not require that he have a surgeon to treat Antonio. At that point, Tubal quietly exited; that was a moral boundary he was not prepared to cross.<sup>13</sup> Clearly Shylock could not be seen as a representative of all Jews. The same was true for the Christians. The aggressively nasty expressions of anti-Semitism were reserved primarily for Gratiano, with some exclamations critical of Shylock added to the text. Antonio was not mean or vengeful in his judgment of Shylock; there was no laughter, no symbolic christening, no triumph over Shylock. Instead, Antonio’s

speech requiring Shylock's conversion and outlining the financial settlement was greeted in the end, as the stage manager noted, with "Rotary Club applause."<sup>14</sup> Finally, Portia: in Shakespeare's script, after Shylock rejects the opportunity to be merciful, she never again refers to him by his name but always as "Jew" or "the Jew." Cimolino reversed that, changing her every use of "the Jew" to "Shylock," "you," or "he" as the contexts required. When Shylock struggled to get back to his feet, she intervened to help him up. And when Gratiano threw Shylock's skull cap on the ground, she retrieved it, carefully put it in her briefcase, and in the finale interrupted Jessica's exit in order to give it to her. Michelle Giroux's Portia was the most compassionate Portia ever at the Stratford Festival. Whereas in the 1955 show sadistic Christians triumphed over a tough, vengeful Shylock, in 2013 neither all the Christians nor all the Jews were all that bad.

To understand more clearly the place of the 1996 *Merchant of Venice* directed by Marti Maraden in the history of Stratford productions, both in its management of controversy and in its representation of Portia and Jessica, we need to consider another early show. In 1970, Jean Gascon directed Maureen O'Brien to play Stratford's least compassionate Portia. The archival records provide no evidence for my claim. Indeed none of the earliest directors—not Guthrie, Gascon, Glassco, or Lamos—comments on the character of Portia, except as a plot device. Guthrie almost ascribes a character trait to her when he grants that, contrary to the apparent plan of the play, she displaces Antonio as "the advocate of mercy" in the trial scene (Guthrie 1965, 101). Gascon, however, registered his interpretation of Portia in the Festival Edition of *The Merchant of Venice*, published in 1970 by Festival Editions of Canada, a publishing venture of Stratford's most important entrepreneur, Tom Patterson. This edition included introductory notes on each scene and detailed stage directions by Gascon.<sup>15</sup> They clearly called for a Portia who was clear-headed about her strategy for the trial, manipulative in playing the game she had in mind from the outset, and severe in her execution of justice. The famous speech on the quality of mercy is a "tactic" to "win the confidence and respect of the court" (Gascon 1970, 116). When she says, "Tarry, Jew! / The law hath yet another hold on you . . .," the stage direction reads "turning the sword in the wound" (125). When she insists that the state not reduce Antonio's share of Shylock's forfeited wealth, she is described as "pitiless" (124). And when Antonio passes his judgment on Shylock, including the forced conversion, Gascon notes that Antonio is "showing mercy though Portia will not" (124).

Besides standing in sharp contrast to Giroux’s compassionate Portia in Cimolino’s production, O’Brien’s “Venice Portia” seemed inconsistent with her “Belmont Portia.” In her study of Royal Shakespeare Company productions of *The Merchant of Venice*, Miriam Gilbert (2002, 83) argues that “the way in which any given production portrays Belmont becomes an interpretation of Portia.” Collaborating with Gascon in 1970, Desmond Heeley acknowledged his indebtedness to the art of the Renaissance Venetian Vittore Carpaccio for his designs. He created a milieu at Belmont fit for a fairy-tale princess, a milieu in which O’Brien was “enchanting to look at”<sup>16</sup> (the recurrent motif in reviews) or, as one put it, a “Dresden doll Portia.”<sup>17</sup> That cohered with Gascon’s concept of the play as a whole, in which the beauty of Belmont trumps the business of Venice: “in the world Shakespeare envisions,” Gascon argued, “there is no place for [Shylock]. He is the ugly note of reality, played off-key in a symphony of beauty and poetry. While Shakespeare is aware that the world of Belmont is a fairy-tale world, a utopia of purity and fidelity, he is holding it up as an ideal.”<sup>18</sup> What seems to me to be surprising and significant is that Gascon seemed not at all perturbed by the apparent contradiction between the fairy-tale princess of Belmont and the arch legal strategist of Venice.<sup>19</sup> The latter Portia “enjoyed the game” of turning the tables on Shylock until she decided when “to draw it to a climax”; the former one helped her husband choose the correct casket by “telling him to listen to the music,” but only “*Unconsciously*” (Gascon 1970, 121 and 83; emphasis added). Richard Monette exemplified a similar acceptance of a *Merchant of Venice* with two distinct, if not incompatible, worlds. Although the very first note in the stage manager’s prompt script summed up the play as “A Satire on Hatred!,” the show ended with a grand “chorale,” with extras holding lanterns at the exits and ladies on the upper stage throwing petals on those below as the main couples paraded across the stage, swirled, and then exited together.<sup>20</sup>

*The Merchant* directed by Maraden in 1996 illustrated how the portrayal not only of Belmont, but also of Venice, could shape a coherent narrative or through-line for Portia. Cimolino set the action of his production in the 1930s, presumably the late 1930s because one of the last sound cues called for the sound of an air-raid siren. Maraden, however, was quite specific that the setting she had chosen was Italy in 1933. She wanted to invoke “that climate of incipient, insidious anti-Semitism, before it has fully blossomed in all its horror, when we can still—and should—recognize and stop it” (Maraden 1996, 37). To do so, she added to the production stage business that would establish the politics of that

culture in action. At the beginning of the show, the lights came up on a café with several small tables; at the one upstage left, an older, Jewish man (Tubal we would learn later) sat drinking his coffee and reading the newspaper. The action returned to the café for the scene in which Salerio and Salanio reported, to their own amusement and that of others who overhear, on the boys of Venice following Shylock and mocking him about his lost stones, ducats, and daughter. Near the end of the scene, Tubal entered, bought a newspaper, and went toward the table where he had sat before. The waiter then turned up the backs of the chairs. When Tubal went toward an empty table downstage, two of the patrons turned up the chairs. The action was simple, even understated, but Tubal and the audience got the message: being Jewish, he no longer had a place.

Tubal had had that experience and understood its meaning. Portia, on the other hand, was insulated from such knowledge. What informed Maraden's interpretation of Belmont and Portia was Vittorio De Sica's film of *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* (1970).<sup>21</sup> This adaptation of Giorgio Bassani's novel told the story of a wealthy, sophisticated, highly educated Jewish family whose country estate provided them with a world elsewhere, a home secluded and secured by the property's centuries-old trees and walled garden. Of course the family was not safe; only one would survive the concentration camps. Like the walled garden of the film, Belmont in Maraden's interpretation was a secluded country estate, some miles away from Venice. For the scenes there, the set changed to gracious rooms that opened out onto a bright garden stretching into the distance. What interested Phillip Silver, the set designer, "was the challenge of creating two worlds: the airiness of Belmont and a claustrophobic Venice of narrow streets and open piazzas spawning intrigues of commerce and love and hate."<sup>22</sup> This Belmont helped to establish the removed, protected starting point of Portia's story.

In this show, Susan Coyne's Portia was, like other Portias, "a lady richly left," intelligent, articulate, and somewhat bored, but also "unlesioned . . . unschooled, unpractised" (1.1.161, 3.2.159). By her own estimation she was young enough that she "may learn," bright enough that she "can" (3.2.161, 162).

The trial and its aftermath in Maraden's production provided its Portia with experiences from which she might learn, experiences of the "intrigues of commerce and love and hate" of men in Venice and the dark cultural forces motivating them. Three moments were especially important in this regard, all three of which focused on Portia in the





**Figure 3:** Production Photograph of Susan Coyne (Portia), *The Merchant of Venice*, Avon Theatre, 1996. Photo by Cylla von Tiedemann, courtesy of The Stratford Festival Archives.

act of looking. First, after entrusting Antonio with the final judgment of Shylock with the line, “What mercy can you render him, Antonio?” (4.1.374), Portia stepped upstage to talk privately with Nerissa. As Antonio moved through his speech, however, she turned back to listen to what he was actually saying, then came a few steps closer (downstage), and then, as he required that Shylock become a Christian, looked on in dismay. It was as if she had never imagined that Antonio would do what he did, would conceive of “mercy” as he did.<sup>23</sup> Was it the mercilessness of his Christian mercy that dismayed her? Was it what the behaviour of this man, whom Bassanio so loved, suggested about her new husband that distressed her? Second, at the moment of Shylock’s final exit, as he moved slowly upstage centre, Gratiano, the principal agent of outright anti-Semitic nastiness in this production, snatched Shylock’s skull cap off his head and threw it on the ground. Portia then came downstage centre, turned to face Shylock, took off her glasses, breathed, and simply watched him leave upstage centre. Sound cues and lighting cues underscored each step in this process. What was she feeling or thinking? Was she adjusting her sense of the man whom she had called, after he rejected the mercy option, invariably called, as Shakespeare’s text requires, “the Jew”? Did she feel some compassion or solicitude for Shylock in his isolation and defeat? Third and finally, in the scene immediately after the trial: with Portia alone in the street outside the courthouse, two of Mussolini’s black shirts entered. When Portia turned her attention to them, they simply raised their hands and gave her a little round of applause. Regarding Portia’s response, the prompt book notes only “TBA”; in archival videotape, Susan Coyne nodded and just looked at them. Did she conclude (as I did) that, precisely because she was smart but naive, she had been co-opted by forces that would wreak unimaginable injustice and suffering? Was she realizing how little she knew of the world outside of the walled gardens and treed estate of Belmont? The production provided no answers to this question or to the others I have posed. The audience got only the experience, not the meaning—only Portia experiencing, not whatever meaning she would make of it. This was a Portia in a process of coming to terms with things.

The performance of Jessica in the 1996 show resembled that of Portia in that it depended, ultimately, on the actor playing Jessica just looking. The first Jessica in Tyrone Guthrie’s production in 1955 was important, at least at first, for her “looks.” In an article entitled “Two Beautiful Girls Being Sought for Festival Roles,” the local paper announced that the Jessica he was hoping to cast “should typify Jewish



beauty, must be able to move about the stage well, need not be a great actress.”<sup>24</sup> For the Princess in Stravinsky’s *Soldier’s Tale*, the Festival wanted someone more, and less, accomplished. According to Lou Applebaum, the actor for this role “should express the beauty of all womanhood, need not sing or act but should be able to dance a little bit.”<sup>25</sup> In the end, Guthrie cast University of Toronto honours English student Charlotte Schrage as Jessica. Given her experience at Hart House Theatre, including the lead in *Miss Julie* directed by Leon Major, she quickly grew into the part of Jessica. As the stage manager, Jack Hutt, noted in his script in mid-July, “Charlotte—now a nice performance, having built voice and characterization.”<sup>26</sup> Few critics, however, unlike the stage manager observing show after show, commented on Schrage’s acting. What pre-occupied them was the callousness of the character, who betrayed her father and her family by embracing, without a second thought, it seemed, her new love, new religion, and new life in the romance of Belmont. That was the source of controversy. She put on the attire that would make her indistinguishable from Portia’s other Belmont ladies and exited happily at the end, hand-in-hand with Lorenzo. Philip Slomovitz, who felt that he had some assurance that Guthrie would provide a sympathetic portrayal of Jews in his *Merchant* in 1955, was appalled by the production and the representation of Jessica especially. Having seen Guthrie’s production, he was convinced that the play had “no place in modern society; that it is pure, unadulterated anti-Semitism and must be branded as such.” Of Jessica in particular he wrote that “Jewish womanhood is reviled in this character and the sanctity of the Jewish home is abused most cruelly . . . [She is] so frivolous, so insulting to her father, so derisive of her Jewish heritage, that her role left us humiliated.”<sup>27</sup>

The story of Jessica at Stratford took a significant turn with Marti Maraden’s 1996 production, a turn that depended partly upon Jessica’s looks but, as with Susan Coyne’s Portia in that show, more upon Jessica looking. There were at least a couple of steps toward this end. First, in 1970, Jean Gascon had Jessica stop to look at Antonio before running off to catch up to Lorenzo.<sup>28</sup> Seana McKenna’s Jessica in 1984 was a step in that direction. She too put on a gown, carefully fitted by a tailor added to the cast to perform that function, a gown that made her fit in with Portia’s other ladies. She was not, however, judging by her expression in this production photo, altogether happy about it. As Ralph Berry (1985, 90) noted in his review of the show, “To her credit, Seana McKenna contrived to sketch in a girl who would be interestingly difficult in any context.”



**Figure 4:** Production Photograph of Seana McKenna (Jessica), Ernest Harrop (tailor), Patruska Sarakula and Holly Dennison (ladies in waiting), *The Merchant of Venice*, Festival Theatre, 1984. Photo by David Cooper, courtesy of The Stratford Festival Archives.

In Marti Maraden's production in 1996, Jessica (Marion Day) remained even more the outsider in Belmont. Her robe resembled in its richness those of Portia's other ladies, but it was more exotic than theirs in pattern and colour. Like those ladies, she wore a bandeau on her head, but unlike theirs, hers could not keep her long, wavy black hair from spilling over. Despite the little silver cross that she wore around her neck, she was not really one of them.

Perhaps that was what she was realizing for the first time in her isolation on stage at the very end of the show. Gratiano and Nerissa had exited first, followed by Bassanio and Portia. Jessica started to leave with Lorenzo, but then she stopped at centre stage. Lorenzo noticed that she was not coming with him, but went on anyway. Jessica then looked up and saw Antonio with his good-news letter, looked back at the deed of gift she herself had received, looked again at Antonio downstage, and then over and beyond him out into the audience. With that, lighting cue 120 called for a blackout.<sup>29</sup> For the first time in a Stratford Festival

production, Jessica ended up alone on stage rather than hand-in-hand with Lorenzo or running off to catch up to him. For the first time, she escaped the traditional closure of romantic comedy, but whatever she was thinking, or feeling, or coming to terms with, remained unresolved.

Richard Rose settled that matter in his production of *Merchant* at the Stratford Festival in 2007. In this show Jessica remained an alienated outsider at the very end. Lorenzo had taught her how to genuflect and how to make the sign of the cross during the course of the play. At the beginning of the finale, she heard, but did not comprehend, his Christian imagery of the music of the spheres, with the smallest orbs in their motions “choiring to the young-eyed cherubims” (5.1.62). She was not entirely alone on stage at the end, for she was watched and overheard by Antonio, but she was unaware of his presence as she put on a makeshift prayer shawl (as Shylock had donned one before the interval in this production) and softly sang an ancient Jewish song of mourning. In the 2007 production, the unhappiness of Jessica about her conversion, her marriage to Lorenzo, her abandonment of her religious heritage, and her place in Belmont was the heart of the matter.

For the first twenty-five years at the Stratford Festival, directors and critics accepted the commonly held view that *The Merchant of Venice*, or at least the Belmont story within it, was a fairy tale. Robertson Davies, an influential figure at Stratford when the Festival was founded, put the point bluntly: “Above all, remember that this is a fairy-tale, and the hero must be very heroic, the villain very villainous, and everybody as light-hearted as possible” (Davies 1948, 66). Marti Maraden exploded that idea and confronted the controversial nature of *Merchant* by deciding to set the action of the play in Fascist Italy in 1933, a milieu in which anti-Semitism and the devastating consequences it would fuel in Europe were inescapable. For at least Portia and Jessica in the 1996 production of *Merchant*, the fairy tale was over; they had emerged “from the enchanted thicket of fancy into the common light of day,” (Granville-Baker 1946, 335) but what they would make of what they were seeing and experiencing remained unfinished.

## NOTES

1. Dresser Sheets P669 and P671, *The Merchant of Venice*, 1989, Stratford Festival Archives, Stratford, Ontario. I am grateful to Liza Giffen, Stratford Festival Archivist, and her staff, especially Christine Schindler and Lois Quail, for their assistance with the materials in their care and with obtaining permissions to include copies of the production photographs.

2. William Shakespeare (2010); all *Merchant* quotations are from this edition.
3. Marti M. Maraden, interview with author, Stratford, Ontario, April 4, 2016. She is the only woman to have directed *The Merchant of Venice* at the Stratford Festival, and, to date, no woman has directed *The Taming of the Shrew* there, one reason, perhaps, for the persistence in public statements of the opinion at the festival that *Shrew* is a romantic comedy.
4. Doug Bale, "Class Trip Off due to Content of Merchant," *London Free Press*, April 4, 1989 ("Press Clippings," Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 292, f 50r).
5. Barbara Aggerholm, "Stratford Play Off-limits for School Trips," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, February 3, 1989 ("Press Clippings," Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 291, f 35r), reports the Waterloo decision; Mark Stewart, "Play 'unsuitable' for Students, Board Cancels Stratford trip," *The Oshawa Times*, April 4, 1989 ("Press Clippings," Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 292, f 51r), the Durham one.
6. Patricia Quigley, education director, the Stratford Festival, interview with the author, Stratford, Ontario, April 10, 2016; her luncheon meeting with Bernie Farber prompted the unfounded speculation. See Bernie M. Farber, "Merchant Should Be Taught to Older Students," *Beacon Herald* [Stratford], May 8, 1989 ("Press Clippings," Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 293, f 12r), for one of many reports of the position of the Canadian Jewish Congress, which was not to ban or censor the play but to restrict the teaching of it to senior grades of high school.
7. Robert Reid, "Deletion: It's an Artistic Director's Judgment Call," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, May 6, 1989 ("Press Clippings," Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 293, f 10v).
8. Philip Slomovitz, "Purely Commentary," *Jewish News*, June 24, 1955 ("Press Clippings," Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 5, f 47r).
9. Prompt script, note facing p. 118, *The Merchant of Venice*, 1955, Stratford Festival Archives. Here and elsewhere in this paper, I am indebted to the extraordinary work of those who stage managed the Stratford Festival productions. Given the scale of many shows, we have the records of stage managers, assistant stage managers, and their apprentices, all of whom confirm and supplement in important ways one another's notes on the productions. Their attention to detail also informs another crucial part of their role at the Festival, the rehearsal of the understudies and the structuring of understudy runs of the shows. Nora Polley, a stage manager for decades at Stratford, and in many respects its institutional memory, now produces the composite scripts, a valuable resource for directors and scholars; see Toby Malone (2013).
10. Prompt script, note facing p. 119, *The Merchant of Venice*, 1955, Stratford Festival Archives.

11. Victoria Klein, assistant stage manager, prompt book, and Ihor Sychylo, stage manager, prompt book, notes facing 4.1.384, Stratford Festival Archives.
12. Jamie Portman, “Stratford Delivers a Thoughtful Study of Racial and Religious Hatreds and the Baleful Power of Money in its New Production of Merchant of Venice,” Southam Newspapers, May 30, 2001 (“Press Clippings,” Stratford Festival Archives, 2001 Reviews Volume, *Merchant of Venice*, review 1).
13. In the production directed by Bill Glassco, the exit of a group of “Jews” who came to the trial with Shylock provided a precedent for this decision; see Vincent Berns, stage manager, prompt book, *The Merchant of Venice*, 1976, note facing 4.1.302, Stratford Festival Archives.
14. Bona Duncan, stage manager, prompt copy, interlineated notes 4.1.193–386 passim, Stratford Festival Archives.
15. To be fair to Gascon, he considered the stage directions he provided in this edition to be “a director’s homework” or his “pre-production notes” that “can, and certainly will, be changed by the performance” (Gascon 1970, xxx, xxxi).
16. E. H. Lampard, “The Merchant of Venice: Glittering Production at Stratford,” *St. Catharine’s Standard*, June 9, 1970 (“Press Clippings,” Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 139, f 5v).
17. Samuel Hirsch, “Hirsch on Theater: ‘Merchant of Venice’ at Stratford, Ontario,” *Boston Herald Traveler*, June 10, 1970 (“Press Clippings,” Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 139, f 7r).
18. Jean Gascon, “Director’s Notes,” house program, *The Merchant of Venice*, 1970.
19. That Maureen O’Brien gave audiences “a Portia cut in half” was one of the production’s many flaws noted by Nathan Cohen, “Shakespeare at its Worst,” *Toronto Daily Star*, June 9, 1970 (“Press Clippings,” Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 139, f 4r).
20. Bona Duncan, stage manager, prompt script, *The Merchant of Venice*, 2001, notes facing 5.1.294–307.
21. Marti Maraden, presentation to graduate class, English 710K (“Shakespeare in Performance”), University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, June 24, 1996.
22. Phillip Silver, *Stratford Festival Souvenir Program*, 1996, 39.
23. Given the absence of any notes on this stage business in the stage manager’s prompt book, this account of what happened at this moment during the trial scene is based on the archival videotape of the 1996 show.
24. *Beacon Herald* [Stratford], March 25, 1955 (“Press Clippings,” Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 3, f 51r).

25. Ibid.
26. *The Merchant of Venice*, prompt script, stage manager's copy, note facing p. 63.
27. Slomovitz, "Play's Revival a Depressing Experience," *Jewish News*, July 8, 1955 ("Press Clippings," Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 5, f 77r).
28. Clive Barnes, "Theater: Another Look at 'Merchant,'" *New York Times*, June 10, 1970 ("Press Clippings," Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 139, f 9r). Whereas Barnes admired the ending with Jessica "staring wonderingly at Antonio," Philip Slomovitz, in "Anti-Semitism Seems Inevitable in Shylock Role," *Jewish News*, June 19, 1970 ("Press Clippings," Stratford Festival Archives, vol. 139, f 11r), described her look as a "rebuking glance," a "directorial accusatory stare."
29. Ann Stuart, stage manager, prompt script, note facing 5.1.f.

## WORKS CITED

- Berry, Ralph. 1985. "Stratford Festival Canada." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 36 (1): 87–93.
- Davies, Robertson. 1948. *Shakespeare for Young Players*. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Ltd.
- Gascon, Jean. 1970. "Director's Preface." In *The Merchant of Venice*, edited by John Stevens. Toronto: Festival Editions of Canada.
- Gilbert, Miriam. 2002. *Shakespeare at Stratford: The Merchant of Venice*. London: Arden.
- Granville-Barker, Harley. 1946. *Prefaces to Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Guthrie, Tyrone. 1965. In *Various Directions: A View of Theatre*. New York and London: Macmillan.
- Pettigrew, John and Jamie Portman. 1985. *Stratford: The First Thirty Years*. 2 vols. Toronto: Macmillan.
- Malone, Toby. 2013. "'Distract parcels in combined sums': The Stratford Festival Archives' Stage-Managerial Collections." *Canadian Theatre Review* 156 (Fall): 66–71.
- Shakespeare, William. 2010. *The Merchant of Venice*. Edited by John Drakakis. Arden Shakespeare, Third Series. London: Methuen.
- Stratford Festival Archives. 1955–2013. Stage Management Records. *The Merchant of Venice*, various productions. Stratford Festival Archives, Stratford, Ontario.
- Valk, Diana. 1958. *Shylock for a Summer: The Story of One Year (1954–5) in the Life of Frederick Valk*. London: Cassell.

# Intercultural Performance and The Stratford Festival as Global Tourist Place: Leon Rubin's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night*

ROBERT ORMSBY

## A MORE GLOBAL CONTEXT FOR STRATFORD'S SHAKESPEARE

In 2006, Leon Rubin stated that he had tried to “reimagine Shakespeare in a more global and cultural context” throughout the five years that he had been directing at the Stratford Festival.<sup>1</sup> As he commented in his program note to *Twelfth Night*, his productions usually drew on non-English cultures for their scenography: his two *Henry VI* plays, from 2002, employed “visual imagery from other cultures, such as Japan”; he set the 2003 *Pericles* “in the Far East and used multiple cultural settings to represent his journey”; his 2004 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* took place “in the Amazonian rainforest”; his 2005 *Measure for Measure* “was based in Eastern Europe, around Hungary”; and his 2006 *Twelfth Night* was “set in India when it was an English colony.”<sup>2</sup> But what did it mean to reimagine Shakespeare in a more global and cultural context at the Stratford Festival in the early twenty-first century? Was global Shakespeare primarily a matter of what happened in the Festival's theatres, or did it include other elements that go into creating an overall “Stratford Experience”? In this paper I examine Rubin's productions of *Dream* and *Twelfth Night* to consider how Shakespeare and the global were configured at the Festival near the start of this century. These two main-house productions suggest that what Ric Knowles has referred to as the company's “‘multinationalist' moment”



(Knowles 2004, 31) is connected to the Festival's cultivation of Stratford as a tourist place, where theatregoers are invited to help create a sense of place constituted by stage action that relies on intercultural elements, the cross-border tourist industry between Canada and the United States, and a conventional belief in Shakespeare as the poet of universal human nature.

When thinking about what it means to reimagine Shakespeare in a global context at Stratford, it is helpful to remember that the Festival is central to a number of significant narratives about earlier phases of Canadian theatre's role in negotiating two international relationships: those with Britain and with the United States. Margaret Groome (2002, 109) has linked Stratford's founding to the desire for a national theatre in Canada that could counteract the influence of British and American theatrical exports, a desire that was balanced against "a reluctance to 'go too far' in loosening the ties to the British empire." Meanwhile, the hiring of British director Tyrone Guthrie as Stratford's first artistic director was, arguably, a manifestation of the widespread perception in postwar Canada that any national "cultural institution receiving international attention would immediately be acknowledged as a national icon" (ibid., 108). As Guthrie himself put it, Canada, "like an enormous young boy" whose "shy little voice" was "at odds with his gigantic and formidable stature" (qtd. in Pettigrew and Portman 1985, 15), would become culturally mature by producing the classics (i.e., Shakespeare) at venues like the Stratford Festival in a manner suited to the national character (Guthrie 1959, 299). Yet his effort "to transplant a supposedly universal conception of Shakespeare into the Canadian context has been read as a neo-colonial manoeuvre willingly abetted by the forces of anglophile nostalgia" (Shaughnessy 2002, 124; Falocco 2009, 5).

In 1974, the first issue of *Canadian Theatre Review* (CTR) expressed similar sentiments when entering the debate over the Festival's role in developing a national dramatic and theatrical tradition free from direct British influence. CTR's editorial position was characteristic of the rise of alternative theatre in Canada in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and of the contemporaneous growth of Canadian nationalism, which was evident in the country's adoption of the Maple Leaf flag in 1965 (replacing the Canadian Red Ensign) and in the waxing national confidence that followed Montreal's highly successful World's Fair, Expo 67. The journal issue included an interview with Robin Phillips, the Briton newly appointed as Stratford's artistic director. The edgy tone that the anonymous interviewer adopted when questioning Phillips about the



propriety of hiring a foreigner to lead Canada's "national" theatre" (Phillips 1974, 63) echoed an introductory editorial statement demanding Phillips' removal from the position (Rubin, Mezei, and Stuart 1974, 8). Editor Don Rubin's subsequent essay was, however, more nuanced. Arguing that Stratford helped develop a postwar national theatre tradition but not a national dramatic literature, he reminded readers that the 1951 report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (the Massey Report), released two years before Stratford's founding, gave powerful official voice to the anxiety about the overwhelming influence of the United States on Canadian culture. Rubin's recognition that the Stratford Festival was "of equal importance with the Massey Commission Report" to the Canadian theatre and a defence against the influence of American culture has attained the status of a canonical scholarly expression of the Festival's position in Canada's relationship between Britain and the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever concerns about English or American colonial or neo-colonial influence attached to the Festival in its first twenty-odd years, Knowles' description of Stratford's multinationalist moment as constituted by "free trade, 'globalization,' and intercultural tourism" (Knowles 2004, 31) singles out important elements of the tourist attraction it had become by the time Leon Rubin got there. The mid-twentieth-century anxiety that the United States would eventually dictate cultural terms to Canada finds comic Shakespearean expression in the television series *Slings & Arrows*, which aired while Leon Rubin worked at Stratford. *Slings'* first season includes a plotline in which the American corporate raider Holly Day proposes to turn the New Burbage Festival (a parody of Stratford) into a theme park, Shakespeareville, an embodiment of the belief that the Stratford Festival itself had become a mere tourist trap (see Parolin 2009, 197). Stratford is not Shakespeareville, but it is a major Shakespearean tourist destination, like Stratford-upon-Avon, although Ontario's Stratford cannot credibly supply its visitors with the same kind of fantasies about encountering early modern English heritage on offer in Britain.<sup>4</sup> Of course, what both attractions offer tourists is not simply a physical destination, but the opportunity to create a sense of place, to be part of the "process . . . by which space is made useful and meaningful," including "the attachment of meaning or sentiments to places through shared understandings" (Paulsen 2010, 2). These Shakespearean locales can also be tourist attractions at which certain visitors seek "self-discovery through a complex and sometimes arduous search for an Absolute Other" (McCannell 2013, 5), where place is the "symbolic shelter for every tourist desire, the

ultimate destination” (McCannell 2011, 11). Such places shelter tourists’ symbolic desire because they are brought into being by visitors’ attachment of meaning to them through “circles of anticipation, performance and remembrance” (Bærenholdt et al. 2004, 3).

Creating a tourist place like the Stratford Festival, moreover, involves an eclectic blend of notions about chronology and geography. Anticipation is created by publicity, reviews, and memories of earlier experiences; performance takes the form of travel, staging, and watching theatre, and enjoying various non-theatrical diversions; remembrance, which affects future anticipation, is partly shaped by preserved photographs, souvenirs, and programs. Rubin gave theatregoers the opportunity to be part of the performance of “global” Shakespeare by adorning his productions in images of various exotic locales. At the same time, Artistic Director Richard Monette’s notes in visitors’ guides in the early twenty-first century encouraged visitors to think of the Festival in terms of theatrical seasons animated by universalist or trans-historical themes: seasons put theatregoers in touch with “the origins of our art” (2003), offered performance as a “religious ritual” connecting spectators “with all of humanity” (2004), and “archetypal” characters “whose virtues and flaws we can all recognize in ourselves” (2005).<sup>5</sup> If Monette proposed a universally relevant Festival experience as the context within which Rubin’s intercultural spectacles played out, the economically important and historically determined global relationships at Stratford were with multinational corporate sponsors (such as American Express, General Motors, Imperial Oil) and with American visitors. The Festival’s archives contain many dozens of newspaper stories published between 2003 and 2006 detailing the harm that a foreign epidemic and overseas conflicts did to the latter relationship across southern Ontario’s performing-arts sector: attendance at theatres in Toronto and Stratford dropped as the World Health Organization issued warnings against travel to Canada because of SARS (the viral respiratory disease originating in China) transmission, frightening away American tourists; and plans to implement restrictive border controls between Canada and the United States because of security concerns arising from American-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq further threatened Ontario’s box offices. The federal and Ontario governments pledged emergency relief funding for cultural institutions, and in 2006 Antoni Cimolino (then the Festival’s General Manager) lobbied politicians in Washington, D.C. about proposed travel restrictions. However, as newspapers reported, it was not just the Festival’s revenue that was threatened by the potential loss of American customers, who made up more than a third of

its visitors; local businesses, such as the hospitality trade—a key aspect of the Stratford experience and the Festival’s identity as a tourist place—faced real economic uncertainty.

The ways that Rubin’s *Dream* and *Twelfth Night* contributed to the Festival’s identity as a tourist place in the early twenty-first century shed light on what Crystal Bartolovich (2001, 178) refers to as the “problems of location and possession” of Shakespeare that “seem to be multiplying geometrically under conditions of late capitalism as ‘globalization.’” In what follows, I focus not on the overall Stratford experience, but on how Rubin’s intercultural performance served it, making a number of related arguments about the possession and location of Shakespeare. I consider how *Dream* and *Twelfth Night* invited theatregoers to perform a version of “the tourist gaze,” which John Urry and Jonas Larsen (2011, 2) describe as an organizing principle employed by tourists “that orders, shapes and classifies, rather than reflects the world.” These productions encouraged spectators to do what visitors to Stratford-upon-Avon have done since the eighteenth century: order, shape, and classify their travel to Shakespeare-related locales as a pilgrimage that allows visitors to rediscover themselves by encountering a supposedly culturally distant Other, namely versions of Shakespeare that suited pilgrims’ desires. I examine how Rubin staged encounters with Others culturally distant from Ontario’s Stratford—South American Athenians and Illyrians transported to colonial India—while masking the stage architecture, thus visually obscuring the theatre space’s conventional associations with the Festival’s origins and its connections to British twentieth-century theatrical culture. Because the Latin American and Indian elements in *Dream* and *Twelfth Night* respectively were themselves intercultural and global, the productions did not affiliate Shakespeare with precisely articulated national or local cultures. Instead, Rubin remade the space of the Stratford Festival Theatre into a tourist place of global exchange that took the form of an interplay among generic cultural tropes that are widely recognizable. The productions did not explicitly confront the economic threat posed by overseas conflicts to the cross-border tourist traffic between the United States and southern Ontario; rather, the director staged an idealized image of the Festival itself, associating Shakespeare with non-English cultures in ways that ensured theatregoers the tourist privilege of enjoying that which is conventionally Other (to themselves, to Ontario’s Stratford, to the playwright) while avoiding any deep commitment to the cultures on display. More precisely, by portraying the two comedies as non-threatening journeys or encounters with various forms of Otherness that ended in a

safe return home, Rubin implied that spectators could enjoy the productions as tourists in the sense of those who depart only temporarily from colloquial, workday existence (Urry and Larsen 2011, 2).

### STRATFORD-UPON-AMAZON?

Throughout his 2004 *Dream*, Rubin made vague many of the indicators that would have situated the action in any specific locale. For instance, he replaced references to Athens, which would have reminded audiences of Shakespeare's indebtedness to an ancient culture's source material, with more generic phrasing such as "civilian," "the city," and "poor mortal." As he did in *Pericles*, Rubin had John Pennoyer use long white fabric hanging panels to mask the Festival Theatre's dark wooden stage structure in the first two scenes of *Dream*; designed by Briton Tanya Moiseiwitsch and associated with Guthrie's legacy at Stratford, the unmasked structure would have been a visual reminder of the Festival's indebtedness to British theatrical culture. Pennoyer, meanwhile, understood his costuming to mark a basic "contrast between the [production's] urban setting and the tropical jungle," and his comment that the "mechanicals rehearse in a barrio, a characteristic environment of a Latin American country,"<sup>6</sup> captures the nature of the show's design: an amalgam of easily recognizable signs suggesting the generalized non-Shakespearean and non-Stratford otherness of some unnamed Latin American location. This amalgam of signs reflects what W. B. Worthen writes, in discussing the Globe's relationship to theme parks, about such characteristic tourist destinations: they offer the "experience of a place's 'theme' or 'essence,'" often depicting locales that are "not very specific," and that are "troped by imagery, characters, and narratives previously encountered in mass-culture entertainment" (Worthen 2003, 93–94). Rubin re-imagined a more global context for Shakespeare by altering the traditional associations evoked by the Festival's stage architecture, a space that has provided Stratford with its visual identity, and its location as a tourist venue. He did so by devising a South American-themed setting for *Dream* constituted by a variety of globally recognizable tropes derived from mass-entertainment culture, and by arranging these tropes in a way that depicted the stages of anticipation, performance, and remembrance through which tourist places are sustained.

The production opened with an anticipation of the themed wilderness in the forest scenes to come by illuminating in a square of light a zebra-skin rug while the jungle sounds of birdcalls and insect buzzing

played on the sound system. After the lights faded to black, they came back up in a window-pane pattern that covered the rug, connoting prison bars or, perhaps, the caging of animal instincts at Theseus' court. The jungle sounds gave way to several guitars playing a Latin tune to accompany Jonathan Goad's Theseus and Dana Green's Hippolyta tangoing in the half-light; this was no longer the African setting implied by the zebra rug, but somewhere in South America. The four lovers, however, were hardly specific to any nation or even any continent. Instead, Rubin and Pennoyer made a clearly legible distinction between stylish and awkward pairs of youths. Nazneen Contractor's Hermia wore black high-heeled shoes, a knee-length skirt, and a sleeveless midriff-bearing top with long evening-wear gloves, while Jeffrey Wetsch's Lysander was more casually fashionable in a baggy tracksuit with three-quarter-length sleeves. By contrast, Haysam Kadri's Demetrius was a straight-laced young man in chinos, dress shirt, and blazer, while Michelle Giroux's Helena was done up as a gangly private-school girl with glasses, grey blazer, and knapsack. Brad Rudy's Egeus, in a dark business suit, presented a culturally non-specific model of outraged paternalism, but Rubin closed the scene by returning the action to a clichéd or themed depiction of South American dictatorship. As drums, rattles, and guitars played, stage hands dressed like paramilitaries in black shirts, berets, and holstered sidearms removed the rug, adding a frisson of menacing Latin otherness to the lovers' escape from their quotidian, regulated life at court for the freedom of the woods.

Rubin used the mechanicals' first scene to prime theatregoers for the conventionally touristic departure from the "familiar place" of quotidian existence to the encounter with a freer, less civilized world in the jungle (Urry and Larsen 2011, 12). The windowpane bars of the court were replaced with the outline of an apartment building projected onto a fabric panel, suggesting Pennoyer's barrio setting. Rubin's mechanicals were dressed like shabby beach bums, though their outfits, like the lovers', did little to denote South America. Shane Carty's Starveling, sporting cut-off trousers, carried a six-pack of beer; Robert King's Snug, too, had cut-offs and wore a blue shirt; Brendan Averett's Flute had chinos and a bright-orange Hawaiian shirt; Thom Marriott's Bottom wore grey trousers and a loud purple short-sleeved collared shirt. The fairly monochromatic palette of the first scene was exchanged for a wash of light on the stage floor to create what looked like brush strokes in pastels of turquoise, pink, and mauve, suggesting a transition to some holiday spirit that matched the workmen's clothes. Indeed, Quince called an end to their horseplay that began the scene by blowing on a referee's

whistle, enacting a struggle between the serious work of play-acting and the playfulness these workmen aimed at. Significantly, the horseplay included a Shakespearean intertext, as the men chanted a version of the “Lend me the cannikin, clink, clink” drinking song from act 2 of *Othello* (2.3.63).<sup>7</sup> Whereas the original song devolves from celebration into tragedy when Iago frames Cassio, here it served as a prologue to buffoonery that transformed the acting profession into lighthearted experimentation with the roles in “Pyramus and Thisbe.” Marriott ended the scene in the same vein, intoning in a deep, overly dramatic voice “Once more unto the beach dear friends, once more.” By erasing a single “r,” Rubin removed the explicit military threat to a specific foreign locale and people—Harfleur and its French defenders—with which Henry V speaks the lines. As rewritten, the line urges the would-be actors on to the seaside, an unspecified though characteristically tourist destination. The new line helped transform the Shakespearean tag Marriott spoke a second later, “To die, to sleep, perchance to dream” (3.1.65–66);<sup>8</sup> seen in the recreational spirit of the previous quotation (and in the scene generally), Hamlet’s suicidal thoughts were turned into what could be taken as an assurance that death, or the impending danger of the forest, is merely sleep, a non-threatening journey from which the traveller is likely to return and recover. Making this promise of safe return, which is central to tourism, Rubin enjoined spectators to regard the woods with a tourist gaze.

In recasting the woods as a South American rainforest, Rubin and Pennoyer created a setting—something akin to Stratford-upon-Amazon—that suggested the kind of Shakespearean tourist place that the Stratford Festival is. Rubin’s director’s note attempted to create for theatregoers a sense of anticipation that, in experiencing the forest, they would be transported to a mystically Shakespearean past. Unlike “the modern world,” where “the woods are small and close to the cities,” Rubin wanted to capture what “Shakespeare intended,” namely the “idea of the forest as a place of magic and nature” that “was deeply ingrained in the Elizabethan psyche”; “a remote, uncharted, magical place where lives are somehow transformed.”<sup>9</sup> For the forest scenes, Pennoyer’s fabric panels were removed to reveal the stage architecture covered in steel pipes, twisted and painted green to resemble vines. Although Rubin’s “Director’s Note” indicates that he wanted the forest to put spectators in touch with a Shakespearean otherness that resided in a supposedly historical/Elizabethan understanding of the woods, he also intended those who encountered this “uncharted” place to see “the fairies [as] resemble[ing] the colours and shapes of the indigenous tribes

that inhabit South America.”<sup>10</sup> These unspecified tribes of generically “natural” people, identifiable only by their “colours and shapes,” arguably reflect a modernist attraction to the primitive that Guthrie, who innovated theatrically by returning to supposedly earlier ideas of ritual and the sacred, would have understood.<sup>11</sup> For his part, Rubin imagined the forest inhabitants—dressed in brightly coloured tight body suits decorated with fake animal furs, prints, and fronds that resembled the jungle foliage—as a means to do away with the supposed clutter of stale British Shakespearean theatre practice that had led to “the prettified Victorian image of fairies prevalent today.”<sup>12</sup>

The play’s urbanite trekkers, in whom theatregoers may have seen an image of themselves as theatrical explorers taking in the jungle spectacle of “indigenous . . . South American” otherness, were patently out of their element in the woods. Of course, the characters could not see the fairies—and thus it was the theatregoers who were invited to develop the tourist gaze as such—but the lovers encountered the supernatural without ever being in any danger. That is, like tourists who could enjoy “licence for permissive and playful ‘non-serious’ behavior,” these four could experience “physical closeness” to spectacles of otherness without being concerned with “moral proximity” or bearing responsibility for or suffering serious consequences from such encounters (Urry and Larsen 2011, 12, 29). Rubin made Demetrius an emblem of inept adventurousness, outfitting Kadri in silly khaki shorts, a long-sleeved safari shirt, and ugly dark socks, all accessorized with binoculars and a small shoulder bag. Giroux’s Helena became a 1950s throwback, in a wide skirt, white blouse, and pink jacket with rolled-up sleeves. Wetsch maintained his urban-culture garb, but Contractor’s Hermia seemed ready for a slumber party with her nightgown and quilt. In stark contrast to this odd assemblage of non-Amazonian lovers, each “themed” as they were in the first scene to represent a different and not particularly South American type, the fairies made a spectacular entrance suited to the stage’s sylvan makeover. As South American panpipes sounded, fairies appeared on the platform above the stage; dressed in tight body suits with gauzy bits in pastels reminiscent of the colours on the stage floor in the mechanicals’ scene (and possibly South American Mardi Gras), they matched the art nouveau aura of the set’s bent steel vines. Just before Goad’s Oberon leaped athletically onto the stage and Green’s Titania made her stately entrance on a platform above, a pounding drum mixed in with the pipes as the lighting came up to reveal more fairies dancing onto the stage in what resembled moves from the Brazilian martial art, capoeira. However, in the same way that capoeira has become, in part, a cultural



phenomenon far removed from its origins among slaves who developed the martial art as a means of defending themselves, so the martial spirit of the drums and the potential menace in the athletic leaping gave way to something much gentler.<sup>13</sup> Resembling their “prettified Victorian” predecessors in demeanour if not appearance, Rubin’s fairies merely vexed the lovers with plant fronds and puppet snakes, and three of the lovers were dispatched effortlessly and comically with Puck’s (Nicholas Van Burek) blowdarts that found their marks in the actors’ buttocks.

Furthermore, the transformations that did occur in the forest were clearly temporary and partial, with little serious effect. As the action unfolded, the lovers began to take on the wildness of the jungle setting only insofar as their clothes became slightly dirty and dishevelled. At the same time, this setting awoke their sexual instincts, though this sexuality was strictly comical, thus providing a humorous perspective on those travellers who seek tourist “places where bodies can be corporeally alive, apparently ‘natural’ or rejuvenated,” places that “involve ‘adventure,’ islands of life resulting from bodily arousal” (Urry and Larsen 2011, 22). The efforts of Wetsch’s Lysander to impress Hermia with suggestive pelvic thrusts were as preposterous as Kadri’s Demetrius awkwardly miming erotic spanking on the phrase “Fanned with the eastern wind” (3.2.142).<sup>14</sup> Giroux’s Helena took the same laughable approach to bodily arousal; after ripping open her jacket and thrusting out her chest at the repelled Kadri, she scurried around on all fours like a dog, playfully fetching his discarded stick in her mouth. Marriott’s Bottom became more outwardly assimilated to the rainforest than the lovers did; with a bent-wire ass’s head covered in leafy jungle vines, he closely resembled the set. Although the headgear, along with Marriott’s hilariously contrived “uncontrolled” braying made this Bottom the most animalistic and “organic” figure in the production, he was also determinedly modern. Marriott rapped his line “The wren with little quill” (3.1.121), ending the speech by purposely badly imitating a DJ’s record-scratching before waking up Green’s smitten Titania by air-drumming and air-guitaring. When the fairies later fulfilled his request for “the tongs and the bones” (4.1.29) with characteristically Latin rattles and drums, Marriott performed a ridiculously virtuoso imitation of Michael Jackson’s spinning, moonwalking, and shrieking. Consequently, Titania, the queen of this primitive world that is supposed to connect theatregoers to a mystically Shakespearean realm, falls in love with an absurd show-off who points theatregoers back to a more modern form of global mass-culture entertainment that jars inorganically against the sounds of the vaguely South American rainforest.



Rubin's fifth-act court scene rounded out the production's depiction of the rainforest as a tourist place by concluding with various forms of remembrance. The four lovers' costumes—all beige to match Theseus' billowing robes—clearly signalled the transformation of discord into harmony that was orchestrated in the rainforest, while the multicoloured pastel cross-hatched lighting on the floor replaced the first scene's black-and-white tones with a commemoration of the jungle's holiday spirit. Just as the mechanicals' scene in act 1 anticipated the forest-as-tourist-place, their fast-paced and very funny version of "Pyramus and Thisbe" memorialized the ethos of harmless fun in that rainforest, where the lovers' potential tragedy was converted into humour. Pyramus and Thisbe's outfits shared in the production's themed South American-ness. Thisbe's purple skirt and skimpy top, which showed plenty of Averett's skin, was a grotesque cliché of Brazilian carnival costuming, while the actor's multi-coloured headdress was reminiscent of both carnival and the brightly lit jungle foliage of the preceding acts. Similarly, while Marriott's grass-tufted helmet recalled Bottom's leafy ass-head, the actor's hubcap breastplate perhaps suggested the clichéd petty automotive larceny associated with Pennoyer's "characteristic" barrio environment. The celebratory "bergomask" that resolved the mechanicals' recapitulation of the lovers' encounter with themed Amazonian tourist-place otherness commemorated the holiday spirit of that place by accompanying the large group dance to the Lambada. This song, the full title of which is "Chorando se Foi (Lambada)," is associated with the state of Bahia in eastern Brazil, and was recorded by multiple artists in the 1980s before it became a global mass-media example of themed Latin-ness when the French-Brazilian group Kaoma had a worldwide hit in 1989–90 with its cover of the tune.<sup>15</sup>

Rubin offered one last means of commemorating the tourist place of this *Dream's* Stratford-upon-Amazon. In act 4, when Goad's Oberon invited Green's Titania, "take hands with me, / And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be" (4.1.85), bungee-jumping fairies fell from the flies and gracefully bounced up and down half-a-dozen times before Oberon promised to bless Theseus' house. Rubin explicitly recalled this moment in act 5 when, after the court scene's Lambada, Goad and Green as Oberon and Titania stood on the vine-covered platform above the stage to bless the household. Below, fairies gathered on the stage faced the audience to repeat in unison Titania's "We will sing and bless this place" (5.1.391); as they danced, bungee jumpers bounced high above the stage, thus recalling Oberon's lines from act 4 and thereby doubly extending the fairies' benediction on the play's world outward to

the theatre and its spectators. The acrobatics might have reminded theatre historians of Peter Brook's iconic *Dream* for the Royal Shakespeare Company, but Rubin wanted to employ the high-flyers to recast the theatre as a place of sheer physical spectacle, and was "keen to use the circus techniques" he had "been learning about for many years."<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, despite masking Moiseiwitsch's iconic dark wooden stage structure, the director also located this aerial spectacle in Stratford's own storied past; noting that "the Festival Theatre is similar to a circus tent," he implicitly reminded audiences that the theatre's pie-crust/crowned roof itself commemorates the Festival's first seasons held in a tent.<sup>17</sup>

So where did theatregoers find themselves at the curtain call, when strains of the Lambada sounded again and bungee-jumpers bounced once more from the flies? In keeping with Puck's request for an endorsement of the performance just concluded, the curtain call prompted audience members to demonstrate their approval of an eclectic group of influences that Rubin had brought together. Much of the action unfolded in the mystified other place where Shakespeare is supposedly discovered, the South American rainforest that stands as an analogy for the Elizabethan conception of the woods but that also masks the stage design which links the Festival—through Guthrie and Moiseiwitsch—to twentieth-century British theatrical culture. At the same time, replaying the Lambada reminded spectators of the production's themed Latin American-ness and its reliance on mass-media global culture, while the circus elements were supposed to point back to the Festival's origins, which Rubin and Pennoyer had otherwise visually obscured. Due to this mix of cultural references, precisely where this production was supposed to be located and to whom it belonged was not entirely clear. If the question remained open about what culture(s) this *Dream* was affiliated with, Rubin's 2006 *Twelfth Night* was, perhaps, more explicit in addressing that question.

### **STRATFORD'S BOLLYWOOD FANTASYLAND**

For his 2006 *Twelfth Night*, Rubin somewhat altered his representation of the dramatic action as a tourist journey by taking advantage of the fact that the play's narrative does not return travellers Viola and Sebastian to their homes but assimilates them into Illyria. He thereby raised the possibility that the English culture Shakespeare represents could be assimilated into the Indian locale that he and Pennoyer sought to create for the production. Rubin claimed to want to locate the production outside "the traditional Western European setting" because he

was “trying to widen perspective,”<sup>18</sup> while Pennoyer remarked that they were inspired by Shakespeare, who treated Illyria as a place that “is not England” but a sort of “fantasyland” “where almost anything can happen.”<sup>19</sup> Although Rubin wanted to do away with the Victorian-ness of *Dream*’s fairies, he specified that the *Twelfth Night* setting was, in fact, Victorian; he intended to portray “India when it was an English colony,” where “Orsino’s world is Indian and Olivia’s is English.”<sup>20</sup> To help convey his vision of colonial India, Rubin had Pennoyer cover the theatre’s dark wooden stage architecture yet again, this time in fabric that could be lit in rich colouring, and that was shaped as a kind of Indian tent or pavilion. As Pennoyer noted, this strategy of “costuming the stage” helped them mimic “Shakespeare’s tendency to write English characters into foreign places,” though somewhat contradictorily the design also obscured Stratford’s colonial relationship to Britain, since “[t]he oak of the Festival stage is so identified with England.”<sup>21</sup> That is, the creation of an intercultural fantasyland or tourist place that covered over Canada’s colonial/Shakespearean heritage and replaced it with a more colourful South Asian one served a purpose similar to that of the rainforest in *Dream*: the imagined other land of Indian Illyria was an analogy intended to put theatregoers in touch with the imaginative space that was supposedly authentically Shakespearean. The Illyrian/Indian otherness that Stratford’s Canadian and American theatrical tourists encountered as the production ostensibly propelled them back in time, away from the current “multinationalist moment” to an imagined colonized locale, was themed in a markedly exoticized fashion. At the same time, what might be labelled the production’s “Bollywood” musical and dance elements drew the production back closer to the present, suggesting the appropriation and incorporation of Shakespeare by a modern, non-Western, global cinematic culture. Nevertheless, Rubin’s brief extratextual coda to the play’s action countered such incorporation by representing a return from a tourist destination, thus complicating any singular sense of where this *Twelfth Night* located Shakespeare, or to what culture it affiliated the playwright.

Viola’s attraction to Orsino was a central feature of this *Twelfth Night*’s depiction of assimilation into an Indian locale that was, like *Dream*’s South American one, never precisely identified. From the start, the director and designer represented Orsino’s milieu through immediately recognizable signs of themed “Indianness” associated with luxury, vivid colours, and romantic allure. Sanjay Talwar’s love-struck Duke sat on a platform covered in vivid red and gold cloth, and, like the other members of his court, he wore loose trousers, a turban, and a brightly

coloured top. As a group, they watched a woman dance while a sitar, flute, and drums played a seductive rhythm. By her second scene, Dana Green's Viola had switched from the light-coloured European gown and shawl in which she first appeared to clothing that matched her Indian environment as Cesario; she now wore a light turban, pyjama trousers, and a white tunic under a sumptuous gold vest. Green further suited herself to the court, which was lit in pink, magenta, and orange, by greeting Orsino using the "Namaste" gesture; with her head lowered, her palms pressed together, the thumbs pointing toward her chest, her respectful disposition was easily identifiable as "Indian." For her next scene with Orsino, the court was decorated using sumptuous multi-coloured cushions, and a sitar and flute played before Andrew Massingham's Feste took over, accompanying his own singing on finger cymbals. Talwar's Orsino now wore a golden robe and had his hair down, and the scene played on the tension between Viola's experience as a traveller dangerously out of her element and a tourist who is guaranteed a safe home-ward journey. Massingham's melancholic love song nearly induced Talwar and Green to kiss, but Feste's warning cymbal-clanging comically startled them out of their mutual captivation. However, there was a suggestion that, while Green's Viola had not physically crossed the line from being a tourist who avoids moral proximity to the tourist locale, she had done so emotionally. Specifically, as she recounted the story of her father's only daughter—herself—chimes and a sitar softly played, associating the melancholy of her suppressed love with the romanticism of "India" at Orsino's court.

When Green's Viola/Cesario went to Olivia's household, supposedly an English one and thus a locale associated with Viola's original European costuming, the desire that her Cesario disguise unleashed in Seana McKenna's Olivia was expressed by means of the themed Indianness prevailing at Orsino's court. Initially, the setting and costuming at Olivia's home was understated; the fabric on the stage structure was lit in a golden biscuit colour, warm but not ostentatious. Her servants were dressed in plain white saris, while McKenna herself wore black and dark-purple Victorian mourning garments. Similarly, Thom Marriott's Sir Toby wore grey trousers and a dark topcoat, Diane D'Aquila's Maria had a grey-purple nineteenth-century gown, and Brian Bedford wore a long dark coat and knee breeches as Malvolio. The relatively understated Englishness was completed with plain wooden chairs and a drinks table. However, a transformation occurred after Olivia encountered the apparently Indian Cesario. When Green delivered the "Make me a willow cabin at your gate" speech (1.5.257–65),<sup>22</sup>

proposing how he/she would woo Olivia, strains of the sitar associated with Orsino's court played. McKenna's clearly love-struck Olivia drew laughter as she pleaded with Green to "come to me again" (1.5.271); alone and inspired by Green's "Indian" speech, she removed her mourning veil, beginning the metamorphosis that drew her—sartorially, at least—closer to her Indian surrounding. For Cesario's next visit to Olivia's, McKenna wore a light-purple dress with a shimmering green overskirt, and was more assertive in pursuing Green. As the scene ended, McKenna removed a mechanical songbird from its cage and, holding it by the feet as it flapped its wings, she ran offstage excitedly, overtly mirroring the toy animal's free spirit. Olivia's final transformation occurred when she encountered Shaun McComb's Sebastian, who was dressed like Cesario. Wearing an ostentatious gold and pink sash over her shoulder and a turquoise and gold sari, McKenna out-glittered everyone in her Indian finery. As she kissed McComb, an Asian flute sounded a fluttering note like a bird beating its wings, underscoring the link between Olivia's decorative, clichéd Indian-ness and the uncaging of her animal/sexual instincts.

Rubin matched Viola and Olivia's transformation or apparent absorption into the Indian environment with an explicit rejection of British symbols and authority. He did so in part by turning Don Carrier's Sir Andrew into a clichéd Scot. Carrier played the bagpipes with comic ineptitude, danced Highland steps awkwardly, and, rather than actually fighting Cesario, lifted his kilt to expose his boxer shorts in preposterous homage to *Braveheart*, the Academy Award-winning film about William Wallace. While such cliché was consistent with Rubin's theming tactics, this Sir Andrew was clearly meant to represent that which could not be assimilated to the production's supposedly Indian environment: when D'Aquila's Maria noted Olivia's distaste for yellow, Carrier's knight was overtly ashamed of that colour in his tartan mantle; and at the production's close, a dejected Sir Andrew, in his Highland uniform, walked slowly and sadly offstage, his bagpipes under his arm. The evident rejection of British authority in this imagined colonial Indian setting was even more pronounced in the gulling of Bedford's Malvolio, whose English accent dripped condescension. In yellow stockings, his gleefully lustful but ridiculous pursuit of his mistress recapitulated McKenna's colourfully costumed pursuit of Green's Cesario three scenes earlier. Like Sir Andrew's dejected exit in full Scottish regalia, Bedford's imprisonment—all condescension drained from his English accent as he pleaded with Massingham's "Sir Topaz"—represented the disciplining of English authority as a process of excluding those

elements of British culture that were unacceptable in the production's version of India.

The large-scale dance number that Rubin staged directly before Feste's closing song advanced the seeming absorption of "acceptable" British cultural authority into the director's themed depiction of India. This number celebrated something the lovers in Rubin's *Dream* only flirted with, namely crossing the line from being tourists by succumbing to a touristic place "where bodies can be corporeally alive," one of those "islands of life resulting from bodily arousal" (Urry and Larsen 2011, 22). For the dance, the three couples who found love were all very clearly part of *Twelfth Night*'s imagined India: Marriott's Sir Toby and D'Aquila's Maria now wore colourful sashes over their European clothing; Talwar's Orsino wore the same shimmering green robe-coat he had before; and, while McComb maintained his Cesario-like turban-and-tunic costume, Green removed hers to reveal a sleeveless top and wide skirt in orange, pink, and white. As patterned lights brightened the stage floor and others turned the fabric on the stage structure violet, pink, and a luscious purple, a Bollywood-esque techno-sounding sitar-and-drum tune began, punctuated by a male chorus chanting a percussive "Hey! Hey! Hey!" The three couples danced together and Green and McKenna supplied their own arm and wrist-twisting gestures, again reminiscent of Bollywood dance routines. This effect was completed by Olivia's "Indian" attendants (now in colourful costumes) and colonial British policemen, all of whom danced around the stage's perimeter to frame the joyful surrender to the exoticism and romanticism of this Bollywood fantasyland. Obviously, Rubin was revisiting his strategy of using recognizably "foreign" music as he had with the Lambada in *Dream* two years earlier. Yet, while the Lambada, like Bollywood cinema or intercultural Shakespeare, is the result of syncretism that blends diverse cultural elements from across the globe, this dance routine did not cap a return home for the Victorian figures who themselves stood in for tourists. Instead, the routine continued a journey outward, away from a supposedly originating English culture, be it Shakespeare's "Elizabethan" portrayal of characters in foreign lands, that of the Victorians who spread Shakespeare throughout their colonies, or the twentieth-century theatre design of Moiseiwitsch's stage underlying the "Indian" spectacle.<sup>23</sup> In that regard, the dance suggested what has been happening to Shakespeare as the playwright's works are performed at festivals around the world; other cultures do not simply receive the cultural authority he represents but use it for their own purposes, and in so doing relocate Shakespeare, claiming possession of him for their own.

However, Rubin closed the production with a serio-comic reassertion of British authority that complicated the portrayal of absorption into this Indian fantasyland. After the Bollywood-like dance number, Massingham, who had moved to centre stage while the dance was still in full swing, performed Feste's closing song, accompanied by a relatively sombre tabla, sitar, and cymbals. As he sang, the various characters ambled offstage at intervals. Alone, Massingham put the earlier scene's birdcage in front of him and covered it with the long skirts of his coat, suggesting the suppression of carefree animal sexuality with which the bird was associated when Olivia released it. A moment later, a large cage dropped from the flies, imprisoning Massingham's Feste himself. Bedford's triumphant Malvolio appeared on the platform above, his arms spread demonstratively to the audience, which supplied the wild applause he sought. This crowd-pleasing moment arguably symbolized the return from the tourist's journey. Rubin saw Feste as "a roaming, gypsy-like character"; he belonged to Olivia's English household but was able to venture without consequence between that English setting and Orsino's Indian locale.<sup>24</sup> In other words, he embodied what has been described as the tourist's "vagabond" qualities of moving freely into and out of foreign locales unencumbered by any responsibility to those places (Urry and Larsen 2011, 28–29; Bauman 1993, 241). The imprisonment of this vagabond/gypsy by Olivia's explicitly English steward who had come back to his true self represented, like the covering of the caged bird, then, a return from the production's fantasyland tourist place and the re-establishment of workaday existence. Although it was the vengeful Malvolio who forced the voyage back from the tourist place, the moment was far from puritanical in spirit. This action reframed as humorously lighthearted the need to conclude the holiday and, possibly, return Shakespeare to his English location, or to reassert the playwright's English identity, even if that meant associating Shakespeare's comic spirit with the gleeful revenge of a priggish authority figure.

Thus, the brief coda to Rubin's *Twelfth Night*, like his 2004 *Dream*, appears to have returned Shakespearean travellers home, but where was home? I have argued that this home was implicitly associated with the idea of the Festival as a tourist place comprised of several elements: reliance on an international or dual-national spectatorship; the avowal of some connection to a supposedly authentic Shakespearean other that exists primarily as a rhetorical convenience to justify production choices; and the masking of the Festival's British-influenced origins with vaguely South American and Indian cultures and global mass-media culture. In one sense, Rubin's use of South American and Indian cultures



continued intercultural performance's loosening of any one nation's "claims to ownership" of Shakespeare (Burnett 2011, 449). Finally, though, these productions did not simply align Shakespeare with "foreign" cultures; those cultures were for the Festival's use, and clearly were not a straightforward expression of Brazil's or Bollywood's ownership of Shakespeare. To answer the question, "what interests are served?" by Rubin's *Dream* and *Twelfth Night* in their questioning of established "boundaries of national and cultural frameworks," the clearest response is the Festival itself as it continued to evolve in relation to prevailing modes of Shakespearean performance and in relation to its institutional identity (Dionne and Kapadia 2014, 11). The two productions reflect how the Festival, once associated with Canadian anti-colonial nationalism, could stage Shakespeare in a more global context in the twenty-first century, serving as a tourist place that integrated diverse cultural references and signifiers as it circulated the complex phenomenon known as global Shakespeare.

## NOTES

I gratefully acknowledge funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada that made research for this chapter possible.

1. Leon Rubin, "As Quoted." *Twelfth Night Program* (Stratford: Stratford Festival, 2006).
2. Ibid.
3. Don Rubin (1974, 8). Rubin did not at the time dwell on the irony that a journal devoted to Canadian theatre was led by an American who modelled *CTR* on the New York-based *TDR: The Drama Review*, though twenty years later he was far more overtly self-conscious about his position when describing the journal's origins—see Rubin (1994, 5–9).
4. For more on tourism at Stratford-upon-Avon and at the Globe, see Conkie (2006), Dobson (1992), Engler (1997), Holderness (1988), Kennedy (1998), Ormsby (forthcoming), Prescott (2013), Rumbold (2012), Schoch (2012), Thomas (2012), Watson (2007), and Worthen (2003).
5. Richard Monette, "Artistic Director's Note," *Visitors' Guide* (Stratford: Stratford Festival, 2003); Richard Monette, "Artistic Director's Note," *Visitors' Guide* (Stratford: Stratford Festival, 2004); Richard Monette, "Artistic Director's Note," *Visitors' Guide* (Stratford: Stratford Festival, 2005).
6. John Pennoyer, "As Quoted," *A Midsummer Night's Dream Program* (Stratford: Stratford Festival, 2004).
7. Shakespeare (2006); all *Othello* quotations are from the cited edition, referencing act, scene, and line.



8. Shakespeare (1987); all *Hamlet* quotations are from the cited edition, referencing act, scene, line.
9. Leon Rubin, "As Quoted," *A Midsummer Night's Dream Program* (Stratford: Stratford Festival, 2004).
10. Ibid.
11. For a discussion of Guthrie's interest in theatre as ritual that works against the alienations of industrialization, see Falocco (2002, 6–13) and Shaughnessy (2002, 131–2). For Guthrie's identity as a modernist, see Shaughnessy (99–101); for Guthrie's connection to figures of the Elizabethan revivalist movement, see Falocco (8–9) and Shaughnessy (96).
12. Rubin, "As Quoted," *A Midsummer Night's Dream Program*.
13. In *Capoeira*, Matthias Röhrig Assunção (2002) remarks upon the "conflicting interpretations" that "sought to prove what the supposed 'essence' of capoeira is: African or Brazilian; a fight disguised in dance or a dance which became a fight" (2). He further describes the diverse "competing master narratives of capoeira history" (5) that include the martial art's relationship to: African culture and Brazilian slave experience; the "formation of national, regional and ethnic identities" (8); class relations and criminal gangs; and tourism and advertising (205, 207).
14. Shakespeare, (1994); all *A Midsummer Night's Dream* quotations are from the cited edition, referencing act, scene, line.
15. Darien Lamén (2013) points out that the popularization of Kaoma's song "obscure[s] the histories of Amazonian and circum-Caribbean connectedness that gave rise to the lambada [in Brazil's Para state] in the first place." He argues that, in Para, the lambada is a result of what he calls an Amazonian "critical cosmopolitanism." See Lamén (2013, 157n1).
16. Rubin, "As Quoted," *A Midsummer Night's Dream Program*.
17. Ibid.
18. Leon Rubin, "As Quoted," *Twelfth Night Program*.
19. John Pennoyer, "As Quoted," *Twelfth Night Program* (Stratford: Stratford Festival, 2006).
20. Leon Rubin, "As Quoted," *Twelfth Night Program*.
21. John Pennoyer, "As Quoted," *Twelfth Night Program*.
22. Shakespeare (1994); all *Twelfth Night* quotations are from the cited edition, referencing act, scene, line.
23. For more on Bollywood cinema and Shakespeare, see Dionne and Kapadia (2014). For more on globalization and Bollywood cinema, see Mehta and Pandharipande (2010) and Schaefer and Karan (2013).
24. Leon Rubin, "As Quoted," *Twelfth Night Program*.

