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Lidia Curti

A Foreign Question

I. Re-visitations

Shakespeare has been the signpost of different epochs, and every epoch has left its mark on him. It has been said many times and I cannot but risk the repetition in this introductory piece. Happily or unhappily, for centuries the Shakespearean text has hosted dramatic and filmic realisations and adaptations, critical visions and revisions, narrative and poetical rewritings.

> Perhaps no text in English literature has accommodated as many varied, and indeed foreign, readings as the oeuvre of Shakespeare – which has opened a space even outside of the theatre into television, cinema, the classroom and so forth, on a global level. Such an accommodation, and reception, is surely at the heart of hospitality.[1]

Obversely, many writers, directors and thinkers have hosted Shakespeare as part of their art and thought: in the century that has just ended, Müller and Wilson, Visconti and Strehler, Brook and Marowitz, Bene, Steiner and Chereau, and before them Artaud, Craig and Granville Barker – the list could go on. Today, the reference to Al Pacino in *Looking for Richard* and to James Gandolfini in *The*

[1] Paul Kottman, "Hospitality in the Interval: Macbeth's Door", *The Oxford Literary Review*, vol. 18 (1996), 89. In this essay, originally given at a seminar held at the University of California, Irvine, Kottman connects the problem of the readings of Shakespeare to the question of hospitality as a theme in philosophical and literary texts elaborated by Derrida, and before him by Heidegger.

Sopranos, irriverent as it may seem, is to something more than just an actorial improvisation inspired by the Bard.

As Derrida says, the reading is 'finite, selective, elected', it can never be exhausted, there is always something more to say since it is the allegorical substance of the work of art that says more, describes something else. During a seminar on "What Is It To Read?" at Columbia University in the Fall of 2002, he underlined the infinite responsibility towards any kind of text: 'texts are inexhaustible, our reading is limited, whether it is transposed in translation or rewriting or re-presentation'.[2]

Text, criticism, theatre, spectators, readers, visions and revisions give shape to a complex chain crossing different textual regimes. In the itinerary that has marked the collective work that gave rise to the writings in this volume – cultural studies, women and gender studies, (post)colonial studies – Shakespeare has been the touchstone, the token of a passage from a monumental classic to the elusive now, even in its mediatic and electronic un-substance.

Shakespeare seems to be a compulsory incipit for every drammaturgical action, from Brook and Pasolini to many lesser known spectacles. It is said that the blues musician Champion Jack Duprée, invited by the students at a new British university in the years of the great contestations, paused before each piece, turned to the public and announced: 'Shakespeare's mother wrote this'. Bruce Chatwin, at the beginning of his writing on the 'song lines' country, felt the need to commence from Shakespeare, reminiscing about the place in Stratford where Ophelia was said to have taken the plunge, before taking his own plunge into the journeys that ultimately brought him to death.

Peter Brook hosted the stranger in his performances (one of his many different directions of *The Tempest* had a black actor alternatively perform as Caliban and Prospero), suggesting that theatre is made by another, perhaps the other of the textual Shakespeare as it has come to us, whether we wish to call it the acting body in the present, postcolonial society or whatever else.

In "Inhospitable Shakespeare", Annamaria Cimitile, drawing on

[2] "What Is It To Read? Thinking with Jacques Derrida", Italian Academy, Il Teatro, Columbia University, Oct 21, 2002.

Belsey, Miller and other critical writings, underlines the necessity to provincialize Shakespeare, to return 'his text to Europe' (Orkin): "If dismantling monumentalization and unveiling cultural domestications of Shakespeare, as most contemporary readings do, offer a productive interrogation of cultural value, I also think that another practice should be placed alongside them, one that remits Shakespeare to its alterity." In the wake of some of the critics she quotes, she suggests that one must look for difference in other senses too, and see the text as *epistemically distant* from our present. In his essay in this volume, Maurizio Calbi, too, indirectly speaks of the resistance of the original text.

The dilemma is again between autonomy from the text and its sovereignty. The first is crucial insofar as I have an autonomous relation with the text-as-other by interiorizing the image of the other within myself. Thus I become autonomous, and in this way betray the other. The other must be the other within myself. 'I must respect the otherness of the other', Derrida maintained during that long discussion, keeping alive the antinomies of the question: the autonomy of the reader, the sovereignty of the text. Autonomy is built on heteronomy, difference, on the law of the other.

