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SHAKESPEARE AND MODERN VERSIONS OF HIS PLAYS: VARIATIONS AND DEPARTURES

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Abstract. *The first part of this text attempts to clarify the criteria by which the 'betrayal' of Shakespeare by numerous, lovingly undertaken presentations of his work, can be distinguished from works in which, in spite of seemingly drastic modifications and departures, Shakespeare's conception of art continues to unfold, and to demonstrate its relevance. The Shakespeare, which true artists find impossible to overlook or betray, is the 'mythic' Shakespeare, analyzed at great length in Ted Hughes' Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being (1992), and evident, as Hughes claims, when Shakespeare, the familiar "realist psychologist and impersonator", is examined more closely. The second part of the text deals with the approaches to this 'mythic' Shakespeare in the works of the great modernists Eliot, Lawrence, and Joyce. The two sections represent an introduction to the study of modern versions of Shakespeare's plays inspired by the recognition and exploration of this 'mythic' bard. The analysis covers the works of Heiner Muller, Robert Wilson, Robert Lepage, Tom Stoppard, Arnold Wesker, John Herbert, Edward Bond, Howard Barker, Jean Anouilh, Eugene Ionesco, Pola Vogel, Ann-Marie MacDonald, and others.*

FOREWORD

I think it's difficult to teach anything and I think the learning process is a mystery. We don't know anything about it. At best we can encourage people.

Robert Wilson, from an interview published in
In Contact With the Gods? Directors Talk Theatre

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> **Beth**: This – this is my father. He's given up love. Love is dead for him. My mother is dead for him. Things live for him to be killed. Only death counts for him. Nothing else. This – This – This is me. This is me now. The way I am. ...I know – love. I know what love is. I can never forget. That. Never.
>
> Sam Shepard, *A Lie of the Mind,* Act II, Scene I

> In certain senses of the word 'love', Shakespeare is not so much our best as our only love poet.
>
> C. S. Lewis, *English Literautre in the Sixteenth Century*

I first taught Shakespeare in 1976. I was then a young teaching assistant expected to make the students familiar with the extant, academically approved approaches to his life and works. I remember how it was considered bold and irrelevant to mention, while discussing *Hamlet*, that some young writer had been inspired by it to write a piece called *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead.* Although I have enjoyed immensely reading what Shakespeare has meant to critics and scholars, I now stand firmly behind my decision to teach the course by presenting Shakespeare's works together with the modern plays, and other modern works of art they have inspired. This book is an attempt to explain why. Partly, it has to do with the growing realization that, more firmly than Matthew Arnold himself, I believe the important things the critics might have to say already exist, and are better perused, in the lines of the poets and the works of the artists. Partly it is because of the great number of students who have come up to say, after completing the course in this way, that it had entirely changed their understanding of themselves and of life. The courage and excitement with which they face the future, the joy with which they take up the task of thinking about, and exploring the experiences that lie ahead, have confirmed my second belief, that literature is an equipment for living, and that sharing with them what I believe will sustain them, is a kind of love. I hope that encountering it in Shakespeare, and in the classroom, will help them find the strength never to betray it, or give it up. For me, that is what Shakespeare, and Shepard, and for that matter all the other authors included in this study, are about.

INTRODUCTION I: THE SETTING

That Shakespeare is our contemporary has been stated and confirmed on numerous occasions throughout the twentieth century.[1] The most superficial (and suspect) yet obvious evidence of this recognition is the staggering number of stage and screen performances of his plays undertaken each year not only in the English speaking countries and Europe, but all the other parts of the globe as well. This can mean many different things, as the examiners of our cultural politics have shown in their compilation

[1] Jan Kott's 1965 study *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* was followed, in 1989, by a symposium *Is Shakespeare Still Our Contemporary?*, published by the International Association of Theatre Critics, with Introduction and notes by John Elsom (London: Routledge, 1990). Proceedings from a symposium *Shakespeare in the New Europe,* held in Sofia in May 1993, were published by Sheffield Academic Press in 1995. *Woza Shakespeare!* (Methuen, 1996) is about *Titus Andronicus* in South Africa today. Forty-four Shakespeare Summer Festivals are to be held in USA alone, according to the report in the May/June issue of American Theatre. And so on...

The Shakespeare Myth.[2] Still, when Shakespeare's 'popularity' is not fabricated to neutralize his subversiveness by reducing him to a show-biz commodity, it becomes clear that it is due to the fact that Shakespeare really 'works' today, under most diverse circumstances and in most unlikely ways and places. One worthy reminder of this are Joseph Papp's enthusiastic free performances of Shakespeare's plays in the ghettos of New York, out of which, in 1954, the now famous New York Shakespeare Festival grew[3].

Papp believed in Shakespeare because he believed in the power the language of his plays gives the individual. Regardless of the success or failure of Papp's specific theatrical ventures, fundamentally his insight into Shakespeare was right. It was right (and this is where the underlying assumptions of this study come to light) because his goal was not simply to translate into marketable visual representations the plots of Shakespeare's plays but to demonstrate, by making visible and comprehensible through enactment, Shakespeare's belief in and justification of art. Shakespeare could have remained an entrepreneur, and played in and directed other people's plays only. What meaning did he see in the act of undertaking to write his own? Doing so, out of the common English tongue, in the configurations of language that he used, he opened doors to new insights and created spaces where thought could move in ways previiously not deemed possible. The plays are not about the plots they use (the plots themselves were old stories taken over from other authors and generally familiar); they question what within those old familiar plots continues to remain unfathomable; they seek for ways escapes from old destructive plots might be effected; they are about what we do to the innate power, freedom, and creativity of mind.

Joseph Papp's free performances of Shakespeare in the streets of New York were, therefore, a deeply political act. They were Papp's way of joining Shakespeare in the fight against powers which impoverish minds, block development and destroy life, and which remain unresisted largely because unrecognized. Shakespeare and Papp understood art to be the activity through which such recognition and resistance become possible. Dedicated to, and inspired by the liberating power of Shakespeare's works, Papp's performances, improvised in the street or Central Park, were probably more truly Shakespearean than any number of pedantically and superficially faithful renderings of the plays mounted in the various meticulously reconstructed modern versions of the Globe.[4]

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[2] *The Shakespeare Myth*, ed. Graham Holderness (Manchester University Press, 1988)

[3] In her biography of Joseph Papp, *Joe Papp: An American Life* (New York: Brown and Co., 1994) Helen Epstein writes: "His brothers and sisters, wives and buddies, friends and professional colleague all recalled that Papp had always slipped into Shakespeare the way other people slipped into Yiddish, Spanish or French". A wonderful account of Papp's work in context is provided by Joseph Wesley Zeigler's *Regional Theatre: The Revolutionary Stage* (New York: De Capo Press, 1977). In Chapter 13, "The Storming of the Citadel: The Theatres Go to New York", outlining, on pp. 227-233, the rise of the New York Shakespeare Festival, he writes: "Popularization of the theatre for him was not a 'white man's burden' or something pursued on a grant from some foundation.; rather it flowed out of his own being, not as a fashionable experiment but as the essence of his approach to theatre. ...Papp remained an outsider. He was not legitimized by the Ford Foundation support. He was not homogenized by Theatre Communications Group. He was neither pigeonholed by the movement's overstructuring nor haunted by its malaise. He shared its dream, but he lived outside its rules". He was fired by CBS television from his stage manager's job when he refused to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee, and practiced minority casting when others dared not, because he believed that the theatre can stand as a symbol, *become* the reality he believed in, and not be a place of tokenism and abstractions.

[4] The Winter 1995 issue of *Canadian Theatre Review* carried an article "Shakespeare at The Globe in Tokyo: A

My emphasis in this study on the activity of thought out of which the plays of Shakespeare arise, puts me in close proximity to the American poet and playwright Amiri Baraka. In the meditation on the nature of art in his essay "Hunting Is Not Those Heads on the Wall" Baraka writes:

> Thought is more important than art. Without thought, art could certainly not exist. Art is one of many products of thought. An impressive one, perhaps the most impressive one, but to revere art and have no understanding of the process that forces it into existence, is finally not even to understand what art is. ...Art is like speech, for instance, in that it is at the end, and a shadowy replica of another operation, thought. And even to name something, is to wait for it in the place you think it will pass.[5]

Baraca found it necessary to draw this distinction because, as he observed, "the academic Western mind is the best example of the substitution of artifact worship for the lightning awareness of the art process. ...The academician, the aesthete, are like deists whose specific corruption of mysticism is to worship things, thinking that they are God (thought, process) too". I find the distinction useful because it explains the betrayal of Shakespeare in many of the events staged in his honour and associated with his name. Shakespeare in the twentieth century is to be found in those processes in which the quality and the liberating power of Shakespeare's thought exist today. Often these are entirely missing from the stage and screen versions of his plays which strive to be faithful to all the inessential aspects of his drama but fail to even try to fathom the thought, Shakespeare's *why,* behind them. They are Baraka's decorative trophies on the wall, the living power of Shakespeare remaining somewhere else.

In another text, a "State/Meant" on the Black Artist's role in America, Baraka's words, again, describe quite adequately what, in most general terms, I take to be a Shakespearean project. When he writes that "the Black Artist must demonstrate sweet life, how it differs from the deathly grip of the White Eyes" and that "the Black Artist must teach the White Eyes their deaths, and teach the black man how to bring these deaths about" the change in the way of seeing that he calls for is the symbolical death and transfiguration central to Shakespeare's oeuvre. It is this ability to see things feelingly that Shakespeare forces his unwise white patriarchs to suffer for, and learn. Baraka is too intelligent to make the mistake certain feminist freedom-fighters are making and think that all white males (Shakespeare included) automatically, and with no sense of discomfort or disease, see the world through the White Eyes of Western patriarchy. Many Dead White Males[6] understood how deeply crippling the white logocentric phalocentric

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Crossroad of World Theatre", by Takahagi Hiroshi, who has been with the theatre since its opening in April 1988. Among other things Hiroshi writes: "Architect Isozaki Arata made every effort to design a reconstruction of the original Globe Theatre, basing his plans on contemporary records - De Witt's drawings of the Swan and the Fortune contract". The reconstructed London Globe opened in 1997. A Web-sight, checked for the activities of Papp's Public Theatre on August 10, 1998, showed a Shakespeare lab in progress at the Delacorte Theatre in Central Park, and "Free at Three: Shakespeare in Harlem" program, scheduled to begin on August 16th.

[5] Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoy Jones), from *Home: Social Essays* (1964), reprinted in *The Poetics of the New American Poetry,* eds. Donald Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 1973), pp. 378-383.