## WORKS CITED

- Assunção, Matthias Röhrig. 2002. *Capoeira: The History of an Afro-Brazilian Martial Art*. London: Routledge.
- Bærenholdt, Jørgen Ole, Michael Haldrup, Jonas Larsen and John Urry. 2004. *Performing Tourist Places*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.
- Bartolovich, Crystal. 2001. "Shakespeare's Globe?" In *Marxist Shakespeares*, edited by Jean E. Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow, 178–205. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 1993. *Postmodern Ethics*. London: Routledge.
- Burnett, Mark Thornton. 2011. "Shakespeare Exhibition and Festival Culture." In *The Edinburgh Companion to Shakespeare and the Arts*, edited by Mark Thornton Burnett, Adrian Street, and Ramona Wray, 445–63. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Conkie, Rob. 2006. *The Globe Theatre Project: Shakespeare and Authenticity*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen.
- Dionne, Craig and Parmita Kapadia, eds. 2014. *Bollywood Shakespeares*, Houndmills: Palgrave.
- Dobson, Michael. 1992. *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship. 1660–1769*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Engler, Balz. 1997. "Stratford and the Canonization of Shakespeare." *European Journal of English Studies* 1 (3): 354–66.
- Falocco, Joe. 2002. "Conflicting Ideological Interpretations of the Founding of the Stratford Festival." *Journal of American Drama and Theatre* 21 (1): 5–20.
- Groome, Margaret. 2002. "Stratford and the Aspirations for a Canadian National Theatre." In *Shakespeare and Canada: A World Elsewhere?*, edited by Diana Brydon and Irena R. Makaryk, 108–35. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Guthrie, Tyrone. 1959. *A Life in The Theatre*. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Holderness, Graham. 1988. "Bardolatry: Or, The Cultural Materialist's Guide to Stratford-upon-Avon." In *The Shakespeare Myth*, edited by Graham Holderness, 2–15. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Kennedy, Dennis. 1998. "Shakespeare and Cultural Tourism." *Theatre Journal* 50 (2):175–88.
- Knowles, Ric. 2004. *Shakespeare and Canada: Essays on Production, Translation, and Adaptation*. Brussels: Peter Lang.
- Lamen, Darien. 2013. "Claiming Caribbeanness in the Brazilian Amazon: Lambada, Critical Cosmopolitanism, and the Creation of an Alternative Amazon." *Latin American Music Review* 34 (2):131–61.

- McCannell, Dean. 2011. *The Ethics of Sightseeing*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2013. *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ormsby, Robert. Forthcoming. "Shakespearean Tourism: From National Heritage to Global Attraction." In *The Shakespearean World*, edited by Jill Levenson and Robert Ormsby, London and New York: Routledge.
- Mehta, Rini Bhattacharya and Rajeshwari Pandharipande. 2010. *Bollywood and Globalization: Indian Popular Cinema, Nation, and Diaspora*. London: Anthem Press.
- Parolin, Peter. 2009. "What Revels are in Hand?": A Change of Direction at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival of Canada." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60:197–224.
- Paulsen, Krista E. 2010. "Placemaking." *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Pettigrew, John and Jamie Portman. 1985. *Stratford: The First Thirty Years*. Macmillan: Toronto.
- Phillips, Robin. 1974. "On Being Invited to Canada." *Canadian Theatre Review* 1:60–64.
- Prescott, Paul. 2013. *Reviewing Shakespeare: Journalism from the Eighteenth Century to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rubin, Don. 1974. "Creeping Toward a Culture: The Theatre in English Canada since 1945." *Canadian Theatre Review* 1:6–21.
- . 1994. "CTR: The Moment of Conception." *Canadian Theatre Review* 79/80:5–9.
- Rubin, Don, Stephen Mezei and Ross Stuart. 1974. "An Editorial Viewpoint." *Canadian Theatre Review* 1:4–5.
- Rumbold, Kate. 2012. "Shakespeare and the Stratford Jubilee." In *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Peter Sabor and Fiona Ritchie, 254–76. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schaefer, David J. and Kavita Karan. 2013. *Bollywood and Globalization: The Global Power of Popular Hindi Cinema*. London: Routledge.
- Schoch, Richard. 2012. "The Birth of Shakespeare's Birthplace." *Theatre Survey* 53(2):188–201.
- Shakespeare, William. 1987. *Hamlet*. Edited by G.R. Hibbard. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 1994. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Edited by Peter Holland. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2006. *Othello*. Edited by Michael Neill. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- . 1994. *Twelfth Night*. Edited by Roger Warren and Stanley Wells. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shaughnessy, Robert. 2002. *The Shakespeare Effect*. Houndmills: Palgrave.
- Thomas, Julia. 2012. *Shakespeare's Shrine: The Bard's Birthplace and the Invention of Stratford-upon-Avon*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Urry, John and Jonas Larsen. 2011. *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*. London: Sage.
- Watson, Nicola. 2007. "Shakespeare on the Tourist Trail." In *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture*, edited by Robert Shaughnessy, 199–226. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Worthen, W. B. 2003. *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# Stratford, Shakespeare, and J. D. Barnett

IAN RAE

Stratford, Ontario, enjoys the highest rate of arts-related employment per capita in Canada (Denis-Jacob 2012, Polèse 2011). The artistic reputation of this city of 33,000 hinges upon the activities of the Stratford Festival, as well as on the reaction of Canada's alternative theatre network to the classical mandate of this world-renowned institution. In post-centennial (i.e., post 1967) Canada, the alternative theatre movement rejected the Stratford Festival for its lack of a "localist" sensibility and depicted it as the exemplar of a placeless and universalist aesthetic (Knowles 1995, 2002). However, the sociocultural context of the Stratford Festival is slightly more complicated than this binary suggests because the Festival is an outgrowth of a "textual community" dating back to the city's founding in 1832, one that exploited what Daniel Fischlin calls "the Shakespeare effect" (Fischlin 2007, 4) to brand the city with Shakespearean signifiers which functioned, for residents, as marks of quality and aspiration to attract immigrants, tourists, and commercial investment (Rae 2015). While the Stratford Festival is the product of national and international forces, it is also the apotheosis of a civic Shakespeare tradition fostered by a small but influential cultural elite whose activities have met with varying degrees of support and resistance from politicians, business leaders, and the public for the past 185 years. Most accounts of the Stratford Festival's founding and development either elide or trivialize this historical context. However, this chapter will identify some of the flawed historical assumptions in the two grand narratives of the Stratford Festival's founding and then investigate the material and aesthetic impact of the Shakespeare tradition through the exemplary activities of the book collector, library

founder, and city councillor John Davis Barnett. Barnett is best known for donating 40,000 volumes from his private collection to found the Arts Library at Western University in London, Ontario, but his zeal for Shakespeare and literature also had a profound impact on his hometown of Stratford.

## GRAND NARRATIVES AND FLAWED ASSUMPTIONS

There are two grand narratives of the founding of the Stratford Festival, North America's largest repertory theatre: the story of the "Stratford Miracle," which is an outgrowth of the Festival's publicity machine, and the critique of that story by the alternative theatre community, which emphasizes national factors in the founding of the Festival (e.g., the thwarted mid-century drive to establish a national theatre in Canada) even as it rejects the Festival on nationalist grounds. These grand narratives will be familiar to most scholars of Shakespeare in Canada because Richard Knowles codified them in his 1995 analysis of "the Stratford Story" in "From Nationalist to Multinational: The Stratford Festival, Free Trade, and the Discourses of Intercultural Tourism." This influential essay, in turn, became the cornerstone of Knowles's *Shakespeare and Canada* and is frequently cited in essay collections such as Irena Makaryk and Diana Brydon's *Shakespeare in Canada: A World Elsewhere?* (see also Groome 2002, 131n4, 132n6; McGee 2002, 157n7; McKinnie 2002, 213–4). I will briefly summarize the two grand narratives here, only to underscore some of their flawed assumptions about the City of Stratford. Both these narratives, for their own reasons, emphasize the incongruity of the City of Stratford and the Stratford Festival, and both misrepresent Stratford's cultural history prior to 1953. These (mis)-representations matter because the critic's attitude toward the Stratford Festival is a defining element in the two main "coming of age" stories of Canadian theatre history: one beginning with the founding of the Stratford Festival, in 1953, the other beginning with the new Canadian plays of the alternative theatre movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in which "colonialist discourses of international high culture were confronted by attempts to found a populist national(ist) theatre as a post-colonial and counter-hegemonic gesture of resistance" (Knowles 1995, 33).

The first grand narrative is variously called the Stratford Story or the Stratford Miracle (Whittaker 1958, Guthrie 1959, *Stratford* 1962, Patterson and Gould [1987] 1999). It is a pastoral tale in which a teenager, Tom Patterson (1920–2005), dreams of founding a Shakespeare Festival

in Stratford while he dawdles in parks adjacent to his high school. As an adult, Patterson returns to Stratford from Toronto to realize his teenage dream in order to save his hometown from industrial ruin in the face of the closure of the city's largest employer, the steam locomotive shops of the Canadian National Railway (CNR). In this narrative, Patterson leverages a small grant from city council to pursue his idea and manages, through a combination of luck and persistence, to enlist British theatre director Tyrone Guthrie, designer Tanya Moiseiwitsch, and actors Alec Guinness and Irene Worth, as well as Canadian theatre talent such as William Hutt and Timothy Findley. Patterson's mission to bring Elizabethan high culture to a small Ontario town causes him to be mocked but he prevails against all financial odds. Indeed, the enduring charm of this narrative arises out of its combination of heroic ambition and comic execution: "The genesis of the 'Stratford Idea' in the imagination of Tom Patterson is a story long since elevated to the status of Canadian folklore and accorded genial nods and smiles at the charming naiveté of it all" (Groome 2002, 122). This folklore effectively pairs a Great-Man theory of history (Guthrie transforming Stratford through sheer force of will and personality) with a populist rags-to-riches tale in which the little guy (Patterson) prevails through a combination of guile and hustle. Historica Canada's Heritage Minute short film on the Festival's founding encapsulates this dynamic in Patterson's awkward boast to Guthrie during a rehearsal for *Richard III*, which is disrupted by a train whistle: "Chamber of Commerce guy said to me, 'Patterson, Stratford has always been a railroad town' and I said, 'Yeah, but I'm planning to change that.'" The debonair Guthrie resolves this crisis, symbolic of the city's clash of industrial and cultural economies, by declaring that the play will have to start late to avoid the "8:05 for Toronto." The emphasis in this grand narrative, then, is on the radical transformation of the city via the dedicated efforts of a few talented cosmopolitans (Guthrie, Moiseiwitsch, Guinness) and dogged locals (Patterson, contractor Oliver Gaffney).

The place of the City of Stratford in this narrative can be effectively summarized by Patterson's 1952 recruitment letter to Guthrie:

As you know, Canada is not yet 100 years old, and being a young country, has spent most of its time looking for bread and butter. As a result, there was no time for any of the arts—and we are therefore very backward in that respect. . . . I think I probably know as much of the theatre as any one else—which is nothing—and we therefore are more than willing to give you a completely free hand—that is, within a fairly generous budget. . . . This is the feeling of the [Festival] committee to



the last man. There is absolutely nothing to start with, so that whoever does produce the Festival will have no traditions to overcome—and what is more, no local thespians who have their own ideas! (qtd. in Patterson and Gould [1987] 1999, 58–60)

By emphasizing the cultural nullity of Stratford, the Stratford Miracle narrative highlights the theatre's abrupt transformation of a city known for locomotive repair and furniture making into an international destination for cultural tourism. Thereafter, in theatre criticism, "Stratford" denotes the Festival, not the city; the former determining the latter. In turn, the Festival's grand narrative of creation *ex nihilo* plays a key part in a larger disciplinary creation story because, as Irena Makaryk observes, the Festival's founding is "undoubtedly the major event, the great leap into the unknown as Timothy Findley calls it . . . in Canadian Shakespeareana" (2002, 23). Although scholars have amply demonstrated that there was professional theatre in Canada prior to 1953 (Knowles 1995, McNicoll 2012)—as actor Amelia Hall (1989) memorialized in *Life Before Stratford*—the mythical quality of the Festival's founding still resonates in the Canadian arts community.

Canadian theatre scholars have done an excellent job of dispelling the miraculous properties of the Stratford Festival's ascent on the national level by demonstrating how the Festival benefited from the frustrated early twentieth-century drive to create a national theatre in Canada. According to this narrative, the Festival usurped much of the talent pool that would have supported a national theatre with a focus on Canadian plays while promoting the colonial perception that a distinctly Canadian theatre tradition could somehow be founded on the works of a foreign playwright (Salter 1991, Knowles 1995, Filewod 1996, Groome 2002). Curiously, however, the "localist" critique of the Stratford Festival by the alternative theatre community does little to challenge Patterson's portrait of Stratford as a cultural blank slate populated by know-nothings who blithely offer money and labour to British theatre stars in exchange for cultural expertise (Knowles 1995, 26). The contrast between the import-minded Canadians and the export-minded British thespians at the local level makes a convenient exemplum of colonial thinking, and the rejection of this kind of thinking is a crucial component of the alternative theatre community's own creation story (Usmiani 1983, 153). If the ideal of the alternative and regional theatres in Canada was to foster "an organic connection between the audience and what went on stage" (John Hirsch qtd. in Bessai 1980, 10), Stratford represented the quintessence of the inorganic: a town of rude mechanicals

that was suddenly catering to the continent's cultural elite and presenting itself as a bastion of Shakespeareana despite having no connection to Shakespeare beyond a few place names for parks and schools. The Festival's repertory mandate (which privileged European classics over new Canadian plays), its pyramidal corporate structure (governed by a board and run by directors), and its bourgeois audience (supported by wealthy patrons and federal grants) came to emblemize the kind of establishment theatre that the alternative movement sought to overthrow. As Alan Filewod observes, "in its repudiation of 'colonial' structures of thought and methods of theatrical creation, the alternative theatre sought to discover authentic, indigenous Canadian dramatic forms" in the 1970s (Filewod 1987a, viii). Subsequently, the alternative movement was forced to consider the colonial quality of its own "indigenous" claims in relation to First Nations theatre and the problem of "authenticity" in a settler society (Filewod 2011). Nonetheless, a convenient binary persists in academic criticism between a placeless, ahistorical Stratford and a community-oriented Canadian theatre rooted in place, drawing on local traditions and particularities, and deeply concerned with history (Filewod 1992, 9–10; Knowles 1994, 1995, 2004).

While this critical binary helps to make sense of many Shakespeare productions at the Stratford Festival, it fails to investigate the extent to which the Shakespeare tradition might have been embedded in municipal history prior to 1953, or the way in which the Stratford Festival might have arisen out of community imperatives ingrained in the city's history. For example, Knowles ([2005] 2010) offers a persuasive interpretation of the ahistorical quality of the Festival's 2002 performance of *Richard III*, which harkened back to the Festival's heroic opening night in 1953 more than it did to the fate of English kings. Knowles argues that the 2002 production's staging, promotion, and edits to Shakespeare's text demonstrated that "this production was not really interested in history, historiography, or historical difference," but rather with "Stratford's own fabled history, which it routinely presents in its public discourse (including the season's 'Background Book') as 'The Stratford Story'" (Knowles [2005] 2010, 140). Knowles and Margaret Groome have done a thorough job of demonstrating that while the Stratford Story may be a tale about theatre, it is always also a print narrative designed to shape the Festival's critical and popular reception. However, these critics miss the fact that the story distorts the municipal past for the purposes of augmenting the impression of the Festival's local impact. Hence, as historian Adelaide Leitch writes in *Floodtides of Fortune: The Story of Stratford*,

After the arrival of the Festival, there was much assessment and reassessment of a city suddenly caught up in international fame and fortune. . . . Unaware of the past, the Shakespearean Festival of Canada Foundation published an otherwise excellent booklet, *The Stratford Story*, and posed a question that many were asking: “Why, with no particular previous claim to cultural importance, should Stratford suddenly become the hub of such a project as a festival of Shakespeare?” . . . The answer, as they saw it, was the hundreds of acres of parks and gardens. (Leitch 1980, 209)

The answer, in other words, was more nature than culture, more material resources than civic history. Human agency in the Stratford Story arises principally from the will of the founders, whose legacy the story frames and protects. Hence Guthrie synthesizes his various iterations of the Stratford Story in his 1959 memoir, *A Life in the Theatre*, where he positions his chapter on Stratford as the climactic achievement in a long career of bridging amateur and professional theatre and questing for a thrust stage. Theatre critics must be careful not to perpetuate the misleading depiction of Stratford’s history in the founders’ narratives.

For example, critics typically take Patterson’s story of the genesis of the “Stratford Idea” as a given and overlook the fact that the idea can be traced at least as far back as 1927 (Leitch 1980); that Patterson’s initial concept of the Festival as a series of plays performed in a river-side bandshell first arose in the late 1920s (Riedstra 2015); that the stock-market crash of 1929 arrested this ambition (Shaw 1977, 51); that the idea “of converting a local theatre into a proper Shakespearean house” (Dexter 1940, 13; Rae and Smeltzer 2016) resurfaced as early as 1940; and that a driving force behind all these initiatives—Stratford’s park system, the bandshell, the Shakespearean Gardens (est. 1936–38) where Patterson reputedly conceived his “idea”—was R. Thomas Orr, whom Patterson cites as a local icon and personal role model in his memoir (Patterson and Gould [1987] 1999, 16–19). In short, the post-colonial critique of the Stratford Festival, which rightly asserts the inappropriateness of Shakespeare as the figurehead of a national theatre in Canada, inadvertently perpetuates the colonial error of taking the local cultural tabula rasa as a given, overestimating the influence of imperial agency in this “virgin” territory, and underestimating the power of local agents and traditions.

Part of the blame for the misrepresentation of Stratford’s history must rest with the flawed source materials available to scholars studying the Stratford Festival. As Knowles and Groome correctly observe, the founders and early promoters of the Festival engaged vigorously in

producing and disseminating their own mythology through press kits, brochures, visitor's guides, annual reports, and books. Countless newspaper articles and magazine profiles depended on these Festival press kits and publications for information about Stratford in general, and the news articles are, in turn, cited by Patterson in his memoir to give an air of objectivity to his subjective account. The proliferation of these print materials quickly reached the saturation point at which folklore began to pass for history.

An early example of this myth-making process is the oft-cited 1954 documentary, *The Stratford Adventure: The Story Behind the Stratford Festival*, directed by Morten Parker for the National Film Board (NFB). This film was initially approved as a short documentary, in the NFB's newsreel format, about the raising of the giant tent that housed the inaugural Stratford Festival. Parker's wife and collaborator, Gudrun, was slated to direct this newsreel, but once she was on site and caught up in the buzz of the emergent Festival she convinced the NFB to convert the newsreel into a colour feature, thirty-nine minutes long (Patterson and Gould [1987] 1999, 161; Ohayon 2009). Morten Parker subsequently took over directorial duties for the feature and, if Patterson's memoir can be believed, Gudrun composed most of the script for the film the night before each shoot (Patterson and Gould [1987] 1999, 162). Consequently, this "documentary" about the genesis of the Festival involved no substantial research into the sociocultural context of Stratford's "adventure." Instead, the film overcomes the problem of its last-minute preparation by combining pastoral footage of the Festival's setting with a clever pastiche of Shakespearean quotations to narrate the adventure through a voiceover that could be added after the shoot. This voiceover performs a variation on the mid-century house style of the NFB, which "use[s] a post-recorded 'voice-of-God' narration in which a single voice of authority, inevitably middle-class male, expounds throughout the film on the situation explored in the images" (Nelson 1988, 71). The film then intersperses this voiceover with vignettes of Stratford citizens discussing the idea of the Festival in stock scenes—businessmen discuss financial risk at a bank, a server expresses scepticism about Shakespeare's popular appeal at a diner—and their quotidian banter contrasts with the grandeur of the Elizabethan enterprise, which overcomes all petty obstacles. While the presence of these locals adds an air of verisimilitude to the film, Parker scripts them as part of a heroic enterprise involving stock characters: the visionary (Patterson), the leader (Guthrie), the sceptics (unnamed locals), the true believers (Festival staff and volunteers), the young heroes (Guinness

and Worth riding bikes around town), and the wise elder, whose final approval validates the quest (Orr).

A similar departure from the “voice-of-God” format in *The Stratford Adventure* involves the re-enactment of key moments in the Festival’s genesis narrative (Patterson’s proposal to city council, Guthrie’s first meeting with the board, etc.). These re-enactments involved the founders, board members, politicians, construction workers, and volunteers. Again, the presence of non-actors enhances the impression of documentary realism, but these re-enactments are nonetheless choreographed in a style pioneered by John Grierson at the NFB during the Second World War for propaganda purposes. It is a style that emphasizes the power of leadership, the utility of cooperation within the British Empire, the necessity of coordinating labour under a central authority, and the profitability of uniting transnational markets (Nelson 1988, 32, 131). Thus the re-enactments tend to glorify the command and influence of the British theatre stars, the improved state of Canadians in their presence, and the allure of the founders’ joint production for Canadian, American, and British tourists. Tellingly, the film concludes with the advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the King in *Henry V* emphasizing unity of purpose in the war effort:

That many things, having full reference  
To one consent, may work contrariously.  
As many arrows loosèd several ways,  
Come to one mark; as many ways meet in one town,  
As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea,  
As many lines close in the dial’s centre,  
So may a thousand actions, once afoot  
End in one purpose, and be all well borne  
Without defeat. (1.2.205–13)

*The Stratford Adventure* earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary Feature in 1954 and was distributed widely in the United States and the United Kingdom (Ohayon 2009). The film also screened “over 100” times in Stratford in 1955, shaping the perception of the city and its history for tourists and locals alike (*Beacon Herald* 1955). *The Stratford Adventure* is thus the best-known version of the Stratford Story, although locals have very little voice in it.

## **BARNETT**

If, as Robert Wallace argues, it is the task of theatre criticism to consider the “ways in which theatre both responds to and affects cultural

and political imperatives in communities” (Wallace, 1990, 29; Belliveau, Weale, Lea 2005; Nothof 2009), then the remainder of this paper will investigate the cultural imperatives that fostered the development of the Shakespeare tradition in Stratford prior to the emergence of the festival proposals in the 1920s. It will do so by focusing on the city’s cultural elite and the exemplary activities of John Davis Barnett, who by several estimates amassed the best Shakespearean collection in Canada by the time of his death in 1926 (Davis 1925, Landon 1929). Although my research on Barnett challenges much of what academic criticism says about Stratford, let me emphasize that this research confirms many things academics say about Shakespeare in Canada in general: namely, that local manifestations of Shakespeare should, as Brydon (2002, 395) argues, be understood within the circuits of transnational economic and cultural capital; that the study and veneration of Shakespeare was, as Fischlin (2007, 17) argues, part of an educational strategy promoted by the Family Compact (i.e., the governing and ruling elite) in Ontario and similar cliques to entrench British imperial authority; that the performance and memorialization of Shakespeare functioned, as Knowles (2002, 374) argues, as a tool for managing “social change” in Canada and promoting a particular notion of “upward mobility”; that Canadian interest in Shakespeare was, as Karen Bamford (2002) argues, facilitated by Shakespeare societies populated by local elites; and that beyond these elites there was, as Heather Murray (2002) argues, a secondary interest in Shakespeare among autodidacts who admired Shakespeare’s achievements despite his paucity of formal education.

A quick overview of Barnett’s biography will confirm these arguments. Barnett was born in London, England, in 1849 and died in London, Ontario, in 1926. The physical trajectory of his life underscores the element of colonial mimicry in his cultural project but also the hope for new possibilities in Canada, an enduring hope among imperialists that would eventually lead Guthrie to realize his thrust stage experiment in Ontario. Barnett had received some training in draughtsmanship from his father when he left England for Montreal at seventeen, but otherwise he had little formal education. Nonetheless, he read voraciously and believed that book learning was an effective means of acquiring knowledge and bettering oneself (Barnett 1916). Barnett’s career confirmed this belief: he rose quickly through the ranks in the steam-locomotive shops of the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) and he served on the council of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers from 1889 to 1896 and again in 1898 (Wagner 2016). He also “belonged to

the American Society of Civil Engineers, and was the first Canadian president of the American Railway Master Mechanics Association (1879–1880)” (Wagner 2016). He left Montreal to become “Master Mechanic of the Grand Trunk Railway Repair Shops in Stratford from 1880–1884,” and then “Superintendent . . . in charge of the construction and operation of the expanding shops” in Stratford from 1888 until his retirement in 1902 (Belton and Belton 2013). The GTR shops, which the CNR later acquired, were a massive operation that affected most families in Stratford. For example, Barnett replaced Patterson’s grandfather as master mechanic at the GTR shops, while Patterson’s father, Harry, succeeded Barnett in this role until Harry quit the railway to open a bookstore that served Stratford until 1960 (Robinson 2012, 10–12; Patterson and Gould [1987] 1999, 20–21). Barnett no doubt influenced Tom Patterson’s father because Barnett believed fervently in self-improvement through book learning and he transformed a small technical library at the GTR shops into a literary institute that became the basis of a training program for railway draughtsmen as well as a recreational resource for GTR employees (Bennett 1981). Barnett stocked this library with fiction, history, and religion titles he selected, a role he would also adopt in 1896 to help establish the Stratford Free Public Library (Emery, Smith, and Steele 1918). Loans of these humanities titles outnumbered those of the sciences at both locations (statistics were kept and published in local newspapers). For example, fiction constituted the vast majority of the 7,000 volumes loaned by the 261 members of the GTR Literary Institute in 1898: “Science and art, 210; history, 136; biography, 80; travels, 231; miscellaneous 228; poetry, 39; fiction, 6,081” (*Beacon* 1898). Barnett also donated hundreds of books to the local adult-education Mechanic’s Institute when its library was destroyed in the city hall fire at the turn of the twentieth century.

Following his retirement, Barnett channelled his energy and expertise into public works in southwestern Ontario. In 1903 he helped to found the Stratford Public Library building, donating books, advising on its lending policies, and even designing its lecterns. He served on the library’s board until he moved to London in 1918. Barnett also became a leading figure in the Ontario Library Association and lectured all over Ontario on “The Evolution of the Book” (*Ontario Library Review* 1920, 40) and “The Value of a Public Library to a Community” (Ontario Library Association 1926, 60, 123). Like his friend R. Thomas Orr, who is depicted in *The Stratford Adventure* as “almost alone” in his endeavours, Barnett advocated for the creation of Stratford’s extensive park system. Barnett was elected to city council once, in 1902, not



coincidentally when the creation of this park system was emerging as a matter of public debate. Subsequently, from 1907 to 1910, Barnett combined his aesthetic and engineering interests as Water Commissioner, overseeing the filtration system for Stratford's drinking water in an elegant building that is now Gallery Stratford, adjacent to the Stratford Festival. Eventually, the water, light, and electricity commissions amalgamated into one utilities agency, which Barnett headed in 1910, and which facilitated Stratford's transition from water power to electricity generated by Niagara Falls, thereby moving industry away from the Avon River. Thus Barnett played a pivotal role in the development of some of Stratford's most prominent public infrastructure and he received vocal praise for these works in regional newspapers. In other words, Barnett was not some kind of book-hoarding recluse but rather a leading figure in the community with considerable influence over it.

Barnett's most significant public gesture was his donation of approximately forty thousand volumes to the University of Western Ontario (later renamed Western University) in 1918, which James Talman and Ruth Talman (1953, 121) hail in *Western 1878–1953* as “the greatest single development of library resources that the University has known.” In 1918, Western's fledgling Arts Faculty possessed a few hundred books scattered in study rooms and professors' offices; its acquisitions budget was \$150 per year (*ibid.*); its students generally borrowed books from the London Public Library off campus. According to Landon, the former head of the London Public Library who brokered the donation with Barnett, Western's Arts Faculty was so poor during the First World War that it frequently could not pay its professors' salaries and conducted Arts classes in rented rooms (Landon [ca. 1930], 1947). The Barnett donation quickly transformed Western's ailing Arts faculty into a hub for humanities research. Barnett further facilitated this transformation by moving to London and spending four years cataloguing books and compiling bibliographies of, for example, the history of book publishing in London, Ontario. In other words, Barnett was an early Canadianist as well as a Shakespearean. Along with Sir Adam Beck, he was named honorary co-president of the London Canadian Club, and “for the Ontario Historical Society he prepared a descriptive bibliography of the narratives of the group of Canadian political prisoners who were exiled to Van Diemen's Land [Tasmania] after the events of 1837–38” (Landon 1929) by drawing on his special interest in the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837. Other bibliographies were in the works when Barnett suffered a stroke in 1922. After his death, Barnett's estate left an additional \$5,000 to Western as a contribution toward the new library's

construction, an amount equivalent to the donation to Western from the Carnegie Foundation (Talman and Talman 1953, 126–7).

Barnett earned an honorary doctorate from Western in 1919 for his donation. The *Ontario Library Review* celebrated this event by praising Barnett's collection as well as his lending philosophy:

The Barnett library was the greatest private library in the Dominion. Dr. Barnett has always had in mind the placing of his books where they would serve special students from one end of Canada to the other. When the collection of 45,000 volumes was presented to . . . Western, it was on the understanding that inter-library loan privileges should be freely granted, a stipulation that shows that fifty years of devotion to book-collecting and the expense connected therewith were actuated by the noblest of all motives—service to others. (*Ontario Library Review* 1919b, 3–4)

A similar tribute to Barnett for his years of service to the Stratford Public Library was reprinted in the *Ontario Library Review* and underscores the moral dimension of his collecting activities (Emery, Smith, Steele 1918). Barnett briefly acted as a Methodist circuit preacher while in Montreal and he approached his collecting activities with a kind of Methodist zeal for educating all classes of society, including labourers, and instilling the Protestant work ethic. Nonetheless, one must recognize the class project informing Barnett's endeavours, however inclusive. The public-library movement of the turn of the twentieth century, like the Mechanic's Institute movement that preceded it, granted access to information previously controlled by private libraries, but the libraries were also designed to divert working-class energies into non-revolutionary pursuits. The figurehead of this movement was the American steel baron Andrew Carnegie, who funded the construction of nearly a hundred libraries in Ontario. Carnegie, like Barnett, was a British immigrant with little formal education who nonetheless read avidly while working on the railroads and "looked upon a public library as a means of public education, as an institution for encouraging self-culture" (*Ontario Library Review* 1919a, 3).

"There were cultured homes in almost every city in Ontario in which John Davis Barnett was a welcome guest" (Landon [ca. 1932]) and in these homes Shakespeare represented the pinnacle of cultural attainment. Not surprisingly, Barnett's Shakespeare holdings were the pride of his collection. In Barnett's estimation, his collection included "more than 2000" books and pamphlets about Shakespeare (Barnett n.d., 32), although the Barnett donation to Western numbered closer

to 1,500. According to Barnett, these holdings ranged from “a surprising fecundity of suggestion in amending the text of the early quartos and the first folio editions of the plays,” to biographical information, eulogies, authorship debates, “pictorial illustration,” and the Greek, Roman, and French source texts of “our Bard,” as Barnett calls him (*ibid.*, 32, 34). Barnett also kept a scrapbook in which he cut and pasted references to “the Divine William” (*ibid.*, 34) by other authors in a kind of home-made concordance. Although not a trained scholar, Barnett considered himself an expert bibliographer, as a *Canada Monthly* article underscores:

Mr Barnett is not only a Shakespearian collector but is also a student and authority who stands high among other perhaps better-known authorities. He tells, incidentally, and with characteristic modesty, of an incident from which he was able to draw a good deal of amusement. On one of his trips to the Old Land he was impelled, when in the British Museum, to draw attention to a rather ridiculous error in the descriptive data in the Shakespearian collection and was able to prove his point in spite of the protests of some of the attendants, who[m] he says, “Could hardly credit the fact that a Canadian with a backwoods library should know anything about Shakespeare.” . . . He justly takes pride in the fact that some little time ago, on request, he was able to supply seventeen books and a number of pamphlets to aid in the work of making as comprehensive as possible the Shakespeare Memorial library at Stratford-on-Avon. (Moore [ca. 1911], 147)

This magazine article calls attention to the element of nationalist one-upmanship in Barnett’s endeavours. However, Barnett’s cultural frame of reference for the determination of value is still profoundly colonial.

Barnett never realized his grandest public vision: the creation of a National Library of Canada that would use his collection as its nucleus (Barnett 1918; Landon 1929; Talman and Talman 1953, 122). As early as 1904, Toronto news outlets reported that Barnett’s collection was “perhaps the most remarkable private library in Canada, if not in America” (Kodak 1904), while in 1916, the *Toronto Daily News* reported that Barnett had compiled “a collection of Canadiana that is at least unsurpassed in this country” (*Toronto Daily News* 1916). Ottawa nonetheless ignored Barnett’s appeals to nationalize his library, which he imagined as the basis of a giant interlibrary loan service that would help to retrain injured veterans from the First World War, and which would function as the engine of an information economy: “Thus shall our state-owned books grow from a boxed-in reservoir until they become like a circulating turbine pump with a pulsating delivery” (Barnett

1918, 107–8). Rebuffed, Barnett continued to pour his savings into the acquisition of books in second-hand stores during his travels up and down the rail lines, as well as through exchanges with a range of other rare-book collectors. When he arrived at Western, he estimated that he “had purchased a book and three-quarters for every day [he] had lived” (*Beacon Herald* [ca. 1922]). Barnett stored these books in his modest home near the GTR shops, where they filled every room of the dwelling and an adjacent stable. This “house held up by books” (Dingman 1981), as locals called it, became a de facto lending library run by Barnett for local and international scholars. Landon (1929) claims that

had its owner kept a visitor’s register it would have recorded some of the outstanding scholars of this continent during the last half-century. Extensive also was the correspondence which came from investigators seeking assistance. For a generation Dr. Barnett provided a reference service that was unique.

Without such a register, it is difficult to verify claims that, as one newspaper headline puts it, Barnett’s library was “a Mecca for Scholars” (*London Free Press* 1911). However, the newspaper and magazine clippings in the John Davis Barnett fonds at Western University underscore the growing fame of his collection in the early twentieth century. For example, an undated article from the *Courier* (probably Buffalo) proclaims in its headline: “Famous Library of Stratford Calling World’s Scholars.” The article then notes that Barnett’s “Shakespearean collection is known from one end of Canada to the other and contains scores of volumes that are not found elsewhere in this country,” although it is not clear whether the author means Canada or the United States here.

As for the local impact of Barnett’s library, it served as a resource for local writers, scholars, and arts-appreciation groups. From Barnett’s correspondence in the Western University archives, we know that his collection facilitated the production of regional histories by Kathleen and Robina Lizars (1896), whose book, *In the Days of the Canada Company*, a reference to the land and colonization company, is a widely read account of the settling of the Huron Tract in southwestern Ontario that dramatizes the clashes between the Goderich-based Colborne Clique, from whom the Lizars are descended, and the Family Compact, whose Canada Company agent, Thomas Mercer Jones, donated the portrait of Shakespeare that gave Stratford its name (it was mounted outside the inn that became Stratford’s first permanent structure). We also know from Barnett’s correspondence that his library became a resource for Stratford scholars such as John Mason, later professor of History at

Tulane University in New Orleans (Belton and Belton 2013). Finally, Barnett made his library available to the Fortnightly Club, run by Sarah Orr (Thomas's sister), and the Shakespeare Club, which hosted lectures from invited Shakespeare scholars, including local university graduates. For example, as president of the Fortnightly Club, Barnett hosted a 1905 meeting of the club at his home to deliver a lecture on the ennobling effects of landscape (at a time when the construction of the municipal park system was still a matter of intense local debate) and he used images of landscape paintings from his book collection to illustrate the argument.

The Stratford newspapers reported on the activities of the Shakespeare Club and the Fortnightly Club (John Davis Barnett funds) and this coverage of the city's cultural tastemakers gave a kind of official sanction to the Shakespeare tradition in Stratford. Hence public Shakespeare events tended to coincide with moments of civic celebration or crisis. For example, the first professional performance of Shakespeare in Stratford occurred in the year of Canadian Confederation, with a performance of *Othello* by the Townsend family of England. Likewise, in the depths of the Great Depression, Stratford embarked on the construction of the Shakespearean Gardens. Although these projects received broad public support, they reflected the class interests of an affluent and learned segment of that public, as would the Stratford Festival after them (Knowles 1994, 1995).

By way of conclusion, then, I would propose a series of revisions to the grand narratives about the Stratford Festival and its relation to the city. First, the binary of locals-versus-Shakespeareans that structures most of the criticism on the Stratford Festival (Groome 2002, 123; Makaryk 2002, 23) is an academic convenience that evolved out of the Festival's early press to become a template for representations of Stratford in print and on film (*The Stratford Adventure, Slings & Arrows*), but it is not historically nuanced. Patterson and the board of the Stratford Shakespearean Festival Foundation reacted to the crisis of the CNR closures in a manner that was entirely consistent with the history of elite activity in the city, falling back on the Shakespeare tradition and the park system. Second, the naively pastoral portrait of the Festival's setting needs to be revised. From its inception, the park system was not an inert green space but a cultivated *system* designed by the country's leading landscape architect, Frederick Todd (who also worked on Mont Royal Park in Montreal and in the National Capital Region, Ottawa), to combine the functions of elite promenade, public green, and arts venue.

From 1911 onward, the park system hosted outdoor cultural events such as music festivals and historical pageants. From 1908 to 1973, the park system acquired a pedagogical dimension when the Stratford Normal School, a teacher's college on whose grounds the Stratford Festival now sits, was carved out of its eastern end. From 1967 onward, the park system assimilated the water works adjacent to the Festival when the old pump house became Gallery Stratford. Thus Barnett's work as book collector, library founder, parks advocate, and water commissioner helped to prepare the material and intellectual ground for the founding of the Stratford Festival as well as for the expansion of a particular amalgam of culture, capitalism, and social engineering in Stratford. Finally, although critics love to contrast the CNR shops and the Stratford Festival for comic effect, the former actually prepared the intellectual ground for the latter through Barnett's pedagogical mission at the GTR Institute and Mechanics' Institute, as well as through the impact of the Patterson family. The recent redevelopment of the GTR site for the University of Waterloo Stratford campus, with its focus on digital design, fits a civic pattern of adapting former industrial sites toward what we now call the "creative economy" (Florida [2002] 2012)—a process that started in 1904 with the creation of the park system out of derelict factory sites and continues in the industrial east end today with the Stratford Festival Archives and the Factory163 arts complex (Rae and Smeltzer 2016). While theatre critics have done a good job of gauging the impact on the Stratford Festival of a "local aristocracy"—by which they mean Vincent Massey and his peers (Fischlin 2007, 17; Knowles 1994, 1995)—the stories of Stratford and the Stratford Festival would seem less incongruous if critics paid closer attention to elites in Stratford instead of those in Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto.

## WORKS CITED

- Bamford, Karen. 2002. "The Imperial Theme: The Shakespeare Society of Toronto, 1928–1969." In *Shakespeare in Canada*, edited by Brydon and Makaryk, 66–91.
- Barnett, J. D. 1916. "The Mechanic and the Book." *Ontario Library Review* 1 (1): 16.
- . 1918. "A National Library for Canada." *Ontario Library Review* 2 (4) (May):107–8.
- . n.d. "In My Library [fifty-page handwritten lecture]." John Davis Barnett fonds. Western University Archives.
- Beacon*. 1898. "The G.T.R. Literary Institute." *Beacon* [Stratford], June 17, 3.

- Beacon, The*. 1913. "Mr. Barnett's Library: His Shakespearean Collection Attracting Much Attention." *The Beacon* [Stratford], November 17. John Davis Barnett fonds. Western University Archives.
- Beacon Herald* [?]. [ca. 1922]. "A Book and Three-Quarters for Every Day of His Life." John Davis Barnett Clippings. Stratford-Perth Archives.
- Beacon Herald*. 1955. "'Stratford Adventure' Film Director Pays Return Visit." *Beacon Herald* [Stratford]. August 10, 7.
- Belliveau, George, Josh Weale and Graham Lea. 2005. "Theatre PEI: The Emergence and Development of a Local Theatre." *Theatre Research in Canada* 26 (1-2): 64-81.
- Belton, Betty-Jo and Tom Belton. 2013. "J.D. Barnett: A Man Singular in Books." A Joint Exhibition of the University of Western Ontario Archives and the Stratford-Perth Archives. Stratford-Perth Archives.
- Bennett, Paul. 1981. "At the Gallery." *Stratford Beacon-Herald*. November 3. John Davis Barnett Clippings. Stratford-Perth Archives.
- Bessai, Diane. 1980. "The Regionalism of Canadian Drama." *Canadian Literature* 85 (Summer): 7-20.
- Brydon, Diana. 2002. "Afterword: Relocating Shakespeare, Redefining Canada." In *Shakespeare in Canada: A World Elsewhere?*, edited by Diana Brydon and Irena Makaryk, 395-409. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Davis, Ruth Helen. 1925. "The Beginnings and Development of The University of Western Ontario, 1878-1924." M.A. thesis, Western University.
- Denis-Jacob, Jonathan. 2012. "Cultural Industries in Small-Sized Canadian Cities: Dream or Reality?" *Urban Studies* 49 (1): 97-114.
- Dexter, Grant. 1940. "The Stratford Tradition." *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 21, 13.
- Dingman, Stanford. 1981. "Streets of Stratford: Battle of the Douro River, 1809." *Beacon Herald* [Stratford]. August 1. John Davis Barnett Clippings. Stratford-Perth Archives.
- Emery, J. W., J. H. Smith and James Steele. 1918. "Stratford [Reproduced letter of thanks upon the retirement of J.D. Barnett from the Board of the Stratford Public Library]." *Ontario Library Review* 3 (November): 38-39.
- Falocco, Joe. 2009. "Conflicting Ideological Interpretations of the Founding of the Stratford Festival." *Journal of American Drama and Theatre* 21 (1): 5-20.
- Filewod, Alan. 1987a. *Collective Encounters: Documentary Theatre in English Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- . 1987b. "The Ideological Formation of Political Theatre in Canada." *Theatre Research in Canada* 8 (2). <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/TRIC/article/view/7372/8431>.



- . 1989. “Erasing Historical Difference: The Alternative Orthodoxy in Canadian Theatre.” *Theatre Journal* 41 (2): 201–10.
- . 1992. “Between Empires: Post-Imperialism and Canadian Theatre.” *Essays in Theatre/Études théâtrales* 11 (1): 3–15.
- . 1996. “National Theatre, National Obsession.” *Canadian Theatre History: Selected Readings*. Edited by Don Rubin, 424–31. Toronto: Copp Clark.
- . 2008. “Introduction: The Toy Shop of Myth.” *The Donnellys*. James Reaney, 9–21. Toronto: Dundurn.
- . 2011. *Committing Theatre: Theatre Radicalism and Political Intervention in Canada*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Fischlin, Daniel. 2007. “On Shakespearean Adaptation and Being Canadian.” In *Shakespeare: Made in Canada: Contemporary Canadian Adaptations in Theatre, Pop Media and Visual Arts*, edited by Daniel Fischlin and Judith Nasby, 3–19. Guelph, ON: Macdonald Stewart Art Centre.
- Florida, Richard. [2002] 2012. *Rise of the Creative Class*. Revised, New York: Basic Books.
- Groome, Margaret. 2002. “Stratford and the Aspirations for a National Theatre.” In *Shakespeare in Canada: A World Elsewhere?*, edited by Brydon and Makaryk, 108–36.
- Guthrie, Tyrone. 1959. *A Life in the Theatre*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill.
- Hall, Amelia. 1989. *Life Before Stratford: The Memoirs of Amelia Hall*. Edited by Diane Mew. Toronto: Dundurn.
- “History.” *Chichester Festival Theatre*. <https://www.cft.org.uk/about-us/history>.
- Kodak [pseud.?]. 1904. *Toronto News* [?]. Quoted in the article “Barnett Library: Kodak Writes of It in Toronto News.” Ca. January 28. John Davis Barnett Clippings. Stratford-Perth Archives.
- Knowles, Richard. 1994. “Shakespeare, 1993, and the Discourses of the Stratford Festival, Ontario.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 54 (2): 211–25.
- . 1995. “From Nationalist to Multinational: The Stratford Festival, Free Trade, and the Discourses of Intercultural Tourism.” *Theatre Journal* 47 (1): 19–41.
- . 2002. “Othello in Three Times.” In *Shakespeare in Canada*, edited by Brydon and Makaryk, 371–94.
- . 2004. *Shakespeare and Canada: Essays on Production, Translation, and Adaptation*. Brussels: Peter Lang.
- . [2005] 2010. “Encoding/Decoding Shakespeare: *Richard III* at the 2002 Stratford Festival.” *Canadian Shakespeare*. Edited by Susan Knutson, 128–45. Reprint, Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press.

- Landon, Fred. 1929. "John Davis Barnett, 1849–1926: A Paper Read by Fred Landon, Librarian of the University of Western Ontario, before the Perth County Historical Society." March 22. John Davis Barnett fonds. Western University Archives.
- . [ca. 1930]. "UWO's First Private Benefaction Was Gift of Dr. J.D. Barnett's Vast Book Collection." John Davis Barnett fonds. Western University Archives.
- . [ca. 1932]. "Former Stratford Man Is Greatest Benefactor of Western University." Unnamed Stratford newspaper. John Davis Barnett Clippings. Stratford-Perth Archives.
- . 1947. "Gift Library Is Monument to J.D. Barnett." *Beacon Herald* [Stratford], February 17. Reprinted from the *London Free Press*. John Davis Barnett Clippings. Stratford-Perth Archives.
- Leitch, Adelaide. 1980. *Floodtides of Fortune: The Story of Stratford*. Stratford, ON: City of Stratford.
- Lizars, Kathleen and Robina. 1896. *In the Days of the Canada Company*. Introduction by George Munro Grant. Reprint, London: British Library.
- London Free Press*. 1911. "Library of 30,000 Volumes Collected by Stratford Man." *London Free Press*, January 28. John Davis Barnett fonds. Western University Archives.
- Makaryk, Irena. 2002. "Introduction: Shakespeare in Canada: 'a world elsewhere?'" In *Shakespeare in Canada*, edited by Brydon and Makaryk, 3–41.
- McGee, C. E. 2002. "Shakespeare *Canadiens* at the Stratford Festival." In *Shakespeare in Canada*, edited by Brydon and Makaryk, 141–58.
- McKinnie, Michael. 2002. "Liberal Shakespeare and Illiberal Critiques: Necessary Angel's *King Lear*." In *Shakespeare in Canada*, edited by Brydon and Makaryk, 141–58.
- McNicoll, Susan. 2012. *The Opening Act: Canadian Theatre History, 1945–1953*. Vancouver: Ronsdale.
- Moore, Edward. [ca. 1911]. "Unknown Treasures: The Story of a Stratford Booklover and His Books." *Canada Monthly*: 146–7, 181–3. John Davis Barnett fonds. Western University Archives.
- Morden, Pat. 2007. "A Good Block." In *Shakespeare: Made in Canada: Contemporary Canadian Adaptations in Theatre, Pop Media and Visual Arts*. Edited by Daniel Fischlin and Judith Nasby, 49–59. Guelph, ON: Macdonald Stewart Art Centre.
- "Mr. John Davis Barnett, Scholar, Book-Lover, Dies after a Lengthy Illness." John Davis Barnett fonds. Western University Archives.
- Murray, Heather. 2002. "Pioneer Shakespeare Culture: Reverend Henry Scadding and His Shakespeare Display at the 1892 Toronto Industrial

- Exhibition.” In *Shakespeare in Canada*, edited by Brydon and Makaryk, 47–65.
- Nelson, Joyce. 1988. *Between the Lines: Rethinking the Grierson Legend*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Nothof, Anne. 2009. “Canadian Drama: Performing Communities.” In *The Cambridge History of Canadian Literature*, edited by Coral Ann Howells and Eva-Marie Kröller, 402–21. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ohayon, Albert. 2009. “*The Stratford Adventure: Capturing a Historical Event with No Help from the Organizers*.” *National Film Board of Canada*. <http://blog.nfb.ca/blog/2009/08/31/stratford-adventure-capturing-historical-event-with-no-help-from-organizers/>.
- Ontario Library Association. 1926. *The Ontario Library Association: An Historical Sketch 1900–1925*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Ontario Library Review*. 1919a. “Andrew Carnegie.” *Ontario Library Review* 4 (1): 2–3.
- . 1919b. “Honorary Degree for a Library Man.” *Ontario Library Review* 4 (1): 3–4.
- . 1920. “The Six Institutes of 1920.” *Ontario Library Review* 5 (2): 37–41.
- Patterson, Tom and Allan Gould. [1987] 1999. *First Stage: The Making of the Stratford Festival*. Reprint. Willowdale, ON: Firefly Books.
- Polèse, Mario. 2011. “The Arts and Local Economic Development: Can a Strong Arts Presence Uplift Local Economies? A Study of 135 Canadian Cities.” *Urban Studies* (October): 1811–35.
- Rae, Ian. 2015. “The Stratford Festival and Canadian Cultural Nationalism.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Literature*, edited by Cynthia Sugars, 386–402. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Rae, Ian and Sandra Smeltzer. 2016. “The Stratford Anomaly and Canadian Cultural Clusters.” *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 36 (December).
- Riedstra, Lutzen. 2015. “Stratford’s Park System.” Stratford-Perth Archives. <https://www.visitstratford.ca/uploads/parkssystem.pdf>.
- Robinson, Dean. 2012. *Railway Stratford Revisited*. Stratford, ON: Stratford Printing and Graphics.
- Salter, Denis. 1991. “The Idea of a National Theatre.” In *Canadian Canons: Essays in Literary Value*, edited by Robert Lecker, 71–90. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Shakespeare, William. 1992. *King Henry V*. Edited by Andrew Gurr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shaw, Grace Lydiatt. 1977. *Stratford Under Cover: Memories on Tape*. Toronto: N.C. Press.

- Slings & Arrows*. 2003–2006. Directed by Peter Wellington. Rhombus Media.
- Somerset, Alan. 1991. *The Stratford Festival Story: A Catalogue-Index to the Stratford, Ontario, Festival, 1953–1990*. New York: Greenwood.
- Stuart, Ross. 1982. “The Stratford Festival and the Canadian Theatre.” In *Theatrical Touring and Founding in North America*, edited by L. W. Conolly, forward by Michael Sidnell, 173–91. Westport, CT: Greenwood.
- Talman, James, and Ruth Davis Talman. 1953. *Western—1878–1953: Being the History of the Origins and Development of the University of Western Ontario During Its First Seventy-Five Years*. London: University of Western Ontario.
- Toronto Daily News*. 1916. “In the House that Jack Built.” *Toronto Daily News*, December 13. John Davis Barnett Clippings. Stratford-Perth Archives.
- The Stratford Shakespeare Festival Story, 1953–1962*. 1962. Stratford, ON: Mirror.
- Usmiani, Renate. 1983. *Second Stage: The Alternative Theatre Movement in Canada*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Wagner, April. 2016. “John Davis Barnett.” Biographical Dictionary of Canadian Engineers. Edited by Rod Millard. Department of History, Western University. <http://history.uwo.ca/CdnEng/barnett.html>.
- Wallace, Robert. 1990. *Producing Marginality: Theatre and Criticism in Canada*. Saskatoon: Fifth House.
- Whittaker, Herbert. 1958. “Introduction.” *The Stratford Festival: 1953–1957: A Record in Pictures and Text of the Shakespearean Festival in Canada*. Forward by Vincent Massey, vi–xxix. Toronto: Irwin & Company.

# Counterfactual History at The Stratford Festival: Timothy Findley's *Elizabeth Rex* and Peter Hinton's *The Swanne*

PETER KULING

VICTORIA: Can you smell the past?  
Stewing buckets of cow's heel and pig's knuckle,  
Fetid cheese and beer.

Can you? (Hinton 2004, 15)

Peter Hinton's *The Swanne* trilogy premiered at what was then the Stratford Festival of Canada (now simply the Stratford Festival) in 2002, inviting the audience to embark on a long, speculative journey through a messy alternative history that culminates in the coronation of Queen Victoria and the alternative claimant's exile to Canada in the company of a cast of characters from London's seediest underbelly, including his resurrected dead male lover. In Hinton's fictional re-imagining, Victoria is a substitute heir, displacing the black son born to Princess Charlotte, daughter of the future George IV, who has been quickly packed off to an orphanage and is reported stillborn. The trilogy draws heavily on Shakespeare for its language, characters, and incidents, producing, at least for seasoned Stratford theatregoers, a palimpsestuous effect. The aromas of the past in *The Swanne* are as often Shakespearean and Canadian as Georgian or Victorian.

In his program note for part one of *The Swanne*, *George III: The Death of Cupid*, Richard Monette, Stratford's artistic director at the time, makes reference to another Stratford première, Timothy Findley's

*Elizabeth Rex*, two years earlier (Monette 2002). *Elizabeth Rex* shares with *The Swanne* an interest in counterfactual history mediated through Shakespeare. More overtly beholden to its Shakespearean roots, *Elizabeth Rex* stages an interaction between Shakespeare's queen and an actor from his company, Ned, both suffering the consequences of ill-fated romances. Ned's lover, an Irish soldier, has given him syphilis, and Elizabeth's did-they-or-didn't-they lover, the Earl of Essex, is about to be executed for treason. The increasingly visible symptoms of Ned's illness jeopardize his career playing women, and Elizabeth's feelings undermine her ability to transcend gender as a Renaissance "prince," so through their shared suffering the two teach each other how to perform their gendered roles while Shakespeare, a minor character, lurks only to steal their lines for his plays while his actors put on a production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. "Seemed? Seemed! (*She snatches the letter.*) That sword Southhampton raised was not a *seeming* sword. Nor was it a *seeming* alliance he forged with Essex" (Findley 2000, 65), Elizabeth's outraged response to an appeal for clemency, is duly noted by the playwright for future incorporation, we can surmise, into the second scene of *Hamlet*.

Both Findley and Hinton are explicitly engaged in revisionist history. Hinton explains that his artistic curiosity was prompted by a realization that "we construct from the facts that survive, the ideas we comprehend and the values we support—a fiction" (Hinton 2004, 5). Findley, too, was prompted by curiosity about historical facts: "Essex, imprisoned in the Tower of London, was to be beheaded in the morning of Ash Wednesday, 1601. On the eve of his execution, Shrove Tuesday, it is known that Elizabeth called Shakespeare and his actors—the Lord Chamberlain's Men—to perform in one of her palaces" (Findley 2000, x).

By comparing the uses of historical facts, counterfactual details, and Shakespeare in these two projects, I hope to illuminate Stratford's function, at the turn of the millennium, in producing a very particular kind of speculative history play grounded in Shakespeare's reception in Canada. Both projects replicate, to some extent, Shakespeare's own use of history. In the late 1990s, the period in which these plays were conceived, Shakespeare was being aggressively reconsidered by cultural materialist, new historicist, and other Marxist-oriented critics, and by feminist and queer theorists, who sometimes found, just as Edward Bond (2013) had in his 1973 play *Bingo* or Frank McGuinness (1997) in *Mutabilitie*, that Shakespeare was not an unproblematic ally. Criticism of the period in which both *Elizabeth Rex* and *The Swanne* were written often attends

to anachronisms in Shakespeare, as Julian Markels does with his new historicist reading of *King Lear*, which “aspires to explain in ideological terms the structure, progression, meaning and significance of the play” (Markels 1991, 11) through its ahistorical elements. Findley and Hinton develop new ideological readings of history through anachronistic intertexts, queer additions to history, celebrity casting (at least for Stratford habitués), and meta-theatrical references.

Both plays can be understood in light of the ideologies of Shakespeare criticism at the end of the millennium, their anachronistic performance moments serving to rupture the received narrative and suture it with queer stitching. These new speculative histories at Stratford reflect Ewan Fernie’s vision of an emergent, globalized Shakespeare in the wake of cultural materialism that cultivates “racial and social minorities as special-interest markets” (Fernie 2007, 139). Like many Shakespeare adaptations of this period, *Elizabeth Rex* and *The Swanne* use Shakespeare to bring these “special-interest” concerns to a mainstream audience. Both playwrights use history as a springboard to approach issues that are profoundly true, though counterfactual. Martha Henry, the great Canadian classical actress who directed the première production of *Elizabeth Rex*, reflects this when she says, in a documentary about the production, that “Sometimes [Findley] comes up with things that can’t be verified, and they aren’t in any book but you know in your bones that they are right.” In this, Findley and Hinton are following Shakespeare’s own approach to historical fact as the raw material that can be shaped in order to explore contemporary ideologies, as Alexander Leggatt (1989), among others, has argued. Just as Shakespeare’s depictions of past political struggles in his history and Roman plays shed light on English Renaissance ones, so, too, Findley’s and Hinton’s history plays engage with contemporary issues; in both cases, these are issues of identity.

A particularly influential strand of late-millennium criticism, responding to Stephen Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), is discernible in both *Elizabeth Rex* and *The Swanne*. Both explore historical self-fashioning in their respective time periods, and in so doing suggest avenues for contemporary, particularly queer, self-fashioning resistant to conventions that, at least in Hinton’s version of history, seem to originate in a Victorian prudery that even the Victorians could only uphold through wilful misrepresentation. Neither Findley nor Hinton faithfully represents history, instead creating what Gérard Genette (1997, 5) has described as palimpsestic architextuality, a form of knowing performance inviting audiences to recognize and respond



to various layered intertexts. Something of this palimpsestuousness is reflected in Findley's preface to the published script, when he says: "This echoes Polonius' advice in *Hamlet*: 'This above all, to thine own self be true.' Or, as Glenn Gould was to declare to me a year before his death: 'all that matters is that you become yourself'" (Findley 2000, xi). In allying his Canadian contemporary with Shakespeare's character, Findley (perhaps mischievously) signals something enduring, perhaps even universal, about the project to become oneself. Given that the play is about professional actors, public figures playing a role, and individuals whose occupations and predilections constrain the expression of their true selves, this advice is not so easy to heed.

Findley's collapsing of the temporal and geographical distance between Polonius and Gould is accompanied by a concomitant erasure of the boundaries around individual identity: not just palimpsests of historical and contemporary texts, speeches, and popular knowledge, but also palimpsestic personas. Ned and Elizabeth are only the most obvious foils for each other, with others introduced through the onstage performance of *Much Ado* and recurring allusions to Shakespearean characters, incidents, dialogue, and themes, for knowing and alert audiences to recognize. Findley situates characters as foils not only by having them perform as each other for each other, but also by linking them thematically. Ned is a foil not only for Elizabeth, but also, through his terminal syphilis, for the dying Essex who, though not ill, is nevertheless doomed. Elizabeth, trying on male and female roles throughout the play, also performs herself in a play within a play about herself.

Diane D'Aquila's performance as Elizabeth may, arguably, serve as a palimpsestuous connection to *The Swanne*, in which she plays a regal actor-manager fallen on hard times, now a blind actress known as Scarecrow; this character also draws on D'Aquila's scene partner, Brent Carver's Ned in *Elizabeth Rex*. At the end of illustrious acting careers, both Ned and Scarecrow rant about their final performances, the historical limits of gender, and their forthcoming final exits. Throughout *The Swanne*, Hinton's palimpsestuousness goes further than Findley's not only in these echoes across productions, but also by incorporating doubling and tripling. Performers in the original Stratford casts played two, three, or more characters, with resonant echoes: Margot Dionne, for example, played both Princess Charlotte in part one of *The Swanne* and Proserpine, who raises Charlotte's abandoned baby, William. Doubling, a very Shakespearean practice, is used in *The Swanne* to Shakespearean effect.

In addition to these overlapping roles that inform and illuminate each other, both plays are replete with intertextual allusions that may create, for knowing spectators, further foils. *Elizabeth Rex* is strategically filled with intertextual references from *Hamlet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and Shakespeare's sonnets, drawing much of its theatrical effect from the way different story lines from history and drama parallel each other, creating multiple refractions between characters and situations. The actors of the Lord Chamberlain's Men are depicted as real-world versions of Pistol, Mistress Quickly, and Prince Hal, and Elizabeth speculates that she will find her way into Shakespeare's plays, recognizing that her relationship with Essex has elements in common with doomed Shakespearean lovers. In an example of Findley's playful anachronism and counterfactual history, Elizabeth refers to *Antony and Cleopatra*, which would première five years after *Elizabeth Rex*'s present moment:

ELIZABETH: (*To WILL.*) Am I your Cleopatra? (*Pause.*) Is your Antony, then, my Essex?

WILL: It had occurred to me. (Findley 2000, 83)

Playful anachronism and counterfactual history are also hallmarks of Peter Hinton's *The Swanne*, which ranges across the Shakespearean canon (and beyond) to generate unconventional and provocative performances of Canadian, queer, gendered, and racialized identities. The trilogy is divided into three parts. In part one, *George III—The Death of Cupid*, characters evoking Mistress Quickly, Florizel, and Perdita get involved in baby swapping plots moving through brothels and bars. Part two, *Prince Charlotte—The Acts of Venus*, focuses on identity performances and familial disintegration, drawing on *Antony and Cleopatra* and *King Lear*. Part three, *Queen Victoria—The Seduction of Nemesis*, draws on Shakespeare's depictions of contested crowns in his history plays, but also, in its treatment of the dénouement and its interest in brave new worlds, on his romances, and especially *The Tempest*. In all three parts, Hinton invites audiences to speculate about possible histories that have not become part of the one we know.

*The Swanne*'s connection to Findley, and through him to an emerging Stratford corpus of Elizabethanesque plays, is clear, but, as Kate Taylor noted in the *Globe and Mail* (October 11, 2002), its ambitions and themes also evoke Tony Kushner's epic two-part play from 1991, *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*; *Elizabeth Rex*, with its gay character succumbing to the effects of a sexually transmitted disease, might also be compared to Kushner's magnum opus. Like Findley's evocation of Shakespeare's Polonius and Canada's Glenn

Gould as the guiding spirits of *Elizabeth Rex*, Hinton's recourse to both Shakespearean and contemporary (or, as reviewers suggested, postmodern) techniques collapses the distance between them. Hinton plays with this collapsing distance in another way every time the characters speak the words "Canada" and "Shakespeare," evoking what Linda Hutcheon has described as a "knowing" response in some spectators (Hutcheon 2006, 120). Like Findley, Hinton populates his fictional world with echoes from Shakespeare's fictional worlds likely to be familiar to the Stratford audience; Hinton, additionally, fictionalizes Canada. His characters view Canada as a remote and romantic place, perhaps reshaping how a Canadian audience might begin to understand its own place in the world. The exoticism of Canada is reflected in George III's characterization of his son's lover as: "your French Lady? The mistress—The Canadian. The Catholick Julie St. Laurent" (Hinton 2004, 20).

Dramaturgically, *The Swanne* and *Elizabeth Rex* share certain structural similarities. Both open with a scene that is out of temporal sequence and then move back into history, a strategy reminiscent of Shakespeare's in *Henry V*. The plays share a thematic focus on self-fashioning, with both Findley's Queen Elizabeth and Hinton's Queen Victoria deepening their understanding of the performative nature of their own, and other characters', identities. Throughout these plays, themes of authorship—another kind of self-fashioning—arise as characters grasp the power they hold to author their own fates, quite literally in the case of Victoria's manuscript, *The Swanne*, which is the story of Hinton's *The Swanne* that she must ultimately destroy in order to become queen. As Hinton notes in his preface, "It is a commonly held belief and universal truth that history is written by the winners" (Hinton 2004, 5). Hinton's trilogy begins with its winner, Victoria, writing and thereby controlling her history, but it ends with the destruction of that writing.

While Victoria is one of history's winners, the play presents that victory, too, as a kind of self-fashioning. She writes *The Swanne* throughout the second and third parts of the trilogy, but when the manuscript is discovered its power is underestimated: "She is a girl and it's only a play" (Hinton 2000, 396). The Duchess of Kent, in contrast, recognizes its power to shape reality: "this—theatrical—was written as a means to prepare herself, To Be Queen—Monstrous as it is to conceive" (Hinton 2000, 397). Monstrous conception is a resonant phrase in *The Swanne*, which turns on the birth of a black male heir to the throne, and, like Charlotte, Victoria must disown her progeny in order to protect her posterity.