What we have today is a text covered by many strata, and the question is how, if at all, do we find the authentic, the pure Shakespeare? Catherine Belsey acknowledges that the past is the result of a 'conjectural knowledge', an interrogative text, and every present reading gives temporary ephemeral replies. According to her, it is the unrepresentability of Shakespeare, its incomprehensibility that should be made significant; this is precisely in my opinion what some contemporary readings have done, from Valerie Traub's to Marjorie Garber's interesting critical re-appraisals, just to mention some among many, and even Jan Kott's manifesto in *Shakespeare our Contemporary*, however out-dated it may seem today. Paul Kottman, though insisting on the openness of the Shakespearean text to different readings, writes of the importance of the interval between any reading and the text: between them there is a correspondence but never a coincidence.

> We might even say that the interval which any corresponding reading occupies is, *qua intervallum*, irreducible. No reading could eliminate it, as it would then eliminate its very condition for being. I would

instead suggest that reading is the *occupation* of this interval: it is, on the one hand, the work of the interval; and it is, on the other hand, 'to be in the interval'.[3]

He treats hospitality as 'the entrance or gate in the text of *Macbeth*', the gate or door for him having been opened by Derrida and before him by Heidegger.

Overcoming all hesitations, many of the essays in this volume have chosen to read Shakespeare through the 'poetics of subalternity', in the wake of well-known critical re-visitations, superfluous to name here. Marie Hélène Laforest shows how a text like *The Tempest* has been reclaimed in postcolonial writing by a group of Caribbean writers who, in the guise of Caliban, made the inverse journey to another island, England, the original centre of both the writing and the 'primary' scene. For her the door to the text has been opened by George Lamming's re-writing, just as by Aimé Césaire's *Une tempête* for Francesca Recchia. The latter considers the figure of Caliban with reference to the process of creolization in the Caribbean context and to recent contemporary debates on this theme in literature and the arts. The interchangeable role of guest/host is referred to the figure of Sycorax as the absent mother in Claudia Buonaiuto's "Monstrous Bodies: Sycorax, or the Feminine Grotesque". Her analysis points to the persistence of her lingering power, a presence in absence, recalling Marina Warner's point:

> … her mysterious, indetermined story and character suffuses *The Tempest*; the 'foul witch Sycorax' occupies the drama like a prompter who accompanies the action throughout, hidden and unheard, beneath the stage.[4]

[3] Kottman, "Hospitality in the Interval", 105.

[4] Marina Warner, "'The foul witch' and Her 'freckled whelp': Circean Mutations in the New World", in Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman, eds, *'The Tempest' and Its Travels* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 97. In this interesting essay, Warner compares Sycorax to Medea and above all to Circe. With the latter, Sycorax shares a world of grotesque transformations: "…the grotesque is the aesthetic genre that obeys no principle. Circe was the famous mistress of such mutations; through the grotesque figure of the foul witch Sycorax, Shakespeare simultaneously condemned these Circean powers and annexed them for his own art." (ibid., 113)

Likewise, Jane Wilkinson examines questions of hosting and healing, royal power and hospitality in Orson Welles's "Voodoo" *Macbeth*, relocated in 19th century Haiti and performed by black actors in the 1936 theatrical adaptation at Harlem. While, in her essay, "'This great loss' – or, was Claribel's marriage 'sweet'?", Marina Vitale analyses an important chapter in the feminist re-visions of Shakespeare's work, Hilda Doolittle's poem *By Avon River*, devoted to the mute, invisible Claribel of *The Tempest*. The essay draws attention, through many references, to the cross-ethnic, cross-cultural problematic implications involved in that marriage, mostly ignored even in H.D.'s re-visionist text. Finally, Alessandra Masolini has written on Roberta Torre's film *Sud Side Story* that, within the frame of Sicilian mafia and popular folklore, looks at *Romeo and Juliet* through the lenses of a Southern Mediterranean culture with its problems of migrancy and marginality.

