

© 2013

ISSN 2326-8158

**Selected Papers
of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference**

Editor

Hillary Nunn
The University of Akron

Co-Editor

Gabriel Rieger
Concord University

Assistant Editor

Kevin Kane
The University of Akron

Editorial Board

Richard Dutton
The Ohio State University

Jonathan Kamholtz
University of Cincinnati

Lars Engle
University of Tulsa

Eva McManus
Ohio Northern University

David George
Urbana University

Robert Pierce
Oberlin College

Bill Godshalk
University of Cincinnati

Mary Ellen Lamb
*Southern Illinois University-
Carbondale*

Peggy Russo
*The Pennsylvania State
University Mont Alto*

Lisa Starks-Estes
*University of South Florida St.
Petersburg*

From the Editor

This fifth volume of the *Selected Papers of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference* features five of the most accomplished essays of our 2012 conference, “Extreme(ly) Shakespeare(an).” Dr. Joseph Sullivan, OVSC president and 2012 Conference Chair, organized the October 18-20 meeting at Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio. The Marietta College Departments of English and Theatre, as well as the college’s Office of Academic Affairs, generously supported the conference; the meeting’s success is due in large part to the efforts of Tim Catalano, Janet Bland, Jeff Cordell, Andy Felt, Gama Perucci, Mark Miller, Angie Stevens, and Alyssa McGrath.

The conference served as a venue for papers exploring the notion of extremes in Shakespeare’s work, and the first essay in this volume embodies this mission on multiple levels. What if, Byron Nelson asks, instead of concluding the grouping known as the “problem plays,” *All’s Well That Ends Well* could be seen as marking the beginning of Shakespeare’s final phase of work? His essay “Helena and ‘the Rarest Argument of Wonder’: *All’s Well That Ends Well* and the Romance Genre” shows how, once the plays are realigned, “The thematic motifs consistent with the late romances suddenly seem apparent: the plot of *All’s Well* begins where *Pericles* ends, with a long-suffering maiden healing a sick monarch; it ends where *The Winter’s Tale* begins, with a pregnant wife.” In this light, Nelson argues, “Helena seems to have more in common with the plucky, put-upon heroines of the romances, like Marina and Imogen, than she does with the otherworldly Isabella.”

Kirk Hendershott-Kraetzer’s essay, “A Hot Mess: Knowing Juliet through Accidental Encounters in Popular Culture,” tracks the often unexpected echoes of Juliet in television dramas to show how the medium reflects changes in her character’s cultural resonances. Hendershott-Kraetzer surveys eight different television characters described as “Juliets”; these surprising manifestations then become the essay’s basis for outlining the qualities that have made their way into popular conceptions of the iconic character. Today’s scholars may tend to see the Shakespearean Juliet as manipulative, Hendershott-Kraetzer writes, yet it is nonetheless “startling [to see] how far some of the TV Juliets will go in their attempts to manipulate others and the social

systems in which they are embedded—to say nothing of the damage they wreak as a result of their choices.” His essay shows how those qualities mix with the more traditional image of a sweet, star-crossed Juliet in the associations that the character’s name conjures for students and internet commentators alike.

Next, in “Jean-François Ducis: Re-Creating Shakespeare for an Eighteenth-Century Audience,” Amy Drake considers Ducis’s modifications to *Macbeth* as he revised it for the Parisian stage. Eighteenth-century France, she argues, “provided an especially auspicious time for Ducis to introduce his Shakespearean adaptations, because audiences were open to experiencing new forms of theater.” Ducis may be unknown to many Shakespeare scholars, yet this essay shows that his work has influenced drama well beyond his native France. Looking at the plays in the context of the French revolution—and the cultural preferences in heroism it came to inspire—Drake explores *Macbeth*’s metamorphosis into a redeemable character. In the process, Drake considers Ducis’s presentation of Lady Macbeth, whose transformation into Frédégonde gives her a mythic aura and unrepentant manner that proved meaningful to the era’s audiences. Drake’s exploration considers French theatergoing habits to reveal how Shakespeare’s works took on a different life on the other side of the English Channel.

A second distinctive performance venue—the wrestling cage—provides the backdrop for Aaron Hubbard’s essay, “When Words Defile Things: Homoerotic Desire and Extreme Depictions of Masculinity in Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus* and Mixed Martial Arts.” There, Hubbard reads the battleground hostility of *Coriolanus* alongside the relationships fostered between fighters in the newly-popular sport of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). Hubbard’s essay shows that both the play and MMA construct the male body as a site of unspoken desire, and that the aggression of combat provides a culturally protected mode of expressing fantasies of penetration. Calling upon the vocabulary of MMA to unpack the obsessive rivalry between Coriolanus and Aufidius, Hubbard shows how *Coriolanus* mirrors modern ideas of masculine friendship forged through violence. Both Coriolanus and MMA fighters “distrust language because they think it lacks the clarity of a fight,” Hubbard argues. “It is not that fighters are or are not homosexual,” he explains, “but that

homoeroticism is built into the action of the fight, just as it is built into the dramatic structure of *Coriolanus*, only to then be actively suppressed and denied.”

In “Extremes of Gender and Power: Sycorax’s Absence in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*,” Brittney Blystone examines Prospero’s verbal representation of Sycorax in the drama’s opening. Noting that Caliban’s mother never appears on stage, Blystone shows how Prospero’s descriptions of Sycorax shape the ways Ariel and Caliban—not to mention audience members—envision her character. Prospero’s words make clear that “Sycorax symbolizes all of his negative assumptions about women; therefore, he constructs her sexuality in ways that oppose his patriarchal views on virginity.” As Blystone argues, Caliban realizes Prospero’s lingering worries about the female power Sycorax represents, calling on her to strengthen his claims to the island. The emphasis that Prospero and Ferdinand place on Miranda’s chastity provides a vivid counterpoint to Sycorax’s enigmatic but nonetheless condemned pregnancy.

Without Joseph Sullivan’s dedication to the OVSC, neither this issue nor the 2012 conference would have ever materialized. The members of the editorial board once again offered dedicated service and thoughtful input to this collection, as did Co-Editor Gabriel Rieger, whose commitment to the journal has been much appreciated.

This issue has benefited enormously from the work of Assistant Editor Kevin Kane, whose patience, good humor, and relentless attention to detail somehow lasted through the entire publication process. Edmund Taft and Marlia Fontaine-Weisse provided an invaluable infrastructure for the journal; without their earlier work, this issue would have been impossible. For a second year, Kenny Cruse came to the rescue on technical matters too numerous to mention. Richard Wisneski’s ingenuity made the issue’s cover possible, and Thea Ledendecker provided much-needed moral support. The University of Akron Department of English graciously sponsored our efforts as well—something much appreciated in times when projects like this one often go underfunded. And, lastly, I would like to thank all those who contributed their work for consideration for publication in this issue. Without their generosity and faith in our efforts, this volume could never have come into existence.

“Extreme(ly) Shakespeare(an)”

Table of Contents

Helena and “the Rarest Argument of Wonder”: <i>All’s Well That Ends Well</i> and the Romance Genre	<i>Byron Nelson</i> 1
A Hot Mess: Knowing Juliet through Accidental Encounters in Popular Culture	<i>Kirk Hendershott-Kraetzer</i> 13
Jean-François Ducis: Re-Creating Shakespeare for an Eighteenth-Century Audience	<i>Amy Drake</i> 47
When Words Defile Things: Homoerotic Desire and Extreme Depictions of Masculinity in Shakespeare’s <i>Coriolanus</i> and Mixed Martial Arts	<i>Aaron Hubbard</i> 61
Extremes of Gender and Power: Sycorax’s Absence in Shakespeare’s <i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Brittney Blystone</i> 73

Helena and “the Rarest Argument of Wonder”: *All’s Well That Ends Well* and the Romance Genre

Byron Nelson, *West Virginia University*

In recent years, *All’s Well That Ends Well* has enjoyed fresh consideration, on both page and stage. It has come to seem less a “problem play” than an early romance; Helena has come to seem better fitted to the company of Marina and Perdita than to Isabella; and some critics have detected the presence of a collaborator, possibly Thomas Middleton. In particular, readers of the *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS) in 2012 can hardly have missed the debate about the date of, and possible collaboration in, *All’s Well That Ends Well*. There, Laurie Maguire and Emma Smith suggest a later date for the play, a possible collaborator for Shakespeare, and a new generic identity for *All’s Well*. In posing their revisionist theory, Maguire and Smith contemplate the unusual variety of problems in *All’s Well* as compared to the plays that were first printed in the 1623 Folio. They observe that MacDonald Jackson’s dating of the play after 1606, which was tacitly accepted by Lois Potter in her new biography of Shakespeare, is beginning to accrue wide acceptance. Separated from its longtime companions, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida*, and released from the now-disputed genre of “problem play,” *All’s Well* seems very different when viewed in the company of the late romances. Maguire and Smith note that, if the new, later date is correct, the play no longer seems “a misfit problem play but an early ‘late romance’” (13). The thematic motifs consistent with the late romances suddenly seem apparent: the plot of *All’s Well* begins where *Pericles* ends, with a long-suffering maiden healing a sick monarch; it ends where *The Winter’s Tale* begins, with a pregnant wife. Like Hermione in the latter play, Helena returns miraculously, from her supposed death, although in *All’s Well* the audience is made privy to the secret of the heroine’s long disappearance from the action—and not deceived about her supposed death, as is the audience of *The Winter’s Tale*. The conclusions of both plays are notable for the restoration of wronged and suffering wives, and both plays deploy the language of grace and wonder. The apparently supernatural awakening of the statue of Hermione is anticipated by the scene in which Helena cures the apparently incurable King of France of his ambiguous, life-threatening

malady—and, I would add, the scenes of the magical cures of Thaisa by the healer Cerimon and of the speechless and morose Pericles by his as-yet unrecognized daughter Marina.

More controversially, Maguire and Smith propose the hand of a previously undetected collaborator in the composition of *All's Well*. “[A] second hand—that of Thomas Middleton—might be detected in this play,” they argue with some degree of persuasiveness (“Many Hands” 13). They cite the high proportion of rhyming lines, the unusual vocabulary (e.g., words like *ruttish* and *fistula*), contractions and colloquialisms not usually associated with Shakespeare, and a fondness for mock-languages, such as the hybrid language devised by the soldiers for the exposure of Parolles (13-14). Perhaps inspired by the recent identification of George Wilkins as the probable collaborator in *Pericles* and Middleton’s apparently prodigious gift for collaboration revealed by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino in their massive *Collected Works* of Thomas Middleton, Maguire and Smith accept the new consensus that collaboration was part of Shakespeare’s professional practice; they insist, “stylistically it is striking how many of the widely acknowledged problems of *All's Well* can be understood differently when we postulate dual authorship” (15).

Within a month, Maguire and Smith’s argument in *TLS* drew a ferocious rejoinder from Brian Vickers and Marcus Dahl, who insisted, “there is absolutely no evidence of another hand in this play” (15). They accused Maguire and Smith of ignoring the scholarship and distorting the evidence; for the unusual linguistic features of *All's Well* as it appears in the First Folio, Vickers and Dahl blamed failures in the text’s transcription. Undeterred by this onslaught, Maguire and Smith, in the best partisan spirit of an election campaign, accused their assailants of following unreliable methodology and clinging to sentimental Victorian assumptions; in addition, they admonished Vickers and Dahl for failing to spot the evidence for revisions and collaborations in *Measure for Measure* and *Macbeth* and ignoring the evidence for the new, later date—1607, rather than the traditional early 1600s (“*All's Well*” 6). At this point, either passions cooled or the editors of the *TLS* letters page grew weary of the battle, and the rejoinders ceased.

Whatever the merits of these conflicting arguments, I was struck by the way in which *All's Well That Ends Well* suddenly seems a fresher and more powerful play when viewed as an early “late romance” and not

confined to the ghetto of "problem plays." As Gordon McMullan explains, by "this simple, if undefended, chronological change, the romance elements in the *All's Well* plot take on entirely new significance" (10). The possible re-dating of *All's Well* opens up the possibility that Shakespeare's interest in the romance genre did not begin with a chance encounter with the draft and sketches for Wilkins's *Pericles*, which in the classic theory of Philip Edwards marked a startling new phase in Shakespeare's career: "It would be curious indeed if Shakespeare had discovered, in a poor play that he started tinkering with, the kind of plot, the kind of art, the kind of theme, which he was to spend all the endeavour of the last years of his writing life trying to develop" (qtd. in Warren 7). What if, instead, *All's Well* rather than *Pericles* marks the beginning of Shakespeare's final phase? Seen this way, Helena seems to have more in common with the plucky, put-upon heroines of the romances, like Marina and Imogen, than she does with the otherworldly Isabella.

Marianne Elliott, in her production of *All's Well That Ends Well* for the Royal National Theatre in London in 2009, chose to stress the fantastic elements rather than to brood on the scholarly problems cited above. Elliott apparently sought to present the play in a manner that was fresh and accessible to a contemporary audience; I doubt that she had any thought of pleasing literary scholars. But reconsidering her production in light of the *TLS* debate illustrates nicely the new insights that can come from seeing *All's Well* as a late romance. Helena, played by Michelle Terry, was brisk, determined, and bawdy; she was far from demure or hesitant in devising the bed trick, for which she enjoyed the enthusiastic partnership of Diana; and, dressed like Little Red Riding Hood, she went off on her pilgrimage up a steep hill at the rear of the stage and into a spooky Gothic forest suggestive of both early illustrations for the Brothers Grimm and Tim Burton's movies. There was no hint of a Victorian maiden's modesty when she cured the King of France of his life-threatening fistula. The production made no attempt to explain Helena's idolatrous obsession with the callow Bertram, who in this production was never more than a foolish boy who fantasizes about military heroism; as such, he was easy prey for the absurd boasts of Parolles, who was dressed as an Elvis impersonator, decked out with garish scarves. (Parolles's costume in this production amusingly fulfilled Lafew's description of him as "a snipped-taffeta fellow" [4.5.1-2].¹) Helena was happy to share the

company of the festive girls of Florence, who were dressed in a manner reminiscent of the girls in the dance at the gym in the film version of *West Side Story*. Only the wedding photos, taken after Helena's recovery of Bertram, in which the faces grew progressively gloomier in a set of freeze-frames, seemed to predict the disillusionment of the newlyweds. The production did not specifically evoke the tone of wonder we associate with the late romances—the sets were occasionally evocative of the fantastic illustrations of Dr. Seuss—but it certainly affirmed Helena's healthy sexuality and distinguished her from the cool repression of Isabella. Indeed, this Helena had more in common with the scheming city wives of Middleton and looked back to the upbeat, pragmatic heroines of Shakespeare's early comedies, from Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Rosalind in *As You Like It*, rather than to the long-suffering Isabella.

Like Thaisa, Hermione, and other heroines of the romances, Helena disappears from the action for a long stretch and is widely thought by the other characters to have died, and her return in Act 5 is treated as a miraculous resurrection. Since the audience is privy to her planned disappearance, the effect of her return is not as shocking as Hermione's in *The Winter's Tale*. Most significantly, in a manner that anticipates the late romances, Helena is depicted as a medical and psychological healer; as such, she looks backward to Friar Laurence as an herbal physician and forward to Cerimon and Marina in *Pericles*. The herbal cures of the friar and Helena demonstrate that Shakespeare's interest in herbal cures preceded his acquaintance with future son-in-law Dr. John Hall; perhaps, instead, his interest in holistic medicine prepared the way for his apparently friendly relationship with Susanna's husband, the respected Puritan physician of Hall's Croft in Stratford-upon-Avon. Helena's cure of the King of France from his life-threatening fistula is a highly complex affair, and it deserves better than Lois Potter's flippant dismissal, in her new biography of the playwright: "Helena, though Bernard Shaw called her a 'lady doctor,' does not really have more medical skills than those every woman of the period was supposed to have, plus a prescription that her father has left among his papers" (336). To say this is to miss the profoundly spiritual and psychological effects of her treatment; and if indeed "every woman of the period" had the same medical skills, why did none of them possess the expertise to cure the

ailing monarch? "Every woman" didn't cure the King of France; only Helena, heir to her father's considerable medical knowledge, provided the cure.

Although Shakespeare for good reason chooses not to stage the scene of the king's recovery, Helena's therapeutic skills are considerable, and the audience is encouraged to believe her claim to be able to cure the king. Her father, Gerard de Narbon, left her "prescriptions / Of rare and proved effects" (1.3.219-20); the fact that he did so on his deathbed (2.1.106-7) gives this knowledge the extra cachet of a solemn parental blessing. Lafew testifies to the astounding effect of Helena's treatment when he tells the ailing king that he had seen a medicine that could "breathe life into a stone" and "[q]uicken a rock" (2.1.74-75). Even Parolles, not normally given to praising anyone but himself, proclaims Helena's cure as "the rarest argument of wonder that hath shot out in our latter times" (2.3.7-8). Helena approaches her opportunity to cure the king with the same confidence with which she chooses Bertram as her marriage partner. Unlike the boastful Parolles, she announces her intention to provide a cure with crisp professional confidence rather than with boastful self-promotion: "There is a remedy . . . / To cure [the King's] desperate languishings" (1.3.226-27), she announces, and she furthermore coolly predicts that she can cure the king in twenty-four hours (2.1.167).

Shakespeare chooses not to depict Helena at work as a medical practitioner, but it is clear that everyone in the play, except the jejune Bertram, is impressed by Helena's dignity and perseverance. Lafew admits to being amazed by her professional manner, wisdom, and constancy (2.1.84-85), while Helena herself modestly insists that "remedies oft in ourselves do lie," although they are popularly attributed to heaven (1.1.216-17). Helen Wilcox calls *All's Well* "Shakespeare's 'miracle play,'" not because of any indebtedness to the medieval dramatic genre but because "devotion, faith and redemption are among its chief concerns" (140). In attempting to cure the king, Helena insists that the test is on heaven, not on her, and she describes her proposed treatment in specifically theological terms as "great'st grace lending grace" (2.1.162). She even hints briefly at an astrological influence at work in her cure when she notes, "his good receipt / Shall for my legacy be sanctified / By th' luckiest stars in heaven" (1.3.242-44). Wilcox is on solid footing to

claim that Helena's major actions in the play—the cure, her pilgrimage to a holy shrine, her apparent return from the dead, and her pregnancy—confirm her identity as an agent of divine grace. As Wilcox insists, “The source of her confidence is divine aid or ‘greatest Grace lending grace’ [sic], for which she claims simply to function as a conduit” (141).

At the same time, however, it must be admitted that her pregnancy—indeed, what Wilcox calls “the mysterious pregnancy of a supposedly virgin mother” (140)—is actually not the result of any divine miracle but a skillfully-planned and well-executed bed trick which nearly results in a ruined reputation and imprisonment for Helena's paid accomplice, Diana. Bertram is, of course, Helena's newly-married husband, and he imagines in the pitch darkness that he is accomplishing his lustful goal of seducing Diana. It is statistically a long shot for Helena to become pregnant at her very first sexual encounter, but we have to remember that, unlike Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, she is already something of a sexual adventurer, in word if not in physical act. She has already parried wittily with Parolles about her virginity, and she admits early in the play that her affection for Bertram is irrational and close to idolatry—“Indian-like” (1.3.201).