[6] *Dead White Males,* a play by Australia's most popular contemporary playwright David Williamson, premiered in Sydney in the spring of 1995. The press clippings inform us that a university student Angela is forced to choose between her love of canonical literature, personified by Shakespeare, and post-structuralist theories that denounce Shakespeare and the canon as the instruments of the dominant ideology. Her professor endorses the

view of the world was, and tried what they could to challenge it. Slavery, discrimination and other life-denying passions and practices which concern Baraka concerned Shakespeare as well, who, as an artist, saw clearly, throughout the history of Western Civilization, the spoiled lives of many victims, and not the blacks only. So, the Black Artist's role in America, as Baraka defines it, is not different from Shakespeare's role, or the role of any artist capable of serious involvement with his world: "...to report and reflect so precisely the nature of the society, and of himself in that society, that other men will be moved by the exactness of his rendering and, if they are black men (victims), grow strong through this moving, having seen their own strength, and weakness; and if they are white men (victimizers), tremble, curse and go mad, because they will be drenched with the filth of their evil." [7] These are the motives behind Baraca's plays and poems. Hamlet, ordering a performance, or Shakespeare writing his own plays, had the same goals in mind.

* * *

The value of allowing this extended concept of a true-artist-as-a-Shakespearean to operate was made evident to me during the *Words: theatre-dialogue* seminar I attended in Copenhagen in November of 1996. That year the city was the cultural capital of Europe and the seminar was planned for that occasion. All the guest performances (Needcompany's performance of Jan Lauwer's *Snakesong,* The Wrestling School's performance of Howard Barker's *(Uncle) Vanya*, Gilla Cramer's solo performance *Die Kommandeuse,* and The Theatre Garage Company's performance of Mou Sen's play *The Hospital*) were excellent and qualified as 'Shakespearean' by the seriousness of the problems they addressed and the uniqueness and rightness of their formal approaches. Surprisingly, amid this excellence, the performance from China was the most 'Shakespearean'.

Quite in line with Ted Hughes' interpretation of Shakespeare[8] which I take as the starting point of my own study, the first three plays centered on the rejection and destruction of the feminine which, according to Hughes, Shakespeare diagnosed as the cause of the tragic course of our civilization. In Needcompany's work this was most unforgettably presented through the incorporated Salome/John the Baptist dialogue from Oscar Wilde's eponimous play; Gilla Cremer's performance was a study of the Lady Macbeth-like transformation of the woman Ilse Koch into the life-destroying careerist Kommandeuse of Buchenwald; in Howard Barker's version of Chekhov, Ivan murders Helena. Mou Sen's *The Hospital,* however, even if the author may not in any way have consciously intended it, I saw as an exciting new version of *Hamlet.*

Against the black backdrop of the Kanonhallen theatre, above the stage, a huge x-ray of a dislocated joint was seen. Indeed, a very adequate visual reminder not only of the actual setting of the play - the hospital, but also of Mou Sen's country, China, out of joint with its past, crippled in its effort to set itself right and create a satisfying future. Two

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second view, and sees Shakespeare as a chauvinist pig, the deadest of the dead white males whose time has come to retire from cultural rule. However, in his efforts to liberate his students he adopts the same methods of suppression used by the dominant ideologies he is attacking, thus discrediting himself and undermining his own socialist feminist multiculturalsit project.

[7] Baraka, op. cit. inerpolated parenthesis are mine.

[8] The Hughes, *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being* (London: Faber & Faber, 1992).

more visual effects increased the eloquence of the performance. A cage with three huge brilliantly white rabbits was brought onto the stage. Within seconds it was clear that one was male, since quite hysterically, driven by sexual compulsion, he chased and accosted the other two. When towards the middle of the performance a much larger cage with a number of like compartments was wheeled onto the stage, the power of the metaphor grew as it became obvious that in unfree conditions even the natural creativity of sex becomes perverted: the desolate neurotic mating of the caged animals began to look very much like a precise reflection of what goes on, invisibly, in similar confined spaces within which human beings have to spend their thwarted lives. At the end of the performance the walls of the cage were lifted but the rabbits, all but one, remained in their place. The horror of a life where freedom may become completely forgotten, unidentifiable because trained out of mind and memory, was to me again Shakespearean, since it is out of such mental rabbit cages the Rosencrant and Guildensterns of today come. The last visual aid Mou Sen used in his performance were TV sets, flanking the stage and turned to Chinese TV programs. They were interrupted by commercials where it was painfully funny to see Chinese women, poor Ophelias, jig, amble, lisp and nickname various detergents the way American housewives in American TV commercials do.[9] By coercion or seduction[10], cage or TV set, the idea conveyed was of individual life stolen and, as Adrian Mitchell rightly observed, replaced with the ideal of living exclusively "for the good of the firm".[11]

Out of this state of things, in *The Hospital,*[12] eleven voices were heard, eleven soliloquies. The only action in the play was the activity of thought by which the characters on the stage strove to make sense of their lives: deaths of fathers, loss of brothers, professional fortunes and disappointments, the need to write, political massacres, grief over a tree felled, a woman killed by negligence at childbirth. They did nothing except speak, that is - think. Again I was made to think of *Hamlet.* In Act II, scene 2 of the play, when Rosencrantz and Guildenstern claim they do not see Denmark as a prison, Hamlet replies "Why, then 'tis not to you, for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." Mou Sen desired his characters (and his viewers) to become capable of the quality of thought that would makes the recognition of invisible

[9] The ease with which instant solutions to life's problems are being offered on television is appalling. Recent addition to the magic dusters and miracle scrub-pads on Yugoslav television is a cleansing creme *Astonish.* When the Australian Nobel Prize winner Patric White asked what he considered to be the most important question "Are you for magic?" (to continue to say for himself, in "*The Burning Piano"*, Jim Sharman's 1993 documentary, "I am. Inadmissible when you are taught to believe in science or nothing. Nothing is better. Science may explode in our faces. So, I am for magic. For dreams. For love."), already, for millions, the meaning of the word was inextricably bound to the trivia they were daily asked to find marvelous and admire.

[10] In his 1955 lecture "Freud: Within and Beyond Culture", collected in *Beyond Culture* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966) Lionel Trilling used the terms *coercion* and *secudtion* to describe methods used to make the individual's defenses against the domination of culture weaker. He wrote: "We do not need to have a profound quarrel with American culture to feel uneasy because our defenses against it, our modes of escape from it, are becoming less and less adequate. We can scarcely fail to recognize how open and available to the general culture the individual becomes, how little protected he is by countervailing cultural forces". He liked Freud because Freud believed that there is in us a stubborn core of biological urgency that reserves the right, and exercises the right to judge the culture and resist and revise it. Ultimately, Mou Sen also believes that the loss of this power of discrimination can be prevented.

[11] Adrian Mitchell's poem "Time and Motion Study", published in *Worlds: Seven Modern Poets*, ed. Geoffrey Summerfield (Penguin, 1974), p. 206.

[12] Simultaneous translation from Chinese was provided, but the audience were provided with copies of the text as well.

moral and ideological prisons possible. Hamlet is the hero of Shakespeare's play because Shakespeare makes us see him think, just as he makes us see the others merely follow and obey- instructions, orders, 'traditions'.

In an interview published in the *Words: theatre-dialogue* brochure, Mou Sen spoke admiringly of Chekhov, the doctor-playwright.[13] Like Chekhov, he says he desires to use his art to increase his audience's ability to see how even in the most inconspicuous moments of their lives, when nothing seems to be going on because they are "for instance, having a meal at the table, just having a meal"[14] their happiness may be created or their lives smashed up. Chekhov's plays, (greatly affected by Shakespeare, as I proceed to show in the next chapter) are powerful not because of any single thing that any single character says or does, regardless of how memorable their actions or words may be. The plays achieve their full impact as wholes, as complex dramatic structures, mandalas[15], that alter awareness through the viewers' growing comprehension of the depth and relevance of situations frequently dismissed from thought as undramatic and 'ordinary'. The point of the revisionist maneuvers of these plays is to sharpen focus on these situations, alter vision, involve the players and viewers in the necessary readjustments of their sense of responsibility. Although Shakespeare did not posses a medical degree Chekhov found him inspiring because he recognized how deeply concerned with the health of this civilization he was. He tried to point out its weaknesses, diagnose what poisoned it, and made it rotten, all in the hope that life within it could be, lived and celebrated, rather than wasted and mourned. By sharing this special strategy of yes-saying, beyond barriers of time, nation, religion or race, Shakespeare, Chekhov, Mou Sen and Baraka are one.

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[13] On pp. 18-19 of that publication, Mou Sen says: "*The Hospital* is supposed to show life in a Chinese hospital, i.e. actually it was supposed to convey the atmosphere that can be found in Chekhov's plays. By analogy with Chekhov, I intended to call the play *The Cherry Orchard* in the beginning, even though it has nothing in common with the plot of this play or any other of Chekhov's plays. As I said, I was interested in the atmosphere". The Fall 1996 issue of *Canadian Theatre Review*, covering the proceedings of the festival and symposium "Surviving in the Ice Age", held in Manitoba that May, included Mou Sen in its survey of the "survivors". His performance *File Zero* (based on a documentary poem by an avant-garde poet, Mou's classmate), had toured Canada in the summer of 1995. Denis Salter, who reviewed the performance for CTR ("Survival in China - Open Secrets: Mou Sen's File Zero", pp. 44-48), speaks of its "stylistic mixture of documentary realism and symbolical stage-images guaranteed to make it controversial". He sees the closing moments of the play as a visual parable representing not just Tiananmen Square (the most obvious interpretation), but any incident, in China and elsewhere, in which people destroy – and are in turn destroyed by – technologies of oppression".

[14] At the time *Ivanov* was written Chekhov told his friends that theatre should "Show life and men as they are, and not as they would look if you put them on stilts". He insisted that things that happen on the stage should be as complex and yet as simple as they are in life. The quotation in the text is from the "Introduction" (written by the translator Elisaveta Fen) of Chekhov's *Plays,* published in the Penguin Classics series, p. 19.

[15] In his conversations with Bill Moyers, recorded in 1985-86, one year before his death, Joseph Campbell (who, besides teaching and writing, found time to be the founder of the New York based Theatre of the Open Eye, as well) said: "Mandala is the Sanskrit word for 'circle', but circle that is coordinated or symbolically designed so that it has the meaning of a cosmic order. ...In working out a mandala for yourself, you draw a circle and then think of the different impulse systems and value systems in your life. Then you compose them and try to find out where your center is. Making a mandala is a discipline for pulling all those scattered aspects of your life together, for finding a center and ordering yourself to it. You try to coordinate your circle with the universal circle". Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth,* ed. Betty Sue Flowers (New York: Doubleday, 1988) p. 216-217.