II. Aliena in Shakespeare

> "Something that has a reference to my state:
> No longer Celia, but Aliena."
> (*As You Like It*, 1.2. 130-31)

A poetics of subalternity can be read on all sides even in the so called authentically contextualized text. The stranger in Shakespeare, thus named in Leslie Fiedler's study of 1973, is a rich theme acquiring many shapes and touching on different types and characters. Many are the male characters who are exiled or self-exiled: some are excluded from their own territory or the precincts of the city, others estrange themselves, such as Coriolanus and Timon, or, less tragically, Touchstone and the lovers in *The Dream*. To these we might add those who feel strangers in their own country, marginalised either due to physical deformity, skin colour, animal shape or to gender identity.

The alien or abject merges in the figure of the guest as friend/enemy, a concept that goes back to Medea, the 'barbarian' woman, exiled twice first for love and then for lack of love, and to the Danaïds, who, as Kristeva reminds us in *Strangers to Ourselves*, are doubly strangers: as they come from Egypt and as against marriage.

"Remaining outside the community of the citizens of Argo, they also refused the basic community that is the family".[5]

In his essay *Of Hospitality*, Derrida recalls that the Latin 'hostis' is linked to hostility as it means guest but also enemy. In Renaissance England host signified both host and guest, and in many languages they are still indicated by the same word. Even in those languages that have two different words, each of them leads back to the other as in the Freudian *heimlich* and *unheimlich*.

> … it is indeed the master, the one who invites, the inviting host, who becomes the hostage … And the guest, the invited hostage becomes the one inviting the one who invites, the master of the host. The guest becomes the host's host. The guest (*hôte*) becomes the host (*hôte*) of the host (*hôte*).
> These substitutions make everyone into everyone else's hostage. Such are the laws of hospitality.[6]

The stranger asks the intolerable question, for he or she is foreign to the language, the law, the ethos. The question of the stranger must be read first of all as a question coming from the foreigner, from abroad. "…the one who, putting the first question, puts me in question."[7]

In *Macbeth*, the words 'guest' and 'host' are repeated obsessively (see for instance the very short scene 6 in Act 1); the threshold between friend and enemy, he who hosts and he who is hosted, is wavering, uncertain. The difficulty to know whether the murderer, the parricide is host or guest, finds a resonance in the words of the "porter of hell-gate" (2.3). Kottman observes that the catastrophe in *Macbeth* is that 'the guest/host' has been killed:

[5] Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1991), 44.

[6] Jacques Derrida, "Step of Hospitality / No Hospitality", in *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond,* trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Ca: Stanford University Press, 2000), 123-25. The two lectures translated in this book are derived from a series of seminars conducted by Derrida in Paris, January 1996.

[7] Derrida, "Foreigner Question", ibid., 3, and again on page 131: "…the question *of* the foreigner as question *come from* abroad."

> The violence perpetrated by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is portrayed in Shakespeare's language as a kind of perverse hosting. Each time that Lady Macbeth and Macbeth plot a murder, they simultaneously plan the evening's hospitality."[8]

Here hospitality is tied to the theme of power as in *Othello*, to sex and power as in the romances. This association is analysed in Wilkinson's essay at length, as well as in Calbi and de Filippis.

From king to unwelcome guest: Lear who has 'estranged' Cordelia first, and then Kent, becomes a stranger himself, homeless and unsheltered – like Edgar, exiled, in flight, his previous identity reduced to nothing: "Edgar nothing I am". Both, through the fool's voice, become excluded from language, civil society, family and state. As Kristeva says:

> Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that ruins our habitation… By recognising him within us, we render the 'us' problematic, perhaps impossible … the stranger begins with the conscience of my difference and ends when we all recognise ourselves as strangers, rebels to links and communities.[9]

Many are the female 'foreigners' in Shakespeare: among others, Joan of Arc, Cleopatra, and in different ways Sycorax and Claribel. The first two are snared by the label 'strumpet'. Joan of Arc is abused repeatedly by Talbot in Act 1.5 of *1 Henry VI:* "…thou art a witch… this high-minded strumpet… A witch, by fear, not force, like Hannibal / Drives back our troops and conquers as she lists..."; again in Act 3.2. 38: "Pucelle, that witch, that damned sorceress…" and soon after "vile fiend and shameless courtezan" (45). Later on, her stench will be recalled. Like Cleopatra, she is vilified and praised, alternatively by the English and the French. The latter repeatedly sanctify her: "We'll set thy statue in some holy place / And have thee reverenc'd like a blessed saint: / Employ thee, then, sweet virgin, for our good." (3.3. 14-6).