The play chooses not to stage two crucial scenes that no Hollywood producer today with an eye on the box-office receipts would omit from a screen version: the cure of the king and the bed trick. Elliott's 2009 Royal National Theatre production happily enacted the bed trick in shadows behind a backlit sheet, with Diana, already in bed with Bertram, skillfully handing off the baton, so to speak, to Helena, who enthusiastically jumps into the bed to replace her. And whatever the exact nature of the king's malady may be, it is hard for the reader not to conceive of the cure as at least partly, or largely, the result of a sexual encounter. While we are never told exactly where the king's “fistula” is located, the malady is usually associated with the rectum or the groin. In explaining the benefits of Helena's proposed cure to the ailing monarch, Lafew tells the king that her cure could “make you dance canary” and could “araise King Pepin” and “give great Charlemain a pen in's hand,” and both phrases strongly suggest the reawakening of sexual potency (2.1.75-78), as do the earlier lines about enlivening stones and rocks. When he emerges from his encounter with Helena, Lafew describes the king with the striking and unexpected German or Dutch adjective *lustig* (2.3.41); and, describing a

dance that is even more pointedly sexual than the canary, Lafew says that the king is now "able to lead her a coranto" (2.3.43). Certainly by the mid-seventeenth century, the coranto had earned a reputation as a provocative sexual dance; the Ranters and other radical religious sects of the English Revolution were often accused of conducting mixed naked dances, as in the "Ranters' coranto" or the "Adamite Curranto." (For example, Gilbert Roulston, one of the numerous anti-Ranter pamphleteers from the years 1650-51 salaciously reported that the Ranters "stript themselves quite naked, and dans[ed] the *Adamites Curranto*" [2].) This is not to insist necessarily that Helena has actually provided sexual services to the king, only that there seems to have been clear erotic or sexual content to Helena's therapy, and that Lafew's provocative language invites us at least to imagine such content. It is even tempting to imagine that Helena at the play's end is carrying not Bertram's child but the king's. (Admittedly, this possibility drives the fairy tale aspect of the romance genre into the brick wall of hard reality; and if this theory of the king's paternity is correct, Helena would join the company of such brisk pragmatists in the romances as the brothel managers in *Pericles* and Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*.)

If Shakespeare's depiction of the king's cure hints broadly at bawdy behavior, it fits in deftly with the other cunning aspects of Helena's character. She has, after all, chosen Bertram for a marriage partner clearly against his will; she misrepresents the nature of her supposedly religious pilgrimage, going to Florence rather than St. Jacques le Grand; she devises the bed trick and pays Diana for her bawdy role in it; and she recruits the Widow of Florence and Diana in her feminine conspiracy. The bed trick has its origin in the narrative of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38, where Tamar, posing as a prostitute, has sex with her father-in-law, Judah, who fails to recognize her identity, in order to convey the seed of Judah. The deception of the bed trick neatly parallels the climax of the play's subplot, the exposure of the mendacity of the boastful Parolles; the disguised Helena seduces Bertram, who is besotted with lust for Diana and agrees to meet his imagined beloved in the dark, just as Parolles, while captured and blindfolded, eagerly betrays the military secrets of the army. Blinded by lust or the determination to remain alive, at whatever cost to honor, Bertram and Parolles commit actions that bring them into discredit, although Parolles is publicly humiliated, while

Bertram is forgiven and rewarded at play's end. At least the cowardly Parolles admits to the pragmatism that underlies his shabby betrayal—"Simply the thing I am / Shall make me live" (4.3.335-36)—while Bertram is as churlish as ever when confronted with the evidence that Helena has indeed fulfilled the conditions of his impossible bargain.

Helena's cure of the king bears comparison with the twin scenes of healing in *Pericles* and anticipates a persistent theme in the late romances. Cerimon, who revives Thaisa from her apparent death and rude burial at sea, is depicted as an exemplary healer who piously invokes the Greek physician-god Aesculapius for guidance (3.2.114). Unlike Helena, he claims no divine mandate for his cures, and in his expository speeches he reveals information that his followers undoubtedly already know: that he prefers virtue and cunning over status (nobleness) and riches (28-30) and that he has had medical training. He has studied medicine ("Tis known I ever / Have studied physic" [33-34]) and is acquainted with "blest infusions" (37). When he recognizes that Thaisa shows signs of life, he promptly calls for fire and medical supplies—which in his holistic program include cloths, music, and air (81-83, 89, 90, 93). But he's no miracle-worker, and early in the scene he admits to a servant that he was unable to save the life of his master (7-9). He understands that Thaisa's recovery is tentative and warns his assistants to be cautious, but his exhortation to Thaisa—"Live, and make / Us weep to hear your fate, fair creature, / Rare as you seem to be" (104-6)—has a miraculous ring to it, as if Cerimon were calling her back into life. When in the play's final scene he presents the long-lost Thaisa to the incredulous Pericles, he sounds like both a consoling physician and an archeologist who has found a treasure: "Look, Thaisa is / Recovered" (5.3.27-28).

Marina's therapy, when she cures her speechless father on the ship in the harbor at Mytilene, is more a matter of music therapy than hard medical treatment—unlike Helena, she has no prescriptions inherited from a medical father—but she achieves immediate results. Pericles is first roused out of his silence by Marina's song, then by his gradual realization of Marina's true identity. Sadly, no original song by Shakespeare has survived, and none is included in the 1609 quarto text, and while the song included in Lawrence Twine's *Pattern of Painful Adventures* is hardly distinguished poetry, it does include some crucial details which eventually help Pericles to confirm Marina's identity:

"Amongst the harlots foul I walk / Yet harlot none am I" (qtd. in Warren 290). From Marina's opening words, it is conceivably (but only remotely) possible to excuse Pericles for striking Marina, if he is convinced that she is merely a hardened prostitute who has come to solicit his patronage. Yet only a thug or deranged person would respond violently to the simplicity and sincerity of Marina's singing. We should perhaps recall that Marina endured an unhappy childhood at the court of Cleon and Dionyza and that she had inadvertently inspired Dionyza's insane hatred simply by outshining their daughter Philoten. Yet she did learn a valuable set of skills appropriate to a gentle woman at the Renaissance court, such as sewing, singing, weaving, and dancing (4.6.184); these are the skills that Marina proposes to teach at the academy for young women that she will open, with Bolt's assistance, from the money paid to her by Lysimachus. She also proposes to teach "other virtues, which I'll keep from boast" (4.6.185), as she explains it discretely to Bolt. It's hard not to imagine these as courtesans' tricks that she has observed during her stay in the Mytilene brothel; moreover, sewing, singing, and dancing are among the skills that a skillful Renaissance courtesan like Veronica Franco in Venice would keep in her repertory of professional activities. (As Margaret F. Rosenthal notes in her reconstruction of the career of Franco, the courtesan's complex repertory of services was by no means "limited to sexual activity" [4].) Unlike Helena, Marina seemingly remains a virgin to the end of her play; but no heroine of a Shakespearean romance has endured more threats of violence and threats of sexual assault. Given her bitter life experiences, it seems scarcely plausible to describe Marina as "innocent" by the time she exits the play as promised wife of Lysimachus, the corrupt prince and harbor official and cynical sex addict.

In short, Shakespeare's interest in affirming the power of magical and medical cures in *All's Well* precedes the official canon of the "late romances," and Helena's pluck and initiative make her comparable more to the heroines of the romances, especially Marina, than to the abstemious Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, with whom she is frequently paired. The proposed later date for *All's Well* suggests that this play, rather than *Pericles*, begins the period of the romances, on which Shakespeare spends most of his artistic energy in the latest phase of his writing career. Helena's career looks forward to Marina's, in the sense that both overcome impossible odds, have problematic relationships with

fathers who have either died or disappeared, are confronted with highly unusual sexual demands, and (most intriguingly) are possessed of unusual medical skills and therapeutic techniques. Dismayingly, both find themselves in marriages to unsuitable partners. Bertram is hostile to or ungrateful for the benefits of the match that Helena has dreamt about idolatrously from the beginning, and Lysimachus is a corrupt prince cynically taking kickbacks as the harbor inspector whose response to his first sight of Marina is appallingly sexist: “Faith, she would serve after a long voyage at sea” (4.6.43-44). One is tempted to say of these marriages, as Jaques sneeringly taunts Touchstone, “thy loving voyage / Is but for two months victualed” (AYL 5.4.190-91).

Laurie Maguire and Emma Smith may well be correct in detecting the collaboration of Thomas Middleton in the composition of *All's Well*, and we may well attribute the play's sexual cynicism to the author of plays like *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, just as one might credit or blame George Wilkins, the brothel-keeper and cynical playwright, for the seamier sexual details in *Pericles* that (as the Victorians would say) our “gentle” Shakespeare would surely never countenance. Helena's taste for sexual intrigue and her determination to become pregnant by the man she desires may well have been suggested to Shakespeare by the opportunism of Middleton's bawdy heroines. The innocent, credulous belief of both Helena and Marina that their medical cures are guided by heaven seems purely Shakespearean, and this faith in heavenly intervention is scarcely like a Middletonian solution. The evidence for Middleton's involvement is simply not strong enough at this point to credit him as a collaborator. Yet there are enough hints (like the use of the unusual word *fistula* and Helena's shocking sexual pragmatism) to suggest that Shakespeare felt Middleton's influence on some level.

Helena's pregnancy, against all odds, like the preservation of Marina's virginity despite horrendous threats, is the miracle that introduces the world of the late romances. It prepares the stage for the triumphant restoration of the reputation of Imogen, the recovery of the lost Perdita, and the miraculous preservation or literal resurrection of Hermione. As the earliest of Shakespeare's romances, *All's Well That Ends Well* is itself “the rarest argument of wonder.”

Notes

1. All quotations from Shakespearean text refer to *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 6th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2009).

Works Cited

- Maguire, Laurie, and Emma Smith. "All's Well That Ends Well." *Times Literary Supplement* 8 June 2012: 6. Print.
- . "Many Hands—A New Shakespeare Collaboration?" *Times Literary Supplement* 19 April 2012: 13-15. Print.
- McMullan, Gordon. "What is a 'Late Play'?" *Shakespeare's Last Plays*. Ed. Catherine M. S. Alexander. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. 5-28. Print.
- Potter, Lois. *The Life of William Shakespeare*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Print.
- Rosenthal, Margaret F. *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992. Print.
- Roulston, Gilbert. *The Ranters Bible*. London, 1650. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 19 November 2013.
- Shakespeare, William. *All's Well That Ends Well*. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. Ed. David Bevington. 6th ed. New York: Pearson, 2009. 374-413. Print.
- . *All's Well That Ends Well*. Dir. Marianne Elliott. Royal National Theatre, London. 2009. Performance.
- . *As You Like It*. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. Ed. David Bevington. 6th ed. New York: Pearson, 2009. 298-332. Print.
- . *Pericles*. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. Ed. David Bevington. 6th ed. New York: Pearson, 2009. 1442-74. Print.
- . *Pericles*. Ed. Roger Warren. Oxford Shakespeare. New York: Oxford UP, 2003. Print.
- Taylor, Gary, and John Lavagnino, eds. *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007. Print.
- Vickers, Brian, and Marcus Dahl. "What Is Infirm. . . ?' *All's Well That Ends Well*: An Attribution Rejected." *Times Literary Supplement* 11 May 2012: 14-15. Print.
- Wilcox, Helen. "Shakespeare's Miracle Play?: Religion in *All's Well, That Ends Well*." *All's Well, That Ends Well: New Critical Essays*. Ed. Gary Waller. New York: Routledge, 2007. 140-54. Print.

A Hot Mess: Knowing Juliet through Accidental Encounters in Popular Culture

Kirk Hendershott-Kraetzer, *Olivet College*

One night, on an episode of the TV series *Supernatural*, Juliet groped Romeo. Or rather, a character situated as Juliet groped a character whom another character mockingly called Romeo. Either way, he wasn't happy about it.

Partly as a research interest, I collect references to and appropriations of *Romeo and Juliet* in popular culture, and this certainly fit the bill. These references fall into two broad categories: those that I have been given or directed to, such as Taylor Swift's "Love Story" (Lidy), and those I encounter by chance (such as while watching a movie or roaming the satellite feed on a sleepless night). After years of slowly building this collection, I began to wonder what someone unfamiliar with the playtext's characters and plot might come to think about *Romeo and Juliet* from accidental encounters such as seeing this Juliet paw her would-be Romeo. Was it possible for a casual TV viewer to learn something about *Romeo and Juliet* without intending to do so and without consulting the playtext? And if so, what might one learn?

1. Suddenly Juliet.

Between fall 1997 and summer 2012, I accidentally encountered eight different direct references to *Romeo and Juliet* in episodes of one-hour television dramas. These were more than just appropriations of a plot element or quotations that a professional might recognize but that someone less familiar with the text might miss. These references were specific enough to be immediately recognized by someone unfamiliar with the plot, to say nothing of individual lines in the text: at least one character was specifically designated as Romeo or Juliet.

With the exception of "Upper West Side Story," none of these episodes initially positions itself as an adaptation or appropriation of the Shakespearean plot or Shakespearean characters, and the Shakespearean invocations, when they come, are often incidental: comic moments, teasing wisecracks, or ironic allusions. They also are unexpected:

TV Juliets

Character¹ (Performer)	Episode (Year)	Show (Network)
Christina Talbert (Mags Chernock)	“Denial” (1997)	<i>Law and Order</i> (NBC)
Cora Kennison (Tina Holmes)	“Starved” (2005)	<i>Law and Order: Special Victims Unit</i> (NBC)
Kelly Morris (Leah Pipes)	“The Boy in the Shroud” (2006)	<i>Bones</i> (Fox)
Anna Gonzales (Danay Garcia)	“Crossing the Threshold” (2009)	<i>The Cleaner</i> (A & E)
Becky Rosen (Emily Perkins)	“Sympathy for the Devil” (2009)	<i>Supernatural</i> (CW)
Marielle Di Napoli (Anna Gunn)	“Love Eternal” (2010)	<i>Law and Order</i> (NBC)
Chloe Woods (Elizabeth Gillies)	“Upper West Side Story” (2012)	<i>White Collar</i> (USA)
Olivia DiFlorio (Meghann Fahy)	“To Swerve and Protect” (2012)	<i>Necessary Roughness</i> (USA)

characters suddenly become Romeo and Juliet. For example, in “Denial,” Assistant District Attorney Jamie Ross and her supervisor Jack McCoy are discussing their prosecution of two teenage lovers for the murder of their unborn child. Ross comments of the male defendant, Tommy, that “The jury liked his Romeo of the Dairyland routine,” which positions his girlfriend, Christina, as Juliet. Similarly, in “Starved,” the Special Victims Unit detectives are searching for a serial rapist who finds his victims at speed-dating events, using fake names all tied to the same email address, romeo@forumail.com. In the episode’s first act, the

detectives routinely call their quarry Romeo until they find out his real name, Mike Jergens, and discover that he has been living with a woman, Cora Kinneson, for over a year: Cora becomes this episode's Juliet. "The Boy in the Shroud" is replete with references to young love and to young love gone wrong even before the FBI Special Agent in charge of investigating the death of a boy, Dylan, who has been missing for three weeks, hypothesizes that "the perv kill[ed] Romeo and Juliet kill[ed] the pervert." After that, the episode's Shakespearean references include repeated characterizations of Dylan as Romeo and a crucial evidentiary role for "the Romeo and Juliet rose" (the English Alba rose), which Dylan's girlfriend Kelly left in his hand after his accidental death.

In September 2009, *Romeo and Juliet* references in one-hour scripted dramas seemed to become more common: in addition to episodes discussed here, I accidentally encountered three more direct references to the playtext or its characters since first drafting this essay (all, unfortunately, now lost because of a DVR crash that happened before I took the time to note the episodes' and series' titles). "Crossing the Threshold" finds an undercover narcotics cop involved in an illicit relationship with the daughter of the cartel boss he is supposed to be investigating: the cop's lieutenant describes the couple as "Romeo and Juliet." In "Sympathy for the Devil," one of *Supernatural's* main characters, Sam, is fondled by an eager fangirl, Becky; after Becky leaves, Sam's brother teases his uncomfortable and befuddled sibling by calling him Romeo. Sam's Juliet will return to haunt him in future episodes of the series. *Law and Order's* "Love Eternal" features Marielle DiNapoli, described by a friend as "a beautiful forty-year-old woman who dresses like a colorblind twenty-year-old prostitute": after having been accused of murdering her husband and in response to a plea offer of extreme emotional disturbance, Marielle snaps, "We were a happily married couple. Everything was perfect," and walks out of the negotiation. One of the prosecuting attorneys says of Marielle, "She thinks she's Juliet: no way she killed Romeo, even if she did [do it]." "Upper West Side Story," the *White Collar* episode that most aggressively borrows from and tropes on Shakespeare, situates its Romeo and Juliet in the story's B plot. Evan, a scholarship student at a swanky Upper West Side private school, has "a massive crush" on the daughter of the financier in charge of (and who is embezzling from) the school's endowment; that daughter, Chloe, has a

massive obsession with romantic poetry in general and *Romeo and Juliet* in particular (it's her "favorite"), to say nothing of her crush on her substitute English teacher, Neal (who is working undercover for the FBI and who can spout "She Walks In Beauty" with the best of them—the episode makes a hash of literary history, plunking *Romeo and Juliet* into the middle of a discussion of the British Romantics). "Upper West Side Story" repeatedly invokes its Shakespearean source: Mozzie, one of the series regulars, will "play the part of the helpful friar who brings the star-crossed lovers [Chloe and Evan] together," including forging sonnets to Chloe in Evan's hand and packing Chloe's locker with red roses, because Mozzie "want[s] to see the little guy get the girl." Finally, *Necessary Roughness's* "To Swerve and Protect" finds another series regular, Ray Jay, in love with his SAT tutor, Olivia. Forbidden to have sex with Olivia in the family home, Ray Jay argues that his mother's draconian edict be reversed, invoking the Veronese lovers' sad end in support of his claim: "Romeo and Juliet—their parents kept them apart. And look what happened to them. You're fighting biology. Not to mention Shakespeare." Later, when Mom finds out that Ray Jay has pulled the old "I'm staying at a friend's house" ruse on her so he can go and have more sex with Olivia, Mom snarls, "I am going to go get that little Romeo and he is going to wish he drank poison."

Most of the characters appear only in single episodes, though two—Olivia DiFlorio and Becky Rosen—appear in multi-episode story arcs, Olivia over the course of four episodes in a single season (including an entire episode before she is positioned as Juliet by Ray Jay's mother), and Becky in three episodes spread across two seasons. There is much to be said about these episodes' references to and appropriations of *Romeo and Juliet*, including their constitution of the feud, their take on the lovers' relationship, or their construction of the households' internal dynamics, to say nothing of how they conceptualize their Romeos. However, I am limiting the present analysis to the representations of Juliet alone because she is a character through whom culture has often prescribed (and proscribed) codes of femininity and female behavior. Instead of a "monument to the beauty and innocence of youth" (Weis 38), we find Juliets who have "fallen" from that assumed, idealized state of grace, unruly women who resist and destabilize traditional notions of

Juliet and point our attention to a continuing cultural struggle over our knowledge of the nature of this foundational character.