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When I spoke of the surprising ways in which Shakespeare can be found to 'work' today I also had in mind two presentations I witnessed recently, during the *Playing Shakespeare in European Theatre Schools* symposium, organized by the *Concepts* consortium, (member of the European Council's Forum of Cultural Networks) and held in Belgrade in the last week of April, 1996.[16] One presentation, a wonderful rendering of *Love's Labor's Lost* by the students of the Bulgarian Faculty of Dramatic Arts, dropped the words of the play altogether but remained faithful to the thoughts by translating their intention into action perfectly. The other was a very surprising (although not unique) reaction to Shakespeare from England, presented by a group of young women from De Montfort University in Leicester. In their case especially memorable was their rendering of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Both demonstrated the surprising ways in which the release of the power and subversiveness of Shakespeare's thought can occur.

The Bulgarian boys read the scene on which they were supposed to work *(Love's Labour's Lost,* Act I, Scene 2.) as a juxtaposition of two concepts of power between which a growing man, preparing himself to take his place in the world, has to choose. Patriarchal ideology has rejected love because love for a woman awakens passions and powers quite different from those required to make men politicians, or warriors. Boys are taught not to succumb to this weakness and are alerted to its dangers by the cautionary tales of Samson, Solomon, Hercules.[17] Shakespeare's play, of course, challenges this ideology and its teachers by making the young men in the play, and hopefully those in the audience, find reasons to reject conformity and opt for the forbidden.

Lined up in a row, the Bulgarian boys moved slowly through the smoke-filled atmosphere on the stage (reinforced with the sound of Elvis Presley's *Love me tender, love me true)* in the direction of their fated encounter with Love. It was represented by Ivan, a very handsome young man in a short girl's smock, seated, smoking seductively, almost in the wings, stage right. As they came up to him, the boys kissed him on the mouth and thus caught the 'infection'. In the next scene, the same boys stood behind a row of chairs facing the audience. Each was expected to take his place in society, each had an appointed seat to fill. Yet, when those who have inhaled love try to proceed with their conventionally planned 'normal' lives, they find it impossible to do so. The boys that held on to the backs of the chairs they were expected to ease themselves in obediently, trembled visibly. The conflict on their faces was prolonged and agonizing until, one by one, they lifted their locks and, with fingers used as imaginary scissors, cut their own hair off. We saw them, in this comic resolution of the scene, *choosing* to be Samsons, to be lovers, declaring that the power of love made them men and human, at the same time that it unmade and displaced the other types of power passed on and legitimized by patriarchy.

The Bulgarian boys were directed by a beautiful and talented student Lilija Abadzijeva. The performance of the Leicester girls, although they too were coached by a

[16] The participants of the *Playing Shakespeare in European Theatre Schools* were students and teachers from De Montfort University, Leicester, UK; Utrecht School of Art, Netherlands; National Academy of Theatre and Film, Sofia, Bulgaria; Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Skopje, Macedonia; Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade, Yugoslavia; Department of Drama, Cetinje, Yugoslavia. The FDA Professor Vladimir Jevtović was the Belgrade host, and the main driving force behind this event.

[17] Act I, scene 2 of *Love's Labor's Lost,* especially Armado's closing thoughts.

woman, Tersa Bradshaw, was preceded by the introductory remarks of Noel Witts,[18] the head of *Concepts,* and one of the associate editors of the recently founded *Performance Research* journal. He said that the English find Shakespeare's language impossibly difficult today, and that foreigners, who read the plays translated into modern speech have an enormous advantage because Shakespeare's obscurities and archaisms are clarified for them by the translators. This complaint was voiced earlier on in the year by Clive Barker[19] who claimed that school children in England hate Shakespeare for the same reason Noel Witts had indicated, and that he managed to make a few classes happy by supplementing the texts with practical activities, such as teaching the pupils how to make the sails billow and improvise the storm in *Othello,* or adding fencing lessons to *Hamlet.*

The Leicester girls took up this complaint and said that they did not even bother to read the whole plays from which the scenes were taken. They did not understand the language and refused to waste their time on the glossaries. All they did was try to make sense of the lines the task required. Surprisingly enough, they came up with some interesting results. The Armado/Moth exchange from Act One, Scene Two of *Love's Labour's Lost* was reduced to its fundamental architectonics[20]- struggle for supremacy between "tough seniors" and "tender juvenals". Three positions were marked on the stage, one (the desirable) being the point both parties of the argument tried to reach and hold. The few words from the text (to which they had reduced the scene, and which the actors spoke repeatedly) made visible what Shakespeare's complex verbal play in that scene was really about: taking up positions of authority and manoeuvering for power. There was a lot of running and shuffling on the stage!

In the second exercise, with the help of a large projection screen from which a young man copied and rehearsed instructions how to deal with women, they turned the first meeting between Petruchio and Katharina, in Act II Scene 1, of *The Taming of the Shrew,* into a visual deconstruction of patriarchy. They showed it to be a persistent transmission and application of the imperative mode, rehearsed to be used against women in such a way that, while outwardly seeming a good-natured invitation, it was always to be an inexorable command.

Although the presentations I have described were only student exercises, they were powerful because they approached Shakespeare exploratively, quested for meaning and

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[18] Noel Witts teaches in the Department of Performing Arts at De Montfort University . The *Performance Research* is published by Routledge.

[19] Clive Barker, the former editor of the *New Theatre Quartely,* visited the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in the last week of October 1995. At the close of his stay, he gave a wonderful lecture in the British Council Library in Belgrade. The topic was the state of British theatre today. In this context, among other things, he talked of the growing Shakespeare industry, and the problems related to reading and producing the Bard.

[20] The work of the Leicester group had some points in common with Robert Wilson's approach to the theatre. Here are some relevant observations about his work made in the interview published in *In Contact With the Gods? Directors Talk Theatre,* eds. M. Delgado & P. Heritage (Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 303-308: "His work constantly challenges the idolatry of the word, providing a disjunction of word and image, so that the visual does not function as a mere illustration of the spoken text. Although the majority of Western directors still use the production as a means of 'illustrating' the play text, he is looking for a visual language that parallels the text that has to be spoken or sung. When he prepares a work he makes drawings and diagrams. He makes a form in the structure, and then fills it in more intuitively. For him theatre is an architectural arrangement in time and space. He insists that "its the same if you have an actor or don't have an actor. A light moves or a prop moves and it's timing, it's a construction in time and space. And that's what I think is the architecture, the construction of anything, whether it's Mozart, or Wagner or Shakespeare".

did not merely reproduce the plots. They made me think of Aldous Huxley who, in the *Introduction* to his *Texts & Pretexts,* said this about the way the poet (the artist, the maker) acquires the experience he shapes into art:

> Experience is not a matter of having actually swum the Hellespont, or danced with the dervishes, or slept in a doss-house. It is a matter of sensibility and intuition, of seeing and hearing the significant things, of paying attention at the right moments, of understanding and co-ordinating. Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him. It is a gift for dealing with the accidents of existence, not the accidents themselves.[21]

If Shakespeare possessed both this gift of experience and expression, the young players of Shakespeare, gathered at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade, worked in the true spirit of the master: they engaged their sensibility and intuition, tried to see and hear significant things, paid attention, understood, coordinated. In their own unique ways they tried to deal with what they were experiencing. The Belgrade exercises demonstrated that, if the thinking about the meaning of Shakespeare is profound, in the presentation of the results, in the shaping of the performance, the text of the plays can be used in full, or reduced to a few powerfully employed key phrases, or even completely absorbed and transformed into some entirely new, wordless mode of performance, and still produce encounters that enlarge, enliven and enlighten us, as Peter Shaffer knew they could.[22]

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Sometimes even performances thrown off balance bring into sudden prominence details in Shakespeare not previously experienced as central for the meaning of the plays. An instance of this happened during a production of *Midsummer Night's Dream* by a graduating class of FDU acting students, in April, 1997. A talented but undisciplined student, playing Bottom, found the temptation to steel the show irresistible. In the scenes with the hole in the wall, in Act five, his acting was so brilliant that it made all the other excellencies of the play (even his own acting in other scenes) forgettable: all of a sudden Pyramus and Thisbe's wall, "that had in it a crannied hole or chink", became the key to the understanding not only of the play but of Shakespeare's art in general. In the closing sequence, when Theseus comments that only Moonshine and Lion have remained, and the Wall, Bottom replies: "No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers". All of Shakespeare's plays, at that moment, became that hole in the wall, that space where love remains possible in a loveless world, and art - the effort that 'brings down' the lies of the mind that poison relationships and separate (or segregate) Othello from Desdemona, Jew from Christian, parent from child, lover from the beloved, human from the animal, mechanic from King, reason from imagination, dream from 'reality'. There was

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[21] Aldous Huxley, "Introduction*", Texts and Pretexts,* (London: Chato & Windus, 1932), p. 12.

[22] In Peter Shaffer's play *Lettice and Lovage* (Penguin, 1987), in Act I, Scene 2, Lettice speaks of her mother, a Shakespearean artist, who ran a touring company of players, 'Les Barbares', made up entirely of women, trained by her to speak Shakespeare thrillingly in the French tongue. They performed the history plays of Shakespeare only (in her translation), because history was her great passion. Her other passion was language, because, she used to say to Lettice, 'Language alone frees one'. The three Es (enlarge, enliven, enlighten) summed up what this remarkable woman thought human intercourse should accomplish.

something in Shakespeare that, as the poem by Robert Frost stated centuries later, "did not love a wall". Like Frost, Shakespeare dreaded the darkness in which move sons who will not go behind their father's saying, "Good fences make good neighbors". His midsummer-night's dream was a dream of a state of mind beyond mental and physical barriers and aphartheids, where all forbidden marriages, meetings and unions *do* happen, discords pass, and celebrations of complex unities take place.

Sadly enough, throughout the twentieth century, walls of visible and invisible hate have continued to fall and rise incessantly: In Yugoslavia, torn to pieces by the worst kind of ethnic, religious and political nightmares, there were several productions that saw the *Dream* in this light, as a play of great political relevance. But the *Dream* has political relevance for others as well. Even in countries which boast of being open societies, just and free of mental prejudices of any kind, the young keep looking for the *Doors.* When political activism, music, consciousness expanding drugs (in the sixties) and Prosac and Ecstasy (today) fail to get them "to the other side", to love, they die, not however as the lovers in Shakespeare did (preserving the love they had, saving their dream-come-true from contamination and corruption of political reality), but alone, empty-handed, sex-crazed and unfulfilled. The culture that in the twentieth century produced Auschwitz, is *not* a place where "everything that lives is holy", and not a place where "life delights in life". Their frequent self-inflicted deaths prove that they still possess the power of discrimination and know that what they are offered by their culture is a lie, a perversion of life. Chekhov felt the same about the middle-class life in Russia of his own time, and used the 'revolver shot' in his plays when characters, unable to find constructive resolutions for their cultural discontents, choose to die. He, however, hated to do so because he loved life and kept hoping that if the memory, dream, or intuition of authentically fulfilling and creative existence is not extinguished, living our dreams, rather than dying for them, might ultimately become possible.