Both plays end with the silencing of alternative narratives and the tidying-up of counterfactual history until it regains its familiar, factual shape. *Elizabeth Rex* ends with Will's Prospero-like reflections: "And so, it was done. We had our man—we had our woman—and this way, they passed into time" (Findley 2000, 140). Cecil implores him: "Master Shakespeare—a word. This story must remain within these walls—for our mutual benefit in the time to come" (Findley 2000, 140). *The Swanne* ends with Victoria's coronation imminent, her self-authored history destroyed now that it has served its purpose, and the alternative history consigned to a ship bound for Canada. "Can you smell the past—Fog and steam to Canada coming," Victoria asks (Hinton 2004, 441). On that ship, William's coronation, and his union with Jeremy, his white double, can play out without historical consequence. Jeremy rises from the dead, and the men are crowned as king and consort. Nemesis—performed by the entire company—speaks as a collective Greek chorus to narrate the history that has emerged victorious as well as the queer and racialized one about to be sunk, burned, and forgotten forever.

NEMESIS (all): Remember Victoria, the pain and kick  
 Remember Charlotte and the Swan Tattoo  
 Remember to forestall the death of love  
 Remember Peterloo! (Hinton 2004, 457)

The coronation voyage plays out as a fantastical culmination of otherness, alternate history, and public performance explicitly allied with Canada, a magical distant land where such things are possible. Queen Victoria returns to the stage, alone, to close the proceedings: "Silent now this world forever gone" (ibid., 459). With six short words, Queen Victoria dismisses her own manuscript, and Hinton's, and their shared depiction of alternate histories lost somewhere in the waters between England and Canada.

*Elizabeth Rex* and *The Swanne* fit within Daniel Fischlin's view of adaptation as "one locus where issues surrounding identity are fruitfully pursued" (Fischlin 2002, 313). These plays use Shakespeare to pursue queer, counterfactual identities that reflect Canada in the early years of the new millennium. Both plays are speculative histories with sustained prescriptive cultural and historical impact. By staging "lost" aspects of familiar stories, perhaps both playwrights introduce lost parts of Canada's own history, and, in so doing, invite audiences to reconsider a story they only think they know.

## WORKS CITED

- Bond, Edward. 2013. "Bingo." In *Bond Plays: Three*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Dollimore, Jonathan. 1984. *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fernie, Ewan. 2007. "Dollimore's Challenge." *Shakespeare Studies* 35:133–57.
- Fischlin, Daniel. 2002. "Nation and/as Adaptation: Shakespeare, Canada, and Authenticity." In *Shakespeare in Canada: A World Elsewhere?*, edited by Diana Brydon and Irena R. Makaryk, 313–38. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Findley, Timothy. 2000. *Elizabeth Rex*. Niagara Falls, ON: Blizzard Publications.
- Genette, Gérard. 1997. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Translated by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. 1980. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hinton, Peter. 2004. *The Swanne: A Romance in Three Parts*. Toronto: McArthur & Company.
- Hutcheon, Linda. 2006. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge.
- Leggatt, Alexander. 1989. *Shakespeare's Political Drama: The History Plays And The Roman Plays*. New York: Routledge.
- Markels, Julian. 1991. "King Lear, Revolution, and the New Historicism." *Modern Language Studies* 21 (2) (Spring): 11–26.
- McGuinness, Frank. 1997. *Mutabilitie*. Boston: Faber and Faber.
- Monette, Richard. 2002. "A New Stage at Stratford." *George III—The Death of Cupid* Program, 2–3. Stratford: Stratford Festival of Canada.
- . 2004. "Foreword." In *The Swanne: A Romance in Three Parts*, vii–x. Toronto: McArthur & Company.
- Taylor, Kate. 2002. "Ambitious Swanne takes Flight" *The Globe and Mail*. Oct. 11. Internet, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/ambitious-swanne-takes-flight/article1336817/>

## “Who’s There?”: *Slings & Arrows*’ Audience Dynamics

KAILIN WRIGHT

In *Slings & Arrows*, Geoffrey—an impassioned theatre director—sets up *Hamlet*’s ubiquitous opening line:

GEOFFREY: Frank? Knock, knock?

FRANK: Who’s there?

GEOFFREY: Excellent. First line of the play.  
The world’s longest knock, knock joke.  
Who’s there indeed.<sup>1</sup>

If *Hamlet* begins with a knock-knock joke, then so too does *Slings & Arrows*, as it too asks “Who’s there?” A television series inspired in part by Canada’s Stratford Festival, *Slings & Arrows* dramatizes the backstage workings of the fictional New Burbage Theatre Festival and contemplates how audiences inform the ongoing battle between artistic integrity and commercial sustainability. This struggle does not have a clear winning side: *Slings & Arrows* demonstrates the necessary integration of high culture and pop culture, of art and commerce, of the ideal and real audience. The battle centers on the audience and the answer to the question, “Who’s there?” From the narcoleptic elderly to the narcissistic hipster, *Slings & Arrows* parodies a wide range of viewer types. In each season, a particular type of audience initially inhibits but eventually facilitates a Shakespeare production. *Slings & Arrows* ultimately unites different types of spectators, including business- and art-minded viewers, the youth and the elderly, and television and theatre audiences. The show’s hero works to transform a profit-driven theatre with high-budget

spectacles into a locus of artistic integrity with minimalist productions, and with the transformation of the theatre comes the surprising transformation of the audience.

*Slings & Arrows* has garnered scholarly attention as well as a following of devoted fans and a collection of international television reviews. Daniel Fischlin's Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project (CASP), which offers an extensive online archive and database, featured *Slings & Arrows* as its "spotlight" subject in 2007 in order to examine the "ongoing fascination that Shakespeare has for Canadian popular media" (Fischlin 2004). In addition to CASP, Laurie Osborne (2011) as well as Kim Fedderson and J. Michael Richardson (2014) have also analyzed *Slings & Arrows*' intermedial adaptation of theatre for television. L. Monique Pittman (2011) approaches *Slings & Arrows* as an extended adaptation of *Hamlet* in order to investigate the resounding significance of father figures in the series. While these scholars offer valuable resources on *Slings & Arrows*' adaptation of Shakespeare, the series' treatment of fictional audiences as well as its real audience dynamics has yet to be considered.

*Slings & Arrows*' pivotal relationship and source of conflict is between an artist and his spectral audience. New Burbage's long-reigning artistic director, Oliver Welles, dies in the first episode but continues to haunt both the show and the new artistic director, Geoffrey Tennant. While Oliver's ghost represents many things to Geoffrey, such as betrayal and self-doubt, the ghost signifies something much more to *Slings & Arrows*: Oliver personifies the audience. Oliver is always watching Geoffrey from the wings of the stage or from the auditorium itself. When a therapist tells Geoffrey that "We just need to find the source of your pressure," Oliver appears for the first time in the season and watches Geoffrey from the back of the room.<sup>2</sup> In this scene, Oliver embodies the spectator and thereby functions as the source of Geoffrey's stress. In this way, Geoffrey's fraught relationship with Oliver signals his antagonistic relationship with his imagined theatre audience. Whereas Geoffrey verges on an elitist approach and believes in good theatre even if no one is watching, Oliver takes a populist approach and dedicates his late career to bad theatre with a full house. While Geoffrey and Oliver's artistic difference rests on the significance of the audience, their relationship can also be defined in terms of spectatorship. As a therapist explains to Geoffrey:

MINISTER [Therapist]: I've been reading about this theory. Now, this theory says that every artist has one person who is their private



audience. Someone that they desire to please. Or someone they are angry with or want to communicate with in some way. Is Oliver your audience?

OLIVER: Oh, I love that.<sup>3</sup>

With each season and each new Shakespeare production, Geoffrey struggles with the urge to either appease or challenge his most critical of audience members—the ghost of Oliver.

Although Virginia Heffernan (2005) argues that *Slings & Arrows* is “too sad to be a comedy,” each season follows comedy’s narrative arc. According to Northrop Frye—a scholar also known for his work on Canadian identity and literary traditions—comedy typically concentrates on a romantic relationship between two lovers that is “blocked by some kind of opposition” (Frye 1957, 4); the series adapts this literary convention by privileging a creative relationship between Geoffrey and Oliver. The main goal of each season, then, is not marriage but a theatrical production. Frye suggests that the archetypal theme of comedy is “*Anagnorisis* or recognition of a newborn society rising in triumph around a still somewhat mysterious hero and his bride” (ibid., 192). At the end of each season of *Slings & Arrows*, the newborn society occurs in the theatre as Geoffrey at once reunites with his romantic partner (Ellen) and with his creative partner (Oliver and the theatre audience).

*Slings & Arrows* casts the audience in general and Oliver in particular as the blocking figures that prevent Geoffrey’s artistic vision and romantic ideal of “Theatre Sans Argent” (Theatre Without Money).<sup>4</sup> As Feddersen and Richardson (2014, 207) suggest, Geoffrey “embraces a romantic liberal humanist conception of theatre, replete with the customary essentialist and universalist notions of the power of drama: the ‘truths’ in the plays . . . can make one ‘believe that love can be rekindled, that regimes could be toppled by the simple act of telling a story truthfully.’” In direct conflict with this concept of theatre, Richard, the business manager, wants Geoffrey to create productions that will sell tickets. In the second season, Geoffrey asks Richard “Which would you prefer: an empty house with a great play or a full house with a piece of garbage?,” to which Richard heartily responds, “Garbage! Garbage! I want garbage!”<sup>5</sup> This interaction is representative of Geoffrey’s reductive expectation of an audience who would readily attend a terrible production as long as it features comic sound effects and pyrotechnics. In each season, however, the audience initially functions as the blocking figure but eventually acts as the co-creator of Geoffrey’s production.

The audience and Oliver ultimately help the hero renew his creative role in society. Oliver, as a spectral audience member, not only helps Geoffrey direct *King Lear*, but also enables Geoffrey to finally take the stage as an actor. In fact, Oliver even acts as a prompt when Geoffrey asks, “Oliver, what’s my line?” While Bob Martin describes Oliver as the “conventional view,” I would note that while Oliver does represent the conventional view of the audience, in each season he also comes to foster Geoffrey’s bold staging of Shakespeare’s tragic plays (VanDerWerff 2013). Geoffrey, in turn, welcomes Oliver’s presence when directing *King Lear*, thereby acknowledging the significance of the theatre audience:

OLIVER: We are going to have to start from scratch.

GEOFFREY: “We,” my dead friend? Does that mean you’re back on board?<sup>6</sup>

Geoffrey addresses Oliver (the symbolic audience) as “we,” which signals a turn in their relationship from adversaries to allies: by the end of the series, Geoffrey no longer views the audience as the punishing blocking figure. The coming together of Geoffrey and Oliver is the coming together of artist and audience.

Each season opens and closes with long shots of the audience. In the beginning of the first season, New Burbage’s audience is consumerist, narcoleptic, and bored, whereas by the seasons’ end the spectators are still as plentiful but also intellectually stimulated, emotionally engaged, and appreciative. This transformation overtly critiques mainstream or profit-driven theatres, but it also calls attention to the essentialist idealism that good theatre is minimalist in production elements with the power to move even the most reluctant of theatre viewers. Season one opens with audience members in the gift shop eagerly buying stuffed ducks, Shakespeare dolls, and blow-up figures of Edvard Munch’s *The Scream*; they buy these objects in anticipation of Oliver’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* production, where bleating sheep are the comic highpoint.

During the show, the audience is listless: the Minister of Culture secretly listens to the hockey game, her husband uses binoculars to gaze at an actress’s cleavage, and the resident theatre critic compares the production to “an old boot” because it “soothe[s]” and does not “make demands of the audience.” Even Oliver, the production’s director, admits that there is “not one moment of truth in this entire thing.” With Puck’s closing lines, “think . . . that you have but slumbered here



**Figure 1:** The New Burbage Theatre Festival’s gift shop sells stuffed Shakespeare dolls in the series’ first episode.

while these visions did appear,” there is a close-up of the Minister of Culture’s husband asleep in the audience.

In this way, the first season opposes business with art by casting the audience as the willing consumers of a business-driven theatre. Yet Geoffrey finds his inspiration for *Hamlet* through this very type of audience. Terry from accounting—a proclaimed “numbers man”—takes on Hamlet’s tomorrow soliloquy with Geoffrey’s help. As Fedderson and Richardson explain, “With Geoffrey’s guidance, [Terry] finds through the text of the ‘Tomorrow’ speech a way of apprehending self and the world that had not occurred to him before” as he finds a “much more capacious sense of self and of life” (Fedderson and Richardson 2014, 221–2, 221). With Terry’s breakout performance, it is not only Terry but also Geoffrey who has a moment of self-discovery: Terry develops a love of theatre and Geoffrey recognizes that he must direct *Hamlet*. While celebrating the productive seminar, Terry says, “Geoff, you gotta get back on that horse or you’ll never get on a horse again,” and Geoffrey realizes, “I don’t wanna get on a horse. I’d rather . . . direct.”<sup>7</sup> With this new inspiration, Geoffrey then figuratively and literally fights to take over the *Hamlet* production.

In the season one finale, we see a transformed audience. This time when the Minister of Culture’s husband stares at the heroine’s cleavage, he can’t help but respond to her acting as he exclaims “she’s good.” Richard, the business manager, is moved to tears while watching Ophelia, and as a result refuses to turn New Burbage into a Shakespeareville

theme park. Even Basil, the nepotistic theatre critic, is genuinely captivated. As guest-star writer and actor Ann-Marie MacDonald explains on screen, “people are so sick of being sold to, of being bombarded. They want a place to go where they can actually hear the truth.” In this way, the first season transforms the spectators from slumbering consumers to active viewers with what Geoffrey describes as “poetic faith” or the willing suspension of disbelief. Co-creator Susan Coyne describes the actor’s transformation on stage: “in the wings he’s smoking a cigarette, then he hears his cue, and he drops his cigarette and steps onstage and becomes the apothecary, or whoever he is. I think we always were fascinated by that. That moment of transformation” (VanDerWerff 2013). *Slings & Arrows*, however, not only dramatizes the actor’s transformation but also shows us the audience’s transformation.

Season two concentrates on the creation of a new generation of young theatregoers. This season’s opening shots of the audience contrast the young and old: the camera follows a person with a walker as she finds her seat in the auditorium and then pans to an elderly teacher telling his students

[*Hamlet*] is one of the greatest plays ever written [so shut up and listen. You will sit there quietly with your hands in your laps. You will not throw pennies at the actors. You will stare at that stage until it is over. If I hear so much as a peep from any of you, I’ll give you reason to be sorry, mark my words.<sup>8</sup>

The teacher’s instructions create a negative portrait of young audiences as not only unengaged but also disruptive; this speech also sets up a combative intergenerational relationship as the older teacher threatens his young students. The camera eventually returns to the older woman with the walker who goes unconscious before the play even begins. Richard captures the fear of season two when he says “our subscriber base is dying.” We are, however, quickly reminded of the lesson from season one: the actor and audience are in a self-reinforcing cycle. Despite that “the audience is full of hoodlums,” the students are captivated when Ellen gets her soliloquy “right.” *Slings & Arrows* asserts that good theatre makes a good audience—even if the audience is made up of school groups.

In season two, however, the youth initially threaten to alienate the theatre’s older subscribers and bankrupt the Festival. In his need to elicit more ticket sales amidst a dying subscriber base, Richard spends a sizeable loan to hire an advertising firm (Froghammer) and appeal to a new set of young spectators. *Slings & Arrows* develops the teacher’s

negative portrait of the student audience through a quirky advertising campaign geared at youth. The advertisements attack the older generation of subscribers by depicting them on their deathbeds; and they feature the Festival’s worst reviews with quotations such as “theatre has never made television look so appealing” and “it was all I could do to stay awake.” The ads, then, alienate older viewers, suggesting that theatre cannot simultaneously attract the young and the old.

While a business seminar fittingly helps Geoffrey overcome his fear of the audience as consumers, a children’s production of *Macbeth* is what inspires Geoffrey to stage the Scottish tragedy and eventually enables a “youth quake” or an onslaught of young audience members. In the second season, then, it is the young audience that facilitates the Shakespeare production and the Festival’s success. *Slings & Arrows* shows us that it is not only the audience who must have poetic faith in the performers, but also the performers who must also have poetic faith in the audience. In season two’s production of *Macbeth*, Geoffrey resists the temptation to rely on spectacle and on a bloodied Banquo; he instead trusts the audience’s willing suspension of disbelief by prompting the viewers to imagine a horrific ghost. Season two rewards Geoffrey’s faith in the audience when Richard discovers that “There are young people out there!” The youth quake comes to New Burbage and saves the Festival from bankruptcy. What is most surprising is that the older subscribers also attend *Macbeth*. As Nahum—the theatre’s custodian—says to Geoffrey, “we have them.” Just as season



**Figure 2:** The advertising firm, Froghammer, insults New Burbage Theatre Festival’s subscriber base in the second season.

one demonstrates that good theatre makes a good audience, season two's *Macbeth* unites younger and older audiences.

Throughout the series, the youth, the middle-aged, and the elderly each transform from inhibitors to facilitators of Shakespearean theatre. Co-creator Bob Martin explains that the three seasons of *Slings & Arrows*, and the respective Shakespeare productions of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*, dramatize different stages of life: "the first season is youth, the second one is middle age, and the third one is old age, in a very general sense" (VanDerWerff 2013). These three life stages apply not only to the actors and plays but also to the audience members. Although each season does not correlate with a generation of viewers, the series as a whole consistently and comically explores why audiences at any stage of life would attend the theatre. In season one, a middle-aged businessman inspires Geoffrey's *Hamlet*; in season two, a child's play leads to Geoffrey's staging of *Macbeth*; and in season three, the elderly shape Geoffrey's *King Lear* production when he discovers his starring actor in an old-age home. In previous episodes, the elderly audience members have fallen asleep, have been near death, and have cancelled large blocks of tickets. In the third season, however, they inspire Geoffrey's casting of *Lear*, and a self-proclaimed "old man" stars in the production.<sup>9</sup> While season three addresses issues of old age through the *King Lear* play and the lead actor's imminent death, it also concentrates on the audience dynamics of theatre and television.

Just as season one targeted commercial versus artistic audiences, and season two focused on the young and the elderly, season three opposes theatre audiences with television viewers. In contrasting theatre with the ever-popular medium of television, the show questions its own ironic form and purpose—to use a television series as a vehicle for celebrating classical theatre. The third season opens with television screens on a theatre stage before an audience. This opening, as with the introductory shots in the first two seasons, announces the main opposition of season two: television versus theatre.

This final season is metatheatrical in its consideration of the relationship between television and theatre audiences. Along with the television screens that dominate the theatre stage in the season's opening, there is also a fog machine, sound effects, and flashy lighting; these visual and aural effects suggest that a popular audience expects these technological enhancements in their viewing experience. Geoffrey, however, does not seem to be comforted by the Festival's financial success, large audience, and technological tools: he leaves the stage in tears before he





**Figure 3:** Charles Kingman (William Hutt) plays the role of King Lear and is on his own quest for self-knowledge as he seeks the answer to the series’ pervading question, “Who’s there?,” with the help of Oliver’s ghost (Stephen Ouimette).

can announce that he will be directing *King Lear* in New Burbage’s (and *Slings & Arrows*’ new season. From these opening moments of season three, television and technology not only threaten to overpower the theatre’s space and viewing experience, they also overwhelm theatre’s most devoted advocate, Geoffrey.

Reinforcing the third season’s self-reflective gaze on the mediums of theatre and television, the main characters also question their own identity. Lear’s iconic line “Who is it that can tell me who I am?”<sup>10</sup> defines the narrative through-line of the third season as both the New Burbage Theatre Festival and the characters search for their own identity. Richard asks “Who the hell am I, Anna? Who the hell is Richard Smith-Jones?”<sup>11</sup> Geoffrey confesses, “I don’t know who I am,” and Oliver questions his own “marginal existence.” The third season questions the roles of theatre and television as each character figuratively looks in a mirror and seeks their own answer to the question “Who’s there?”.

*Slings & Arrows* distinguishes theatre and television audiences in terms of the viewing experience itself; the show, for instance, hypothesizes that theatre audiences are more intellectually engaged and have a more visceral or immediate relationship to the staged show. A recurring character, Darren Nichols, returns to New Burbage and describes the “pitfalls of [the] common” audience: “one of the many pitfalls of being a



common man is that you have a limited understanding of your own reality. You are amused by something but you are incapable of understanding the mechanism of that amusement.” Darren directs this insult to Richard—a character who admits that “I don’t like Shakespeare”—and captures the series’ treatment of popular audiences as “incapable of understanding” the complexity of theatre.

*Slings & Arrows* parodies television and theatre viewers and ironically (considering the television medium) privileges theatre audiences as more sophisticated. Television and film actors come to work at New Burbage but are faced with the depth and difficulty of the theatre production. The third season directly pits television and theatre against each other when a narcissistic television star betrays Geoffrey by having *King Lear* demoted to a smaller venue; and Ellen abandons the *Lear* production for a role in a television series, or for what Geoffrey describes as the “idiot box.” Despite these betrayals, theatre takes its spot at the top of the pecking order. While shooting her television show, Ellen confesses, “I’m fucking miserable. There’s never time to talk about anything, not a scene, not even a line of dialogue. If you ask a question, they say ‘oh, just shoot the alien.’” For Ellen, television is “not acting.” Television, then, threatens to take not only audiences but also actors away from the theatre, and it does so to their detriment.

Liveness is another characteristic that distinguishes theatre and television audiences’ experience in *Slings & Arrows*. When a television diva stars in Geoffrey’s *King Lear* production, an interviewer asks her: “What brought you back to New Burbage?” The television star seems to voice *Slings & Arrows*’ ongoing argument about the dynamism of live theatre and its audience when she says: “the audience. I want the thrill of performing in front of the people. The people affect your performance. You can feel them out there in the dark. You can feel them watching you and you act for them.” Of course, because she is only a television star, this authentic moment is immediately undone when she complains “Can we do that again?,” asking for a second take that is impossible in theatre before a live audience.<sup>12</sup>

*Slings & Arrows* further emphasizes the limits of television and the sensory benefits of live theatre when Geoffrey brings theatre out into the audience by dismantling the proscenium arch and creating a thrust stage: theatre, and the thrust stage, physically invades the space of the audience and facilitates a visceral viewing experience. In season one, for instance, a young actress from the Festival kicks a soccer ball at a video camera during a television audition. As the soccer ball hurtles toward

the camera lens, it reminds us of the television screen’s unbreakable physical barrier. Theatre can break the fourth wall and reach the audience in a way that television cannot.

The final season ends with a departure from the big stages of New Burbage and a return to theatre sans argent and sans technology: there are no television screens and no state-of-the-art storm machine in the church space—a fitting location for Geoffrey’s vision of theatre that serves a “higher purpose” and relies on “poetic faith.” Osborne deftly argues that *Slings & Arrows*’ final episode is the series’ best example of theatre because it strips away the sound effects and soundtrack that television offers. Throughout the previous seasons, a distinct sound track marked by “metonymic ticking” always accompanies and thereby signals a successful theatrical acting moment (Osborne 2011, 20). In this way, television conventions and technology enhance the audience’s experience of theatre in the show. The final episode’s production of *King Lear*, however, takes place on a bare stage and fittingly has no accompanying soundtrack. As Osborne says,

This departure from the series-long use of television scoring distinguishes *this* theatrical experience from the earlier productions . . . . Stripped of many of the Festival’s resources, most of its audience, and all its fancy machinery, Charles Kingman’s *Lear* comes as close as the TV series can to the theater . . . . The absence of musical scoring after the series-long melodic cueing to mark effective theater performance, drives home the series’ final invocation of the theater’s effectiveness.

The final episode, then, celebrates theatre without the aid of television’s technological enhancements (namely, musical scoring). As a candidate for the position of the new artistic director of the New Burbage Theatre Festival explains, “I don’t really think that theatre is about technology. I think it’s about what happens right now in front of an audience.”<sup>13</sup> This definition of theatre captures the third season’s celebration of the liveness and immediacy of the theatre audience.

Geoffrey’s productions aim to highlight the actors’ abilities and the poetry of Shakespeare’s material. New Burbage, by comparison, with its high-budget productions, on-stage television screens, storm machines, and complex lighting cues seems to cater to a viewing experience that is more akin to watching television, which is why it is fitting that the final production occurs outside of the Festival. The series’ “conclusion,” Osborne (2011, 3) asserts, “implicitly returns theater to an idealized state, at least temporarily beyond the reach of commercialized television,



**Figure 4:** The final season's production of *King Lear* (with the title character played by William Hutt) is markedly minimalistic and takes place on a bare stage in a church.

which is represented as artistically and personally barren even though it has provided the form and venue to celebrate theater anew.”

The series ends, as comedies do, with a marriage (Geoffrey and Ellen get married) and, most importantly, with the hero being fully reintegrated into society (a theatre society). Geoffrey's farewell to Oliver captures the doubleness of Oliver's—and by extension of the audience's—roles as a simultaneous help and hindrance when he says: “I want to thank you and I want to curse you.”<sup>14</sup> After Oliver helps Geoffrey take the stage as an actor and find a smaller theatre venue that is more appropriate to Geoffrey's artistic goals than the big Festival, Oliver says, “I think I'm going to go . . . I think I've done everything I can here so um good-bye.” In making amends with Oliver—the personification of the spectator—Geoffrey also comes to terms with the audience, which is why he is able to perform on stage and face the viewers. The absence of the audience represented “great” theatre for Geoffrey in the first two seasons, but by the third season Geoffrey embraces the audience and their presence through his reconciliation with Oliver's ghost. As Geoffrey says to Oliver, and by extension to the theatre audience, “I love you.”

Despite the metacritical commentary on television's shortcomings, the series ultimately integrates television and theatre spectators as we simultaneously watch a staged Shakespeare production and a television workplace drama. Heffernan's (2005) review of *Slings & Arrows*

suggests that the series’ aesthetic is more akin to theatre than to television, because “It’s also not wacky and not bright-colored, and it’s filled with old people.” Heffernan seems surprised that a narrative about theatre can be “consistently engaging”; in this way, she offers the inverse of Geoffrey’s perspective because she privileges entertainment over “passion and sincerity” (ibid.). The appeal of *Slings & Arrows*, then, is not limited to theatre lovers.

*Slings & Arrows*’ parody of popular audiences who would more readily attend large-scale musicals or watch a televised hockey game anticipates real reviewers’ responses to the show. Heffernan, for instance, tells prospective American viewers that Shakespeare and Canada can actually make for good television:

Don’t be lazily put off by the subject of Shakespeare or the show’s nine Gemini nominations. (The Geminis are Canada’s television awards, and unlike the Emmys they typically go to dispiritingly worthy endeavors.) “Slings & Arrows” is consistently engaging, and it’s often painful and gorgeous. The passion and sincerity of the characters, actors who won’t do commercials and directors who resist corporate sponsorship, come to seem commonplace, in the Canadian way. And the tears—the viewer’s tears—will be real. (Heffernan 2005)

Heffernan patronizes the “actors who won’t do commercials and directors who resist corporate sponsorship,” which echoes the sentiments expressed onscreen by Richard (the business manager) and Barbara (the visiting television diva). For Barbara, like Heffernan, theatre distinguishes itself from television by focusing on “plays by dead men for no money.”<sup>15</sup> Heffernan’s sentimental belittling of “the Canadian way” and “dispiritingly worthy endeavors” finds a more extreme onscreen counterpart through the character of Holly Day, who demeans “local shit” and wants to turn the theatre into a theme park. Another American media reviewer, Alynda Wheat (2005), similarly warns readers that they may find the show “too, well, Canadian” but promises that “the series is worth the effort.” These reviews draw attention to the show’s unlikely union of Canadian and American viewers. *Slings & Arrows*’ onscreen audiences and responses to the Canadian small-town New Burbage Theatre Festival offer insight into real audiences and reviews.

The fictional theatre audience mirrors the real television audience: just as the show’s narrative brings together seemingly oppositional types of viewers, the series as a whole unites theatre and television viewers. A reviewer for *Newsday*, a New York-based daily, describes *Slings & Arrows*’ success as a television series that “memorably celebrates the

nobility of human dreams and the intoxicating impact of live theater” (Newsday 2007). While *Newsday* praises the “impact of live theater,” other reviews treat the subject of live theatre as more of a liability. Heffernan (2005) critiques the series’ theatre actors “with baggy eyes,” and only in spite of the show’s theatre elements, she exclaims, “whatever you call ‘Slings & Arrows,’ it’s good.” The series’ audience, then, is divided on the value of theatre: “viewers,” a *Los Angeles Times* reviewer said, “need not understand, or even like Shakespeare to enjoy [*Slings & Arrows*]” because it is a “splendid show, always smart but never superior” (qtd. in *Globe and Mail*, August 10, 2005). While some real audience members believe in “the intoxicating impact of live theatre” like Geoffrey (Newsday 2007), other viewers share the onscreen sentiments of Richard, who confesses “I don’t even think [Shakespeare] was that good!”<sup>16</sup> *Slings & Arrows* effectively brings together divergent real audiences, as theatre lovers and Bard bashers as well as Canadians and Americans all agree that the series is “good” (Heffernan 2005).

*Slings & Arrows* celebrates theatre culture while it revitalizes television by demonstrating, as one reviewer says, “how complex and clever television drama can be” (Chilton 2013). Gayle MacDonald reports that the series drew large audiences: “TMN [The Movie Network, which first aired the series] does not release audience ratings, but the pay-TV network says *Slings & Arrows* generated a Canadian audience on par with such acclaimed HBO series as *Rome* and *Deadwood*” (MacDonald 2006). While trying to valorize good theatre, *Slings & Arrows* also makes good, successful television. “In the final season,” as Osborne (2011) says, “the series, now itself hugely successful, wrestles most fully with its own contradictory impulses to celebrate theater while making effective TV.” While Geoffrey repeatedly fights to get audiences to appreciate good theatre, *Slings & Arrows*’ reviews and real audiences are the ultimate proof that good theatre can be popular.

*Slings & Arrows*’ dramatization of audiences unites the business consumers and art lovers; the young and old; the television viewers and theatregoers. Perhaps most surprising of all, *Slings & Arrows* has brought together real Canadian and American audiences as well as avid theatre lovers and viewers who eagerly admit “I loathe the theatre” (Garalczyk 2011). *Slings & Arrows*’ availability on the Sundance channel has “introduced it to a new American and international audience who seem to appreciate the ‘good humor’ of a ‘second class’” (Werts 2007) nation but do not necessarily even like Shakespeare, or indeed the “inescapable pathos and pretentiousness” of theatre (Garalczyk 2011).

In this way, the diversity of the onscreen fictional audiences mirrors the variety of the series’ real audiences. *Slings & Arrows* unites seemingly oppositional audiences both on screen and off: business helps sustain theatre, a youth quake revives a dying subscriber base, American reviewers wonder, “Canadians, how do they do it?,” and television serves as the medium for a celebration of classical theatre (Heffernan 2005).

In their final moments together, Geoffrey and Oliver reflect on the significance of their relationship:

GEOFFREY: What are we doing here, you and I?

LEAR [*off screen*]: You must bear with me.

OLIVER: Putting on a play.

GEOFFREY: Ha. Putting on a play.

LEAR [*off screen*]: I’m old . . .

GEOFFREY: This isn’t about us, is it?

LEAR [*off screen*]: Foolish . . .

OLIVER: No. Never was.<sup>17</sup>

As Geoffrey and Oliver both come to realize, the series “isn’t about us.” *Slings & Arrows* is about the complex relationship between an artist and audience.

## NOTES

1. *Slings & Arrows*, season 1, episode 5, directed by Peter Wellington (Toronto: Rhombus Media), DVD. Subsequent *Slings & Arrows* references are to season and episode.
2. *Slings & Arrows*, 3.2.
3. *Slings & Arrows*, 3.3.
4. *Slings & Arrows*, 1.1.
5. *Slings & Arrows*, 2.5.
6. *Slings & Arrows*, 3.4.
7. *Slings & Arrows*, 1.3.
8. *Slings & Arrows*, 2.1.
9. *Slings & Arrows*, 3.4.
10. William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. R. A. Foakes (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2005), act 1, scene 4, line 221.
11. *Slings & Arrows*, 3.1.

12. Ibid. While this affected praise of the live audience undermines the television star, it also calls critical attention to Geoffrey's ideal of poetic faith as fantasy.
13. *Slings & Arrows*, 3.6.
14. *Slings & Arrows*, 3.6.
15. *Slings & Arrows*, 3.6.
16. *Slings & Arrows*, 1.3.
17. *Slings & Arrows*, 3.6.

## WORKS CITED

- Chilton, Martin. 2013. "Slings & Arrows: So Good It Gave David Simon Writer-Envy." Review of *Slings & Arrows*. *Telegraph* [UK], July 13.
- Fedderson, Kim and J. Michael Richardson. 2014. "Slings & Arrows: An Intermediated Shakespearean Adaptation." In *OuterSpeares: Shakespeare, Intermedia, and the Limits of Adaptation*, edited by Daniel Fischlin, 205–29. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Fischlin, Daniel. 2004. "Spotlight: Slings & Arrows." *Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project*. University of Guelph. [http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/slings\\_spotlight.cfm](http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/slings_spotlight.cfm).
- Frye, Northrop. 1957. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Garalczyk, Wojciech. 2011. "That Willful Suspension of Disbelief Which Constitutes Poetic Faith." Review of *Slings & Arrows*. *Pajiba*, January 3. [http://www.pajiba.com/tv\\_reviews/slings-and-arrows-review-that-willful-suspension-of-disbelief-which-constitutes-poetic-faith.php](http://www.pajiba.com/tv_reviews/slings-and-arrows-review-that-willful-suspension-of-disbelief-which-constitutes-poetic-faith.php).
- Heffernan, Virginia. 2005. "Shakespearean Struggles, Both Onstage and Backstage." Review of *Slings & Arrows*. *New York Times*, August 5. <http://nyti.ms/1LvK9OP>.
- MacDonald, Gayle. 2006. "Outrageous fortune of Slings & Arrows." Review of *Slings & Arrows*. *Globe and Mail*, November 4.
- Newsday* [New York]. 2007. Review of *Slings & Arrows*. July. <http://www.newsday.com>
- Osborne, Laurie E. 2011. "Serial Shakespeare: Intermedial Performance and the Outrageous Fortunes of Slings & Arrows." *Borrowers And Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* 6 (2) (Fall-Winter): 1–24. <http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/783090/show>.
- Pittman, L. Monique. 2011. "Tracing Hamlet in Slings and Arrows: Fathers Haunt the Theatre." In *Authorizing Shakespeare on Film and Television: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity*, 177–206. New York: Peter Lang.



- VanDerWerff, Todd. 2013. “The creators of *Slings & Arrows* Talk About Creating One of TV’s Greatest Shows.” *AV Club*, May 22. <http://www.avclub.com/article/the-creators-of-slings-arrowsi-talk-about-creatin-98326>.
- Werts, Diane. 2007. “To watch, perchance to laugh.” Review of *Slings & Arrows*. *Newsday* [New York], Accessed February 16, 2007. <http://www.newsday.com>.
- Wheat, Alynda. 2000. “Tonight’s Best TV.” Review of *Slings & Arrows*. *Entertainment Weekly*, August 1.

# Race, National Identity, and the Hauntological Ethics of *Slings & Arrows*

DON MOORE

In *Specters of Marx*, Jacques Derrida (1994) unpacks his concept of *hauntology*, which is a thinking of ethical inheritance and responsibility that evokes both Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (which begins "A specter is haunting Europe") and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Much like Derrida's hauntological rethinking of our ethical inheritance from the "multiple, heterogeneous" specters of Marx, the Canadian television series *Slings & Arrows* similarly stages a kind of hauntological rethinking of Canadian theatre's ethical inheritance from the multiple, heterogeneous specters of Shakespeare, in whose "borrowed robes" institutions like the Stratford Festival have draped themselves as a way of orienting our shared Canadian notions of national identity, moral integrity, and artistic merit. In fact, *Slings & Arrows* stages a number of hauntological conceits, including ghosts who argue with and literally direct the actions of the living, with both comedic and ethically charged consequences. Some of these spectral figures appear in the form of subaltern "ethical others," who haunt the show throughout its three seasons, and whose function is to ethically orient the storylines of *Slings & Arrows* for the attentive viewer, offering subtle metacommentaries regarding what Canadian theatre's ethical responsibilities should be. These living ethical others—unlike the dead or dying voices of Canadian-theatre past that the series presents—are demarcated along racial, national, and cultural lines. Another key hauntological aspect of the show is its intermedial presentation of a particular television-friendly Canadian specter of Shakespeare. I argue that the intermedial effects of adapting Shakespeare

to the tight episodic structure, generic demands, mass-marketed and mass-mediated context of a Canadian comedy television series heavily inflect our interactions with the spectral ethical others in *Slings & Arrows*, and thus require some unpacking. Doing so will help us better understand how the hit show doesn't just function as great comedy but also as an ethico-political argument regarding what "Canadian theatre" is, raising ethical questions regarding for whom, by whom, and in whose interests it is created.

### **THE GHOST OF THE MACHINE—INTERMEDIALITY, ADAPTATION, IDEOLOGY**

A key hauntological aspect of *Slings & Arrows* is its *intermediality*. This concept is concerned with the effects of cross-generic and/or mixed-media productions. It is also related to the concept of remediation. Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, in their book *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, define remediation as having to do with "the particular ways in which [different forms of "new media"] refashion older media and the ways in which older media refashion themselves to answer the challenges of new media" (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 15). Bolter and Grusin's concept of remediation concerns the ways in which media, re-presented in different forms of media, thus constitute reconfigured generic effects and forms. As such, questions related to remediation cannot be separated from intermediality. This relationship between the remediated and the intermediated has to do with the ways in which remediation (and thus, by extension, intermediality) can be understood to operate within a semiotic logic of *supplementarity*—another Derridian concept related to the concept of hauntology. Remediation involves the supplemental referencing or reintroduction of one media form within another, which *always already* points beyond the structural limits of either form. For example, the remediation of Shakespeare's plays within a television series like *Slings & Arrows* not only reproduces theatrical materials and processes in a new medium, but has the effect of changing the way we understand and view those remediated materials. In a sense, the televised version becomes *part* of our experience of watching the theatrically based play, supplementing and re-configuring our relationship to it.

Thus, the supplemental structure of remediation results in the disruption and/or reconfiguration of both the form of media being remediated, as well as the media through which the former is being represented, and likewise refuses any definitive relationship of copy to "origin"/mediation to "source." In McLuhanesque terms, one might say

that inasmuch as media is structured like a linguistic sign system based on supplementarity (referential signification) with no access to origins, the medium both structures and is implicated by the message, which is always already a medium. In short, instead of thinking of the relationship between one form of media remediated within another form of media as referential—one medium re-presenting another more “originary” source—it is more productive to consider how this interaction creates complex intermedial effects. One particularly productive way of understanding the complex, ethico-political effects of intermediality is Derrida’s reframing of this question in hauntological terms in his book with Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television*.

In that book, Derrida describes the hauntological experience of being filmed for television, a process by which, he says, “we are already specters of a ‘televised.’ . . . We are spectralized by the shot, captured or possessed by spectrality in advance” (Derrida and Stiegler 2002, 117). In other words, says Derrida, in the process of being filmed, there is an othering of the image from itself; a kind of “reframing” of the person or thing that is both part of, and other than, what that person or thing is. This is a key aspect of the hauntological relationship between what Derrida calls the “spirit” of a thing and its multiple, heterogeneous specters. In short, the relationship between the spirit of a thing (or its “origin”), and its multiple, heterogeneous specters (including its intermedial re-productions in different forms of media) is, for Derrida, a classic deconstructive aporia. These specters are the supplements, or “traces,” of a concept which, as it turns out, are the spirit’s very conditions of possibility. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida (1994, 7) explains that

what distinguishes the specter or the *revenant* from the *spirit*, including the spirit in the sense of the ghost in general, is doubtless a supernatural and paradoxical phenomenality, the furtive and ungraspable visibility of the invisible, or an invisibility of a visible X, that *non-sensuous sensuous* of which [Marx’s] *Capital* speaks (we will come to this) with regard to a certain exchange-value; it is also, no doubt, the tangible intangibility of a proper body without flesh, but still the body of *someone* as *someone other*. And of *someone other* that we will not hasten to determine as self, subject, person, consciousness, spirit, and so forth. This already suffices to distinguish the specter not only from the icon or the idol but also from the image of the image, from the Platonic *phantasma*, as well as from the simple *simulacrum* of something in general to which it is nevertheless so close and with which it shares, in other respects, more than one feature.

Like Platonic simulacra, which always imperfectly refer to a unified, ungraspable ideal, specters, Derrida repeatedly warns, are always *more than one* and they are *heterogeneous* (if even such a unified “heterogeneity” of the specter can be risked). These same specters, however, implicitly demonstrate that the transcendental signified “*spirits*” to which they refer (for example, Hegel’s concept of “absolute Spirit”) are in fact non-existent, without “origins,” and thus not “present”—it is only through the “traces” of such spirits that we receive their memory. Thus, specters, if they are to do justice to their particular concepts, for Derrida, must always point *beyond* their eschatological limits (meaning the confines of a life ontologized as dates of birth and death and labelled with a proper name and hypostatized attributes). In short, the spirit of a thing or person—because it is always already spectralized in the memories and experiences of others, including in remediated forms such as photographs and video—is *nothing but* its multiple, heterogeneous specters. Thus, for Derrida, our ethical obligation to the specter is to remain open to the possibility that there is always more than one, and that their ability to work on us, influence us, and “live on” may continue long after their supposed “death.”

The various real and fictional specters who haunt *Slings & Arrows*—the specters of Shakespeare, the Nigerian writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, Oliver Welles, the fictional, deceased artistic director of the fictional New Burbage Festival, who himself seems like the spectral apparition of real-life deceased artistic director of the Stratford Festival, Richard Monette, among others—are all depicted working in a major Canadian theatre involved in theatrical productions of the “greatest hits” of Shakespeare. *Slings & Arrows*, however, adapts these theatrical materials for a comedic Canadian television series. Thus, the ways in which these specters ethically and ideologically interact with each other and with the audience of *Slings & Arrows* is affected by the intermedial and/or mixed-media contexts of their appearance on television, meant for mass-media distribution.

For example, the successful first performance of *Hamlet* depicted at the end of season one is represented as a montage sequence stringing together short clips from the most famous speeches and one or two moments of dialogue between key characters. When a particularly “magical” moment of acting supposedly occurs, this is indicated by a non-diegetic orchestral swell thematically unconnected to what is actually going on in the play, and by reaction shots of “oooohs” and “aahhhhs” from various key characters, whether or not the performance

is actually “magical.” In these montage sequences in *Slings & Arrows*, our temporal and emotional experience of the play is manipulated in ways we’ve been well trained to respond to by similar thematic montage sequences in movies like *Rocky*. Thus, in these key scenes from *Slings & Arrows*, the ethical and ideological representations of the success or failure of particular artistic choices are therefore spectrally communicated to the TV audience as much through televisual trickery as an actual performance of the play.

Pierre Bourdieu, in his book *On Television*, observes that “there is a basic, fundamental contradiction between the conditions that allow one to do cutting-edged math . . . and the conditions necessary to transmit it to everybody else. Television carries this contradiction to the extreme” (Bourdieu 1996, 37). Bourdieu’s book is about television journalism, but many of his insights aptly apply to the intermedial effects of presenting adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays as part of a very successful Canadian comedy series, which is both a critique and a celebration of the Stratford Festival, featuring many of its most well-known actors. For instance, when complex and politically charged plays like Shakespeare’s are intermedially adapted for a mass medium like television—particularly within *Slings & Arrows*’ tight, episodic structure, television-friendly storylines and characters, and casting which adheres to mass-media standards of beauty and body image—some serious reshaping of the Shakespearean text and the ideas expressed in that text will need to—or rather, are more easily made to—occur.

One aspect of this mass-mediatization of Shakespeare that *Slings & Arrows* undertakes is the *glocalization* of its content. A glocalized mass-media production is one in which any local or regional content generally needs to be translated, stereotyped, or cut altogether with the intention of better appealing to an international audience. One of the most successful examples of glocalization is Ang Lee’s movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), A Taiwan-China-Hong Kong-U.S. co-production which grossed over US\$213 million internationally—and is the highest-grossing foreign-language film in American history—as a result of its successful reimagining of a Taiwanese folk tale into an international blockbuster martial-arts action film. Though the basic Taiwanese folk tale structures the storyline of the film, the action elements, internationally recognizable stars, and slick production values ensure that the local story will not preclude mass-media audiences. In *Slings & Arrows*, a clear example of glocalization is in the show’s casting—particularly of featured, recurring characters. Paul Gross’s stardom

on both sides of the border via the television series *Due South* and his Hollywood-ready good looks made him a marketable choice for a lead in a Canadian series aimed at international distribution. Also featured on promotional materials for *Slings & Arrows* is Canadian-born television and film star Rachel McAdams, whose international stardom was yet to come. Like Gross, her Hollywood good looks and charismatic television presence helped to make the series, as well as her own acting career, internationally glocalizable. A second glocalized aspect of the show is the way in which its content, storylines, and locations are unmistakably “local” references to the Canadian Stratford festival: its politics, economics, and even many of its most prominent actors are represented, sometimes in semi-obscured forms that can be understood as an “in-joke” for Stratford aficionados. That said, these local references are not reliant on insider knowledge of Stratford and its denizens.

Another tried-and-true tactic of Western media producers is to create television geared toward the humanistic celebration of “great art,” like *Slings & Arrows* is. As Kim Fedderson and J. Michael Richardson point out in *Outerspeares*, “the creators of *Slings & Arrows* do not take issue with the canons of traditional Western art, or their institutionalization or commercialization” (Fedderson and Richardson 2014, 206). On the contrary, the show’s success rather depends on Shakespeare’s canonicity. Indeed, as Fedderson and Richardson suggest, the show “seems set upon restoring the value of Shakespearean currency” (ibid.). The “universalist” notion of great art’s mass appeal and its (seeming) lack of potentially controversial political content has been deployed by many media producers as a profitable and unobjectionable marketing strategy. For example, a boom in this type of “arts documentary” occurred in North America during the McCarthy-era Red Scare. For a North American film or television production to risk being too overtly political at that time could mean the suppression of the show, legal troubles for the producers, or worse. On the other hand, the remediation of Shakespeare’s work for the purpose of “branding” it as a uniquely Canadian product is potentially problematic if a series like *Slings & Arrows* focuses too closely on the national, ethical, and political issues at stake in a play like Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, which was featured in the television series’ first season. To *Slings & Arrows*’ credit, however, the *specters* of political and ethical complexity haunt the entire series of *Slings & Arrows*.

Such an internal critique of the nationalistic politics of branding Shakespeare as “Canadian” occurs in season two of the series during a



meeting between Froghammer Advertising Agency head Sanjay (played by Canadian actor Colm Feore) and New Burbage Theatre Festival business manager Richard Smith-Jones (played by Mark McKinney of *Kids in the Hall* fame). In this scene, Smith-Jones reads out the festival's mission statement:

[I]t is the purpose of the New Burbage theatre festival to stage the classics of theatre with a special emphasis of the works of William Shakespeare with high production values and an unrivaled level of artistry and in a culturally and socially inclusive manner to communicate Canada's cultural voice both domestically and abroad [laughter off stage]. ("Season's End" 2005, S2 ep.1)

As Smith-Jones's mission statement suggests, a central dramatic tension within *Slings & Arrows* is derived from the ways in which particular conceptions of what constitutes "high Canadian culture" and its ethical, artistic, and ideological obligations to (Canadian) humanity, are placed in constant tension with employing Shakespeare as a consumer product. And yet, this very tension is at issue in *Slings & Arrows*, itself an internationally mass-marketed television series hawking Shakespeare as Canadian content and Canadian national identity—an irony likely not lost on the writers of the series.

In hauntological terms, such questions of intermediality are related to what Derrida (1994) in *Specters of Marx* calls the "visor effect." Derrida draws this effect from his close reading of act 1 scene 5 of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in which Hamlet is visited by the ghost of his father—a scene allegorized in *Slings & Arrows* via Geoffrey Tennant and Oliver Welles's hauntological relationship. In Shakespeare's famous Oedipal scene depicting the transmission from father to son of ideological, political, and ethical inheritance, Derrida pinpoints and complexifies the "great argument" that is triggered within Hamlet for the rest of the play due to the spectral nature of this encounter. This father-to-son exchange is signified, for Derrida, by the armour and visored helmet worn by the ghost. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida (1994, 7) explains that

to feel ourselves seen by a look which it will always be impossible to cross, that is the *visor effect* on the basis of which we inherit from the law. Since we do not see the one who sees us, and who makes the law, who delivers the injunction (which is, moreover, a contradictory injunction), since we do not see the one who orders "swear," we cannot identify it in all certainty, we must fall back on its voice . . . . An essentially blind submission to his secret, to the secret of his origin: this is a first obedience to the injunction. It will condition all the others.

The visor effect is described here in terms similar to those of the secretive surveillance techniques of the guard hidden behind the slats of the central security window in Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, a model of incarceration poignantly discussed in Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. However, in Derrida's version the ghostly voice of the law positions itself behind an early-modern-style visor brimming with sedimented historical resonances. In this way, Derrida (like Heidegger does with Husserlian phenomenology) "poeticizes" Foucauldian power, underscoring its spectral qualities. The visor effect, in short, is a hauntological theory of how we inherit and pass along social, cultural, and political power relations, sedimented historical traditions, and generationally transmitted ethical obligations. A particularly dominant way in which this hauntological inheritance is passed along today is through the consumption of media.

In *Ecographies of Television*, Derrida draws a parallel between the visor effect and televisual media spectacle. The visor effect, explains Derrida, "or what in any case I have called this, is that, up or down, the king's helmet, Hamlet's father's helmet, reminds us that his gaze can see without being seen" (Derrida and Stiegler 2002, 121). Whether we see the ghost's face or not, the point is that we will always be under surveillance by its gaze. Thus, "the specter is not simply this visible invisible that I can see, it is someone who watches or concerns me without any possible reciprocity, and who therefore makes the law when I am blind, blind by situation. The specter enjoys the right of absolute inspection. He is the right of inspection itself" (ibid.). Derrida connects this seeming right of "absolute inspection" without the possibility of reciprocity to the way media spectacle operates. He suggests that

one has a tendency to treat what we've been talking about here under the names of image, teletechnology, television screen, archive, as if all these things were on display: a collection of objects, things we see, spectacles in front of us, devices we might use, much as we might use a "teleprompter" we had ourselves pre-written or prescribed. But wherever there are these specters, we are being watched, we sense or think we are being watched. This dissymmetry complicates everything. (Derrida and Stiegler 2002, 122)

What Derrida suggests here, among other things, is that visual media seems to have a peculiar power over audiences as an ideological apparatus. *We think* we are merely watching *it*—perhaps as a passive pleasurable act, enjoying a comedy show about a fictional Canadian Shakespeare festival in order to unwind after a long day, or examining it as a kind

of televisual document that we mean to master and interrogate for one purpose or another—but as it turns out, in effect, *it is watching us*.

Derrida begins to unpack this relationship between the televisual spectacle and the visor effect by close reading of a filmed interview between himself and a friend, Pascale Ogier, a successful French film actress who had since passed away, at age twenty-five, and with whom Derrida acted in the 1985 film *Ghostdance*. Intriguingly, that film was also about mythologies and beliefs about ghosts and how those ideas intersect with the ways in which cinematic spectacle operates. Derrida explains that

the ghost [in this case the televised specter of his friend Ogier] looks at or watches us, the ghost concerns us. The specter is not simply someone we see coming back, it is someone by whom we feel ourselves watched, observed, surveyed, as if by the law: we are “before the law,” without any possible symmetry, without reciprocity, insofar as the other is watching only us, concerns only us, we who are observing it (in the same way that one observes and respects the law) without even being able to meet its gaze. (Ibid., 120)

One aspect of this complex and intensely personal ethical interaction with the filmed image that Derrida unpacks is that, among other effects, the televisual image operates as a particularly engaging ideological training mechanism—a technology of power by which we end up *training ourselves* via a non-reciprocal, ethical relationship with “the law.”

## THE ETHICAL SPECTERS OF SLINGS & ARROWS

The ethical specters haunting *Slings & Arrows*, I argue, also operate along the lines of a televisual version of Derrida’s visor effect, ethically hailing us from a non-reciprocal, virtual medium “out of joint” with our own world, as well as with the theatrical story world in which they appear. Particularly in the first season of *Slings & Arrows*, which so closely draws upon the ghostly relationship between Hamlet and his father for its story structure and for the artistic collaboration between Geoffrey Tennant and Oliver Welles, we can draw parallels between Derrida’s hauntological reading of *Hamlet* and the ethical and ideological specters haunting *Slings & Arrows*. Indeed, one of the more hauntological themes on which the series structures itself is the way in which haunting serves as an allegory for artistic inheritance. Geoffrey is literally haunted by Oliver and the two have arguments over the staging, casting, and artistic vision of all the Shakespearean plays presented in the series. This “great argument” between Geoffrey and Oliver, however,

is analogous to the ways in which artistic inheritance between artists and their influences work. It is also an allegory for the ways in which particular sedimented traditions and styles are passed on from an older generation of a theatre company to successive ones. The ubiquity of English accents peppering the series, for example, is a specter of traditional ideas about how Shakespearean text should be spoken—a stereotype which is closely related to the Stratford Festival's early history of hiring big-name British actors and directors, seemingly due to their status as more "authentic" Shakespearean theatre professionals.

Hauntological inheritance, as presented in the series, is also ethical. In contrast to the white Anglo cultural default position of *Slings & Arrows'* New Burbage Festival, the most dominant specter of ethics haunting the series appears in the form of black African cultural otherness. This particular ethical specter, which is perhaps the most interesting one in the series, involves Nahum (Rothaford Gray), the New Burbage Festival's Nigerian-born security guard/custodian. He appears in the very first episode and serves from then on as a kind of ethical commentator on the unfolding action. We first meet Nahum watching a television in his custodian's closet with (then-living) artistic director Oliver Welles. They are watching Welles's live production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* via the monitor. Welles despairs that "there isn't a moment of truth in this entire production." Nahum replies that "the truth can be a dangerous thing" ("*Oliver's Dream*" 2003, S1. Ep. 1). He then recounts how he himself was a theatre director in Nigeria, but had to flee the country after his acting troupe staged a production of *The Wheel*, a play by Nigerian poet/activist/television personality Ken Saro-Wiwa, who was imprisoned and murdered by the Nigerian government of General Sani Abacha. When Welles asks how Nahum's play was received, Nahum answers that he fears the production was overly critical of the Abacha regime, the authorities burnt down the sets and beat the actors with sticks.

The comedy of this scene derives from its quick, almost throwaway style that contains and manages the tension from the serious nature of Nahum's revelations, channelling it into comedic bathos. Even this politicization of the plot, however, is carefully chosen: much like the way *Slings & Arrows* presents "Shakespeare's greatest hits" in abridged form, Nahum metonymically represents one of the most infamously egregious human-rights abuses in recent history—so well known and universally condemned in the West, in fact, that while it remains politically relevant, it is likely uncontroversial for the television audience.

There are several specters conjured in this brief, comedic scene. There is the ghost of Ken Saro-Wiwa, as well as the specters of Nahum's acting troupe who were beaten by the same brutal regime that dispatched the murdered Nigerian poet/activist. But these specters are themselves the spectral memories of another specter—the fictional, televisual specter of Nahum. What we know of Nahum's acting troupe we learn only from him. But we know for certain that Ken Saro-Wiwa was murdered—Derrida reminds us repeatedly in *Specters of Marx* that specters are always multiple, and that they are heterogeneous, like multiple versions of a story. But *many* such specters of Ken Saro-Wiwa speak to the truth that he was murdered, and confirm the conditions under which that happened. What Derrida calls “the infinite [ethical] demand” made by these specters on us, however, is mediated by the comedic style of this scene, and by Nahum's marginalized position in *Slings & Arrows* as subaltern outsider.

We also see Nahum at different times fulfilling his nightly duty of placing the “ghost light” on the stage. This safety precaution, mandated by the Canadian stage actors' union, is connected with a long-held theatrical superstition that every theatre has a ghost in need of appeasement. Thus, Nahum's ghost-light duties could be read with a theological, or even a liberal humanist ethical connotation of shining a light or moral beacon in a dark place. In fact, Nahum's name intertextually resonates with the book of the prophet Nahum in the Hebrew Bible—a text about divine justice and retribution. The ghost light marks Nahum as a kind of bridge between the spirit world—via the specter of Oliver Welles—and the world of the living—via Geoffrey Tennant. It also symbolizes Nahum's ethical function of mediator within the company and as a kind of worldly humanist “voice of reason” or appeasement. We don't know the status of Nahum's actual citizenship, or if he has any aspirations to rise above his under-employment as security guard/custodian and take on a more integral place within the flagship Canadian *national* theatre in which he is seemingly, if not very, qualified to work as an artist, and so regularly asked for advice on how to run. For example, at the beginning of season three, during early rehearsals for *King Lear*, Geoffrey asks Nahum his opinion about—and, indeed, ostensibly grants him veto power over—the use of an extremely expensive special-effects machine; quite an executive privilege for a security guard!

When we examine the hauntological dynamics of Nahum's position in *Slings & Arrows* more closely, however, it is his position as subaltern other within the company that operates as his character's

particular “visor effect,” lending him his authority as a “foreign” voice of reason by maintaining his subject position as outsider looking in. What’s more, scenes in *Slings & Arrows* such as the *King Lear* rehearsal, in which Nahum is effectively given veto power over the expensive special effects machine, underscore the power dynamics of Nahum’s ethical interventions. Specifically, all such interventions must originate by a demand from, and eventually be re-routed back through, the pre-existing hegemonic power structures of the festival.

Thus, as Fedderson and Richardson (2014, 226) maintain, Nahum is effectively othered in this series as a “happy outsider,” functioning to “remind the audience of the existence of a larger reality beyond the little world of the New Burbage festival.” The series stops short, however, of too radically challenging the white privilege, racism, and social immobility seemingly stunting a character like Nahum, even if his spectral ethical function is to critique those very issues. Thus, while Nahum is the spectral ethical voice of the series, in the end we are left with the optics of him still left placing the ghost light and holding the puke bucket.

## WORKS CITED

- Bolter, Jay David and Richard Grusin. 1999. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Boston: MIT Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1996. *On Television*. Translated by Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson. New York: The New Press.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1994. *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge.
- Derrida, Jacques and Bernard Stiegler. 2002. *Echographies of Television*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Fedderson, Kim and J. Michael Richardson. 2014. “*Slings & Arrows: An Intermedial Adaptation*.” In *Outerspeares: Shakespeare, Intermedia, and the Limits of Adaptation*, edited by Daniel Fischlin, 205–29. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Fischlin, Daniel, ed. 2014. *Outerspeares: Shakespeare, Intermedia, and the Limits of Adaptation*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press.
- “Oliver’s Dream.” 2003. *Slings & Arrows*. Season 1. Episode 1. Created and written by Susan Coyne, Bob Martin, and Mark McKinney. Acorn Media, 2008. DVD.
- “Season’s End.” 2005. *Slings & Arrows*. Season 2. Episode 1. Created and written by Susan Coyne, Bob Martin, and Mark McKinney. Acorn Media, 2008. DVD.

Shakespeare, William. 1997. Hamlet. In *The Norton Shakespeare*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt et al. New York: Norton

*Slings & Arrows*. 2003–2006. Created and written by Susan Coyne, Bob Martin, and Mark McKinney. Acorn Media, 2008. DVD.



# Performing “Indigenous Shakespeare” in Canada: *The Tempest* and *The Death of a Chief*

SARAH MACKENZIE

## FRAMING THE DISCUSSION: INDIGENOUS PERFORMANCE CULTURE IN CANADA

While Indigenous theatre cannot be confined to its particular ethnographic and political dimensions, much Indigenous drama and literature continues to contend with the concerns of Indigenous communities, most prominently Canada’s colonialist legacy.<sup>1</sup> Emerging as a force in the 1980s,<sup>2</sup> Indigenous theatre has, over the course of the past thirty years, come to operate as a crucially important site in the collective feminist and intercultural struggle against racialized, gendered violence. Indigenous playwrights regularly employ a “decolonial” approach that represents violence as an overt reminder of colonization. They mount representational, discursive opposition to those colonial tropes that have misrepresented Indigeneity generally and Indigenous women particularly. Such tropes have contributed both to the perpetuation of broad-based social dismissal of Indigenous peoples and to racialized and sexualized violence.<sup>3</sup> As Irish-Algonquin playwright Yvette Nolan asserts in various interviews, because there is “no such thing as post-colonization at this point” (in Dempsey 2009, 25)<sup>4</sup> it is essential that “much of [Indigenous] theatre is about colonization” (in Aboriginal Media Society 1996, 13).<sup>5</sup> Comparing Nolan’s 2008 National Arts Centre production of *The Death of A Chief*,<sup>6</sup> a “gender-bending,” Indigenous, feminist adaptation of *Julius Caesar*, with Lewis Baumander’s 1987

Skylight Theatre production of *The Tempest* (Knowles 2007, 55),<sup>7</sup> this chapter argues that, while both directors aspired to address and to challenge Canada's colonialist legacy, only Nolan's adaptation, a rethinking and rewriting of Shakespeare rather than simply a production, most effectively and successfully achieves this aim.

### REREADING *THE TEMPEST* IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Inspired by the 1987 meeting between representatives of the Indigenous peoples of Manitoba and Glenn Babb, then South Africa's ambassador to Canada, during which Babb took the opportunity to remind Canadians that treatment "of native people in th[is] country . . . is no better, if not worse, than [in] Soweto" (Peters 1993, 197),<sup>8</sup> director Lewis Baumander, leaving the play's original text unaltered, decided to set his production of *The Tempest* in the Queen Charlotte Islands (now called Haida Gwaii), off the coast of British Columbia, during the late-eighteenth-century voyages of James Cook,<sup>9</sup> the area's period of first British colonization. Baumander, then Skylight Theatre's artistic director, grew up in Saskatchewan near a Cree reserve and found the white South African delegate's criticism of Canada's treatment of Indigenous peoples both reasonable and unsettling. The director thus chose to allow Shakespeare's timeless themes of "revenge and retribution, the abuse . . . of power . . . forgiveness and grace" to play out in the context of the West Coast Indigenous peoples' struggle to retain their way of life in the face of British colonial power (Kinross 1989, N14).

In his production of the play, Baumander cast Kuna/Rappahannock actor Monique Mojica as Ariel and Cree performer Billy Merasty as Caliban.<sup>10</sup> In order to avoid constructing a culturally appropriative piece (that is, a representational exploitation of the Haida way of life before colonization), Baumander also engaged playwright Tomson Highway's<sup>11</sup> brother, René Highway (1954–1990), as the play's choreographer. Notwithstanding a few criticisms concerning the overall quality of the production (e.g., Helen Peters, who reluctantly noted its "jar[ring] quality"), it was considered by many aesthetically "lovely" and was an immediate success (Knowles 2007, 53), with *Toronto Star* reviewer Phil Johnson describing it as a "colourful, new-world interpretation" (1987, N16), and Louise Kinross, also reviewing for the *Toronto Star*, applauding the 1989 revival's "special effects" and "[r]itual dance" (1989, N14).

On opening night, Skylight Theatre publicist John Karastamatis suggested that, although originally written four hundred years ago, *The Tempest* is equally poignant today, in contemporary Canada, as

“native peoples continue to fight for land claim settlements, status and rights” (Johnson 1987, N16).<sup>12</sup> It is true that *The Tempest* is perhaps better suited than the play Nolan chose, *Julius Caesar*, to address the issues related to colonialist power dynamics. After all, the plot of *The Tempest* directly addresses the ramifications of coercive settlement. By enslaving both Caliban and Ariel, Prospero’s actions echo the colonialist displacement of Indigenous populations during and after colonization. Baumander himself suggested that “in Prospero’s and Caliban’s relationship, the tragic effects of cultural oppression are most apparent” (Kinross 1989, N14).<sup>13</sup> For Skylight’s publicist, *The Tempest* was, in effect, “a story of an indigenous culture being invaded by an alien culture that imposes new ways and means on them” (ibid.) She considered the correspondence to lie in the tale of Ferdinand and Miranda, whose love affair, Mojica suggested, resembled that of John Smith and Pocahontas. In light of the fact that Shakespeare was a contemporary of Smith, it is likely, suggested Mojica, that Shakespeare had their story in the “back of his mind” when he wrote *The Tempest* in 1611 (Wagner 1989, D10).<sup>14</sup> This is not to say, however, that Mojica considered that Baumander’s *The Tempest* was a reflection of “Indigenous Theatre,” as the production was not, to any extent, employed for decolonial Indigenous performance purposes.<sup>15</sup> As Mojica suggested, Indigenous theatre practitioners must “transcend [their] position of creating work in reaction to the dominant culture” and refuse to “remain forever the ‘other,’ either relegated to quaint folklore or elevated to mystic exoticism” (1991b, 3). This transcendence certainly did not occur in Baumander’s production.