2. Know this.

Current thinking in cognitive psychology makes a distinction between explicit and implicit modes of learning. Explicit learning is “the conscious learning of facts and regularities” (Hulstijn), in which “the learner intends to acquire a specific set of target knowledge and this knowledge is assessed directly (Kirkhart 448). Implicit learning is “our ‘default’ learning system: a fast and effortless associative learning mode that enables us to extract structural regularity from the environment without intention, conscious monitoring, and sometimes even awareness of the learning content/process” or “explicit learning instructions” (Deroost et al. 2).² As with learning, there are two broad processes by which we store information: effortful and automatic (Battaglia). The effortful process is deliberate, while automatic acquisition happens “without the conscious intention to commit” a concept “to memory” (Hulstijn). Stored information—knowledge—is housed in knowledge structures, one type of which is a schema, “a person’s knowledge about some aspect of the environment” (Goldstein 219). Schemas form through direct experience—things that we do and things that happen to us—and indirect, mediated experiences, such as watching a television show or a performance of a play. An example of a schema might be “romantic couple.” In this, a person might store information from direct experiences (dates) and from mediated experiences (such as the courtship of Prince William and Kate Middleton). Once information in a schema becomes sufficiently complex, new schemas can form (Battaglia): a Romeo and Juliet schema might bud out of the romantic couple schema, and perhaps, over time, the information about a character might become complex enough that a Juliet schema could develop.

As part of a much more complex process of learning and knowing, then, the following takes place as people travel through culture: they accidentally encounter mediated references to *Romeo and Juliet*; these indirect experiences are learned implicitly, without conscious effort; that information becomes knowledge about *Romeo and Juliet*, or simply the characters themselves, when it is automatically stored in a knowledge

structure called a schema. This brings us back to what knowledge about Juliet might be built into such a schema through these unexpected encounters with characters who have suddenly become Juliet (such as Anna Gonzales, Christina Talbert, or Kelly Morris): she is probably an active sexual agent; she may be sexually transgressive; and she is not an idealized, innocent girl, but rather a complicated individual driven by her passions.

3. Juliet is probably sexually active. She is monogamous (probably).

None of the eight Juliets is a sexual innocent and, with only two exceptions, all are shown or reported to be sexually active.

In “To Swerve and Protect,” Olivia DiFlorio is caught having sex with her boyfriend by her boyfriend’s mother, while in “The Boy in the Shroud,” Kelly Morris’s foster mother reports having caught her in the act. Anna Gonzales in “Crossing the Threshold” is shown on screen in a sexual encounter with her Romeo, while in “Denial,” Christina Talbert has conceived a child and given birth before the episode’s teaser begins. On being asked whether her boyfriend has ever asked her “to, you know, do things in the bedroom that you don’t want to do,” Cora Kinneson of “Starved” replies “There’s nothing I wouldn’t do for Mike,” suggesting that there are “things” she has done that her interviewer might be surprised to learn. Marielle Di Napoli, from “Love Eternal,” divorced one man to marry a second and has engaged in S/M fetish play with both.

Neither Becky Rosen, of “Sympathy for the Devil,” nor Chloe Woods of “Upper West Side Story,” is indicated as being sexually active, but they are sexually interested in their Romeos. Becky is “so excited she’s having trouble breathing” (“5.01”) when she meets her Romeo. She feels his chest and gasps, “And you’re so firm,” and later, when she is again feeling up his chest, her embarrassed and uncomfortable Romeo (Sam) asks, “Um, Becky, c– uh, can you... quit touching me?” (“5.01”). Becky’s response? “No.” Similarly, Chloe has “amorous designs” on Neal, her substitute teacher. Her behavior toward him is flirtatious: she leans in and slightly parts her lips as she listens to him recite Byronic verse from memory; she engages him with direct eye contact while touching his forearm in casual conversation; she invites Neal to her apartment for

“home tutoring,” where she tries to engage him on the subject of her “passion.”

Generally, the Juliets are monogamous. Becky is strongly Sam-centric; Anna, Kelly, and Christina have no partners other than their Romeos. While Chloe’s affections are redirected within her episode, she is interested in only one partner at a time (rather like Romeo, in fact). In an episode of *Necessary Roughness* subsequent to “To Swerve and Protect,” Olivia dumps her Romeo for another boy, but there is little suggestion that she was two-timing. Although Marielle “was playing Pin the Tail on the Boyfriend while husband number one was still in the picture,” she is entirely devoted to her second husband, whom she describes as her soulmate, “my soul,” and “my great love.” Perhaps most interestingly, Cora’s devotion to her Romeo is near-absolute. Confronted with proof of his repeated infidelities, his contempt for her, and evidence that he is a serial rapist, Cora refuses to forsake him: she apologizes to him for her role in his arrest, marries him while he is incarcerated, and finally attempts suicide, overwhelmed by the guilt of forsaking him to the police.

4. Juliet may be “naughty.”

Besides representing her as an active sexual agent, “act[ing] according to one’s will in a sexual realm” (Crown and Roberts 386), these eight productions often code Juliet as sexually transgressive in some way.

Christina has been having sex with her boyfriend Tommy on the sly and keeps her pregnancy and the birth of her child hidden from her mother, going so far as to enlist her father in the scheme. Contrastingly, Olivia, unembarrassed about having sex with her boyfriend Ray Jay, wants him to convince his mother that they should be able to have all the sex they want, wherever they want. The episode hints that Olivia is turned on by Ray Jay’s mother’s knowing, and more so, suggests that her kink is getting the son to defy Mom. Kelly, a runaway who is living on the street, has become a sexual cynic, assuming strangers’ worst intentions: on being approached and spoken to by an older male, she immediately categorizes him as a “perv” who is hitting on her (he is not). Chloe is a naughty schoolgirl, scheming to have a sexual liaison with her teacher, a characterization reinforced by two of her three costumes, both of which are informed by common tropes—conventional visuals and/or

situations—in contemporary pornography: Chloe’s prep-school skirt with white shirt and knee socks draws from the “naughty schoolgirl” trope, and her cheerleader’s uniform evokes the constellation of cheerleader porn videos that populate the Web.

Cora is a pliant submissive.³ The implication of whether she’s been asked “to do things in the bedroom” that she might not “want to do” is that her Romeo is requesting something “wrong” of her, be it sodomy, role-playing, or sadomasochism. Her response, “There’s nothing I wouldn’t do for Mike,” is ambiguous and possibly ambivalent: she smiles, lowers her eyes, adjusts her hair, then looks back up at her questioner. This line and these gestures could be read as embarrassment, as being patient with a dullard, as pride, or as a combination of all. The actor’s tone in her response is similarly ambiguous: repeated listenings suggest no definitive vocal stress on any word or syllable. Becky, on the other hand, is very clear about what she’s interested in: the self-described “number one fan” of the show’s in-universe *Supernatural* novels, Becky’s screen name is samlicker81 and she is “Webmistress at morethanbrothers dot net.” She has “read all about” Sam and his brother Dean, and “written a few” pieces of incestuous homoerotic fan-fiction about them. Although a bit embarrassed when she tells the brothers about this, she is also proud, and she is willing to do more than fantasize: in a subsequent episode in her arc, “Season Seven, Time for a Wedding!,” she drugs Sam, kidnaps him, and puts him under a spell in which he believes that he and Becky are married. She also keeps him tied to their wedding bed... and he isn’t happy about it. The episode delicately hints that the bondage may be for more than just preventing Sam’s egress: Becky has removed Sam’s pants (because, as Becky says, “They’re very constricting”), offers to “help” Sam “tinkle,” and tells the individual who provided her with the love potion that “This isn’t the honeymoon I had in mind. Well, some of it is, but not in this context” (“7.08”).

Almost the opposite of the secretive Christina and a good step beyond the girlishly eager, mildly kinky Becky, the energetic Marielle, riding crop in hand, chases her naked first husband across the sand dunes near their Westhampton, New York home and uses a pair of “cute” pink handcuffs to secure her second husband, naked, inside a dog cage, where she teases him with a sword. Marielle’s habits, which she describes as “a little embarrassing,” are known far and wide: her friends are well aware

of these games, as are the Westhampton cops and, in time, the Manhattan police, courts, and anyone sitting in the gallery during Marielle's cross-examination. Anna has premarital sex with her boyfriend, but that is hardly noteworthy for this group. Unlike Marielle, she is secretive about the relationship, with good reason: her father is a drug lord, and her boyfriend is an undercover narcotics cop (which she knows). Although the episode does not play up this angle, this secrecy and the attendant danger may be part of the allure of the relationship, to say nothing of her intent to deny her father and refuse her name. This tension may also fuel the lovers' heroin use: during their on-screen sexual interludes, crossfades, out-of-focus photography, and cross-cutting suggest that the couple are having drugged sex.

5. Juliet is no dewy innocent.

In fact, she conceals facts and prevaricates. She is manipulative. She schemes. She lies. And while these behaviors may at times be constructed as comic excesses of personality by the episodes, TV-watchers are also provided with clear indications of Juliet's rather significant capacity to wreak havoc on the lives around her.

Aware that some may consider her sexual practices to be outré, Marielle does not initially admit that the sword that killed her husband was part of their sex play when the male detectives ask about that cage and those handcuffs (though she is willing to discuss her activities with the detectives' female lieutenant). It is possible she schemes to stab her husband's suspected killer to death with a steak knife during a sting operation in which she is the bait, though more probably this volatile character, living more or less in the immediacy of her emotions, takes advantage of an opportune moment. Marielle is an adulteress, but the episode gives no indication that she ever directly lies to her first husband about it; she meets with her husband's suspected killer under a pretense, but she doesn't lie to him, either; she does prevaricate quite a bit, but concealing some facts or being cagey with the truth isn't *exactly* lying and is in fact understandable when it comes to talking with strangers about one's sex life.

While Chloe and Becky both have simple desires, their machinations to attain the objects of their desires can be elaborate. Chloe

schemes to get Neal alone in her home for “tutoring.” Although Becky neither lies, prevaricates, nor manipulates in “Sympathy for the Devil,” in a subsequent episode, “The Real Ghostbusters,” she “borrow[s]” a cell phone “from [another man’s] pants” (“5.09”) and uses it to lure Sam and his brother to a hotel, where the first-ever *Supernatural* fan convention is taking place; when this does not work, in “Season Seven, Time for a Wedding!,” Becky doses Sam with that love potion, marries him, then keeps him trussed and gagged on their nuptial bed. For her part, Anna wants three things: to be away from her drug-cartel-running father; to be with her lover, the undercover narc who is investigating Dad; and to get her lover out of the clutches of his crooked lieutenant. Although her desires are greater in number than Becky’s or Chloe’s, Anna’s plan is simpler: run away. However, unlike her sister Juliets, Anna’s story is not in the comic mode. She and her lover, John, have no particular destination in mind, though they are well funded, John having stolen \$12 million worth of drugs from Anna’s father. Specifically, Anna tells another character (William, the “cleaner” of the show’s title) that she “can’t tell” him where she and John were running to. The staging indicates this to be prevarication. A sharp observer of human behavior and an expert on addiction, William isn’t buying Anna’s story and asks whether she and John have “ever spent a sober moment together.” Her response, reinforced by other scenes in the episode, indicates that these star-crossed lovers have not. Beyond that, the skeptical William mocks Anna’s protestations that she loves John, that John is helping her, that “Before I met him, nothing mattered.” Anna’s plotting and hedging is not malevolent. She just wants to be with her Romeo, and if she needs to lie to others (and, possibly, herself) to do it, then that is what she is going to do.

Both Kelly and Cora lie and prevaricate, though neither for reasons as simple as avoiding responsibility for some wrong or trying to get out of a jam. Suspected of involvement in the death of her boyfriend (Dylan, the episode’s Romeo), Kelly lies in an attempt to protect her little brother, who is the real (albeit unintentional) killer, saying it was a “kind of an accident, right? What do you call it? A crime of passion?” This lie is almost immediately exposed, and when pushed on it, she evades: “Well, I’m pretty screwed up, didn’t you hear?” Cora has been “living together” with Mike Jergens for “over a year”; Mike’s online identity is “Romeo,”

and the detectives believe he may be a serial rapist. When asked about Mike's whereabouts at the time of the most recent rape, Cora lies, providing her lover with an alibi. Confronted with Mike's disdain for her, Cora recants, though in a later spasm of emotion she runs to Riker's Island, where Mike is jailed, and marries him. In point of fact, Cora outright lies to someone else only once in the episode, and that lie is (like Marielle's or Kelly's evasions) understandable: confronted with an unbelievable accusation, she fibs to protect her man. More disturbing is the way in which Cora prevaricates and perhaps even lies to *herself*: she tells the lead detective on the case that Mike is "dat[ing] other women" because "I'm not as smart as Mike. I didn't go to college. Sometimes he just needs other people to talk to, but he always comes home. That's what matters." After her jailhouse marriage, Cora again tells the detective, "He loves me. That's why he married me." Challenged with "you know in your heart that he's guilty," Cora responds, "I don't want him to be." Cora knows she's being told the truth, but her desperate need to be with Mike leads her to lie to others and to herself.

Olivia is presented as a tease, getting Ray Jay aroused then withholding further intimacy and mocking his manhood in order to attain her goals. In the first act of "To Swerve and Protect," we find Olivia and Ray Jay in his car, kissing and arguing. Disinclined to "[do] it in a car," Olivia wants to have sex in Ray Jay's house and is contemptuous of what she considers to be the hypocritical, bourgeois morality of his mother, taunting her boyfriend's purported passivity and mocking his manhood until he promises to confront Mom:

OLIVIA

Come on, this is ridiculous. I mean, doing it in a car? It's so high school.

RAY JAY

Yeah, but we're in high school. Okay. Maybe we can go to your house.

OLIVIA

Or, maybe you can tell your mom to stop treating us like children.

RAY JAY mouths “okay,” frustrated.

OLIVIA (CONT)

I mean, c’mon, like she wasn’t doing it when she was our age.

RAY JAY

Oh, no no no no—

OLIVIA laughs.

RAY JAY

—no no no no—

(He puts his fingers in his ears)

—no no no no no no.

OLIVIA

(pulls RAY JAY’s fingers out of his ears)

I will not be banned from my boyfriend’s house, no matter how hot he is.

RAY JAY

Okay, so, what do you want your hot boyfriend to do about it?

OLIVIA

(kissing him)

I want you to stick up for us. I’m not interested in dating a boy, Ray Jay. I’m interested in dating a man.

Described by her family and acquaintances as an honors student, Christina is editor of her high school yearbook, president of the school’s history club, vice president of her student council, and a prize-winning geometry student. In her mother’s words, “She has a very bright future ahead of her”—if only she weren’t a liar, fornicator, thief, and, possibly, murderer. Engaged in a clandestine sexual relationship with her boyfriend Tommy, Christina dresses in “baggy clothes” for months to hide

the fact that “she’s packing some weight under there”; with Tommy, she leaves a frat party to deliver their baby in a hot-sheet hotel, then returns to the party where they slow dance to “Endless Love”... after either strangling the infant or leaving it in a garbage can to die, wrapped in a towel and covered with some newspaper. In itself, this is already a strikingly dark representation of Juliet. However, Christina also steals blank prescription forms from her Ob/Gyn, using one to get a nasal spray composed of synthetic oxytocin, a medication that the medical examiner says is contraindicated for pregnant women. Then she lies to the police, telling them that she miscarried at the hotel after having sex with Tommy and then unknowingly flushed the fetus down the toilet. During her murder trial, Christina sits by while her lawyer savages her mother and pins the crime on her father. It is difficult to read performer Mags Chernock’s expression in this scene: Christina appears to be somewhat sad about what is being done to her mother, but this impression could be a result of the Kuleshov effect.⁴ She might even present a faint expression of approval.

It would be unsettling if Christina were just a little sad about what is happening to her parents. So, too, if she were faintly pleased. Worse still would be no emotion at all, and the episode hints at this. Christina seems unaware of the appalling implications of her initial story: after putting her spontaneously aborted fetus in the trash, she and Tommy go dance to their “special song.” She illegally obtains an abortifacient (presumably after doing some research to find a good one). During their arraignment for murder, the judge reprimands Christina and Tommy for holding hands in court, and following a court-ordered psychological examination, the psychiatrist describes her as “a narcissistic bitch. Forget about remorse. To her, that baby was like a peach pit passing through her system.” This Juliet may “sit there [in court] looking all sweet and innocent,” but the cops and the lawyers (and the viewers who trust them) know that she is anything but.⁵

The Juliets are driven to conceal, prevaricate, manipulate, scheme, and lie by their passions. In three instances—Marielle, Chloe, and Becky—their desires have no (lasting) ill effects, and Chloe and Becky may ultimately benefit from their actions. As noted above, these three characters’ episodes or arcs are comic in structure, and their outcomes mirror the overall structures of the TV shows they appear in: *Law and*

Order and *White Collar* tend to push toward a restoration of order, though neither without irony and neither always to a complete harmony; *Law and Order* in particular is wont to “let” its criminals get away with their crimes, suggesting that the “order” that is restored is dysfunctional, a disorder that we have come to resignedly accept as the status quo. *Supernatural* positions its protagonists as seeking order, but that order is endlessly delayed—every time that Sam and Dean believe that they have “won,” a plot development reveals yet more disorder that must be set right or eradicated.

In some cases, the Juliets’ passions are treated lightly, as is the case with Marielle, Chloe, and Becky. Marielle and her behaviors are treated as silly (though her toys are used in her husband’s murder); her partners are apparently willing, informed participants; and she does help the police and prosecutors to restore order by the end of the story. Chloe’s attempts to “o’erperch” the barriers that her father has erected around her love life lead to his arrest, but the episode situates this as a good outcome for the young woman: as Neal (having evolved from object of erotic fixation to life coach) puts it, “It won’t be easy. But don’t run away from that. This could be an opportunity, a chance to start over, maybe live the life you really want. I got that chance, and it’s the best thing that ever happened to me.” Being rid of her embezzling, money-laundering dad has long-term benefits, not least of which is a blooming romance with her new Romeo, Evan. And Becky, at the end of her arc, is similarly directed towards a more appropriate object for her affections: despite her claim that her “vibrant sexuality” scares off most men, Becky is revealed to be more “nice” than “naughty,” disinterested in “do[ing] anything weird” and more invested in finding a good old-fashioned soulmate, “someone who loves me for me!” (“7.08”). For his part, Sam suffers no long-term damage from his time with this Juliet—in fact, Becky helps him kill some demons and saves his life—and he and his brother get to enjoy some wacky adventures, more-or-less easy interludes in their otherwise grim lives. The results of all three of these Juliets’ exertions are, at their core, comic in structure, and, in tone, comedic.

In other instances, the Juliets’ passions and the lies that they prompt lead down less condign paths. What Olivia wants is unclear. Is it sex, the security of a relationship, power over an impressionable, even vulnerable younger male, or the power to disrupt others’ lives? “To

Swerve and Protect” is ambiguous as to its Juliet’s motivating desires and fears, though her arc suggests that power is significant to her, be this conscious or not. Although Ray Jay’s feelings are hurt and though his relationship with his mother is altered, the show does not imply that the damage to either is irreparable; Ray Jay may even have matured a little. This ambiguity is consonant with the show’s overall tone: characters might get better but rarely “well,” and that not always happily. Such is not the case with the three remaining Juliets, whose trajectories are distinctly downward. In *Bones*’s “The Boy in the Shroud,” Kelly’s desire to be with Dylan, her Romeo, leads her to plan to run away from her foster home; keeping this a secret leads to her boyfriend’s death, an FBI investigation, her little brother’s arrest, and Kelly’s being bereft of both lover and family. The episode’s tone and structure sort with *Bones*’s characteristic mixing of comic and tragic modes: in a manner similar to *Law and Order*, order is usually restored, though not in a way that leaves the characters happy, particularly so in this instance. This Juliet’s desires lead to the destruction of everything precious in her life.