* * *

Other examples of how we mean by Shakespeare, as Terence Hawks has astutely observed [23], are being generated daily. For instance, a recent Australian film, *Lillian's Story,* was inspired by the life of a girl who was raped and confined to a lunatic asylum by her father. The only thing that kept her sane, through over forty years of incarceration, was Shakespeare. In his works, which she came to know by heart, she managed to find ways to deal with her predicament and mentally transcend her unjust and cruel confinement. The lines she recited in her Shakespearean 'madness', when confronted with the so called normal, sane world into which she was ultimately released, reminded one of Aldous Huxley and John Savage's Shakespearean tirades in *Brave New World*. Lillian's story, however, was not a fiction fabricated to reveal poetic truth, but a true story, a life really lived in a Shakespearean fashion.

[23] Terence Hawkes, *Meaning by Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 1992). On p. 3. Hawkes writes: "Suppose we have no access to any 'essential' meaning nestling within Shakespeare's texts and awaiting our discovery. Then what can their purpose be? If they do not transmit the meaning intended and embodied within them by their author, what on earth do Shakespeare's plays do? How do they work? And what are they *for*? ...For us, the plays have the same function as, and work like, the words of which they are made. We *use* them in order to generate meaning. In the twentieth century, Shakespeare's plays have become one of the central agencies through which our culture performs this operation. That is what they do, that is how they work, and that is what they are for. Shakespeare doesn't mean: *we* mean by Shakespeare".

In Alan Bennett's recent stage and screen version of the life of George III, the King regains his regal sanity in a like manner. During a group reading of *King Lear* in the asylum, he suddenly sees why the others think him mad. He had been too spontaneous and natural: in a world where hypocrisy is expected, he had forgotten "to seem".

In Japan, in 1992, a Noh master Matisui Akira worked with the Kyoto-based NOHO theatre group on a production of *Ophelia.* The performance was shown in America during the Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Shakespeare Festival. The link between Shakespeare and Noh was found in the fact that one of the five categories of the Noh repertoire consists of "passive" tragedies about women who have done no evil, but who are driven to madness by lost love. In the NOHO version of Shakespeare's play, set in the graveyard of Elsinore, "Ophelia's ghost appears and tells her story, sifting through shards of memory in order to attain the understanding that will dispel her nightmares and let her sleep peacefully at last."[24] In London, on the Fringe, in May 1995, the Jermyn Street Theatre presented a double-bill in which, besides the Flying Spinsters' *Sexing the Woolf* (an hour in the life of Virginia Woolf seen through the eyes of a drowning woman) the Stagefright Theatre Company did *All Cut up: or How Five Great Women Kept Ophelia Afloat*.

But, there are other types of Shakespearean presentations as well. In Australia, Monash Shakespeare Society's produced *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in g-strings which, according to an article in the 1996 issue of *The Scene*, Monash University performing and visual arts magazine, "quickly found favour with Melbourne audiences". The director, Scott Crozier (whose promotional CD-ROM was declared pornographic by the Singapore customs, forcing him, for export purposes, to clad his near naked fairies in g-strings and very brief bike shorts) had this to say about his reading of the play:

> The production is meant to be sensual, it's meant to be hot and sweaty, because that's the nature of the play in my view. Shakespeare has released adolescent lovers into what is supposed to be a pastorally romantic forest inhabited by immoral amortals. They are out of Athens, away from the laws which restrict them, and without those laws we tend to drift to the type of amorality we see in *Lord of the Flies.* These sinister elements are often downplayed because of the social mores foisted on us from the Victorian era, when the play was clogged with tulled fairies and Mendelsshon's music.[25]

For him, he continues in the same interview, the play is not about ethereal notions of love, but about sex. "It's about the terror of finding yourself on the borders of sexual maturity in a world free of parental restrictions. All the dreams of anticipation and expectation become a nightmare in reality."

Back in Britain, in 1996, as part of the activities celebrating four decades of its existence, National Youth Theatre staged *A plague on both your houses.* The program note described the performance as "an adaptation of Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare's most romantic play. If we ignore the violence, if we ignore what happened to Romeo's last beloved Rosaline, if we find a nineteen year old man who seduces a thirteen year old girl acceptable, if we can call killing yourself romantic. If we don't, it's just a cynical tale

[24] A report on the American premiere of this performance at Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Shakespeare Festival was published in American Theatre, in June 1992.

[25] Gary Sponk, "Shakespeare in g-strings", *The Scene: Monash university performing and visual arts magazine,* Issue two, 1996, p. 13.

of teenage sex and suicide. Someone call Juliette Lewis". In Canada, Ann-Marie Macdonald's play *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* won the Governor General's award for drama in 1990, not for exposing the romantic as the cynical but for reworking the tragic into comedy.

Frequently in such Shakespeare-inspired events Shakespeare is betrayed fundamentally, not because he is re-told through inaccessible or unacceptable formal experiments, but because the bold formal re-telling displays inadequate, lame re-thinking. Theatre director Peter Sellars, himself a highly experimental artist, discovered this prerequisite for doing Shakespeare during his studies at Harvard. There he founded the Explosives B cabaret, where new plays were done every two weeks, and where he had a chance to work on Mrozek, Gertrude Stein, Aeshcylus, Handke, and Ibsen. There he also started working on condensed Shakespeare, by doing *Macbeth* with three actors. When asked to explain why he wanted to manipulate the text like that he said:

> Because I wanted to get another way of reading the text. I wanted to remove the received associations that we have of that play – of all of the Shakespeare plays. You see, I've never really believed in plot that firmly because a play is about content. It's not about the story. Plot is the hook on which the playwright hangs what interests him. By entirely removing the plot I wanted to treat the play line by line, literally, for "what does it mean?" In America we are totally at the mercy of the plot. Everything is the synopsis.[26]

After Shakespeare, the second major influence on Sellars was Chekhov. Sellars always directs newly translated version of plays not originally written in English because the work he had done on Shakespeare had taught him how carefully the language of each author has to be studied and understood. For a director, the most important discoveries lie there: how "the grammar connects to the character, how the deep sentence structure connects to the way the character's mind is functioning".[27] Directoral concepts can take wing only after deepest possible inquiries along these lines have been carried out.

Another director, Garland Wright found that his own development proceeded along similar lines. Commenting on his work as the artistic director of Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, he had this to say about his link with Shakespeare*:*

> *Hamlet* is a play I've always said I don't want to do... Then one day I woke up and said, "Oh, I get it. *Hamlet* is a play about me not wanting to direct *Hamlet*." The day I decided to do *Hamlet* was the day I began to locate what the interior of the play was from a personal place. It's a play about all those questions that every human being asks himself. So it started becoming personally important, which had never happened before. *Hamlet* had always been that sort of play you were supposed to do because it's the most difficult ever written (though I suggest *Lear* is the most difficult). And that never seemed reason enough for me to direct it. But now that I can feel a way in which my own thought and feelings can reverberate,

[26] From an interview with Peter Sellars published in *The Director's Voice: Twenty-one Interviews*, ed. Arthur Bartow, (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1988), p. 273.
[27] Ibid.

I'm fascinated with it.[28]

In line with this discovery, he now prefers actors who are very smart and who want to transform, who don't have to say, "Hamlet's a guy just like me," but who want to *find out* who Hamlet is and become/transform into that character.

As developing artists, both Sellars and Wright instinctively reacted to the two ways Shakespeare is most frequently debased- by being reduced to the plot, with no understanding of what Shakespeare wanted to hang on that hook; or by being used as the illustrator, or justifier of what we are, rather than the examiner and problematizer of the process by which we found our identity. This debasement is visible, for example, when the production of *Othello* (another Shakespeare at the National Youth Theatre in 1996) is declared to be "a monumental study of jealousy", only to be praised, later on in the same program note, for qualities the television-trained audiences likes to see: "the dark passion, frenzy and violent revenge, with a cast of 24, versatile and handsome set, astounding special effects and cinematic incidental music". Very different approach to Shakespeare from the one embraced by Peter Sellars in his *Macbeth* reduced to a cast of three!

* * *

Just as Shakespeare, rather than invent new stories, re-told existing tales, and re-worked familiar historical and mythological plots, numerous modern artists have been inspired to work on him, not only to direct him from what they think is a fresh and relevant perspective, but to re-write him for the twentieth century, or conduct him through some other mode of art into the modern era. Shakespearean preoccupations of these modern plays (the subject of this study) follow the line of Francis Bacon's pictorial revisions of Poussin, Rembrandt, or Velazqueze.[29] I believe this analogy holds. Bacon saw Poussin's *Massacre of the Innocents* as a mandala, an image focused on the tragic misdirection of energies within our civilization. He was so shocked to realize that Poussin's painting was accepted by others as a well executed illustration of history, and not its challenge, that he decided to make its central meaning (the unheeded scream, the failure of the feminine to protect young life from the political abuses and violence of patriarchy), disturbingly visible and audible in his own art. On many of his canvases nothing except the mouth, with this agonizing scream, exists. Popes and patriarchs (serial killers, the cause of physical and spiritual destruction of untold number of innocents throughout history), in Bacon's meditations on Velazqueze, are finally shown for what they are: death-bringers, ill deserving the name (*Innocent I, II, III, etc.*) they so frequently use to serialize themselves under. When Shakespeare's characters come to the realization that *seems* and *is* can be very different things, they go mad. When Bacon realized this, he began to distort our surface seemings to show the x-ray depths of what we have become. Circumventing deceptions he tried to 'take reality by surprise', as the title of a recent monograph quotes him saying.

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[28] Interview with Garland Wright published in *The Director's Voice,* p. 335.

[29] A useful juxtaposition of some of these (for instance Rembrandt's *Carcass of Beef* and Bacon's *Figure with Meat,* or Velazquez's *Pope Innocent X* and Bacon's numerous versions of this painting) can be found in Christophe Domino's *Francis Bacon: 'Taking Reality by Surprise', (London: Tames & Hudson's New Horizons Series, 1997), pp. 61-62.* Perhaps it is relevant to state here that Bacon admired Shakespeare, and liked to joke about the fact that Shakespeare's works were attributed for a time to his ancestor and homonym, the philosopher Francis Bacon. See Ibid., pp. 57 and 98.