[8] Kottman, "Hospitality in the Interval", 98.

[9] Kristeva, *Strangers*, 2.

When she is finally defied, York challenges her to use her devilish charms to get free and likens her to Circe (see 5.3. 31-3), anticipating Prospero's invectives against the defeated Sycorax.

Geraldo de Sousa, in "Joan of Arc, Margaret of Anjou, and the Instability of Gender", points to how the two women warriors in the trilogy – Margaret enters as Joan exits – stand for a cross-cultural contrast strongly related to a gendered opposition:

> French culture, no less alien and fantastical than the Amazon kingdom, emanates from the two women warriors, Joan of Arc and Margaret of Anjou. Unstable and fraught with inner disturbances, this fantastical world, where gender exchanges are deployed, subverts English ideological certainty.[10]

He underlines that the historical Joan belongs to a long tradition of transvestite female saints, and her violation of gender roles is the source of great confusion and instability, especially among the English.

Leslie Fiedler has devoted a great part of his analysis to the woman as the original stranger, "that borderline figure, who defines the limits of the human … named variously the 'shadow', the 'other', 'the alien', 'the outsider', the 'stranger'."[11] He defines Joan as the archetypal daughter, the first undutiful daughter among many – Jessica, Juliet, Cordelia, Desdemona, Miranda and others. She is brave, rebellious, defiant and at the same time a whore, a liar, a witch. At the end she will reject and insult her father. Towards her the author is ambivalent, as Fiedler notes: "…the balance of Shakespeare's sympathy (along with ours) tilts in her direction … he betrays an

[10] Geraldo U. de Sousa, *Shakespeare's Cross—Cultural Encounters* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 41.

[11] L. Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), 15. In this work, he has analysed the stranger as woman in *Henry VI*, Part I and II, as Jew in *The Merchant of Venice*, as Moor in *Othello*, as new world savage in *The Tempest*, and as witch in the entire Shakespearean corpus.

[12] Ibid., 57. He observes: "Shakespeare's ironic strangers often possess a mythic dimension lacking in the official spokesmen they challenge" (Ibid., 58). This quality, that has been often associated with the Shakespearean witches, is often attributed to the

ambivalence about the reigning values of his time."[12] The same ambivalence the critic sees in Cleopatra:

> Sometime to be sure, he makes the dark lady his spokesman, a surrogate self, as he did with Venus in *Venus and Adonis* and, most notably, with Cleopatra of whom it is fair to say with Wyndham Lewis that she represents the author … in love with Antony. [13]

Cleopatra – her figure dominates the stage often in absence; when she is there she floods the scene with words – is presented at the very onset of the play as a 'gypsy' and a 'strumpet', but praised by Enobarbus in ravishing terms: from "her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure love" (1.2. 155-6) to "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale / Her infinite variety; other women cloy / The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry / Where most she satisfies… (2.2. 243-6). Caesar who has called her a whore will recognise her greatness and regality: "Bravest at the last, / She excell'd at our purpose, and, being royal, / Took her own way … she looks like sleep, / And she would catch another Antony/ In her strong toil of grace". (5.2. 336-8 and 347-9).[14]

Both Joan and Cleopatra are constantly under the gaze of men, subject to constant namings, made the objects of a series of epithets, obsessively spoken about. Fiedler again says: "All are 'antiwomen', subverters of the role assigned to them by men who seek to naturalize their strangeness to a patriarchal world."[15]

This brings us to the other two 'foreigners' mentioned above, Sycorax from Algiers, a non-metaphorical witch, and Claribel, the lost

stranger, to whoever lives at the limits of one's world, "whenever they are forced to confront creatures disturbingly like themselves in certain respects, who yet do not quite fit …" (Ibid., 44). Again, whatever disturbs our definition of the human. In his prolonged comment on transvestism in Shakespeare's comedies, he notes that the rite of the female impersonator is based on 'a ritual archetypal magic' to exorcise the threatening element of alterity that the woman is.