Much more destructive still, and in keeping with *Law and Order*’s darker aspects, is Christina in “Denial.” She performs an illegal abortion (with possible negative consequences for the physician from whom she stole the prescription forms, as well as for the pharmacist who filled the scrip), illegally disposes of the fetus, feloniously impedes a murder investigation, involves her Romeo and her father in an ongoing criminal conspiracy, and then participates in her lawyer’s mauling of her bewildered, sobbing mother. (What will happen during Christina’s first night home after her acquittal could well be the matter of a Jacobean domestic tragedy.) The wake that Christina leaves is impressive, and the episode’s message is clear: Juliet can be dangerous to those around her. But whatever emotional and relational aftershocks might remain, the damage wrought by Christina’s need to be with Tommy is, by and large, done. This is not the case with Cora Kinneson. Her needs prevent her from seeing Mike as he truly is, thus providing a serial rapist with a lair of sorts and a ready-made alibi to cover up his ongoing predation. Her continued inability or refusal to see Mike as he is leads to her self-inflicted incapacitation. As “Starved” ends, Mike continues to prey on Cora: he uses his position as her husband to have Cora’s feeding tube removed, an act which will almost certainly cause her death, then asks the

detective who has been pursuing him to “expedite the death certificate.” Their conversation concludes the episode:

MIKE

The life insurance company’s gonna need that before they can process my claim.

OLIVIA

I shoulda known. How much you gonna get?

MIKE

A million five. I added Cora to my policy right after we got married.

OLIVIA

You were never gonna kill yourself, but you knew that Cora wouldn’t live without you.

MIKE

That’s a terrible thing to say to a grieving husband.

OLIVIA

Get him the hell out of here.

MIKE

(to lawyer)

Come see me tomorrow. We need to get started on my appeal.

Consistent with the tragedy-inflected “universe” of *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, which suggests that the “dedicated detectives” are barely keeping chaos at bay, and although the episode neither says nor shows this, there is no reason for viewers to think that Mike will stop raping women in his guise as “Romeo.” The damage caused by this Juliet’s passions will extend past her incapacitation, perhaps well past her death. Juliet is not simply “no dewy innocent.” At her best, she is not a force for good, and in other cases, she is a destructive agent, a significant complication to the traditional notion of an innocent Juliet.

6. Fallen angel?

If cognitive psychology is correct in its hypotheses of learning and of the formation and storage of knowledge, to arrive at a Juliet who is manipulative, indiscrete, lusty, and dangerous, a viewer still would have to see these productions, then store this learning about Juliet, sorting out tensions between *these* Juliets and received notions of an idealized Juliet. I myself am evidence that this can happen: watching Juliet fondle Romeo in “Sympathy for the Devil” started the process of assimilation and analysis that continues here. Even if seeing this combination of eight broadcasts is unique to my experience, the facts that all eight push the Juliet “envelope” in some way and that they are scattered across fifteen years of programming on five networks (and more still in syndication), each having different demographics, suggest that the “fallen Juliet” is not unique on television, nor to my experience. In her study of romance novels’ appropriations of Shakespeare, Laurie Osborne notes that the Romeo and Juliet incarnations in Georgette Heyer’s *Sprig Muslin* are very “far from the star-crossed lovers” (48). The television Juliets are similarly far, fallen from an idealized state that, ironically enough, is often assumed of the character but that is unsupported by the playtext itself. Catherine Belsey argues, “*Romeo and Juliet* is a play about desire” and the “intensity of [female] passion” (65), and these Juliets’ passions are very intense. And if, as Belsey suggests, Shakespeare’s Juliet is little concerned with propriety (67), then these Juliets are even less so. Further, Belsey describes the lovers’ relationship as “necessarily clandestine . . . to be enacted in secret, in total darkness, and in silence” (68). But while Marielle, Chloe, Christina, and Anna might wish to keep their love lives secret, they are unconcerned about cloaking their activities in the dark: given Marielle’s exuberance and Anna’s lack of caution, how much they might wish for secrecy is a question, and since Chloe loops in her friends on her plan to seduce her teacher—one even texts her for an update mid-attempt—secrecy is not much on her mind, either. The other four characters are, to one degree or another, less than silent, and Becky and Olivia are downright open about their desires. If Shakespeare’s Juliet “counters [and even subverts] contemporary [Elizabethan] ideological imperatives for female modesty and submission” (Roberts 53), then these Juliets blow those imperatives apart. And if Shakespeare’s Juliet is

manipulative, then it is startling how far some of the TV Juliets will go in their attempts to manipulate others and the social systems in which they are embedded—to say nothing of the damage they wreak as a result of their choices. Contradictory, unresolved, and unstable, “Juliet,” notes Sasha Roberts, “has repeatedly posed a problem for those seeking to idealize her” (48), despite continued efforts to recuperate the character, and these Juliets participate in resisting that recuperative impulse, presenting Juliet as eight different kinds of a hot mess, disorganized yet fascinating, and disordered on both an individual level and as a group, yet all the more alluring for that.

People can be unpleasant. They lie, cheat, steal, manipulate, have sex on the sly; sometimes they do worse. So there is little in the behaviors of the eight TV characters that should surprise anyone. And as a matter of fact, there is much for a reader of the Shakespearean playtext to recognize. Juliet hedges and prevaricates in response to parental requests and imperatives, as in her response to her mother’s inquiry about Juliet’s “dispositions to be married”: “It is an honour that I dream not of” (1.3.66, 67). Pressed again to say whether she “can . . . like of Paris’ love,” Juliet waffles impressively: “I’ll look to like, if looking liking move, / But no more deep will I endart mine eye / Than your consent gives strength to make it fly” (1.3.97, 98-100). And two acts later, Juliet answers her father’s question, “Doth she not count her blessed, / Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought / So worthy a gentleman to be her bride?” (3.5.143-45) with an oxymoronic riddle: “Not proud you have, but thankful that you have. / Proud can I never be of what I hate, / But thankful even for hate that is meant love” (3.5.146-48). These responses seem custom-designed to drive a parent batty. Her sexual agency, seen most clearly in “Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds” (3.2.1), has been commented on by a variety of critics.⁶ The argument that Juliet is not a passive subject is well established. Besides dominating the exchange with Romeo at her balcony in terms of raw number of lines (a 2:1 ratio), Juliet skillfully positions Romeo as the subordinate in their relationship in an attempt “to control her destiny by controlling the man who constitutes her destiny” (Brown 334).⁷ Beyond having a will to power, Juliet is volatile—threatening suicide multiple times, shifting emotional registers and allegiances within moments—and may (like her father) incline to

explosive rages. Since all these personality traits inhere in the text, a fair question would be, “What exactly is there for Juliet to fall from?”

7. And we shall know her by her name.

Theatrical and critical practice notwithstanding, the interpretations of *Romeo and Juliet* that have had the most impact on the popular imagination in the past half-century have to be the films by Franco Zeffirelli (1968) and Baz Luhrmann (1996). Certainly they are the most widely known. A Google image search for “Juliet” turns up dozens of stills from these movies, almost all emphasizing her youth, beauty, innocence, or helplessness. The sexuality of the exuberant Olivia Hussey and the more ethereal Claire Danes is more childlike than adult: in Luhrmann, the lovers’ marriage night under billowing white sheets could be a pillow-fight at a sleepover; Zeffirelli’s Juliet, flying out of bed the morning after, indicates none of the complicated emotions that teenaged women can feel about their first sexual experiences. Per the text, their union is post-marital, not pre- or extra-. Whatever dissembling or manipulating they may do is provoked: beset by a mother pressing a suitor on her, a betraying confidante, and a bullying father, the filmic Juliets defend their Romeos, their marriages, themselves; they are *not* not telling the truth because the adults bug them or because it is empowering to hoodwink an authority figure; they do *not* manipulate their Romeos; and I see no suggestion of a “predatory dimension” (Weis 197 n.158-59) in either Juliet’s balcony conversation. For all of their late-twentieth-century trappings, the Zeffirelli and Luhrmann Juliets are rather conventional participants in an older tradition of representation, a tradition that appears to have been assimilated broadly in culture.

Comments from students reflect the tension between traditional conceptions of the character and the more contemporary, “unhinged” Juliets.⁸ My students often come to the playtext seeming to know the conventional Juliet. In 2012-13, start-of-term surveys prompted iterations of surface-level (sometimes inaccurate) knowledge of the character, knowledge that is in line with the Zeffirelli-Luhrmann tradition: “Daughter to Capulets” and one of the “star-crossed lovers” (Student 4); “Young woman. Loves Romeo. She faked her death, then poisons herself because Romeo died” (Student 2); “13 year old girl who

falls for Romeo” (Student 5, Responses); “a representation of Inamorata . . . the young beauty, and star-crossed lover” (Student 1, Responses).⁹ These definitions mirror those in easily-referenced print and online dictionaries. *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* describes her as “the heroine of Shakespeare’s tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* (1594-95),” a definition modified slightly in *Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary*: “the heroine of Shakespeare’s tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* who dies for love of Romeo.”¹⁰ Even posts on the discussion boards that accompany *Webster’s Online* sort with tradition: “Always thought it meant ‘youthful’” (Nwankwo). None seems to have moved very far from nineteenth-century sources such as E. Cobham Brewer’s 1898 *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, which describes Juliet as “Daughter of Lady Capulet, and ‘sweet sweetening’ of Romeo, in Shakespeare’s tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*. She has become a household word for a lady-love.”¹¹

Yet, despite such cultural pressure to maintain this construction of Juliet as “the pillar of beauty and purity . . . the ideal picture of the lovely, dainty feminine dream” (Student 6, “Answers”), one student’s comment indicates some erosion of this idealized pillar: “I find it fishy that she falls for Romeo so quickly” (Student 6, Responses). After close contact with the text, repeated in-class discussions and study of scholarly writings on *Romeo and Juliet*, the students indicated that they had come to be suspicious of assertions of Juliet’s monumental innocence and purity, tending to characterize her in negative terms, as a tantrumy, self-interested schemer: “she has a tacky habit of threatening to harm herself” and “is not pure in her motivations,” which “are fueled by her own desires . . . Her goal, motivations, focus, and ambition are all to obtain what SHE wants” (Student 6, “Answers”); “She plays Romeo like her personal marionette” (Student 5, Message); she is a “sinister” character (Student 4, Message) who “uses those around her, especially those below her station . . . as the means to her end”; “Juliet could have gone along with her father’s plan and lived a life of comparative ease and luxury, yet she chose the impressionable son of her family’s rivals as a means to escape her situation” rather than Paris, because she knows “he can be manipulated in ways the older Paris is unlikely to agree to” (Student 1, “Juliet”). While some of my students accept the notion of Juliet’s sexual purity, this assumption is not sacrosanct: “She may have been considered pure,

mainly because back then that meant she was a virgin in regards to her body—though that didn't last for long, having barely waited for the ring to be on her finger” (Student 5, Message; see also Student 4, Message).¹²

Leaving aside for the moment scholarly writing, one must venture more deeply into the realms of popular culture to find Juliets that start to align with my students’ and the TV productions’ skepticism. *Raucous*, unregulated, often obscene, and sometimes only semi-literate, *Urban Dictionary* bills itself as “the dictionary **you write**” (“Urban”), with an “anti-authoritarian, no-bullshit” and “rebellious personality” (“jobs”); it is a barometer of sorts of contemporary slang and fluid popular conceptions of what words mean. In mid-July of 2012, the site presented 11 ranked definitions of Juliet.¹³ They range from the conventional—“a gentle, sheltered, rich, and lovestruck teenage girl” (Rinoa)—to the misogynistic: “A big bootied amazingly hot whore face slut” (Fattyu). In the most-liked definitions, Juliet is idealized in terms that align with traditional conceptions of the character: “A sweet girl who really likes having fun and laughing... she's never bad, never sad. Perfect in every way” (Fruitloops);

A Juliet is pretty damn chell. She does not care about social status and is very loyal. She's gorgeous and has amazing hair. She doesn't realize how awesome she is and is not a conceited fuck like the rest of them, the guys at her school choose to shun her because of her social status and who she hangs out with but if she went to a different less douchey school she would have a boyfie in seconds.. A Juliet is an amazing person, your time with her is precious so don't take advantage of it. (Iloveyoumorethenskurtcobain)

and

The perfect girl. She will light up your life from the moment you meet her.

She's smart but not nerdy, hot but not slutty. Beautiful body and a gorgeous smile, and always up for a good time. A Juliet will be the best girlfriend/friend you will ever have, she's the girl you will want to make your wife.

Sexy, athletic, intelligent, loving, and knows how to party. She may seem intimidating, but that is only because she knows what she wants, and knows she needs a real man. (allthatreallymatters)

Another definition hyperlinks “Juliet” to “dimepiece” (fo shizzle), which reveals four definitions that feature “perfect” (the x factor; DimePiece),

“perfect 10” (Matt Knows; Azari), “perfection” (Azari), “flawless” (Azari), and “hot” (Matt Knows), always in reference to a woman’s physical beauty but almost as often describing her intellectual, spiritual, and emotional qualities, along with her “great charisma” and sense of humor (the x factor). One writer concludes with “possibly wifey type” (the x factor)—i.e., a woman whom one loves, treats well, respects, and may even find “irreplaceable” (xxBumpLikeThisxX): “A REAL Lady” (Stephen). In this subset of Juliet definitions—according to the fo shizzle’s logic, Juliet is a dimepiece—there is continued idealization, but references to Juliet’s sexuality also begin to emerge, albeit cast in terms that are positive—e.g., “hot but not slutty” (allthatreallymatters) or exciting—“Innocent but not as innocent as you think” (Cameron).

We begin to see our TV Juliets—sexually transgressive, manipulative, indiscrete—in the unpopular Urban Dictionary definitions, definitions in which Juliet’s sexual agency is described as more aggressive or described in more negative terms. Along with the “whore face slut” definition above, one finds “Braggs about sex, orally and physically” (youwillneverknow69) and “A ditzzy lolita, who often falls ‘in love’ and then gets married, just for the sex. Often fakes her own death to get ‘the sex’, then due to a series of misunderstandings, actually does kill herself over lack of sex” (zombie fools). In the same vein, the character’s volatility appears in assertions that Juliet is “An often over-dramatic girl who loves romance. . . . Oh, and if you mention Romeo she’ll yell at you, roll her eyes, or not talk to you for a month” (jennbunnybear=]); “over dramatic and some times. Like if you ask her where her fucking Romeo is she’ll cut you. ...Or tell you she is going to cut you, but most likely, i’m pretty sure she won’t” (Cameron); “loud...very loud, dont mention romeo and juliet or shell bash u” (anonymous); “Often a redhead and a liar. She often looks very young, even if in her lat twenties. She loves attention and will do WHATEVER she can to get it. Does not tell the truth. Ever” (youwillneverknow69). These latter posters, for all of their misogyny (and, it seems, personal hostility towards real-world Juliets), have learned elements of the Shakespearean Juliet’s personality, her temper, willingness to deceive, and sexual agency. And yet Urban Dictionary clearly records site-users’ resistance to that construction: they do not like the “fallen” Juliets.

The eight television incarnations of Juliet do not just fall from the idealized and even dis-empowered “heroines” of the type seen in Zeffirelli and Luhrmann: they fall a good bit past the Shakespearean Juliet, too. In this, they figure forth a cultural tussle over Juliet’s nature, one mirrored by the dictionaries, my students, and professional critics. The complex, contradictory signals about Juliet borne by these various enactments are indicative of the stage in knowledge development in which new schemas form, in this case a Juliet schema distinct from the Romeo and Juliet schema, much as a Romeo schema has already appeared (see, for example, definitions of Romeo in the second edition of the *OED*, the 2005 *New Oxford American Dictionary*, and Partridge; additionally, Urban Dictionary suggests that some real-world Juliets may be working hard to decouple themselves from the Romeo and Juliet schema). In this Juliet schema, we find Juliets in contest: the sweet sweetening and the desperate girl seeking a Romeo who may turn out to be befuddled, reluctant, or even malevolently inclined to his Juliet’s destruction; the fair maiden and the calculating manipulator; the innocent erotic fumbler and the S/M fetishist. The television Juliets continue to participate in resisting the recuperative impulse that Roberts describes, fighting tradition and even Shakespeare himself. At the ends of their stories, seven of the eight Juliets survive and remain unmarried, and of these, five go on to disrupt convention in some other way. Only Becky, Cora, and Chloe end up in something like a recuperated state: Becky is led towards a true love interest by Sam; Cora dies, “punished” for her immoderate love; and we last see Chloe as she heads down the hallway of her school—literally leading her new, age-appropriate Romeo by the hand. In these characters, Juliet lives on, messy, disruptive, disorganized, and alluring, still posing problems—problems about how we learn about her, what we know about her, how well we know her, whether we really know her at all.

Notes

Thanks to my colleagues Charles Graessle and Dina Battaglia for sharing their expertise in the fields of applied linguistics and cognitive psychology in the early stages of developing this essay. Any errors with regard to those fields are entirely my own. Thank you as well to John Wilterding, John Miller-Purrenhage, and Cea Noyes, who provided feedback on different versions of this paper, and to Hillary Nunn and Kevin Kane, for their patience, thoroughness, and good humor throughout the editorial process.

This essay is dedicated to my brother Keith (1949-2012).

1. In the analysis that follows, I refer to the Juliets by character name, rather than by the performer name.

2. In applied linguistics, two widely-discussed, similar modes are incidental and intentional learning (see Clapper; Hale and Piper; Hulstijn; Wattenmaker, “Incidental”; and Wattenmaker, “Learning”). Although they refer “to different constructs in different domains of inquiry,” the incidental, implicit, intentional, and explicit modes can “overlap” (Hulstijn). In fact, the terms appear at times to be interchangeable: incidental can be used to describe processes that others refer to as implicit. Actually, in the “(neuro)cognitive domain of scientific inquiry, implicit and explicit learning are sometimes said to take place incidentally and intentionally,” even though “the latter two labels do not play a crucial role in theoretical accounts of learning, simply because the behaviorist learning theories of the previous century have lost their prominent role” (Hulstijn).

3. At least as she sees it. The episode positions her as the victim of a sexual and emotional predator.

4. Initially described by Russian filmmaker Lev Kuleshov, the Kuleshov effect results from editing together two shots in a sequence in a movie. Kuleshov found that viewers will see a relationship between shots shown in sequence, even when there is no relationship in the world external to the film. Kuleshov cut together a shot of a male actor looking into the camera with a neutral expression, a shot of a bowl of soup, and another shot of the actor. Viewers asserted that the man was hungry. In another sequence, Kuleshov juxtaposed the same shots of the actor with a shot of a girl in a coffin; viewers said the man looked sad. In the instance of “Denial,” juxtapositions of Christina’s weeping mother with shots of Christina herself may be leading me to think Christina looks sad when what is really happening is that I *expect* her to be sad in these particular circumstances.

For more on Kuleshov and the Kuleshov effect, see Monahan, *passim*, and Barsam and Monahan 340-42, 345, and 347.

5. For an interesting take on the *Law and Order* universe’s ethos, see Fish.

6. See Belsey 65-68; Roberts 48-53; Jackson 18-19, 130-31, 142-44, 150-53, and 158-61; and Weis 13-14.

7. Twelve years later, Mansour essentially replicates Brown's argument in "The Taming of Romeo in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*." For a separate take on Juliet's desire to control her destiny, see Duncan-Jones.