Although the Haida-inspired Indigenous motifs used in the set did, as Peters suggests, show something of the “complexity and power” of pre-contact Indigenous spiritual traditions—traditions and practices that were largely diminished or denied entirely to Indigenous peoples during and (in some cases) long after colonization (Peters 1993, 200)—the play’s connections to any specific Indigenous culture were very “loose” (Knowles 2007, 53), rendering the final product, however well intended, profoundly vacant. The props inspired entirely, according to Karastamatis, by West Coast Haida traditions, included masks which were aesthetically pleasing but not associated with any particular Indigenous culture; similarly, a shamanistic robe designed to be worn by Prospero was also devoid of a specific, identifiable Indigenous referent. Although the show featured an Indigenous dance ceremony, most likely derived from northern Cree or Ojibwa tradition, it was adapted by René Highway to meet directorial demands and was not aligned with

any particular Indigenous cultural ceremony; it was, therefore, a misappropriation of a potentially sacred Indigenous tradition for dramatic effect.<sup>16</sup>

While the decision to cast Indigenous performers was similarly well intentioned, this only exacerbated the problematic nature of the play's engagement with Indigenous material. Ariel, in Baumander's production, was interpreted as a female version of the gender-ambiguous North American trickster, Nanabush—a common figure in Indigenous-authored texts and plays, particularly those produced in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>17</sup> However, when it came to the actual performance, Ariel was portrayed as a “harpy,” and made an absurd, exoticized, and completely decontextualized emergence as a Northwest Coast thunderbird, flying from the belly of a dead walrus, which clearly had no place on Canada's west coast (Knowles 2007, 53). The trickster representation was also somewhat obfuscated by the representationally confounding mélange of props and costumes incorporated in the production.

Given Canada's colonial context and ever-worsening national epidemic of violence against Indigenous women and girls, the depiction of Ariel in act 1 was most disturbing.<sup>18</sup> Audiences witnessed an Indigenous woman waiting servilely on her master's orders, while Miranda, Prospero's white, privileged daughter, slept peacefully under the protection of her father's power, here aligned with imperialist domination. This interpretation suggested its association with the opposing stereotypes of Indigenous and white women that had been used throughout history to marginalize and oppress Indigenous populations: on the one hand, the notion of pure, virtuous white women, agents of civilization and, on the other, impure, uncivilized, and domitable Indigenous women (Stoler 1992, 148; 1989, 515). Such polarized representations have, as Kim Anderson has argued, perpetuated stereotypes of Indigenous subservience, uncontrolled wantonness, and savagery, all of which have contributed to a culture of sexual violence that has regarded (and continues to regard) them as there for the “sexual taking” (2000, 109). Because Baumander's emblematic portrayal of Ariel as a slave and an ambiguously motivated rebel was dramatically decontextualized and representationally confounding, the play risked contributing to, rather than subverting, these social constructions of Indigenous womanhood.

The portrayal of Caliban was, as John Davis has argued, also somewhat troubling. Reminiscent of colonialist stereotypes of Indigenous men as barbaric and appetitive, the misshapen monster is also presented not only as a dark-skinned, intoxicated slave but also as a rapist

(as in Shakespeare’s play), the sexual aggressor to the innocent Miranda. Significantly, depictions of the vulnerable white woman in need of protection were propagated in tandem with portrayals of Indigenous degenerate licentiousness during periods of threat to imperial rule, whether real or imagined, so as to legitimize the coercive measures needed for control. Because white women were symbolically aligned with the social/moral purity of imperial rule in the British colonies, images of the dark male rapist ravaging the white female body became a signifier of colonial upset, suggesting that the dark rapist aligns directly with the pending failure of the civilizing mission (see Sharpe 2003, 68; Stoler 1992, 148). Prospero, fulfilling his colonial duty, punished Caliban for his act of violent rebellion. Baumander’s decision to depict Caliban as a rapist in a drunken stupor, although true to Shakespeare’s text (at least insofar as his attempt at sexual assault), was therefore misplaced and ineffective in terms of the goal of colonial redress. According to Davis (1989), audiences were quick to laugh at such a familiarly demeaning trope. As he writes,

Enslaved, Caliban staggers around the stage crying “Freedom, freedom,” a common enough delusion among men when they are drunk. Some of the audience, clearly accustomed to laughing at drunken Indians, found this scene funny, but it was the kind of nervous laughter that comes of a bad conscience.

While Shakespeare’s Caliban is, at points, lyrical and eloquent, in such poetically charged scenes Baumander risked aligning his antagonist with romanticized colonialist portrayals of the “noble savage,” the male version of the “Indian Princess” (Lyytinen 2011, 79). Baumander’s intended elucidation of (and resistance to) cultural misrepresentations thus risked having the converse effect, a potential upending due, at least in part, to the fact that, while attempting to employ Shakespeare allegorically to demonstrate the violence inherent in the common processes of settler colonialism, the production itself enacted a kind of colonialism. Simply resetting the play in time and place was insufficient to “recontextualize Shakespeare politically” and to create a production in keeping with the “current post-colonial concerns” of Indigenous peoples (Fischlin and Fortier 2000, 5). Paul Leonard reminds us that “the economy of *The Tempest* inevitably positions Prospero as the authority,” with the “values and aspirations” of the colonizing, imperial power, here embodied by the figure of the protagonist, “presented as normative”; in this context, “Caliban’s plot to subvert Prospero and regain control of his island is allowed to exist only within [the] safety of the comic mode”

(1988, 11). Unadapted, *The Tempest's* imperial ideology appears to be so securely in place that Caliban's struggle to resist might easily have been interpreted as a humorous gesture and therefore was unlikely to have encouraged viewers to interrogate the moral incentive behind the colonizing protagonist's relations with those characters indigenous to the island or with those he shipwrecks (Peters 1993, 203).

Since Shakespeare's play appears to be so suitable for the purpose of addressing Canada's colonial legacy, it is not surprising that Baumander made the decision to leave the text unaltered; yet, fittingness of plot aside, the production did not bring to fruition a viable performative contestation of colonial violence, something it was expressly designed to do and, as has been noted above, was, in the end, representationally fraught in terms of its depictions of Indigeneity. Although a visually captivating production, in terms of mounting a trenchant critique of colonialism, the production was unsuccessful.

### **SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA AS INDIGENOUS THEATRE: *THE DEATH OF A CHIEF***

Jennifer Drouin has argued that "adaptation involves making a Shakespeare that is foreign, alien, and other fit a particular conception" of a sociocultural landscape (2014, 43). To turn to Yvette Nolan's *The Death of a Chief* is to turn to a masterful demonstration of a collaboratively revised Shakespearean drama employed successfully for decolonial ends. Setting the scene in Rome, Ontario, featuring Mojica as Caesar and well-known Cree performer Lorne Cardinal as her husband, Calpurnius, Nolan's reshaped *Julius Caesar* is a ready vehicle for exploring issues relating to the colonial dismantling of Indigenous political structures. Despite Nolan's use of Shakespeare's text as a means by which to contend with Indigenous sociocultural relations, *Death* was not designed to undermine Shakespearean drama, but is, rather, an adept reinterpretation which speaks to the multifaceted nature of the original work.<sup>19</sup> *Julius Caesar* was, in fact, the first of Shakespeare's plays that Nolan had encountered, taken as a child to a production by her residential-school-educated mother when she was very young and impressionable. Dismissing any negative ramifications associated with adapting Shakespeare's work to Canada's colonial context, Nolan considered *Julius Caesar* to be politically "timely" (2006b).

*The Death of a Chief*, co-authored by Nolan and Kennedy Cathy MacKinnon, was a collaborative effort, the product of five years of workshoping at Native Earth Performing Arts, one of Canada's most

prestigious and longest-running Indigenous theatre groups, then under Nolan’s artistic direction (Crean 2011, 16). The production was, at first, a seeming departure from Native Earth’s mandate: the purpose of the company is to assist with the development of contemporary Indigenous theatre. Native Earth would have had no interest in workshopping a project like Baumander’s production, despite its beauty, as doing so would have amounted to the promotion of an “update[ed]” version of a well-known Shakespeare play performed in “Indian dress” (ibid.). Although Nolan and MacKinnon’s text does not “talk back” to Shakespeare as one might expect of an Indigenous adaptation (Knowles 2007, 54), it is a dramatic reordering of the original play and, in the end, a complete reshaping of the text for the purpose of collective, community consideration of immediate Indigenous political prerogatives. As Nolan (2006b) comments:

We struggle to find some kind of self-government, to achieve some kind of self-determination, we’re working with very flawed systems and very flawed tools and that’s a hard thing. I don’t know. We don’t know what the answer is. I guess that’s why this story [*Julius Caesar*] is so fascinating to us because if we can work it out in this play then maybe we can work it out in our lives too.

Given the success with which the final product uses Shakespearean drama (a crucial component of the dominant, colonialist dramatic canon) as a decolonial tool, it is unquestionable that the production functioned in precisely the manner to which Nolan had aspired: that is, the subversion of colonialist ideologies enabled by performance-based education. Very early in her career Nolan chose to adopt a courageous and emancipatory approach to script writing, focusing her work—as evidenced in *Death*—on intercultural education concerning Canada’s regionally variant colonial history. “Everything I do is attached to teaching,” she asserts, “in what I write, there’s always a point . . . There’s always a moral” (qtd. in Aboriginal Media Society 1996, 13). Although Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* is primarily interrogative rather than didactic, here, in Nolan’s educative refiguring, the point may be taken to be that drama, including Shakespeare, can be employed in the service of decolonial social transformation, inspiring what Qwo-Li Driskill (2008, 167) refers to as “relearning,” a process which works to facilitate reconciliatory “collective healing.”

While Nolan is reluctant to define the meaning of adaptation as it applies to Shakespearean drama—a reasonable reservation, considering the varying, nuanced theoretical debates surrounding issues of



adaptation and appropriation—she does assert that “every text adaptation is about trying to find resonance in your community” (2006b). Focusing their seminal anthology, *Adaptations of Shakespeare*, on plays that “radically alter the shape and significance of the original work so as to invoke that work and yet be different from it,” Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier duly note that adaptation, broadly theorized, is an act of “cultural recreation,” rather than a simple “borrowing” (2000, 3–4, 5). Linda Hutcheon, confirming that adaptation is indeed “repetition with difference,” suggests that true adaptation is both a “process” and a “product”; in Nolan and MacKinnon’s collaboration, the product and process were indeed inextricably linked (Hutcheon 2006, 114, 22). Susan Crean, a former member of Native Earth’s board of directors, recalled watching the “evolution” of *Death*, a collective process of refiguration shared by the entire cast, over the play’s unusually long trajectory of development; she described her feelings of elation, as, each day, “tables and chairs were hauled out” of the rehearsal space and all performers enthusiastically “delved” into the script (Crean 2011, 16). The actors, consisting of more than thirty Indigenous performers and creators, were a diverse group, part of an urban Indigenous community of artists from across the Americas. The collective established “their moves together, adjusting dialogue, and dissecting the meaning of the play,” thereby progressively altering the script’s overall focus until the text was no longer an evaluation of Brutus’s oscillating mental state, but a testament to the difficulties relating to First Nations politics in Canada (ibid.). Although focusing the play on this issue was particularly difficult for Nolan because, for her, it is the “biggest problem” with which Indigenous communities must today contend (2006b), it did allow her to fulfil her own expectation of adaptation by creating a piece relevant to Indigenous communities, including the community of urban artists involved in the production (2006b). In respect to community galvanization, *Julius Caesar* was, evidently, a useful tool: “at the end of the [first] day, everybody cried. At the end of the week everybody [was] exhausted because we worked through these issues and realized we have no idea what to do,” says Nolan (2006b).

The true success of the production was in its negotiation between Western and Indigenous modes of dramatic representation. Although Indigenous theatre is commonly used as a means by which to reveal our shared history of violence, bringing to the fore issues pertinent to both Indigenous peoples and settlers, the perpetual challenge for Indigenous practitioners is the reconciliation of Western dramatic practice with Indigenous tradition, which tends to communicate meaning “through

gesture, rhythm, and silence,” often “eschew[ing] central characters” (Crean 2011, 16). After much contention, discussion, and script study, the decided point of cohesion between Shakespeare and Indigeneity—the place of commonality between the two seemingly irreconcilable traditions—was found in Brutus’ line “Th’abuse of greatness is when it disjoins/Remorse from power” (see Nolan and MacKinnon 2009, 2.1.18). When asked about the special relevance and function of the phrase within the play and, broadly, within Indigenous communities, Nolan indicated that the line resonates with Indigenous people’s ongoing struggle to reclaim traditional modes of existence in settler societies. As she comments:

It works in our leaders because whatever that break was, the residential school break, the post-contact break, we lost a whole bunch of stuff. We lost a whole bunch of traditions, and a whole bunch of ritual, and a whole bunch of guidelines, principles and since the last thirty years, forty years we’ve been trying to reclaim those things. That’s a good thing but as we reclaim them and people acquire power within our community they start turning into, well, the oppressed always become the best oppressors. They turn into the very things that stole the power from them in the first place. (Nolan 2006b)

Through creative group revisioning, Shakespeare’s original framework thus became a jumping-off point for a discussion of intracultural corruption, which also (and perhaps most importantly) points to the non-Indigenous, colonialist role in such corruption, without alienating non-Indigenous viewers/readers, a feat only accomplishable through the careful translation of customs and the cautious melding of perspectives.

The result, *The Death of a Chief*, was therefore not only a successful adaptation of Shakespearean drama, employed for decolonial ends, but also an intricate merging of various Indigenous traditions, the sacred traditions of each particular diasporic Indigenous community represented in the performance. While Nolan is concerned about disregard for “cultural specificity” and the lack of connection to specific traditions that such a merge involves, especially when the blending of cultures in the theatre community requires casting from across (and occasionally outside) Indigenous communities, she is equally concerned with “the question of by whom and in whose interest tradition is controlled” (qtd. in Knowles 2007, 57). Jarred by the way in which concepts relating to purity and authenticity of blood (e.g., the leveraging of Aboriginal “status”) are used to the “detriment of peoples who have been disconnected from their histories,” by forces both within and

outside of Indigenous communities (Knowles 2007, 57), Nolan sought, in the collaborative process and the politics, especially the gender politics, of *The Death of a Chief* to air her concerns regarding blood quantum controversies:<sup>20</sup> her “political problems with what tradition has been reclaimed and by whom” (in Knowles 2007, 57), as well as the progressive corrosion of female prestige, a result of the entrenchment of what Sam McKegney (2013, 4) has aptly termed “heteropatriarchy” in Indigenous communities. Nolan’s casting of Mojica in a male role was instrumental in subverting masculinist portrayals of Indigenous women, which have functioned to uphold imperialist hierarchies of race and gender that have resulted in the displacement of Indigenous women from positions of power within political and religious institutions. The playwright found that, because of this legacy of upheaval, “the people who are [today] claiming to be empowered to reclaim the traditions very often are men and the traditions they reclaim very often exclude women” (in Knowles 2007, 57). In *The Death of a Chief*, audiences had the rare opportunity to witness an Indigenous woman in a position of political power—both as chief and as victim of political violence. Nolan’s interpretation thus worked on two levels, indicating the former power of Indigenous women in community, while also—albeit less directly—implying the real-life systemic violence to which Indigenous women are and have been subject.

Yet it was integral to the creation process that directorial concerns with traditional notions of puritanism and masculinism as applied to Indigenous cultures be addressed without undermining the sacredness of those traditions that were incorporated into the final production; each cast member found “connections between the play and her or his own traditional culture” (Knowles 2007, 55). Jo-Ann Episkeneew has noted that theatre is a “particularly attractive genre for Indigenous people looking for a creative outlet for their stories” precisely because “unlike other literary forms, theatrical productions are not the creation of solitary individuals working in isolation” and “one of the values common to the many diverse Indigenous cultures is the value of community” (2009, 147–8). Nolan, with MacKinnon, ensured that the creative process entailed a group “negotiation” of traditions and thus, in the end, one with which all involved were satisfied (in Knowles 2007, 58).

*The Death of a Chief* opened with a seven-minute Indigenous “Honour Song,” which Nolan refers to as “a distillation of the whole play, a bit like a prologue that tells you the whole play in a physical motion, [a] shamanistic,” ritualistic procession, performed by the large cast (in

Knowles 2007, 54–55). The traditional procession, making immediately evident the communal construction of the play, emerged slowly from group deliberations held after repeated readings of *Julius Caesar* and was designed as a brief synopsis of the action to come, which also included elements of all the traditions represented (Knowles 2007, 57; Crean 2011, 16). After progressing beyond the silent opening sequence of movements, the connecting line—“Th’abuse of greatness is when it disjoins/ Remorse from power”—served as a recurring refrain for the chorus, shaping the radical reconfiguring of script and scenes that followed. In making the decision to close with Antony’s touching eulogy, an ode to the chief, Nolan and MacKinnon reshaped Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, omitting the whole second part of the action and keeping the emphasis to the very end on “Caesar.” Creating a production that was characterized by both reverence and revisionism, *The Death of a Chief* proved to be among the most successful community-based adaptations of Shakespearean drama for decolonial Indigenous performance purposes to be staged in Canada. In employing adaptation, Nolan diminished Shakespeare’s inherent complexity but reshaped *Julius Caesar* so as to effectively address Indigenous concerns in contemporary Canada.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, Highway (1989), Clements (2005, 2012), Nolan (2006a), and Mojica (1991a, 1992). For a comprehensive discussion of the role of Indigenous theatre in overcoming North America’s colonial legacy, see Nolan (2015).
2. Before colonization, North American Indigenous peoples partook in elaborate performances, often religious in nature, incorporating props, masks, and smoke effects. In Canada, many traditional performances became illegal under the federal Indian Act, enacted in the late nineteenth century; not until 1951 was the act revised to allow these ceremonial dramas. For further information, see James Spradley’s *Guests Never Leave Hungry* (1972). Discussion of performance across cultures has been relatively late coming to Canada. This is largely due to the policy of official multiculturalism, adopted in 1971 and entrenched in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, which relegated art produced outside of the majority French and English cultures to non-professional status. See Knowles and Mündel (2011, i–viii) and Dewing (2009).
3. It is widely recognized that Indigenous women living in white settler societies are overrepresented as victims of gendered violence, in both intra- and intercultural contexts. Importantly, the connection between the sociocultural displacement of Indigenous women during European colonization and contemporary violence against them has been emphasized

by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars. See A. Smith (2005, 170), L. T. Smith (1999, 146), Brownridge (2009, 199), Allen (1992, 88), Hylton et al. (2002, 18), Anderson (2000, 97), LaRocque (2008, 73), and Chong (2008, 531).

4. An interview with Dempsey (2009) is the source of the Nolan quotation.
5. Aboriginal Media Society (1996) is the source of the Nolan quotation.
6. While *The Death of a Chief* was first envisioned by Nolan, the play was a collaborative effort between Nolan and Kennedy Cathy MacKinnon.
7. All of Nolan's statements quoted in Knowles (2007) are drawn from conversations between Nolan and Knowles. The production was remounted in 1989 with a slightly different cast.
8. An interview with Kinross (1989) is the source of the quotation.
9. The first non-Indigenous man to set foot on British Columbia's coast, Captain James Cook (1728–1779), was a British explorer and cartographer. He journeyed in two ships, the *Resolution* and the *Discovery*, to New Zealand, Hawaii, and up the coast of what is now British Columbia and Alaska; he also created a detailed map of Newfoundland before making three longer voyages of the Pacific Ocean. He was the first to make British contact with the Hawaiian Islands and Australia's east coast and created the first documented circumnavigation of New Zealand. See Richard Hough's (2003) *Captain James Cook*.
10. Merasty played Caliban in the 1989 version. In 1987, he played the smaller role of Mariner/spirit.
11. After completing studies at the University of Western Ontario and advanced training as a concert pianist, Highway turned to theatre as a forum for cultural recuperation, and established his reputation very quickly, becoming the first Indigenous dramatist to break into the critical mainstream in Canada with two comedies set on an Aboriginal reserve in northern Ontario: *The Rez Sisters* (1986) and its sequel, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* (1989).
12. An interview with Johnson (1987) is the source of the quotation.
13. An interview with Kinross (1989) is the source of the quotation.
14. An interview with Wagner (1989) is the source of the quotation.
15. Monique Mojica, e-mail correspondence with the author, March 23, 2015.
16. For further details concerning the play's props and set, see Knowles (2007) and Peters (2008).
17. For a critical and insightful discussion of the deployment of trickster figures in Indigenous literatures, see Morra and Reder (2010).
18. National studies suggest that Aboriginal women (Indian, Métis, and Inuit) are subject to gendered violence at a rate three to four times higher

- than women in the general population. See Brownridge (2008, 355; 2009, 99–100).
19. The script was published in Knowles’s 2009 collection, *The Shakespeare Mine*.
  20. For a colloquial discussion of the debates surrounding Aboriginal status in Canada, see Adler (2014).

## WORKS CITED

- Aboriginal Media Society. 1996. “Native Playwright Inspires Students.” *Windspeaker* 14 (7): 13.
- Adler, Howard. 2014. “5 Things You Need to Know About Aboriginal Status.” CBC News, August 23. Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/indian-status-5-things-you-need-to-know-1.2744870>.
- Allen, Paula Gunn. 1992. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon.
- Anderson, Kim. 2000. *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood*. Edited by Beth Mcauley. Toronto: Sumach Press.
- Andrews, Penelope. 1997. “Violence Against Aboriginal Women in Australia: Possibilities for Redress Within the International Human Rights Framework.” *Albany Law Review* 60:917–41.
- Brownridge, Douglas A. 2008. “Understanding the Elevated Risk of Partner Violence Against Aboriginal Women: A Comparison of Two Nationally Representative Surveys of Canada.” *Journal of Family Violence* 23: 353–67.
- . 2009. *Violence Against Women: Vulnerable Populations*. New York: Routledge.
- Crean, Susan. 2011. “Native Earth Performing Arts.” *This Magazine* 44 (6): 20.
- Chong, Natividad Gutiérrez. 2008. “Symbolic Violence and Sexualities in the Myth Making of Mexico’s National Identities.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (3): 524–42.
- Clements, Marie. 2012. *Tombs of the Vanishing Indian*. Vancouver: Talonbooks.
- . 2005. *The Unnatural and Accidental Women*. Vancouver: Talonbooks.
- Davis, Brian. 1989. “A play of feeling and imagination not to be missed.” *Toronto Star*, June 20.
- Dempsey, Shawna. 2009. “Yvette Nolan Takes Centre Stage.” *Herizons* (Fall): 23–25.
- Dewing, Michael. 2009. *Canadian Multiculturalism*. Ottawa: Parliamentary Information and Research Service.
- Driskill, Qwo-Li. 2008. “Theatre as Suture: Grassroots Performance, Decolonization and Healing.” In *Aboriginal Oral Traditions: Theory,*

- Practice, Ethics*, edited by Renate Eigenbroad and Renée Hulan, 155–68. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.
- Drouin, Jennifer. 2014. *Shakespeare in Québec: Nation, Gender, and Adaptation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Episkeneuw, Jo-Ann. 2009. *Taking Back Our Spirits*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.
- Fischlin, Daniel and Mark Fortier. 2000. "General Introduction." In *Adaptations of Shakespeare from the 17th Century to the Present*, edited by Fischlin and Fortier, 1–23. New York: Routledge.
- Highway, Tomson. 1989. *Dry Lips Oughta Move To Kapuskasing*. Calgary: Fifth House.
- Hough, Richard. 2003. *Captain James Cook*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Hutcheon, Linda. 2006. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge.
- Hylton, John H. et al. 2002. *Aboriginal Sex Offending in Canada: Prepared for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation.
- Johnson, Phil. 1987. "Tempest with Twist Stars at Skylight." *Toronto Star*, June 30, N16.
- Kinross, Louise. 1989. "His Tempest Tossed by West Coast Way of Life." *Toronto Star*, June 20, N14.
- Knowles, Ric. 2007. "'The Death of a Chief' Watching for Adaptation; or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bard." *Shakespeare Bulletin* 25 (3): 208–20.
- Knowles, Ric (ed.). 2009. *The Shakespeare's Mine: Adapting Shakespeare in Anglophone Canada*, edited by Ric Knowles, 379–426. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press.
- Knowles, Ric and Ingrid Mündel. 2011. Introduction to "*Ethnic, Multicultural, and Intercultural Theatre*", edited by Knowles and Mündel, 1–8. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press.
- LaRoque, Emma D. 2008. "Violence in Aboriginal Communities." *Public Health Agency of Canada*, December 30. Accessed March 16, 2010. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-/cnivf/publications/fvaborcommunit-eng.php>.
- Leonard, Paul. 1988. "The Tempest x 2 in Toronto." *Canadian Theatre Review* 54 (Spring): 7–12.
- Lyytinen, Maria. 2011. "The Pocahontas Myth and Its Deconstruction in Monique Mojica's Play Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots." In *Native Performance and Representation*, edited by S. E. Wilmer, 78–94. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- McKegney, Sam. 2013. "Into the Full Grace in the Blood of Men: An Introduction." In *Masculindians: Conversations about Indigenous Manhood*,



- edited by Sam McKegney, 1–14. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.
- Mojica, Monique. 1991a. “Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots.” *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots: Two Plays*, 9–62. Toronto: Women’s Press.
- . 1991b. “Theatrical Diversity on Turtle Island: Tool Towards the Healing.” *Canadian Theatre Review* 68:3.
- . 1992. “Birdwoman and the Suffragettes: A Story of Sacajawea.” *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots: Two Plays*, 66–85. Toronto: Women’s Press.
- Morra, Linda M. and Deanna Reder, eds. 2010. *Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Nolan, Yvette. 2006a. *Annie Mae’s Movement*. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press.
- . 2006b. “‘The Death of a Chief’: An Interview with Yvette Nolan.” By Sorouja Moll, March 12. [http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/i\\_ynolan2.cfm](http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/i_ynolan2.cfm).
- . 2015. *The Medicine Shows: Indigenous Performance Culture*. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press.
- Nolan, Yvette and Kennedy Cathy MacKinnon. 2009. “The Death of a Chief.” In *The Shakespeare’s Mine: Adapting Shakespeare in Anglophone Canada*, edited by Ric Knowles, 379–426. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press.
- Peters, Helen. 1993. “The Aboriginal Presence in Canadian Theatre and the Evolution of Being Canadian.” *Theatre Research International* 18 (3): 197–205.
- Sanders, Julie. 2006. *Adaptation and Appropriation*. New York: Routledge.
- Sharpe, Jenny. 2003. *Allegories of Empire*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Smith, Andrea. 2005. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. New York: Zed Books.
- Spradley, James. 1972. *Guests Never Leave Hungry*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. 1989. “Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule.” *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History* 32 (1): 134–61.
- . 1992. “Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia.” *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History* 34 (3): 514–51.
- Wagner, Vit. 1989. “The Idea of Setting *The Tempest* in a North American Indian Context.” *Toronto Star*, June 16, D10.

## Shakespeare, a Late Bloomer on the Quebec Stage

ANNIE BRISSET

The following study examines Shakespeare's late arrival to the francophone stages of Quebec. After a long period of indifference toward the English playwright par excellence, Québécois translations of Shakespeare began to appear at the end of the 1960s. They remained relatively uncommon during the 1970s, when theatre labelled as Québécois was taking shape, in part by distancing itself from the European repertoire in order to align itself with American theatre. Quebec translations of Shakespeare began to multiply in the 1990s, with the re-appropriation of the translating activity, and, more significantly, with the growing autonomy of the theatrical field. A new generation of playwrights and stage directors emerged during the 1980s, a transitional period. The focus on identity—previously the major current in Quebec society and theatre—slowly ceded its place to new and diversified theatrical aesthetics. Quebec would have to wait for the end of the twentieth century for a comprehensive Shakespearean “Conquest” to really take place.

There is one certainty in francophone theatre in Canada: Shakespeare is always presented in translation. To translate for the stage necessarily implies a contextualized reading and rewriting. Two forms of criticism, one stemming from German Romanticism, the other arising from postcolonial studies, and both building on Walter Benjamin's “The Task of the Translator” ([1923] 2000)—widely considered “*the* central text on translation in the twentieth century” (Berman 2008, 17)\*—have led both to considerations of the translative act as an *ethos* and to translations being judged on the basis of the “ethical attitude” with which

the translator approaches the foreign text (Berman 1995, Venuti 1998, Meschonnic 2007).

Sociology offers a better vantage point to observe translation practices than ethics, at least when the latter is posed a priori and ends up being conflated with a moralization of the translative act. To grasp the *raison traduisante*<sup>1</sup>—the rationale behind a translation—one must situate the translated text in its historical, political, social, cultural, and indeed, theatrical environment. This contextualization brings to light the motivations behind the selection of foreign plays and their interpretation in a particular society; it encompasses a given state of the theatrical field, with its different subfields (e.g., institutionalized or experimental, repertoire or creation). One must also consider each translator's positionality in the field, and determine what constitutes him or her as a translating "subject."

These external conditions of the translation are part of a sociology of fields and agents, for which Pierre Bourdieu (1992) laid the foundation, and should be complemented by a sociology of communications such as developed by Niklas Luhmann ([1984] 2011), since a translation is also a discourse. It is a particular type of construction because the enunciation of the translator—or that of the various agents who produce the final text—displaces the original author's enunciation. In this sense, translation becomes a meta-enunciation, both subjective and social. Understanding a translation implies a series of questions: is there a connection between, on the one hand, that which the translation communicates in text or on the stage and, on the other, what is communicated elsewhere in society, theatre being linked to other social systems: politics, economy, literature, media? In other words, what are the doxological ties of a translation to its immediate context? Which transformations allow the foreign text to resonate with certain topics, certain narratives, circulating in the translating society? This exploration extends to the aesthetic approaches to theatre.

It is on this sociological and sociocritical horizon that I propose to situate Quebec translations of Shakespeare between 1968 and 1999, which represents a pivotal period in the political, economic, and cultural history of this province. It is also a pivotal stage in the history of Quebec theatre and theatre translations, particularly concerning translations of Shakespeare. Starting in 1968, the series gathered momentum and peaked with the so-called *Printemps Shakespeare* (Shakespearean Spring) of 1988 (Lieblein 1998).

	POLITICS	THEATRE	TRANSLATION
1968	Parti québécois <i>Nègres blancs d'Amérique</i> , Vallières	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Les Belles-Sœurs</i>, Tremblay</li> <li>• <i>L'Osstidcho</i></li> <li>• <b><i>Hamlet, prince du Qc</i></b>, Gurik</li> <li>• <b>Les Enfants de Chénier / Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui</b></li> <li>• <b>Leméac</b>, « Théâtre » series</li> </ul>	<i>La Nuit des rois</i> , Roux, TNM
1969		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le Grand Cirque Ordinaire</li> <li>• École nationale de théâtre : conflict on the absence of Quebec plays</li> </ul>	
1970	October Crisis – FLQ Manifesto – British diplomat kidnapped – Qc Labour Minister murdered – War Measures Act	<b>Leméac</b> , « Théâtre Traduction & Adaptation » series	<i>Hamlet</i> , Roux, TNM
1972			<i>Jules César</i> , Roux, TNM
1973		<i>Hosanna</i> , Tremblay	<i>Mégère apprivoisée</i> , *Audiberti, Trident
1975			<i>La Nuit des rois</i> , *Curtis, Trident
1976	Parti québécois elected	<b>Cahiers de théâtre Jeu</b>	<b><i>Macbeth</i></b> , *Maeterlinck, NCT
1977	Charte de la langue française	<b><i>Lear</i></b> , Ronfard, NTE	
1978		<i>Les Fées ont soif</i> , D. Boucher	<b><i>Macbeth</i></b> , Garneau, Manufacture
1979		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A Canadian Play/ Une plaie canadienne</i>, Germain</li> <li>• <b>CEAD</b> : 1st repertoire</li> </ul>	<i>Le Songe d'une nuit d'été</i> , *Neveux, TPQ
1980	First Referendum	<i>Provincetown</i> , Chaurette	

	POLITICS	THEATRE	TRANSLATION
1981	Parti québécois re-elected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Le Roi Boiteux</i>, Ronfard</li> <li>• Opsis, Denoncourt</li> <li>• Carbone 14, Maheu</li> </ul>	
1982	Canadian Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ubu, Marleau</li> <li>• <i>Le Roi Boiteux</i>, Ronfard</li> </ul>	<i>La Tempête</i> , Garneau, ÉNT/Vieux-Port <i>Hamlet</i> , Roberge, Quat'Sous
1983			<i>Macbeth</i> , Garneau, Trident <i>La Mégère apprivoisée</i> , Lemieux, Th. Bois de Coulonge
1984		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Circulations</i>, Lepage</li> <li>• <i>Being at home w. Claude</i>, R.-D. Dubois</li> <li>• AQCT (Assoc. québécoise des critiques de théâtre)</li> </ul>	<i>La Nuit des rois</i> , *Anouilh, TPQ
1985	Parti québécois defeated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Trilogie des dragons</i>, Lepage</li> <li>• <i>L'Annuaire théâtral</i></li> </ul>	
1986			<i>Othello</i> , Roux, TNM <i>La Mégère apprivoisée</i> , Lemieux, NCT
1987	Meech Lake Accord, proposition	<i>Les Feluettes</i> , Bouchard	
1988		<b>Printemps Shakespeare</b>	<i>La Tempête</i> , A. Ronfard, TEF/Espace GO <i>Le cycle des rois</i> : R. II, *F.-V. Hugo, H. IV-V, *Novarina, Omnibus/EspaceLibre <i>Le Songe d'une nuit d'été</i> , Allen, TNM
1989			<i>Roméo &amp; Juliette</i> , Roux, Trident + TNM <i>Richard III</i> , Maillet, Rideau Vert

	POLITICS	THEATRE	TRANSLATION
1990	Meech Lake Accord rejection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged in Manitoba by Elijah Harper, Cree MP</li> <li>• Draws attention to the status of First Nations (ignored in Constitutional debates)</li> </ul>	<b>AQAD :</b> Association québécoise des auteurs dramatiques	<i>Hamlet</i> , Roux, TNM
1991		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Les Reines</i>, Chaurette</li> <li>• <i>William S.</i>, Maillet</li> <li>• Ô Parleur, Mouawad</li> </ul>	<i>Comme il vous plaira</i> , Chaurette, Licorne <i>Macbeth</i> , Garneau, Ô Parleur
1992			<i>Le Drame du roi Lear</i> , Roux, TNM
1993			<i>La Nuit des Rois</i> , Maillet, Rideau Vert <i>Coriolan</i> , Garneau, Repère/FTA <i>Macbeth</i> , Garneau, Repère/FTA <i>La Tempête</i> , Garneau, Repère/FTA <i>Le Marchand de Venise</i> , Allen, TNM [ <i>Macbeth</i> , Villeneuve, Chicoutimi]
1994			<i>Comme il vous plaira</i> , Chaurette, NCT
1995	Second Referendum		<i>La Mégère apprivoisée</i> , Micone, TNM <i>Le Songe d'une nuit d'été</i> , Chaurette, Trident
1996		<b>Dramaturges Éditeurs</b>	
1997			<i>La Tempête</i> , Maillet, Rideau Vert
1998		Résidence des auteurs dramatiques <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Résidence internationale de traduction</li> </ul>	<i>La Tempête</i> , Chaurette, Trident

	POLITICS	THEATRE	TRANSLATION
1999			<i>Roméo &amp; Juliette</i> , Chaurette, Trident <i>Hamlet</i> , Maillet, Rideau Vert

Source: G. David (1998) for Shakespeare productions. The asterisk indicates foreign translators.

**Figure 1:** Translations of Shakespeare: Montreal and Quebec City 1968–1999.

For readers unfamiliar with Quebec’s history, let us briefly recall the context of the time. Politically, this period coincides with the resurgence of Quebec nationalism that materializes in 1968 with the creation of the sovereigntist Parti Québécois, the party’s rise to power in the provincial general election of 1976, its renewal at the ballot box in 1981 despite the failure of a provincial referendum on sovereignty the previous year, and finally its defeat in the 1985 election. It also coincides with the debates surrounding the patriation of the Canadian constitution in 1982, carried out without Quebec’s ratification, and the Meech Lake Accord, constitutional amendments proposed in 1987 to meet Quebec’s demands, which failed in 1990, two events seen as “betrayals” which feed the narrative of victimhood that permeates Quebec society, and which led to a second referendum on sovereignty in 1995.

In the field of theatre, 1968 was an inaugural year; Quebec theatre assumed an American identity<sup>2</sup> with Michel Tremblay’s *Les Belles-Soeurs* and its unprecedented use of the vernacular. Other phenomena contributed to the emergence of what became known as “théâtre québécois,” particularly the collective creation embodied by *L’Osstidcho* at the Théâtre de Quat’Sous in 1968, and the foundation in 1969 of the Grand Cirque ordinaire, a theatre company with an agenda of social and political protest similar to that of the Living Theatre and the Bread and Puppet Theatre. Equally significant was the creation, also in 1968, of the Centre du Théâtre d’Aujourd’hui, where *Les Belles-Soeurs* was first read. The centre hosted Les Enfants de Chénier, the iconoclastic company of the Théâtre du Même Nom—a definite snub to the institution of the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde (TNM)—led by Jean-Claude Germain. The Théâtre d’Aujourd’hui took as its mission the production of strictly Quebec creations. During this time, mass student protests at the École Nationale de Théâtre du Canada (ÉNT) were directed at the absence of precisely this Québécois repertoire in their training.<sup>3</sup>

Also on the institutional level, in 1968 Leméac editions created the first series dedicated to drama, followed two years later by a series



devoted to theatre translations (Théâtre Traduction et Adaptation). The year 1968 thus marked the beginning of the re-appropriation of theatre translation that would continue until the 1990s. In the late 1960s, seventy-five percent of foreign plays performed on Quebec's institutional stages were imported from France; that is to say, in a "French" translation. Twenty years later, these translations had almost entirely disappeared: nearly ninety-five percent of foreign plays were now performed in a Québécois translation.

This also applies to translations of Shakespeare. In the early 1970s, the first two plays performed at the Théâtre du Trident in Quebec City, *The Taming of the Shrew* (1973) and *Twelfth Night* (1975), were produced in translations imported from France, those of Jacques Audibert and Jean-Louis Curtis, respectively, just as all Shakespeare had been since 1945.<sup>4</sup> In 1976, the Nouvelle Compagnie théâtrale used Maurice Maeterlinck's version of *Macbeth*. In 1979 and 1984, the touring Théâtre populaire du Québec performed Georges Neveux's version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Jean Anouilh's version of *Twelfth Night*. In 1988, the Théâtre Espace Libre put on François-Victor Hugo's translation of *Richard II* and Valère Novarina's condensed rendition of *Henry IV* and *Henry V* for their production of Shakespeare's Great Cycle of Kings.

The Shakespearean repertoire established by Gilbert David (1998) since the end of the Second World War reveals that Shakespeare translations in Quebec went through three stages. From 1945 to 1967, Shakespeare was played exclusively in translations from overseas. The transition occurred between 1968 and 1988: among the eighteen productions staged then, only six translations came from outside Quebec. Since 1989, foreign translations have been replaced by local translations (and retranslations).

Quebec translations were inaugurated in 1968 at the TNM by two of its co-founders, Jean-Louis Roux and Éloi de Grandmont. In his translation of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, Grandmont (1968) used the Quebec vernacular to illustrate the regional cockney accent. Whatever its variations may be, this vernacular became the dominant target language used for the contemporary foreign repertoire and, occasionally, for that of canonical pieces as well. Garneau, for instance, liberally used it for his translation of *The Tempest*. It was Jean-Louis Roux, however, who launched the "nationalization" of theatre translation in Quebec with his *Twelfth Night*. Roux was arguably the first francophone translator of Shakespeare in Canada, and was the most prolific during the

period under study. Beyond *Twelfth Night* (1968), Roux translated and produced *Hamlet* (in 1970), *Julius Caesar* (in 1972), *Othello* (in 1986), *Romeo and Juliet* (1989), and *King Lear* (1996). During the same period, Normand Charette translated three plays: *As You Like It* (1991, 1994), *The Tempest* (1998), and *Romeo and Juliet* (1999).<sup>5</sup>

## **“MOLIÈRE GO HOME!” AND SHAKESPEARE?**

The repatriation of the translation activity characterizes the decolonization of culture, including theatre, that occurs throughout this period. In Quebec, the rallying cry could have been that of the “Molière go home” manifesto published by a Franco-Ontarian youth group in 1970 and published in the student newspaper at the Université Laurentienne in Sudbury (Nolette 2015, 121). “Molière” became the generic name for French literature, perceived as foreign and patronizing to Franco-Canadian works, especially those from Quebec. French drama, which had long since imposed its codes and rules on franco-phone stages, became the favourite target of parodic adaptations, the canonical example being Réjean Ducharme’s *Le Cid maghané* (1967), a parody of Corneille’s *Cid* (often regarded as the prototype of classical theatre). This iconoclastic moment was not specific to Quebec; similar parodic rewritings of the French repertoire occurred around the same time in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario (Nolette 2015).

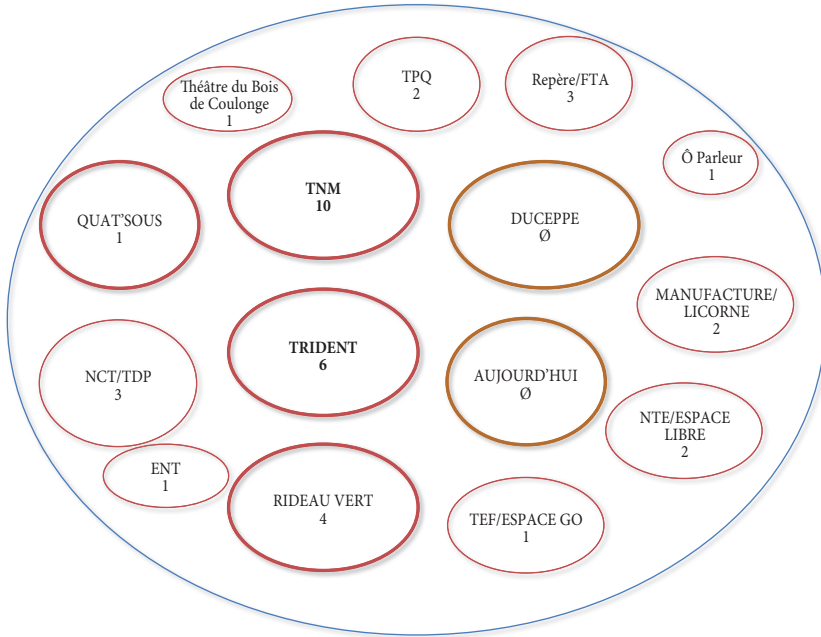
In her book on Shakespeare adaptations in Quebec between 1968 and 2011, Jennifer Drouin notes more than thirty adaptations, including a few parodies like Robert Gurik’s ([1968] 1977) *Hamlet, prince du Québec*. The number of adaptations, added to what are (problematically) viewed as translations proper, suggests that, as a cultural catalyst, Shakespeare was more powerful than Molière, and one of the most important playwrights on the Quebec stage (Drouin 2014, 3).<sup>6</sup> However, most of these variations on Shakespeare’s plays were performed on experimental and peripheral stages, sometimes outside Quebec; some were never staged at all (ibid. 193–201). Shakespearean productions identified by Gilbert David offer a more nuanced portrait of the situation. There were only fifteen productions of Shakespeare in Montreal and Quebec from 1968 to 1987, the two decades preceding the *Printemps Shakespeare* (David 1998, 118). Molière, by contrast, maintained his place in the canon of French-language theatre in Quebec, and his comedies continued to retain their appeal. Molière represented twenty percent of the foreign repertoire in major theatres during this same period (Brisset 1996). The situation for Shakespeare was quite

different, but it still represented a significant improvement on the previous period, which boasted only nine productions between 1945 and 1967 (ibid., 122ff.). Outside of Montreal and Quebec City, Shakespeare was less frequently encountered. There were only two productions in Chicoutimi, for example: *Macbeth* (1993) and *The Winter's Tale* (1997), both translated by Rodrigue Villeneuve. Indeed, Gilbert David (1998, 118) observed that a third of the Shakespearean corpus had yet to be performed in French in Quebec, including *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Cymbeline*. As for *Hamlet*, it was only produced four times over a period of a little more than thirty years (1968–1999). Other major plays, such as *Othello*, *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, *Richard III*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Coriolanus*, were staged only once in that period, prompting David to note that “Shakespeare was very rarely ‘our contemporary’ while he was becoming the most performed playwright around the world.” (ibid., 119)

To have a better idea of Shakespeare’s presence in Quebec, it is helpful to examine the distribution of plays according to the institutional status of the theatres or companies which produced them.

The small number of productions, often only one or two per theatre, however well established, is striking. Founded in 1948 and oldest of all theatres, the Théâtre du Rideau Vert did not stage *any* Shakespeare before the 1989 production of *Richard III* in a translation by Antonine Maillet.

Two other instances exemplify Quebec’s disinterest in Shakespeare, at least until the end of the 1980s. The Nouvelle Compagnie Théâtrale (NCT), which in 1997 became Théâtre Denise-Pelletier, operates one of the largest stages, with a capacity of 850 seats, and proudly boasts of its yearly reception of “60,000 students from 250 schools.” At the time of its foundation, in 1964, the NCT adopted a pedagogical mission for youth, pledging to present them with “masterpieces of universal literature.” In thirty-five years, however, only three of Shakespeare’s plays were produced: Maurice Maeterlinck’s translation of *Macbeth* (1976), Jean-Marie Lemieux’s translation of *The Taming of the Shrew* (1986), and *As You Like It* (1991) translated by Chaurette and Alice Ronfard. Similarly, the touring Théâtre populaire du Québec, founded in the spirit of Théâtre national populaire in France, was intended to reach a public that rarely attends theatres by presenting masterpieces of classical and contemporary drama. Yet, Shakespeare figured only twice on the theatre’s repertoire in the thirty-some years of its existence



MONTREAL

- Rideau Vert (1948)
  - TNM—Théâtre du Nouveau Monde (1951)
  - Théâtre de Quat’Sous (1955)
  - TPQ—Théâtre Populaire du Québec (1963–1996†)
  - NCT/TDP—Nouvelle Compagnie Théâtrale (1964)/  
Théâtre Denise-Pelletier (1997)
  - Théâtre d’Aujourd’hui (1968)
  - Jean-Duceppe (1973)
  - La Manufacture/La Licorne (1975)
  - NTE—Nouveau Théâtre Expérimental/  
Espace Libre (1979)
  - TEF—Théâtre Expérimental des Femmes (1979)/  
Espace GO (1991)
  - Ô Parleur (1991)
- 
- ENT—École Nationale de Théâtre (1960)
  - FTA—Festival de Théâtre des Amériques

QUEBEC

- Trident (1971)
- Théâtre du Bois de Coulonge (1977–1995†)
- Théâtre Repère (1980–1996†)

<b>Shakespeare Productions</b>
1968–1977 : 6
1978–1987 : 9
1988–1999 : 21

**Figure 2:** Shakespearean Presence: Montreal and Quebec City 1968–1999.

(1963–1996). These two productions—*A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1979) and *Twelfth Night* (1984)—were performed using the translations of Georges Neveux and Jean Anouilh, respectively.

Certain venues, like the Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui, were established in order to make room for Quebec creations. Thus Shakespeare was no more present there than any other foreign playwright. Other theatres also have their own specialties, like the Compagnie Jean-Duceppe, which favours the Anglo-American modern repertoire and certain Quebec plays. Occasionally, Shakespeare will appear on experimental stages like Espace GO, a studio-theatre dedicated to contemporary creations. In 1988, the Théâtre Expérimental des Femmes staged *The Tempest* in a translation by Alice Ronfard and Marie Cardinal, with Françoise Faucher in the role of Prospero. That same year, at Espace Libre, the Omnibus company produced Shakespeare's Great Cycle of Kings, with François-Victor Hugo's *Richard II*, Valère Novarina's adaptation of *Henry IV* and *Henry V (Falstaff)*, and the chorus of *Henry V*, translated by Jean-Pierre Ronfard. In 1991, a young company, Ô Parleur, staged *Macbeth* (in Michel Garneau's translation) outdoors, in a parking lot in Old Montreal, directed by Wajdi Mouawad, newly graduated from the ÉNT, who would make his mark a few years later as playwright and director at the international level. Another Shakespearean cycle—*Coriolanus*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*, translated by Garneau—was staged in 1993 by the Théâtre Repère, in a production by Robert Lepage at the Festival de théâtre des Amériques (now known as the Festival TransAmériques). Even at the ÉNT, Shakespeare seems to have been relatively absent: a single production is recorded, *The Tempest*, in 1982, in the improbable location of the Old Port of Montreal, performed by the ÉNT's graduating class, directed by Michel Garneau. The latter subsequently published his translations of *The Tempest* and *Coriolanus*, commissioned by the ÉNT, in 1989. Aside from the 1982 production of *The Tempest*, we do not know for sure when and if students performed these plays.

All things considered, Shakespeare was regularly staged only at the two pillars of Quebec theatre, the TNM in Montreal and the Théâtre du Trident in Quebec City. These two companies share a vocation to present the classics while supporting the Quebec repertoire. Their productions take place on large and prestigious stages. In Montreal, the TNM staged Jean-Louis Roux's first three translations (*Twelfth Night*, in 1968; *Hamlet*, in 1970; *Julius Caesar*, in 1972) at the Port-Royal theatre of the Place des Arts, before the TNM purchased the old Comédie-Canadienne, an avatar of the original "Gaiety," which became

the company’s headquarters. In Québec City, the Trident presents Shakespeare in the Grand Théâtre de Québec’s Salle Octave-Crémazie Hall, the equivalent of the prestigious Place des Arts.

**SHAKESPEARE, “OUR” CONTEMPORARY**

With the hypercentral position he occupies in the literary canon, and by the universal nature of the subjects he broaches, Shakespeare lends himself to all kinds of localizations.<sup>7</sup> The case studies assembled in *Shakespeare and the Second World War* (Makaryk and McHugh 2012) illustrate the ductility of the narrative material in the service of diverse and even conflicting interests. In the case of Quebec, we need to ask what sparked interest in Shakespeare during the political, economic, cultural, and, especially, theatrical Risorgimento marked by Quebec’s two attempts to secede from Canada and achieve national sovereignty.

At present, *Macbeth* and *The Tempest* are the plays most frequently chosen for performance in Montreal and Québec City. These two plays share a motif: the usurpation of a kingdom, oppression, and the restoration of justice. Treated differently in *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*, this narrative does not deviate from the Quebec narrative proposed by Gurik in his adaptation *Hamlet, prince du Québec*, created in that seminal year of 1968. One need only add this politically satirical phrase—“Être ou ne pas être libre!” (To be or not to be free!)—for *Hamlet*’s production frequency to match the other two plays.<sup>8</sup> The country’s spoliation is the matrix narrative, the deep structure of what is said and written in Quebec society, where nationalism is expressed in and beyond the political field. Its echoes range from the fields of history and sociology to poetry through linguistics, with the many lexicographical works aiming at the institutionalization of a “Quebec language” distinct from the “French language,” the latter now *lingua non grata* on politically engaged stages, particularly at Jean-Claude Germain’s Théâtre d’Aujourd’hui.

<i>Macbeth</i>	5	<i>Jules César</i>	1
<i>La Tempête</i>	5	<i>Othello</i>	1
<i>La Nuit des rois</i>	4	<i>Le Cycle des rois</i>	
<i>Hamlet</i>	4	• <i>Richard II</i>	1
<i>La Mégère apprivoisée</i>	4	• <i>Henri IV, Henri V, Henri VI</i>	1
<i>Le Songe d’une nuit d’été</i>	3	<i>Richard III</i>	1
<i>Roméo et Juliette</i>	2	<i>Le roi Lear</i>	1
<i>Comme il vous plaira</i>	2	<i>Coriolan</i>	1
		<i>Le Marchand de Venise</i>	1

**Figure 3:** Frequency of Plays, 1968–1999.

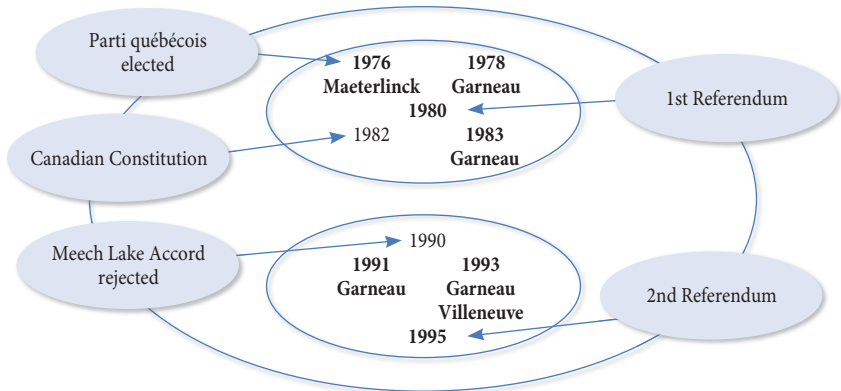


Figure 4: Productions of *Macbeth*: political context.

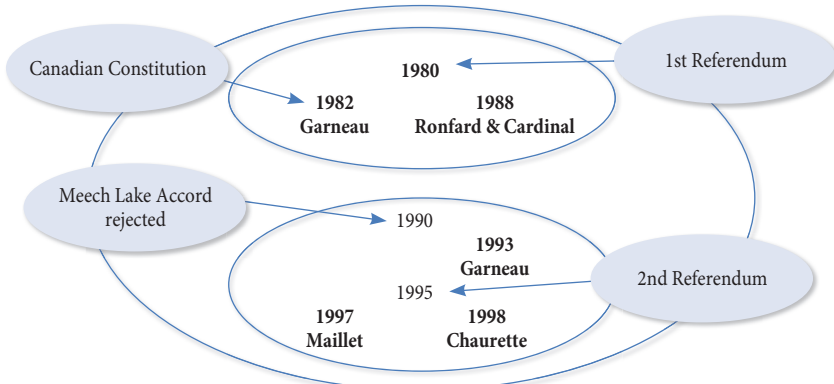
The frequency of these occurrences is telling, but is there a correlation between the performances of *Macbeth* and *The Tempest* and the dates of Quebec’s two sovereignty referenda?

Productions of *Macbeth* cluster around 1980. The most remote (1976) was presented in Maeterlinck’s version, all the others in Garneau’s. The closest to our time, and perhaps most significant, was a production in 1978, adapted to the situation in Quebec by a number of changes that allowed the Quebec audience to recognize its own history in that of Shakespeare’s play (Brisset 1996, 109ff.). The language created by Garneau, based on the Gaspésie dialect, an archaic language echoing that of Shakespeare but at the same time evoking the (supposedly) Edenic time before the Conquest of 1760—that is, the British conquest of New France—is the driving force of this double reading. The following excerpt (Act 4, Scene 3) summarizes Quebec’s self-representation as a victim, and offers a glimpse of the possible victorious outcome which stands but a vote away:

Quand j’pense à chez-nous, j’ai jusse envie d’mé trouver un coin  
 Tranquille à l’ombe pour m’laisser fère pis brailler tout mon soûl  
 [...]
   
 Moé, j’pense qu’on f’rat mieux d’défende  
 Not’ droét d’exister qui s’trouve ram’né quasiment à rien  
 [...]
   
 Not’cause peut pas ête plus jusse! La victoére nous attend  
 Au boutte d’la route! (Garneau 1978, 116)<sup>9</sup>

Two years later, victory slipped away. In 1991, directly following the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, *Macbeth* reappeared in Garneau’s translation, and yet again in 1993, just before the second referendum





**Figure 5:** Productions of *La Tempête*: political context.

on sovereignty. That same year, *Macbeth* also appeared in Chicoutimi, a bastion of separatism, in a translation by Rodrigue Villeneuve. The language and staging may have varied, but the play remained pertinent.

The situation seems different with *The Tempest*. Nevertheless, the play, translated and directed by Garneau, was performed in July 1982, the year of constitutional repatriation and soon after the first referendum, in a co-production of the Groupe d’animation urbaine de Montréal and the ÉNT. It was performed again at the Festival de théâtre des Amériques in 1993, between the rejection of the Meech Lake Accord and the second referendum, again in Garneau’s translation. Moreover, *The Tempest* was presented at the same time as *Macbeth* in a cycle that also included *Coriolanus*, also translated by Garneau. Both Garneau translations of *The Tempest* and *Coriolanus* were published in 1989.

Meanwhile, Alice Ronfard and Marie Cardinal staged their own version of *The Tempest* for the 1988 production at Espace GO by the Théâtre Expérimental des Femmes. With a female Prospero, the intention was quite different from the nationalist vision of earlier productions. Before the end of the century, two other productions of *The Tempest* took place, one at the Rideau Vert in 1997 (translated by Maillet), and the other at the Trident in 1998 (translated by Charette). Though the 1995 referendum was still recent, Quebecers were less interested in a theatre that simply reflected their own image.

## SHAKESPEARE, AT LAST

In Quebec, Shakespeare was relatively neglected until the late 1980s. Only six productions are recorded between 1968 and 1977, nine between

1978 and 1987, compared with twenty-one between 1988 and 1999. Translations of Shakespeare seem to multiply just when Quebec drama lets go of its focus on identity—having a theatre that resembles “us,” talks “about us” and “like us”—in favour of an approach centred on theatricality. The growing interest in Shakespeare occurred after Quebec theatre gained international recognition. Playwrights like Tremblay and, especially, the new generation of playwrights, directors, and companies from the early 1980s—particularly Gilles Maheu and Carbone 14, Denis Marleau and Ubu, Serge Denoncourt and Opsi, Normand Chaurette, René-Daniel Dubois, Robert Lepage, and Michel Marc Bouchard—can be credited for this international recognition.

What came to be known as the *Printemps Shakespeare*, this multiplication of Shakespearean productions in the 1988 season, corresponds with the moment when Quebec theatre no longer mirrored Quebec society. The victim narrative had lost steam; now was the time to celebrate “les géants” (the greats): Quebecers who had made their mark in business, media, or culture. Quebec was entering a new era.

### THREE QUEBEC TRANSLATORS OF SHAKESPEARE

The question of the translator, that is, of the translating “subject,” is generally neglected in Translation Studies, except for certain aspects such as feminism. Understanding the difference between various translations of the same text in a given society at a given time in its history requires a closer examination of the translators’ subjectivity—more specifically, of a socialized subjectivity following Luhmann’s principle that only communication can communicate (Luhmann [1984] 2011). Two significant translators from this period, Jean-Louis Roux and Michel Garneau, will be examined here, as well as Antonine Maillet because of her interest in sixteenth-century French specifically.

To address the differences between the translations, I propose to build on the concepts of *trajectory* and *habitus* associated with the sociology of Bourdieu (1994). Originally derived from Aristotle (*hexis*), the concept of *habitus* refers to one’s disposition to perceive and act, created through education, training, or experience. It links the subject to his or her social context, sometimes unwittingly.

Situating each of the aforementioned translators in the theatre field and against a backdrop of the symbolic representations of their time will help grasp the *raison traduisante*—the rationale—that informs their approach to Shakespeare’s works.

## JEAN-LOUIS ROUX: SOUNDS FIRST

The lack of an in-depth study of Roux's translations is surprising given the number and variety of plays he has translated and his pioneering position regarding Shakespeare in particular; not to mention—if solely from a Translation Studies standpoint—the meticulous nature of the notes and comments that accompany some of his translations. Perhaps this lack of interest can be associated with the “order of discourse” that governed Quebec society, then dominated by the nationalist ideology.<sup>10</sup>

Born in 1923, Roux is above all else an actor, with over two hundred and fifty stage, television, and film roles to his credit. He also directed about forty productions. At sixteen, he joined the amateur theatre company the Compagnons de Saint-Laurent, led by Father Émile Legault, a follower of social Catholicism. In 1942, Roux performed in Claudel's *L'Échange* with Ludmilla Pitoëff, who also directed the play. After the war, the actress invited him to Paris, where he lived for three years before founding, in 1951, the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde, in Montreal, with a few members of the Compagnons de Saint-Laurent. In the spirit of Jean Vilar, who became director of the Théâtre national populaire in France that same year, the TNM vowed to make theatre accessible to a larger public. As artistic director from 1966 to 1982, when he left to spearhead the ÉNT, he contributed to the emancipation of Quebec society with the eclectic choices he made, having classical authors like Shakespeare rub elbows with contemporary drama, notably from Quebec. Certain productions—Dario Fo's *Faut jeter la vieille* (1969), *Les oranges sont vertes* by Claude Gauvreau (1971), and Denise Boucher's *Les fées ont soif* (1978), a feminist play censored by the clergy—sparked controversy.

Asked about his approach to theatre, Roux insists that he is “old school” and that he endeavours to “serve the author,” underlining the fact that his approach to translation has evolved: “I used to stay closer to the meaning, but by reading the text out loud, more and more, I realized the necessity of maintaining certain recurring sounds that hit the ear, and by doing so, support its meaning” (1990, 40). This observation evokes Henri Meschonnic's notion of “forme-sens,” which distinguishes a work of art from ordinary communication. To state that a great playwright is “first and foremost a language” is to recognize that the solidarity between form and meaning is the result of a construct. Roux offers the example of Tremblay, who “created” his theatrical language: “It would be presumptuous of the translator to take liberties with this language” (40). According to Roux, accuracy is important, but

literal translation is not always the right solution. Shakespeare's works are written in a language that has evolved and that, removed from its original context, is no longer transparent: "I thus contend that we gain by moving away from the literal sense, but never from sonority. If it is not possible to find the same sounds, we must strive to find equivalence in alliterations . . . theatre is spoken. It is sound" (40).

For Roux as a translator, the aim is to bring the public to the author. It is nonetheless as a theatre practitioner that he does so, first by favouring orality but also through "understanding," "concision," and "clarity" (42). Working scrupulously close to the Shakespearean text, Roux explains each decision that distances him from the original, or that seems to take him further from it, in a voluminous apparatus of notes and comments that frame his first three translations: *Hamlet* (Roux [1969] 1989), *Julius Caesar* (Roux 1973), and *King Lear* (Roux 1996). Here are a few paratextual excerpts from his rendition of *Hamlet*:

I.2.133–134: Visant à plus de fluidité, j'ai interverti ces deux vers.

I.2.133–134: ". . . Hyperion to a satyr . . ." Que ceux qui connaissent Hyperion lèvent la main!!! J'ai donc préféré le terme plus général de Titan, qui fait encore parfaitement image.

I.5.25–28: Pour des raisons d'euphonie, je me suis autorisé à remplacer le mot "meurtre" par "mort violente"; ce qui m'a amené à prendre quelques libertés dans la traduction de ce passage, tout en m'appliquant, comme partout ailleurs, à rendre le sens exact.

II.2–448ff.: J'ai traduit assez librement tout le passage de *L'Énéide*. Par ailleurs, les vers sont des décasyllabes (cinq pieds iambiques, chez Shakespeare) où je me suis efforcé, cette fois, de faire compter chacune des syllabes . . . J'espère ainsi établir un rythme qui soit différent du dialogue.<sup>11</sup>

These few examples illustrate the aforementioned principles that guided his translation choices. Allusions that no longer have a referent are omitted or transposed, and particular attention is paid to the different language registers and their function, including the flowery or convoluted language that Shakespeare puts into the mouth of his most "outlandish characters" (Roux 1990, 42.).

The first rendition of the opening line of the famous Hamlet soliloquy—"Existence ou néant: unique dilemme . . ."—was mocked by some, but Roux ([1969] 1989) explains:

III.1.12: Je me suis laissé convaincre que les spectateurs sont trop habitués à la traduction conventionnelle pour en changer. Mais, je suis tout de même persuadé que ma première traduction était bonne. D’abord, elle était plus près de l’esprit de la langue française, qui préfère les substantifs aux verbes, pour désigner la nature, la substance d’une idée. Ensuite, sans entrer dans une discussion philosophique . . . l’opposition de l’existence et du néant rend mieux celle du “to be” et du “not to be” . . . Pour Hamlet, il faut choisir entre l’existence (c’est-à-dire la réalisation de la possibilité de vengeance de la mort de son père) et le néant (c’est-à-dire l’absence d’existence ou l’échec de sa vie).<sup>12</sup>

Underscored by these remarks, Roux’s scrupulous attention to the text is tempered by his vision of acting, and of an actor’s relationship with the public. As a translator-actor, Roux does not omit or add anything to the text that is not immediately justified by the context (a fact that does not limit the critique of his choices). Here is an excerpt from Roux’s *Hamlet*, compared to the same excerpt in Maillet’s version:

<i>Hamlet</i> , Roux ([1969] 1989)	<i>Hamlet</i> , Maillet (1999a)
<p>Le Spectre            Oui: ce monstre incestueux et adultère.            Cette âme ensorceleuse, ce charmeur perfide            —Se peut-il que le mal soit si séduisant?            Dont les désirs lubriques ont eu raison            De la vertu dont semblait luire ma reine?            [. . .]            Mais voici, je crois, la brise du matin:            J’ai peu de temps. Pendant ma sieste habituelle,            L’après-midi, dans mon jardin, ton oncle,            Profitant de mon insouciance, se glissa,            Une ampoule de jusquiame à la main,            Et m’instilla, dans le creux de mon oreille,            Ce poison qui donne la lèpre et qui cause            Effet si néfaste à l’humeur de l’homme,            Qu’aussi rapide que vif argent, il coule            Dans les pores et méats naturels du corps            Et qu’instantanément, il fait tourner            Et cailler, comme du lait sûr, le sang            Fluide et clair. Ainsi en fut-il du mien.            Et, aussitôt, une éruption couvrit            D’écailles de lézard noires et répugnantes            Toute ma peau saine.</p>	<p>Spectre            Oui, cet incestueux, cet adultère            Animal, par sa magie noire, ses dons            Charmeurs qui ont le pouvoir de séduire,            A gagné à sa convoitise honteuse            Ma reine d’une apparente si grande vertu            [. . .]            Doucement, je crois sentir l’air matinal:            Je serai bref. Dormant dans mon verger            À l’heure la plus sûre, ton oncle apparut            Avec de la sève d’ébène dans une fiole,            Et au creux de mon oreille fit couler            Liquide pestilentiel. Ainsi mon sang            Fut atteint et couvrit sitôt d’une lèpre            Nauséabonde mon corps tout éclatant.            Et voilà comment, dormant à portée            De main d’un frère, je fus vite expédié            Et privé de vie, d’une couronne, d’une            reine            Occis même tout chargé de mes péchés,            Sans absolution ni extrême-onction.</p>

<i>Hamlet</i> , Roux ([1969] 1989)	<i>Hamlet</i> , Maillet (1999a)
Ainsi, dans mon sommeil, la main d'un frère M'ôta la vie, couronne et reine, d'un seul coup, M'abattant, dans la fleur de mes péchés, Sans le réconfort des derniers sacrements.	