Many twentieth century writers were as frustrated by the superficial misreadings and misuses of Shakespeare as Bacon was by the commercial corruption of art carried out in his field. Like Bacon, in producing their own Shakespearean meditations, these writers strove to clear away obscuring surfaces, and make explicit the overlooked (because too illusive, too implicit, or too dangerous) energies in Shakespeare. Sometimes their stylizations seem cruder and simpler in texture than the originals they were inspired by. Aiming, like T.S. Eliot, for "the purification of the motives in the ground of our beseeching"[30], they undertook what they felt were the necessary transfigurations, and risks. They used Shakespeare as a divining rod.[31] Through him they were better able to sense what is in the atmosphere, what needs to be looked at and dealt with, the forces in society not generally acknowledged, yet detrimental. Having discovered what, for them, Shakespearean situations and confrontations were, they articulated them as they found them configured in our lives today. The value of these metamorphoses is precisely the variety of forms deep thought-processes take. Each work is a new language learned, a new door opened, as Peter Brook would say, through which our vision is transformed. After years spent doing research through theatre (and re-thinking Shakespeare), in his collection of essays, *The Open Door,* almost entirely dedicated to meditations on form, Brook writes:

> We are also touching here on the great misunderstanding about Shakespeare. Many years ago it used to be claimed that one must "perform the play as Shakespeare wrote it". Today the absurdity of this is more or less recognized: nobody knows what scenic form he had in mind. All that one knows is that he wrote a chain of words that have in them the possibility of giving birth to forms that are constantly renewed. There is no limit to the virtual forms that are present in a great text. A mediocre text may only give birth to a few forms, whereas a great text, a great piece of music, a great opera score is true knots of energy. Like electricity, like all sources of energy, energy itself does not have a form, but it has a direction, a power.[32]

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[30] T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding", *Four Quartets* (London: Faber & Faber, 1944), p. 46.

[31] The idea of the artist as a diviner, or douser, has recently been used by Seamus Heaney (in his essay "Feelings into Words" where, for him, "dousing, or divining is a gift for being in touch with what is there, hidden and real, a gift for mediating between the latent resource and the community that wants it current and released.") and Ping Chong. In this text, reference is made to Chong's description of his own stage work inspired by the idea that "Know thyself" can mean know thy peculiar images. His own performances present such images, or as I like to say mandalas, where we can confront, contemplate and recognize ourselves. See Chapter 3: "The Foreseen", in Louise Steinman's *The Knowing Body: Elements of Contemporary Performance & Dance* (Boston: Shambhala, 1986), pp. 49-77.

[32] Peter Brook, "The Slyness of Boredom," *The Open Door: Thought on Acting and Theatre* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), p. 57. Earlier, in the same essay (on p. 3.) Brook writes: "Theatre has no categories, it is about life. This is the only starting point, and there is nothing else truly fundamental. Theatre is life. ...Life in the theatre is more readable and intense because it is more concentrated. ...The compression consists of removing everything that is not strictly necessary and intensifying what is there." The title of Brook's last book is significant. Blake, and after him Huxley, and Jimmy Morrison (of the *Doors)*, and even T.S. Eliot (in the *Four Quartets*, where he yearns for the "unknown, remembered gates", and hears "Footfalls echo in the memory/Down the passage which we did not take/Towards the door we never opened/") looked for a way out of our walled-in life, looked for ways of cleansing the doors of perception and making a different attitude to life possible. Like them, in the second essay of the collection, "The Golden Fish", Brook speaks of the theatre as the place where "the normal inadequacy of perception is replaced by an infinitely more accurate quality of

What direction Shakespeare's great texts gave to the thoughts of Nietzsche, Chekhov, Shaw, Anouilh, Ionesco, Bond, Wesker, Stoppard, Heiner Muller, Howard Barker, Robert Wilson, John Herbert, Robert Lepage, Orwell, Huxley, Virginia Woolf, Margaret Atwood, and others, what meaning they were able to bring to form in their Shakespearean variations, this study will only begin to explore.

INTRODUCTION II: MYTHIC SHAKESPEARE: COMPOSITION INSTEAD OF BRUSHWORK

What is the use or function of poetry nowadays?.....Function and use remain the same, only the application has changed. This was once a warning to man that he must keep in harmony with the family of living creatures among which he was born, by obedience to the wishes of the lady of the house; it is now a reminder that he has disregarded the warning, turned the house upside-down by capricious experiments in philosophy, science and industry, and brought ruin on himself and his family. 'Nowadays' is a civilization in which the prime emblems of poetry are dishonoured. In which serpent, lion, and eagle belong to the circus-tent; ox, salmon and boar to the cannery; racehorse and greyhound to the betting ring; and the sacred grove to the saw-mill. In which the Moon is despised as a burned-out satellite of the Earth and woman reckoned as 'auxiliary State personnel'. In which money will buy almost anything but truth, and almost anyone but the truth-possessed poet.

Robert Graves, Foreword to *The White Goddess*

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.
...I will kill thee, and love thee after.

Othello, 5:2

She knows, like Ophelia,
The task has swallowed him.
She knows, like George's dragon
Her screams have closed his helmet.
She knows, like Jocasta,
It is over,
He prefers
Blindness.

She knows, like Cordelia,
He is not himself now,
And what speaks through him must be discouted
Though it will be the end of them both.

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awareness," (p. 94) and hopes that various temporary forms theatre uses can be the net in which the golden fish is caught, i.e., the instant of experience "when a door opens and our vision is transformed" (p. 105).

She know, like God,
He has found
Something
Easier to live with –
His death, her death

Ted Hughes, "Prospero and Sycorax"

In the essay "The archetypes of literature", later incorporated into the second chapter of *Anatomy of Criticism,* Northrop Frye wrote: "The profound masterpiece seems to draw us to a point at which we can see an enormous number of converging patterns of significance. Here we begin to wonder if we cannot see literature, not only as complicating itself in time, but as spread out in conceptual space from some unseen centre. This inductive movement towards the archetype is a process of backing up, as it were, from structural analysis, as we back up from a painting if we want to see composition instead of brushwork". He proceeds to praise the literary anthropologist who traces *Hamlet* to its pre-literary sources in nature myths as someone who is not "running away from Shakespeare", but taking steps which draw us closer to the archetypal form which Shakespeare recreated. A minor result of this new perspective, claims Frye, "is that contradictions among critics, and assertions that this and not that critical approach is the right one, show a remarkable tendency to dissolve into unreality".

Ted Hughe's study *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being* is written in the spirit of Frye's *Anatomy*, and produces all the effects Frye attributes to literary anthropology. The insight it provides into the composition of Shakespeare's entire oeuvre is such that in comparison with what it has to offer, all other approaches to Shakespeare 'dissolve into unreality'. The basic psychology of the scheme Hughes discovered in Shakespeare became clear to him during his work on the Faber anthology of Shakespeare's verse in 1970. In 1978, Donya Feuer of the Royal Theatre in Stockholm, put together a full-length performance of interlinked verse extracts from Shakespeare. Then, in it a solo actress relived her Shakespearean incarnations, following Shakespeare's fascinating evolution from play to play. She contacted Hughes and inspired him to anatomize what he had identified as Shakespeare's myth, and present it as it revealed itself in each work. The letters they exchanged concerning this matter became the book.[33]

But the study, in fact, rests on Hughes' knowledge of anthropology, his poetic practice, and his exploration of drama and theatre, carried out during his fruitful collaboration with Peter Brook.[34] Indirectly, it makes Shakespeare the centre of modern

[33] Hughes, "Foreword," op. cit., p. XII.

[34] The relationship with Peter Brook was productive for both. In *The Open Door*, in the already quoted essay "The Golden Fish," Brook speaks of the nature of the theatrical event and the way it can awaken the audience "to an instant of deep insight into the fabric of reality." Years of experience had taught him that to do that, to catch a moment of truth (the 'golden fish'), "all techniques of art and craft have to serve what the English poet Ted Hughes calls a 'negotiation' between our ordinary level and the hidden level of myth... The other world which is permanently there is invisible, because our senses have no access to it, although it can be apprehended in many ways and at many times through our intuitions. All spiritual practices bring us towards the invisible world by helping us to withdraw from the world of impressions into stillness and silence. However, theatre is not the same as a spiritual discipline. *Theatre is an external ally of the spiritual way* (my italics) , and it exists to offer glimpses, inevitably of short duration, of an invisible world that interpenetrates the daily world and is normally ignored by our senses". When Brook speaks of the ordinary level, and the hidden level of myth (the visible and the invisible worlds bridged by art), he is producing his own "Defence of Poesie", the creative activity of our complete being that art makes possible being, for him, the opposite of the life-denying

literature and, directly, it throw light, within Shakespeare, on the unseen centre from which his works evolved and towards which, it becomes clear, numerous modern plays converge. Starting from that centre, (Shakespeare's 'myth', according to Hughes) the study shows how Shakespeare re-charted archetypal situations into very precise mandalas of the modern predicament. None of the leads in the previously published brushwork studies of Shakespeare offer such a clear understanding of what Shakespeare was exploring through his art, and why he is so relevant for us today.

According to Hughes, Shakespeare's intuition of something criminal within Western civilization began to sharpen into focus already in the two poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece.*[35] Commenting on the length of his book (which is in reality about twenty books "densely connected like the chapters in the investigation of a crime"), Hughes writes:

> In fact, it does constitute the investigation of a crime - the inevitable crime of Civilization, or even the inevitable crime of consciousness. In Court, the cultural tradition behind the 'tragic error' of the Adonis figure is in the dock, accused, and Justice is being sought (by Shakespeare) for the different cultural tradition behind the outcry of his victim, the plaintiff, who speaks for the rejected (assaulted, murdered, escaped from murder) Goddess. ... Shakespeare, finally, divines how the two might be reconciled in understanding and love.... Since this great Court Case is, as it were, still unfinished, the reader (like Shakespeare, and like my book, I trust) will have to make efforts to surmount the quarrel, and embrace Shakespeare's final judgment. But once my basic assumptions are accepted, everything follows, logical and consistent, like a detective story.[36]

What Hughes calls 'Shakespeare's myth' evolved out of Shakespeare's growing insight into the real issues behind the numerous religious conflicts of the Tudor era. In his early mandalas (situations and plot structures he chose for his two poems, out of the unlimited number of possible themes and topics) first form is given to his recognition that the turning away, the degradation, and the destruction of the feminine represents the underlying event not only behind the visible turbulence of his own time (i.e., the rejection of Madonna worshipping Catholicism by the Puritan patriarchs) but behind all of Western history.[37] Robert Graves clamed, both in his poems and his studies of myth, that there is one story, and one story only.[38] Hughes agreed. He discovered that the "inclusive, subterranean pattern of unity" that made the mature plays of Shakespeare "a single,

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dissociation of sensibility required by activities considered 'not-art'.