[13] Ibid., 74-5.

[14] Leslie Fiedler notes that Cleopatra is a midway between Ariel and Venus, and sacrifices her femininity to the male principle, recognising however that in her last words on the 'boy actor' she resumes her womanly role.

[15] Ibid., 74.

daughter, become a stranger after her marriage to Tunis. They are incorporeal characters who only exist in words, two inhospitable bodies, analysed respectively in Claudia Buonaiuto's and Marina Vitale's essays, as the index of 'an irreducible female presence/absence' in the play. Conversely, in Serena Guarracino's essay on the musical elements in Shakespeare's last plays, the ambiguity is considered from the other side and referred to the presence/absence of the boy's voice, that is erased just as his body is.

Many more are the women in a condition of estrangement in the comedies: they are voluntary or involuntary exiles like Rosalind and Celia in *As You Like It*, Hermia in A *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Miranda in *The Tempest*, or Perdita in *The Winter's Tale,* the latter exiled from her country as she is born. Others are travellers in search of love or rank like Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Helena in *All's Well that Ends Well*, or Viola in *Twelfth–Night*. Voyage and exile are often accompanied by transvestism and the assumption of male roles: Helena as a male doctor in Paris heals the king; in Florence she turns herself into a pilgrim and then, going back to her sex, substitutes Diana in the bed of the man she loves unrequited – so does Mariana in *Measure for Measure*. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia and Nerissa disguise themselves as a lawyer and a scrivener respectively; in *Cymbeline* Imogen takes on the role of the young attractive Fidele, in the same way as Rosalind and Viola had become Ganymede and Cesario.

They are all ready to cross the threshold between male and female and to exercise their game of seduction along that ambiguous line. In *The Winter's Tale*, Perdita hovers between one camouflage and another, Hermione between death and life, statue and body.[16] This identity threshold is underlined by Viola-Cesario as she says to Olivia "I am not what I am" (3.1. 155), and by Perdita: "I see the play so lies / that I must bear a part." (4.3. 672-3). In her travesty, Celia, though

[16] In her chapter "Jewels, statues, corpses" in *Desire and Anxiety – Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (London: Routledge, 1992), Valerie Traub enlarges on this, commenting on the monumentalization, and consequent reduction to silence, of many female characters. The critical literature on the exchange of sexual roles in Shakespeare is wide, here I wish to mention the contributions given by C. Cook, L. Jardine, L. Levine, M. Novy, S. Orgel, S. Zimmerman.

maintaining the same sex, speaks about alienation from the self and assumes a name representing them all: "Something that has a reference to my state: / No longer Celia, but Aliena." (*As You Like It*, 2.1. 130-31). This might also be a reference to the constant crossing of such threshold in Elizabethan theatre where every female character subsumes a male body.

> One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons:
> A natural perspective, that is and is not!
> (*Twelfth Night; or, What You Will,* 5.1. 226-227)

Such characters exist as in a suspension, in the margin of a fluctuating structure, to use Kristeva's expression in *Powers of Horror*.[17] In the epilogue to *As You Like It* , Rosalind wavers between the female and the male part moving in and out of the representation, with a clear reference to the reality of the performance:

> It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue; but it is no more unhandsome than to see the lord the prologue. ... If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me, and breaths that I defied not ...[18]

In this gallery there is finally the image of Cleopatra, enchanting seducer and charmer, surrounded by her gentlewomen 'like the Nereids, so many mermaids', at the centre of an imaginary baroque Orient, in her golden and silver barge: "For her own person, It beggar'd all description". As a counterpoint to this ravishing picture,

[17] The suspension is expressed in the contradictory essence of the abject, linked to the feminine and the maternal. As Kristeva observes in *Powers of Horror*, abjection comes from this fluctuation between life and death, solid and liquid; from this undifferentiated structure, border and threshold, descends the threat to the symbolic order. For this and other related topics, see my "Presenza e assenza del femminile in Shakespeare", *Memoria di Shakespeare*, a cura di Agostino Lombardo (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 2003).