### ANTONINE MAILLET: LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE

In his study comparing the treatment of Shakespearean meter by Roux with that of Maillet, Joël Beddows notes that “the tone and breath of the Maillet text are different from those of the original” (Beddows 1998, 40). In the previous excerpt, the specificity of the Shakespearean verse disappears and is replaced by a tighter, more modern form of writing, interspersed by a small number of words and turns of phrase borrowed from sixteenth-century French poetics: “Ma reine d’une apparente si grande vertu,” “fit couler liquide pestilentiel,” “occis”; or in the Mousetrap: “du fruit vert, à la branche attaché,” “Ainsi pense que jamais.” By using a decasyllabic line instead of Shakespeare’s iambic pentameter, Maillet is forced to negotiate meaning:

Shakespeare: But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air

Maillet: Doucement, je crois sentir l’air matinal

Bonnefoy: Mais, assez! / Il me semble sentir l’air du matin

Roux: Mais voici, je crois, la brise du matin

“Doucement”—as one would use “Un instant!”—seems to simply fill up space in the decasyllabic verse. Rhythm, assonance, and alliteration are lost in Maillet’s version, whereas Yves Bonnefoy, himself a poet, maintains them integrally, as does Roux, paying attention to the actor’s movement on stage. In that sense, Maillet’s translation proceeds from a different *trajectory* and *habitus* than Roux’s, who, as noted, is both an actor and a director.

Born in 1929, in New Brunswick, Maillet, a novelist and playwright, belongs to the same generation as Roux, but she is an academic, specializing in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French, partially maintained in Acadian speech patterns. At Laval University in 1969, after she defended her dissertation, *Rabelais et les traditions populaires en Acadie*, she began to teach creative writing and oral literature. Her first play, *La Sagouine* (1970), takes a critical look at the social status of “les gens d’En-Bas” (the poorer class) dominated by “les gens

d’En-Haut” (the wealthier class). In her novels—*Pointe-aux-Coques*, *Don l’Original*, *Les Cordes-de-Bois*, *Pélagie-la-Charrette*, and *Crache à Pic*, among others—as in her plays—*La Sagouine*, *Les Crasseux*, *Gapi*, *Garrochés en paradis*, *Évangéline Deusse*, to cite a few—she paints a social fresco wherein the protagonists, victims of history and of their social condition, express themselves mostly in the Acadian dialect.<sup>13</sup> She uses that dialect in her translation of *Pygmalion*, where Grandmont had used Québécois *joual* in his version:

<i>Pygmalion</i> , Grandmont (1968)	<i>Pygmalion</i> , Maillet (1999b)
ÉLISE Aye là! toé! . . . T’as pas de manières Tu viens de maudire mes fleurs dan ‘a sloche [. . .] Cé-ti vott’ gars, ça? Ouais! Ben . . . Si y aura été élevé comme y faut, I sra pas v’nu maudire mes fleurs à terre, pis sacrer son camp, pis pas payer. Allez vous t’y m’les payer, mes fleurs?	MARCHANDE DE FLEURS En v’là des magnères! Deux ramées de viaulettes garrochées da-ans gadoue. [. . .] Aoh! c’est vot’ gars, sti-là? Ben, si v’s aviez fait vot’ deouère coumme eune boune maire devit faire, i arait point écrabouillé les fleûrs d’un pauve feille après déguarpi sans payer. Vous allez-t-i’ me payer pour le dégât, vous?

Eliza Doolittle speaks like the Sagouine and, in this translation, Maillet transposes the Acadian vernacular directly and realistically, the way she does in her own works. However, she refrains from using it to translate the lines spoken by lower-class characters in her translations of Shakespeare. *Hamlet’s* gravedigger speaks in an unconvincing syncretic language, in which his popular language nevertheless displays an excellent knowledge of “passé simple,” the literary past:

**Hamlet, V.1**

FOSSOYEUR

Une qui fut une femme, monsieur; mais qu’elle repose en paix, elle est morte

[. . .]

Vous ne savez pas? N’importe quel imbécile le sait, c’est le jour même que vint au monde le jeune Hamlet: lui qui est fou et qui fut envoyé en Angleterre.

[. . .]

Ç’ui-là d’un putain de fou; çui-là de qui que vous pensiez.

(Maillet 1999a, 101–2; my emphasis)

Yet, the language she uses in *Richard III*, composed in alexandrines, is reminiscent of France’s Grand Siècle, and the characters declaim as they do in Racine:



ANNE

Déposez, déposez votre charge honorable—  
Si dans un char funèbre peut s'ensevelir l'honneur—  
Pendant que je serai pleureuse inconsolable  
De la mort trop précoce du vertueux Lancastre  
Pauvre image refroidie d'un auguste et saint roi!  
Cendres sinistres et pâles d'une noble dynastie!  
(Maillet 1989, 24–25)

These translations suggest that Maillet projects a linguistic knowledge onto Shakespeare's works. If the Shakespearean tone is affected, the resulting production is no less powerful.

### MICHEL GARNEAU: DOXA DOLOROSA

Garneau's *Macbeth*, "translated into *Québécois*," is mostly remembered as political propaganda on the eve of the first sovereignty referendum. The poetics of this translation, however, is more interesting. The two aspects are not mutually exclusive, quite the contrary.

Born in 1939, Garneau is a theatre practitioner, both as a playwright and an actor, as well as musician and singer. The author of some fifty plays, he has taught for more than twenty years at the ÉNT. On the stage, he is best known for having performed in some of Michel Tremblay's works. Mostly, Garneau is a poet. A dozen of his collections were compiled and published in 1988 as *Poésies Complètes, 1955–1987* (Garneau 1988), followed by another dozen collections. *Poésies Complètes* brings together the poems written over an incandescent period, both politically and artistically. With this period came the end of *La Grande Noirceur* (the Great Darkness) before the Quiet Revolution in Quebec—a period of social, cultural, and political change—which corresponded, on the international scene, to decolonization. Created in 1963, the *Parti pris* magazine both established a publishing house and initiated a nationalist political movement (Mouvement de Libération Populaire) strongly influenced by postcolonial writings such as Frantz Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952; *Black Skins, White Masks*, 1967) and *Les damnés de la Terre* (1961; *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1963); these were echoed by Pierre Vallières in his book *Nègres blancs d'Amérique* (1968; *White Niggers of America*, 1971).<sup>14</sup> As a politically engaged artist, Garneau shares the ideas underlying *Parti pris*, but also those of the pro-independence Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale and Parti Québécois. In 1977, a year before his translation of *Macbeth*, he turned down the Governor General's Award for Poetry and

Drama (the highest literary award in Canada) for explicitly political reasons. His poetry belongs to the same field as Paul Chamberland, a member of *Parti pris* and author of *L’Afficheur hurle* (1969); Gaston Miron’s *L’Homme rapaillé* (1970); or Michèle Lalonde’s “Speak White” (1974) and *Défense et illustration de la langue québécoise* (1979).

When Garneau’s *Macbeth* was produced, the theme of identity dominated social discourse. This topic unfolded around words like *nation*, *country*, *people*, *we*—all co-referent to *Quebec*—and was included in narratives where they were associated with other terms designating *alterity* and *territoriality*, and with verbs such as *to disappear*, *to dissolve*, *to assimilate*, and correspondingly, *to exist*, *to survive*, and their derivatives, whether in the media, in the political, economic and legal realm, or in literature. Among Shakespeare’s plays, *Macbeth*’s narrative follows the independence discourse the closest. Elsewhere, I have described which strategies Garneau uses to accentuate this coincidence (Brisset 1996). Here, I would rather focus on the similarities between Shakespearean and Québécois poetics in the 1960s and 1970s, when Garneau was active as a poet-translator. Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* is rife with metaphors and images similar to those used by Quebec poets in this period (so repetitive that they border on cliché). Images of wounds and blood express feelings of oppression and dispossession: all discourse seems to revolve around Quebec and the explicit predicates — “exploited,” “humiliated,” “is a country to be born.”

*Bleed, bleed, poor country!*  
[. . .] our country sinks beneath the yoke;  
It weeps, it bleeds, and each day a gash  
Is added to her wounds  
*Macbeth*, IV.3

L’entendez-vous dans ses *blessures*  
gémir, *ce pays* [. . .]  
et moi, dans cette souffrance  
André Major, *Poèmes pour durer* (1969, 117)

Mon Québec, ma terre amère [. . .]  
avec une large *blessure* d’espace au front [. . .]  
Je marche avec un cœur de patte *saignante*.  
Gaston Miron, *L’Homme rapaillé* (1970, 56–59)

J’étais [. . .] prisonnier de ses *blessures*  
*Plaie* quotidienne / d’un espoir  
Paul-Marie Lapointe, *Le réel absolu* (1971, 198)

Une *plaie* au cœur même des *blessures* [...]  
Québec [...] en ciel bas sur la *terre de sang*  
Denis Vanier, *Je* (1974, 35, 43; my emphasis)

Also frequently used are the metaphors of the tomb, the coffin, and the corpse:

Alas! *poor country*; [...]  
It cannot / Be called our mother, but *our grave*  
*Macbeth*, IV.3

Ce continent me trahissait *ce pays / ce cercueil*  
Paul-Marie Lapointe (198)

Nous vivons encore [...] / *fossoyés* mais drus [...]  
Cet âge scellera notre aurore ou *notre tombeau*  
Paul Chamberland, *Terre Québec* (1964, 49; my emphasis)

The images that Shakespeare attributes to Macduff find a nearly perfect match in the corpus of Quebec poetry that surrounds Garneau's translation:

*Not'droét d'exister* [...] s'trouve ram'né quasiment à rien ;  
Chaque matin qui vient, y'a eune nouvelle veuve qui hurle sa peine,  
De nouveaux orphelins qui pleurent, des nouveaux malheurs  
éclatent [...]  
*Pauv'pays, mon pauv'pays, tu vas saigner jusqu'au boutte de ton sang* [...]  
Pour toutes les terres que l'tyran  
A volées au monde [...] *not'pauv'pays* s'trouve pogné dans un carcan  
terrible.  
*C't'un pays* qui pleure, qui geint, qui grince, / *c't'un pays* /  
Qui sent son mal, qui *saigne*, chaque jour, y'a eune *plaie* neuve  
Dans ses *blessures* [...]  
*Not'mére-patrie*, on peut quasiment pus la nommer mére, faudra't  
Ben proche dire *tombeau, fosse commune* [...]  
(Garneau 1978, 116–21; my emphasis)

Over ten years later, Garneau published his translations of *The Tempest* and *Coriolanus*, both commissioned by the ÉNT, and reviewed by Sherry Simon (1990). Both are condensed versions, presumably intended for acting exercises whose venue and date are not mentioned. The language is no longer archaic, as it was in Garneau's (1978) *Macbeth*, but it retains certain elements from the *joual*. According to Garneau's (1989) preface, it is hockey, not independence, that serves as the backdrop to *Coriolanus*. That being said, Garneau removes any indication of the setting, or of the characters' functions or titles, making a topical reading of the text possible (Gagnon 2003).

## SHAKESPEARE: A SYMBOLIC CONQUEST

When discussing the translation of theatre texts, the question of what differentiates a translation from an adaptation necessarily arises. As the hermeneutic tradition has shown, each translation constitutes an *interpretation*, informed not only by the text and its context, but also by the *intentio lectoris*—the “intention of the reader”—to use Umberto Eco’s term. The phenomenon of re-translation proves that. Moreover, the re-expression of a foreign text collides with the non-coincidence of source and target languages and, above all, social systems. Translation is, thus, *adaptive* by nature. By opening itself up to non-Western traditions, Translation Studies has had to revisit the very notion of translation, and thus the concept was dramatically expanded. Today, translation includes practices of great diversity, which nevertheless share what Wittgenstein (reflecting on games) called a “family resemblance” (qtd. in Tymoczko 2007). These practices are distributed over a *continuum*. In the 1970s, Translation Studies switched from a prescriptive and axiological approach to a descriptive and functionalist approach that accounts for the “purpose” and “context” of each individual translation. Translation may well, then, be the transliteration used by Franz Boas in anthropology to grasp the structure of Amerindian languages; Louis and Celia Zukovsky’s sound-for-sound translations of Catullus’s poems; or Pierre Klossowski’s French rendition of *The Aeneid*, which aimed to echo the sound of Latin. It is also the word-for-word transposition used—in combination with existing translations—by Michel Tremblay and Gilles Marsolais to recreate plays originally written in languages they did not speak. At the other end of the spectrum are translation practices that, with their various forms of rewriting, reduce the original to a textual watermark. The middle ground, however, offers a wide range of options: in her recent study of theatre practices in the Canadian Francophonie, Nicole Nolette (2015) describes a set of playful translations that the traditional definition never would have included. Is, then, Garneau’s *Macbeth* more or less of an adaptation than Maillet’s condensed version of *Twelfth Night*?

Often, theatre translation is subject to a specific direction. For instance, in regards to Jean-Marc Dalpé’s translation of *Richard III* for the TNM, Brigitte Haentjens stated in 2015 that the text was tightened during the rehearsal process to better reflect her directorial vision (Haentjens 10). An even more convincing example is that of the two versions of *As You Like It* by Chaurette. In his first translation, in 1991, staged at the Licorne, Chaurette focused on “sound equivalent” (“full of

tears, full of laughs” / “foule de rires, foule de larmes”) to the extent of leaving recurring English words of the original in the text, such as *fair*, *fool*, *news* (Chaurette 2011, 86–87). This homophonic approach underlies the aesthetics of the absurd, a liberating aesthetic present in the play itself, but favoured by the director, Alexander Hausvater. The second translation, in 1994, is the result of a close collaboration with stage director Alice Ronfard. What Shakespeare “said,” that which he “wrote and rhythmized” can only resonate in the vast Denise Pelletier hall after cuts in the text following an interpretation that immediately captures the attention of its young audience: “As I remember, Adam . . .” / “Écoute-moi bien Adam!” (ibid., 92ff.). This adaptive practice is commonly observed with regard to translations *and* originals written for the stage. “To kill Shakespeare” says Chaurette, is the *sine qua non* condition to his resurrection. Still, his reincarnation as a preconceived idea of the “true” or “real” translation is problematic for the following reason: produced in the sixteenth century, in a context that is no longer ours, the original text (which one?), with its contradictions and semantic diffraction, eludes any “truth” that may be unique and fixed.

The (elusive) quest for a clear demarcation between translation and adaptation is attached to a larger socio-historical and theatrical context, as evidenced by the rendition of foreign plays during the period under consideration. What motivated Quebec’s growing interest in Shakespeare in the early 1990s? The decline of nationalism in theatre, which accompanied the autonomization of the “théâtre québécois,” is not the only explanation. This time period corresponds with the international recognition of Quebec playwrights and directors, and of the various expressions of their creativity. Moreover, the translation of classics plays a large role in the history of international literatures, as Antoine Berman (1984) and Pascale Casanova (2015, 62ff.) showed, respectively, for Romantic Germany and for Elizabethan England and Renaissance France. Shakespeare stands out among other classical playwrights by being universally recognized, conferring both value and permanence to his works. To paraphrase Casanova (2015, 76), Shakespeare is the “Greenwich” of international drama.

Following Gurik, many appropriate Shakespeare as writing material: Ronfard (*Vie et mort du roi boiteux*), Chaurette (*Les reines*), Maillet (*William S.*), to name only a few from the period. Jennifer Drouin records about fifteen re-creations between 1989 and 2000 (2014, 195–9). Shakespeare, who sparked little interest until then, suddenly finds

himself translated, annexed, even diverted, for the profit of the dramatic heritage in Quebec.<sup>15</sup>

By measuring themselves against Shakespeare, writers, playwrights, and directors conquer a new territory. What Pascale Casanova refers to as a “conquest strategy”—in the military sense—with regard to translations of Elizabethan England, occurs here also through an appropriation. The root principle, however, is inverted: the original is not embellished or improved upon with additions. Rather, nearly all Quebec translators reduce and condense the text. Constrained by the receiving system, Shakespeare is thus translated “for today.”<sup>16</sup> Regardless of this *systemic* adjustment, to translate or transform Shakespeare implies measuring oneself against a wealth of narrative techniques, as well as expressions and stylistic devices that contribute to the revival of a literary language largely removed from the Québécois stage in favour of the vernacular.

Translated by Anne Sophie Voyer.

## NOTES

- \* Unless otherwise noted, all translations from French-language sources are by Anne Sophie Voyer.
- 1. Michel Deguy, conference given at the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, 13/05/2002. Unpublished manuscript.
- 2. “My fruits are North-American,” Tremblay stated, comparing himself to a tree, adding that he will “always be closer to the culture of North America than to the culture of France.” With the topic and the language of *Belles-Sœurs*, he aligns himself with American playwrights such as Eugene O’Neill and Arthur Miller, but also Tennessee Williams, whom Tremblay translated extensively.
- 3. For a detailed discussion of the Montreal theatrical field and its evolution, see the remarkable study by Sylvain Schryburt (2011), who approaches the topic in terms of stage practices.
- 4. Curtis’ version was “arranged” by André Brassard, who staged the play. Subsequently, the works of Shakespeare produced by Trident would be presented in a translation made in Quebec: *Macbeth* (Garneau 1983), *Romeo and Juliet* (Roux 1987 and 1988), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Chaurette 1995), and *The Tempest* (Chaurette 1998).
- 5. Later translations by Chaurette include *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (2001), *Twelfth Night* (2003), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (2006), *Othello* (2006), and *King Lear* (2012). See Chaurette (2011) on his approach to translating Shakespeare. For a description of his first translations, see Martin (2007).

6. “More than thirty such French-language adaptations of Shakespeare have been written in Québec—and an impressive number of translations and innovative stage productions have been performed as well—making Shakespeare a far more creative force in Québec than Molière. The surprising existence of Québécois Shakespeare raises an important question: why has Shakespeare become one of Québec’s major authors?” (Drouin 2014, 3).
7. “Localization” refers to a form of translation that has developed with the globalization of trade, and consists of adapting a product (software, video game, website, maintenance instruction, advertising material) to the linguistic and cultural practices of the target region or country.
8. “Être ou ne pas être libre! voilà la question Est-il plus noble à l’âme de souffrir les morsures de l’injuste infortune ou de se révolter contre cette multitude de maux et d’en finir avec eux : se battre ou dormir ? [ ] La conscience fait de nous des poltrons [ ] dormir, non ! se battre ! . . .” (Gurik 1968, 73).
9. The passage can be loosely translated as:

When I think of our place, I only wanna find myself a corner  
Quiet, in the shade, to just let everything go and bawl my eyes out  
[ . . . ]  
I think we’d be better off defending  
Our right to exist, reduced right now to almost nothing  
[ . . . ]  
Our cause is just! Victory will be ours  
At the end of the road.
10. See the mediatic lynching of Roux, declared opponent of separatism, after his appointment in 1996 as lieutenant governor of Quebec under the Parti Québécois government of Lucien Bouchard. A few years earlier, Mordecai Richler had suffered similar treatment following his article “Oh Canada! Oh Quebec!,” which appeared in the *New Yorker* in 1991. The francophone media had given it the exact opposite meaning of what he had said, namely with reference to the natalist interference of the Catholic Church in the lives of Quebec women. In both cases, the hearsay was more stubborn than the facts.
11. I.2.133–134: To increase flow, I inverted these two lines. “. . . Hyperion to a satyr . . .’ By show of hands, who is familiar with Hyperion???” I replace this with the more generic “Titan,” which perfectly suits the purpose here. I.5.25–28: For euphonic reasons, I replaced the word “murder” by “violent death”; this led me to take a few liberties in this excerpt, but I strived, as everywhere else in the text, to render the meaning exactly. II.2.448: I translated pretty freely the entire excerpt from *The Aeneid*. Moreover, each line counts ten syllables (iambic pentameter in Shakespeare), and I tried this time to account for each syllable . . . I hope, hence, to create a rhythm that will differ slightly from the dialogue.”



12. "I let myself be convinced that the audience was too used to the traditional translation to allow the change. Nevertheless, I remain convinced that my first translation was fair. First, it was closer to the spirit of the French language, which favours substantives to verbs to express the nature or the essence of an idea. Then, without entering any philosophical debate . . . the opposition of 'existence' and 'nothingness' better renders the difference between 'to be' and 'not to be' . . . For Hamlet, the choice is really between existence (that is, the realization of revenge of his father's death) and nothingness (that is, the absence of action/existence or his life's failure)." Similarly, Chaurette (2011, 83) observes that "the culture of a Shakespeare play," which "has become *cliché* over time," is what makes it attractive and allows it to work with the public.
13. In 1977, her novel *Les Cordes de bois* (Paris: Grasset) is selected for the Goncourt, but rejected by the jury on the grounds that one cannot win the award "for a work written in a language before Malherbe." Maillet nevertheless received this award two years later for *Pélagie-la-Charrette* (Paris: Grasset, 1979).
14. *Parti pris* advocates for a literature that denounces political, economic, and cultural alienation of French Canadians and aims to create the conditions of their emancipation, namely their independence (Major 1979).
15. As in the 1970s and 1980s, when this process was more or less automatic, the name of the translator can be foregrounded to Shakespeare's. For instance, the cover of *Richard III* shows the picture of the actor that held the title role at the Rideau-Vert, and Maillet's name appears as if she were the author of the play, not the translator.
16. Back cover of *La tragédie de Macbeth* (2015), translated by Paul Lefebvre.

## WORKS CITED

- Beddows, Joël. 1998. "Pour une poétique du texte de Shakespeare: les formes métriques utilisées par Antonine Maillet et Jean-Louis Roux." *L'Annuaire Théâtral* 24:35–51.
- Benjamin, Walter. [1923] 2000. "La tâche du traducteur." *Œuvres I*, translated by Maurice de Gandillac revue par Rainer Rochlitz et Pierre Rusch. Paris: Gallimard.
- Berman, Antoine. 1984. *L'Épreuve de l'étranger: Culture et traduction dans l'Allemagne romantique*. Paris: Gallimard.
- . 1995. *Pour une critique des traductions: John Donne*. Paris: Gallimard.
- . 2008. *L'Âge de la traduction: "La tâche du traducteur" de Walter Benjamin, un commentaire*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes.
- Bonnefoy, Yves, trans. 1978. *Hamlet, Le Roi Lear, précédé de "Readiness, ripeness: Hamlet, Lear"*. Paris: Gallimard, Folio.

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1992. *Les Règles de l'art: Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*. Paris: Seuil.
- . 1994. *Raisons pratiques: sur la théorie de l'action*. Paris: Seuil.
- Brisset, Annie. 1996. *A Sociocritique of Translation: Theatre and Alterity in Quebec (1968–1988)*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Casanova, Pascale. 2015. *La langue mondiale: Traduction et domination*. Paris: Seuil.
- Chamberland, Paul. 1964. *Terre Québec*. Montréal: Librairie Déom.
- Chaurette, Normand. 2011. *Comment tuer Shakespeare*. Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- David, Gilbert. 1998. "Shakespeare au Québec: théâtrographie des productions francophones (1945–1998)." *L'Annuaire théâtral* 24:117–38.
- Drouin, Jennifer. 2014. *Shakespeare in Quebec: Nation, Gender, and Adaptation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Gagnon, Chantal. 2003. "Le Shakespeare québécois des années 1990." *Theatre Research in Canada / Recherches Théâtrales au Canada* 24:1–2.
- Garneau, Michel, trans. 1978. *Macbeth*. Montréal: VLB.
- . 1988. *Poésies Complètes, 1955–1987*. Montréal: Guérin Littérature.
- , trans. 1989. *Coriolan*. Montréal: VLB.
- , trans. 1989. *La Tempête*. Montréal: VLB.
- Grandmont, Éloi de, trans. 1968. *Pygmalion*. Montréal, École Nationale de Théâtre, coll. Manuscript.
- Gurik, Robert. 1977 [1968]. *Hamlet, prince du Québec*. Montréal: Leméac.
- Haentjens, Brigitte. 2015. "L'éclat du Mal" In *Cahier dramaturgique pour Richard III, Une création de Sibyllines en collaboration avec le Théâtre du Nouveau Monde et le Théâtre français du CNA*, 9–16. [[https://issuu.com/sibyllines/docs/cahier\\_richard\\_iii\\_d907a5a615ed76](https://issuu.com/sibyllines/docs/cahier_richard_iii_d907a5a615ed76)]
- Lapointe, Paul-Marie. 1971. *Le réel absolu*. Montréal: Éditions de l'Hexagone.
- Lieblein, Leane. 1998. "D'une époque ou de tous les temps? Le 'printemps Shakespeare' de 1988." *L'Annuaire théâtral* 24:100–13.
- Lefebvre, Paul, trans. 2015. *La tragédie de Macbeth*. Montréal, Dramaturges Éditeurs.
- Luhmann, Niklas. [1984] 2011. *Systèmes sociaux: Esquisse d'une théorie générale*, trans. Lucas Sosoe. Québec: Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- Maillet, Antonine, trans. 1989. *Richard III*. Montréal: Leméac.
- , trans. 1999a. *Hamlet*. Montréal, École Nationale de Théâtre, coll. Manuscript.
- , trans. 1999b. *Pygmalion*. Montréal, École Nationale de Théâtre, coll. Manuscript.

- Major, André. 1969. *Poèmes pour durer*. Montréal: Éditions du Songe.
- Major, Robert. 1979. *Parti pris: idéologies et littérature*. Montréal: Hurtubise HMH.
- Makaryk, Irena R. and Marissa McHugh, eds. 2012. *Shakespeare and the Second World War: Memory, Culture, Identity*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Martin, Roxanne. 2007. *Chaurette devant Shakespeare: la traduction comme processus de création*. Mémoire de maîtrise, Département d'Études françaises, Université de Montréal.
- Meschonnic, Henri. 2007. *Éthique et Politique du traduire*. Lagrasse, France: Éditions Verdier.
- Miron, Gaston. 1970. *L'Homme rapaillé*. Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- Nolette, Nicole. 2015. *Jouer la traduction: Théâtre et hétérolinguisme au Canada francophone*. Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa.
- Roux, Jean-Louis, trans. [1969] 1989. *Le drame de Hamlet, prince de Danemark*, traduit et annoté par Jean-Louis Roux (texte intégral). Montréal: École Nationale de Théâtre, coll. Manuscript.
- , trans. 1973. *Le drame de Jules César. The Tragedy of Julius Cæsar*, traduit et annoté par Jean-Louis Roux. Montréal: Éditions du Jour.
- . 1990. "Shakespeare en québécois? Entretien avec Jean-Louis Roux," *Cahiers de théâtre Jeu* 56:82–84.
- , trans. 1996. *Le drame du roi Lear*, traduit et annoté par Jean-Louis Roux. Rimouski: Éditeq.
- Simon, Sherry. 1990. "Coriolan" / "La Tempête": Shakespeare/Garneau." *Jeu* 56:120–25.
- Schryburt, Sylvain. 2011. *De l'acteur vedette au théâtre de festival: Histoire des pratiques scéniques Montréalaises, 1940–1980*. Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- Tymoczko, Maria. 2007. *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome.
- Vanier, Denis. 1974. *Je*. Montréal: Éditions de l'Aurore.
- Venuti, Lawrence. 1998. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London: Routledge.

# Mediatic Shakespeare: McLuhan and the Bard

RICHARD CAVELL

Writing to his mother, the elocutionist Elsie Hall McLuhan, in 1931, when he was a twenty-year-old student at the University of Manitoba, Herbert Marshall McLuhan made one of his first recorded comments about Shakespeare, in whom McLuhan would retain a life-long interest and whose work would provide him—though in a typically McLuhanesque way—with the foundations of the media theory with which his name is associated today. “Dear Mother,” he writes,

I was initiated to the writings of Mr Bernard Shaw last evening when we attended a very admirable performance of Pygmalion presented by the University . . . [R]egarding Shaw himself: I was very agreeably surprised. He has looked at life with a very penetrating but somewhat disapproving eye. I should think that he deserves one of the highest places among English dramatists, after Shakespeare. As far as comparing him with that paragon of mortals . . . why it is of course absurd . . . [T]he difference is as great as between sublime genius and clever brilliance. I shall certainly get thru Shaw at the first opportunity. (McLuhan 1987, 3)

He would not get through Shakespeare so easily;<sup>1</sup> not only is King Lear the presiding figure in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, as Hamlet is in *Understanding Media*, but even at the height of his fame in the mid-1960s, when he was the most quoted person on earth, devoured by the very media whose power he had articulated so brilliantly, we find him writing to his doctoral thesis supervisor, Muriel Bradbrook, questioning her about some bardic esoterica (Marchand 1989, 53).

The connection between McLuhan's foundational theories of media and his reading of Shakespeare was rhetoric, to which McLuhan devoted his doctoral dissertation on Thomas Nashe. Titled "The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of his Time,"<sup>2</sup> this Cambridge dissertation sought to account for Nashe's extravagant style. McLuhan's thesis was that the multivocality of Nashe's texts represented the residua of an orality that in Nashe's (and Shakespeare's)<sup>3</sup> time was still very much alive, albeit under threat by the increasing hegemony of print that would ultimately impose an equitone monotony on verbal style. The oral dimension of Nashe's work was signalled by its complex rhetorical scaffolding, which was fundamental to the mnemonic imperative of a spoken culture. That these rhetorical structures had survived well into the era of print suggested to McLuhan that it was rhetoric itself that was fundamental to the meaning of these works—the medium of rhetoric was at the heart of their message. McLuhan had no difficulty applying this principle to the study of advertising he published eight years after completing his doctorate: just as rhetorical structures shape utterances to produce a certain effect in the listener or reader, so ads shape discourse to persuade the consumer to purchase an object.

In his dissertation, McLuhan argues that it was the hybrid interface of oral modalities with scribal media in the Elizabethan era that produced the complexity of its literature. By way of illustration, in his first chapter he cites the famous passage from *Henry V* (1.1. 38–52) in which the Archbishop of Canterbury describes Henry:

Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,  
You would say it hath been all-in-all his study;  
List his discourse of war, and you shall hear  
A fearful battle rendered you in music;  
Turn him to any cause of policy,  
The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,  
Familiar as his garter—that when he speaks,  
The air, a chartered libertine, is still,  
And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears  
To steal his sweet and honeyed sentences:  
So that the art and practic part of life  
Must be the mistress to this theoric.

As McLuhan (2005, 67) comments, "the speech could have come straight out of the *De Oratore*" of Cicero.<sup>4</sup>

McLuhan began his dissertation in 1939 under the supervision of Elizabethan scholar Muriel Bradbrook, mistress of Girton College

and the first woman to be named a professor at the university; in 1941, when she joined the war effort, F. P. Wilson, likewise a scholar of the Elizabethan era, replaced her. Both stressed a contextual approach to Shakespeare; Bradbrook (1989) was the author of *Shakespeare in His Context* and Wilson (1963) of *Plague in Shakespeare's London*. This de-centring of Shakespeare from scholarly approaches that focused exclusively on the text and on Shakespeare's "Englishness"<sup>5</sup> would be galvanized when McLuhan read *The Lion and the Fox: the Rôle of the Hero in the Plays of Shakespeare*<sup>6</sup> by Wyndham Lewis, whom he befriended when Lewis moved to Windsor, Ontario, during the Second World War. McLuhan quotes extensively from *The Lion and the Fox* in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962, 119–20); with its epigraph from Thomas Nashe (misspelled as Nash), Lewis's book spoke directly to McLuhan's concern with the survival of rhetorical practices in the Elizabethan Renaissance, the lion and the fox representing these two cultures, characterized by Lewis ([1927] 1955, 11) as "the old world of chivalrous romance" and "the new one of commerce and science," a distinction which McLuhan would expand upon in his reading of *Lear* that opens *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. Of particular note with reference to McLuhan's mediatic approach to Shakespeare is Lewis's question "as to whether Shakespeare saw the world as the expression of *techne* or *tyche*" (ibid., 18); for McLuhan, the answer was definitely *techne*, though not in a way that Lewis envisioned.

Before McLuhan wrote *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, he gathered together the ads he had been lecturing about in his classes and turned them into his first book, *The Mechanical Bride*, for which he received a contract in 1948, five years after completing his dissertation. Published in 1951, *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man* is a scathing examination of magazine ads published in the United States in the 1940s. McLuhan presents the ads as cognate with "the visual technique of a Picasso, the literary technique of a James Joyce" (1951, 3), and the almost exclusively modernist frame of reference for the book serves as a mode of remediating earlier cultural forms. Thus, McLuhan reads the Chandleresque sleuth, for example, as the mechanical version of the "Renaissance virtuoso" (109), of which Hamlet is the archetype:

The popular sleuth . . . offers a window onto a complex psychological landscape. This landscape includes the figure of the superman as he has taken his stand on all the moral, political, and scientific issues of the West from Da Vinci to Holmes. It also includes the platform at Elsinore and the ghost-stricken figure of Hamlet. Hamlet the Dane saw one ghost. The modern Hamlet stares at a whole assembly. And not

least among these is Philip Marlowe, Chandler's echo of Christopher Marlowe's supermen Tamburlaine and Dr. Faustus. (110)

The detective represents the commodification of learning itself, a process inaugurated by Hamlet's immersion in writing at Wittenberg, which gave him the inner self that would ultimately take the form of Philip Marlowe's sleuthing.

By McLuhan's own admission, *The Mechanical Bride* was a blip in his career, a dissection of the mechanical culture inaugurated by the printing press at the very moment when that culture was being superseded by electronic media. Within two years of publishing that book, McLuhan and his anthropologist colleague Edmund Carpenter had received a Ford Foundation grant to explore communications, which they did through a seminar and the journal they founded and edited from 1953 to 1959, *Explorations*. In their introduction to an anthology of the journal's articles, McLuhan and Carpenter (1960, ix) state that in the journal they had "argued that we are largely ignorant of literacy's role in shaping Western man, and equally unaware of the role of electronic media in shaping modern values." In the service of this argument, we find McLuhan and Carpenter writing about "acoustic space," David Riesman about the "oral and written traditions," Dorothy Lee about "lineal and nonlinear codifications of reality," and McLuhan writing about "the effect of the printed book on language in the sixteenth century." This essay by McLuhan provided the missing link to his dissertation on Nashe. In that work, McLuhan had argued that oral modalities had survived well into the era of script and of print, but he had not theorized the effects of print itself. His encounter with Harold Adams Innis at the University of Toronto, where McLuhan had taken a position in the English department in 1946, proved a defining moment in this regard. Innis, a professor of political economy who was as massively and chaotically well-read as McLuhan, argued in his 1950 book *Empire and Communications* that media had an active rather than passive role socially, politically, culturally, and economically, and that it was possible to understand history based on the medium that was dominant during a given epoch and the concomitant effects of that media. McLuhan would become the keeper of the Innisian flame, writing introductions to Innis's works on communications, which were reprinted as a result of McLuhan's repeated citation of them. In *Empire and Communication*, McLuhan was able to read Innis's characterization of the Shakespearean era:

The accession of Queen Elizabeth permitted by absence of the Salic law which prevailed in France and dominance of a woman over the court



were accompanied by patronage of literature. Since England, with its interest in wool rather than linen, was dependent on the Continent for supplies of paper, restrictions on publications were in the interests of mercantilism and maintenance of royal power . . . . Restrictions on publications accentuated an interest in the drama and enabled Shakespeare to exploit and expand the capacities of language which had not been repressed by print . . . . In Athens, tragedy flourished before writing was firmly established and in England before printing had developed its overwhelming power. (Innis 1950, 182–3)<sup>7</sup>

It was Innis who alerted McLuhan to the possibility of understanding the past “dynamically as a dramatic action with a world cast,” as McLuhan (1972, v) puts it in his “Foreword” to the reprint of *Empire and Communications*.

We hear echoes of Innis in McLuhan’s (1960) *Explorations* article “The Effect of the Printed Book on Language in the 16th Century.” Whereas McLuhan had studied in his dissertation the oral residua within printed work, he now writes about how

Shakespeare’s 19th century editors tidied up his text by providing him with grammatical punctuation. They thought to bring out, or hold down, his meaning by introducing a kind of punctuation that came into use more and more after printing. This was an ordering of commas and periods to set off clauses for the eye. But in Shakespeare’s time, punctuation was mainly rhetorical and auditory rather than grammatical. The 4th century grammarian Diomedes tells us that punctuation marks indicate an ‘opportunity for taking breath,’ and Cassiodorus in his 6th century *Institutio de Arte Grammatica* notes that the *positura or distinctio* is a ‘suitable pause in a duly measured delivery.’ For them the punctuation for grammatical order was incidental to its function in aiding delivery. (McLuhan 1960, 125–6)<sup>8</sup>

It is this oral orientation, according to McLuhan, that was crucial to the Shakespearean effect:

A popular writer like Shakespeare was free of humanist obsessions about imitation of the ancients. He could exploit the old popular idiom and the huge new tapestry of polyglot effects that poured from the press. Many of his typical effects resulted from pouring the visual masques and pageants of the court and high-life through the new medium of spoken or orated poetry. The learned of the 16th century were obsessed by the need not only to imitate classical poets, but also to adapt this verse to song. Verse had no status at all as recited. It had to be sung. Owing to print, spoken verse became popular on the stage. Song is speech slowed down and adapted to a single tone or pitch.

Print made possible the rapid reading of verse. In speeding up song, print fostered oratorically delivered poetry. (Ibid., 130)<sup>9</sup>

McLuhan would formalize these observations in his theory of remediation—that a new medium retrieved previous media as its content. To this concept McLuhan would add his interest in patterns of perception derived from his readings in late nineteenth-century empathic theories of artistic mediation and the related notion that media altered perceptual configurations, providing him thus with the scaffolding for his masterpiece, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962).

*The Gutenberg Galaxy* opens with an extended analysis of *Lear*—not of its content, but of its dramatization of the agonistic shift in media from orality to script and print:

When King Lear proposes “our darker purpose” as the subdivision of his kingdom, he is expressing a politically daring and *avant-garde* intent for the early seventeenth century:

Only we still retain  
The name, and all th’additions to a king. The sway,  
Revenue, execution of the rest,  
Beloved sons, be yours; which to confirm,  
This coronet part betwixt you.

Lear is proposing an extremely modern idea of delegation of authority from centre to margins. His “darker purpose” would have been recognized at once as left-wing Machiavellianism by an Elizabethan audience. The new patterns of power and organization which had been discussed during the preceding century were now, in the early seventeenth century, being felt at all levels of social and private life. *King Lear* is a presentation of the new strategy of culture and power as it affects the state, the family, and the individual psyche (McLuhan 1962, 11).<sup>10</sup>

The agent of this shift is print, embodied by the map which Lear calls for at the outset.<sup>11</sup> As McLuhan comments,

The map was . . . a novelty in the sixteenth century, age of Mercator’s projection, and was key to the new vision of peripheries of power and wealth. Columbus had been a cartographer before he was a navigator; and the discovery that it was possible to continue in a straight-line course, as if space were uniform and continuous, was a major shift in human awareness in the Renaissance. More important, the map brings forward at once a principal theme of *King Lear*, namely the isolation of the visual sense as a kind of blindness. (ibid., 11)

It is print, in McLuhan's reading, with its tendency toward abstraction and fragmentation, that inaugurates the play's tragedy. The "great fragmenter is Lear himself," writes McLuhan, "with his inspired idea of setting up a constitutional monarchy by means of delegating by authority. His plan for himself is that he become a specialist: 'Only we still retain / The name, and all th'additions to a King'" (12). Print leads to individuality which leads to competitiveness which in turn careens rapidly into total disorder: "following his specialist cure, Goneril and Regan leap into the act of filial devotion with specialist and competitive intensity" via the "divisive eulogistic competition" (12) that Lear demands as his due. In response to the play's theme of nothing, "it is left to Cordelia to 'nothing nothing,' to destroy destruction," McLuhan wrote subsequently, adding that "in Hegel's thought the negation of negation is the Phoenix, the world as playhouse of forms" (McLuhan and Watson 1970, 69).

McLuhan comments in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* that "In *King Lear*, as in other plays, Shakespeare shows an utter clairvoyance concerning the social and personal consequences of denudation and stripping of attributes and functions for the sake of speed, precision, and increased power" (McLuhan 1962, 12). It is print's valorization of vision over the other senses that sets these tragic events in motion, producing "the anguish of the third dimension" (*ibid.*, 15; the phrase is from E. H. Gombrich) through the process whereby figure (the typographical sign) is abstracted from the ground of the page, a process represented in *King Lear* when Edgar seeks to convince the blinded and suicidal Gloucester that he is standing on the edge of a cliff (4.6). "What Shakespeare does here is to place five flat panels of two-dimensions, one behind the other," writes McLuhan (1962, 17). "By giving these panels a diagonal twist they succeed each other, as it were, in a perspective from the "stand still" point. He is utterly aware that the disposition to this kind of illusionism results from the separation of the senses" (*ibid.*).<sup>12</sup> Paradoxically, then, the Gutenberg technology, with its separation of the senses via an emphasis on vision, produces a form of illusionism and of blindness—Lear's "darker purpose." Gutenberg technology also imposes lineality upon previous patterns of perceptual configuration. McLuhan cites from *Troilus and Cressida* (3.3) in this regard: "For emulation hath a thousand sons / That one by one pursue. If you give way, / Or hedge aside from the direct forthright, / Like to an ent' red tide, they all rush by, / And leave you hindmost" (McLuhan 1962, 14).<sup>13</sup> With lineality and abstraction comes commodification: "Printed books, themselves the first uniform, repeatable, and mass-produced items in

the world, provided endless paradigms of uniform commodity culture for sixteenth and succeeding centuries” (ibid., 163). As an example of Shakespeare’s recurrence to this theme, McLuhan cites from *King John*: “That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling Commodity, / Commodity, the bias of the world— / The world, who of itself is peised well, / Made to run even upon even ground / Till this advantage, this vile drawing bias, / This sway of motion, this Commodity, / Makes it take head from all indifferency, / From all direction, purpose, course intent” (2.2, qtd. in McLuhan 1962, 163; 2.1).<sup>14</sup> In *From Cliché to Archetype*, McLuhan and Watson argue that Othello’s demand for “ocular proof” is likewise a sign of the commodification of truth imposed by vision, dependent upon “the isolation of one sense as basis for proof” (1970, 33), and, similarly, in *Cymbeline*, “the retrieval of ‘truth’ is achieved by the new sensory stress on visual matching that was characteristic of the precision of print itself” (32). McLuhan cites Iachimo’s (Giacomo’s) speech from *Cymbeline*, “If you seek / For further satisfying, under her breast . . . lies a mole . . . . You do remember / This stain upon her?” (2.5, qtd. in McLuhan and Watson 1970, 32; 2.4 in the Norton edition), and the exchange between Menas and Pompey in *Antony and Cleopatra* (2.7: “And though thou think me poor, I am the man / Will give thee all the world”), which suggests the way in which “fragmentation, breaking people and things into little bits, . . . leads to the simple formula ‘every man has his price’” (McLuhan and Watson 1970, 33).<sup>15</sup>

Here we have the first movement of McLuhan’s vast chiasmic history of mediation, the detribalization of a primarily oral culture via print into a society of individuals, where humanity itself is commodified. The other movement is articulated by the shift out of individualism into a world retribalized by electronic media.<sup>16</sup> As McLuhan puts it in one of the most stunning passages of *The Gutenberg Galaxy*,

We are today as far into the electric age as the Elizabethans had advanced into the typographical and mechanical age. And we are experiencing the same confusions and indecisions which they had felt when living simultaneously in two contrasted forms of society and experience. Whereas the Elizabethans were poised between medieval corporate experience and modern individualism, we reverse their pattern by confronting an electronic technology which would seem to render individualism obsolete and the corporate interdependence mandatory. (McLuhan 1962, 1)

Having traced the shift out of corporate identity into individualism in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan charts the reverse movement in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*:

After three thousand years of explosion by means of fragmentary and mechanical technologies, the Western world is imploding. During the mechanical ages we had extended our bodies in space. Today, after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time . . . . Rapidly, we approach the final phase of the extensions of man—the technological simulation of consciousness, when the creative process of knowing will be collectively and corporately extended to the whole of human society. (McLuhan 1964a, 3–4)<sup>17</sup>

Once again, Shakespeare presides over this shift. “A fairly complete handbook for studying the extensions of man,” writes McLuhan, “could be made up from selections from Shakespeare. Some might quibble about whether or not he was referring to TV in these familiar lines from *Romeo and Juliet*: ‘But soft! what light through yonder window breaks? / It speaks, and yet says nothing’” (ibid., 9). As McLuhan comments in the “Introduction to the Second Edition,” “some reviewers have imagined that this was an involuntary misquotation” (1964b, xi). Disavowing content-based approaches to literature, and media in general, McLuhan sought to refocus attention on the medium itself, even if it meant misquoting the Bard. The medium in this ersatz quote was television, a “light through” technology, as opposed to the printed page, a “light on” technology. The television “says nothing” because its effect is not experienced via its content but through its profoundly involving character.<sup>18</sup>

McLuhan cites *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Troilus and Cressida* as plays which are “concerned with the torment of people transformed by illusions” (1964a, 9), the illusions being precisely the sort that media produce. They are illusory because all-encompassing, forming our total environment. McLuhan indirectly invokes *Hamlet* as well in the first chapter of *Understanding Media* through an allusion to Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*: “The ultimate conflict between sight and sound, between written and oral kinds of perception and organization of existence is upon us. Since understanding stops action, as Nietzsche observes, we can moderate the fierceness of this conflict by understanding the media that extend us” (16). The allusion is to section 7 of *The Birth of Tragedy*:

The ecstasy of the Dionysian state, with its annihilation of the usual limits and borders of existence, contains for its duration a lethargic element in which all past personal experience is submerged. And so this chasm of oblivion separates the world of everyday reality from that of Dionysian reality. However, as soon as that everyday reality returns to consciousness, it is experienced for what it is with disgust:

an ascetic mood which negates the will is the fruit of those conditions. In this sense the Dionysian man is similar to Hamlet: both have at one time cast a true glance into the essence of things, they have acquired knowledge, and action is repugnant to them; for their action can change nothing in the eternal essence of things . . . . Knowledge kills action, to action belongs the veil of illusion; . . . true knowledge, insight into the horrific truth, outweighs any motive leading to action, in Hamlet as well as in the Dionysian man . . . . Conscious of the truth once glimpsed, man now sees all around him only the horrific or the absurd aspects of existence. (Nietzsche [1872] 2000, 46)<sup>19</sup>

The breach between thought and action in *Hamlet* contextualizes McLuhan's counter-intuitive reading of Nietzsche. The tragedy of Hamlet is that he has been detribalized from his father's ear-oriented world (it is in King Hamlet's ear that Claudius pours the poison) through his acquisition of writing as a student at Wittenberg. Unable to execute the tribal (oral) command for vengeance, Hamlet instead contemplates the question of being, thrust upon him by the individuation of writing. Whereas Nietzsche suggests that Hamlet's knowledge of the horror of existence makes action superfluous ("better not to have been born," says Silenus), McLuhan construes the comment to suggest that critical knowledge can modify the action of (in this case) media. This critical dimension would remain the hallmark of McLuhan's media theory.

Central to McLuhan's media theory was the notion that media are translators: "all media are active metaphors in their power to translate experience into new forms. The spoken word was the first technology by which man was able to let go of his environment in order to grasp it in a new way . . . . In [the] electric age we see ourselves being translated more and more into the form of information" (1964a, 57). McLuhan cites *As You Like It* as envisioning a world in which "all things are translatable into anything else" (ibid., 58), in Duke Senior's famous lines, "And this our life, exempt from public haunt, / Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, / Sermons in stones, and good in every thing" (2.1; qtd. in McLuhan 1964a, 58). McLuhan comments that

Shakespeare speaks of a world into which, by programming . . . one can play back the materials of the natural world in a variety of levels and intensities of style. We are close to doing this on a massive scale at the present time electronically. Here is the image of the golden age as one of complete metamorphoses or translations of nature into human art, that stands ready of access to our electric age. The poet Stephane Mallarmé thought "the world exists to end in a book." We are now in a position to go beyond that and to transfer the entire show to the

memory of a computer . . . [W]e might return to the state of tribal man, for whom magic rituals are his means of “applied knowledge.” (Ibid., 59)

Here, as elsewhere, McLuhan’s utopian understanding of new media is tempered by an awareness of the loss that this shift to a new medium would entail. In that context, the allusion to the pastoral drama *As You Like It* is highly appropriate; as Jean E. Howard (1997, 1591) comments, “pastoral has a utopian as well as a critical dimension.”

After *Understanding Media*, McLuhan’s literary frame of reference would shift increasingly to James Joyce in *The Medium is the Massage* (McLuhan, Fiore, and Agel 1967), *War and Peace in the Global Village* (1968), and *Counterblast* (1969). This was less Joyce the modernist, however, than it was the author who remediated the orally inflected linguistic structures of writers such as Shakespeare, the Joyce who could pun on *Macbeth* in the line “a burning would is come to dance inane.”<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, at the height of his fame, in 1966, McLuhan wrote an essay on “Spatial Form in Tudor and Stuart Poetry,”<sup>21</sup> in which he once again returns to the scene in *Lear* where Edgar guides Gloucester to the edge of the “cliff” (4.6), commenting that

it is difficult for us to respond to this description in any way that approximates what would have been a sixteenth or seventeenth century response. The new world of pictorial space that became accepted in the poetry of the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was as bizarre and fantastic to Renaissance sensibilities as a cubist mosaic was to the visitors to the Armoury Show in 1913. Shakespeare is presenting this scene as an emotional extreme of terror. (McLuhan 1966, 6–7)

Noting that Shakespeare moderates the terror of this scene with a reference to auditory resonance (“That on the unnumber’d idle pebble chafes”), McLuhan argues that it is this interfusion of auditory elements characteristic of oral culture with the visuality engendered by print culture that is the hallmark of Shakespearean poetry. In this context he quotes the famous line from Sonnet 73, “Bare ruin’d choirs where late the sweet birds sang,” noting that

the choirboys have departed like the birds. The leaves have deserted the boughs as the lead has been stripped from the Abbey roof. The abrupt interface of all these situations in a visual pun is equivalent to the simultaneity of semantic interface in an auditory pun. As visual stress mounts, such interfacing, whether visual or auditory, yield to the single and isolated effects that Bishop Sprat insisted were necessary to the progress of science. Much of the criticism and scholarship of



the twentieth century has been directed toward the recovery of the multi-sensuous and many-levelled awareness of Shakespeare and his audience. Long accustomed to specialized and carefully fragmented approaches to work and experience, there has been much novelty and excitement in encountering the integral ways in which the High Renaissance organized its experience. (Ibid., 13)

McLuhan suggests that Shakespeare's use of hendiadys (to which a section of *Cliché* is devoted) was his attempt to resolve this "doubleness of vision" (19). The essay remained unpublished, McLuhan perhaps concerned that it would detract from his growing reputation as the "oracle of the electric age."<sup>22</sup>

In 1970, however, in *From Cliché to Archetype*, written with Wilfred Watson, McLuhan returned to his interest in drama; the book as a whole is suffused with references to the Theatre of the Absurd, which likely derive from Watson, who, as a playwright, wrote in this mode.<sup>23</sup> There are, nevertheless, references to Shakespeare throughout. The authors write that "Jan Kott, in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, is prepared to revise Shakespearean tragedies like *Othello* and *King Lear* into tragic farces. Peter Brook . . . directs *King Lear* according to Jan Kott's recipe . . . . It would seem likely that once again, as in the seventeenth century, Shakespeare, in tragedy, if slanted in an absurdist way, can be used to explore changing modes of consciousness" (McLuhan and Watson 1970, 8). Shakespeare, they argue, "enjoyed the slang clichés of his time as much as Ionesco" (ibid., 57), citing as an example Hamlet's kibitzing with the players (2.2).

Much of the book targets Northrop Frye. McLuhan's contextual approach to Shakespeare, let alone his mediatic interests, distinguished him from his University of Toronto confrère, with whom he maintained a polemical relationship throughout his career.<sup>24</sup> McLuhan's approach to Shakespeare was decolonizing; McLuhan argued throughout his career that literary innovation originated on the cultural margins, and this would apply both to Shakespeare himself—the dramatist without a university degree<sup>25</sup>—and to the readings of Shakespeare that McLuhan produced in his media studies. His was not a Shakespeare representative of an essential "Englishness," nor a Shakespeare who represented some unattainable imperial standard for Canadian literature. McLuhan would never have sought, as Frye did, to "explain the absence of a Shakespeare in Canada"<sup>26</sup> because he rejected the nationalist model of literary production and the imperial model of literary criticism that informs Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*. In contrast, not

only did Frye spend a considerable part of his career seeking to articulate the Canadianness of Canadian literature (while arguing its perpetual deferral to European literary archetypes),<sup>27</sup> but he also approached Shakespeare as a paradigm of literary form. He states his position at the beginning of a collection of essays on the Bard: “there is never anything outside his plays.”<sup>28</sup> While Frye (1986) acknowledges that the “better-educated people in Shakespeare’s audience . . . studied grammar, logic and rhetoric at school” (6), this does not lead him to the mediatic conclusions at which McLuhan arrived. Hamlet’s reaching for his notebook after the Ghost’s revelation strikes Frye as “pathetic, almost humorous” (89) but not as a sign of Hamlet’s newfound scribal identity—Hamlet has “the student’s disease of melancholy” (89), not the student’s disease of writing; and the map does not make an appearance in Frye’s reading of *King Lear*. McLuhan and Watson critique Frye in *From Cliché to Archetype* for this disregard of ground in favour of figure.<sup>29</sup> With reference to Frye’s theory of archetypes, elaborated in *Anatomy of Criticism*, McLuhan states that

literary archetypalism has obscured Shakespeare’s pervasive exploration of the meaning of culture. Most of his comedies, analogous to Sonnets 1–20, are concerned with husbandry in all senses. In the English histories Shakespeare sees the city as a cliché becoming feudal wasteland or junkpile, and feudalism itself as a product of the growth of the medieval city. Sonnet 124 shows him interfusing garden (cultural) and city (political) imagery. Love, he says, “fears not policy, that heretic . . . / But all alone stands hugely politique, / that it nor grows with heat nor drowns with showers.” (McLuhan and Watson 1970, 79)

“Husbandry” here speaks to the interfusion of cliché *and* archetype to which the book as a whole is devoted, or in other words to figure and to ground, centre and margin. “Polonius,” as McLuhan states, “retrieves his archetypal forms from a much larger store of traditional rhetoric than Professor Frye dips into” (ibid, 85), citing the speech in which Polonius lists the various dramatic modes (*Hamlet* 2.2). As McLuhan argues, “with the new means of plenary cultural retrieval, ancient clichés are taking their place as transcendental or archetypal forms” (118) because “a cliché is an act of consciousness: total consciousness is the sum of all the clichés of all the media or technologies we probe with” (150). This is in effect to theorize the meme, a phenomenon especially evident today, when the Internet can take the most banal event and make it into an archetype, and when search engines such as Google are able to retrieve vast amounts of data which would otherwise remain obscure.

McLuhan's career had entered a recursive phase after the publication of *Understanding Media*, in which he began to recast previous works in the light of contemporary phenomena. In 1972, in the last decade of his life, he rewrote (with Barrington Nevitt) *The Gutenberg Galaxy* for the software era. *Take Today: The Executive as Dropout* expands the theatrical metaphor inherent in McLuhan's discussion of *Lear* in the earlier work through the argument that a new era, which we now call Anthropocene, had been inaugurated with the launch of Sputnik in 1957. "With the new satellite surround, the earth was instantaneously transformed into a global theater, whose inhabitants became not only observers but the observed. They could no longer remain simply spectators. The sudden change made them participants, actors, people involved in role-playing on a global scale" (from the front jacket flap of the first edition). Putatively addressed to the corporate world, *Take Today* is in fact an investigation of the incorporation effected by electronic media, which connect us into a single massive organism. The *Lear* metaphor thus works in reverse: whereas *Lear* dropped out of the corporate structure of feudalism into individuality, electronic media retribalize us.

McLuhan argues, at the end of his foreword to Innis's *Empire and Communication*, that Innis could be understood as a satirist. Citing from *Troilus and Cressida* (3.3), McLuhan (1972, xii) states that Innis "does thoughts unveil in their dumb cradle"<sup>30</sup> through his ability to focus on the ground of historical events. What this focus revealed to him was history as a series of "misconceived enterprises": "in his power to reveal the patterns of massive imperial events, Innis is a kind of *deus ex machina*, unmasking the actors" (ibid., vii), and it is this insight that endows Innis with the function of satirist. McLuhan and Nevitt take on that role in *Take Today*, whose title suggests the commodification of time that is limned in Macbeth's "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" speech, in conjunction with Joyce ([1939] 1999), "Toborrow and toburrow and tobarrow" from *Finnegans Wake* 455.12–13). Here, Shakespeare's work becomes foundational: "the entire works of Shakespeare are concerned with the unhappy dissolution of personal faith and loyalty and the rise of the Machiavellian Iagos, Edmunds, and Macbeths," writes McLuhan (McLuhan and Nevitt 1972, 19), quoting the passage from *Troilus* beginning "O! when degree is shak'd . . . the enterprise is sick," adding that "the shift to individual self-interest and private goals instead of corporate role playing was a sixteenth-century drama that is being played backward today" (19). Hamlet is relevant to this shift because of "being torn between his corporate princely role and the new private-

power politics of the strong-arm Fortinbras types” (19). Quoting from *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan and Nevitt write that “King Lear is like Hamlet, trying to play it both ways, the pathetic case of a man seeking to be ‘with it’ but lacking awareness of the Machiavellian consequences of the new forms of delegated authority” (20).

It was Shakespeare’s *King Lear* that introduced the word “remediate” to the English language, and the word has taken on considerable significance in media theory, where it refers to the process whereby a new medium takes a previously dominant medium as its content. It was this aspect of Shakespeare’s poetry that fascinated McLuhan; he could hear in it the voices of an oral culture that was already in the process of dying out through its remediation by print. McLuhan’s Shakespeare is one who maintains a steadfast loyalty to the folkloric world of oral culture. The *Sonnets*, Shakespeare’s astounding meditation on print’s promise of poetic immortality, treats that promise with great irony, according to McLuhan.<sup>31</sup> The dedication of *Sonnets* to the “onlie begetter,” he suggests, is ironic: “more double talk was seldom put in thirty-odd words than in these words of dedication” (McLuhan 1962, 204), written a decade after the fashion for sonnet-writing had passed, and “similar irony occurs in [the 1609] preface to Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida*” (204). This preface is “an analysis of communication theory” (205) in that it “uses [the] idea that the producer is . . . his consumer to mock both readers and writers of the new age in a dazzling sequence of negative involutions. The author is as little impressed by the ultimate value of print as the Shakespeare who could not be bothered to print his plays” (205). Rather, argues McLuhan, it was the “old oral bond with its flexibility of pitch [that] held between reader and writer” (206) in the Elizabethan era. Writing about electronic media in the 1960s and 1970s, McLuhan appeared to be celebrating the return to a new orality. Reading his media musings in the context of his comments about Shakespeare, however, reveals his awareness that this new “orality” would be a negative involution of the old—a chiasmic reversal in which everything is the same and everything is different. What he celebrated was the particular moment of cultural interface between two modalities—print and digital—while contemplating with concern the eventual hegemony of the new media. These insights emerged from literate values that McLuhan knew to be in decline. If for Plato media were tragic in their separation of the knower from the known,<sup>32</sup> then it can be said that McLuhan’s understanding of media was tragic and that Shakespeare was foundational to that understanding.

## NOTES

1. McLuhan read (and annotated) the Kittredge edition of Shakespeare; his copy is now housed, with what remains of his library, at the University of Toronto: <https://fisher.library.utoronto.ca/mcluhan-library>.
2. Now published as *The Classical Trivium: The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of his Time* (McLuhan 2005).
3. Katherine Duncan-Jones makes a very strong case for the close inter-relationship of Nashe and Shakespeare in *Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life*, (2010, xv, 68–9).
4. McLuhan returns to this passage in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962, 161–2).
5. For example, *Shakespeare's England* ([1916] 1950) states that it is “the habits of the English people” that hold the key to an understanding of Shakespeare (unsigned preface, perhaps Charles T. Onions, v).
6. Part 2 of which, on Shakespeare and Machiavelli, had a significant influence on *The Gutenberg Galaxy*'s articulation of the Shakespearean moment.
7. Innis makes similar points in *The Bias of Communication* (1951, 26, 55, 128).
8. Originally published in *Explorations* 7 (1957).
9. Further, Shane Butler notes that, “in antiquity, the text’s phonographic status was supported . . . by the development and adaptation of oral practices . . . in ways that maximized their perceived susceptibility to writing” (2015, 25).
10. McLuhan returns to this passage in the chapter on “The Printed Word” in *Understanding Media* (1964a, 175–6).
11. Stephen Greenblatt notes that the audience would have shuddered at the site of this map in its visual manifestation of a nation divided. See his “Introduction to *King Lear*” (1997, 2309).
12. McLuhan and Parker return to this scene in *Through the Vanishing Point* (1968, 74–5).
13. McLuhan also quotes from Sonnet 60 (“Like as the waves”) to the same effect (1962, 244), and returns to the passage from *Troilus* in *Understanding Media*, where he comments “the image of society as segmented into a homogeneous mass of quantified appetites shadows Shakespeare’s vision in the later plays” (1964a, 176). McLuhan and Nevitt quote this passage in *Take Today* (1972, 54).
14. McLuhan and Nevitt also quote the “commodity” passage from *King John* (ibid., 46).
15. McLuhan and Watson reference *The Merchant of Venice* in a similar context (1970, 33), and McLuhan and Harley Parker return to this theme in *Vanishing Point* (1968, 11).

16. McLuhan returns to this theme in *Understanding Media*: “Today we appear to be poised between two ages—one of detribalization and one of retribalization” (1964a, 344), citing in apposition *Julius Caesar* 2.1: “Between the acting of a dreadful thing, / And the first motion, all the interim is / Like a Phantasma, or hideous Dream: / The genius and the mortal instruments / Are then in council; and the state of man, / Like to a little Kingdom, suffers then / The nature of an insurrection.”
17. The observation retains its currency. Butler writes in *The Ancient Phonograph* that “human artifacts do not simply represent or signify a human but are themselves as human as any other human body is[;] . . . they are, in Marshall McLuhan’s well-worn phrase, ‘extensions of man’” (2015, 194).
18. The scanning finger of the televisions of McLuhan’s time, or the pixellation of current technology, moves too fast for the eye to comprehend; the image is in fact produced in the brain.
19. See my extended discussion, “The Tragedy of Media: Nietzsche, McLuhan, Kittler” in *Remediating McLuhan* (Cavell 2016, 125–46).
20. Quoted in *From Cliché to Archetype* (McLuhan and Watson 1970, 45), from Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* ([1939] 1999, 2.1.250); this line is also quoted as an epigraph to McLuhan and Eric McLuhan, *Laws of Media* (1988).
21. McLuhan, “Spatial Form in Tudor and Stuart Poetry,” McLuhan Fonds, RG 31, D 156, vol. 132, file # 59, National Archives of Canada, 22 pages, unpublished, dated July 8, 1966.
22. From the front cover of the second edition of *Understanding Media*, attributed to *Life* magazine.
23. See, for example, the 1969 play, written in the wake of Watson’s prickly collaboration with McLuhan, *Let’s Murder Clytemnestra According to the Principles of Marshall McLuhan* (Watson 1989).
24. See the chapter “Borderlines” in Richard Cavell, *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography* (2002), as well as B. W. Powe, *Marshall McLuhan and Northrop Frye* (2014).
25. Duncan-Jones emphasizes the importance of this point in *Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life* (2010).
26. Frye, “Conclusion to a *Literary History of Canada*,” (1971, 213).
27. See Cavell (1995), “Where is Frye?”
28. Frye, *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare* (1986, 2).
29. McLuhan and Eric McLuhan make a similar point in *Laws of Media* (1988, 89).
30. McLuhan and Nevitt also cite this passage in *Take Today* (1972, 16).
31. In the chapter on “Clocks” in *Understanding Media*, McLuhan writes that the theme of immortality in the *Sonnets* is often paired with “the petty

futility of daily existence as measured by the clock” (1964a, 149), citing from Sonnets 10 and 60 as well as the “Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow” soliloquy from *Macbeth*.