The term 'negotiation', used by Hughes, is very popular in the current critical parlance and is central for another study of Shakespeare, Stephen Greenblatt's *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993).

[35] Hughes, op. cit.

[36] Hughes, op. cit., p. 43.

[37] Even today encyclopedias of British history often begin with the Roman conquest, the truly major learning experience for the nation which keep the tradition alive and become the greatest imperial power of the enlightened era. It is not surprising that a publication which takes up the cause of the suppressed other possibilities of organizing human life is called *Herstory.* (Two volumes of *Herstory: Plays by Women for Women* have been published by the Sheffield Academic Press, in their Critical Stages series).

[38] Robert Graves, "To Juan, at the Winter Solstice" in *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature*, Volume II, eds., Frank Kermode and John Hollander (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 2081.

tightly integrated cyclic work,"[39] was also one story, and one story only: the account of the still-evolving archaic myth of the Great Love and Mother Goddess[40] and her adoring beloved son-and-lover who (and that is where the 'myth' of what things could be like for us stops, and 'history' begins) "pupates and destroys her."[41] Hughes, the student of anthropology, reminds his readers that, in fact, the story of the Great Goddess and her lover/destroyer, with all its elaborations in the vast religious systems that have grown out of it, represents simply "Western man's greatest image of a fundamental polarity in human existence."[42]

Intuitively lead to keep this 'image of a fundamental polarity in human existence' in the centre of all the situations singled out for inspection in his plays, Shakespeare found more and more evidence that the psychological frame of mind from which the rejection of the feminine first emanated continues to operate. It was the mythic centre (or cause), of which history kept being only the logical consequence and outcome. Both the examinations carried out in the plays that dealt with Greece and Rome (i.e. *Troilus and Cressida* and *Coriolanus*), and those that dealt with British history, showed that - regardless of the difference in time, place or specific mode of enactment - the same attitudes prevailed. The mystery of the fundamental polarity of human existence had been imperfectly comprehended. Time became the record of a civilization destructive because its psyche was out of joint with itself, dislocated from creative being, incapable of creative relatedness. What should have been the central and centering goals of life (wholeness, completeness, creativity, archetypally represented by the garden of Edenic harmony and love) became usurped and replaced by contrary attitudes. Because Adonis turned away from Venus, rejected 'total unconditional love' and preferred controlling and killing, as hunter, to creating and caring, as lover, we no longer live in the garden, but in some Tarquin's city, in a civilization of constant wars and numerous visible and invisible conflicts.

Even the comic material Shakespeare handled in the early stages of his career provided him with evidence from which to intuit the tragic scope of the problems he was expected to make laughable.[43] When civilization's favourite pedagogical method, taming, was his topic, far from agreeing with the conventional view that women are dangerous to order unless forced into obedience and brought under control of patriarchy, Shakespeare came to the conclusion that the danger to life comes from the patriarchs themselves, whose ethical blindness and insensitivity to life need to be tamed into wisdom and the

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[39] Ted Hughes, "Foreword," op. cit., p. XII. By mature plays Hughes means plays form *As You Like It* to *The Tempest.*

[40] Ibid., "Introduction", p. 12.

[41] Ibid., p. 18.

[42] Ibid., p. 18.

[43] About the early stages of Shakespeare's career Bernard Shaw wrote the famous one-act 'piece d'occasion' *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets* (a fund raiser for the National Theatre). The play dramatizes the meeting between Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth I, and the 'Dark Lady' Mary Fitton. Taking advantage of their comic encounter, Shakespeare urges the Queen to endow a National Theatre. He states his case: "I have writ two plays to save my friends from penury, yet shewing my scorn for such follies and for them that praise them by calling the one *As You Like It,* meaning that it is not as *I* like it, and the other *Much Ado About Nothing*, as it truly is." He longs (as many authors still do today) for a theatre where he can present his other plays, those "which no merchant will touch, seeing that his gain is so much greater with the worse than with the better." He reminds her that "writing of plays is a great matter, forming as it does the minds and affections of men in such sort that whatsoever they see done in show on the stage, they will presently be doing in earnest in the world, which is but a large stage." See *Bernard Shaw: Seven One-Act Plays,* ed. Jeffery Tillett (London: Heinemann, 1968), pp. 116-117.

ability to see things feelingly. Often, he saw, criminal activity was not the breaking of the law, but rather the making of it by the law-givers who use it selectively to create unfair personal advantages, and not to ensure justice for all. The meditation that began in *The Taming of the Shrew* found completion in *King Lear*.

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The spiritual and ethical withering (rather than flowering) of our civilization which Shakespeare had noted found its most famous modern reflection in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Eliot attributed the condition to the dissociation of sensibility (feeling from knowing) he believed set in as the aftermath of the Elizabethan age. He erred in his estimate. Shakespeare, the Elizabethan poet, recognized it as an old disease transmitted into his own era from a far more distant past. *How* Shakespeare wrote, what he created through language, healed the dissociation,[44] but *what* he wrote about (refining through his work his own historical sense) was the dissolution in culture rooted in the attitude of mind which had destroyed Greece and Rome, spawned the disasters of his own era and continued to spoil life in Eliot's modern *Waste Land*. Eliot's "Hollow men", in whom nothing remained of the original completeness and fullness of being, in Shakespeare strutted and fretted as Rosentcrantz, Guildenster, Osric, Polonius. The failure of thought to be an experience, to modify sensibility, to be felt as the odour of a rose; and the existence of people who read and fall in love but for whom "these two experiences have nothing to do with each other," in Shakespeare afflicted numerous defenseless victims of deliberate cultural crippling. He wrote his plays to study how corruption of life sets in, to see who and how pollutes the future by pressuring the young to submit to destructive ideologies.

For the quality of mind Shakespeare possessed Eliot paid him direct homage when he praised his ability to acquire "more essential history from Plutarch than most men could from the whole British Museum."[45] But Eliot's description of the 'difficult' poet,[46] equipped to deal with the state of civilization that has to be faced and resisted, fits Shakespeare perfectly as well. If, as he says in "The Metaphysical Poets", our civilization

[44] In Chapter two of his book Hughes has a brilliant section "The verbal device and Tragic Equation as brain maps." In itself, it is a complete and very successful restatement of Hughe's thesis, as well as his re-statement of the dissociation of sensibility, its causes and effects. Writing about the duality of the left and right hemispheres of the brain he says: "By nature the two sides presumably live in a kind of happy marriage. ..But, as history demonstrates, the onset of rationality institutes proceedings for a kind of divorce. ...Excluding imagery and emotion, and promoting the rational, analytical verbal formulation of life, in other words lifting the left side into dominance literally by suppressing the right, seems desirable in some situations. But where it becomes habitual, it removes the individual form the 'inner life' of the right side, which produces the sensation of living removed from oneself. Not only removed from oneself, but from the real world also, and living in a prison of sorts, since the left side screens out direct experience, establishing its verbal 'system' as a hard ego of repetitive, tested routines, defensive against the chaos of real things. ...Metaphor is a sudden flinging open of the door into the world of the right side, the world where the animal is not separated from either the spirit or the real world or itself. ...The Goddess myth is in the right side, while the (ultimately rational and secularizing) myth of the Goddess-destroyer is in the left side." The wholeness of total consciousness which Shakespeare eventually achieves is the form for the achieved co-operation of the two hemispheres. For Hughes, "the fact that the gigantic vision of complete human consciousness is set down as drama, rather than epic or metaphysical poem is the ultimate aspect of its completeness: physical acting itself is the language of the right side, the verbal text the language of the left side, and their indivisibility is the seal of the global integrity of the whole operation."

[45] In "Tradition and the Individual Talent".

[46] In "The Metaphysical Poets".

"comprehends great variety and complexity, and the variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results;" if the poet must become "more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning", then Shakespeare continues to be that poet, since he certainly was comprehensive and allusive, and certainly did produce various and complex results He may even have been too difficult, as Eliot's failure to fully comprehend *Hamlet*'s intentions and indirections shows. Shakespeare possessed "a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience" and make it significant through language. Eliot only knew that such a sensibility was the ideal, but he himself did not possess it and was not always able to recognize it, or appreciate it in others.

F.R. Leavis immediately recognized Eliot's difficulties with *Hamlet* as a sign of this 'disability'. Today, from the perspective of Ted Hughes' *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*, to what Leavis had to say in his essay "The Necessary opposite, Lawrence: Illustration - the Opposed Critics on *Hamlet,*" a few more things could be added, not to contest but to deepen and recontextualize his argument. When Leavis objected that Eliot was "not a whole man" and explained why, after supporting him, he had to add a qualifying 'Yes, but –' he wrote:

> The 'but' is a very serious matter. That the creative Eliot could not draw on any wholeness of being, or free flow of life, has consequences for criticism, and the 'social' poverty of spirit...was a manifestation of the disunity and disability, the inner disorder that characterized him: there is much significance in its allying itself so readily with his instinctive animus against Lawrence. [47]

The criteria by which Leavis ultimately judged Eliot (wholeness of being, free flow of life) are precisely the criteria Ted Hughes believes Shakespeare used to judge his entire culture. The disunity Leavis speaks of showed in many things, including the split between Eliot 'in his genius,' and Eliot as a social persona (a variant of Eliot's own distinction between the man who suffers and the man who creates, into whom he strove so hard to be transhumanised). Leavis recognized it also as the reason behind Eliot's occasional dissociation from Shakespeare (and Lawrence, and Blake - artists who best exemplified it). He saw the source of this blunder in Eliot's uncertainty about his own relationship with the feminine, to his "distinctive attitude towards, the feeling about the relations between men and women." Analyzing his poetry Leavis writes: "The general truth about him is that he can contemplate the relations between men and women only with revulsion or disgust--unless with the aid of Dante. ...Love, human love, a memory coming under that head and become an established and deep-lying emotional centre - a spiritual value - exists for him as the gleam of a reality to be sought with disciplined devotion."[48] Even in passages of Eliot's most powerful "evocations of the pre-Waste-Land world, in which trees flower and springs flow and the wings are unbroken and the heart rejoices," Leavis finds "the memories are all of the same kind, in the sense that the intensity they have is remoteness, and the kind is not one that suggests a rich, or representative, human experience."[49]

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[47] F. R. Leavis, "The Necessary Opposite, Lawrence: Illustration-the Opposed Critics on *Hamlet*," pp. 139-40.
[48] Ibid., pp. 140-41.
[49] Ibid., p. 143.