[18] "...the full meaning of the play is only established by the last turn of the mythological screw, when the boy who has been playing Rosalind playing she is Ganymede playing Rosalind, steps out of his role and stage-sex to speak the Epilogue." Fiedler, *The Stranger*, 47.

there is another picture drawn by her at the end of the play exposing the male body hidden underneath her person:

> ...... Saucy lictors
> Will catch at us, like strumpets, and scald rimers
> Ballad us out o' tune; the quick comedians
> Extemporally will stage us, and present
> Our Alexandrian revels. Antony
> shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
> Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
> I' th' posture of a whore.
> (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 5.2. 213-21)

In a sudden *mise en abime*, Cleopatra recoils at the picture of herself being represented by a boy and thus robbed of her splendid Egyptian corporeity in the 'future' Elizabethan theatre. Again, a female absent body. The body of an Alexandrian woman.

The question of the stranger is also at the centre of those articles that have not yet been mentioned. Simonetta de Filippis and Bianca Del Villano have examined passions such as incest and jealousy, respectively in *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*, leading to exile and wanderings for many of the characters involved. In both cases the final resolution seems to heal the wounds that led to the transgression of the law of hospitality. More problematic is the breach in *Othello*, as both Maurizio Calbi and Manuela Coppola show respectively in "Being a Guest But Not Quite... White" and in "'Gateskeepers of hell': Desdemona's Impossible Hospitality". In different ways both Othello and Desdemona illustrate the *difficulties* of hospitality as named 'with a discrete irony' by Derrida. "It is as though hospitality were the impossible: as though the law of hospitality defined this very impossibility, as if it were only possible to transgress it..."[19] In Marta Cariellos's article, "Bad Audience and Perfect Guests", this argument is extended to a metatheatrical dimension: the author examines theatrical representation as the locus where the elusive relationship

[19] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 75.

between a play and its audience points to yet another problematic kind of hospitality.

* * *

This volume has its origin in the seminar on "Shakespeare and the genres of hospitality" (Dottorato in letterature, culture e storie dei paesi anglofoni, U.N.O., 2001-02). It was originally inspired by Derrida's essay "Of Hospitality", and by a series of previous discourses on memory, writing, tradition-translation. My thanks go to Iain Chambers, Marina Vitale, Jane Wilkinson, and to all those who contributed with their presence and participation in the discussion. Particular thanks go to the editorial assistance of Claudia Buonaiuto, Marta Cariello, Annamaria Cimitile and Manuela Coppola.

Silvana Carotenuto

Hospitality in Transit...

> ...I
> find my way out.
>
> O this wandering empty
> hospitable midst. Apart,
> I fall to you, you
> fall to me, fallen away
> from each other, we see
> through:
>
> One
> and the same
> has
> lost us, one
> and the same
> has
> forgotten us, one
> and the same
> has—
> (Paul Celan)

Ospitalità - On the threshold of time, we find ourselves in the middle path between now and then, pressed by the urgent matters of the end-of-the millennium and their constitutive traditions. In movement on the threshold, urgency hints at movement itself, that of the contemporary Diaspora with the alterations of worldly Cosmopolitanism: dispersions of whole populations confront a

policing of more and more violent identifications.[1] In-between, the "question" of hospitality.

What is hospitality? What is hostility? Why hos(ti)pitality? To give place to these questions, a small and intense book comes to us, practising what it promises: *Of Hospitality* by Jacques Derrida. From the threshold internal to the text - a (non)place between two styles, two genres, the *italics* and the trans-cription - a musical score offers the double bind of an invitation and an obsession: *Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond* "Of Hospitality".[2] A written commentary and the hyperbolic orality of a thought "*that does not fear to confront the ghosts and to open up paths across to the living*".[3] The fragments - "Foreigner Question" and "Step of Hospitality/No Hospitality" - of a seminar, offered by Derrida in Paris in 1996 and trans-cripted by Dufourmantelle, turn into the precious dis-semination of an exchange, dual, plural: Dufourmantelle/Derrida; Dufourmantelle and Derrida; Derrida to his students. The (non)place of difference, the encounter of (two) thinkings, (the) infinite plurality (of teaching)...