32. Aleida Assmann comments that “according to Plato, the ‘tragedy of culture’ started with the introduction of (alphabetic) writing, because this technique of notation separated the knower from the known.” See her “Canon and Archive” (2008, 104).

## WORKS CITED

- Assmann, Aleida. 2008. “Canon and Archive.” In *Cultural Memory Studies*. Edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, 97–107. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Bradbrook, Muriel. 1989. *The Collected Papers 4: Shakespeare in His Context*. London: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Butler, Shane. 2015. *The Ancient Phonograph*. New York: Zone.
- Cavell, Richard. 1995. “Where is Frye? Or, Theorizing Postcolonial Space.” *Essays on Canadian Writing* 56:110–34.
- . 2002. *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- . 2016. *Remediating McLuhan*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Charles T. Onions, ed. [1916] 1950. *Shakespeare’s England: An Account of the Life and Manners of His Age*. 2 vols. Reprint. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Duncan-Jones, Katherine. 2010. *Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life*. London: Methuen/Arden.
- Frye, Northrop. 1957. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 1971. “Conclusion to a *Literary History of Canada*.” In *The Bush Garden*, 213–45. Toronto: Anansi.
- . 1986. *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*. Edited by Robert Sandler. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. 1997. “Introduction to *King Lear*.” In *The Norton Shakespeare*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt et al., 2307–16. New York: Norton.
- Howard, Jean E. 1997. “Introduction to *As You Like It*.” In *The Norton Shakespeare*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt et al., 1591–99. New York: Norton.
- Innis, Harold Adams. 1950. *Empire and Communications*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- . 1951. *The Bias of Communication*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Joyce, James. [1939] 1999. *Finnegans Wake*. New York: Penguin.



- Lewis, Wyndham. [1927] 1955. *The Lion and the Fox: The Rôle of the Hero in the Plays of Shakespeare*. Reprint. London: Methuen.
- Marchand, Philip. 1989. *Marshall McLuhan: The Medium and the Messenger*. Toronto: Random House.
- McLuhan, Marshall. 1951. *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man*. New York: Vanguard Press.
- . 1960. “The Effect of the Printed Book on Language in the Sixteenth Century.” In *Explorations in Communications*, edited by McLuhan and Edmund Carpenter, 125–35. Boston: Beacon.
- . 1962. *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- . 1964a. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- . 1964b. “Introduction to the Second Edition.” *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. 11th printing. New York: New American Library.
- . 1966. “Spatial Form in Tudor and Stuart Poetry.” McLuhan Fonds, RG 31, D 156, vol. 132, file # 59, National Archives of Canada, 22 pages, unpublished, dated July 8, 1966.
- . 1969. *Counterblast*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- . 1972. “Foreword” to Harold A. Innis, *Empire and Communications*. Rev. ed. Mary Q. Innis, v–xii. Reprint. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- . 1987. “Letter to Elsie McLuhan.” February 19, 1931. *Letters of Marshall McLuhan*. Selected and edited by Matie Molinaro, Corinne McLuhan, and William Toye. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- . 2005. *The Classical Trivium: The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of his Time*. Edited by W. Terrence Gordon. Corte Madera: Gingko Press.
- McLuhan, Marshall and Edmund Carpenter, eds. 1960. *Explorations in Communications*. Boston: Beacon.
- McLuhan, Marshall and Eric McLuhan. 1988. *Laws of Media: The New Science*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- McLuhan, Marshall and Barrington Nevitt. 1972. *Take Today: The Executive as Dropout*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- McLuhan, Marshall and Harley Parker. 1968. *Through the Vanishing Point: Space in Poetry and Painting*. New York: Harper and Row.
- McLuhan, Marshall with Wilfred Watson. 1970. *From Cliché to Archetype*. New York: Viking.
- McLuhan, Marshall, Quentin Fiore, and Jerome Agel. 1967. *The Medium is the Massage*. New York: Random House, 1967.
- . 1968. *War and Peace in the Global Village*. New York: McGraw Hill.

- Nietzsche, Friedrich. [1872] 2000. *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music*. Translation and introduction by Douglas Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Powe, B. W. 2014. *Marshall McLuhan and Northrop Frye: Apocalypse and Alchemy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Shakespeare, William. 1997. *The Norton Shakespeare*. Edited by Stephen Greenblatt et al., 1591–99. New York: Norton.
- Watson, Wilfred. 1989. *Let's Murder Clytemnestra According to the Principles of Marshall McLuhan: Plays at the Iron Bridge, or The Autobiography of Tom Horror*. Edmonton, AB: Longspoon.
- Wilson, F. P. 1963. *The Plague in Shakespeare's London*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# Shakespeare and the “Cultural Lag” of Canadian Stratford in Alice Munro’s “Tricks”

TRONI Y. GRANDE

*Shakespeare should have prepared her.*

—Alice Munro, “Tricks”

Alice Munro has achieved iconic status on the Canadian literary scene and the world stage as the first Canadian to be chosen as a Nobel Laureate in Literature.<sup>1</sup> The Swedish Academy, in awarding Munro the 2013 Nobel Prize, proclaimed her international significance as “master of the contemporary short story” (Bosman 2013). After her eleventh original short-story collection, *Runaway*, was published in 2004, Jonathan Franzen (2004) called Munro “the best fiction writer now working in North America.” Despite her retirement in 2012, Munro continues to spark a major industry in Canadian publishing, writing, and literary studies. Munro’s literary allusiveness has been discussed by Ildikó de Papp Carrington (1989) and others, while more biographically focused critics such as Robert Thacker (2011) have pointed out the numerous parallels between Munro’s work and her life experiences in small-town southwestern Ontario. No one, however, has examined Shakespeare’s embedded presence in Munro’s (2004) short story “Tricks.”<sup>2</sup> Less than an hour’s driving distance from “Alice Munro Country” (her “home place” in Huron County, as Thacker [2011, 463] puts it), the Ontario town of Stratford becomes a moving force in “Tricks,” shaping the female protagonist’s ironic quest to achieve a conventional comic ending.

Of all the incomplete feminine quests in her award-winning collection *Runaway*,<sup>3</sup> the most tragic one may appear to be Robin's trek to Stratford in "Tricks." As reviewer Robert Weibezahl (2004) asserts, "The most heartbreaking story in the collection, 'Tricks,' is about a frustrated spinster who, on a solo trip to the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, meets and falls in love with a Montenegrin clock maker. The gently tragic outcome is worthy of Henry James, Chekov or the Bard himself." Although the comparison of Munro to Chekhov is a familiar one,<sup>4</sup> her connection to Shakespeare has seldom been remarked upon.<sup>5</sup> In "Tricks," that connection is central, sparking the quest of the heroine and underwriting Munro's own narrative strategy of ironic reversals. Munro stages a meeting between her questing southwestern-Ontario heroine Robin, Shakespeare, and Canadian high culture by having her protagonist drawn to the Stratford Festival in the 1960s, in search of a liberating world that would stretch the bounds, and transform the bonds, of her social and familial role. Stratford and Shakespeare function symbolically in "Tricks," as the promise not just of a brighter future but also of a brighter past. Stratford provides Munro's heroine with a measure of release into a Frygian green world, although in Munro's aborted comedy the "trick" of supernatural intervention (or divine providence) does not win out over what Shakespeare calls in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the "tricks" of "strong imagination."

In "Tricks," Munro's explicit citations of the Shakespearean intertexts *As You Like It*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *King Lear*—the plays that Robin sees in Stratford—heighten the sense of what Weibezahl calls Munro's "gently tragic outcome." Yet, like Shakespeare himself, Munro intermingles generic categories, the polar extremes of tragedy in *King Lear* and comedy in *As You Like It*. Escaping into the green world symbolized by Stratford in the Canadian imagination, Robin almost achieves comic fulfillment when she meets Danilo, but they both are inescapably embedded in the element of time. Robin's attempted reunion with Danilo a year later throws her into a physical and psychological tempest. As Robin succumbs to her own insecurity and to the plot of tragic betrayal, Munro's text activates the ties to *Antony and Cleopatra*, with its motif of lovers magnificently doomed by their overactive literary imaginations. But if Robin, like Shakespeare's Cleopatra, survives her lover's death, in order to finish the narrative, the final act of the drama, Munro offers another fate that outshines the puny ends of tragedy. Robin is in the end alive, clear-eyed, unapologetic, installed in her own community, where she has managed to make a difference. And all this without Danilo, without her exotic "other half." The final reality

facing Munro’s heroine, however ironic, is thus not altogether brutal, as Munro underscores the salvific romance motif of truth revealed through time. If Stratford, and the structure of Shakespearean comedy and romance, inform Munro’s own tricks as a storyteller, it is Northrop Frye, Canada’s “most distinguished Shakespearean” (Knowles 2004, 12), who provides a heuristic key to unlock these historical, symbolic, and structural elements in “Tricks.” Frye’s own presence at Stratford and on the Shakespeare scene during the earliest era depicted in “Tricks,” and his influential theories of green-world comedy, open up Munro’s treatment of Stratford as a romantic symbol. Frye proves a wise guide to show how the romantic impulse in Munro turns ironic, rather than tragic, as Robin’s quest to find what Stratford represents opens ultimately in a feminist direction, onto the vista of romance. Stratford’s shifting significance in relation to time places Munro’s work in the end more squarely in the genre of romance, with its possibilities for women’s liberation, than in the genre of comedy, with its more constraining, conventional insistence on heterosexist ends; or in the genre of tragedy, with the self-destruction of the heroine. Any characterization of Robin as a “frustrated spinster” belies sexist expectations bred in the hothouse of romantic comedy, expectations that Munro ultimately challenges in “Tricks.” This challenge to sexist assumptions is consistent with Munro’s strategy elsewhere in her canon, for, as Magdalene Redekop points out, “Munro has no overt feminist agenda and yet no writer is more devastatingly effective at dismantling the operations of our patriarchal structures” (xii).

“Tricks” is typical of Munro’s work in giving us what Coral Ann Howells (1998, 56) calls “the sense of individual lives scrolling out over many decades.” “Tricks” opens on “an evening years ago” (237), as Robin awaits the fulfilment of her second encounter with Danilo; and it ends “forty years” later (262), when Robin encounters Danilo’s identical twin (at this point an incapacitated old man) on the psychiatric ward where she now works, presumably in semi-retirement, as a psychiatric nurse or counsellor. The revelation of the brother’s identity, and the heartbreaking fact of Danilo’s death, signal the irrefutable truth of time. The printed medical record that Robin opens in the Quiet Room (once a prayer room, but at this moment emptied of those who would either pray or be quiet [267]) reveals this truth to her, with dates, place names, proper names. These fragments of the real shatter the imaginary force of Robin’s fantasy—both her fantasy of a life with Danilo and her concocted story of his betrayal; “Tricks,” like many of Munro’s works, ends by resisting “women’s disposition towards shaping

their lives as romantic fantasy plots” (Howells 1998, 78). Beyond the story—on the extradiegetic, metadramatic, or metafictional level, in true Shakespearean fashion—Munro plays with the reader’s notions of what is real and what is fictional.

The fantasy in Robin’s story, and her desire for Danilo, connect deeply with Stratford as an actual Canadian cultural mecca, recognizably real in Munro’s short story but at the same time reshaped for her artistic purposes. Stratford resonates in “Tricks” as a multilayered symbol of deep nostalgia for lost origins, on both an individual and a national level. Robin meets Danilo after she sees *Antony and Cleopatra* in her fourth year of visiting Stratford, and the following year (as the story opens), the play she attends but leaves early is *As You Like It*. Ever since her first play, *King Lear*, “For five years Robin had been doing this. One play every summer” (238). Munro has refashioned the chronology of Stratford performances to fit with her own narrative.<sup>6</sup> While providing the sweep of Robin’s life, the narrative chronology in “Tricks” consists of flashbacks (analepses) and flash forwards (prolepses), as is characteristic of Munro’s mature works. As Isla Duncan points out, whereas Munro’s earlier works (such as “The Office” and “Boys and Girls”) “follow a primarily linear sequence, the same does not apply to most of her later work, where the elaborate manipulation of time is a hallmark” (Duncan 2011, 8). The timeline of “Tricks”—in one of Munro’s later works, *Runaway*—encourages the reader to recreate the *fabula*, or chronological story, from the *syuzhet*, or arrangement of events in the plot. The story reveals four major shifts in time and perspective that are evident in Robin’s experience of Stratford:

1956: First Stratford visit. Robin, a student nurse, sees *King Lear*.

1961: Second Stratford visit. Robin sees *Antony and Cleopatra* and meets Danilo, “five years” after her first visit (238).

1962: Third and final Stratford visit. Robin sees part of *As You Like It*, returns to Danilo’s shop, but has the door slammed in her face; at this point in the narrative, Robin is twenty-six-years old (presumably born in 1936); Joanne, her sister, is thirty (born in 1932). Some time in this year, Danilo returns to Montenegro and sponsors his twin brother’s emigration to Canada in May, as specified on the medical record that Robin discovers.

1984: Joanne dies at age fifty-two, as revealed by the statement that she “has been dead for eighteen years” (262) at the end of the story.

1995: Danilo dies, according to the medical record, at age seventy-one.

2002: Aftermath of Stratford: “forty years” (262) after her third Stratford visit, Robin, at age sixty-six, encounters Danilo’s twin and learns the bare truth. She has deliberately chosen not to return to Stratford during the past forty years.

As the above timeline suggests, the revision of the past in “Tricks” is made possible by the gaining of a future perspective, which makes Robin, and the reader, revisit and reimagine her last physical encounter with Danilo four decades earlier. As in Shakespeare’s comedies and romances, and indeed in his tragedies built on misunderstanding, the theme of reading and rereading, double takes and mistakes, is key to understanding the causal relationships in the plot. The reader, like Robin, must feel the force of shock at story’s end, when the real (the “factual” medical document) hits even harder than the (meta)fictional story Robin has told herself about Danilo’s rejection of her.

Initially, through Robin’s love of Stratford, Munro captures the excitement of early Stratford, the perception of a new trend that might put Shakespeare and high culture on the map in Canada. The symbolic function of Stratford in Munro’s text depends upon its cultural role in its second decade in the 1960s, when Stratford was becoming the very nexus of the relation between Shakespeare and Canada. From its inception, Stratford was a conduit of the national imaginary, as Ric Knowles (2004), Irena R. Makaryk (2002), and Margaret Groome (2002) (among others) have shown. Frye illuminates how the Stratford Festival began as a response to an authoritative ideal, an original to be emulated, but then absorbed that ideal in the making of Canada’s own theatrical traditions. In “Culture as Interpenetration,” Frye suggests that Stratford exemplifies the “interpenetration” between tradition and the individual talent, or between the literary canon of the colonizing “homeland” and the unique idiom of Canada as colonized nation struggling to gain control of its own cultural productions.<sup>7</sup> The birth of Canadian Stratford makes sense because, as Frye (2003, 527) argues, “In culture, as in religion and politics, the homeland is the first source of authority, and the first duty of a colonial culture is to respond to it.” Frye describes three phases in the development of a nation’s culture, beginning with the narrowly imitative phase:

In the first phase the provincial culture tends to imitate externally rather than by absorption, accepting certain standards and trying to meet them. It confines its attention to what is established in the homeland and has become a principle of cultural authority there. It is obvious that cultural lag is built in to such a process. (Ibid., 527)



This “cultural lag” means that the colonial culture will exhibit a delay, or slower rate of development, in the ways it imitates and reflects the homeland’s authoritative culture (527). In the second phase of cultural development, the practice of imitation is superseded by a looser kind of echoing, with an emphasis on increasingly contemporary influences, to the extent that “the writer has got out of the schoolroom and has joined a community” (527). Finally, the mature phase reveals “the growth of an unforced and relaxed sense of a cultural tradition” which can be “absorbed, instead of merely imitated or echoed” (528).

Frye turns to the Stratford Festival to exemplify how an imitative provincial literature in Canada has grown into a mature tradition. At first, Stratford used the authority of the British Empire to legitimize itself and build itself up: “The director was Tyrone Guthrie and the leading actors were Alec Guinness and Irene Worth—not precisely what the CRTC [Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission] would call Canadian content. Those who think in pigeon-holes could hardly point to anything more obviously parochial and colonial” (529). Yet the Stratford Festival did usher in a genuinely Canadian tradition—“a very important event in the history of *Canadian* drama,” a new era for Canadian actors and playwrights—as well as “an extraordinary recreation of the power and freshness of Shakespeare,” Canadian-style (529). There was nonetheless a “cultural lag” in bringing Canadian theatre home to the Stratford Festival, for in the early decades, as Groome has shown, Shakespeare served as “the nation’s foremost cultural authority”; “in spite of the Festival’s ‘seeking out’ of a national identity, Canadian plays were not produced at the Festival until its eighth season, 1960” (Groome 2002, 129). Canadian plays were not regularly performed for another twenty years; and even in the last half of the seventies, from 1975 to 1980, under the direction of Englishman Robin Phillips, “the production of Canadian works became sporadic” again (*ibid.*).

Munro’s naming of her heroine in “Tricks” recalls both the famous Stratford director and the trickster in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Robin Goodfellow. For Munro’s Robin, Stratford above all means Shakespeare, as the opening scene reveals. Robin, her invalid sister, Joanne, and her neighbour Willard Greig, sit on the porch in the summer evening, as the expectation of returning to Stratford to see Danilo again weighs heavily on Robin, along with the fear that her special green dress will not be back in time from the cleaner’s. Joanne draws on her own special “fund of contempt” to mock both Robin and, by implication,

Stratford: “She *needs* it, she’ll *die*, she’s going to the *play*,” said Joanne to Willard, in a confidential tone” (237). Willard’s intervention as peacemaker brings Shakespeare into the conversation as a way of consoling Robin:

“What’s the play, Robin?” Willard asked, to smooth things as much as he could. “Is it by Shakespeare?”

“Yes. *As You Like It*.”

“And can you follow him all right? Shakespeare?”

Robin said she could.

“You’re a wonder.” (237)

Through Willard’s compliment, Munro reminds the reader of Shakespeare’s Miranda, whose name means “to be wondered at” (Shakespeare 2009, 1581). Robin’s situation is metaphorically like Miranda’s in *The Tempest*—that of a “maid” confined, if not entirely islanded from the rest of the world, yet under constant surveillance. Willard’s compliment also ironically echoes Ferdinand’s to Miranda: “O you wonder!” (Shakespeare 2009, 1.2.430), though Willard is certainly no Ferdinand.

Robin’s affinity for Shakespeare, and for Stratford, marks her as a rarity, an outsider, in comparison not just with Joanne and Willard but with the people in her town. Stratford is “only thirty miles away” (238), but it may as well be on a different continent:

People there knew that the Shakespeare plays were being put on in Stratford, but Robin had never heard of anybody going to see one. People like Willard were afraid of being looked down on by the people in the audience, as well as having the problem of not following the language. And people like Joanne were sure that nobody, ever, could really like Shakespeare, and so if anybody from here went, it was because they wanted to mix with the higher-ups, who were not enjoying it themselves but only letting on they were. (238)

Yet Robin is undeterred, led by a fervent desire to see the Saturday matinee performance as she likes it. She feels “only a slight sting” resulting from Joanne’s ridicule: “Tomorrow was her day to go to Stratford, and she felt herself already living outside Joanne’s reach” (237). At Stratford, Robin will be as far away from the mockery and tyrannizing of Joanne as Rosalind, journeying into the Forest of Arden, is from her despot uncle Duke Frederick in *As You Like It*.

Robin is on one level precisely the kind of audience member envisioned by the Stratford Festival. Historical studies of the Stratford

Festival phenomenon have shown its importance as a symbol not just of Shakespeare's cultural authority but of civilized nation-building in Canada. Groome recounts how "the Festival was billed as the artistic voice of the country, sent out to the 'corners of Christendom' to speak of the nation's attainment of a 'civilized, sensitive and adult' state."<sup>8</sup> Despite the brevity of Robin's visits to Stratford, her rich imaginative participation in Stratford colours her dull, ordinary life:

Yet those few hours filled her with an assurance that the life she was going back to, which seemed so makeshift and unsatisfactory, was only temporary and could easily be put up with. And there was a radiance behind it, behind that life, behind everything, expressed by the sunlight seen through the train windows. The sunlight and long shadows on the summer fields, like the remains of the play in her head. (239)

Robin's keen response to Stratford reveals her ability to imagine an other world in Shakespeare's plays, to take on the magic of the language and the embodied lives of the characters, to assent to the axiom voiced by Touchstone in *As You Like It*: "much virtue in If" (Shakespeare 2009, 5.4.101–2). If Shakespeare produces epiphanies in Robin, they are unlike the single, condensed, highly visual moments of apprehension in modernist fiction; rather, as David Crouse (1995) and Tracy Ware (2006) argue of Munro's own epiphanies, they are spread out, dispersed, diluted. Munro does not shed light on political or moral messages conveyed by Shakespeare, nor does she import any concrete truths into Robin's life. Shakespeare appears to Robin more as a feeling, a warm presence, a diffuse brilliance, testifying to imagination's power to lend the ordinary world a golden glow.

Although Stratford before Danilo is a solitary experience for Robin, it is all the better for being so: "She had yet to see a single person there that she knew, in the theatre or out on the streets, and that suited her very well" (238). It is the experience of being "surrounded by strangers" (239) that Robin finds so soothing. A colleague remarks about Robin's trips to Stratford, "I'd never have the nerve to do that all on my own" (239). Robin's spirit of adventure, whetted by her stifling life with Joanne, does set her noticeably apart from her peers: for example, the nurse who got the tickets to *King Lear* in the first place "was bored sick" (238). Thus Robin keeps the experience of Shakespeare at Stratford a secret from Joanne and from everybody else: "Robin had kept quiet about how she felt. She could not have expressed it anyway—she would rather have gone away from the theatre alone, and not had to talk to anybody for at least twenty-four hours" (238). Robin will not share

her Shakespearean pleasures, which have been woven into the solitary enjoyment of Stratford from her first visit: “her mind was made up then to come back. And to come by herself” (238).

In this respect, Robin is unlike the public audience envisioned by the Stratford Festival. In the first decade of the festival, the confidence in Stratford’s civilizing, ennobling force spilled over from the plays to the creation of an academic symposium known as the Stratford Seminars, which served Frye well as a vehicle for the democratizing power of Shakespeare.<sup>9</sup> In 1961, Frye delivered the opening and closing talks in the Stratford Seminar series in the Festival Theatre’s auditorium, to an audience of about a hundred participants, and at the August wind-up banquet, Frye delivered his eloquent “Toast to the Memory of Shakespeare” (Frye 2010c, 81–2). Frye’s writings associated with Stratford uphold the view of Shakespeare as open, inscrutable, everywhere diffuse. For Frye, Shakespeare is locatable in space and time only through the continuity of language and through the literary structures and archetypes that the Bard himself channelled. Through these mythological and linguistic structures, as Frye argues in a reading of *King Lear*, Shakespeare lays bare “the primary power of vision in human consciousness” (Frye 2010c, 301; see also Findlay 2002, 301). Munro’s Robin intuitively grasps—though she does not wish to articulate—the visionary power of Shakespeare, which can transform the dreary world of nature into an inner golden world and redeem sublunary sorrows, turning even blindness into insight.

By making Robin a “follower” of Shakespeare before she meets Danilo, Munro gives an invisible nod to Shakespeare’s power in shaping our own fictions, and to Shakespeare’s iconic status in the Canadian Stratford. In his 1961 Stratford “Toast to the Memory of Shakespeare,” Frye distinguishes between Shakespeare the man, about whom “we know very little, and even less that is really significant” (except for Ben Jonson’s “devotion,” inscribed in Jonson’s First Folio dedication to “the sweet swan of Avon”), and Shakespeare “the dramatic poet whose plays are acted in this unlikely spot, simply because it is called Stratford, and have brought thousands of people from all over the continent to flutter around his genius like moths around a light.” Frye issues a dig to the Stratford audience: “When we look at the variety of people who come to see and hear these plays, we realize that the first remark ever made about Shakespeare’s admirers is still the best one. It is the opening sentence of the preface to the Folio: ‘From the most able to him that can but spell. There you are numbered’” (Frye 2010c, “Toast,” 81). Munro’s Robin is one of the “most able” of Shakespeare’s fans, and the least given

to corraling Shakespeare in the service of her own ideology. The light that Robin feels is cast by Shakespeare on her life accords with the final aspect of Shakespeare treated by Frye:

whenever we open our mouths to speak, the rhythms and cadences of Shakespeare are helping to form what we say. Whenever we think, or think we think, Shakespeare's metaphors and images are entering into the structure of our thought. Whenever we attain any understanding or love of one another beyond the range of our immediate experience, Shakespeare's insight into humanity is helping to make our insight possible. (Ibid., 81–2)

For Frye, Shakespeare is not so much an authorial voice dictating our views of the plays as a presence to be felt and known. Frye makes clear in a radio talk on the quatercentenary of Shakespeare's birth that Shakespeare is not "trying to 'say' something by means of the plays"; "The plays are structures that contain infinite meanings . . . . There is no 'true meaning' in Shakespeare because there is nothing to be abstracted or pulled out from the total experience of the play" (Frye 2010c, 233). Munro and her Robin would agree. Robin (and by extension Munro) is that kind of Stratford fan who longs to expand her vision and be lifted up to the kind of higher world that Frye has taken such pains to describe to Canadian society.

Munro's Robin, however much she thrills to her annual allotted performance of Shakespeare, is interested not in analyzing but in experiencing, *feeling*, Shakespeare. Her choice of play every summer appears to be entirely fortuitous and unexamined: "She picked a play that was being done on one of her weekends off from the hospital. She never read it beforehand and she didn't care whether it was a tragedy or a comedy" (238). The closest Munro comes to allowing an analysis of Shakespeare in "Tricks" is in the brief discussion that Robin and Danilo have about the play she has just seen: "He asked her about *Antony and Cleopatra*, had she liked it (yes), and what part she had liked best. What came into her mind then were various bold and convincing embraces, but she could not say so" (250). Robin tells Danilo, "The part at the end . . . where she is going to put the asp on her body'—she had been going to say *breast*, then changed it, but *body* did not sound much better—'and the old man comes in with the basket of figs that the asp is in and they joke around, sort of. I think I liked it because you didn't expect that then'" (250). Besides foregrounding her own unexpected trick ending in this passage, Munro presents her heroine as captivated by the erotic performance, and the opening to the unexpected—a fitting fore-play for

Robin’s charged encounter with Danilo. Munro’s use of *Antony and Cleopatra*, which Frye intriguingly argues is the Shakespeare play closest to twenty-first-century concerns (Frye 2010c, 565), activates the highly charged sexual dimension of Robin and Danilo’s interactions, in which a “hum or a tension” is set up, stretched like a wire between Robin’s body and Danilo’s (250).

Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* offers an apt tragic counterpoint because, as Frye points out, Shakespeare’s lovers are caught between their two separate worlds of Rome and Egypt, unable to escape into a regenerative green world (however much they may engage in role-switching fantasies). Frye categorizes *Antony and Cleopatra* as a “tragedy of passion” (Frye 2010c, 294), in which the lovers contend mightily with the forces of duty against passion, but succumb to the pressures of the real, as “fools of time” (288). This tragic structure resonates in the context of the relationship between Munro’s Robin and Danilo, whose desire for passion is ultimately overcome by a combination of factors: temporal powerlessness, duty—in this case a devotion to their siblings with disabilities—and overwrought imaginations and misconceptions. *Antony and Cleopatra* is a fitting intertext in “Tricks” because the play reveals, as Joyce Carol Oates has famously argued, a “tragedy of imagination,” “the destruction of the *faux-semblant* and attendant illusions by the intervention, bitter or glorious, of reality” (Oates 2013, 419).

Robin has read Shakespeare too carefully—creating “nothing” out of something, like Othello, Leontes in *The Winter’s Tale*, or Antony and Cleopatra themselves. Yet, in another way, Robin has not read Shakespeare carefully enough: she has not anticipated the alternate, marvellous explanations of romance, which might have explained and altered her imaginary fiction about the rejection of the man she took to be Danilo.

While Munro uses the tragic resonances of *Antony and Cleopatra* to inform “Tricks,” she also invokes the shape of Shakespearean comedy and romance, though she frustrates our need for the conventional happy ending. Munro uses what Frye calls the “drama of the green world” (Frye 2006, 169) to structure our expectations of the phases that will follow in the narrative. Robin’s story begins in an ordinary, waking world of frustrated desire—arbitrary and irrational bondage. The cruel, needy Joanne plays the part of a block to the heroine’s fertility, and to the renewal of life in general. In fact, Joanne’s very description evokes barrenness or sterility, for she is “stunted halfway between childhood and female maturity. Stunted, crippled in a way, by severe

and persisting asthma from childhood on” (237). Joanne’s “devastating way of catching on to other, more fortunate people’s foolishness” makes her the primary obstacle in Robin’s life. Joanne represents, in the terms of Shakespearean comedy, the “anticomic society, a social organization blocking and opposed to the comic drive.”<sup>10</sup> Robin’s own fertile potential to love and procreate has, under Joanne’s influence, been stunted. Robin is a nurse who appears irredeemably single—she “had never had a lover, or even a boyfriend. How had this happened, or not happened? She did not know” (248). Her position as outsider in her society, where other girls are being “taken” in marriage, has something to do with her duty to care for Joanne, but more to do with that “she was just waiting, as if she was a girl of fifteen” (249).

The motif of renewal and resurrection, associated with the cycles of nature, is a chief focus of green-world comedy, whose theme is “the triumph of life over the wasteland, the death and revival of the year impersonated by figures still human, and once divine as well” (Frye 2010c, “The Argument of Comedy,” 9). For Robin, Stratford is the green world because it represents freedom from Joanne, and the possibility of fertility and renewal, first on a spiritual level and, after Robin’s meeting of Danilo, on a physical level. Munro’s short story, like the Shakespearean drama of the green world, is structured on what Sherman Hawkins (1967, 64) calls “the contrast between two worlds, two orders of experience, two perspectives on reality.” The green world is always “the world as we wish it were instead of as it is, reality refashioned ‘as you like it’” (ibid.). As in Shakespeare’s green-world comedies *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *As You Like It*, Robin journeys from her bound, ordinary life, into the pastoral setting of Stratford, which so clearly evokes a longing for “England’s green and pleasant land.”

Munro drops the reader into the narrative just before Robin ventures out into the green world. Robin’s adventure will involve a kind of disguise—a symbolic “green dress”—and “temporarily lost identity,” as is typical of the middle phase of Shakespearean comedy (Frye 2010a, 174). Through her incognito train trip, Robin becomes increasingly liberated from her conventional identity. She loses her purse and hence her old identity, a loss that Munro hints is tied to her gendered costume as a kind of failed green knight: “of course her dress had no pockets. She had no return ticket, no lipstick, no comb, and no money. Not a dime” (239). Robin is now fully immersed in comedy’s middle phase, which Frye (Frye 2010a, 174) says is characterized by a “confusion of identity and sexual licence,”<sup>11</sup> as in the cross-dressed antics of Rosalind in *As You*



*Like It* or the expansive scenes of romance in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where Antony dons Cleopatra’s “tires and mantles” while Cleopatra wears his “sword Philippan” (2.5.22–23). It is during the comic middle phase of confusion and loss of identity that Robin meets Danilo Adzic, an Eros figure whom we might regard, following Annis Pratt (1981), as a “green-world lover.” In her feminist adaptation of Frye’s comic theory to the archetypal patterns in women’s fiction, Pratt has shown that the “green-world lover” is “closely associated with the naturalistic epiphany, a vision of the green world that calls up from the feminine unconscious the image of an ideal lover and almost always includes a rejection of social expectations concerning engagement and marriage” (1981, 22–3). Although Munro ultimately departs from the structure of comedy by depriving her heroine of a conventional comic ending through marriage, she does tease us with the possibility of Robin’s future sexual fulfilment. Allowing Danilo “to rescue her” (243), then surrendering to a romantic encounter with him and to their physical embraces, Robin takes on a new sexual identity, through “the conversation of kisses. Subtle, engrossing, fearless, transforming” (252).

Munro does not utterly deprive Robin of the satisfaction gained in the final phase of comedy, “the discovery of identity.” As Frye points out, “the identity at the end of a comedy may be social, the new group to which most of the characters are attached, or individual, the enlightenment that changes the mind or purpose of one character; or, as usually happens in Shakespeare, both” (Frye 2010a, 176). Robin achieves no new married state, but she does gain enlightenment, with the *cognitio*, or *anagnorisis*, the recognition scene at story’s end. But first Stratford must change in Robin’s eyes; it must indeed change her eyes. The green world that fuelled her solitary fantasies of communion with Shakespeare and nature becomes a world of paired lovers akin to the world of *Antony and Cleopatra*—“She felt as if she had been chosen to be connected to that strange part of the world, chosen for a different sort of fate. Those were the words she used to herself. *Fate. Lover*” (254–55). Assuredly, Danilo is associated with yet another world within the green world. He is a trained clockmaker whose knowledge of Shakespeare comes from having read the plays as a child in order to perfect his English. The Cyrillic alphabet so unintelligible to Robin in Danilo’s apartment, and the other world of Montenegro, spell difference for Robin, even in her quest for unity, coherence, and wholeness.

Munro emphasizes the difference between Robin’s *Antony and Cleopatra* year and her *As You Like It* year, when she returns hopeful for

a reunion with Danilo. In between, the thought of Danilo has changed everything. Robin goes “to the library to read about Montenegro” (253), and she tries “to settle Danilo into some real place, and a real past” (254). She becomes absorbed in Danilo, in seeking him, tracing his possible presence in printed materials. And her pursuit is successful: “He remained with her. The thought of him was there when she woke up, and in lulls at work” (254). The experience of this “absorption” (254) is even more intense than Robin’s initial experience of Stratford: “She had something now to carry around with her all the time. She was aware of a shine on herself, on her body, on her voice and all her doings. It made her walk differently and smile for no reason and treat the patients with uncommon tenderness” (255). Robin’s shifting focus on Danilo, her habitual repetition of the story of their encounter, has displaced the primacy of Shakespeare. She no longer cares about watching the play at all: “It struck her that she could just go on to Downie Street, and not bother with the play, because she would be too preoccupied or excited to notice much of it” (256). It is only because she is “superstitious . . . about altering the day’s pattern” (256) that she forces herself to attend *As You Like It*, though she leaves the play early and hence does not have the benefit of the final, crucial recognition scene: Robin’s “life” shows few signs of mirroring or learning from any didactic lessons of art.<sup>12</sup>

The two mirror scenes and the two green dresses in the story starkly represent the difference between Robin’s first and second Stratford experiences. At first, when Robin looked at herself in the mirror in the “Ladies Room” at the Festival Theatre, “she had been pleased with what she saw” (Munro 240). A year later, wearing the wrong green dress, with her hair flattened by the rain, and the mirror reflecting only the unavoidability of temporal shifts, Robin looks like a fool of time. Robin appears powerless to keep her promise to fulfil Danilo’s demand, “You will wear the same dress. Your green dress. And your hair the same” (240). For all Robin’s efforts, and Danilo’s skill as a clockmaker, the lovers cannot control time. The need to stave off changes, the slippage between twin representations of temporal phenomena (even the doubling and difference of identity itself) is in a very real way what leads to Robin’s error, her misrecognition of Danilo’s twin as Danilo himself.

Munro’s “Tricks” puts front and centre Robin’s encounter with the foreign other, the immigrant, the madman, the black swan in that *other* Avon, the Avon River of Stratford, Ontario. Danilo never quite becomes Daniel, though Robin calls him that because she is “shy at the

last moment of calling him Danilo, for fear she might pronounce the foreign syllables in a clumsy way” (259). Danilo’s foreignness, his split identity for Robin as “Danilo. Daniel” (264), reflects on the doubleness, the fractured ideal, of Canadian Stratford itself. If Stratford is seen as “enshrining Canada’s colonial dependence” (Makaryk 2002, 25), it also can be seen as both enforcing and subverting relations between the dominant British and colonized Canadian cultures (Groome 2002, 109). The founding and institutionalization of Stratford were “irrevocably linked to the potency of the birthplace cult” (ibid.), to the real Shakespeare in the *real* Stratford. But this originary Stratford is only, at bottom, a myth of a lost origin, a site that marks his absence.

If Stratford functions as a symbol of Shakespeare’s authority, it also serves as a reminder of the lost fullness of desire. Canadian Stratford’s image-making of Shakespeare is, as Knowles (2004, 17) has argued, akin to Lacan’s mirror-stage formation of an “Ideal-I.” Like Miranda, we may be seized with wonder at the image of Shakespeare and the empire, this “brave new world, that has such people in it,” but our exhilaration at the promise of unity and coherence is only “the beginning of self-alienation and the messiness of the ‘lack’ that is desire. The postcolonial subject takes on the image of “the self as an always inadequate (and underdressed) approximation of the imperial ideal (and the proper accent)” (ibid.). Critics have found that Munro’s taste for gimmick and contrivance is far more pronounced in *Runaway* than in any of her previous books. For example, Meghan O’Rourke (2004) says, “it is no accident that the story that most explicitly relies on theatricality and self-consciously classical plot devices is called ‘Tricks.’” In the end, Munro’s Robin is no trickster with the power to play pranks; she cannot ensure that Jill shall have Jack.

Still, “Shakespeare should have prepared her” (268) for the trickery of twins and time, and above all for the untrustworthiness of her own fiction-making. Forty years after the fact, Robin, who has become a psychiatric nurse after her ironic misconception of Danilo’s rejection, is forced to recognize that she played the lover whose “seething brain” sees things that aren’t there, as Theseus says in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*:

Such tricks hath strong imagination  
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,  
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;  
Or in the night, imagining some fear,  
How easy is a bush supposed a bear! (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*,  
5.1.18–22)

*Antony and Cleopatra* should also have given Robin insight into the tricks of the imagination, for Antony clearly sounds the warning note *Don't trust appearances!* when he tells his follower Eros,

Sometimes we see a cloud that's dragonish,  
A vapour sometime like a bear or lion,  
A towered citadel, a pendant rock,  
A forkèd mountain, or blue promontory  
With trees upon't that nod unto the world  
And mock our eyes with air. (4.14.2–7)

Yet, notwithstanding his distrust of “black vesper’s pageants” (4.14.8), Antony continues to place faith in untrustworthy fictions. He rails against Cleopatra’s betrayal, imagining that she made his own soldiers surrender to Caesar, because she has “Packed cards with Caesar and false-played [Antony’s] glory” (4.14.19). Antony’s too-easy credence ends up destroying him, as he stabs himself and eventually dies when he believes that Cleopatra has committed suicide. Robin is equally blind to alternate readings of her own betrayal, though Munro refuses to fashion a tragic end out of the consequences of Robin’s blind belief in her own susceptibility to betrayal.

Robin’s fate and Danilo’s may be sealed by an accident of history, but Robin herself determines her own fate by the insecurity that builds rejection and despair into her own story, rather than waiting for Shakespeare’s providential ending. As she creates her own reversal of a story that might have turned comic, Robin plays both the victim and author of her own misrecognition (both her misrecognition of Danilo’s twin, Alexander, and of her rejected self). Robin is both the fool of time, and its heroic resister.

Robin’s ending is not ultimately tragic. Her quest does bring a boon back to her dull world, in true Shakespearean, Frygian fashion. Fiona Tolan points out Frye’s relevance to Munro’s lead story “Runaway”: Frye’s discussion of the romance quest, “with its tripartite structure of the perilous journey, the crucial battle, and the exaltation of the returning hero,” recalls Joseph Campbell’s similar description of the three stages of the hero’s journey, “Separation—Initiation—Return.”<sup>13</sup> If Danilo is Robin’s exotic other, and her dark green-world lover, then *he* is a kind of Cleopatra, and *she* a kind of Antony, journeying symbolically from Rome to Egypt and back again, dreaming of that exotic world she could barely pronounce—*Montenegro*, a substitutionary ironic displacement for Shakespeare’s green world, and rife with real-world catastrophe and conflict.

Robin’s work as a psychiatric nurse with patients who are delusional has been prompted and ironically enriched by her own Stratford experience. Munro affirms Shakespeare’s insight in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* that “The lunatic, the lover, and the poet / Are of imagination all compact” (5.1.7–8), for “Robin has had patients who believe that combs and toothbrushes must lie in the right order, shoes must face in the right direction, steps must be counted, or some sort of punishment will follow” (269). After moving her heroine from a fantasy absorption with Shakespeare in Stratford to an ecstatic connection with the colonial other connected with Shakespeare—“His forehead, being broad and high” (243)—Munro does not leave her heroine altogether bereft. Robin has found what she calls “my people” (264), for whom she has a special affinity; and has not married for a lack of offers, but because she chooses not to. With a bit of effort, a couple of her former patients have even fallen in love with her: “The men felt gratitude, she felt good will, both of them felt some kind of misplaced nostalgia” (266). Robin’s society has, like the “liberalized” society of Shakespearean comedy, become more inclusive, more accepting of difference. Munro’s *anagnorisis*, the tragic revelation at story’s end, is devastating, dashing all our hopes of a comic or romantic happy ending (hopes bred in Shakespearean comedy and romance). Danilo, like Cordelia, is gone, and Robin has been thrown into the position of Lear. If she does not cry out against the loss, Munro’s reader does: “Thou’lt come no more, / Never, never, never, never, never!” (*King Lear*, 5.3.313–14). Munro, like Shakespeare, almost makes us forget that these moving fictions, these majestic visions, are illusions bred by the strength of our own assenting imagination. The aging Robin is now as wrinkled as Hermione at the end of *The Winter’s Tale*—and just as well past her fertile due date—but no high moment of grace redeems the loss.

Did Robin dream Danilo? Do we wake, or do we yet dream, in entering into Munro’s, Robin’s, or Shakespeare’s fictions? In the creation of such a man, or man-like sign, nature—whatever is real—has vied with fancy, outdoing imagination itself, as Shakespeare’s Cleopatra makes clear:

But if there be nor ever were one such,  
 It’s past the size of dreaming. Nature wants stuff  
 To vie strange forms with fancy; yet t’imagine  
 An Antony were nature’s piece ’gainst fancy,  
 Condemning shadows quite. (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 5.2.95–99)

Danilo did not, any more than Antony could, bestride the ocean, or like a “demi-Atlas” bear half the world on his shoulders (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 5.2.81; 1.5.24), for in Munro’s short stories, the grandeur of Shakespeare’s Roman tragedies is displaced in an ironic and realistic direction. But at least Munro gives her man Juno, nipping at his heels.

In “Tricks,” Munro tells the same kind of tale of deferred desire that built Stratford itself—the search for an originary fullness that prompts Frye’s own preferred movement into the anagogic phase of the green world. As Munro concludes her story, aptly, with a writer’s trick—the art of the unclear pronoun reference, learned from Shakespeare the master—we wonder if the lost origin at the heart of this quest is not Shakespeare himself, the inscrutable green-world lover. If there was a mistake, it was “in the matter of the green dress” (265). “Even now she can yearn for her chance” (268), though Robin has assuredly brought a boon back to her world: “Something—though not what she was expecting—*had* changed her life” (265). Munro’s narrator ends by starkly stating the endlessly deferred desire, the lag between the original and the copy, as it seeps back into language, into the very structures and narrative framework inherited from Shakespeare—for such is the resting place of restless longing: “She wished she could tell somebody. Him” (269).

## NOTES

1. I am gratefully indebted, as always, to Garry Sherbert for his brilliant analysis (both of Shakespeare’s green world and of Munro’s “Tricks”). Thanks are also due to Cynthia Sugars for excellent comments on an earlier draft of this paper, to the editors of this collection (Irena Makaryk, Kathryn Prince), and to the anonymous readers for the Press, for their many perceptive suggestions, which informed the revision process.
2. Michael Trussler (2013, 252–4) does, however, offer a pithy start in his treatment of “Tricks.”
3. *Runaway* won both the Giller Prize and the Rogers Writers’ Trust Fiction Prize in 2004, adding to the long list of Munro’s awards, which have been well summarized in Reingard M. Nischik, “Alice Munro: Nobel Prize-Winning Master of the Contemporary Short Story,” *Études canadiennes/Canadian Studies* 77 (2014), 7–25.
4. Thacker traces the publisher’s blurb “She’s our Chekhov,” from its first utterance by Cynthia Ozick (Thacker 2011, 443), to its “ubiquitous” appearance on book jackets, and its revision in the hands of Claire Messud—for whom Munro is not just “our Chekhov” but “our Flaubert, too” (*ibid.*, 516). In his updated 2011 edition, cited here, Thacker provides a final revision of

the comparison, this time by Leah Hager Cohen: “She is our Munro. And how fortunate are we to call her that” (ibid., 560).

5. Ildikó de Papp Carrington does discuss one allusion to Shakespeare in “Royal Beatings.” Rose overhears her father, “king of the royal beatings,” quoting *The Tempest*: “The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces.” As Carrington points out, “the allusion to Prospero deepens Munro’s irony by emphasizing the difference between *The Tempest* and the sordid farce in which Rose’s father performs” (1989, 47).
6. The basic pattern but not the dates in Robin’s experience of Shakespeare can be glimpsed in the Stratford Archives list of Past Productions: *As You Like It* in the 1976 season was not only followed in the 1977 season by *Antony and Cleopatra*, but had been preceded five seasons earlier in 1972 by *King Lear*. See <https://www.stratfordfestival.ca/AboutUs/OurHistory/PastProductions>.
7. See “Culture as Interpenetration,” Frye’s address to UNESCO’s International Council of Philosophy and Humanistic Studies in Montreal on September 16, 1977, which was first published in *Divisions on a Ground: Essays on Canadian Culture*, edited by James Polk (Toronto: Anansi, 1982), 15–25, reprinted in Frye (2003).
8. Ibid. In this passage, Groome cites L. Roberts, *A Report from Stratford* (Woodstock, ON: Commercial Print-Craft, ca. 1956).
9. See L. M. Findlay’s (2002, 302) discussion of the general democratizing impulse in Frye’s work on Shakespeare.
10. See Frye (2010a, 172–193 [“The Triumph of Time”]) for a discussion of “the typical structure of Shakespeare’s comedy.”
11. Ibid.
12. Trussler (2103, 253) points out that “Tricks” interrogates the kind of knowledge offered by art (253).
13. See, also, Tolan’s (2010) excellent article.

## WORKS CITED

- Bosman, Julie. 2013. “Alice Munro Wins Nobel Prize in Literature.” *New York Times*, October 10. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/11/books/alice-munro-wins-nobel-prize-in-literature.html>.
- Brydon, Diana and Irena R. Makaryk, eds. 2002. *Shakespeare in Canada: A World Elsewhere?* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Carrington, Ildikó de Papp. 1989. *Controlling the Uncontrollable: The Fiction of Alice Munro*. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Crouse, David. 1995. “Resisting Reduction: Closure in Richard Ford’s *Rock Springs* and Alice Munro’s *Friend of My Youth*.” *Canadian Literature* 146:51–64.



- Duncan, Isla. 2011. *Alice Munro's Narrative Art*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Findlay, L. M. 2002. "Frye's Shakespeare, Frye's Canada." In *Shakespeare in Canada*, edited by Brydon and Makaryk, 292–308. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Franzen, Jonathan. 2004. "'Runaway': Alice's Wonderland." *New York Times*, November 1. Sunday Book Review.
- Frye, Northrop. 2003. "Culture as Interpenetration." *Northrop Frye on Canada*. The Collected Works of Northrop Frye, vol. 12. Edited by Jean O'Grady and David Staines, 521–30. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- . 2006. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. The Collected Works of Northrop Frye, vol. 22. Edited by Robert D. Denham. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- . 2010a. *A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance*. In *Northrop Frye's Writings on Shakespeare and the Renaissance*, edited by Grande and Sherbert, 127–225.
- . 2010b. *Fools of Time: Studies in Shakespearean Tragedy*. In *Northrop Frye's Writings on Shakespeare and the Renaissance*, edited by Grande and Sherbert, 250–327.
- . 2010c. *Northrop Frye's Writings on Shakespeare and the Renaissance*. The Collected Works of Northrop Frye, vol. 28. Edited by Troni Y. Grande and Garry Sherbert. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Groome, Margaret. 2002. "Stratford and the Aspirations for a National Canadian Theatre." In *Shakespeare in Canada*, ed. Brydon and Makaryk, 108–36.
- Hawkins, Sherman. 1967. "The Two Worlds of Shakespearean Comedy." *Shakespeare Studies* 3:62–80.
- Howells, Coral Ann. 1998. *Alice Munro*. Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Knowles, Ric. 2004. *Shakespeare and Canada: Essays on Production, Translation, and Adaptation*. Brussels: Peter Lang.
- Makaryk, Irena R. 2002. "Introduction: Shakespeare in Canada: 'a world elsewhere?'" In *Shakespeare in Canada*, ed. Brydon and Makaryk, 3–41.
- Munro, Alice. 2004. *Runaway*. New York: Penguin.
- Oates, Joyce Carol. 2013. "The Tragedy of the Imagination in *Antony and Cleopatra*." In *Living with Shakespeare: Essays by Writers, Actors, and Directors*, edited by Susannah Carson and Harold Bloom, 418–32. New York: Vintage.
- O'Rourke, Meghan. 2004. "Tricked Up: Alice Munro Rebels Against Realism." *Slate.com*. [www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/the\\_highbrow/2004/12/tricked\\_up.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/the_highbrow/2004/12/tricked_up.html).

- Pratt, Annis. 1981. *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Redekop, Magdalene. 1992. *Mothers and Other Clowns: The Stories of Alice Munro*. London: Routledge.
- Shakespeare, William. 2009. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. Edited by David Bevington. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Thacker, Robert. 2011. *Alice Munro: Writing Her Lives*. Updated ed. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.
- Tolan, Fiona. 2010. “To Leave and to Return: Frustrated Departures and Female Quest in Alice Munro’s *Runaway*.” *Contemporary Women’s Writing* 4 (3): 161–78.
- Trussler, Michael. 2013. “Narrative, Memory, and Contingency in Alice Munro’s *Runaway*.” In *Critical Insights: Alice Munro*, edited by Charles E. May, 242–58. Ipswich, MA: Salem Press.
- Ware, Tracy. 2006. “Tricks with ‘a Sad Ring’: The Endings of Alice Munro’s ‘The Ottawa Valley.’” *Studies in Canadian Literature* 31 (2): 126–41.
- Weibezahl, Robert. 2004. “The Mastery of Alice Munro.” *BookPage.com*, November. <https://bookpage.com/columns/10306-mastery-alice-munro>.

# Beyond (or Beneath) the Folio: Neil Freeman's Shakespearean Acting Pedagogy in Context

TOM SCHOLTE

In the mid-2000s, upon the occasion of his retirement, I had the intimidating assignment of replacing the nationally and internationally renowned, and larger than life, Neil Freeman as the teacher of Shakespearean acting at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Having been trained by Neil as both an actor and director at UBC in the 1990s, I was, at least, well positioned to facilitate a sense of continuation of Neil's unique pedagogy while, at the same time, reconciling it with my own continually evolving practice. Neil's sudden passing in October of 2015 has led me to reflect upon his seminal role in my evolution as an actor, director, and teacher, and, more significantly, his place in the wider field of actor training in Canada.

Neil is undoubtedly best known for his zealous commitment to the authority of the First Folio of 1623 as a privileged guide to Shakespeare's dramaturgical intentions. This has led to a largely polarized assessment of his contributions to Shakespearean practice in Canada, with scores of actors inspired and energized by his framing of the performative potentials of the text's idiosyncrasies, and an equal number of literary scholars dismissively scoffing at the very notion that these idiosyncrasies might be anything more than the accidental byproduct of the well-documented vagaries of notoriously haphazard Elizabethan typesetting practices. This great divide is unfortunate on a number of levels: it contributes to the continued intellectual/artistic suspicion with which "theorists" and "practitioners" housed together in university theatre departments often

view each other, and it distracts from the deeper and more fundamental insights into acting and cognition inherent in Neil's pedagogy that not only converse productively with other historical and contemporary currents in actor training, but also anticipate, by several decades, the "cognitive turn" in Theatre Studies. In the pages that follow, I will attempt to excavate the pedagogical legacy of Neil Freeman in a manner allowing these features to stand out in greater relief for future generations of scholars and practitioners.

Born in Southport, Lancashire, England, Freeman began his acting career in weekly rep before attending the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School on a Sir John Gielgud Fellowship. Upon graduating, he remained in Britain, acting professionally on radio and television, directing, teaching, and, finally, emigrating to Canada after a two-year stint as an artistic director.

He began his Canadian teaching career as an adjunct at the University of Alberta before joining the full-time faculty at York University and, finally, the University of British Columbia. He was also a much sought-after guest lecturer at acting schools throughout North America and the United Kingdom. He held the title of Master Teacher at Shakespeare and Company in Lenox, Massachusetts, and, over the course of his career, acted in fourteen of Shakespeare's plays (for such companies as the Citadel, the Stratford Festival, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz), directed twenty-four, and coached them all several times over.

For Applause Books, he edited the 1,200-page Applause First Folio, as well as individual First Folio editions of Shakespeare's plays, and a series of three books of Shakespearean audition material that, through his inventive and adventurous editing, tripled the standard repertoire from three hundred to nine hundred speeches. He also authored the monograph *Shakespeare's First Texts*, in which he explicated his unique method for engaging with the Folio texts.

A thorough reflection upon this body of work might best begin in the middle years of the still unfolding so-called cognitive turn in Theatre Studies, with the 2011 publication of Raphael Lyne's monograph *Shakespeare, Rhetoric, and Cognition*, in which he makes the somewhat bold claim, against the grain of several centuries of prevailing wisdom, that "rhetoric need not only be a theory of public speaking. It can also be a theory of thought—a description of how we deal with some of the most severe cognitive challenges" (Lyne 2011, 66–77).

Mining a handful of plays for illustrative examples, Lyne builds a case that “Shakespeare represents his characters facing severe mental challenges: understanding their situations, and responding to them, both require great effort” (ibid, 2). He asserts that the characters’ “approach to these challenges is poetic and rhetorical,” that “the similes and metaphors and other tropes that they use . . . are the means by which they take mental command of the world, or fail to do so” (3). “Shakespeare’s characters’ mental strains and stretches, then,” he concludes, “must be conveyed in the strains and stretches of language: in the tropes of rhetoric” (2–3).

Parsing the sputtering list of adjectives in Hamlet’s invocation of the familiar “world as garden” metaphor in his first soliloquy, he suggests that “this rhetorical moment captures Hamlet’s attempt to think well, rather than it being the result of him speaking well” and sums up the overall effect of his cumulative soliloquizing as follows:

In these cases it has seemed as if rhetorical tropes are the means by which Hamlet seeks to think through his situation . . . . [A] study of these tropes in the abstract (like a rhetorical manual, for example) would serve as a map of Hamlet’s ways of thinking difficult thoughts—a map that would work for other characters too. And perhaps for people, as well—for here indeed is the rub. Heuristic cognitive rhetoric is a feature of Shakespearean drama, but its relationships to observations about cognitive science, and to writings about rhetoric themselves, require us to recognize that it need not be limited to that context. (57)

In critical circles, Lyne’s thesis is made particularly risky by the post-A. C. Bradley backlash that quite definitively cast the “tendency to treat literary characters as real people” as the height of intellectual bad taste. Yet, he soldiers bravely on with his “counter-intuitive approach,” giving “the characters a large stake, and great credit, for their words and what they represent” (26).

Like much of the scholarship in the cognitive turn, Lyne’s theorizing draws its inspiration from the embodied cognitive linguistics of George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, and Mark Turner. He explicitly outlines their conception that metaphor “arises” from the way the brain both “organizes and explores concepts” and “respond[s] to our bodily experiences of the world,” and that, when operationalized in language, metaphor “records the ways in which we think through problems and opportunities.” His intent is to employ the “vivid new way to see metaphor reaching back into its origins in the formation of concepts” developed

by these theorists in order to “explore literary means of representing thought when it struggles to take shape” (35).

For Neil Freeman, having trained as an actor at the Bristol Old Vic but never, to my knowledge, having ever set foot inside a psychologist’s laboratory, such ideas were obvious long before the scholars of the cognitive turn invoked the epistemic gold standard of the sciences to back up their claims; at least as early as the publication of the first edition of *Shakespeare’s First Texts* in 1994. For him, this notion did not extend merely to the rhetorical tropes themselves, and did not stop at the belief, shared by many other practitioners of Shakespeare (most famously by John Barton), that regular iambic lines are indicative of a character’s mental balance while those that are irregular suggest some form of mental instability or failed emotional containment. Neil passionately maintained that the Folio text of 1623, with all of its unruly punctuation and variable, mismatched spellings, was, in fact, the very “map” of the various characters’ “ways of thinking difficult thoughts,” just as hypothesized by Lyne a decade and a half later, and that these “irregularities” provided multiple deeper layers of information regarding the cognitive and emotional states of the characters intended by Shakespeare. Thus, the grammatical “tidying” and “reshaping” of the texts that was begun by editors following the Restoration had inadvertently erased powerful clues designed to provide actors with rich possibilities for even more finely grained and dynamic performances (Freeman 1994, 15).

Of course, given the absence of any handwritten original manuscripts, many scholars have objected strongly to the assumption that the punctuation and spellings of the Folio contain any privileged knowledge of Shakespeare’s dramaturgical intentions due to the technical inconsistencies of Elizabethan professional printing practices and the detectable idiosyncrasies of the “interfering hands” of the five or more different typesetting compositors by whom it was produced. Neil acknowledged this objection but reframed it in a manner that, alluding to the rhetorical training inherent in an Elizabethan/Jacobean education, as well as the uncodified grammar of the era, presents the belief in the authority of modern editors and their fixation on grammatical correctness as, at the very least, equally dubious. For him,

The reader is faced with the same plays in two different formats, edited according to entirely different principles to satisfy totally different demands:

-the first printings, “edited” unconsciously by accidental alteration of up to three hands (or more) other than Shakespeare’s, in a

manner reflecting all Elizabethan and Jacobean writing, according to practices shared by Shakespeare and his contemporaries and consistent with the theatrical intent of the original hand-written manuscripts

-the modern texts, consciously edited according to practices which were not even under consideration at the time the manuscripts were first written, by one or more editors basing the work on that of *several preceding editors, centuries after the first manuscripts were created, often with the preservation of the theatrical content not being the primary concern.* (Freeman 1994, 4)

While Neil Freeman is by no means the only professor of Shakespearean acting to impute such authority to the Folio texts, he was certainly the most vociferous and prominent in a Canadian context, and in the rigorous, fully developed systems of analysis and application that he constructed and promulgated through his countless international appearances, as well as in his Applause publications. These together have earned him international prominence as a respected practitioner and teacher. Kristin Linklater, whose impact on voice and speech training in North America is without parallel, has hailed Neil as the “actor’s best champion of the Folio,” while David Smuckler, the Kristin Linklater disciple who has gone on, at both York University and Canada’s National Voice Intensive, to train the vast majority of Canada’s post-secondary voice and speech teachers, declared Neil’s Folio work to be a “cornerstone in the revolution in acting Shakespeare’s text” (neilfreeman.com).

While all of this is a significant aspect of Neil’s legacy, in order to truly assess the full scope of his contributions to acting pedagogy in this country, I believe it necessary to resign completely from the minutiae of the Folio debate itself, and to take a wider, more holistic view of his concern with the ways in which Shakespeare’s language manifests the shape of human thought and his absolute intolerance for the tendency of many contemporary actors to “impose a generalized gloss on a speech, either of poetry or of an overwhelming never changing emotional state” that contains “no journey,” robbing the text of the richness inherent in these intricate patterns of thought by rendering it “static and locked” (Freeman 1994, 32). Viewed this way, the obsession with the differing implications of a colon versus a semi-colon and the emphasis suggested by capitalized long spellings emerge not as a gospel to be taken on faith but, merely, through insisting that the actor confront every structural twist and turn of phraseology and their underlying cognitive operations as a highly effective means to a valuable, and necessary, artistic



end—and not, by any stretch, the only tool in Neil Freeman’s formidable toolkit.

For Neil, each line of text was its own world of thought; distinct in content, tone, and texture. The essential requirement for any Shakespearean actor was the ability to move quickly, and cleanly, from one thought to the next without allowing them to bleed into each other. Moreover, this movement required an omnidirectional freedom that often seemed directly at odds with the relentlessly forward momentum engendered by the Stanislavski system of acting’s tendency to use language as a kind of blunt instrument, with the sole purpose of provoking a desired response from one’s scene partner. The goal-oriented foundations of the Stanislavski system and its teleological future-focus on a desired end-state can, at times, leave the actor/character working furiously to correct the error signal between desired and performed actions, leaving them completely blind to the possibilities of the mind/body’s potential responses to the emergent “ever-changing present” (a term Neil attributed to his one-time York University colleague, David Rotenberg) that, when viewed in a Stanislavskian fashion as a series of obstacles, get bulldozed through rather than appearing as a sea of possibilities for additional texture and sensual/emotional colouring. For Neil, the responsiveness to one’s own language and underlying thought process (“expressing, at one and the same time the stepping stones of argument while releasing underlying emotional feelings that accompanied it”) was an essential component of Shakespearean acting, and with which the Stanislavski system alone was insufficient to cope.

There are two powerful images regularly used by Neil to enable this type of response: the serpent’s coils and the sculpture. Paraphrasing Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Neil tells us:

In Shakespeare a sentence is never worked out like an essay before it is spoken, nor projected as an entirety. It is rarely thought “A” + thought “B” + thought “C” ad infinitum in an ongoing predestined straight line. Rather within each sentence, thought “B” comes out because thought “A” has been uttered, thought “C” similarly springs out as a direct result of thought “B,” and on, like a “serpent twisting and untwisting its own strength.” . . . Treat each new phrase as a fresh unraveling of the serpent’s coils. What is discovered (and therefore said) is only revealed as the old coil/phrase disappears revealing a new coil in its place. The new coil is the new thought. The old coil moves because the previous phrase is finished as soon as it is spoken. (Freeman 1994, 44)

The sculpture image reinforces the principles of the serpent's coils in a similarly vivid fashion.

It's as if the actor/reader were examining a piece of sculpture, and every time a new phrase appears s/he is asked to move slightly and see the sculpture from a slightly different viewpoint. With the sculpture the eye keeps moving from one angle to the next, and has to re-absorb, redefine and keep coming to a slightly different viewpoint. The eye doesn't look at the sculpture and describe it just as a whole: details keep on unfolding, from one small bit to the next. In exactly the same way the imaginative mind keeps moving from one phrase to the next, re-absorbing, re-defining and reviewing, the next thought unfolding/springing from the one just made. Freshness and discovery are all. (Ibid., 45)

While one might easily argue that these images are appropriate simply because they capture the demands of poetry, the notion that they might reflect the actual relationship between speech and human thought has a lineage going back well before the cognitive turn or Neil's work. In his essay "On the Gradual Construction of Thoughts During Speech," the Romantic-era man of letters Heinrich von Kleist (1951) provides "striking example(s) (successful and otherwise) of the gradual formation of thought out of a beginning made under stress," the most oft quoted being Kleist's parsing of "Mirabeau's thunderbolt" at the onset of the French Revolution, "with which he silenced that Master of Ceremonies who—after the adjournment of the King's last Royal Session on June 23rd in which he had commanded the Three Orders to vote separately—returned to the assembly hall, where the Three Orders still lingered together, and asked them whether they had heard the King's command" (provoking a response which, Kleist maintained, led to nothing less than "the collapse of the French social order") (43). I take the liberty of quoting this lengthy passage in full as it provides an uncannily accurate analogue of an acting coaching by Neil. To get a peek inside the process, one need only imagine Kleist's commentary and interjections around the words attributed to Mirabeau as Neil's side-coaching spoken softly into the ear of an actor exploring Mirabeau's text in rehearsal.

"Yes," Mirabeau replied, "we have heard the King's command." I am sure that during this humane opening he was not yet thinking of the bayonet with which he concluded: "yes, sir," he repeated, "we have heard it." One can see that he still does not really know what he wants. "But what entitles you"—he continued, and now suddenly a well of immense possibilities breaks through to his consciousness — "to draw

our attention to commands in this place? We are the representatives of the Nation.” That was what he needed: “The Nation gives orders and does not take them”—only to hoist himself at once on to the peak of audacity. “And to ensure that I am making myself perfectly clear to you”—and only now he finds the words to express all the resistance for which his soul is armed: “go and tell your King that nothing but the bayonet’s power will force us to leave our seats”—whereupon, satisfied with himself, he sat down on a chair. (Ibid., 43)

While the process typified by this imaginative encounter with Kleist now makes perfect pedagogical sense to me, this was certainly not the case when Neil first arrived at UBC at the beginning of my final year in the BFA acting program, and my thoroughly Stanislavskianized brain was confronted with such Freemanesque heresies as the admonition that “you can say a line to someone else, say it to yourself, or just throw it up in the air and see who wants it.” The haze began to clear from my mind as I began to contextualize Neil’s approach to text within the movement pedagogy of another powerful teacher who had been my mentor for the previous two years: the former head of the English division of the National Theatre School of Canada, Arne Zaslove, a devout disciple of the iconic Parisian *maître du théâtre* Jacques Lecoq and his gospel of the neutral mask.