Even though it is obvious that Lawrence 'the priest of Love', the author of *Amores*[50] will have more in common with the author of the *Sonnets*[51] than Eliot, the author of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", the passages Leavis quotes (especially from 'La Figlia Che Piange', *Ash-Wednesday* and 'Marina') can be read as evidence that Eliot, who never emerged into fullness of being, desired it, and was moving in the right direction precisely along Shakespearean lines. Ted Hughe's study makes it possible for us to see that the Shakespeare's entire mythic scenario is there. From 'La Figlia,' the poem about the parting in a garden, Leavis quotes: "She turned away, but with the autumn weather / Compelled my imagination many days, / Many days and many hours..;" from *Ash-Wednesday:*

Sister, mother
And spirit of the river, spirit of the sea,
Suffer me not to be separated
And let my cry come unto Thee.

About 'Marina', the poem he likes best of all Eliot's poems, Leavis comments: "The Marina is the heroine of Shakespeare's *Pericles,* the daughter who was lost and is found, for the father the unhoped renewal, and further promise, of life. Eliot in that poem is under the influence of Shakespeare rather than Dante." [52]

Both the uniqueness of this Shakespearean poem in Eliot, and his encounter with Lawrence's work, made Leavis aware how much more Eliot could have done with human love (with the diverse kinds of human relation covered by the word) than, with Dante's help, he actually did. But although Leavis was a powerful scrutinist, he failed to see how Shakespearean Eliot was even when he seemed to be Shakespeare's opposite. The turning away in 'La Figlia...' (so different from Lawrence's account of his meeting with Frieda in a similar setting, which begins "She made me follow to her garden where / The mellow sunlight stood as in a cup"[53]); and the fear of the separation from the feminine in *Ash-Wednesday*; and the recovery of what was lost through the father-daughter relationship in 'Marina', when supplemented with numerous other details from his works, reveal that the inner struggle in Eliot followed the Shakespearean pattern. Even though, in a poem written early in Eliot's career Prufrock tried to convince himself that he was "not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be," between the psychological positions marked by 'Prufrock' and 'Marina' lies Eliot's Shakespearean journey. His interest in characters such as Orestes (loyal to the father to the point of becoming a matricide), Coriolanus (punished for deciding to be loyal to the women in his life), Teresias (in whose body the feminine and the masculine visibly coexist), Sweeney (who speaks of every man's need to "once in a life time do a girl in", records the stages he passed through in his effort to understand the true nature of the 'fundamental polarity in human existence', sort out his own identity and

[50] *The Priest of Love,* on Lawrence
[51] In the edition of *The Sonnets*, edited by John Dower Wilson (Cambridge University Press, 1966), in the "Introduction," Wilson quotes a beautiful long passage from C.S. Lewis' *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (pp. XV-XVI). In his discussion of Shakespeare as a love poet, distinguishing between love "kneeling to ask" ("hardly a giving love") and the one Shakespeare was capable of, Lewis writes: "This patience, this anxiety (more like a parent's than a lover's) to find excuses for the beloved, this clearsighted and wholly unembittered resignation, this transference of the whole self into another self without the demand for a return, have hardly a precedent in profane literature. In certain senses of the word 'love', Shakespeare is not so much our best as our only love poet."
[52] Leavis, op. cit., p. 145.
[53] D.H. Lawrence, "Snap-Dragon", from *Amores*, PDHL., Vol, I, pp. 122-6.

discover how to become capable of love.

When Ted Hughes decided to separate the two Shakespeares, the "realist psychologist and impersonator" from the mythic poet visible when "the upper architectural marvels of the realistic Shakespeare" are lifted away, he did it so that Shakespeare's works could be seen as records of the evolving nature of his psyche.[54] It is of utmost importance to know what kind of psychic development culture makes possible, and in which direction it permits and encourages growth. Great artists put forth images "which include our fate,"[55]that is - read as accurate portraits of the successive stages of this unfolding. In his pursuit of knowledge Eliot, like Shakespeare, entered the underground system of his own being and strove to clarify its discontents with culture. He was looking for his own true mythic image, hoping to be able to do more with what he knew more precisely he was.

Eliot's interest in myth was already evident in 1922, in *The Waste Land*, and continued to grow. In 1923 he wrote of Joyce's use of myth in *Ulysses*,[56] and rejoiced that "psychology, ethnology, and *The Golden Bough* have concurred to make possible what was impossible even a few years ago." Instead of narrative method, he proceeded, we may now use the mythical method. It was, he believed, a step towards making the modern world possible for art. He was working for Faber when in 1948 Robert Graves brought him the manuscript of *The White Goddess*. There are Faber party photographs of Eliot with Ted Hughes, who was also already, in 1960, a Faber poet. But, in spite of being immersed in studies of myth, and surrounded by people whose interest in this field was even greater than his own, he failed to recognize Shakespeare as a mythic poet.

This may be one more reason why Leavis thought that, in writing critically about Shakespeare (complaining that there was nothing in *Hamlet* that one could clearly and finally see, no objective correlative, no comfortably determinate significance) Eliot employed an unintelligent conception of intelligence, and demonstrated a restriction, decided poverty, lack of "true intelligence which is the agent of the whole being".[57] But it is precisely this lack, and the need to do something about it, that made Eliot a poet. The desire for what was most desirable never left him, but it was expressed by a man who wished, yet knew not how to achieve true contact and make love work. Since what Leavis says is true (that "even geniuses have to do what they can with what they are") he wrote about love not like Lawrence, but as he could, and made progress in the direction of the same goal from a different starting point, and out of a very different personal predicament. Lawrence (the author of "The Death of Pan," his own mythical account of the dissociation of sensibility and loss of complete being) saw in *Hamlet* a prince who decides not to be – "decides that the will to be King, Father, Supreme I (ego) isn't in him." As a man who loved life but was to die at 45 from a wasting disease, Lawrence showed great impatience with the hero's inability to free himself from his diseased environment and rise into health and wholeness. Eliot's emphasis, on the other hand, fell on the guilt of the mother, a theme which he felt could have been expanded into a proper tragedy but was not because Shakespeare lacked control of his material.

These two different critical positions recur. For the failure of our civilization, within

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[54] Hughes, op. cit., pp. 38-9.
[55] Ibid., p. 40.
[56] In "Ulysses, Order,and Myth," published in *The Dial,* LXXV, 1923, pp. 48-83. Qoted in *The Modern Tradition: Backgrounds of Modern Literature,* eds., Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson (New York: Oxfor University Press, 1965), pp.679-681.
[57] Leavis, op. cit., p. 154.

the bounds of the 'fundamental polarity', two explanatory accounts exist: blame can be put on the destructiveness of the fathers, or the treacherousness of the mothers. The feminine can be seen as the redeemer, or as the destroyer. Importance can be attributed to women because on their ability to recognize their true mate (a very important topic for both Lawrence and Joyce) the course of the future depends. Or, they can be dismissed as inferior and unimportant, accused of polluting the spiritual and intellectual identity of man, and tolerated only when reduced to breeders, adoring servants, upholders and transmitters of decreed male virtues. Ted Hughes is right in pointing out that these considerations of the "fundamental polarity of human nature" lie at the heart of all great religions. Inevitably, every effort to clear the ground for a more adequate understanding of the problem leads to a critical confrontation with the religious cultural background. Not only Eliot (the Unitarian converted to High Anglicanism) and Lawrence (the Chapel bread Methodist), but also the renegade Catholic James Joyce, the third great twentieth century mythic writer in Britain, looked beyond Christianity to the pagan mythical tradition for traces of a more correct view. Everything Lawrence wrote was a criticism of Christianity, not just his *Apocalypse*, or "The Man Who Died" where Jesus rises in order to be reunited with a woman, in complete love. The very surname of Joyce's hero Stephen Dedalus marks him as a pagan, and his 'Non serviam' puts him in the tradition of the arch-rebel Lucifer. Eliot also, despite his royalism, classicism and Anglo-Catholicism, chanted Da, Datta, Damyata, while looking for peace, and a way our of the Western waste land.

Most subterranean examinations by mythic poets uncover different ways in which the destruction (or loss) of the feminine takes place. Revisions of the harmful cultural assumptions they envisage invariably involve radical redefinitions and rehabilitation of the feminine. In that respect Dante's dream of the successful completion of the quest for meaning under the guidance of poets, women, and Love, had irresistible attraction for all artists who were troubled by similar intuitions and shocked into recognition by his works. But, as Leavis recognized in the case of Eliot's attachment to Dante and inadequate understanding of Shakespeare), a was reached where more needed to be done then celebrate, with Dante, only the spiritual bond with the feminine. Profoundly dissociated, insecure, and very slow in emotional awakening, Eliot needed Dantean exaltations to balance his pornographic (verbal) excesses, well hidden behind his otherwise impeccable taste. Many, including Bertrand Russell who was his teacher at Harvard, saw behind the window dressing of manners, and clothes, the man "with no vigour or life or enthusiasm."[58] Lawrence and Joyce, on the other hand, were outrageously unconventional

[58] In Peter Ackroyd's 1984 biography of T.S. Eliot (here quotes are form the Abacus 1986 edition), numerous episodes speak of Eliot's deeply troubled, dissociated self. For instance, in Chapter 2, "The Pursuit of Learning: 1906-1914" (pp. 30-53), which deals with his undergraduate and post graduate work at Harvard, as well as his sojourn in Paris, among other things Ackroyd writes about the circumstances under which, in 1910-11, the masterpieces of his youth- 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' and 'Portrait of a Lady' were written. The original title of 'Prufrock' was to be 'Prufrock Among the Women'. Ackroyd notes that "just as Eliot found in *Hamlet* obscure and inexpressible emotions which could not be dragged 'to light', so we are able to recognize in the tone and preoccupations of his poetry during this period a brooding dislike, or fear, of women." The poems he wrote later, in his last year at Harvard, are full of self-absorption and self-disgust. In 'The Love Song of St Sebastian,' the speaker "imagines the experience of self-flagellation and the strangling of a woman;" in 'The Death of St Narcissus' the saint welcomes the arrow of his assailant. At the same time as he was completing these poems, writes Ackroyd, he was engaged on an epic, 'King Bolo and His Great Black Queen', which was to occupy his attention for rather long." These are comic verses which are consistently pornographic in content, with allusions to buggery, penises, sphincters, and other less delicate matters. He seems to have derived a

and fought hard, as much with themselves as with the external censors, to free themselves from all crippling cultural conditioning and find ways to celebrate sexuality, and the beauty of complete being and life.