It is already the mad "logic" of hospitality:

> ...*two plurals that are different at the same time.* One of these two plurals says the laws of hospitality, conditional laws, etc. The other plural says the antinomic addition, the one that adds conditional laws to the unique and absolutely only great Law of hospitality, to *the* law of hospitality, to the categorical imperative of hospitality. In this second case, the plural is made up of One + a multiplicity, whereas in the first case, it was only multiplicity, distribution, differentiation. In one case you have One + n; in the other, n+n+n, etc. [4]

It is already the "dream" of "The Language of the Foreigner":

[1] See Jacques Derrida, *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!* (Paris: Galilée, 1997).

[2] *Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond* "Of Hospitality" (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). For the "promise" and its irresistible travelling desire, see Catherine Malabou et Jacques Derrida, *La contre-allée* (Paris: La Quinzaine Littéraire; Collection Voyager avec..., 1999).

[3] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 154.

[4] Ibid., 81.

> *One could dream about what would be the lesson of someone who didn't have the keys to his own knowledge, who didn't arrogate it to himself. He would give place to the place, leaving the keys with the other to unlock the words from their "enclosure"*.[5]

Urged by such a fantasy-promise-desire-invocation, it is for us to follow both transits: offering hospitality to "Hospitality", while dreaming of the difference of another (kind of teaching) knowledge. Almost naturally - it is, more than ever, a question of ethical practice - we transit to our (non)place *par excellence*: Shakespeare and the constituted, always perverted and pervertible Law/laws of his theatre.[6] Here it is possible to test the logic and the dream of hospitality/hostility-hos(ti)pitality, interlinking different genres, encountering originals and adaptations, confronting infinite enigmas,

[5] Ibid.,14. We are referring to Walter Benjamin's dream whose "interpretation" Derrida offered to the audience in his 2001 acceptance of Theodor W. Adorno Prize, appeared in the Italian *Le Monde Diplomatique* under the title "La lingua dello straniero". The Italian title hints at the logic by which reason makes the dream its own 'foreigner', the irreducibility of the dream's language becoming the "stranger"- the dream, language, the unconscious, the animal, the child, the Jew, the foreigner, the woman. What also interests us is that Derrida, in following the etymological transits of the French word *fichu*, the s/object of Benjamin's dream, refers to the handkerchief, the scarf, and the tissue. The same, still different, "figure" returns in note 8, intentionally "veiling" its relevance to the problematic of the new "savoir" of *la différence sexuelle*. The quote by Derrida comes from a session untranscripted in the text - "*so as to keep back the "suspense" of the philosophical narrative for the reader*", as Dufourmantelle explains, 80.

[6] The Derridean text has, personally, meant the precious understanding of an "experienced" paradox: "... an irreducible pervertibility. The law of hospitality, the express law that governs the general concept of hospitality, appears as a paradoxical law, pervertible or perverting. It seems to dictate that absolute hospitality as right or duty, with the "pact" of hospitality. To put it in different terms, absolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.) but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. The law of absolute hospitality commands a break with hospitality by right, with law or justice as rights. Just hospitality breaks with hospitality by right: not that it condemns or is opposed to it, and it can on the contrary set and maintain in a perpetual progressive movement; but it is as strangely heterogeneous to it as justice is heterogeneous to the law to which it is yet so close, from which in through it is indissociable", 26-27. The discussion of such "pervertibility" continues at 55, 65 *et passim*.

always-already unknowingly fantasising to "unlock the words from their enclosure" towards the insurgence of a new thought.

"Giving the place to the place, leaving the keys with the other": "Shakespeare" can thus inaugurate hospitality by means of its own dissemination on the critical threshold between the New Aestheticism (the publishing transit that our guest John J. Joughin followed for his intervention at the PhD seminar)[7] and the relevance of its historical existence for contemporary Post-coloniality (the complex essay by Anna Maria Cimitile). From this (non)place, it offers the double bind of its invitation and its obsession: "taking thinking to its extreme" through the non-always practised, still urgent, direction of the *savoir* of *La Straniera*, the encounter with *la différence sexuelle*, the unveiled infinity of sense it would bring to (another kind of teaching) knowledge.[8] Under the spell of a "shock of discovery", the introductory speech by Lidia Curti materialises *The* unconditioned Law of hospitality in its logic of One + the multiplicity of "female" figures, opening up the path across to the Shakespearean enclave (Marta Cariello's discussion of the aporetic relation between the dramatic text and the audience). Here it is possible to unlock the multiplicity - the "n+n+n+" addition - of its laws: the return of the

[7] John J. Joughin, "Shakespeare's genius: *Hamlet*, adaptation and the work of following", in John J. Joughin and Simon Malpas (eds.), *The new aestheticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003). This text represents an expanded version of his speech given in Naples.