8. My thanks to Kevin Kane for suggesting this adjective.

9. My 2012-13 Shakespeare cohort was composed of students from two courses. The first, titled "Studies in Literary Topics: Shakespeare, Revisitations, and Revisions," was a senior-level capstone course stressing critical thinking, the research process, effective use of scholarly sources in the context of an argument, and the writing of long-form essays. The course texts were *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and *Hamlet*, John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, and Anne-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*. The students were all upper-division students of both genders, with both traditional and non-traditional students represented; their majors included English, History, Writing, Special Education, and English Language Arts; one was a double major in English and Special Education, one a double major in Mathematics and English. The second course, "Shakespeare through Performance," was an introductory-level performance-centered course that could be used to satisfy a liberal core requirement ("Creative Experience") and that could be substituted for an elementary education major requirement (Oral Interpretation of Literature or Acting). All of the students were traditional college students, the majority female, and over half were majoring in English or English Language Arts, or were minoring in English. All of the students in both courses were white. Two students had never read the playtext: one was an English Elementary Education major, and the other, a non-major taking the course for liberal core credit, had never encountered *Romeo and Juliet* in any form that she could recall—print, film, television, or onstage.

10. Wiktionary, companion to the much-reviled Wikipedia, provides the most complete set of definitions of any source and avoids much of the ideological freight and sexism demonstrated by some of the traditional dictionaries:

1. *A female given name.*
2. One of the main characters of William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*.
3. A woman who is or is with a great lover.
4. By analogy with the Shakespearean character, a woman who is in love with a man from a family, party, or country opposing that of her own.
5. The sixth moon of the planet Uranus.
6. The letter *J* in the ICAO spelling alphabet.

The loaded "heroine" is removed and Juliet is placed on a par with Romeo in terms of her role in the playtext, as "One of the main characters." Further, Wiktionary is the first of the dictionaries to acknowledge Juliet's sexual agency: she not only can be with a "great lover" but can be one herself—whatever "great" means in this context. (The definition's "or" portends some frustration in Juliet's future. She can be or be with a great lover but cannot be both.)

11. The 1971 *Compact OED* does not define "Juliet" at all, though the 1976 *Supplement*, the 1991 second edition, and the 2013 online version of the full *Oxford English Dictionary* do: as a "Female personal name" and a "small, round cap of wide, open mesh, usually decorated

with pearls or other jewels, similar to that worn on the stage by Shakespeare's Juliet. Worn chiefly for evening." (The *OED*'s Juliet "entry has not yet been fully updated," although the definition for Romeo was updated as recently as 2010.) In fact, the *OED* does not mention Shakespeare at all in its Juliet definition. Similarly, the 1991 *New Oxford American Dictionary* ignores Shakespeare: Juliet is a code word, as in Alpha Bravo Juliet, and that is it. Like the '71 *OED*, neither Robert Hendrickson's *The Facts on File Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins*, nor *The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, nor the eighth edition of Partridge's *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* defines "Juliet."

12. The majority of these documented responses come from students in a traditional, text-centered course. In a separate course in which they had to think of the playtexts and the characters as performers and directors, students initially struggled to think of characters from the inside: their comments reflected what they thought about Juliet, rather than what Juliet might think about herself. As the semester developed, and particularly near the end of the term, students tended to express more empathy for Juliet's situation, though they remained skeptical of constructions of the character that were built on assumptions of her naïveté.

13. Definitions on Urban Dictionary are provided by users, seem to be unedited by Urban Dictionary employees, and are often casual in their adherence to the conventions of written English. All quotations are accurate, including misspellings, odd punctuation, and the occasional grammatical horror show. I have not included traditional indications of such errors ([sic]) because the quotations became so littered with emendations that they were unreadable.

The site ranks definitions according to user approval: the first definition is the one with the most "up" votes, while the last definition has the fewest. The number of "down" votes appears to have little bearing on ranking: a first definition could have more downs than ups (for example, 12 ups and 23 downs), simply because it has more ups than any other definition for that word (such as 11-456). Definitions with greater numbers of down votes can rank higher than others simply because they have more ups, and for the same reason, a definition with a greater ratio of up to down votes can rank below definitions with lower ratios.

In early November, 2013, the number of Juliet definitions and their rankings relative to each other had not changed from those in July, 2013, though the numbers of up and down votes for each definition had. In early December, 2013, the number of definitions for dimepiece had expanded substantially, and the rankings of the four definitions available in July, 2013, had changed as a result. All dimepiece references are to the July results.

Works Cited

- “5.01 Sympathy for the Devil (transcript).” *Supernatural Wiki: A Supernatural Canon & Fandom Resource*. 16 Oct. 2011. Web. 20 June 2012.
<[http://www.supernaturalwiki.com/index.php?title=5.01_Sympathy_for_the_Devil_\(transcript\)](http://www.supernaturalwiki.com/index.php?title=5.01_Sympathy_for_the_Devil_(transcript))>
- “5.09 The Real Ghostbusters (transcript).” *Supernatural Wiki: A Supernatural Canon & Fandom Resource*. 27 Aug. 2012. Web. 16 Sept. 2012.
<[http://www.supernaturalwiki.com/index.php?title=5.09_The_Real_Ghostbusters_\(transcript\)](http://www.supernaturalwiki.com/index.php?title=5.09_The_Real_Ghostbusters_(transcript))>
- “7.08 Season Seven, Time for a Wedding! (Transcript).” *Supernatural Wiki: A Supernatural Canon & Fandom Resource*. 13 Dec. 2012. Web. 30 Oct. 2013.
<[http://www.supernaturalwiki.com/index.php?title=7.08_Season_Seven,_Time_for_a_Wedding!_\(Transcript\)](http://www.supernaturalwiki.com/index.php?title=7.08_Season_Seven,_Time_for_a_Wedding!_(Transcript))>
- allthatreallymatters. “2. Juliet.” *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 20 Jan. 2011. Web. 9 July 2013.
<<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=juliet>>
- anonymous. “9. juliet.” *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 30 Oct. 2003. Web. 9 July 2013.
<<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=juliet&page=2>>
- Azari, Martin. “3. DimePiece.” *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 22 Oct. 2006. Web. 9 July 2013.
<<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=dimepiece>>
- Barsam, Richard and Dave Monahan. *Looking at Movies*. 4th ed. New York: Norton, 2013. Print.
- Battaglia, Dina. Personal Conversation. 25 Sept. 2012.
- Belsey, Catherine. “The Name of the Rose in *Romeo and Juliet*.” *Critical Essays on Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet*. Ed. Joseph A. Porter. New York: G. K. Hall, 1997. 64-81. Print.
- “The Boy in the Shroud.” *Bones*. Writ. Gary Glasberg. Dir. Sanford Bookstaver. Creat. Hart Hanson. Fox. WILX, Lansing. 13 Sept. 2006. TNT. 10 June 2011. Television.
- Brewer, E. Cobham. *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. Philadelphia: Henry

- Altemus, 1898. *Bartleby.com*, 2000. Web. 19 May 2013.
 <<http://www.bartleby.com/81/9355.html>>
- Brown, Carolyn E. "Juliet's Taming of Romeo." *Studies in English Literature* 36 (1996): 333-55. Print.
- Cameron. "7. Juliet." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 23 Aug. 2011. Web. 9 July 2013.
 <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=juliet>>
- Clapper, John P. "The Effects of Prior Knowledge on Incidental Category Learning." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition* (May 2012): 1-20. PsycARTICLES. Proquest. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.
- The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*. 1971. Print.
- "Crossing the Threshold." *The Cleaner*. Writ. Chris Fisher and David Hollander. Dir. Leon Ichaso. Creat. Jonathan Prince and Robert Munic. A&E. 8 Sept. 2009. Television.
- Crown, Laurel and Linda J. Roberts. "Against Their Will: Young Women's Accounts of Nonagentic Sexual Experiences." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 24.3 (2007): 385-405. Print.
- "Denial." *Law and Order*. Writ. David Shore. Story David Shore and René Balcer. Dir. Christopher Misiano. Creat. Dick Wolf. NBC. 8 Oct 1997. TNT. N.d. Television.
- Deroost, Natacha, Jochen Vandebossche, Peter Zieschka, Daphné Coomans and Eric Soetens. "Cognitive Control: A Role for Implicit Learning?" *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* Online (2012): 1-16. PsycARTICLES. Proquest. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.
- Desmet, Christy and Robert Sawyer, eds. *Shakespeare and Appropriation*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.
- DimePiece Designs. "4. DimePiece." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 14 May 2012. Web. 9 July 2013.
 <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=dimepiece>>
- Duncan-Jones, Katherine. "'O Happy Dagger': The Autonomy of Shakespeare's Juliet." *Notes and Queries* 45.3 (1998): 314-17. Print.
- Fattyu. "8. Juliet." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 27 July 2011. Web. 9 July 2013.

- <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=juliet&page=2>>
- Fish, Stanley. "‘Law & Order’ Probably Doesn’t Like You." *The New York Times*. The New York Times Company, 2 Aug. 2010. Web. 3 Aug. 2010. <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/08/02/law-order-probably-doesnt-like-you/?_r=0>
- fo shizzle. "3. Juliet." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 1 June 2004. Web. 9 July 2013. <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=juliet>>
- Fruitloops. "1. Juliet." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 21 May 2004. Web. 9 July 2013. <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=juliet>>
- Goldstein, E. Bruce. *Cognitive Psychology: Connecting Mind, Research, and Everyday Experience*. 3rd ed. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2011. Print.
- Graessle, Charles. Personal Conversation. 21 Sept. 2012.
- Hale, Gordon A. and Richard A. Piper. "Effect of Pictorial Integration on Children’s Incidental Learning." *Developmental Psychology* 10.6 (1974): 847-51. PsycARTICLES. Proquest. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.
- Hendrickson, Robert. *The Facts on File Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins*. Rev. ed. New York: Facts on File Inc., 1997. Print.
- Hulstijn, Jan H. "Incidental Learning in Second Language Acquisition." *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. Ed. C. A. Chapelle. Wiley Online Library. Wiley-Blackwell. 1999-2012. Web. 1 Oct. 2012. <<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0530/full>>
- Iloveyoumorethankurtcobain. "5. Juliet." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 30 Sept. 2011. Web. 9 July 2013. <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=juliet>>
- Jackson, Russell. *Shakespeare at Stratford: Romeo and Juliet*. London: Arden-Thomson, 2003. Print.
- jennbunnybear=]. "6. Juliet." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 6 Apr. 2009. Web. 9 July 2013. <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=juliet>>
- "jobs.urbandictionary.com." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 1999-2013. Web. 9 July 2013. <<http://jobs.urbandictionary.com>>

- Kirkhart, Matthew W. "The Nature of and Nondeclarative Knowledge for Implicit and Explicit Learning." *The Journal of General Psychology* 128.4 (2001): 447-61. PsycARTICLES. Proquest. Web. 4 Oct. 2012.
- Lidy, Libby. "Romeo and Juliet Song." Message to the author. 19 Jan. 2010. E-mail.
- "Love Eternal." *Law and Order*. Writ. William Klayer. Dir. Ed Zuckerman. Creat. Dick Wolf. WILX, Lansing. NBC. 17 May 2010. Television.
- Mansour, Wisam. "The Taming of Romeo in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*." *The Explicator* 66.4 (2008): 206-08. Print.
- Matt Knows. "1. dimepiece." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 4 May 2003. Web. 9 July 2013.
<<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=dimepiece>>
- Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*, 11th ed. Merriam-Webster.com. Web. Merriam-Webster, Inc. 2013. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/juliet>>
- Monahan, Dave. "The Kuleshov Experiment." *The Looking at Movies DVD*. Prod. Monahan. Disc 1. New York: Norton, 2012. DVD.
- The New Oxford American Dictionary*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.
- The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*. 2 vols. Ed. Tom Dalzell, and Terry Victor. Abingdon: Routledge, 2007. Google Books. Google, 2012. Web. 19 May 2013.
<<http://books.google.com/books?id=mAdUqLrKw4YC&printsec=frontcover&dq=partridge+slang&hl=en&sa=X&ei=VcqjUsDGM-imyQGRr4GACA&ved=oCDkQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=partridge%20slang&f=false>>
- Nwankwo, Juliet Chinonye. Untitled Post. "Juliet." *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*, 11th ed. Merriam-Webster.com. Web. Merriam-Webster, Inc. 17 Oct. 2012. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/juliet>>
- Osborne, Laurie E. "Romancing the Bard." Desmet and Sawyer 47-64. Print.
- The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991. Print.
- The Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Web. 25 Nov. 2013.

<<http://www.oed.com.lib.ezproxy.uakron.edu:2048/view/Entry/102002?redirectedFrom=juliet&>>

Partridge, Eric. *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*. Ed. Paul Beale. 8th ed. London: Routledge, 1982. *Google Books*. Google, 2012. Web. 19 May 2013. <<http://books.google.com/books?id=IAjyQdFwh4UC&pg=PT485&dq=%22brown-out+romeo%22&hl=en&sa=X&ei=-8WjUrjxOrSCyAGmmYEg&ved=oCCoQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22brown-out%20romeo%22&f=false>>

“The Real Ghostbusters.” *Supernatural*. Writ. Eric Kripke. Story Nancy Weiner. Dir. Jim Conway. Creat. Eric Kripke. CW. 12 Nov. 2009. Television.

Rinoa. “4. Juliet.” *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 1 Sept. 2004. Web. 9 July 2013.

<<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=juliet>>

Roberts, Sasha. *William Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*. Plymouth: Northcote House, 1998. Print.

Romeo and Juliet. Dir. Franco Zeffirelli. Paramount, 1968. Videocassette.

“Season Seven, Time for a Wedding!” *Supernatural*. Writ. Eric Kripke, Andrew Dabb and Daniel Loflin. Dir. Tim Andrew. Creat. Eric Kripke. CW. 11 Nov. 2011. Television.

Shakespeare, William. *Romeo and Juliet*. Ed. René Wies. London: Arden-Methuen, 2012. Print.

“Starved.” *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*. Writ. Dick Wolf and Lisa Marie Petersen. Dir. David Platt. Creat. Dick Wolf. WILX, Lansing. NBC. 15 Nov. 2005. Television.

Stephen, Rizzial. “1. wifey.” *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 6 June 2005. Web. 24 Nov. 2013.

<<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=wifey&defid=1304047>>

Student 1. “Juliet Answers.” Message to author. 14 July 2013. E-mail.

---. Responses To Worksheet. 10 Sept. 2012. MS. Author’s private collection.

Student 2. Responses To Worksheet. 10 Sept. 2012. MS. Author’s private collection.

Student 3. Responses To Worksheet. 10 Sept. 2012. MS. Author’s private collection.

Student 4. Message to author. 21 July 2013. Facebook message.

---. Responses To Worksheet. 10 Sept. 2012. MS. Author's private collection.

Student 5. Message to author. 11 July 2013. Facebook message.

---. Responses To Worksheet. 30 Aug. 2012. MS. Author's private collection.

Student 6. "Answers to questions about Juliet." Message to author. 10 July 2013. E-mail.

---. Responses To Worksheet. 6 Sept. 2012. MS. Author's private collection.

A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1976. Print.

"To Swerve and Protect." *Necessary Roughness*. Writ. Liz Kruger, Craig Shapiro and Natalie Chaidez. Dir. Rob Morrow. Creat. Liz Kruger and Craig Shapiro. USA. 13 June 2012. Television.

Swift, Taylor. "Love Story." Big Machine Records, 2008. YouTube, 16 Dec. 2013. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xg3vE8Ie_E>

"Sympathy for the Devil." *Supernatural*. Writ. Eric Kripke. Dir. Robert Singer. Creat. Eric Kripke. CW. 10 Sept. 2009. Television.

the x factor. "2. dimepiece." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 22 Feb. 2005. Web. 9 July 2013. <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=dimepiece>>

"Upper West Side Story." *White Collar*. Writ. Alexandra McNally and Jim Campolongo. Dir. Russell Lee Fine. Creat. Jeff Eastin. USA. 24 Jan. 2012. Television.

"Urban Dictionary [home page]." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 1999-2013. Web. 9 July 2013. <<http://www.urbandictionary.com>>

Wattenmaker, William D. "Incidental Concept Learning, Feature Frequency, and Correlated Properties." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition* 19.1 (1993): 203-33. PsychARTICLES. ProQuest. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

---. "Learning Modes, Feature Correlations, and Memory-Based Categorization." *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 17.5 (1991): 908-23. PsychARTICLES. ProQuest. Web. 29 Sept. 2012.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged. 2002. Print.

- Weis, René. Introduction and notes. *Romeo and Juliet*. By William Shakespeare. London: Arden-Methuen, 2012. Print.
- Wiktionary. Web. Wikimedia Foundation. 19 May 2013.
<<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Juliet>>
- William Shakespeare's *Romeo + Juliet*. Dir. Baz Luhrmann. Twentieth Century Fox, 1996. Videocassette.
- xxBumpLikeThisxX. "5. wifey." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 1 June 2007. Web. 24 Nov. 2013.
<<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=juliet>>
- youwillneverknow69. "10. Juliet." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 11 Sept. 2011. Web. 9 July 2013.
<<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=juliet&page=2>>
- zombie fools. "11. Juliet." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 10 Apr. 2008. Web. 9 July 2013.
<<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=juliet&page=2>>

Jean-François Ducis: Re-Creating Shakespeare for an Eighteenth-Century Audience

Amy Drake, *Franklin University*

French playwright Jean-François Ducis (1733-1816) forged a career out of reinventing the works of Shakespeare for the French stage. The adaptations penned by Ducis during the eighteenth century paved the way for theaters ever after to reinvent and update classic plays in a style that resonates with the playwright's new audiences. Key to this success is his tendency to set a classic play in a non-traditional time and place, but with which the audience can associate and connect. Ducis introduced Shakespearean plays to audiences in France, on the continent, and in South America, and his plays were commercially successful. He made a substantial contribution to French theater, and he was made a member of the French Academy. Therefore, he should have retained an exalted position in theater history; however, his name has become but a footnote in theater history.

My interest in Ducis's work was piqued when I enrolled in a graduate course in Shakespearean theater at The Ohio State University. For a class project I researched the original 1790¹ script of Ducis's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, housed in The Ohio State University Theater Research Institute: as a result this script was displayed in a university library exhibition on Shakespeare and I began work on bringing a reading of Ducis's play to the stage. I then had Ducis's script translated by Elizabeth Rachel Willis, a graduate student in the OSU Department of French, for the purpose of performing Ducis's adaptation of *Macbeth* with my theatrical organization, the Drake Oration Company. The performance was held at the Davis Discovery Center in Columbus, Ohio.² During a post-performance "talk-back," members of the audience asked questions of the actors and director about the production, before a reception at a local art gallery.

The performance at the Davis Discovery Center was open to the public and admission was charged on a "pay-what-you-like" basis, allowing students and patrons of limited means to attend. Semi-costumed actors performed in battery-operated "candlelight," in keeping with traditional lighting of the eighteenth-century French stage. Some costume accessories like a dagger and crown were used to suggest action and

position. The entrance and exit music was from André Ernest Modeste Grétry's *Andromaque*.