Lecoq inherited the pedagogical notion of a tranquilly expressionless full-face mask from interwar theatrical pioneer Jacques Copeau, via his son-in-law, Jean Dasté, of whose Comédiens de Grenoble Lecoq had been a member in the late 1940s. Developed through a rigorous series of non-verbal “études,” the neutral mask facilitates the actor’s acquisition of what the members of Calgary’s One Yellow Rabbit Performance Theatre regard as a kind of holy trinity of performance: economy, precision, and relaxation. In Lecoq’s words:

It puts [the actor] in a state of discovery, of openness, of freedom to receive. It allows him to watch, to hear, to feel, to touch elementary things with the freshness of beginnings . . . [the] mask puts the actor in a state of perfect balance and economy of movement. Its moves have a truthfulness, its gestures and actions are economical. (2001, 38)

This naive state of unencumbered receptivity and balanced, economical, and genuine movements are the requisite conditions for “The Childhood Bedroom,” a particular étude that provides a striking physical counterpart to the verbal discovery of the unwinding serpent’s coils.

You return after a long absence and revisit your childhood bedroom.  
You have had to travel a long way, you arrive at the door, you open

it. How will you open it? How will you go in? You rediscover your bedroom: nothing has changed, each object is in its place. Once again you find all your childhood things, your toys, your furniture, your bed. These images of the past come alive again within you, until the moment when the present reasserts itself. And you leave the room. (Ibid., 30)

The deftly articulated movement to, and engagement with, each toy or piece of furniture in its turn as well as all of the microstages of each engagement (i.e., seeing the teddy bear, reaching for it, lifting it, stroking it, smelling it, gazing at it, seeing another stuffed toy beyond the teddy bear, putting the teddy bear down, moving toward the new object of interest, etc.) simultaneously frees the actor to surrender completely to each unit of the “ever-changing present” without worrying about either pace or the overall coherence of the performance and provides the audience unfettered and uncluttered access to these same units of what, for them, is simply the emergent narrative line. Paradoxically, this exacting discipline ultimately makes the work of both actor and audience increasingly effortless as well as full-bodied; this is the same ease sought by Neil in the verbal realm of Shakespearean rhetoric and its attendant emotional release.

Like Lecoq himself, who began his career in physical education, Zaslove often couched his lessons in metaphors drawn from the realm of sport. The Lecoq/Freeman linkage is strengthened by Neil’s similar appeal to the precise and definitive actions demanded by sporting activity:

When a thought has been made, deftly let it go and move on to the next. When someone throws a ball, they don’t keep hold of it after they have thrown it. To throw it, s/he has to let it go, the muscular action demands it. Would that the thinking/speaking action were equally specific. (Freeman 1994, 46)

As much as the ability to “let it go” and allow the character’s focus to move on with the singularity of a spotlight is central to the actor’s craft, one of the major pitfalls identified by Neil for students approaching Shakespearean texts is the failure to recognize when a character is doubling back to a concept or image previously introduced. For Neil, such instances were examples of “focus as fixation”:

The principles of returning back to the original point of focus (what attracted one to the sculpture in the first place) and then leaving it only to return to the same focus moments later (as if “the serpent” was retracing its path, folding back over coils it has already touched upon) is paramount in many of the major speeches. (Ibid., 50)

A major turning point in my own reconciliation of Neil's methods with other elements of my training occurred when I experienced his techniques for helping a student grapple with just this issue. In our production of *Romeo and Juliet*, in which I was cast as Romeo, our Friar Lawrence was struggling with the long speeches in act 3, scene 5, in which he chides Romeo for threatening suicide upon hearing the news that he is to be banished for slaying Tybalt in a vengeful rage. The following passage presented the first major stumbling block.

Fie, fie thou sham'st thy shape, thy love, thy wit,  
Which like a Usurer abound'st in all:  
And usest none in that true use indeed,  
Which should bedecke thy shape, thy love, thy wit:  
Thy Noble shape, is but a form of waxe,  
Digressing from the Valour of a man,  
Thy deare Love sworne but hollow perjurie,  
Killing that Love which thou has't vow'd to cherish.  
Thy wit, that Ornament, to shape and Love,  
Mishapen in the conduct of them both:  
Like powder in skillesse Souldiers flaske,  
Is set afire by thine own ignorance,  
And thou dismembered with thine own defence. (Shakespeare 1990,  
3.5.1941–53)

Swept up by the emotional stakes of the given circumstances and, having grabbed hold of the obvious, and straightforward, objective of getting me/Romeo to assure him that I would not do anything desperate, my scene partner had fallen into the trap of racing ever forward through the text and, inadvertently, trampling all over the rhetorical structure of the very act of persuasion the Friar is so desperate to successfully complete. The result was an incoherent stream of, to coin an old theatre phrase, good old-fashioned “gabbling.”

Neil sensibly tackled the issue by making the “fixated foci” of the speech (shape, love, wit) as physically tangible as possible by simply writing each single word down on individual pieces of paper and distributing them a good distance from each other on the rehearsal hall floor. Our Friar was instructed to, quite literally, drag me to and fro about the room as he turned and returned to and from each concept as well as, finally, picking up the sheets of paper and shoving them forcefully into my hands and pockets in order to make sure that the ideas had been sufficiently received. We then moved on and repeated a similar process with the much shorter but even more “fixated” speech below.

What, rowse thee man, thy Juliet is alive  
 For whose deare sake thou wast but lately dead.  
 There are thou happy. Tybalt would kill thee,  
 But thou slew'st Tybalt, there art thou happie.  
 The law that threatened death became thy Friend,  
 And turn'd it to exile, there art thou happy. (Ibid., 3.5.1954–60)

Having, through these exercises, forged a psycho-physical, muscular connection with the thoughts themselves as well as their interlocking structure, this young actor was now able to jettison these accoutrements and stand and deliver the text with the clarity and authority of a wise patriarch much my senior; an ability he was to sustain, and build upon, from that moment in the rehearsal hall straight through to closing night. In my own classroom, twenty-five years later, my students always begin their initial work on sonnets and speeches by writing out every significant noun on individual cue cards and exploring their rhetorical/emotional relations by handling them in a similarly rough-hewn manner. The payoffs are consistently abundant year after year.

In the intervening years, a profound book of acting theory has emerged that has most helpfully provided me with a robust language to knit the Stanislavski system together with the pedagogies of Lecoq/Zaslove and Freeman with an articulateness well beyond my own youthful cobbling of years gone by: *The Actor and the Target*, by Anglo-Irish director Declan Donnellan. Presenting a kind of rough and heady heuristic that seems to echo notions of “intentionality” in the proto-phenomenological work of Franz Brentano, Donnellan (2002, 18) posits that “the conscious mind is always present with [a] ‘something else’” outside itself. He dubs this “something else” “the Target” and insists that, given the fact that “all doing must be done *to* something . . . . The actor can do nothing without the target. It may be real or imaginary, concrete or abstract, but the unbreakable first rule is that at all times and without exception there must be a target” (ibid., 19). While this idea may sound like a mere recapitulation of Stanislavski, Donnellan goes on to clearly distinguish the target by insisting that it is “not an objective, want, plan, reason, intention, focus or motive” (27). It is, rather, a “thing” to which any number of transitive verbs can be applied and that is subject to the following rules.

- 1—There is always a target.
- 2—The target always exists outside, and at a measureable distance.
- 3—The target exists before you need it.
- 4—The target is always specific.
- 5—The target is always transforming.

6—The target is always active.  
(Donnellan 2002, 19–25)

The fact that the target can be real, imaginary, concrete, or abstract yet is constrained by the criteria above provides the actor a greater cognitive flexibility than the Stanislavski system regularly allows without sacrificing the exacting specificity of focus that, through its effectiveness in combating the kind of self-generated, generalized emotional reverie that is the amateurish hallmark of most successful high-school actors, has continued to make the system the bedrock of post-secondary actor training for the last century. In rendering playable such actions as *I reassure myself*, *I welcome death*, or *I try to blind myself to the future*, Donnellan's robustly formulated and thoroughly articulated methodology emerges as a highly effective bridge, demonstrating for students that the distance from the Stanislavskian fundamentals providing the foundation of their training to the "speedy dance of ever-changing thought" demanded by the Freeman approach to Shakespeare is not so great after all.

Few theatrical tropes could forge a link between the intricate verbal/imaginative demands of classical text à la Freeman and the comedic finesse required in the clown/bouffon tradition à la Lecoq than a treatment of the classic "double take," à la Donnellan. First, he lays out its fundamental features on the level of more or less basic stage directions.

- Step One: "Good morning, Vicar!"—you look at him.
- Step Two: You look at the chrysanthemums.
- Step Three: While still looking at the chrysanthemums, you realize the vicar is not wearing any trousers.
- Step Four: You look back at him aghast.

He then parses the same sequence of actions, providing the type of cognitive elaborations implicit in the application of his target heuristic.

- Step One: You "look at" the vicar but do not "see" him and imagine he is his usual respectable self.
- Step Two: You think you have finished with greeting the vicar and so set about pruning the chrysanthemums.
- Step Three: The real image of the vicar in his spotted shorts materializes before your eyes.
- Step Four: You look back at him to confirm that the knobby knees quake there in embarrassing reality. (Donnellan 2002, 30)

The isomorphic relation of the double-take *lazzi* as described above with "The Child's Bedroom" étude in terms of both the external precision



and inner imaginative processes of the actor is strikingly illuminated, and can be similarly extended to Neil's unravelling of the serpent's coils and the discovery and description of the sculpture image.

The ability to clearly delineate and guide self and audience along the "stepping stones of argument" is, while essential, not sufficient on its own to produce the quality of Shakespearean acting Neil sought for his students. Without the "attendant emotional release," the work might be fairly impressive on the level of technical proficiency but would lack the capacity to truly transport the audience into a realm of deep identification. Having taught voice and speech early in his career, Neil was more acutely aware than most teachers of acting/scene study that the process of unlocking this response begins with the actor's breath. Having collaborated closely with North America's pre-eminent voice specialist for so many years, it is not surprising that he would embed fundamental features of her work within his own pedagogy.

Kristin Linklater has devoted much of her energy to disrupting actors' "habitual" relationship to words and developing methods to "channel" them "off the page and into the sensorium"; insisting that "when words are *seen, tasted, touched, felt*, they penetrate and break up patterns of thought" (Linklater 1992, 31). Like the other practitioners with whom Neil's work converses so well, the framework of her method is one of serially articulated detail rather than the "generalized gloss" or "predestined straight line" against which Neil is similarly on guard:

The discrete character and autonomous function of each word must come to life in the imagination and be experienced in the sensory and emotional nerve centers and nerve-endings. The experienced meaning of the word must then be channeled out through the vowel and consonant paths of vibration and appetite articulators. The word on the page *becomes* its meaning-in-the-imagination, the meaning *becomes* imagination-experienced-in-the-body (sensorily and/or emotionally), and the experienced-meaning *becomes* the spoken word. (Ibid.)

Linklater expresses this schematically as moving from the habitual reading pattern:

**Printed word ↗ eye ↗ frontal lobe ↗ thinking about ↗ spoken about**

To the "re-patterned mechanism":

**Printed word ↗ eye ↗ image ↗ breath ↗ feeling ↗ experience/memory/emotion ↗ sound ↗ spoken word (34)**

This re-patterning is introduced through an exercise, taken up and adapted by Neil, in which key words from the text are isolated from each other on a piece of paper, along with accompanying questions regarding each word, and students are led through the following set of instructions.

1. Look at the word.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Let the word drop into the solar plexus/sound/energy centre.
4. Let the emotion/sound/energy response release out through the vowel and consonant channels that form the word—running through any or all parts of the body, animating into movement as it goes.
5. Open your eyes and look at the question or instruction on the page.
6. Close your eyes and let the word release through you again. (36)

Questions are formatted in the following manner using “power” as an example.

POWER

Close eyes—“POWER”

WHERE DO YOU FEEL IT IN YOUR BODY?

Close eyes—“POWER”

WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL POWERFUL?

Close eyes—“POWER”

ARE OTHER PEOPLE MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU?

Close eyes—“POWER”

WHAT COULD YOU ACHIEVE WITH POWER?

Close eyes—“POWER” (38)

Following this type of exploratory work, Neil guides students back to the re-assembled text where, in Linklater’s words, the emotional experiences of the imagery within the words (in contrast to a literary, metaphorical treatment of them) “create an inner drama to be revealed directly and transparently through the medium of the words” (33). Placed back in their proper context, the words now collide in dynamic and, often, conflicting ways. Linklater tells her actors that “conflicting images creating conflicting emotions will ‘act’ you and, to a large extent, the genius of the originator of the language will make intelligent sense of your emotions if you just keep on speaking” (33).

For Neil, an exemplary occurrence of this powerful phenomenon is the list of oxymoronic descriptions of Romeo uttered by Juliet upon learning that he has slain her cousin Tybalt. After exploring the words

“fiend” and “angelical” in a manner similar to the one described above, he coaches an imagined actor through their recombination, as per Linklater:

Now try putting both words together into the phrase, “fiend-Angelical,” but feel/breathe the two different words. Say “fiend” and experience the image and total sensual recall as you speak: let the image go as soon as you have spoken it, and straightaway sensually experience/speak the word “angelical.” The movement, or “focus shift” is akin to a quick trip from hell to heaven with no rest or pause for breath; it’s dizzying, almost breath taking. The shift in subject matter is enormous. There are almost two different images in the same piece of sculpture, and each separate image is so powerful that each engenders an entirely different, violently clashing, sensual recollection. And this is the journey poor Juliet has to take not once but three times in a row, for from this violently clashing pair of images she moves immediately into “dove-feathered raven” followed straightaway by “wolvish ravening/lamb.” (47)

Echoing Linklater’s admonition to “just keep on speaking,” Neil reassures us that, if the actor keeps “sensually and deftly changing in response to each new image . . . the sounds of the word will take care of itself” (47). For Neil, nothing less than this deft and fully embodied dance along these staggered stepping stones of darkness and light would amount to a satisfactory performance. Something akin to a particularly spectacular piece of stick-handling by a gifted hockey player; an image that would certainly have been applauded by Lecoq. In addition to the distinctive manner in which it encapsulates some of the particular demands of Shakespearean performance, this passage seems to exemplify Lyne’s notion of the stresses and strains of a character’s thought reflected in the stresses and strains of the character’s language with which we began this appraisal of Neil’s pedagogical legacy.

In my classroom, that legacy is foundational as students begin to tackle Shakespeare by isolating key words from their texts on individual cue cards. The first stop on our subsequent journey of exploration includes the sensual/emotional exploration developed by Linklater and Freeman, followed by an exhaustive process through which we strive to trace the sinuous unfolding of the serpent’s coils and the multi-faceted surfaces of the word-sculptures before us, as Neil has revealed them, and, augmented by the collective wisdom of some of the field’s other great pioneers, render them before audiences in a manner resonating with the most advanced contemporary understanding of the dynamics of human thought itself. I wish that teacher/practitioners would set aside assumptions formed in the Folio wars, grab hold of whatever text

will best suit the needs of their students/actors, and embark on a similar journey. For those searching in earnest for ways to access the bottomless riches of Shakespeare's texts in performance, I believe that the path forged by Neil Freeman remains worth following.

## WORKS CITED

- Donnellan, Declan. 2002. *The Actor and the Target*. London: Nick Hern Books.
- Freeman, Neil. 1994. *Shakespeare's First Texts*. North Vancouver, BC: Folio Scripts.
- von Kleist, Heinrich. 1951. "On the Gradual Construction of Thoughts While Speaking." Trans. M. Hamburger. *German Life and Letters*. 5 (1): 42-46.
- Lecoq, Jacques. 2001. *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre*. Translated by D. Bradby. London: Routledge.
- Linklater, Kristin. 1992. *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice: The Actors Guide to Talking the Text*. New York: Theatre Communications Group.
- Lyne, Raphael. 2011. *Shakespeare, Rhetoric, and Cognition*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
- Shakespeare, William. 1990. *The Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet: Edited from Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies. 1623*. Agincourt, ON: Folio Scripts.

# Rhyme and Reason: Shakespeare's Exceptional Status and Role in Canadian Education

DANA M. COLARUSSO

## INTRODUCTION

For over a century, Shakespeare has maintained an exceptional status in the educational curriculum of Canada. Although education is a provincial responsibility, Shakespeare's prominence in the English Language Arts curriculum has remained remarkably constant from coast to coast (with the notable exceptions of Quebec and Aboriginal education).

Canadian teachers contribute to "Shakespearituality"<sup>1</sup>—a unique regenerative energy which they strive to pass on to their young students. Yet the prominence of Shakespeare in Canadian provincial curricula cannot be taken for granted, nor will it necessarily endure, especially in the twenty-first century and in a multicultural society attuned to postcolonial discourse. New forces are at work, including a wealth of other literary choices, new modes of education, enhanced parental and student involvement, and increasingly open accountability processes. All of these forces of change pose the possibility of re-evaluating and displacing Shakespeare from the curriculum. While Shakespeare as a world-wide phenomenon proceeds unabated, can and should his resonance in Canada persist amid this shifting educational scene?

Among the gatekeepers of the curriculum, teachers play a significant role. In Canada, each province sets its curriculum policies, and determines learning objectives across grades and subjects. Typically, a

panoply of educators, subject experts, and public representatives engage in a substantial consultation process before establishing a new curriculum. A common trait of the process is the limited scope of curriculum policies that mandate key areas of content knowledge and learning objectives; however, these do not prescribe the specific sequence of units or instructional strategies, and rarely do they dictate the texts or resources to be used.<sup>2</sup> While some provinces publish lists of recommended books, individual school-based practices also play a determining role in shaping curricula. Teachers generally continue to be free to use their professional judgement in deciding on texts. Only in a few cases, such as the Saskatchewan and Alberta language-arts programs, is the study of Shakespeare mandated rather than left to teacher discretion. However, even in provinces where no mandate exists, emphasis on Shakespeare units, sometimes in every year of high school, continues to feature in many English programs. Hence, a second inevitable question is why this is so, given more than a quarter century of anti-hegemonic critique in many fields of postsecondary education?

In this regard, my own experience as a Canadian teacher and Shakespeareophile can serve as a reference point. Teaching English in the Ontario secondary-school system at the turn of the millennium, I had responded confidently to students' questions about why they had to study Shakespeare. Inimitable poetry, universal themes, empathy for the human condition, and profound influence on language and culture were my habitual responses and those of my colleagues. It was only after several years that I began to hear less the inexperience and more the earnestness of my students' questions. While striving to support the needs of diverse learners, and learning more about their own cultural stories, I came to ask "What is English?" and to wonder at the grammatical duality of the term "English teacher." I began to puzzle at the contradictions within my own profession of "English" in Canada and to reflect on cultural and linguistic loss. These questions led to my research on English teaching in the global age, where I recognized Shakespeare as a literary taproot in a Western imaginary nurtured in no small part by education (Colarusso 2009, 24).

In this chapter I will probe Shakespeare's exceptional status and role in Canadian education by analyzing historical and contemporary educational documents; and by drawing on interviews with Ontario English teachers<sup>3</sup> and on my own experience of teaching English between 1999 and 2007. I will explore to what extent Shakespeare literacy—that is, an informed understanding of a selection of the plays and

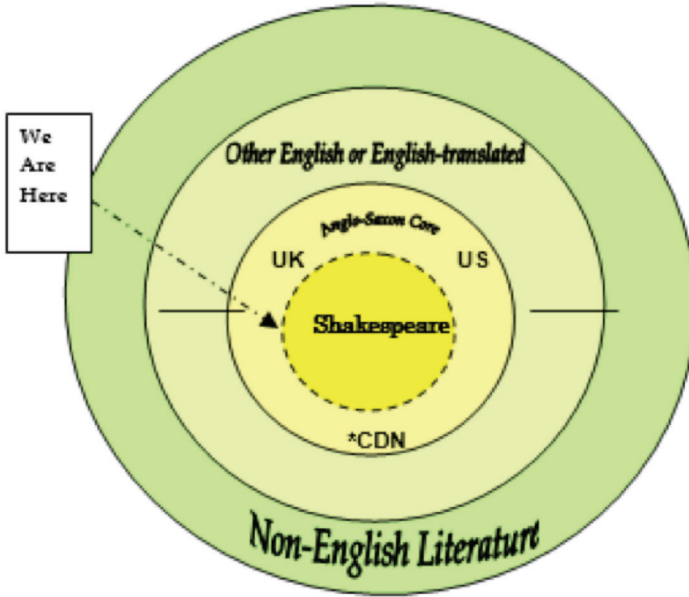


Figure 1: We Are Here.

the requisite skills for further study and appreciation—reflects Canadian society and continues to shape who we are in the world. Finally, I will suggest areas for change and further inquiry in hopeful pursuit of understanding the significance of Shakespeare literacy to Canada.

### SHAKESPEARE EDUCATION AND BRITISH ROOTS

“Every pupil who passes through a high school will be reasonably familiar with the works of all the great poets, such as Shakespeare, Milton, Cowper, Wordsworth, Byron, Scott, Coleridge, Longfellow, etc.” (Ross 1896, 122). Thus assured his readers the Honourable George W. Ross, Minister of Education in Ontario from 1883 to 1899, in his report *The School System of Ontario: Its History and Distinctive Features* (Ross 1896). It was not likely that Shakespeare’s top billing on the minister’s list was accidental; Ross was following in the tracks of other intrepid pioneers of Canadian education, most notably Egerton Ryerson, the Superintendent of Education responsible for the School Act of 1871, which made education free, universal, and compulsory in Ontario. In his eagerness to uplift the education system, Ross often cited the British cultural heritage as a hallmark of quality. His pride in Canadian achievement and ambition for international stature is evident at the start of his



speech “On the Policy of the Education Department” (Ross 1897), where he cites the 1893 Chicago World Fair’s award to the Ontario education exhibit, for presenting “A system of public instruction almost ideal in the perfection of its details, and the unity that binds together in one great whole all the schools from the Kindergarten to the University” (Ross 1897, frontispiece). Though Ross was promoting the Ontario system, there was much educational uniformity throughout fledgling Canada up until the 1930s (Gidney and Millar 2012, 6–7). This continuity ensured Shakespeare’s place in high school, teacher training, and university programs alike.

High-school curricula were academically rigorous and were also intended to build moral character (Gidney and Millar 2012, 210; Ross 1897, 24). Documenting the mid-century push to develop a high-school system and finance the construction of schools, educational historian W. N. Bell described the substantive curriculum that was to be enacted, citing among very few specific literary examples Shakespeare and Milton “for Senior Matriculation with Honours into the University” (Bell 1918, 131). Further, as Ross reported, pupils were expected to demonstrate “an intelligent and appreciative comprehension of the best literature of the day . . . and acquaint themselves with “the best writers of the English language” (Ross 1897, 122). Ross’s nostalgic patriotism for the cultural achievements of the United Kingdom, “that land of peerless literature and romance” (Ross 1897, page 24), expressed faith in British literary works as uniting Canadians with the “highest standards” of the past and as cultivating “intellectual vigor and strength of character” (ibid.). Likewise, “first class” teacher candidates required foundations in the complete poems of the “best” English and American writers: “for instance, *The Ancient Mariner*, from Coleridge; *Evangeline*, from Longfellow; *The Merchant of Venice* and *Richard II*, from Shakespeare, several poems and sonnets from Wordsworth, and a few selections from Campbell” (76–7). Notably, two Shakespeare plays make the minister’s list, compared with one each of the shorter works by the other exemplary poets. Third-class certification similarly required knowledge of “the best poets” (73–4), but candidates were expected only to memorize the “finest passages.” Second-class teachers were held to the same standard, though their English papers were more comprehensive and therefore more difficult to write (75). Thus, from the earliest stages of the creation and development of high-school curricula, it was evident both that pupils had to devote considerable time to learning Shakespeare and that, in turn, teachers were well-prepared to teach the plays to the next generation.

Cultural continuity in the new world was another reason for Shakespeare's early dominance in the Canadian educational context. High-school English courses included "reading, grammar, rhetoric, composition, literature, history, and geography" (122). Of equal importance for matriculation to university or the "normal school" for teaching was mastery of Latin and Greek poetic models. The classics provided a window into the Elizabethan mind, as did Shakespeare's plays, with their many classical allusions. Invoking Aeneas' tale to Dido, for example, the Player in *Hamlet* appeals to collective memory and continuity with the past.

Through Shakespeare, Canadians articulated a humanist curriculum. Recitations of Shakespeare initially re-inscribed the unity of Canadian culture with one that looked to, and vied with, the Greeks and Romans as potent examples of the power of language to express collective existence. Over time the Latin bar lost its place in education here, as elsewhere, but English remained one of the most important courses,<sup>4</sup> carrying the study of Shakespeare, its classical vestiges and humanist enterprise, along with it (Gidney and Millar 2012, 217, 245–6). Thus Shakespearean education has had an uninterrupted role in linking a bilingual, (now) multicultural Canada to its British roots. School celebrations of Empire Day, on the school day preceding Queen Victoria's birthday, reflected Canada's collective sense of itself as "a senior member in a British Empire that bestrode the world, bringing freedom, justice, and enlightenment to millions of its subjects" (ibid., 214). Further, the incubation of British culture in its former colony prepared the way for "Shakespeare literacy" in Canada.

Significantly, the high literary standards were not designed in theory to make teaching or university studies exclusive; rather, the vision was one of social mobility. The development of the high-school curriculum was geared to all levels of society so that the children of shopkeepers, farmers, and merchants alike could aspire to "any position for which manhood and character are the qualifications" (Ross 1897, 24). At the very least, successful high-school matriculation would ensure more favourable consideration with potential employers (Gidney and Millar 2012, 253). Fashioning a spirit of individualism of Canada's own, educational pioneers such as Ross and Ryerson championed equal access that would allow citizens to aspire beyond class or family occupation, and the nation as a whole to aspire to a higher standing in the world. In a speech delivered to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, Ross's defense of the need to improve and build more high schools appealed directly to the idea of social mobility (Ross 1897, 24):

But then education induces people to aspire beyond their station in life. Who has any right to fix a man's station in life? Vassalage perished in England with the Plantagenets. Is it proposed to restore it so that he that is born a laborer shall be a laborer still and he that is born a blacksmith shall be a blacksmith still?

Hence, well before the 1949 Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (familiarily known as the Massey Report after its chairman, Vincent Massey) directed unprecedented federal funds toward Canada's cultural growth, the vision of a culturally strong, free, and independent nation drove liberal education. At the same time, it was a vision that relied on English cultural capital, for which Shakespeare was the symbolic flagship. The Massey Report, commissioned by Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, identified Canada's need for massive cultural infrastructure support, particularly in view of the growing cultural power of the United States, perceived as a threat to Canadian autonomy. Of particular concern was the lack of resources and venues for Canadian theatre arts. Constituting a major part of its response was the recommendation to establish a national arts council to provide grants to artists and artistic projects, an initiative that dovetailed with the emergence of Canada's first great Shakespeare venue. For half a century, education ministers, deans, and professors had overseen curriculum development, teacher training, and matriculation, setting the stage for an English Language Arts curriculum steeped in Shakespeare. In turn, a Canadian society raised in Shakespeare literacy helped create the conditions of public interest and appreciation that allowed a small town in Ontario, aided by the Massey Commission, to launch what would become the most important Shakespeare theatre site in North America, the Stratford Festival.<sup>5</sup>

In sum, Shakespeare in the Canadian educational system has been largely historically determined, partly as the product of British patriotism and partly as a relatively disinterested attachment to Shakespeare as a cultural life raft in the rough seas of a new world.<sup>6</sup> Despite radical changes in Canadian society and, more particularly, in education, Shakespeare remains one of Canada's deepest British affiliations.

## **SHAKESPEARE IN THE CANADIAN HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULA, BY PROVINCE**

Provincial jurisdiction over education in Canada allows curricula to be tailored according to regional and/or provincial priorities. Nonetheless, all the curriculum documents follow a roughly similar pattern of, first,

introductory matter mapping the conceptual framework for assessment and instruction, followed next by a set of learning goals indicating key learning areas for each major subset of the subject. The documents also provide several examples of strategies or methods teachers may use to achieve the learning goal. Across the curricula, it is most often within the latter examples that references to Shakespeare arise, though Shakespeare figures exceptionally in various ways, whether in a notable number of references, an extended instructional exemplar, as seen in Nova Scotia's program, or a specific stated indication that one or more of the plays must be taught, as is the case with Alberta and Saskatchewan. Where Shakespeare is part of the stated learning goal ("objective" or "outcome") as in the latter provincial curricula, there can be no doubt of a stronger and more direct commitment to his place in the instructional program. As typically no other author or works receive such emphasis in these documents,<sup>7</sup> it is evident that Shakespeare continues to have a heightened importance in Language Arts instruction in Canada.

A possible alternative interpretation is that Shakespeare's prevalence in the twenty-first century indicates curricular inertia. However, since in most cases the documents have been rigorously revised within the last five to fifteen years to reflect contemporary issues and technological affordances, the bardic examples are more likely the result of conscious design than of indifference.<sup>8</sup> From British Columbia to the Atlantic provinces, a picture emerges of Shakespeare not merely as an author or set of texts but as an established area of study. I examine provincial Language Arts programs exclusively (excluding Prince Edward Island's), as education in the territories—Nunavut, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories—presents complex distinctions beyond the scope of this paper.

### **British Columbia**

The regular Language Arts program in British Columbia, Grades 8–12, reflects the typical use of Shakespeare for instructional purposes, though these are few in number and occur only in the Grade 10 and 11 programs.<sup>9</sup> In Grade 10, a Shakespeare example is listed as one of the achievement indicators for the goal to "discern multiple meanings of words based on context" (British Columbia, English Language Arts 10, 120). The "achievement indicator" is to demonstrate how the word "star" relates to Elizabethan advances in navigation. In Grade 11, a Shakespeare example is one of the achievement indicators for the goal, "write and represent

to interpret, analyse, and evaluate ideas.” The achievement indicator is to “create a response showing how Shakespeare presents Banquo as a character foil to Macbeth” (British Columbia, English Language Arts 11, 118). A more direct commitment to Shakespeare literacy is evident in the optional Senior English course (“English Literature 12”) for students in their graduating year. Here, Shakespeare citations occur twenty-eight times, within various places, including *Specified Readings* (*Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest*), the *Appendix of Key Literary Terms* (“Shakespearean Sonnet”), and within the strand *Literary Tradition of the English Language (Classical to Present)* as an example of a target skill: “Compare the purpose and style of plays (e.g., *Everyman*, Marlowe’s *Faust*, and a Shakespeare history)” (ibid., 12). In the Canadian territory of Yukon, schools generally follow the British Columbia curriculum.

### **Alberta**

The current Alberta program of study, English Language Arts Grades 10 to 12, instances a case where Shakespeare is explicitly “required” (Alberta Learning, Alberta Canada 2003, 10).<sup>10</sup> Of the two streams available for the three senior years of high school, the “one series” courses require “proficiency in sentence construction”; the “two series” courses offer more diverse texts and genres providing the opportunity to “develop sentence construction skills.” In all three of the one-series program years, “a greater degree of emphasis is given to the study of essays and Shakespearean plays.” Notably, there are no such references to other playwrights. An Alberta student will therefore likely have studied at least three Shakespeare plays before graduation. In the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, the English Language Arts curriculum generally defers to the Alberta Language Arts curriculum, though curriculum revision aimed at instilling local values and beliefs is underway.

### **Saskatchewan**

Saskatchewan’s English Language Arts program is similar to Alberta’s in respect to Shakespeare. In the Grade 10 “first series” program, students require “proficiency with sentence construction” and there is a mandated “Teacher Guided Study” of a play.<sup>11</sup> Teacher-guided study (TGS) refers to a selection that is studied in some detail for a specific purpose and involves explicit instruction (Saskatchewan. Ministry of Education [2013], 33). The document further indicates with an asterisk and examples that the play in question, “\*Must be Shakespeare (*Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth*).” Notably, throughout the Saskatchewan

Language Arts document, Shakespeare is the only author ever to be asterisked; that is, he is a mandated playwright and all the others are, by definition, optional.

### **Manitoba**

Manitoba's English Language Arts Curriculum Framework for the three senior years of high school (Senior 1, Senior 2, and Senior 3) contains no mention of Shakespeare.<sup>12</sup> This remains the case in the Senior 3 curriculum in all three of its strands: literary, comprehensive, and transactional. At the time of writing, Manitoba appears to rely on a Language Arts curriculum it developed in collaboration with the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (WNCP), the Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts, of 1998. The WNCP's purpose was to identify shared western and northern Canadian perspectives and K–12 (Kindergarten to Grade 12) learning resources among Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut for the subjects of math, social studies, and language arts. The protocol expired in 2015 and most member provinces have since independently revised their Language Arts curricula.

Though the main Manitoba program documents do not instance Shakespeare, the companion *Learning Resources Annotated Bibliography* for senior years 3 and 4 (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003, 35) highlights a compact disc, *Walter Borden Reads Sonnets by William Shakespeare to the Music of Fernando Sor*. The entry also notes a teacher's guide that outlines the artistry in Shakespeare's sonnets and describes activities for engaging students in listening, interpreting, reading, and presenting sonnets. There is in addition a Compiled Learning Resources Kindergarten to Grade 10, which cites nine resources for Shakespeare, covering plays such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and *Twelfth Night* among several others. In the latter, suggested use by grade level begins with introductory Shakespeare lessons in Grade 8.

### **Ontario**

The Ontario high-school English curriculum (revised in 2007; see Ontario Ministry of Education [2007a, 2007b]) is significantly weightier than its 1997 predecessor, with additions such as detailed descriptions of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the province, updated discussion of changed literacies and information technologies, as well as new references to global citizenship, cultural sensitivity, and intercultural

communication. The curriculum does not reference any author (including any Canadian author) other than Shakespeare, who is named eleven times within examples of instructional strategies. Thus, although Shakespeare is not compulsory, as is the case in Saskatchewan, his exceptional presence in the Ontario Language Arts curriculum conveys a prevailing significance.

### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Newfoundland is Canada's fourth-largest island and joined Confederation only in 1949.<sup>13</sup> In the first stream (university pathway) of its English Language Arts program, Shakespeare plays are specifically named among classroom texts for student-directed and teacher-supported reading and viewing: *Romeo and Juliet* for Grade 9 (Newfoundland English Language Arts: 9, 309) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Grade 10 (Newfoundland English Language Arts: 10, 129). An example provided is to translate a Shakespearean selection "or other literary text" into "modern language or specific dialect such as Newfoundland or hip hop" (ibid.). In the second stream, designed for strengthening literacy skills, there is no mention of Shakespeare for classroom texts for student-directed and teacher-supported reading, although in the Grade 11 second stream a suggested resource provides an "Audio Version of Shakespeare Plays." Also, within the Grade 11 program, *Appendix Q: Resources* (108) names both the Global Shakespeare Series *Macbeth*, with teacher's guide and related readings, and the Harcourt Series *Othello* and its teacher's guide. Thus, though the teaching of these is not expressly directed, it is implied that first-stream Newfoundland students will have studied four Shakespeare plays by their graduating year.

### **New Brunswick**

In the New Brunswick Language Arts program, a curriculum suggestion for Grade 12 is for students to "demonstrate familiarity with works of diverse literary traditions—works by women and men of many racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in different times and parts of the world, including Shakespeare (New Brunswick. Department of Education and Early Childhood Education [1998, 108]). Curriculum documents for English 12 lists poetry, prose, and drama as genres to be studied, and, parenthetically, "script, live drama, film, modern drama, Shakespearean drama" (ibid., 133). Here again, Shakespeare appears as an area of study, rather than as an author.



## Nova Scotia

References to Shakespeare in Nova Scotia's Language Arts curriculum appear as they do in New Brunswick, with the same wording to describe the diverse literary traditions, "including Shakespeare" (Nova Scotia. Department of Education and Culture [1997, 61, 62]).

In addition, appendix 6 provides a full-page exemplar of a "Scenario" for Grade 12, a *Hamlet* lesson (ibid., 190). The scenario begins:

Students in Grade 12 are learning about language in the global context, relating to the power of audience, the power of speech, and the power of the speaker. During the study of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, students become aware of the power, evils and obsessive nature of revenge. The moral and social implications of revenge were of interest to the Elizabethan audience and continue to intrigue individuals in the twentieth century.

## Quebec

A French-language province, Quebec has two publicly funded school boards; both offer French- and English-language instruction (Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement [n.d.]). According to the Charter of the French Language (also known as Bill 101) all children must attend a French-language school; First Nations children are exempt, as are children whose parents or a sibling have received most of their education in English Canada. Each system offers an array of second-language programs, from elementary to high school: FSL (French as a Second Language) in the English system and ESL (English as a Second Language) in the French system, as well as immersion programs in both. The content of the ESL and English immersion curriculum in French boards in Quebec is not included in this brief outline. In the English system, English Language Arts for the secondary (high-school) program is divided into cycle 1 and cycle 2. For both, there are "compulsory" repertoires of texts, though by "texts" is meant particular genres, for instance young-adult literature, narrative-based texts, and nonfiction (Québec [n.d.], 113 and throughout). Shakespeare is absent from the "Selected Bibliography." Therefore, the extent to which Shakespeare figures in the English Language Arts program as experienced in Quebec schools cannot be discerned from the official program.

To conclude, although the policy documents examined above variously reflect mandates and guidelines for teachers to follow, they do not necessarily reflect what is happening in the schools of any of the provinces in Canada. Review cycles, to revise and update policy material,

take place at various times and often involve catching up to new practices that are already present. The extent to which the policy manuals prescribe, recommend, or reference Shakespeare indicate that, at an administrative level, Shakespeare continues to figure more prominently as a planned area of study than any other author or set of works in the regular high-school Language Arts curriculum.

### *The Beauty and the Beast of School Shakespeare*

It was recognized as early as the nineteenth century in Canada that “There are many subjects easier to teach, and making smaller demands upon the instructor, than English” (Bell 1918, 127). While the conscious choice to keep Shakespeare on the curriculum can hardly be explained by ease of instruction or student demand,<sup>14</sup> there are many pedagogical reasons for his staying power. In a practical sense, Shakespeare is ideal material for the high-school classroom. The stories are captivating, the play lengths are suitable, the adult content is rarely inappropriate or gratuitous, and the large corpus offers abundant versatility: drama, poetry, and prose rolled into one, a variety of themes and genres, and the potential for memorable trips to the theatre to complement and extend classroom study.

In my own experience as a high-school teacher during the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Shakespeare unit was often fun, once past initial complaints of “Why do we have to read this?” and “What language is this?” I recall students acting out the slaying of Tybalt and Mercutio with noisy Star Wars light-sabre swords, Ophelias and Juliets lying along a row of desks to “tableau” their demise, and one group’s video-taped adaptation of a scene in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in which the flower potion was replaced with a magic TV remote to pause, reverse, and revise the outcome of an encounter. For *Othello*, I engaged students in reading and clipping newspapers to create murals illustrating the contemporary relevance of themes in the play, such as war, racism, and violence against women. Numerous are the teachers who perform more marvellous feats to ensure that the hours spent on the plays are joyful and memorable.<sup>15</sup>

However, the teaching and learning challenges were and are many. Multiple keys unlock the richness of the plays for high-school students, including knowledge of theatre conventions and literary and intellectual concepts and currents. Among the tasks students perform are recognizing speakers of a passage, identifying poetic and dramatic devices, explicating lines, and demonstrating their significance to the rest of the

play. Perhaps one reason Shakespeare is taught year by year and as early as Grade 6 is that Shakespeare literacy takes significant time.

It also takes instructional skill and good judgment. A retired English teacher recently explained, “As you know kids cannot listen for more than five minutes . . . kids are bored, and most teachers feel threatened” (Colarusso, 16). He suggested that engaging them in acting, using appointment schedules, and cooperative approaches, such as inside/outside circles and reader’s theatre, are critical for avoiding the doom of “chalk and talk.” A pre-service teacher added the importance of innovation and relevance: rap a soliloquy, or Facebook a dialogue. Another, recently returned from teaching in England, suggested playing charades to guess a scene, and making modern connections such as who would play Lady Macbeth in a contemporary interpretation of the play. As noted by Marta Straznicky (2002, 102), the producers of the CBC Radio reading series for high-school students in 1940s Canada articulated a similar challenge: “the trick is to keep things enlivening without becoming enslaved to erudition.”

Until 2003 the Ontario secondary-school system required a fifth year, Grade 13, and a typical high-school education might include not just some of the plays privileged today in curriculum citations, but also *Julius Caesar*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Henry IV*, parts 1 and 2, as first forays into the histories. Moreover, Grade 13 offered a second *optional* literature course, in which mentoring the intrinsically motivated could entail expanding on Shakespeare literacy with a close study of the sonnets, introductions to Ovid and Chaucer, perhaps even a class trip to see *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* or *Antigone*.

### ***Pourquoi Shakespeare?***

Shakespeare controversies in Canadian education are remarkably sporadic. Whereas staged Shakespeare, like the works of other great dramatists from Brecht to Molière, has served causes of social critique and political emancipation, Shakespeare used in education occasionally offends as a result of the nature of the content of a particular play.

In an article on early film censorship, *Toronto Star* writer Eric Veillette (2010) cited an archived news story from Ontario about a film version of *Hamlet* that was seized by Toronto police authorities. The story, from 1910, quoted a police inspector as saying “That’s all too well to say it’s a famous drama, but it doesn’t keep (it) from being a spectacle of violence.”<sup>17</sup> That representations of Shakespeare’s plays could risk the status quo went against the much-favoured idea at the time that

Shakespeare's works, like other examples of the best written words in the English language, promoted moral character (Ross 1897, 24). Moreover, Christian morality of a non-denominational kind was a common feature of all schooling until well past the first quarter of the twentieth century (McGovern 2014, 146; Gidney and Millar 2012, 210–17). Thus, the unified prevalence of Shakespeare in the curriculum (high school, teacher training, and university entrance matriculation) suggests that either there was early appreciation of its bawdy humour and violent scenes as necessary foils in otherwise morally salutary literature, or that these elements were carefully avoided in the instructional process. Though fewer of Shakespeare's plays are taught now (for example, as one result of the termination of Grade 13 in Ontario), scenes of violence and ribald humour are elements all the more valued as hooks for teaching the video-game generation.<sup>18</sup>

The absence of educational debate concerning Shakespeare continued until well past Canada's salad days, after the Charter of Rights and Freedoms hailed multiculturalism as a national value. In 1986, debate erupted in Waterloo, Ontario, over anti-Semitic harassment of Jewish students during a study of *The Merchant of Venice*. *Toronto Star* columnist Robert Fulford (1986) boldly sided against the teaching of the particular play, advancing an until-then little-considered notion: it may not always be appropriate to teach a particular Shakespeare play.<sup>19</sup> A similar flare-up had occurred in Ontario just prior to the Waterloo incident, in which a regional board of education removed the play from its Grade 9 curriculum.

Ironically, in rethinking Shakespeare we can gain a degree of perspectival variance by turning to Quebec, where the English master playwright unsurprisingly is neither paragon nor mandated writer. A 2013 governmental protocol invokes the co-alignment of government, culture, and education toward a common culture that negotiates its distinctiveness amid a changing social reality (Québec. Ministère de la Culture et des Communications [2013], preamble):

*La culture et l'éducation sont deux composantes essentielles de la vie de notre société. Chacune possède une valeur propre, mais elles concourent toutes deux à modeler, à éveiller, à développer, à affirmer et à enrichir la conscience et l'identité des Québécoises et des Québécois. Chacune contribue à forger la personnalité et la collectivité. En commun, leur action se renforce.*

Culture and education are two essential components of life in our society. Each has a distinct role, but they coincide in reflecting,

in awakening, in developing, and in affirming and enriching the consciousness and identity of Quebec society. Each contributes to the personal development of individuals and the development of the collectivity. Together, culture and education reinforce each other. (My translation)

Intercultural dialogue and awareness of texts as not culturally neutral but culturally charged are points of emphasis in the Quebec protocol's remarkable call to heightened cultural consciousness.

### *Dissenters in the Chorus*

Shakespeare's exceptional place in the educational curriculum was echoed throughout my interviews with fifteen Ontario teachers in 2009. All but two concurred that the works merited their place at the core due to factors such as their universal themes, but also because of their inherent cultural capital. Of the outliers, considerations such as equitable cultural representation and skill readiness were weighted above these traditional defenses. In a more recent interview, a retired teacher suggested that the question of why Shakespeare continues to predominate in the English Language Arts curriculum in Canada is flawed in the sense that Canada is not a special case: beyond policy documents, Shakespeare is all-pervasive in English education systems, and beyond. Sounding the widely held belief that there is no national or cultural basis for this pre-eminence, he stated, "Shakespeare's themes are for everyone and so they transcend cultural boundaries."

The double-edged sword of access to cultural capital and to school success was a constant theme in the data, reflecting the learning-for-all mantra of Canadian education. Streaming into academic and applied pathways encourages the use of plain-English "accessible" versions of Shakespeare for some students, but in all classes there will be any number of students who have a learning disability or are ESL learners. One teacher I spoke to described an ESL student's poignant awareness of language disparity while studying *King Lear*: the student said, "When you ask questions, Miss, I have all these thoughts, and . . . I would like to tell you, but I can't—I can't tell you in English" (Colarusso 2009, 132). On the one hand, there are growing resources and developing pedagogies for language learners. On the other hand, is it all too much? Does bardolatry lead to unrealistic and outdated expectations? After all, teenagers are addicted to songs, not sonnets. Burgeoning priorities in education suggest the need to redistribute curricular space for other types of learning conversations. This, together with curriculum obligations to

include a critical literacy focus in the teaching of language arts, makes teachers cultural workers who are called to question their own biases as they teach.<sup>20</sup> The following dialogue between two members of the same English department provides one illustration of this augmented level of reflective practice (ibid., 133):

*Interviewer:* As English teachers are we colonizers? If we teach in a multicultural society—Is it about eradicating cultural difference in the end?

*Art:* No. No . . . . [The] reason why I said I'd keep Shakespeare on is for universality, not: "Here is English and this is why it's going to be ruling" . . . . Or, "I'm choosing Shakespeare because it is the most important English writer."

*Gen:* I think you definitely think that [turning to Art].

*Art:* No I don't. I think it's there because of the richness of the tales and . . . the language, right? I don't think I have to say more than that . . . . I mean, I definitely would want to see more cultures represented on every course. So, I don't think it's that, either. I would throw out every other English novel, play, whatever, before I threw out Shakespeare because I would like that universality to stay there.

*Gen:* Yeah, but the universality of *The Merchant of Venice* is that a totally racist woman gets to kick down a Jewish guy and he is the greedy dog who at the end has to convert.

*Art:* But, you know what? The way we teach *The Merchant of Venice* –

*Gen:* But a lot of the kids after reading this are like, 'How are we supposed to be happy at the end?—That Portia is having her party?

*Art:* Exactly! . . . And I think that is a fantastic [premise]—

*Gen:* Because I had seven black kids in my class this year and they were all like, "She's a total racist."

*Art:* Yeah, I know. It's hard to dispute that, especially with the comment on the Prince of Morocco.

More aspects of the latent potential for debate on teaching Shakespeare are evident in an interview with several members of an English department at another school board, a school contending with low graduation rates and achievement scores on standardized texts. While the majority agreed on the importance of including Shakespeare in the curriculum despite the difficult challenges the works entailed (with the qualification that more diverse texts should be included), one colleague voiced strong

disagreement with the notion that Shakespeare is suitable for all learners (Colarusso 2009, 130–1):

You've got half the class who are struggling with literacy as it is, so the idea of introducing them to what is a language that is difficult is just going to alienate them further; it's rather stupid, if you ask me, actually. Like, if I was sitting there as a kid I wouldn't do it—it's just another barrier that I don't need, so why . . . ?

Does this latter perspective speak for the multitude of students? Do even the brightest and most successful students have misgivings about spending significant time parsing blank verse? To date, there is little data on student perspectives on Shakespeare. One fourteen-year-old I recently spoke with expressed appreciation for learning *Romeo and Juliet*, quickly qualifying, “but I don't understand why the teacher is such a fan girl about it.” He reflected further, adding that most students do not appreciate the excessive time spent on minutely analyzing metaphors. Visions of students elegantly versed in Shakespeare, destined to become lifetime theatre patrons, may be out of step with the fact that proportionally few graduates will later prioritize rereading or attending performances of the plays, and that only a small minority will go on to pursue literary studies. The young man quoted is highly successful in all subject areas but has his sights set on a science profession. Voices of young people, considered in terms of their postsecondary pathways, can provide both sobering and inspiring perspectives on the future of Shakespeare in school. At the same time, indications abound that youthful passion for Shakespeare is alive and well. Between 1953 and 1980, 1.5 million students attended pre-season shows at Stratford (Pettigrew and Portman 1985, 250) and student attendance has continued to be a priority. Stratford outreach programs, performances by troupes such as Company of Fools (located in Ottawa) that place the accent on high energy, glee, and physicality, and the National Arts Centre puppet workshops are but a few examples of delightful ways outside of the classroom that Shakespeare is reaching youth today. Exploring the ways that these programs connect vibrantly with diverse young people and make Shakespeare come alive is a valuable direction for Shakespeare language-arts pedagogy to take.

### ***Back to the Future: Curriculum Displacement***

As *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* explains, the term “classic” originated in the second century CE as an economic—*class*—distinction. *Scriptor classicus* referred to the writer who wrote for those in



the highest income bracket, and *scriptor proletarius*, by contrast, to a writer whose works addressed to those with income below the taxable limit (Preminger and Brogan 1993, 37). The idea of the “classics” as literary capital fuels advocates of cultural heritage who hold that educational equity cannot be achieved by depriving students of exposure to literary wealth, or the “canon” of literature. In this way, the permanence of canonical school texts finds justification in the idea of a right to equal access to English-language culture, a highly contested stance.<sup>21</sup>

Though seemingly imperturbable, Shakespeare and the preponderance of anglophone white literature in Canadian education is undergoing displacement. Many once standard high-school texts are fading from the syllabus. English teachers finger walk across *The Chrysalids* to reach for *The Bluest Eye*, and if stacks of *Duddy Kravitz*, *The Stone Angel*, and *The Tin Flute* still take up space in the book room, they are passed by for *The Mockingjay*, *The Kite Runner*, and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. It is not that motivation and relevance were not important before, it is that there are more diverse choices today. The phenomenon of elective, voracious reading of series like *The Hunger Games* and *Twilight*, or novel-to-film blockbusters like *The Life of Pi*, indicates strong youth reading preference for a spellbinding ride of twists and turns, likewise the success of graphic novels with reluctant readers, where the medium itself is verbally, visually, and spatially distinctive. Heads of English departments seeking to give students more voice and choice have taken the hint, and while not all teenagers enjoy the new peer-sanctioned texts, there is some melting of the old condition of students as captive audience to teacher/tradition-prescribed literature.

In this changing curricular landscape, some works are grappled (to our collective soul?) with hoops of steel: Canadian families enjoy cross-generational conversations about reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Lord of the Flies*, and *Death of a Salesman* in school. The same goes for *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, with a notable difference: unlike other reified works, Shakespeare texts predominate by their number, the amount of time allotted to their study, and the extent of vertical integration (increasingly in earlier grades) devoted to reinforcing their central importance.<sup>22</sup>

In the figure below the two-way arrow along the side suggests examples of literary works that are continuously subject to choice and change. The dashed line beneath the standard texts long in use indicates minimal displacement, whereas the solid line beneath Shakespeare suggests the relative lack of displacement. To date, the incremental use of

# English Curriculum Displacement

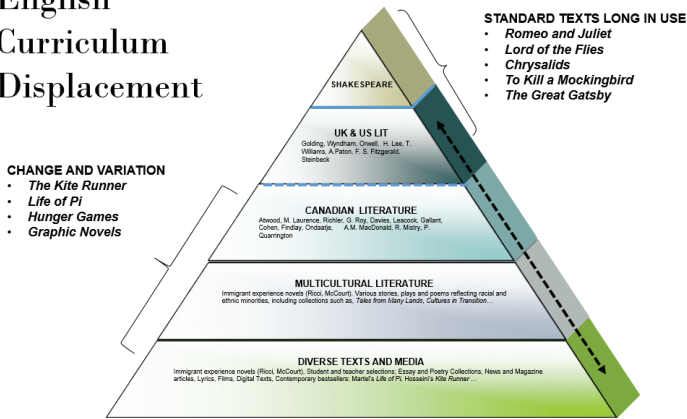


Figure 2: English Curriculum Displacement.

new literature with diverse appeal has yet to replace acquaintance with *King Lear* and *Hamlet* as hallmarks of a complete education. Rather, we are seeing vertical integration as the Shakespeare curriculum penetrates into younger and younger grade levels, undergirding a still-towering centrality. In effect, we can say Canadian society is “stamped” with Shakespeare consciousness, as a way of preparing us to converse with others, define ourselves, and read the world.

## Concluding Reflections

Canadian tolerance is shaped by *Romeo and Juliet*, Canadian compassion is informed by *King Lear*. Canadians know that those who smile can be villains, that leaders are troubled human beings, that good order and government belie chaotic forces, and that mercy seasons justice. So Shakespearean are we that while striving for our own truth, we still pay homage to a throned monarch. It can be argued that other very fine, yet more contemporary, diverse texts can nurture the same sensibilities and insights. Some predict that the concern for cultural appropriateness and the desire for a more responsive curriculum on the part of educators and parents will lead to a migration of Shakespeare content from the curriculum core to the margins. But the holding pattern is one where Shakespeare literally anchors the study of literature and, reflexively, is looked to for sustaining its value.

A bulwark against Shakespeare displacement in the curriculum in Canada is the vitality of his presence in Canadian theatre and the arts

in general. Teaching Shakespeare not solely as literary or historical texts but as drama augments his resonance for students. Some of the heads asleep on the books are dreaming of lives in the arts, and Shakespeare's longstanding role as a training ground for fledgling Canadian dancers, directors, writers, and costume designers cannot be forgotten. The best resources help assure vibrant school Shakespeare: pedagogical guides such as the *Shakespeare Set Free* series; the Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project, with its videotaped live performances ripe for student appreciation; and, wherever possible, trips to the theatre and to the Stratford Festival.<sup>23</sup>

In an educational age that values critical literacy, a questioning stance can help revitalize modes of Shakespeare learning. In 1962, Jean Gascon, the director of Théâtre du Nouveau Monde's first Shakespeare production, *Richard II*, asked "Pourquoi Shakespeare?" Gascon proceeded to supply the answer: "Because we have dreamed of this meeting with the most important dramatic poet for a long time. He has become necessary to us." For Gascon, the genius of "le Grand Will" made his place in Quebec culture inevitable. But he also felt it was necessary to "jostle" [*bousculer*] Shakespeare: "Without wanting to take liberties with the author, we have wanted to feel ourselves free" (see Lieblein 2002, 174–91). Gascon's vacillation between embracing and needing to jostle Shakespeare provides an interesting counterpoint to the Waterloo school-board controversy, where a community deemed a particular Shakespeare play harmful to and inappropriate for young readers. Do we teach Shakespeare because his works are unavoidable? Or do we jostle them? Perhaps teachers, like directors, are cultural workers. Perhaps the need in Canadian education, as in theatre, is to bring these plays into dialogue with local and contemporary issues, values, and modes of expression. Or in certain circumstances, should we choose simply not to teach Shakespeare? And what would happen if we un-tuned that string? Would sheer discord ensue?

At the same time, it is important to articulate rationales for teaching Shakespeare. In the course of progress, difficult truths have emerged in Canadian education. Late atonement for Aboriginal residential schools (government-funded church-administered boarding schools, which forced cultural assimilation on Aboriginal youth) and the continuing imbalance of racial and ethnic representation have catalyzed new curriculum priorities, especially to redress Aboriginal education and, in Ontario, an Afrocentric schooling initiative. These corrections to the notion that education gets things right all of the time should remind

us that Shakespeare literacy is not enough, that it is important to hold our curriculum to the test of an inclusive rationale. On an instructional level we have not only to question our methods and approaches but also to articulate our rationales and methodologies in particular locations: which Shakespeare plays, which methods, why, what is gained, and what is lost? In doing so, Canadian educators are transformed from hegemonic to *cultural workers*, within a context, like theatre, charged with mediating culture.

## NOTES

1. The term occurs within the poetry of the legendary former Stratford Festival director Robin Philips, recited in the documentary feature *Robin and Mark and Richard the III*, directed by Martha Burns and Susan Coyne (2016).
2. Maureen Callan, Education Officer at the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Education, graciously answered my questions by phone in March 2016. The official curriculum is more skills- than content-driven. While it is designed for educators, online publication ensures a high degree of public accountability. In recent years, the latter has included careful explanations of the review process and timelines. Notably, however, the current Ontario English Language Arts curriculum is unique from other provinces in not naming its writers and contributors. As Maureen Callan explained, the content is assembled from a wide variety of sources, and this collective authorship is what is understood by its assignment to the “Queen’s Printer.”
3. The original study (Colarusso 2009) looked at Shakespeare’s exceptionality within the broader questions of English teaching. My current research focuses on Shakespeare pedagogy. The interviews quoted took place between September 2015 and April 2016 with a retired English teacher who is now working as a curriculum consultant, a novice teacher, and a high school student.
4. Ross’s *Patriotic Recitations* (1893), displays the strident inculcation in Canadian schools of loyalty to the “ancient” British spirit which gave the world constitutional government and “the language of Shakespeare.” Thus, though once thought “the basis of a good English education” (Bell 1918, 76), the “Latin bar” gradually faded, and English studies grew ever stronger. Gidney and Millar (2012, 246, 253) locate the earliest record of enrolment to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics 1930 data for six provinces, “incorporating the vast majority of high school students in English Canada.” Ninety-two percent were enrolled in English since “it was taken for granted that intensive immersion in English composition and literature was essential for every high school student.” Today in Canada more English courses

are required than any other subject for completion of a secondary-school diploma.

5. The story of the Stratford Festival captures the abiding viability of Canadian Shakespeare production where capacity, public interest, and governmental support coincide. See, e.g., Tom Patterson and Alan Gould, *First Stage: The Making of the Stratford Festival* (1999) and Pettigrew and Portman (1985). I am grateful to Andrea Gammon, Education Director for the Stratford Festival, for her timely answers to my questions about the role of education in the history of Stratford. That the Festival's mission was tied to education from the start was clear in the first three articles of its original mission statement: "To promote interest in and the study of, the arts generally and literature, drama, and music, in particular; To advance knowledge and appreciation of and to stimulate interest in Shakespearean culture and tradition by theatrical performance and otherwise; To provide facilities for education and instruction in the arts of the theatre." Today, school groups, including a "huge number of elementary students" from various provinces and south of the border, attend at loss-leader ticket prices in order to ensure future audiences. The Festival Prologue series is a fine example of a contemporary educational initiative designed to engage students in dialogue with actors and dramatic experiences on the Stratford stage: <https://youtube/6Zx6dWi7mng>.
6. Shakespeare in Canada from pioneering days and on is chronicled in Brydon and Makaryk (2002).
7. Among extremely few examples of authors named besides Shakespeare within the Language Arts curriculum document itself is the citation for Art Spiegelman, both a character within and the author of *Maus* (1986), a graphic novel about a Holocaust survivor family (see British Columbia Education [2007], Grade 11, 118). Holocaust, First Nations, and immigrant literature, like Shakespeare, are areas of study within the literary suggestions of Language Arts programs.
8. The oldest revision date among the provincial curriculum documents at the moment is 1996 (Manitoba, Senior 1 English). Dates from grade to grade vary, as revised programs are released in a staged process, usually a year apart. Deputy Minister Daniel Gervais of the Manitoba Ministry of Education and Training recently confirmed that in Manitoba curriculum has now evolved beyond the WNCP frameworks.
9. British Columbia Education—Grades 10 and 11 (2007).
10. The three senior grades are contained within the one document: ELA 10-1 and ELA 10-2 ELA 20-1 and ELA 20-2 ELA 30-1 and ELA 30-2.
11. Saskatchewan. Ministry of Education, English Language Arts 10 (2011); English Language Arts 20 (2012); English Language Arts 30 (2013).
12. Manitoba Education and Training, Senior 1 English Language Arts Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes and Senior 1 Standards

- (1996); Senior 2 English Language Arts Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes (1998); Senior 3 English Language Arts Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes (1999); Senior 4 English Language Arts Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes and Senior 4 Standards (2000).
13. Newfoundland Labrador Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 9 (2012 Interim Edition); English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 1201 (2013 Interim Edition); English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 1202 (2013 Interim Edition); English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 2201 (2014 Interim Edition); English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 2202 (2014 Interim Edition); English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 3201 (2015 Interim Edition); English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 3202 (2015 Interim Edition).
  14. In 1905, a Manitoba newspaper accompanied an advertisement for Minard's Liniment with the following: Master (to youth being examined in English history)—With what crime was Lord Bacon charged? Youth (as if by an inspiration)—With writing Shakespeare's plays ("Keep Minard's Liniment in the house." *The Voice*, May 19, 1905).
  15. As profiled in the archives of the Ontario College of Teachers magazine, *Professionally Speaking*, for example.
  16. Interviews with the author were conducted between September 25, 2015, and April 28, 2016, either in person in Courtice, Ontario, or via an online survey and correspondence.
  17. It is difficult to identify the film in the *Toronto Daily Star* story. Though early-century Shakespeare films were rare, the IMDb records a 1908 *Hamlet* directed by Henri Desfontaines (likely an extremely truncated version). It was released in the United States in August 1908. Another possibility was U.K. director William Barker's twenty-minute silent film, *Hamlet*.
  18. Modern films of Shakespeare compete for young audiences with the fast-paced interactivity of video games. With advanced AV technology in many classrooms, teachers screen films and trailers with ease. Movie trailers, easily available on YouTube, exemplify the use of violent and sexual content (or the promise thereof) to hook viewers. One example is the trailer for *Hamlet*, starring Ethan Hawke. Exciting images and impactful typography accompany the voiceover narration:
 

*The President of Denmark Corporation is Dead*  
*Already his wife is remarried*  
*To a man suspected of murder*  
*Now trust is impossible*  
*Passion is on the Rise*  
*And revenge is in the Air.*

19. Other news stories about the controversy described egregious details such as the throwing of coins at Jewish students and incidents of swastika graffiti in schools.
20. See, e.g., *Capacity Building—Series Critical Literacy* (Ontario Ministry of Education, August 2009), which quotes Paolo Freire’s definition of critical literacy, which entails questioning “the power relations that exist between readers and authors.”
21. See, e.g., Fairbrother, A. (2000). “Confessions of a Canon-loving Multiculturalist: School Reform and the Language Arts Classroom.” *Multicultural Education* (3)7.
22. The *Shakespeare Can Be Fun* series by Lois Burdett and *Shakespeare Stories* by Leon Garfield are illustrated and easy to use with children. The *No Fear Shakespeare* graphic novels series is another useful tool for elementary teachers inclined to teach Shakespeare Grades 6–8.
23. The *Shakespeare Set Free* series, produced by the Teaching Shakespeare Institute, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, is notable for interactive activities and supportive blackline pages that can be copied to support dramatic reading and imaginative writing activities. For example, *Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth and A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1993).  
The Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project, a research organization, is notable for its increasingly comprehensive database of historical and contemporary artefacts as well as current developments and discourse pertaining to Shakespeare in Canada.

## WORKS CITED

- Alberta Learning, Alberta Canada. 2003. English Language Arts (Senior High).
- Bell, William N. 1918. *The Development of the Ontario High School*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. <https://archive.org/stream/developmentofont00bellrich#page/98/mode/2up>.
- British Columbia Education, Canada, English Language Arts—Grades 10 and 11. 2007.
- Brydon, Diana and Irena R. Makaryk, eds. 2002. *Shakespeare in Canada: A World Elsewhere?* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Colarusso, Dana M. Interviews. [Work in progress]
- Colarusso, Dana M. 2009. “Teaching English in the Global Age: Cultural Conversations.” PhD dissertation, University of Toronto.
- Fulford, Robert. 1986. “Why Shylock is Not for Teenagers.” *Toronto Star*, August 5.
- Gidney, R. D. and W. P. J. Millar. 2012. *How Schools Worked: Public Education in English Canada, 1900–1940*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press.



- Lieblein, Leanore. 2002. "Le Re-making of le grand Will: Shakespeare in Francophone Quebec," In *Shakespeare in Canada*, edited by Brydon and Makaryk, 174–91.
- Manitoba Education and Training. 1996. Senior 1 English Language Arts Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes and Senior 1 Standards.
- . 1998. Senior 2 English Language Arts Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes.
- . 1999. Senior 3 English Language Arts Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes.
- . 2000. Senior 4 English Language Arts Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes and Senior 4 Standards.
- Manitoba Education and Youth. 2003. Senior 3 and Senior 4 English Language Arts Learning Resources: Annotated Bibliography: A Reference for Selecting Learning Resources.
- McGovern, Mark. 2014. "A Provincial Narrative of Catholic Education." In *A Call to Vocation: Narratives of Catholic Educators*, edited by Deirdre Smith, 146–53. Toronto: Pearson.
- New Brunswick. Department of Education and Early Childhood Education. 1998. Curriculum Development Branch. Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum High School 841890.
- Newfoundland Labrador Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. 2012. English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 9 (Interim Edition)
- . 2013. English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 1201 (Interim Edition)
- . 2013. English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 1202 (Interim Edition)
- . 2014. English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 2201 (Interim Edition)
- . 2014. English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 2202 (Interim Edition), Appendix Q, accessed online September 2016.
- . 2015. English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 3201 (Interim Edition)
- . 2015. English Language Arts Curriculum Guide Grade 3202 (Interim Edition)
- Nova Scotia. Department of Education and Culture. 1997. Education Program Services, English Language Arts 10–12.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. 1999. *Many roots, many voices: Supporting English language learners*.
- . 2007a. *English, revised, grades 9 and 10*.