The titles of their major works chart very accurately the stations of their different revisionist journeys. Between 1913 and 1915 their first major works appeared: *Prufrock*, *Sons and Lovers*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* These were followed in 1922 by the publication of *The Waste Land*, Lawrence's *Aaron's Rod,* written under the influence of another great 'Antichrist' and uncompromising rebel, Nietzsche, and *Ulysses*. Lawrence's major preoccupation and ideal of complete being is very clear: *Sons and Lovers*, *Women in Love*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. When Joyce looked for an all-rounded character who could best embody his ideal, he rejected his friend's nomination of Christ, Faust or Hamlet. Like Lawrence, he objected to Christ saying: "He was a bachelor, and never lived with a woman. Surely living with a woman is one of the most difficult things a man has to do, and he never did it."[59] No-aged Faust was not even considered a man, and Hamlet, although human, was a son only. To Dante's (and Eliot's) paradigm of life's journey Joyce preferred Ulysses' precisely because he was son of Laertes, father to Telemachus, husband to Penelope, lover of Calypso, companion in arms of the Greek warriors around Troy, and King of Ithaca; he did not seek escape from life, or transcendence, but looked for his home in time, and so came closest to embodying the full life and fullness of being Joyce desired.

In contrast to the Catholic conception of spirituality which he knew well (and which, unlike him, Eliot admired), Joyce conceived the novel he wrote about his all-round hero as the epic of the human body. His goal was "to overcome the dichotomy of body and soul, to reveal their fundamental unity."[60] After his chronicle of the stilted lives of his fellow *Dubliners,* his work continued to evolve, with a consistency as riveting as Shakespeare's, or Lawrence's, in the direction of recovery of complete being. *Ulysses,* the novel celebrating one day, June 16, 1904, in the life of Leopold Bloom in Dublin, was followed by *Finnegans Wake,* his novel of the night[61]. It is not possible to find anywhere else a better elaboration of what it is that Macbeth looses when he murders sleep, and why Shakespeare thought it "balm of hurt minds, ...chief nourisher of life's feast," reviving plunge into the soul's well. The novel is a unique, challenging, and most Shakespearean finale of Joyce's quest for completeness and revision of the traditional notion of human identity. If Othello complained that Desdemona was false as water, in *Finnegans Wake* all Joyce's women (Molly Bloom, Marie Tallon, Amalia Popper, Marthe Fleischmann, Nora Joyce) become the river Liffey. The 'Yes' Stephen Dedalus said to life in the *Portrait*, amplified into Molly's 'Yes' at the end of *Ulysses* (when Jew and Gentile are reconciled in her house, and the lost son is recovered through love for somebody else's child), in *Finnegans Wake* becomes an even vaster and more inclusive affirmation. As Joyce's biographer Ellmann observes, all his characters become "purged in surprising ways...by love" and brainpower and decency unite against horsepower and brutality.[62]

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certain satisfaction form description of sexual excess, and for at least another fifteen years he would send extracts from this unfinished (and yet unpublished) work to friends."

[59] Conversation with Frank Budgen, quoted in Richard Ellmann's celebrated 1959 biography. In *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972) p. 449.

[60] Ibid., p. 450.

[61] Ibid., pp. 559, 708, 716.

[62] Ibid., pp. 381-3.

What could be more Shakespearean than the reply Joyce's Bloom's gives to the Citizen: "It is no use...Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred."[63]

Declaratively, Joyce loved Ibsen and Blake above all others, but his obsession with Shakespeare was also life long. The date, June 16, 1904, commemorated not only his first night out with Nora, but also the beginning of his work on his Shakespeare theory.[64] In Trieste, in 1913, he gave ten lectures on Hamlet,[65] and repeatedly referred to this play in his novels, in his numerous meditations on the father-son mystery.[66] Even before that, when he was fifteen and in school at Belvedere College, he had a Shakespearean experience with the Sheehy family who had befriended him. He liked their name because "it was made up of the feminine and masculine personal pronouns,"[67] and later developed the theory of the womanly man, which he considered himself to be, as well as his hero in *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom. There, as part of the entertainment the children prepared, he played Carmen, and Hamlet.

His passion for Ibsen went so far, however, that in 1907 he saw his own *Ulysses* as a Dublin *Peer Gynt.*[68] The reason is, again, fundamentally Shakespearean, since the novel represents a version of the round-about return-journey home, to Molly, in the case of his quester Leopold, in Ibsen's play to Solveg, but in both, in fact, to the Shakespearean feminine of which Hughes writes, the mythic Love Goddess. During his intense and fruitful meditations over Ibsen's work Joyce often, in comparison, found faults with Shakespeare and 'took *Hamlet* to task'. His observations after a performance of *Hamlet* he saw in Trieste in 1908, for instance, are very perceptive, but he did not pursue them more deeply, and failed to see that his 'objections' (complaints of the play's gross dramatic blunders because Ophelia's madness took all the force out of Hamlet's simulation, and because her love for her father, whom the audience see to be a paltry old imbecile, is a caricature of Hamlet's passion) refer to what might be strategic structural devices, justified from the perspective on the play embraced today by Ted Hughes (in theory), and several important revisionist playwrights, such as Heiner Muller (in practice).

In a way, throughout their lives Eliot, Lawrence and Joyce made numerous brushwork observations on Shakespeare's plays, without backing up far enough to see the overall structure and realize to what great extent they were related to him, as well as to one

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[63] Ibid., p. 379.

[64] Ibid., p. 161. We read in Ellmann: "Several aspects of Joyce's life converge upon June 16, 1904, the day he afterwards chose for the action of *Ulysses*. It was on that day, or at least during the month of June, that he began to work out his theory that Shakespeare was not prince Hamlet but Hamlet 's father, betrayed by his queen with his brother as Shakespeare was-Joyce thought- betrayed by Ann Hathaway with his brother, Joyce was at his search for distinguished victims-Parnel, Christ, Himself. Instead of making his artist Shakespeare a avenging hero, he preferred to think of him as a cuckold."

[65] Ibid., p. 355. The first was on November 5, 1913, at the Universita del Popolo.

[66] Ibid., pp. 309, 379. Particularly telling is the second passage in Ellmann where, among other things, he writes: "Joyce, Stephen, and Bloom share the philosophy of passivity in act, energy in thought, and tenacity in conviction. Hamlet, on the other hand, is the hero of a revenge-play; however unwittingly and fumblingly, he sheds a great deal of blood. Joyce does not encourage this view of the artist, and so he relates Shakespeare to the suffering father, the victim, rather than to the avenging son. The artist endures evil, he doesn't inflict it. 'I detest action,' says Stephen to the soldiers. Because he takes this position, he belongs, in the extended metaphor which underlies all *Ulysses,* to the family of Bloom, who tells the Citizen, 'It's no use....Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred.' They are son and father mentally, if not physically."

[67] Ibid., p. 54.

[68] Ibid., pp. 274-5. A Note in Stanislaus Joyce's diary.

another.[69] Professor Harold Bloom, in *The Western Cannon*,[70] (which contains chapters on Shakespeare and the Cannon, Chaucer and Shakespeare, Milton and Shakespeare, Freud and Shakespeare, Joyce and Shakespeare, and Beckett, Joyce, Proust and Shakespeare, and which is really an eulogy to Shakespeare as much as it is an elegy for literature in a century inimical to any kind of true art) notes that we are all in Shakespeare. So we are, Eliot, Lawrence and Joyce including. They suffered damage from living under the ideology of the West which Shakespeare and Hughes bring to Court, and created out of their personal lives what their sensibilities could devour and transmute. Like Hamlet, Othello, Lear, they reached different points in their Shakespearean quest for wholeness and creative life, but they shared the same concern, and went in the same direction, and so were truly Shakespearean precisely because they were different and related, at the same time.

SEKSPIR I SAVREMENE VERZIJE NJEGOVIH KOMADA

Ljiljana Bogoeva-Sedlar

Tekst predstavlja uvodna poglavlja studije o savremenim dramskim delima inspirisanim Šekspirovim komadima. Uticaj Šekspira na savremenu književnost je ogroman. Retki su pisci koji svoj susret sa Šekspirom nisu propratili prigodnim komentarom. Osvrti na Šekspira danas, koji nastavljaju tradiciju dugu već skoro četiri veka, mogu se naći u esejistici, poeziji i savremenim romanima (da iz savremene engleske književnosti potsetimo samo na dela Džemsa Dojsa, ***1984*** *Džordža Orvela,* ***Vrli novi svet*** *Oldosa Hakslija, ili* ***Gospođu Dalovej*** *Virdžinije Vulf). Studija profesora Ljiljane Bogoev-Sedlar iz ove opšte riznice izdvaja dijalog koji sa Šekspirom danas vode savremeni dramski pisci, u delima koja, u okviru bogatih i sasvim specifičnih opusa, direktno variraju i uobličavaju Šekspirov materijal. Na takve poteze navodi ih želja da se izbore za susrete sa savremenom publikom koji bi mogli da sto vernije i uspešnije prenesu ogormnu pokretačku moć Šekspirovih dela. Na 'revizionističke' intervencije se odlučuju upravo zato što se sposobnost kompleksnog i dubokog poimanja, koje umetnost predstavlja, gubi u načinu života tehnološke, birokratske i komercijalne civilizacija pa se često, u opštem padu u najjeftinije vidove zabave, i izvođenja Šekspirovih dela pretvaraju u anti-umetnički i anti-šekspirovki čin. U uvodnom poglavlju, pregledom pristupa Šekspirovim dramama na savremenim svetskim pozornicama danas, autor uspostavlja kriterijume po kojima se kreativan rad sa Šekspirovim materijalom može razlikovati od zloupotrebe Šekspira, izneveravanjem i duha u kojem je stvarao i koncepcije umetnosti koju je implicitno svojim delima uspostavio. Analize drama Roberta Lepaza, Roberta Vilsona, Hajnera Mjulera, Zan Anuja, Ezena Joneska, Toma Stoparda, Arnolda Veskera, Džona Herberta, Edvarda Bonda, Hauarda Barkera, i mnogih drugih dramskih umetnika koji su se bavili Šekspirom, potkrepljuju i pojašnjavaju te kriterijume i pomažu da se sposobnost kritičkog poimanja, odgovornog rasuđivanja i humanog življenja održi i dalje izoštrava.*

[69] In Elman there are several references to unkind things they privately and publicly said about one another (Eliot about Lawrence to Virginia Woolf, Lawrence about Joyce to his own wife, etc.).
[70] Harold Bloom, *The Western Cannon: The Books and School of the Ages* (London, Macmillan, 1994)