John Lough attributes Ducis's fame to writing for the common man rather than for the educated elite who may have read Shakespeare's unabridged works. Ducis's plays were successful in their day in terms of attendance. According to Lough, Ducis's *Romeo and Juliet* (1772) attracted over 16,000 spectators during a nineteen-performance run, which established Ducis's reputation as a popular playwright (180-81). Lough cites a 1783 letter written by theater critic J. F. de La Harpe who stated that the modern "plebian audience" did not have the same high standards as the "select spectators" of previous periods (222). Based on the attendance figures, the plebian audiences enjoyed Ducis's production and made the works commercially successful.

Ducis conceived of staging *Macbeth* decades before actually debuting his adaptation on Monday, January 12, 1784 at the Théâtre du Faubourg St-Germain (Golder 166). Golder notes this long incubation period by referencing a letter written by Ducis on May 14, 1772 to Prince Louis-Eugène in which he wrote '*Je m'occupe de Macbeth*' ("I am dealing with *Macbeth*"). *Macbeth* is mentioned next in the records of the Comédie-Française on November 29, 1773 (163). Perhaps the earliest extant version of Ducis's *Macbeth* is the Beljame MS Golder has found dated 1751, now in the collection of the Bibliothèque de l'Université de Paris, which predates the Folger MS, perhaps by several years (167, 181). This is an early example of Ducis's habit of rewriting and revising his plays.

Ducis worked solely from the translated Pierre-Antoine de La Place texts during his work with Shakespeare from 1772 through 1778 (Golder 167). When Le Tourneur translated a collection of Shakespeare's plays in 1779, Ducis began incorporating these translations into his works. The publication of Le Tourneur's translations motivated Ducis to complete his own adaptations of the Shakespeare plays; he began with *King Lear* (*Le Roi Lear*) before tackling *Macbeth*, which he read on Saturday, September 21, 1782 to his actors, "who accepted it by 14 votes to one" (164-65).

The Ducis production of *Macbeth* was delayed and the reasons for this seem to be a combination of family crises and business complications. Golder attributes the delay to the death of Ducis's eldest

daughter, Laure-François, from tuberculosis, the same disease that had killed his wife (165), while Joseph H. McMahon states that Ducis's wife and two daughters died from an "unidentified plague" (15). Monaco, meanwhile, writes that the play "was delayed because of the insistence on the part of two actresses, Mlle Clairon and Mme Vestris (who was to be his Lady Macbeth), that he make certain revisions" (139). The changes requested by these actresses are unknown. In any event, Golder relates that the play was finally cast in August 1783 and a reading was held to give the actors and interested parties an introduction to the script (Golder 165).

Ducis's forte was in staging Shakespearean plays for his own audience, and the new productions did require him to reinvent some scenes to suit the French sensibilities of the day. In Ducis's telling, Macbeth becomes a tragic, guilt-ridden murderer who, Golder states, "stoically accepts the inevitability of retribution" (180). The play's banquet scene was changed because eating was an activity reserved for French comedy and considered inappropriate for tragedy. Ducis gets around this by having the ghost appear at a coronation ceremony rather than a banquet. It was, however, acceptable to show the "nocturnal attack on the palace and ensuing pandemonium, under cover of which the murder is committed" (181), illustrating audiences' willingness to accept the sin of murder on stage, but not gluttony.

Ducis had reason to be very excited about his first staging of *Macbeth*, because it attracted the attention of the Comte de Provence, who later became Louis XVIII. He appointed Ducis as his *secrétaire des commandements*, or advisor and confidant to the French royal household. The run of this play brought in 4,688 livres, the largest box office of any Ducis play with this company (Golder 166). Golder goes on to report that Ducis postponed publishing *Macbeth* until 1790, even though some of Ducis's other plays were published within weeks after opening on the stage (167). Monaco states that "because of innumerable alterations and corrections not only before but also during the first run of seven performances it is harder than usual to reconstruct how his play was staged at a particular moment" (140). The frequent changes in the script indicate that either Ducis was unsure of his own setting or the stakes were very high in terms of pressure from his patron to produce a

successful show. These numerous changes may also have been a factor in delaying the publication of the play.

According to Jon Pemble, author of *Shakespeare Goes to Paris*, the marriage of French plays and Shakespearean theater resulted in “spectacle and ostentation” with less emphasis on the dialogue. As a result, “French Shakespeare was, in a word, operatic” (95). Pemble comments that although Ducis introduced Shakespeare’s works to the French stage, Ducis has become a forgotten playwright. Pemble adds, “He could neither speak nor read English, and his knowledge of Shakespeare was derived entirely from the translations of La Place and Le Tourneur” (Pemble 95-96). It is important to note that La Place translated only one play in its entirety—*Richard III*. For the rest, he was content to “summarise in a connecting narrative what seemed to him the less important scenes. He also gave an abstract of the plots of twenty-six other Shakespearean plays” (Ward).

Perhaps because of its dependence on La Place, Ducis’s uninspired dialogue lacks the luster of Shakespeare’s poetic language. Pemble proffers that Ducis took great liberties in adapting Shakespeare’s works for the French stage; his “*Macbeth* had no witches (except as an optional extra, never used), no porter, and no banquet, and it was many years before a sleepwalking scene was added” (96). Monaco attributes Ducis’s many changes from Shakespeare’s original text to La Place having “cut and summarized many scenes, especially the comic and indecent ones” (11), including those in *Macbeth*. In fact, some of Ducis’s numerous revisions did include witches named *Personage Un*, *Personage Deux* and *Personage Trois* in a collection published in 1845. In some versions, the witches not do make an appearance at all (McMahon 20-21).

Ducis added and subtracted characters appearing in Shakespeare’s play in order to clarify the story for an eighteenth-century French audience. Pemble notes that Banquo was removed and unfamiliar characters named Frédégonde, Iphycitone, Loclin and Séver were added (96). Golder had this to say about character changes: “Frédégonde is clearly Lady Macbeth. Queen consort to Chilpéric I of Tournai in the sixth century, Frédégonde rose to power by causing Chilpéric to dissolve his first marriage and to have his second wife strangled. She then removed the king himself and ruled through her young son, Clotaire II” (171). This leaves little doubt about Frédégonde’s sinister character, making her “a

classic villainess, the dynamic mainspring of the action and a resourceful instigator of crime” (193). In Ducis’s production, Lady Macbeth’s son has a role in the play; Lady Macbeth is also consistent in her lust for power, and she is unrepentant, unlike in most versions of the play where there is a clear transition in her persona from feminine to femme-fatale.

Ducis took liberties to connect Shakespearean characters with familiar personalities from folklore. This change, similar to the molding of Lady Macbeth, was to provide his audience with insight into the motives of the characters by aligning them with familiar characters from folktales, mythology, and classical drama. The names of non-Shakespearean characters in Ducis’s *Macbeth* were borrowed from the cult of Ossian. For example, the character of Loclin represents other warrior characters associated with Scandinavia; the character Salgar represents a hunter, and the actor portraying Duncan’s son Malcôme-Salgar carries a bow on stage (Golder 172). The names provide spectators with historical echoes, and the props reinforce character types. Hecate, for example, takes on new character names: Iphycione (Erichtonne in some plays), Golder suggests, is reinvented as a “Greek divinity.” Given Ducis’s fascination with Greek tragedy, it is hardly surprising that Ducis molds his characters to resemble Greek gods. This new Hecate goes into a trance in order to make her predictions: she seems to be a combination of Greek oracle and festival fortune-teller (181).

Ducis also incorporates operatic elements of special effects, as a means of modernization, into his adaptations. Opera was well established in France by Ducis’s day, and for this reason his *Macbeth*, as well as his other Shakespearean adaptations, included references to the Bard’s work with “a few basic themes, the occasional well-known phrase, a loose treatment of time and place, and operatic stage effects” to connect the Shakespearean adaptations with familiar musical performances of his day (Pemble 97). Opera transforms a play into fantasy for adults, with glamorous costumes, opulent sets and sumptuous set pieces, and vocal music: all elements freeing theatrical performances from the commonplace settings of traditional stage plays. Also, during the eighteenth century,

[N]ew types of plays began to appear. One of these new types was called, rather inappropriately, *drame*, meaning a serious work not quite in the class of conventional tragedy. In this group were

included the *tragédie bourgeoise*, dealing with commonplace people and often ending in comparative happiness; also the sad or tearful pieces (*comédie larmoyante*). There was also the *comédietta*, a short piece, sometimes with music, resembling the “one-actor” of vaudeville. (Bellinger)

These new forms of playwriting were concerned more with the individual and personal relationships than with social issues. Eighteenth-century France provided an especially auspicious time for Ducis to introduce his Shakespearean adaptations, because audiences were open to experiencing new forms of theater. The Shakespearean plays neatly fit the parameters of the new drama, comedy, and tragedy plays.

This new era in theater was influenced in part by philosophy, including the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. John Golder believes that Ducis’s objective was to portray the character of Macbeth through the lens of “Rousseau’s constructive view of human nature,” which supports the position that “evil is not a part of man’s original nature; secondly, that vice and error, being foreign to man’s constitution, are introduced to it from the outside and change it for the worse and, thirdly, that since man has an inherent capacity for good, no villain is beyond redemption” (195). This assessment hints that Ducis was searching for the humanity within Shakespeare’s characters and drawing it out through Macbeth’s remorse. This may explain his omission of the witches in *Macbeth*, as if he viewed them as completely dark characters outside the realm of humanity. This argument does not take into account the female characters, such as Lady Macbeth, who in Ducis’s production seem beyond redemption.

Pemble argues that Ducis did not intend to authentically reproduce Shakespearean plays but to make the works contemporary. The changing political tide in late eighteenth-century France inspired Ducis to initially create *Macbeth* “as a play of the *ancien régime* [which] acquired a revolutionary slant when it was revived in 1790....but in the later version the victorious Malcome (*sic*) becomes a constitutional monarch. He is crowned as ‘first citizen’ (‘premier citoyen’), and bound by oath to observe the book of the law (‘le livre de la loi’)” (99). This is a reflection of the changed France after the Revolution. In order to gain a following during a period of civil unrest, Ducis was in the difficult position of pleasing his former royal patrons and those who were now in

power while still forging a connection with the theater-going public. He accomplished this by creating multiple versions of each play which were altered per performance, depending upon the audience in attendance.

Even though Ducis's productions resonated with his public, some theater critics of the day were harsh in their assessments. Pemble notes that critics "La Harpe and Julien-Louis Geoffroy were especially hostile" toward Ducis (219), and that critics who initially complained that Ducis had "polluted French theatres with Shakespeare" later condemned his works as "having disfigured Shakespeare beyond recognition" (98). "However harshly Ducis was criticised as a dramatist in his own right," Golder says, "his essential conservatism made him preferable to Shakespeare, whose name continued to be synonymous with vulgarity and tastelessness throughout the period" (330). Pemble cites a review of an 1839 revival of *Othello*, which stated that "the play 'made a poor showing' and the 'old-fashioned speeches' produced 'profound boredom' in the auditorium (98). This review is consistent with Golder's assessment of early audience reaction to the performance: they learned of much of the action through conversation and dialogues (191). Indeed, there is not a great deal of action in Ducis's *Macbeth*, and much of the action is described in speeches.

Not all theater critics were opposed to the French renditions of Shakespeare. McMahon comments that Ducis's plays "were well-received...and won him a seat in the French Academy" (16). This honor was bestowed upon Ducis when the death of Voltaire created an opening in the Academy. As McMahon notes, this is ironic because of Voltaire's disdain for the Bard: "Voltaire weighed the values of the Shakespearean *oeuvre* and found its creator appallingly wanting" (14).³

Other adaptations of Ducis's Shakespearean plays remained in production in France well into the nineteenth century at the Comédie-Française and the Odéon. Golder notes that Ducis's *Macbeth* "did not leave the Paris stage until 1842" (333). It remained in public favor for decades, precipitating revivals for many years after the initial production. *Macbeth* was brought back to the stage in 1798, somewhat closer to an original Shakespearean text, with Talma and Mme Vestris in advanced age again playing leading roles (Monaco 183). This was a significant cultural event in which "Bonaparte, the future emperor, attended the performance at the Théâtre Feydeau on April 22, 1798," adding a sense of

dignity to the occasion (183). Legendary actress Sarah Bernhardt appeared in Ducis's *Lear* at the Odéon Theater in the mid-nineteenth century, helping to facilitate the widespread popularity of both mainstream and adapted Shakespearean plays.

Ducis inspired other playwrights to create their own versions of Shakespearean tales: according to Pemble, internationally renowned novelist Alexander Dumas translated *Hamlet*. Dumas had "seen a performance of the Ducis imitation in his youth, and he claimed to have been so deeply impressed that he learnt the leading role by heart and never forgot it" (109). Monaco examines other versions of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: impressed by a performance in London, Ducis's contemporary G.-R. Lefebvre de Saint-Ildephont also wrote a version of *Macbeth* in 1783. Although Lefebvre's version "shows consideration for historical exactness" by dressing Lady Macbeth in traditional white mourning (138),⁴ it was rejected by the Comédie-Française, since Ducis's *Macbeth* had already been accepted for production at this venue: it would have been unusual for a theater to present two versions of the same play during the same season. These Shakespearean productions may not have occurred if Ducis had not made the plays accessible to French audiences.

Parisian theaters were ideally suited for staging Shakespeare's works because "ballet, pantomime, and supernatural effects," new to French productions, could be properly accommodated by the Comédie-Française (Pemble 166). Each of its theaters has a seating capacity of about 2,000, which is greater than the number of seats in almost all modern Broadway theaters. The French theaters of Ducis's day were equipped with "stage machinery and technical resources" allowing for operatic staging of the plays, "replete with ancient, medieval, and modern pageantry, battles, crowds, supernatural phenomena, and musical and choreographic interludes" (166). Pemble reports that for Ducis's *Macbeth* at the Comédie-Française in 1784 "evocative gothic scenery was provided and music was used to create an appropriate mood" (167). This statement could be used to describe a modern-day operatic version of *Macbeth*; however, this production also "featured the first appearance on the French stage of a Shakespearean ghost" (167). It is historically significant that the ghost appears in Ducis's *Macbeth*, in which "there was no Banquo, but murdered Duncan reappeared and shook his gory locks both

at Macbeth and at the audience” (167). Given that Ducis’s monologues could be quite long, the audience may have welcomed the excitement.

Macbeth is still successfully being reinvented in the twenty-first century. A recent modernized version was staged at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on Broadway starring Scottish-American actor Alan Cumming in the title role of the “Scottish play.” The play ran from April 7 to July 14, 2013 and grossed over \$5 million (“Broadway Grosses”). The production’s website describes this intense version thus:

Directed by Tony winner John Tiffany (*Once*) and Andrew Goldberg, this “stirring turn by Alan Cumming packing theatrical thunder and lightning’ (*Daily News*) is set in a clinical room deep within a dark psychiatric unit. Cumming is the lone patient, reliving the infamous story and inhabiting each role himself. Closed circuit television camera watch the patient’s every move as the walls of the psychiatric ward come to life in a visually stunning multi-media theatrical experience. You cannot miss Alan Cumming in this breathtaking 100-minute “radical re-imagining” (*Variety*) of Shakespeare’s notorious tale of desire, ambition and the supernatural. (“About the Show”)

This latest production proves that there are still new ways of exploring the Bard’s works and re-imagining the title character, just as Ducis did over two centuries ago. Even the Royal Shakespeare Company has toured updated and abbreviated performances of well-known plays, such as the 2012 international run of *King Lear*, which was reduced to seventy-five minutes in order to make it more palatable to young audiences. Strategic cuts, such as those made by the Royal Shakespeare Company, and changes of setting, such as the relocation of action in the Cumming production, are the types of alterations Ducis made in bringing Shakespeare to his audiences.

Ducis played a pivotal role in making Shakespeare’s works accessible on a global scale: audiences in Spain, Italy, and Argentina were first exposed to Shakespeare through Ducis’s translations. These works were also performed in Sweden, Belgium, Holland, Brazil, Poland, Turkey, and Russia (Golder 334). Ducis’s plays may have provided the impetus for audiences to seek out other translations of Shakespearean works. Perhaps updating the time period makes the works more

accessible to some theatergoers: Ducis took this approach in recreating classic plays for eighteenth-century French audiences.

Ducis's name is not often mentioned as one the great figures in the history of theater. There are three overarching reasons for the playwright's obscurity: most existing copies of his plays remain in the original French, Ducis created many versions of most of his plays (which makes it difficult to establish the time and location associated with each version or to pinpoint a definitive version), and the original works of Shakespeare have stood the test of time by resonating with subsequent generations in ways that Ducis's plays have failed to do. Ducis's works seemed old-fashioned to audiences within decades of their premieres. In spite of these points, Ducis was a popular playwright in his day: a claim supported by attendance and box office figures. His lasting contribution to theater is the interest his adaptations generated in exploring Shakespeare's original works, which continues to this day.

Notes

1. Ducis's translation appeared under the title *Macbeth: Tragédie: Remise au theater le premier juin 1790* (Paris: Académie Française, 1790).
2. This theater was built in 1927 as a home for the Players Club, later Players Theatre. When Players Theatre moved out of the space in 1989 it was taken over by the City of Columbus and became the Davis Discovery Center, a performing arts venue for young people which is available for community use (Davis Discovery Center). The Drake Oration Company performed Ducis's *Macbeth* at this theater on May 11, 2012.
3. Voltaire states in the eighteenth of his *Philosophical Letters*, "On Tragedy," that "The English had a regular theatre, as well as the Spaniards, while the French had only platforms" (346). If witnessing Ducis's French interpretations of Shakespearean plays formed Voltaire's opinion of the Bard's work, he may have found the plays more enjoyable on the English stage rather than on a French "platform." However, Voltaire goes on to say that Shakespeare "created the theater. His genius was at once strong and abundant, natural and sublime, but without the smallest spark of taste, and without the slightest knowledge of the rules....[T]he merit of this author has been the ruin of the English stage" (346). One may infer that Voltaire was referring to the content of the works rather than the execution. Voltaire himself admits that it was "very difficult to translate [Shakespeare's] fine verses," and he implores us to "always remember, that when you see a translation, you perceive only a faint copy of a beautiful picture" (347). In translating Hamlet's soliloquy into French, Voltaire sought only to capture the essence of the scene, not to produce a word-for-word translation, which would, as he put it, "enervate the sense" and he invokes the Biblical quotation, "The letter kills, and the spirit giveth life" (348). Pemble notes that "Voltaire, who relished the opera, had reckoned that its intrusion into the tragic stage was going too far. Hearing of [Ducis's] *Hamlet* in 1769, he complained that the 'action' and 'pantomime' were overdone" (172). This comment seems to contrast starkly with Voltaire's generalization about the staid French stage.
4. As portraiture of the era shows, wearing white was the official sign of mourning worn by women of royal blood or high-ranking courtiers. In a painting by François Clouet (c. 1520-1572), "Mary, Queen of Scots is shown, aged 19, in white mourning (*en deuil blanc*) to mark the loss of three members of her immediate family within a period of 18 months" (The Royal Collection).