- . 2007b. *English, revised, grades 11 and 12*.
- Pettigrew, John and Jamie Portman. 1985. *Stratford: The First Thirty Years*. Foreword by Robertson Davies. Vol. II: 1968–1982. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada.
- Preminger, Alex and T. V. F. Brogan, eds. 1993. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Enlarged Edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Québec. Ministère de la Culture et des Communications. 2013. Protocole d'entente interministériel culture-éducation.
- Québec. n.d. Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement. Quebec Education Program. English Language Arts Secondary Cycle 1. (Online June 2016)
- . n.d. Quebec Education Program. English Language Arts Secondary Cycle 2. (Online June 2016)
- Ross, George W. 1893. *Patriotic Recitations for Schools and Colleges*. New York: D. Appleton and Company.
- . 1896. *The School System of Ontario (Canada): Its History and Distinctive Features* <http://www.ourroots.ca/page.aspx?id=920431&qryID=7cfb3200-258b-492a-9b3a-d7d84218b706>.
- . 1897. "Speech by the Hon. G.W. Ross, LL.D., Minister of Education, on the policy of the Education Department." Toronto: Warwick Bro's & Rutter Printers etc. (sic). [https://archive.org/stream/speechbyhongwros00ross/speechbyhongwros00ross\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/speechbyhongwros00ross/speechbyhongwros00ross_djvu.txt).
- Saskatchewan. Ministry of Education. 2013. English Language Arts 10 (2011), 20 (2012), 30 (2013).
- Straznicky, Marta. 2002. "A Stage for the Word: Shakespeare on CBC Radio." In *Shakespeare in Canada*, edited by Brydon and Makaryk, 92–107.
- Veillette, Eric. 2010. "The day Shakespeare was Banned." *Toronto Star*, August 20. [www.thestar.com/news/insight/2010/08/20/the\\_day\\_shakespeare\\_was\\_banned.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2010/08/20/the_day_shakespeare_was_banned.html).

# The Truth About Stories About Shakespeare . . . In Canada?<sup>1</sup>

DANIEL FISCHLIN

*for Tom King*

. . . truths would be tales,  
Where now half tales be truths . . . (*Antony and Cleopatra* 2.2)

This essay uses Thomas King's notions of indigenous story to address how meaning about Shakespeare occurs within national contexts. Meanings, the so-called truth about stories about Shakespeare, necessarily refract through other dimensions of the stories we tell about identity and the hybridized, intermedial ways in which Shakespearean narratives circulate more generally in Canada and elsewhere. I use the word "truth" advisedly; aware that saying the word to Shakespearean scholars is a tad like inviting protracted debates on Hamlet's melancholy, Ariel's sexuality, Gertrude's bedroom proclivities, Othello's ethnicity, or Caliban's indigeneity. To be sure, truth in Shakespearean contexts is a gnarly issue, not only because Shakespeare himself took sometimes extravagant liberties with truth-telling as a key element of his storytelling techniques,<sup>2</sup> but also because how "we" approach the metaphysics of truth says a great deal about how meaning is created, how we generate sites of cultural production that tell us things we may not have heard before.

The singular, monolithic understanding of truth-telling as a simple one-to-one correspondence of iteration to related "fact," in what might be called the popular stereotype, is a far cry from the multiple ways in which truth is generated—the degree to which truth is rooted in story

and the confluence of multiple stories: who tells and retells the story; who hears it and how; where it is told; what words are chosen to tell it; how the story travels as it is retold in different contexts to different listeners; who decides to tell it differently; and on and on. In this view, singular absolutes and truth make for an uncomfortable dissonance that demands critique and dialogue, proliferative structures of meaning that are uneasy with singularities—in short, that demand the infinitely supple potential found and released in story.

Tom is a good friend of mine and one of our unwritten rules of engagement is that we avoid talking about literature, criticism, and university life at virtually all costs—and about Shakespeare even more so. I'm the reluctant Shakespearean in his mind and he's the reluctant author in mine, especially since he's taken to the flugelhorn with such passion. Recently, Tom returned from an extended writing *séjour* in California and brought me a present: "William Shakespeare's Mix n' Match Magnetic Wardrobe," complete with a real-life version of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* donkey head, a Renaissance lute, various portraits of Shakespeare, a "downtown production of *Titus Andronicus*," and the Bard himself wearing an Oxford hoodie—all made in China. The gift, in short, emblemizes the intercultural proliferation of the Shakespeare effect, that seemingly unstoppable resonating of Shakespeare out into worlds "elsewhere" that he could never have imagined as the space in which his stories would find such diverse, improbable voicings.

The gift was sublimely ridiculous, the moveable magnets ingenious—magnets as a trope for things brought together in space by the invisible tug that unites them, yet when moved by the hand of a greater power, infinitely reconfigurable and distributable—just like stories. Was Tom trying to teach me something about Shakespeare here—the hidden forces that bring any and all of us into relationship, however contingent, with each other and the stories that get told and retold about the unseen tug of those inter-relations? And was there an even more compelling logic of arbitrary distribution and ludic manipulation also at stake in the *gift*—the way in which the story depends on who is moving it along, who imagines it, and who transgresses against any attempt to fix it permanently?<sup>3</sup>

And what was this gift of a magnetized Shakespearean dollhouse, with its hideous versions of the Droeshout engraving of Shakespeare from the frontispiece of the First Folio, which, though posthumous, is considered to be an accurate likeness of Shakespeare; its cut-out of the contested



**Figure 1:** Front and back covers of “William Shakespeare’s Mix n’ Match Magnetic Wardrobe.”

Cobbe portrait of Shakespeare, as it is known, which is anything but a life portrait of the Bard: a trumped-up, twentieth-century claim made by people who should know better, handily dismissed by the art historian Roy Strong as “codswallop”<sup>4</sup>—an untruth in other words, but still a story; and the so-called Chandos portrait of Shakespeare, presented in the mix-and-match as a magnetized cutout bearing a tidy haircut topped by a jester’s cap, the haircut an uncanny reminder that the Chandos portrait has been over-painted in the hair area to make its sitter more ostensibly Elizabethan, more . . . Shakespearean?

I wrote all this keenly aware of Jacques Derrida’s reflections on “the gift” in an essay called “The Time of the King.” Somehow I had entered into the space of “the King” through Tom’s hokey, but it turns out, increasingly uncanny, gift. Derrida (1992, 7) argues that “the gift, *if there is any*, would no doubt be related to economy,” a notion he develops into the idea that the gift “interrupts economy.” By giving, one is bound by economic relations even as one steps outside of these relations to offer something for which no recompense is required, no reciprocity or exchange needed, *if* it is truly to be a gift. The gift offers up a paradox in which economies are indeed present even as the gift

heralds what Derrida calls the *aneconomic*, something *outside* the circle of circulation. All of which leads to Derrida’s notion that “the gift is the impossible. Not impossible but *the* impossible. The very figure of the impossible” (ibid.).

The uncanny timing of Tom’s gift just as I was set to write this essay, combined with the uncanny resonance with Derrida, truly was a gift—but a gift that pointed at the unspeakable nature of how unreality unfolds in real time via unscripted contingencies and synchronicities that become story. If all this seems far-fetched to you, let me add to the mix some further uncanny context on Derrida’s early relation to Shakespeare, which was far from what you might expect. At Khâgne, the two-year institution that prepares French high-school graduates for tier-one universities, Derrida barely passed his Shakespeare essay, “Shakespeare’s Idea of Kingship,” receiving a mark of ten out of twenty, with comments that read “In this essay you seem to be constantly on the verge of something interesting but, somewhat [sic], you always fail to express it clearly” (Rothfeld 2015).

I am *not* making this up. Or maybe I am, but in the sense of *making* as an act of *poiesis*, the Greek word that combines the sense of an

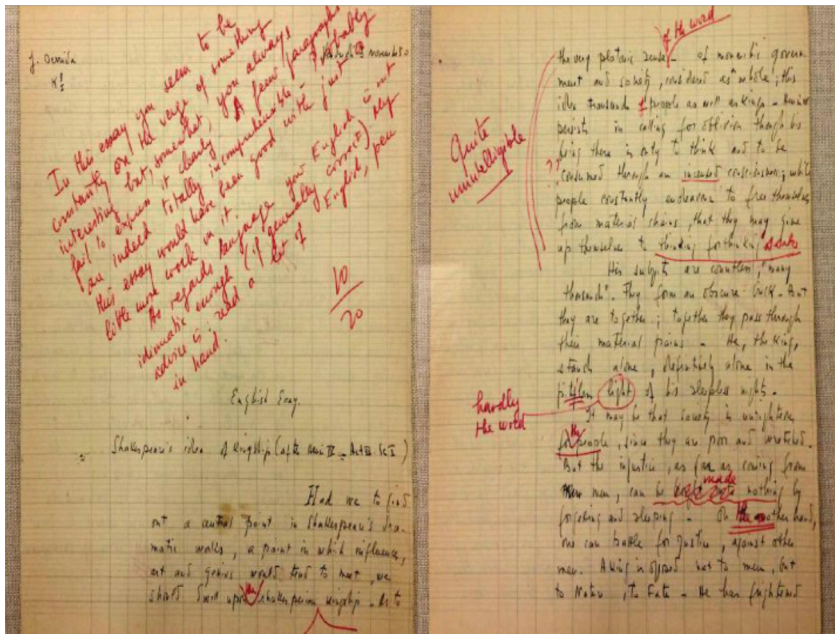


Figure 2: Marked copy of Jacques Derrida’s essay on “Shakespeare’s Idea of Kingship.”



action that transforms, *keeps the world going*. Not only had the great philosopher reduced kingship to a singular idea as opposed to multiple ideas about kingship, but his teacher had identified him as being often “on the verge” of something, a reminder of the struggles it takes to get the story out, to see the depth that my own King, Thomas King, had so astutely pointed to in his Massey Lectures, whose title I’ve poached and altered for this essay, where the “turtles all the way down” phrase he uses repeatedly points to a fundamental truth about creation stories that sustain identity.

So there we were—Tom, Jacques, myself, and that other “King’s Man,” Shakespeare<sup>5</sup>—all brought into uncomfortable proximity by an uncanny set of stories that had somehow intertwined, in Canada, and via Shakespeare. Somehow Shakespeare, Canada, and kings were all in rich if befuddled relation to each other.

The truth about stories here is that they are a gift told by a narrator who, as Tom underlines, can’t be trusted but who nonetheless offers up the story to its recipients in potentially transformative ways. As Tom says, “You can have it [the story] if you want . . . Do with it what you will . . . Just don’t say in the years to come that you would have lived *your* life differently if only you had heard this story. You’ve heard it now” (King 2003, 167). Somehow these lines made more sense than ever in the endlessly rich ways in which stories circulate as gifts, whether they come from a King or not, and the ways in which gifts lead to doing with them “what you *will*” (emphasis mine), a line that Tom had perhaps uncannily borrowed from Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*. “Will” in any event, whether in the sense of volition, or as the given name of a great storyteller, had somehow inserted itself into the truth about *this* particular story.

What follows, then, is my working through from Tom’s puzzling, impossible gift of the uncanny to this essay. In the 2003 Massey Lectures, entitled *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*, the central theme King returns to again and again is that “The truth about stories is that that’s all we are” (King 2003, 32). To underscore this point, we’re told a story that gets retold throughout the book of various listeners who, when told the Sky Woman–Turtle Island creation story<sup>6</sup> about the “earth and how it floats in space on the back of a turtle” (ibid. 61), ask:

If the earth was on the back of a turtle, what was below the turtle?  
Another turtle, the storyteller told her. And below that turtle? Another  
turtle. And below that? Another turtle . . . So how many turtles are



there? She wanted to know. The storyteller shrugged. No one knows for sure, he told her, but it's turtles all the way down. (61–2)

Truth emerges from this story that presents the infinite recursion of turtles as the basis for a vision of our earthbound reality. Truth is many turtles deep, so deep and rich the source that upholds the earth that no one can say for sure. Not even the storyteller can plumb this depth, the infinite, unseen sources that make us real, where the real is defined by a story continuously unfolding on the back of the innumerable sources from which it derives. Change is key to the story as it is voiced and revoiced. Words transform and shape reality as they do from here on in, with my use of the familiar “Tom” now replaced by the more distanced author, surnamed King.

Shakespeare is only mentioned once in *The Truth About Stories*. King says there “would appear to be nothing private about Shakespeare or Jane Austen or Gabriel García Márquez or Margaret Atwood. These writers and their works are known to the world. But the act of reading is a private act” (154). He goes on from this to distinguish between private and communal acts of writing and orality. Where King talks about the public nature of an idea we call Shakespeare, he also discusses the intimacy of reading and reception acts that forestall definitive notions of how a reader receives the work. I would add that even in communal contexts, where spectacle is the determinative mode, how audiences respond publicly and how they receive the information transmitted by the performance is not always so easy to discern, not always necessarily in sync. Intimacy and privacy are deeply interconnected modes of generating proliferative meaning because they are irreducible.

What Shakespeare means in a Canada—whose contexts stretch from sea to sea to sea, encompassing vastly differentiated communities, language groups, economic, and cultural formations—is a highly vexed question in which one truth is that, yes, indeed, there are turtles all the way down. Many stories exist. Many stories remain to be told. Monolithic notions of a singular national narrative associated with Canadian identity are as fraught as are attempts to read *Hamlet* as the origin of modern notions of the individual, *Macbeth* as the prolepsis to fascism and the lust for power that leads to genocide.

So turtles in *The Truth About Stories* mean many things as one goes all the way down—presumably all of those turtles are different as you make your way down, and they embody how impossible it is to reduce complex realities of origin to anything but the diversity of contexts that feed into any given historical moment. And yes, turtles are to be found

in Shakespeare, as shorthand for the turtle dove, associated with faithful and chaste love as in the “loving turtle-doves” of *Henry VI, Part 1*, “That could not live asunder day or night” (Shakespeare 1996, 2.2.790–91). In Shakespeare, turtles are not reptiles, nor do they hold up the earth. For Shakespeare “turtle” is a trope of fidelity and constancy. Unlike King’s earthbound turtles, Shakespeare’s turtles are airy creatures, untethered yet centered on the object of their constancy. But King’s turtles are constant, too. He says: “But in all the tellings of all the tellers, the world never leaves the turtle’s back. And the turtle never swims away” (King 2003, 61). Even as the constancy of turtles is present in both contexts, turtles in Shakespeare lead to other metaphysical realities—not Turtle Island creation narratives but, rather, early modern Neoplatonic notions. These latter ideas address the mystery of a love that makes possible the sustained differentiation of lovers, even as their passion erases their distinctness in the metaphysical congress.

In Shakespeare’s great allegorical poem “The Phoenix and the Turtle,” first published in 1601, the mystical union of lovers is imagined as follows:

So they loved, as love in twain  
Had the essence but in one;  
Two distincts, division none;  
Number there in love was slain. (2012, 25–8)

While indistinct, unimaginable numbers are imagined in King’s “turtles all the way down,” Shakespeare offers up a vision of number “slain” by love, a result of the irresolvable paradox that love presents in which one can have “two distincts” but also, simultaneously, “division none.”

Now vastly different sites of cultural production are at work in King’s and Shakespeare’s use of turtles. One is Canadian, whatever that might mean given King’s multiple origins that combine Cherokee and Greek ethnicities with American- and Canadian-state identities, as well as with King’s own rich integration of these contingencies into an identity that is also of his own making. The other is early modern English, whatever that might mean given the complex identity narratives circulating about Shakespeare as a product of the Midlands who grew up in a Catholic milieu before migrating to urban London, functioning in the netherworld that bridged middle-class aspirations and aristocratic contexts. Yet both offer up sophisticated, if not metaphysically connected, ideas about irreducible truths that ground human realities related to origin, identity, and our relations to the other. Are unimaginable numbers of turtles all the way down another way of speaking to a metaphysical

*truth* that tells us that number “slain” describes a reality so rich as to be inexpressible and unquantifiable? The stories that make *this* story possible arise out of histories of encounter and oppression, of intertextual travelling, and of unexpected synchronicities. Truths, in short, arise from these confluences of stories that make us who we are.

Again that word “truth.” And stories that ask us to consider what we might mean by it.

The online Open Source Shakespeare (n.d.) tells us that the word “truth” occurs “347 times in 313 speeches within 43 works”—and cognates like “truths” and “true” hundreds of times more, almost a thousand times throughout Shakespeare’s work. It is clearly a recurrent, if not obsessively used word, and each usage situates a specific context as well as a set of inter-texts within which that usage resonates. The word “truth” derives from Old English, West Saxon, and Mercian cognates that mean “faith, faithfulness, fidelity, loyalty; veracity, [the] quality of being true; pledge, [or] covenant” (Online Etymology Dictionary). The more modern meaning of truth as a synonym of “accurate” arises in the mid-fourteenth century and comes to mean “accuracy, correctness” by the 1560s. Even more interesting is that English, and most other Indo-European languages, “do not have a primary verb for ‘speak the truth,’ as a contrast to lie (v.),” just as we do not have a specific English word for a mother who has lost a child (Online Etymology Dictionary). So embedded in the etymology of truth is the sense of fidelity and loyalty (turtle doves again) but also of a covenant we take in relation to others as a contingent reality on which we are dependent.

We must tell the truth as a story. There is no direct way to it. This alignment of truth with the context from which it issues conforms, for instance, with Anishinaabe notions of the word truth, *w’dae’bwae*. *W’dae’bwae*, as described by Anishinaabe storyteller and cultural custodian Basil Johnston, contains the familiar meaning of “accuracy,” but also of someone “casting his or her knowledge as far as he or she can” within the contexts of what that person perceives and how he or she uses language, and also the “philosophic notion that there is no such thing as absolute truth” (Johnston 2001, v; 2007, x). In Nishnaabeg (Otonabee) contexts, Leanne Simpson, via her work with Nishnaabeg Elder Jim Dumont, informs us that the word for truth, *(o)debwemin*, “literally means ‘the sound of the heart’” (Simpson 2014, 108). These languages, just the tip of the iceberg, give us yet more stories about what “truth” may mean, more variants on unfolding truths about truth itself.

Meanings generated by the stories embedded in both King and Shakespeare are, in other words, not reducible to any singular schematic. By extension, what Canada might mean in a Shakespearean context or what Shakespeare might mean in a Canadian context is always already troubled by the ways in which both Shakespeare and Canada mean wildly different things in the plurality of circumstances that everyday realities afford us. The orality of Shakespearean theatre, for instance, takes audiences into the realm of group and community dynamics, whereas the private nature of many forms of reception of his work stands outside of conventional relays of meaning. The ambiguities and creative potential that arise from this interplay have produced a rich, unsettling set of Shakespearean narratives in Canada that continue to be made, and that remain to be parsed. What might it mean to rethink Shakespearean meaning(s) in Canada through both public and private iterations of the nested stories that accrue around the Shakespeare effect in which singular meanings are not easily adduced and are no substitute for the iteration of the story itself? As surely as stories in and about Canada offer plural and often highly contested and dissonant perspectives, so too do Shakespearean iterations produced in such a variable context. What might King's turtles and Shakespeare's "number slain" tell us about asymmetrical cultural relations and sites of production of Shakespeare in Canada?

What are we to make of the myriad ways in which Shakespearean stories circulate through Canada as a site of cultural production? In the early 2000s, I launched the Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project (CASP) website, still the most elaborated site of its kind to track the Shakespeare effect from within a particular national configuration. The thousands of data points, images, essays, play scripts and so forth make this an ongoing, living archive. I've never made claims about the site being comprehensive or definitive, or even about the validity of the decision-making that goes on when adding to the site, which is still very much defined by careful, case-by-case considerations based on inclusivity and on sustaining dialogue rather than shutting it down.



Figure 3: Splash page for the Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project (CASP) <http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/>

In 2007, when I curated the *Shakespeare Made in Canada* exhibit at the MacDonalld Stewart Art Gallery (now the Art Gallery of Guelph, or AGG), in Guelph, Ontario, we filled some six thousand square feet of space with myriad configurations that told some of the rich stories of how Shakespeare and Canada relate, many of them tracked by the CASP site. From the work of Nicholas Food Davin, the nineteenth-century adaptor of Shakespeare who wrote the infamous and so-called Davin Report (1879) that became the basis for the odious residential school system (forced-assimilation boarding schools) that has caused such inter-generational grief among our First Peoples, through to contemporary graphic novelist Nick Craine’s imaginings of the birth of Shakespeare’s creative impulse in the wonder of a tadpole he captures in the River Avon, only to watch it die as he runs to his parents to show off the wonder, the life-giving water seeping through his fingers, the curation experience taught me that as voice after voice is added to the mix, extraordinary diversity and unpredictability of meaning are created, even in formidably rigid circumstances where master narratives about institutional entities like Stratford dominate.

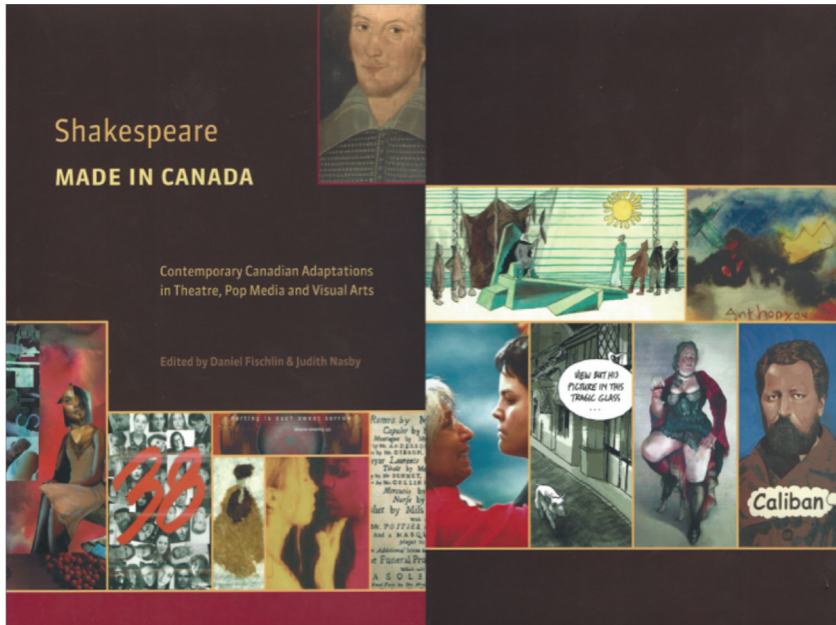
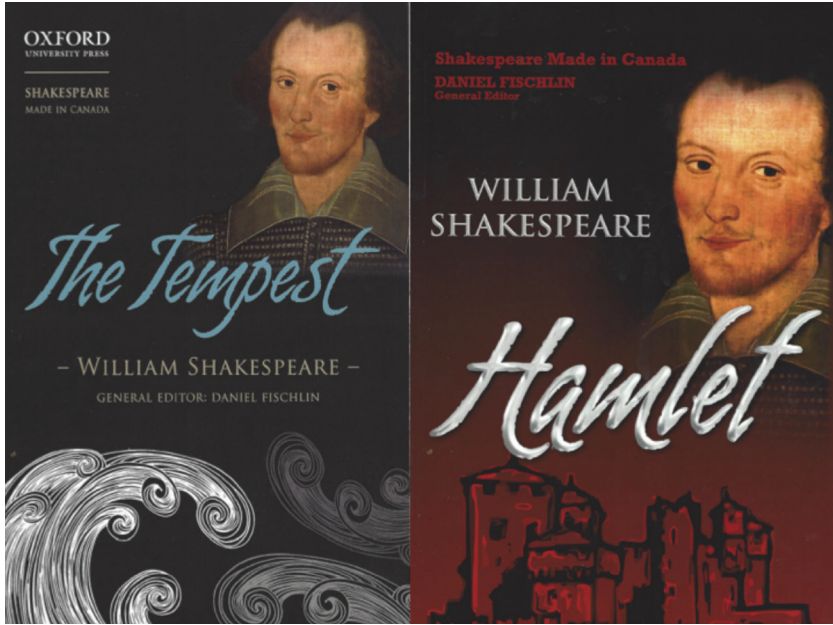


Figure 4: Front and back cover of *Shakespeare Made in Canada* exhibition catalogue.

More recently, Oxford University Press approached me, based on all this other work that has been unfolding both in Guelph and elsewhere across the country for the past twenty years or so, to ask about the possibility of a Shakespeare series designed for the Canadian market. We hashed the issue out. It was clear to me from the outset that complex narratives bound to highly vexed notions of identity would be a minefield at best. I decided to approach the task in the same spirit as I approached the building of the CASP website, insisting on a plurality of voices and critical positions to generate the repertoire of content and critical positionings. One of the conditions I set for the Oxford series was the use of the Canadian-owned Sanders portrait of Shakespeare on the cover, along with a short note that discusses the claims made about the portrait, which is dated 1603. As this project was developing, a range of concerns arose, of the kind that abound at tradition-minded, five-hundred-year-old publishing houses. At least one director at Oxford Canada worried about angering the “mothership” (Oxford UK) given their investment in the “one and only” Shakespeare. There was something of a larger fear that “head office” might not appreciate a national entity like Canada seizing the means and content of cultural production



and exerting autonomy. At the other end of the spectrum was predictable handwringing that sales reps might not want to bother with short books that didn't have as significant a profit margin as the massively expensive introductory psych or criminology texts.



**Figure 5:** Front covers of two editions in the *Shakespeare Made in Canada* series published by Oxford University Press and Rock's Mills Press.

In short, a problem arose because new stories were about to come into existence. We made the decision to edit each play in its entirety from scratch. Two books later, David Stover, then CEO of Oxford Canada—incidentally the person who had come up with the idea for *Shakespeare Made in Canada* in the first place (and who tenaciously continued to support it in the face of all the concern)—was retired as part of a remarkably under-reported restructuring of Oxford Canada. I then found myself in a set of unpleasant discussions with the press, now being run out of the U.S. offices in New York, about the fate of the series. The result is that, a year later, the series had moved to a new home with Rock's Mills Press, founded by Stover, and using many of the editorial team that had played such a critical role in OUP's remarkable success here in Canada under Stover's leadership.

There are stories within stories to what I've just recounted, and the truth of it is that I still don't fully understand what happened. But that



too is a story, and stories can be told by suggestion and inference, too. Somehow, Canada's self-determination, emblemized perhaps most graphically in the use of the Sanders portrait as a keystone image for the series, had perturbed other stories, well known if not, perhaps, over told. To this day, the Stratford Festival bookstore and gift shop does not carry a single copy of an edition from the *Shakespeare Made in Canada* series.<sup>7</sup> To this day, the Sanders portrait is invisible in that space, while the Cobbe portrait is prominently displayed on any number of the licensed gewgaws it sells.<sup>8</sup> But that too is another set of stories about Shakespeare in a Canada where the politics of representation are up for grabs.



**Figure 6:** The Sanders portrait of Shakespeare (1603).

Sceptical as I am about the battles over finding a definitive life image of Shakespeare created while he was alive, the Sanders portrait symbolizes the ways in which Canada and Shakespeare produce new and often dissonant meanings and narratives. I had gotten to know the image through Stephanie Nolen's reporting on it in the *Globe and Mail* and had cold-called the owner, Lloyd Sullivan, prior to the launch of the CASP site in 2004 to ask if we could use the image on the splash page of the website. He generously agreed and, fifteen years later, we are on the verge of a major institution acquiring the portrait after an extraordinary process of due diligence relating to the portrait's claims to authenticity.

Here is not the place for a more complete discussion of the Sanders portrait, but it has ineluctably made itself an element in the larger story of a global Shakespeare that is impossible to circumvent; the only historical document we have from the extended early modern period that actually identifies Shakespeare's birth and death dates (he was born and died on the same day, April 23) is the label on the back of the Sanders portrait, now barely legible as time has taken its toll.



Shakespere  
Born April 23=1564  
Died April 23-1616  
Aged 52  
This Likeness taken 1603  
Age at that time 39 y<sup>s</sup>

**Figure 7:** Detail of the rag paper label on the back of the Sanders portrait of Shakespeare (1603) along with transcription.

The Sanders portrait has an unprecedented level of research attached to it and has received an exceptional level of public and scholarly scrutiny, perhaps more than any of the other so-called portraits. Part of the reason for this is that it represents a threat of sorts to established wisdom on the stories we tell about Shakespeare's image, but also a threat to perceived national ownership of the Shakespeare brand by England. The portrait is a story machine, a powerful generator of truths that are unpredictable and proliferative and dangerous to received wisdom about Shakespeare and his circumstances. The fact that a genealogy of a man living in Ottawa can culminate some thirteen generations back in the small set of villages in which Shakespeare and his closest associates originated unsettles reductive narratives about solitary genius, about how ideas travel, often with companions, and about the vast network

of historical relations that we each embody, often in ways we barely recognize.

A recent book on Shakespearean portraiture by Katherine Duncan-Jones gives some of the flavor of the pushback the Sanders portrait has received. Neglectful of the arms-length work of the Canadian Conservation Institute on the science of the portrait and the extensive, groundbreaking research done by Worcestershire genealogist Pam Hinks that ties the Canadian branch of the Sanders family directly with Shakespeare's inner circle, Duncan-Jones (2015, 104) imputes a "sinister possibility" to a strip of wood the length of the right side of the portrait that has cracked off, saying that it "was deliberately removed at an unknown date, perhaps at the time the paper label was concocted, because it identified the sitter as someone other than Shakespeare." No proof is offered of deliberate removal, *not a shred of evidence* offered to back the claim up. Nor does Duncan-Jones attend to the obvious proportions of the part broken off in relation to the overall size of the painted date ("1603") in the upper right corner, which would have made adding a name highly improbable. That Duncan-Jones completely side-steps the science behind the label, the only known extant document that fixes, as I said, Shakespeare's birthday on April 23, 1564, calling it a "concoction," is shoddy work not worthy of a scholar of her distinction.<sup>9</sup> The question is how does scholarship tell this story in a way so wholly detached from the multiple other stories swirling around the portrait. What are the ethics of doing so, and especially so in the contexts of colonial narratives that undermine, challenge, or trouble dominant narratives? There's a lesson to be learned here and again it involves the unresolved equation of Shakespeare + Canada.

Yet more stories. More turtles all the way down.

The truth about stories about Shakespeare in Canada is contentious, if not the site for some rather unpleasant truths about the ways in which academic discourses can distort, deform, or ignore nascent new realities that challenge disciplinary conventions. The nested narratives that continue to agglomerate around the Sanders portrait, largely driven by its Canadian contexts, are part of a truth about the stories we tell about Shakespeare. These stories, for better or for worse, fictive or not, are the result of specific sites of cultural production that generate meaning both contingently and autonomously, in intricate relations of dependence and independence.

Let me close by returning to that other quadricentenary that was celebrated in Canada some fifty-two years ago, in 1964, to mark

Shakespeare's birth, in 1564. The great Canadian theatre critic, Herbert Whittaker, born in Outremont, Quebec, in 1910 of British parentage,<sup>10</sup> who was to go on to write for the *Montreal Gazette* and the *Globe and Mail*, delivered an address to the 1964 Stratford Shakespeare seminar that had been co-sponsored as part of the quadricentenary celebrations by the "Universities of Canada in co-operation with the Stratford Festival Theatre through the offices of the Department of Extension of McMaster University" (Whittaker 1964, n.p.). The piece was provocatively titled "Shakespeare in Canada Before 1953," which is to say before the date of the founding of what was then called the Stratford Shakespearean Festival of Canada—this before it transformed into the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, and most recently the Stratford Festival, a series of renamings that culminate in Shakespeare's effacement from the title of the Festival.

(More stories to be sure. Less Shakespeare in the very space most associated with Shakespeare in Canada. What's in a name here, save for all the erasures to which the name points?)

Whittaker's essay, while anticipating the wider field of study linking Canada and Shakespeare, addresses "the often neglected history (at that point in time) of Shakespearean productions since Canada's colonial beginnings" (Fischlin and Van Wagner 2004, n.p.), and despairs at the idea that "many history and reference books were citing the founding of the Stratford Festival as the real onset of Shakespearean production in Canada" (ibid.): "I do not wish it to be thought that this country was backward that it knew nothing of Shakespeare before . . . Dr. Guthrie drew him to our attention" (Whittaker 1964, 72). Whittaker closes by acknowledging "all the contributing Shakespeareans who had struggled to bring the works of that great man to the people of Canada" (ibid., 89).

Yet more stories, many untold.

Citing a 1932 production of *Hamlet* as one of the first pre-Stratford productions to receive "national attention," Whittaker's essay discusses a production hailed as the "beginning of National theatre in Canada" (1964, 84). Vere Ponsonby, the ninth earl of Bessborough, a prominent English businessman who served as Governor General of Canada from 1931 to 1935, organized a pre-Stratford version of *Hamlet* featuring Viscount Duncannon, Bessborough's son, then active in the Ottawa Little Theatre, as Hamlet.<sup>11</sup> The play so delighted William Lyon Mackenzie King, who served three terms as Canadian prime minister (1921–1926, 1926–1930, 1935–1948) that he wrote to Duncannon stating his pleasure at seeing "one of Shakespeare's plays [performed] by

real artists; after having been parched in the barren theatrical land,” presumably, of Canada (qtd. in Whittaker 1964, 86).

Yet another King. But I won’t get into that.

There seem to be Kings all the way down in both Canada and Shakespeare. At least in this story. More stories, too, “where now half tales be truths.” This time about so-called “real artists” who are only so if closely tied to elite class structures and deeply colonial notions of artistic achievement. Yet another version of Canada, multiplying in this mirror held up to multiple identities. More originary myths, this time with the king’s representative in Canada (the governor general under King George V) getting approval from the once and future King of Canada, William Lyon, that is, for bringing culture to a theatrically “barren” land. All counterpointed by Whittaker’s essay, which clearly shows Canada to have been anything but barren and parched of Shakespearean theatre in the pre-Stratford era. Yet more stories.

Don’t forget, too, that Ponsonby played a key role as governor-in-council in the launch of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), also in 1932, and a determining role in the foundation of the Dominion Drama Festival, a co-lingual theatre competition also founded in 1932 and involving collaboration with future Governor General Vincent Massey, who was to put his name to the CBC, Anansi Press, and the Massey Lectures series. In 2003, Tom King was the first indigenous person invited to present these lectures. Even more stories that need retelling, more uncanny interconnections, more tense dialectics of *who* gets to tell the story, *who* gets to hear and interpret it.

So yes, there’s always more to tell, more retellings of those tellings, too. More turtles all the way down. This truth remains the reality of the everyday now that captures us all in relation to how we make history and how we make the past, present, and future in Canada. About Shakespeare. And about any number of other things that matter.

And here’s a last fleeting image, a self-portrait taken by Tom King with friends and a certain William. Also a gift from Tom. Have I told you he’s a generous man?



**Figure 8:** Thomas King, friends, and the Sanders portrait of Shakespeare (1603). Photo courtesy of Thomas King.

There's a story to this photo but I can't tell it now.

Let this story go.

There will surely be more.

## NOTES

1. I am indebted and deeply grateful to Martha Nandorfy for her insights on Indigenous notions of truth and story and for her close reading of this essay.
2. One need only examine Geoffrey Bullough's (1975) *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* and the remarkable array of source texts that Shakespeare deployed in any number of creative (de)formations to understand how creative Shakespeare was in the ways in which he shaped his narratives.
3. I tell this story in the context of Jack Reynolds's (n.d.) explication of the importance of the notion of the gift to Derrida's thinking: "The aporia that surrounds the gift revolves around the paradoxical thought that a genuine gift cannot actually be understood to be a gift. In his text, *Given Time*, Derrida suggests that the notion of the gift contains an implicit demand that the genuine gift must reside outside of the oppositional demands of giving and taking, and beyond any mere self-interest or calculative



reasoning (GT 30). According to him, however, a gift is also something that cannot appear as such (GD 29), as it is destroyed by anything that proposes equivalence or recompense, as well as by anything that even proposes to know of, or acknowledge it.”

4. See Thorpe (2009).
5. James VI and I uplifted Shakespeare and his troupe to King’s Men via a royal patent dated May 19, 1603, shortly after he ascended the throne of Scotland and England, on March 24, 1603. The short three-month period between James’s ascension and the royal patent creating the King’s Men company suggests something about James’s awareness of the cultural significance of the theatre in London and Shakespeare’s importance to that scene. The years 1603 and 1604 were significant plague years in London and James gifted the King’s Men with thirty pounds (paid to company lead Richard Burbage in February 1604) “for the maintenance and reliefe of himself and the rest of his company being prohibited to p<sup>r</sup>sente any playes publiquelie in or neere London . . . by way of his Ma<sup>ties</sup> *free gifte*,” [emphasis mine]—an indicator, in light of the “absence of similar payments to the other companies” of the “special favour” enjoyed by the King’s Men (Astington 1999, 133). Another King, another “free gifte” involving the Bard, and the unpredictable circulation of the Shakespeare effect in an economy that continues to spin forward.
6. As Basil Johnston (1976, 13–4) tells it, “High in the heavens there lived alone a woman, a spirit.” Alone and unhappy she is gifted with spirit consorts by Kitche Manitou, the Great Spirit, and gives birth first to children who destroy each other, then to another child from a different consort. Compassionate water spirits who see her weariness persuade a “giant turtle to rise to the surface of the waters and offer his back as a haven . . . . When sky-woman had settled on the turtle, she asked the water animals to get some soil from the bottom of the sea.” And so the earth was created.
7. Shortly after delivering a version of this paper as the opening keynote at the Shakespeare + Canada conference in Ottawa in April 2016, the festival bookstore contacted Rock’s Mills Press and ordered multiple copies of editions from the *Shakespeare Made in Canada* series for the festival store. Stories told lead to changes in a story in ways that matter as a narrative continues to unfold diachronically. There is no last word.
8. William Leahy (2016) points to how “a picture [the Cobbe] of someone who is definitely not Shakespeare [is used] to promote Shakespeare,” stating “It is worth considering that since 2009 it is the new picture, the Cobbe portrait, that features on all of the publicity material of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. This is the introduction to the 2009 annual report and summary financial statements of the trustees and guardians of Shakespeare’s birthplace: “The discovery of the Cobbe portrait of Shakespeare . . . was an unprecedented opportunity for the trust to



publicise its work . . . . Worldwide media attention valued conservatively at £15m followed the unveiling of the portrait in London and the subsequent exhibition at the Shakespeare Centre.” The economies of scale are significant when Shakespeare enters into the equation, and the conscious manipulation of debate in the interests of self-promotion are a critical element in Shakespearean profitability as made clear in the citation from the conservationist Shakespeare Birthplace Trust annual report.

9. For a more complete discussion of Duncan-Jones’s book and the issues it raises around Shakespearean portraiture, see Fischlin (2016).
10. Whittaker’s connection to Outremont overlaps with the Sanders portrait’s migration to Canada from England. Agnes Hales Sanders, wife of Aloysius Joseph James Hales Sanders, travelled from Montreal to England and retrieved the portrait from Probate Court in 1919 after the death of Aloysius’s father, Thomas Hales Sanders. The portrait then came rest on Querbes Avenue in Outremont from 1919 to 1938, where the family then lived, before Agnes moved to Earncliffe Avenue in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce in Montreal (personal communication with James Hale-Sanders, April 7, 2016). Whittaker and the Sanders family (including the Sanders portrait) were thus actually in close, unknowing proximity for a period of time in Montreal.
11. “One of the highlights of the Bessborough’s term was the organization of the Dominion Drama Festival. With help from Vincent Massey and Colonel Henry C. Osborne of the Ottawa Little Theatre, Lord Bessborough created a nation-wide competition for amateur companies with the finals held in Ottawa. The first Festival was in April 1933 and the highest award, the Bessborough trophy, was won by a group from Winnipeg. The Bessborough trophy was later replaced by the Calvert trophy. The festival’s official photographer later rose to prominence—Yousuf Karsh’s extraordinary career was launched with his subsequent portraits of the Bessboroughs.” (Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, n.d.)

## WORKS CITED

- Astington, John H. 1999. “The Globe, The Court and *Measure for Measure*.” In *Shakespeare Survey*, vol. 52, edited by Stanley Wells, 133–42. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bullough, Geoffrey, ed. 1975. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Craine, Nick. 2007. *Parchment of Light: The Life & Death of William Shakespeare. A Graphic Novel Work in Progress*. Guelph, ON: Macdonald Stewart Art Centre.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1992. “The Time of the King.” In *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, translated by Peggy Kamuf, 1–33. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1–33.

- Duncan-Jones, Katherine. 2015. *Portraits of Shakespeare*. Oxford: Bodleian Library.
- Fischlin, Daniel. 2016. Review of *Portraits of Shakespeare*, by Katherine Duncan-Jones. *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 39, no. 2 (Spring): 174–6.
- Fischlin, Daniel and Judith Nasby, eds. 2007. *Shakespeare Made in Canada: Contemporary Canadian Adaptations in Theatre, Pop Media and Visual Arts*. Guelph, ON: Macdonald Stewart Art Centre.
- Fischlin, Daniel and Danielle Van Wagner. 2004. “Herbert Whittaker and *Shakespeare in Canada*.” *Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project*. University of Guelph. [http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/a\\_whittaker.cfm](http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/a_whittaker.cfm). Accessed April 6, 2016.
- Johnston, Basil. 1976. *Ojibway Heritage*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2001. *K'd'Inawaewininaun: Our Language*. Cape Croker, ON: Winter Spirit Creations.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. *Anishinaubae Thesaurus*. East Lansing: Michigan University Press.
- King, Thomas. 2003. *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press.
- Leahy, William. 2016. “Is this a Shakespeare portrait I see before me? Well, no.” *Guardian* [UK]. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/22/william-shakespeare-portrait-bard-400-anniversary>. Accessed April 22, 2016.
- Office of the Secretary to the Governor General. n.d. “Earl of Bessborough.” Governor General of Canada: Former Governors General. Last modified April 30, 2009. [http://archive.gg.ca/gg/fgg/bios/01/bessborough\\_e.asp](http://archive.gg.ca/gg/fgg/bios/01/bessborough_e.asp). Accessed April 16, 2016.
- Online Etymology Dictionary. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=truth>. Accessed April 22, 2016.
- Reynolds, Jack. “Jacques Derrida (1930–2004).” *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/derrida/>. Accessed April 6, 2016.
- Rothfeld, Becca. 2015. “Turns Out Derrida Has Always Been Incomprehensible.” *Hyperallergic*. April 16, 2015. <http://hyperallergic.com/199062/turns-out-derrida-has-always-been-incomprehensible/>. Accessed April 6, 2016.
- Open Source Shakespeare. n.d. “Shakespeare concordance: all instances of ‘truth.’” *OpenSourceShakespeare.org*. George Mason University. <http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/concordance/o/?i=763770&pleasewait=1&msg=sr>. Accessed April 6, 2016.
- Shakespeare, William. 2012. “The Phoenix and the Turtle.” In *The Poems: Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece, The Phoenix and the Turtle*,

*The Passionate Pilgrim, A Lover's Complaint*, edited by John Roe, 239–44. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Henry VI, Part 1. The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996. 632–667. Print.

Simpson, Leanne. 2014. “Bubbling Like a Beating Heart”: Reflections on Nishnaabeg Poetic and Narrative Consciousness.” In *Indigenous Poetics in Canada*, edited by Neal McCloud, 107–20. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Thorpe, Vanessa. 2009. “A portrait of William Shakespeare? ‘Codswallop’ says expert.” *Guardian* [UK]. <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2009/apr/19/shakespeare-portrait-contested>. April 18, 2009.

Whittaker, Herbert. 1964. “Shakespeare in Canada Before 1953.” In *Stratford Papers on Shakespeare*, edited by B. W. Jackson, 71–89. Toronto: W. J. Gage.

## Contributors

**ANNIE BRISSET.** Professor emerita, University of Ottawa, School of Translation and Interpretation, FRSC. Prize-winning author on translation, founding member and past president of IATIS (International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies), consultant to UNESCO on translation-related projects.

**RICHARD CAVELL.** Professor, Department of English, University of British Columbia. Expertise in Canadian cultural studies and cultural memory, Marshall McLuhan, and media theory, and a published playwright.

**DANA COLARUSSO.** Ontario educator since 1998, with varied roles from high-school English teacher to instructor at Trent and UOIT Faculties of Education. Currently FSL Teacher, Durham Catholic Board of Education. 2010 Dissertation Award from the Canadian Association for Teacher Education for her book *Teaching English in the Global Age: Cultural Conversations*.

**DANIEL FISCHLIN.** University Research Chair, University of Guelph. Founder and Director of the Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project ([canadianshakespeares.ca](http://canadianshakespeares.ca)) with numerous publications on Shakespeare in / and Canada.

**TRONI Y. GRANDE.** Associate Professor and Head of the English Department at University of Regina, where she teaches Shakespeare, early-modern and eighteenth-century drama, and feminist theory. Her publications include *Northrop Frye's Writings on Shakespeare and the Renaissance* (co-edited with Garry Sherbert), *Marlovian Tragedy: The Play of Dilation*, and two feminist essays on Frye.

**PETER KULING.** Assistant Professor in the Department of Theatre at the University of Ottawa. He has edited issues of *Canadian Theatre Review* on "Digital Performance" and "Sports and Theatre"

while completing his forthcoming monograph *Queer Shakespeare in Canada: Adaptations and Performances of Nationalism and Sexualities*.

**SARAH MACKENZIE.** Assistant Professor at the University of New Brunswick, where she teaches Indigenous Literature. Her dissertation examined the ways Indigenous women playwrights address the colonialist legacy of violence against women in contemporary North American contexts. Her academic research interests include Indigenous theatre, postcolonial feminist theory, Canadian history, and Indigenous literatures.

**IRENA R. MAKARYK.** Professor of English, cross-appointed to Theatre, at the University of Ottawa. Her research interests focus on Shakespeare's afterlife, Soviet theatre, modernism, and theatre during periods of great social duress. Her most recent book is *April in Paris 1925: Theatre, Politics, Space* (forthcoming).

**C. E. MCGEE.** Professor Emeritus in the English Department of the University of Waterloo. A member of the Board of Governors of The Stratford Festival from 1992 to 1999, he continues to serve on its Education and Archives Committee. Besides ongoing work on the New Variorum *Othello* and the REED Wiltshire and Yorkshire West Riding, he studies productions of Shakespeare's plays in Canada.

**DON MOORE.** Instructor, Department of English, University of Guelph. Expertise in literary theory, film studies, and Shakespearean adaptations. He received his PhD in English and Cultural Studies from McMaster University in 2008 for a dissertation interrogating the ethical rhetoric of 9/11. His recent research has focused on the ethics and politics of post-9/11 global cinema and mass media, and on the cultural impacts of intermedial adaptations of Shakespeare.

**ROBERT ORMSBY.** Associate Professor in the Department of English at Memorial University of Newfoundland, where he teaches early modern drama. His monograph on *Coriolanus*, for Manchester University Press, appeared in 2014. He is currently completing an anthology titled *The Shakespearean World*, which he is co-editing with Jill Levenson for Routledge.

**KATHRYN PRINCE.** Theatre historian at the University of Ottawa, where she is an Associate Professor and, in 2016, recipient of the Excellence in Education prize. Her current work focuses on the practice of emotions in early modern drama. She has published widely on Shakespeare in performance from the seventeenth to the twenty-first centuries.

**IAN RAE.** Associate Professor, Department of Modern Languages, King's University College at Western University. Expertise in Canadian literature, recipient of an Insight Development Grant entitled "Mapping Stratford Culture."

**TOM SCHOLTE.** Professor in the Department of Theatre and Film at UBC, recipient of Canada Screen Awards as actor/director/writer for theatre and film, with performances on professional stages across Canada and work screened at film festivals including Sundance, TIFF, Rotterdam, and the Berlinale.

**KAILIN WRIGHT.** Assistant Professor, St. Francis Xavier University. Expertise in Canadian drama with research published or forthcoming in *Canadian Literature*, *Studies in Canadian Literature*, and *Theatre Research in Canada*. Her critical edition, *The God of Gods: A Canadian Play by Carroll Aikins*, was published by the University of Ottawa Press in 2016.

*This page left intentionally blank*



# Index

- Antony and Cleopatra* 75, 121, 135, 164, 178, 180, 186–187, 189, 192–194, 241  
Anansi Press 257  
Anderson, Kim 114  
Anouilh, Jean 130, 133, 137  
Applause Books 200, 203  
Applebaum, Lou 21  
*As You Like It* 134–135, 150, 166–167, 178, 180, 183, 184, 188–190  
Atwood, Margaret 5, 6, 246  
Audiberti, Jacques 129, 133  
Austen, Jane 246  
Avon Theatre 11, 12, 19
- Babb, Glenn 112  
Bamford, Karen 57  
Barnett, J.D. 4, 49, 50, 56–64  
Bartolovich, Crystal 31, 46  
Bassani, Giorgio 18  
Baumander, Lewis 111–117  
Beck, Adam 59  
Beddows, Joël 145  
Bedford, Brian 40, 41, 43  
Benjamin, Walter 127  
Bentham, Jeremy 104  
Berman, Antoine 127–128, 151  
Bolter, Jay 98  
Bonney, Yves 145  
Bouchard, Michel Marc 130, 141  
Boucher, Denise 129, 142  
Bourdieu, Pierre 101, 128, 141  
Bradbrook, Muriel 157–9  
Bread and Puppet Theatre 132  
Brisset, Annie 5, 6, 139, 148  
Bristol Old Vic Theatre School 200, 202  
British Council 1  
Brook, Peter 38, 168  
Brydon, Diana 50, 57
- Calvo, Clara 2–3  
Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project (CASP) 80, 249–253  
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) 257  
Canadian Jewish Congress 13  
Carbone 14 130, 141
- Cardinal, Lorne 116  
Cardinal, Marie 137, 140  
Carnegie, Andrew 60  
Carpaccio, Vittore 17  
Carpenter, Edmund 160, 175  
Carty, Shane 33  
Carver, Brent 74  
Casanova, Pascale 151–152  
CBC Radio 13, 227  
Centre du Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui 129, 132, 136–138  
Chamberland, Paul 148–149  
Chaurette, Normand 129, 131–132, 134–135, 140–141, 150–152, 154  
City of Stratford 3–5, 13, 16, 23, 29, 39, 49–53, 55, 57–58, 60, 62–64  
Cobbe portrait of Shakespeare 243, 253  
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor 204, 217–218  
Comédie-Canadienne 137  
Compagnie Jean-Duceppe 136–137  
Compagnons de St-Laurent 142  
Contractor, Nazneen 33, 35  
Copeau, Jacques 206  
*Coriolanus* 131, 135, 137, 138, 140, 149,  
Coyne, Susan 18, 20–21, 84  
Curtis, Jean-Louis 129, 133, 152
- D'Aquila, Diane 40–42, 74  
Dalpé, Jean-Marc 150  
David, Gilbert 133–135  
Davies, Robertson 23  
Davis, John 114  
De Sica, Vittorio 18  
Denoncourt, Serge 130, 141  
Derrida, Jacques 4, 97, 99–100, 103–105, 107, 243–244, 258  
Dionne, Margot 74  
Donnellan, Declan 209–210  
Driskill, Quo-Li 117  
Drouin, Jennifer 5, 116, 134, 151, 153  
Dubois, René-Daniel 130, 141  
Ducharme, Réjean 134
- École Nationale de Théâtre (see also National Theatre School of Canada) 129–130, 132, 136–137, 140, 142, 147, 149  
Episkew, Jo-Ann 120  
Espace GO 130, 136–137, 140  
Espace Libre 133, 136, 137
- Fedderson, Kim 80–81, 83, 102, 108  
Ferne, Ewan 73  
Festival de théâtre des Amériques 136–137  
Festival TransAmériques 137  
Filewod, Alan 4, 52–53  
Findley, Timothy 5, 51–52, 71–72, 77  
First Folio 6, 61, 185, 199–200, 242  
Fischlin, Daniel 5–7, 49, 57, 64, 77, 80, 102, 118, 256  
Fo, Dario 142  
Fortnightly Club 63  
Freeman, Neil 6, 199–200, 202–207, 209–214  
Frye, Northrop 5–7, 81, 168–169, 179, 181–182, 185–189, 192, 194
- Gaffney, Oliver 51  
Garneau, Michel 5, 129–131, 133, 137, 139, 140  
Garrick, David 2  
Gascon, Jean 16–17, 21, 234  
Gauvreau, Claude 142  
Genette, Gérard 73  
Germain, Jean-Claude 129, 132, 138  
Gilbert, Miriam 17  
Giroux, Michelle 16–17, 33, 35–36  
*Globe and Mail* 1–2, 253, 255  
Goad, Jonathan 33, 35, 37  
Grand Cirque ordinaire 129, 132  
Grand Théâtre de Québec 138  
Grandmont, Éloi de 133, 146  
Green, Dana 33, 35–37, 40–42  
Greenblatt, Stephen 73, 172

## Index

- Groome, Margaret 4, 28, 50–51, 53–54, 63, 181–182, 184, 191, 195
- Gross, Paul 101–102
- Grusin, Richard 98
- Guinness, Alec 51, 55, 182
- Gurik, Robert 129, 134, 138, 151, 153
- Guthrie, Tyrone 13, 15–16, 20–21, 28, 32, 35, 38, 45, 51, 54–57, 182, 256
- Haentjens, Brigitte 150
- Hall, Amelia 52
- Hamlet* 1, 3, 34, 72, 74–75, 79–80, 83, 86, 97, 100, 102–105, 129–132, 134–135, 137–138, 143–146, 154–160, 165–171, 201, 219, 222, 225, 227, 232–233, 237, 241, 246, 256
- Hart House Theatre 21
- Hausvater, Alexander 151
- Heeley, Desmond 17
- Heffernan, Virginia 81, 90–93
- Henry IV* 133, 137, 227
- Henry V* 34, 56, 76, 133, 137, 158
- Henry VI* 27, 247
- Henry, Martha 73
- Highway, René 112–113
- Highway, Tomson 112
- Hinton, Peter 5, 71–77
- Hoenselaars, Ton 3
- Howells, Coral Ann 179–180
- Hugo, François-Victor 130, 133, 137
- Hutcheon, Linda 76, 118
- Hutt, Jack 15, 21
- Innis, Harold Adams 160–161, 170
- James, Henry 178
- Jansohn, Christa 2
- Johnson, Mark 201
- Johnson, Phil 112–113
- Jones, Thomas Mercer 62
- Julius Caesar* 5, 111, 113, 116–118, 121, 134, 135, 137, 143, 227
- Kadri, Haysam 33, 35–36
- Kahn, Coppélia 2
- Karastamatis, John 112–113
- Karremann, Isabel 2
- King Lear* 7, 73, 75, 82, 86, 87, 88, 90, 93, 107–108, 129, 131, 134–135, 138, 143, 151–152, 154, 156–157, 159, 162–163, 165, 167–171, 178, 180, 184–185, 193, 195, 222
- King, Robert 33
- King, Thomas 241–246, 257–259
- Kinross, Louise 112–113, 122
- Knowles, Richard 27–29, 50, 52–54, 57, 63–64, 112–114, 117, 119–125, 179, 181, 191
- Lakoff, George 201
- Lamos, Mark 15–16
- Lane, Christel 3
- Langham, Michael 13
- Larsen, Jonas 31–33, 35–36, 42–43
- Lecoq, Jacques 206–207, 209–210, 213
- Lee, Dorothy 160
- Leerssen, Joep 2, 4
- Legault, Father Emile 142
- Leggatt, Alexander 73
- Leiblein, Leanore 5
- Leitch, Adelaide 53–54
- Leméac 129, 132
- Lepage, Robert 130, 137, 141
- Les Enfants de Chénier 129, 132
- Lewis, Wyndham 159
- Linklater, Kristin 203, 211–213
- Living Theatre 132
- Lizars, Robina 62
- Lundon Canadian Club 59
- Luhmann, Niklas 128, 141
- Lyne, Raphael 200–202, 213
- Macbeth* 85–86, 129–131, 133, 135, 137–140, 147–150, 167, 170, 174, 222–224, 232
- Mackenzie King, William Lyon 256
- McKinney, Mark 103
- MacKinnon, Kennedy Cathy 5, 116–118, 120, 121
- McLuhhan, Elsie Hall 157
- McLuhhan, Marshall 5–7, 98, 157–171
- Maeterlinck, Maurice 129, 133, 135, 139
- Maheu, Gilles 130, 141
- Maillet, Antonine 5, 130–132, 135, 140–141, 144–147, 150–151, 154
- Major, Leon 21
- Makaryk, Irena R. 50, 52, 63, 138, 191
- Mandel, Emily St. John 6
- Maraden, Marti 3, 11, 16–18, 21–23
- Markels, Julian 73
- Marleau, Denis 130, 141
- Márquez, Gabriel Garcia 246
- Marriott, Thom 33–34, 36–37, 40, 42
- Mason, John 62
- Massey, Vincent 29, 64, 220, 257
- McAdams, Rachel 102
- McComb, Shaun 41–42
- McGee, C.E. 3, 6, 50
- McKegney, Sam 120
- McKenna, Catherine 6
- McKenna, Seana 21, 40–42
- McMaster University 256, 264
- Mehl, Dieter 2
- Merasty, Billy 112, 122
- Merchant of Venice* 3, 6, 11, 13, 15–17, 21, 23, 135, 172, 218, 222, 227, 228, 230
- Meschonnic, Henri 128, 142
- Midsummer Night's Dream, A* 4, 27, 31–34, 37–39, 42–44, 82, 106, 129–131, 133, 137, 138, 152, 178, 182, 188, 191–193, 224, 226, 242
- Moiseiwitsch, Tanya 32, 38, 51
- Mojica, Monique 112, 113, 116, 120–121
- Molière (Poquelin, Jean-Baptiste) 134
- Monette, Richard 11, 15, 17, 30, 100
- Montreal Gazette* 255
- Mouawad, Wajdi 131, 137
- Munro, Alice 6, 177–194
- Myerhoff, Barbara G. 3
- Nashe, Thomas 158–160
- National Arts Centre (NAC) 111, 231
- National Film Board 55
- National Theatre School of Canada (see also École Nationale de Théâtre) 1, 206
- Nestruck, J. Kelly 1
- Neveux, Georges 129, 133, 137
- Nolan, Yvette 5, 111–113, 116–121
- Nolette, Nicole 5, 134, 150
- Nouvelle Compagnie théâtrale 133, 135–136
- Novarina, Valère 130, 133, 137
- O'Brien, Maureen 16–17, 25
- Ogier, Pascale 105
- One Yellow Rabbit Performance Theatre 206
- Opsis 130, 141
- Orr, Sarah 63
- Orr, R. Thomas 54, 56, 58
- Osborne, Laurie 80, 89, 92
- Othello* 34, 63, 130, 134, 135, 138, 164–165, 168, 187, 224, 226, 241
- Ottawa Citizen* 13
- Ottawa Little Theatre 256
- Oxford Canada 251
- Oxford University Press 251
- Parker, Morten 55
- Patterson, Tom 16, 50–52, 54–56, 58, 63–64
- Pennoyer, John 32–34, 37–39
- Peters, Helen 112–113, 116, 122
- Pitöeff, Ludmilla 142
- Pittman, L. Monique 80
- Place des Arts 137–138
- Portman, Jamie 15, 28, 231, 236
- Rae, Ian 4, 49, 54, 64
- Richardson, J. Michael 80–81, 83, 102, 108
- Riesman, David 160
- Rigney, Ann 2
- Romeo and Juliet* 1, 130, 132, 134, 138, 152, 165, 208–209,

- 212–214, 223–224, 231, 233, 236, 238
- Ronfard, Alice 129–130, 135, 137, 140, 151
- Ross, George W. 240
- Rotenberg, David 204
- Roux, Jean-Louis 129–131, 133–134, 137, 141–145
- Royal Shakespeare Company 17, 38
- Rubin, Leon 4, 27, 29–39, 41–44
- Rudy, Brad 33
- Ryerson, Egerton 217, 219
- Sanders portrait of Shakespeare 252–255, 257
- Schrager, Charlotte 14, 21
- Shakespeare Club 63
- Shakespearean Gardens 54, 63
- Shakespeare, William. See *Antony and Cleopatra, As You Like It, Coriolanus, King Lear, Hamlet, Henry IV, Henry V, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Midsummer Night's Dream (A), Romeo and Juliet, Taming of the Shrew (The), Tempest (The), Troilus and Cressida, Twelfth Night*
- Shaw, George Bernard 133, 157
- Sheen, Erica 2
- Silver, Philipp 18
- Simon, Sherry 149
- Saro-Wiwa, Ken 100, 106–107
- Skylight Theatre 112–113
- Slings & Arrows* 4, 29, 63, 79–81, 84–93, 97–98, 100, 101–103, 105–108
- Stover, David 252
- Stratford Festival 3–6, 11, 13, 16, 22–23, 27–31, 34, 49–50, 52–55, 59, 63–64, 71, 79, 97, 100–102, 106, 178–186, 188–191, 193–194, 200, 220, 231, 234, 251–252, 255–257
- Stratford Public Library 58, 60
- Sullivan, Lloyd 253
- Talman, James 59–61
- Talman, Ruth 59–61
- Taming of the Shrew, The* 11, 129–131, 133, 135
- Tempest, The* 6, 75, 111–113, 115–116, 130–131, 133, 134, 137–140, 149, 152, 155, 183, 222
- Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui 129, 132, 136–138
- Théâtre de la Licorne 131, 136, 150
- Théâtre de Quat'Sous 130, 132, 136
- Théâtre Denise-Pelletier 135–136, 151
- Théâtre du Même Nom 132
- Théâtre du Nouveau Monde 129–133, 136, 137, 142, 149–150, 234
- Théâtre du Rideau Vert 130–132, 135–136, 140
- Théâtre du Trident 129–133, 136–138, 140, 152
- Théâtre Espace Libre 130, 133, 136, 137
- Théâtre populaire du Québec 133, 135–136
- Théâtre Repère 131, 136–137
- Todd, Frederick 63
- Toronto Public Library 2
- Tremblay, Michel 129, 132, 141–142, 147, 150, 152
- Troilus and Cressida* 163, 165, 170–171
- Trudeau, Justin 6
- Turner, Mark 201
- Twelfth Night* 27, 31, 38, 39, 42–44, 133–134, 137, 150, 223, 245
- Ubu 130, 141
- Université Laurentienne in Sudbury 134
- University of British Columbia 199–200, 206
- University of Manitoba 157
- University of Ottawa 2, 7
- University of Toronto 21, 160, 168
- University of Waterloo 64
- Urry, John 31–33, 35–36, 42–43, 46
- Valk, Frederick 13–15
- Veillette, Eric 227
- Vilar, Jean 142
- Villeneuve, Rodrigue 131, 135, 139–140
- Wallace, Robert 56–57
- Waterloo Region District School Board 13
- Weibezahl, Robert 178
- Western University (formerly University of Western Ontario) 50, 59, 62
- Wetsch, Jeffrey 33, 35–36
- Whittaker, Herbert 50, 255, 256
- Wilson, F.P. 159
- Worth, Irene 51, 56, 182
- Worthen, W.B. 32
- York University 200, 203–204
- Zaslave, Arne 206–207, 209

## REAPPRAISALS: CANADIAN WRITERS

Series editor: Janice Fiamengo

*Reappraisal: Canadian Writers* was begun in 1973 in response to a need for single volumes of essays on Canadian authors who had not received the critical attention they deserved or who warranted extensive and intensive reconsideration. It is the longest running series dedicated to the study of Canadian literary subjects. The annual symposium, hosted by the Department of English at the University of Ottawa, began in 1972 and the following year University of Ottawa Press published the first title in the series, *The Grove Symposium*. Since then our editorial policy has remained straightforward: each year to make permanently available in a single volume the best of the criticism and evaluation presented at our symposia on Canadian literature, thereby creating a body of work on and a critical base for the study of Canadian writers and literary subjects.

### Previous titles in this collection

Janice Fiamengo and Gerald Lynch (eds.), *Alice Munro's Miraculous Art: Critical Essays*, 2017

David Staines (ed.), *The Worlds of Carol Shields*, 2014

Janice Fiamengo (ed.), *Home Ground and Foreign Territory: Essays on Early Canadian Literature*, 2014

David R. Jarraway (ed.), *Double-Takes: Intersections between Canadian Literature and Film*, 2013

Robert David Stacey (ed.), *Reading the Postmodern: Canadian Literature and Criticism after Modernism*, 2011

David Rampton (ed.), *Northrop Frye: New Directions from Old*, 2010

For a complete list of our titles in this series, see:

**[www.press.uottawa.ca/series/french-and-canadian-studies/  
reappraisals-canadian-writers](http://www.press.uottawa.ca/series/french-and-canadian-studies/reappraisals-canadian-writers)**