Works Cited

- “About the Show.” *Macbeth on Broadway*. Web. 2 Dec. 2013.
 <<http://macbethonbroadway.com/about.html>>.
- Bellinger, Martha Fletcher. “French Drama in the Eighteenth Century.” Excerpt from *A Short History of the Drama*. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1927. 268-76. *Theatre Database*. Web. 2 Dec., 2013.
 <http://www.theatredatabase.com/18th_century/french_drama_001.html>.
- “Broadway Grosses -- *Macbeth*.” *Broadwayworld*. Web. 2 Dec. 2013.
 <<http://www.broadwayworld.com/grosses/MACBETH>>.
- Davis Discovery Center. “History of the Columbus Performing Arts Center.” *Columbus Recreation and Parks Department’s Davis Performing Arts Programs*. Web. 2 Dec. 2013.
 <<http://davisprograms.com/historycpac.html>>.
- Ducis, Jean-François. *Macbeth: Tragédie: Remise au theater le premier juin 1790*. Paris: Académie Française, 1790. Print.
- Golder, John. *Shakespeare for the Age of Reason: The Earliest Stage Adaptations of Jean-François Ducis, 1769-1792*. Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1992. Print.
- Lough, John. *Paris Theatre Audiences in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. London: Oxford UP, 1972. Print.
- “Mary Queen of Scots (1542-1587).” *The Royal Collection*. Web. 2 Dec. 2013.
 <<http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/eGallery/object.asp?searchText=Clouet&x=o&y=o&object=403429&row=4&detail=about>>.
- McMahon, Joseph H. “Ducis: Unkindest Cutter?” *Yale French Studies* 30-33: *Shakespeare in France*. New Haven: Yale French Studies, 1964: 14-25. Print.
- Monaco, Marion. *Shakespeare on the French Stage in the Eighteenth Century*. Paris: Didier, 1974. Print.
- Pemble, John. *Shakespeare Goes to Paris: How the Bard Conquered France*. London: Hambleton and London, 2005. Print.

- Voltaire. "On Tragedy." *Candide and Other Writings by Voltaire*. Ed. Haskell M. Block. New York: The Modern Library, 1956. 346-49. Print.
- Ward, A.W. *et al.* "Shakespeare on the Continent: Voltaire's Last Attacks." *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907-21. Bartleby.com, 2000. Web. 2 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.bartleby.com/215/1214.html>>
- Willis, Rachel Elizabeth. Trans. *Ducis' Translation of William Shakespeare's Macbeth*. 2012. Print.

When Words Defile Things: Homoerotic Desire and Extreme Depictions of Masculinity in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* and Mixed Martial Arts

Aaron Hubbard, *The University of Akron*

Recent interest in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* coincides with the rising popularity of the combat sport known as mixed martial arts, or MMA. According to the *World Shakespeare Bibliography Online* there have been fifty-three theatrical productions of the play since the year 2000; in 2011, the play was made into a feature film starring Ralph Fiennes as Coriolanus and Gerard Butler as Aufidius. During this same time period, *Ultimate Fighting Championship* president Dana White was attempting to turn MMA into a commercial success. According to Michael Borer and Tyler Schafer, television broadcasters initially considered MMA "too barbaric for mainstream audiences," so White sought to bring "official rules, weight classes, and time limits" into the sport. In 2005, his reality TV show, *The Ultimate Fighter*, debuted on the "overtly masculine" cable network Spike TV. It was what Borer and Schafer called an "instant success" (167). White's show, which recently completed its seventeenth season, brings together amateur fighters who compete to become the ultimate fighter. That is, they compete to make the step up from amateur to professional ranks. White's show presents us with a spectacle in which two men grapple and struggle in ways that we might imagine Coriolanus and Aufidius grappling and struggling in the play's action.¹

It is clear, therefore, that—in their depictions of masculinity, sexuality, and violence—*Coriolanus* and the combat sport of MMA share a cultural logic. They both share a specific way of reflecting cultural fantasies about masculine intimacy; at the same time, they both depict attempts between male fighters to brutally suppress and destroy the other, and to suppress and destroy desire—particularly homoerotic desire. That is, both texts reflect the way in which heteronormative culture's attempt to contain desire is shaped by a paradox between fantasy and perceptions of heteronormative masculinity. This hegemonic masculinity is enacted through the extreme depictions of violence in the texts of *Coriolanus* and MMA.

1. Parallels of Violence: Boxing and MMA

In her book *On Boxing*, Joyce Carol Oates writes that during a fight “so much happens so swiftly and with such heart-stopping subtlety you cannot absorb it except to know that something profound is happening and it is happening in a place beyond words” (11). Although boxing is a different sport, it shares with MMA many of the same kinds of depictions and enactments of masculinity, sexuality, and violence. It is easy to get lost in Oates’s romantic vision of boxing and to forget that MMA and boxing are both extremely violent activities. More specifically, MMA and *Coriolanus* both engage with particular kinds of masculinity and combat which, as Robert Haywood argues about boxing, center on the “anxiety of masculine adequacy” and a “demonstration of male potency.” These in turn create a “commingling of desires” and confuse brutality with sexuality. In other words, the homoeroticism that MMA and *Coriolanus* try to escape is “inescapably built into [their] action.” Haywood argues that boxing engages and represents acts of combat and violence “whose ultimate purpose is the display of desire and then desire’s destruction,” specifically the destruction of homoerotic desire (14). MMA raises this violence to an even less restrained and minimally regulated level. This violence is represented in MMA by the fighter who is celebrated only to be driven to the mat and beaten into submission: likewise, Coriolanus enjoys military victories and consideration for consul, but in the end is torn to pieces by the Volscians as Aufidius stands by and directs the angry mob. Coriolanus’s violent death is desire’s destruction, or at least its attempted destruction, which is required by a heteronormative culture whose political order is, in part, shaped by a hegemonic masculinity.

According to Akihiko Hirose and Kay Kei-ho Pih, “hegemonic masculinity is viewed as impenetrable by what it is not” (191), and the process of presenting desire only to attempt to destroy it works within this cultural logic that views masculinity as impenetrable. That is, this logic about masculinity dictates that while a man can admire another man, he cannot desire another man. Hegemonic masculinity denies the possibility of physical, sexual, and psychological penetration. Men can fantasize about other male bodies, as well as come into contact with other male bodies through violence, but these bodies must remain within a

logic that precludes penetration. Working within this logic, MMA fighters use brutality and violence to fantasize about intimacy with other men, and even fantasize their own self-destruction at the hands of a more brutal fighter.

The role of fantasy in MMA became clear the first time I observed an MMA training session and spoke with fighters.² The MMA training facility is the place where the cultural logic of a hegemonic form of masculinity is cultivated. In a surprising echo of Hirose and Pih, Kyle Green echoes writes that at MMA facilities “you are allowed to admire, and seek to emulate, the bodies of other men, but you are not allowed to desire them” (389). Fighters begin their training sessions by shadowboxing—that is, by throwing punches into the air at an imaginary opponent. This resonates with Aufidius’s dreams of fighting Coriolanus: “I have nightly... / Dreamt of encounters ‘twixt thyself and me” (4.5.121-22). His dreams are a kind of shadowboxing that enacts his fantasy about fighting as well as a particular kind of masculinity. One gets the impression that today’s MMA fighters are dreaming of their favorite counterpart as they dance and shadowbox around the cage.

Both MMA and *Coriolanus* are texts in which men seek to violently control their own anatomies as well as the anatomies of other men, while at the same time fantasizing about an ultimate form of intimacy achieved through brutality. One fighter told me that the training at his facility is very pragmatic: MMA hierarchy is determined by physical achievement. That is, the order or hierarchy of MMA is determined by the fight in the cage. In *Coriolanus*, Aufidius tells us that he has fought Coriolanus five times and that Coriolanus has often beaten him (1.11.7-8). And if the hierarchy of masculinity is best determined in the fight or in the cage, as MMA fighters argue, then we might consider that Aufidius perceives himself as being low in the order of things in comparison to Coriolanus. Desire in both *Coriolanus* and MMA is suppressed, in part, by the ways in which the fighters submit to order or hierarchy, and this is an important feature of both texts.

Desire, however, is always present in the cage and in the play, as well as in the experiences and practices of individuals, both women and men, regardless of the heteronormative contexts in which organizations, institutions, and cultures orchestrate their power in order to regulate or deny its presence. As Tim Dean writes, “sexuality has less to do with

genitalia than with the unconscious” and that “[s]exuality conforms to the dictates of fantasy, not to those of anatomy” (148). MMA and *Coriolanus* are shaped by the paradox that exists between the dictates of fantasy and desire, and the perceptions of heteronormative masculinity. Aufidius attests to this paradox when he embraces Coriolanus and says, “Here I clip / The anvil of my sword, and do contest / As hotly and as nobly with thy love / As ever in ambitious strength I did / Contend against thy valour” (4.5.108-12). This hot and noble contest between Coriolanus and Aufidius mingles fantasy with anatomy in a way that produces a form of masculinity that in turn enacts hegemony over both the spirit and the flesh.

Hegemonic masculinity is generated by the dramatic acts of brutality and violence that we can read and see in *Coriolanus* and MMA. We see this masculinity at work when Coriolanus refuses to show his wounds to the people—wounds that have been inflicted upon his body by other soldiers, including Aufidius. Coriolanus states, “I cannot bring / My tongue to such a pace. ‘Look, sir, my wounds. / I got them in my country’s service, when / Some certain of your brethren roared and ran’” (2.3.46-49). Not only does this image of Coriolanus present us with his distaste for the common people and an ideal masculinity in which men do not roar and run away from a fight; it also might imply that the only men worthy of mingling with, penetrating, or even gazing upon the body of Coriolanus are men such as Aufidius. But Coriolanus, as the ideal masculine subject, cannot allow himself to be penetrated by even the best of others, even though he and Aufidius desire each other. That is, there is an ironic contrast between brutality and intimacy in both MMA and the play, because at the same time that these fighters want to be made impenetrable, they also dream of discovering themselves, as Aufidius and Coriolanus do, in the merging of identities and of damaged bodies which can only occur in the context of the fight.

2. The Brutality of Words: Language and Hegemonic Masculinity

While I was observing an MMA training session, a fighter told me that “words defile things.” Not only does this statement bring us back to Joyce Carol Oates’s claim that a fight happens “in a place beyond words,” but it also connects us to Coriolanus’s own views with regard to words

versus actions: “When blows have made me stay I fled from words” (2.2.68). This statement indicates Coriolanus’s preference for physical action and his need to have control over his own anatomy, but it might also indicate unconscious and unspoken fantasies about Aufidius that rise to the surface when Coriolanus is engaged in brutal and violent combat. Both Coriolanus and these MMA fighters distrust language because they think it lacks the clarity of a fight. They fear words because language has the potential to reveal the fantasies and desires that these fighters labor to repress, because they are unable to control how people might interpret their speech, and because language carries the potential to expose their heightened masculinity as a façade produced within heteronormative cultural codes.

The MMA fighters that I spoke with revealed a distaste for language when asked to describe a maneuver called a rear-naked chokehold. In their view, the word *naked* defiles the perceived athletic purity of the hold. Many of the fighters I spoke with expressed disgust at the name of this particular hold, in which one fighter grabs another from behind, wraps his legs around the other’s waist, and attempts to choke him around the neck. The implications of the hold’s name, which makes room for the presence of desire, interfere with the notion of the sport or the fight as being pure or in an ideally masculine place beyond words. Words sexualize the hold and therefore emphasize vulnerability and penetrability. The fighters’ discomfort with the terminology, rooted in a fear of penetration, mirrors Coriolanus’s disgust at the idea of making his wounds visible to the people. That is, Coriolanus fears that, in examining his flesh, the people will speak impure words that would violate the nobility of his wounds—the very wounds earned in the purifying violence of battle—and therefore undermine the power of his masculine body. Menenius says to Coriolanus, “you must desire them / To think upon you,” and Coriolanus responds, “I would they would forget me like the virtues” (2.3.51-53). The thought of exposing his naked wounds to the common people is disgusting. He is enraged at the ritual he must go through to become consul. “[I]f he show us his wounds,” one citizen says, “we are to put our tongues into those wounds and speak for them” (2.3.5-7). Coriolanus, however, does not want them to penetrate him with their tongues. That is, he does not want the common citizen to think upon him, let alone speak for his wounds. His wounds serve as vulnerable holes in

the history of his body. If the people can verbalize the history of Coriolanus's body, then they might be able to subvert the myth of masculine exceptionalism that has shaped Coriolanus's identity as a Roman nobleman.

While the cultural logic of MMA and *Coriolanus* attempts to suppress desire, this desire still manages to rise to the surface. Fighters are concerned that their masculinity will be betrayed by a sexuality that is embedded in the language of the sport and in the gestures of the fight as well. Just as Coriolanus does not want his wounds to be penetrated by the thoughts of the people, at certain moments fighters are disturbed by and disgusted at the thought of anyone outside of the sport thinking of them as being vulnerable to, or desiring, penetration. It is not that fighters are or are not homosexual, but that homoeroticism is built into the action of the fight, just as it is built into the dramatic structure of *Coriolanus*, only to then be actively suppressed and denied.

Still, there is a desire for intimacy on the part of fighters. They seek to emulate and admire the bodies of other men, and even submit to the more idealized bodies in the sport as a gesture of male friendship. Yet at the same time, as Green points out, fighters are not allowed to desire other male bodies. In other words, they are not allowed to penetrate them. Green attempts to sustain his denial of penetration by applying his reading of the work of Georges Bataille to an interpretation of the sport. Building on Bataille's theories of excess and transgression as ways to create community through "a shared escape from the self," Green writes that the "MMA school is a site that facilitates intimacy" (389). Fighters cultivate relationships through violence; or, as Green states it, a fighter "chokes" his "way to friendship" (388). Here he describes how he applied the rear-naked choke-hold to his opponent. He writes:

I could feel him tiring as his breathing became more ragged and his grip weaker. Taking advantage of this I managed to transition to his back. As he continued to take deep breaths, trying to twist into me, I managed to sink in the rear-naked choke. I hesitated but then slowly began to squeeze until he tapped. Afterward we lay on the mat breathing deep into our lungs....An hour later I knew all about his failing business venture. (389)

Green uses this anecdote to demonstrate the presence in MMA of intimacy and friendship, which in his view are cultivated by violence. The

language in this passage is full of sexual energy and desire, and yet Green goes on to say that fighters are not allowed to desire the masculine body—that is, to penetrate this ideal body. Anyone who reads this passage, however, should easily recognize that both men have penetrated one another—although the penetration is psychological, it is mediated by physical violence and enacted through the homoerotic rear-naked chokehold—and that real intimacy cannot occur without physical vulnerability and penetration. This paradox between fantasy and perceptions of heteronormative masculinity, or the desire for intimacy and at the same time the denial of the desire for penetration, is at the heart of what makes MMA such a difficult cultural text. The violence is meant to both repress desire and at the same time fulfill a desire that is not simply being marginalized, but denied. For fighters and theorists like Green, the paradox between fantasy and perceptions of heteronormative masculinity depends on a logic or style of reasoning that is shaped by the ways in which they confuse brutality and sexuality, or violence and intimacy.

It is interesting to compare Aufidius's dream to Green's description of his encounter above. Aufidius recites his dream after Coriolanus has crossed into his territory: "all-noble Martius. Let me twine / Mine arms about that body" (4.5.105-06). This echoes Green's description of a rear-naked chokehold. Aufidius's language, however, becomes even more erotically charged when he describes his "rapt heart" at the sight of Coriolanus, which parallels Green's depiction of breathing in his fight, and how Coriolanus has "beat [him] out" several times, finally saying to Coriolanus, "We have been down together in my sleep, / Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat" (4.5.115-24). These lines intensify the eroticism that is present but denied in Green's depiction and interpretation of his MMA experience.

By using the work of Georges Bataille to rationalize the violence of MMA as a path to intimacy and community, Green turns violence into a means of encountering the other. Green writes that violence is a way to "transform and discover the self through pain and pleasure, blood and sweat, self and other" (390). But Green denies the presence of sexual desire, and without the acknowledgment of desire and the possibility of penetration, it is impossible for Green to argue that intimacy can be cultivated within and through the violence of the sport. Fighters would like to maintain the façade required by hegemonic masculinity, this

impenetrable masculinity, while at the same time claiming that the sport is somehow a path to friendship and intimacy. While the potential for penetration and desire are present, it is the denial of their presence that makes Green's rationalizations untenable. The sport is shaped around the ideological fiction of masculinity, which is dependent upon the violent suppression of desire—in particular, homoerotic desire.

3. Conclusion: The Demystification of Masculinity

The play, which ends the way that I think many spectators might like to see MMA fights end—with the death of one of the participants—helps to reveal the logic that enforces this structure of suppression in the sport, while reading MMA next to the play helps to flesh out a vision of what an ultimate fight between Coriolanus and Aufidius might have looked like. The play ends with the Volscians surrounding Coriolanus and shouting “Tear him to pieces!” (5.6.121) as Aufidius encourages them. The death of Coriolanus seems to be the attempted destruction of desire, as the play ends with Aufidius standing over Coriolanus's body and stating, “My rage is gone, / And I am struck with sorrow” (5.6.147-48). Desire, however, persists: Aufidius's desires, and his need for an exclusively masculine intimacy through brutality, will remain unfulfilled or incomplete.

In the logic of masculinity in MMA and *Coriolanus*, one fighter seeks to inflict pain and suffering on the other until the other submits, or is obliterated. MMA presents us with a culture of violence that seeks nothing less than the submission of the other to the authority of violence as the price for intimacy. It represents a rising trend in the celebration of the spectacle of violence that is emerging as a defining aspect of our culture. The text of *Coriolanus*, through the symbolic power of its language, is able to demystify “the exemplarity of masculinity,” which is an “ideological fiction” in early modern society (Dittmann 655). Because *Coriolanus* participates in the construction of this ideological fiction, only to dismember it in the end, when considered alongside MMA it can help us to better understand our own cultural moment and to consider what this sort of masculine violence might mean for our own society. In both contexts, masculinity seeks to make itself impenetrable to everything other than itself. And the more aware this masculinity becomes of its

vulnerability to being penetrated, the more antagonistic and violent it becomes. Like Coriolanus and Aufidius, it is always looking for a fight.

Notes

1. Dana White's project is to present the combat sport to a mainstream audience; in other words, he is trying to create a popular audience for his business. *The Ultimate Fighter* is the average sports fan's most accessible introduction to MMA. It is a sport in which two fighters, most often male, enter a cage and use different styles of fighting, such as Muay Thai or jujutsu, as well as various punches, kicks, and holds to beat each other into submission. To end the match, one of the fighters must either tap out or pass out.

2. My conversations with MMA fighters occurred in the process of a different project for which I interviewed and observed fighters at a training facility in Canton, Ohio on April 1, 2012, and observed an amateur fight night in Akron, Ohio on April 21, 2012.

Works Cited

- Borer, Michael Ian and Tyler S. Schafer. "Culture War Confessionals: Conflicting Accounts of Christianity, Violence, and Mixed Martial Arts." *Journal of Media and Religion* 10 (2011): 165-184. *ILLIAD*. Web. 17 Apr. 2012.
- Coriolanus*. Dir. Ralph Fiennes. Weinstein Company, 2011. Film.
- Dean, Tim. *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009. Print.
- Dittmann, Joo Young. "'Tear Him to Pieces': De-Suturing Masculinity in *Coriolanus*." *English Studies* 90.6 (2009): 653-672. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 14 Apr. 2012.
- Estill, Laura, and James L. Harner, eds. *World Shakespeare Bibliography Online*. Web. 12 December 2013. <<http://www.worldshakesbib.org/index.html>>
- Green, Kyle. "It Hurts so it is Real: Sensing the Seduction of Mixed Martial Arts." *Social & Cultural Geography* 12.4 (2011): 377-396. *ILLIAD*. Web. 20 Apr. 2012.
- Haywood, Robert. "George Bellow's 'Stag at Sharkey's': Boxing, Violence, and Male Identity." *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 2.2 (1988): 3-15. *JSTOR*. Web. 18 Aug. 2013.
- Hirose, Akihiko and Kay Kei-ho Pih. "Men Who Strike and Men Who Submit: Hegemonic and Marginalized Masculinities in Mixed Martial Arts." *Men & Masculinities* 13.2 (2010): 190-209. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 14 Apr. 2012.
- Oates, Joyce Carol. *On Boxing*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2006. Print.
- Shakespeare, William. *Coriolanus*. *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition: Second Edition*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. New York: Norton, 2008. 2793-2880. Print.

Extremes of Gender and Power: Sycorax's Absence in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

Brittney Blystone, *Northern Kentucky University*

In William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Prospero and Sycorax are extreme ends in the spectrums of power and gender. The patriarchy that Prospero enforces is not an independent or coherent system; rather, it reacts to its opposite, which Sycorax symbolizes. Although some dismiss Sycorax as "long dead by the time the play's events take place" (Thompson 339), she still shapes the characters' perceptions of power and gender. While one can analyze male characters directly by their actions on stage, one can analyze Sycorax only by her influence on these characters. With Sycorax absent, Prospero envisions her as his female opposite. Through Prospero, Sycorax symbolizes everything that may question patriarchy. Sycorax exists only in male characters' accounts; however, Sycorax influences the men's perception of power because she is absent.

In *The Tempest*, the only woman on stage is Miranda, who is both assaulted and honored for her virginity. The lack of women on stage leads Ann Thompson to wonder, "what feminist criticism can do in the face of a male-authored canonical text [*The Tempest*] which seems to exclude women to this extent" (339). Women are so utterly missing on stage that Stephen Orgel calls his essay "Prospero's Wife" merely a "consideration" of "related moments and issues" (1). According to Orgel, *The Tempest* provides enough evidence about the women in the play for us to speculate about them, but not enough for us to make any justified conclusions or arguments. *The Tempest* does not provide us with enough evidence to analyze Sycorax like one analyzes the male characters physically present on stage; however, the male characters, especially Prospero, continually recount and emphasize Sycorax's absence. *The Tempest's* dramatis personae names only one woman, yet the possibility of women in power is present. Prospero is a white, male patriarch, and Sycorax is a woman, possibly of color. Yet, their genders push them into opposing extremes, and this opposition creates tension in the patriarchy and space for potential female power.

As a powerful woman, Sycorax exemplifies anti-patriarchal ideas in early modern England, when patriarchy was the norm (or even ideal),

but an unsteady one that faced opposition on a daily basis. Female power was an available concept that manifested itself in various outlets, including Renaissance literature. Phyllis Rackin argues that Renaissance literature anticipated “modern constructions of gender and sexuality,” and that daily affairs provided readily available models of female power (28). In accounting for the absence of women in Shakespearean plays, Mary Beth Rose argues that there were reasons beyond pervasive patriarchy, theater etiquette, or a shortage of young male actors to play female roles. While many assume that women were completely disempowered in early modern England, Rose claims that women were “buying, selling, and bequeathing property and actively negotiating the marriages of their children, as well as planning for their education” (293). Similarly, Rackin argues that Shakespeare would have witnessed female agency within his home and town: “[T]he boy Shakespeare would have seen women presiding over other households, buying and selling in the local market and working on farms” (41). In fact, Shakespeare grew up in a predominantly female family where women controlled a considerable amount of money and property (33). Despite the patriarchal norm, Shakespeare was able to witness female agency and authority daily, and throughout his life. Anti-patriarchal ideas in *The Tempest* are not anachronistic; rather, they are a part of the environment that surrounded the creation of the play.

Sycorax, however, is not like the women in early modern England; she is not even physically present. Her absence is an extreme example of women lacking agency and representation. Hélène Cixous claims that the dichotomy of man/woman also creates “the proliferation of representations” (350), meaning that Prospero sees Sycorax as a representation of women and everything womanhood represents, in contrast to how he glorifies himself. As a woman, Sycorax is weaker, more evil, and more sexually deviant than Prospero. Cixous claims that these representations create gender stereotypes and give women little existence outside this dichotomy of man/woman (349). In the mind of the male characters, Sycorax is only a gender stereotype, or a symbol of Prospero’s views on women. Sycorax exists only as a contradiction to Prospero and his masculinity. Sycorax’s absence gives Prospero the opportunity to construct her fully into a symbol of the evil woman, the opposite of

himself; however, this construction also makes her an antagonist to Prospero and the patriarchy he represents.

Just as Sycorax is literally absent, women's lack of representation and agency made them figuratively absent in early modern England; however, women used their nonexistence to subvert patriarchal society. Sycorax exemplifies the same mindset: her absence leads Prospero to sabotage his own patriarchy. Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford explain that, in the seventeenth century, women could twist the logic of patriarchy against itself by arguing that their lack of citizenship and rights excused them from society and its laws (Mendelson and Crawford 55). Women's vague identity, and their absence from a male-dominated power structure, could scare men and provide opportunities for subversion. In early modern England, then, patriarchy supported itself with concepts that undermined its existence. As in early modern England, Prospero's patriarchy becomes a dependent, self-contradicting system. Prospero turns Sycorax into a symbol for ideas that threaten his own patriarchy, especially maternal succession, a concept that would reverse the island's hierarchy and limit his power.

As Cixous explains, men categorize and define women through a network of gender differences. Gender determines the degree of one's power. At one end of the spectrum is Sycorax, the disempowered, demonized woman; at the other, Prospero, the ruling patriarch. Yet in early modern England, this logic categorizes women as representations of all that opposed men and evaded patriarchal society. In constructing Sycorax as his evil opposite, Prospero attempts to legitimize his patriarchy in contrast to her; however, as Prospero's evil opposite, Sycorax is a threat to Prospero's authority.

In *The Tempest*, gender is only one opposing force between Prospero and Sycorax. Gender combines with race to determine the degree of power each person holds. Many of today's critics view Prospero as an aggressive upholder of patriarchal and colonial power. Ania Loomba bluntly states that Prospero uses "language of misogyny as well as racism" (328). Both Loomba and Rachana Sachdev define Sycorax as black and claim that her racial identity colors her gender identity: "Therefore Prospero as colonialist consolidates power which is specifically white and male, and constructs Sycorax as a black, wayward and wicked witch in order to legitimize it" (Loomba 329). According to

Loomba, Sycorax's race and gender oppose Prospero's. While Sycorax is a woman, possibly of color, Prospero is a white patriarch who censures the rule of Sycorax.

Sycorax is not present to represent herself; therefore, Sycorax exists purely through secondhand accounts that Prospero edits into slander. There is no evidence or description of Sycorax besides Ariel's accounts and perhaps Caliban's vague, early memories; nevertheless, Prospero embellishes and constructs the story of Sycorax and proves to be the chief source for what the audience knows. Orgel too notes that, though Prospero learns about Sycorax from Ariel, he has Sycorax "insistently present in his memory" (4-5). He speaks Ariel's memories for him: "Imprisoned thou didst painfully remain / A dozen years; within which space she died" (1.2.279-80). Prospero tries to remind Ariel about Sycorax, suggesting or at least creating the possibility that he has added elements to the story originally unknown to Ariel: "Hast thou forgot / The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy / Was grown into a hoop? Hast thou forgot her?" (257-59). Then he commands again: "Once in a month recount what thou hast been, / Which thou forgett'st. This damned witch Sycorax" (263-64). Every month, Prospero must remind Ariel of his own memories. Oddly, Prospero repeatedly asks Ariel if he has forgotten the story he originally told Prospero. Prospero questions Ariel, trying to outline and embellish Sycorax's story as if Prospero knows best: "Where was she born? Speak. Tell me" (261), followed by "O, was she so?" (262) and "Is not this true?" (268). Prospero interrogates Ariel without waiting for him to respond, as if Prospero is the authority of the story. Prospero cannot remember more than Ariel, because he never met Sycorax. Yet Prospero retells Ariel's story back to Ariel. Prospero recounts Sycorax's story with an authority he lacks, making his account more of a construction.

Prospero lacks firsthand observation or concrete evidence about Sycorax; thus, Prospero constructs Sycorax as simply his opposite and tool. According to Loomba, Sycorax is Prospero's "other," which he constructs in order to "legitimize his takeover" (328). Because Prospero never saw Sycorax, his detailed descriptions of her are partly his construction, which he manipulates for his benefit. Thus, his retelling emphasizes her supposed evilness and, by contrast, his goodness. When he describes Sycorax's magic, he describes his abilities as more powerful

than hers. His is the magic that “Sycorax / Could not gain undo” (1.2.291-92). Prospero claims that Sycorax could never defeat his magic, and, to his convenience, she is not there to prove him wrong. Since Sycorax is absent, she becomes the platform for Prospero’s ideas of gender, and she highlights both his desire for power and his fear of losing that power.

Prospero constructs Sycorax as evil by projecting his anxieties about women and power onto her. Using Loomba’s “language of misogyny,” Prospero calls Sycorax a “foul witch,” “damned witch Sycorax,” and “hag” (1.2.258, 264, 270) in his first discussion of her. When describing the men who betrayed him, his words never reach this extreme, but he uses such language to describe a woman he never met. As Orgel argues, Prospero’s “memory” of Sycorax is utterly self-constructed yet oddly angers him. Orgel explains that for Prospero, Sycorax “embodies to an extreme degree all the negative assumptions about women” (5). He cannot mention her name without a sexist slur. He sometimes even omits her name and uses the slur instead, as if *witch* were synonymous with *Sycorax*. Prospero exchanges Sycorax’s name for sexist slurs because Sycorax is interchangeable with Prospero’s negative perception of women, and his insults are gendered. For Orgel, Prospero’s outbursts reveal anger about women’s potential power; contrastingly, Loomba explains Prospero’s anger as “anxiety” about Sycorax’s remaining power (328). Loomba and Orgel are both correct: Prospero is anxious about Sycorax because she symbolizes women in power, and that remains a fear for Prospero, whether he can consciously admit it or not.

In demonizing Sycorax and projecting his fears onto her, Prospero only creates her into something powerful enough to incite fear. Although constructed and absent, Sycorax is a serious threat, because Prospero names her a witch. Attempting to make her out to be as evil as possible, Prospero endows Sycorax with his greatest fear: losing his patriarchal power. In calling her a witch, Prospero reveals his anxiety about women, especially their potential power to challenge patriarchy. *Witch* was a common insult in early modern England and was usually directed towards women because women were believed to be “desirous of power” (Mendelson and Crawford 71). Gendered insults “built on specific fears.” Most of all *witch* meant the “mirror reversal of all that the patriarchy deemed good in a woman” (69). It was a name for women who threatened to upset the patriarchy. In calling Sycorax a witch, Prospero is identifying

her as a threat to patriarchy, and his anger shows that the threat is serious enough to enrage him. In trying to condemn Sycorax, Prospero shows that her power remains in a new form despite her absence. Prospero makes Sycorax into more than just anxiety.

As Prospero's self-constructed opposite, Sycorax is a symbol of all that undermines him. She is no longer a person, but a symbol of all that can question Prospero. Therefore, whenever someone combats Prospero, that person invokes Sycorax's name. Calling upon her perceived power to threaten patriarchy, Caliban uses his mother to curse Prospero, calling on "As wicked dew as e'er my mother brushed" to "Drop on you both!" (1.2.324-26) and "All the charms / Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!" (342-43). Caliban does not need to describe her or even recall her right to the island. Sycorax is such a powerful symbol that her name alone is a curse. She remains powerful in the minds of Caliban and Prospero as a symbol of all that opposes Prospero's beliefs and values.

Because Sycorax embodies Prospero's fears of powerful women, she is associated with ideas that oppose Prospero's beliefs and values — especially maternal succession, a concept that would reverse the island's hierarchy and limit Prospero's power. In the play, property rights are synonymous with the right to rule, and with the right to rule, one decides each inhabitant's personal rights. Critics like Loomba assert that Prospero's claim to the island is colonial. Moreover, it is also patriarchal because it dismisses matrilineal succession. While Prospero claims a Eurocentric, colonial right to the island, he also argues against inheritance through the mother.

Again using Sycorax as a symbol, Caliban calls upon her to combat Prospero and to argue for maternal succession. Caliban claims, "This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother, / Which thou tak'st from me" (1.2.334-35). In these lines, Caliban claims the island using only maternal succession to argue his point, although Caliban "could derive it [the island] from the mere fact of prior possession" (Orgel 5). Instead, Caliban invokes his mother to question Prospero's power: he claims to have inherited the island from his mother, and he assumes that this inheritance is legitimate. As Miranda's assailant, Caliban is not enlightened about gender; he also uses women as tools, so, in the same way that he assails Miranda, he invokes Sycorax's name in questioning Prospero's power. Symbolizing all ideas that oppose Prospero, Sycorax is

more threatening to Prospero than any other argument against him and his rule. Prospero responds by talking about Caliban's character, diverting the argument away from the possibility of matrilineal succession. Prospero's response reveals the potency of Caliban's argument: Prospero never addresses maternal succession but instead changes the subject to Caliban's behavior. Sycorax is Caliban's claim to the island, an alternative power play; through Sycorax, Caliban outlines the possibility of matrilineal succession and in the process questions Prospero's claim, which depends on conquest. If succession trumps conquest, matrilineal succession would invert the hierarchy of the island: Caliban as leader, Prospero as his follower, and Miranda inheriting nothing from her now-powerless father and dead mother. While Prospero dismisses matrilineal succession to legitimize his rule, Caliban uses Sycorax to subvert Prospero's claim. Sycorax establishes Caliban's argument for matrilineal succession, a concept that clashes with patriarchy and would overthrow Prospero. Sycorax is a threat because she is a symbol of a different power structure.

Sycorax subverts the ideology behind Prospero's patriarchy not only by matrilineal succession but also by her sexuality. Sycorax represents for Prospero an unfettered female sexuality that breaks the gender boundaries, threatening greater female autonomy. Sycorax represents an alternative to the chasteness that Prospero imposes on Miranda. Prospero's obsession with Miranda's sexuality demonstrates the value of chastity in a patriarchal society. With her chastity determining her future, Miranda is objectified and dependent. Prospero warns Ferdinand that if he "break her virgin-knot" before marriage, he will condemn the couple with "Sour-eyed disdain" and barrenness (4.1.15-20). Prospero obsessively protects Miranda's virginity, making it more important than her future happiness. Prospero's treatment of Miranda reinforces virginity as the key to a woman's value and future. Upon meeting Miranda, Ferdinand informs her and Prospero that he will make her "The Queen of Naples," but only "if a virgin" (1.2.451-53). Ferdinand's proposal wages Miranda's future on her virginity. Miranda's virginity is not her preference but a commodity that men may control or own. Because of the men's patriarchal views, Miranda is restricted in her sexuality, which is constrained by the men's desire for her virginity. Yet Sycorax exemplifies an alternative to the sexuality Prospero advocates.

While Prospero tries to align Miranda's sexuality with his values, his story of Sycorax only undermines these values. As Prospero's evil opposite, Sycorax symbolizes all of his negative assumptions about women; therefore, he constructs her sexuality in ways that oppose his patriarchal views on virginity. Sycorax is not alive to command, celebrate, or denounce Caliban's attempt to rape Miranda; however, the men's story of Sycorax lives, and it presents for its own benefit a view of sex and female sexuality in contradiction to the typical view of sexuality the men support. Sycorax becomes the "witch," the "blue-eyed hag [who] was hither brought with child" (1.2.264, 270), or, more accurately, the powerful female with an unfettered sexuality. According to Prospero, Sycorax arrives on the island pregnant and without any mention of a husband. Her pregnancy demands that she be seen as sexual, but the text offers no social context for her sexual activity. As Miranda must make a spectacle of marriage to legitimize her future sexual relationship with Ferdinand, the circumstances of Sycorax's pregnancy remain unmentioned. Thus, Prospero defines her as wretched regardless of the sort of sexual relationship — whether consensual, violent, spontaneous, or longstanding — that brought about Caliban's conception. Prospero, Ferdinand, and Caliban glorify virginity, but Sycorax symbolizes a woman who is powerful despite conceiving without being securely accounted for in the usual socially-sanctioned narratives. Sachdev argues that Sycorax sexually deviates from the European norm. Sachdev makes a valid point that Sycorax is "the deviant, powerful, 'monster-like' female," while Miranda is "a chaste, obedient, and dutiful daughter" (224). Sycorax is not only a "hag" but also "blue-eyed" (1.2.270), perhaps implying dark circles under the eyes believed to signal pregnancy.¹ Since Prospero tells the story, he demonizes Sycorax with words like "hag"; however, this only highlights her sexuality for all to see, including Miranda. Prospero's story accidentally portrays Sycorax as an independent woman who remains powerful after losing her virginity, whatever the circumstances of the sexual encounter.

In *The Tempest*, the concept of strong female power is problematic if one considers a female character's presence on stage as the only indicator of her influence. Although Sycorax exists only in the male characters' accounts of her, their idea of her affects their perception of power. While at one extreme Prospero enacts patriarchy, at the other

extreme Sycorax symbolizes everything that questions his patriarchal power. Prospero constructs Sycorax in contrast to himself, but he only exposes the contradictions of his patriarchy. Attempting to condemn Sycorax as a “witch” and a “whore,” Prospero instead creates the model of a powerful woman who breaks gender restrictions. Absent, Sycorax can exist as an idea, a contradiction that twists the logic of patriarchy against itself. As an idea, Sycorax is Prospero’s greatest enemy, an invisible assailant that is not physically present for him to defeat or appease. Because of Sycorax’s absence, she and Prospero become the extreme opposites of power and gender in *The Tempest*.

Notes

1. See Gerald Graff and James Phelan make this association between blue-eyedness and pregnancy in their footnotes. See William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Gerald Graff and James Phelan (Boston: Bedford/Martin's, 2000), 23.

Work Cited

- Cixous, Hélène. "The Newly Born Woman." 1975. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004. 348-354. Print.
- Loomba, Ania. "From *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*." *The Tempest*. Ed. Gerald Graff and James Phelan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 337-347. Print.
- Mendelson, Sara, and Patricia Crawford. *Women in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. Print.
- Orgel, Stephen. "Prospero's Wife." *Representations* 1.8 (Autumn, 1984): 1-13. JSTOR. Web. 8 March 2012.
- Rackin, Phyllis. "The Place(s) of Women in Shakespeare's World: Historical Fact and Feminist Interpretation." *Shakespeare and Women*. Ed. Phyllis Rackin. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. 26-47. Print.
- Rose, Mary Beth. "Where are the Mothers in Shakespeare? Options for Gender Representation in the English Renaissance." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42.3 (1991): 291-314. JSTOR. Web. 8 March 2012.
- Sachdev, Rachana. "Sycorax in Algiers: Cultural Politics and Gynecology in Early Modern England." *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*. Ed. Dymphna Callaghan. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. 208-225. Print.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. Ed. Gerald Graff and James Phelan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. Print.
- Thompson, Ann. "'Miranda, Where's Your Sister?'" Reading Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. *The Tempest*. Ed. Gerald Graff and James Phelan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 337-347. Print.