[8] See Hélène Cixous - Jacques Derrida, *Voiles* (Paris: Galilée, 1998). Here, in between the two texts "Savoir" (Cixous) and "Un ver à soie. Points de vue piqués sur l'autre voile" (Derrida), it is *la différence sexuelle* to speak, through the folds of its veils, in its turns, in the return journey of its metaphors and metonymies. For Cixous, it is the "veil" of her myopia; for Derrida, the *tallith* of his childhood; for both, it is also the tissue of Penelope and her "fiction". Lidia Curti's introduction gives internal hospitality to such a "fiction", also providing visibility to female "unseen tears": "...the question that is being wept through the tears of Antigone. It is more than a question, for a question doesn't cry, but it is perhaps the origin of all questions. And it is the question of the foreigner - of the foreign woman. These tears, who has ever seen them?", *Of Hospitality*, 113. On the "question" of tears, see the wonderful "These Weeping Eyes, Those Seeing Tears: The Faith of Jacques Derrida", in John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida. Religion without Religion* (Bloomingon & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997). For a "pre-originary" transit between woman and hospitality, reflexivitely marking the fecundity of Derrida's thought on *l'hospitalitè*, see his *Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas* (Paris: Galilée, 1997).

Same in incest (Simonetta de Filippis), friendship and narcissism (Bianca del Villano); the horror of the economy of the *domus* (Manuela Coppola); the insurgence of mortal jealousy (Maurizio Calbi).[9] Within the enclave, gently awaken to its dynamics, the voice of the Other can now resound: in our "tempestuous" times, it is Caliban's cry, Sycorax's threat, Claribel's poetry (Marie Hélène Laforest, Claudia Buonaiuto, Marina Vitale).

From the (non)place of Shakespeare, according to the (hospitable) Law of the feminine, the vertiginous movements between the Same and the Other require other and more. Dufourmantelle epigraphs Derrida's sentence: "An act of hospitality can only be poetic" - the PhD group gives place to such a "gesture", bringing attention onto creativity itself;[10] Francesca Recchia writes a poem herself as an hospitable appeal to Caliban's language of revolt;[11] Lucia Ielpo refuses to translate, while discussing translation, the "aphraxic" voice of Carmelo Bene;[12] Alessandra Masolino opens up the pop poetry of the cinematography of Torre's Romea and Giulietto...

It is as if we were trying to transit the "human" (Jane Wilkinson's metatheatrical geography shows the extreme proximity of the

[9] In Maurizio Calbi's essay there is a wonderful reference to the "pervertibility" of hate into "love", approaching an enigma Derrida refers to in parenthesis: "Does hospitality consist in interrogating the new arrival? Does it begin with the question addressed to the new comer (which seems very human and sometimes loving, assuming that hospitality should be linked to love - an enigma that we will leave in reserve for the moment)?", *Of Hospitality*, 27.

[10] "As though the place in question in hospitality were a place belonging to neither host nor guest, but to the *gesture* by which one of them welcomes the other - even and above all if he is himself without a dwelling from which this welcome could be conceived", ibid., 62. Our italics. Also Philippe Lacou-Labarthe, *Poetry as Experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997, 51), in reading Paul Celan, underlines that poetry is "a gesture ... it is an act, an event ...; poetry is not a catastrophe of catastrophe. But, because it aggravates the catastrophe itself, it is, one might say, its *literalization*".

[11] Francesca Recchia made hospitality transit towards the another "enclave" of art in her permanence at *Platform1-Documenta, 11. Democracy Unrealised.*

[12] The transit here goes toward the nodal focus of critical attention on a possible encounter between Derrida and Deleuze. See the special issue of *Angelaki* devoted to: Rhizomatics Genealogy Deconstruction Deleuze/Guattari Foucault Derrida, 5. 2 (2000). In Ielpo's text, the proximity between the two philosophers happens via the "theatre of cruelty", as in the "banned" text by Derrida and Paule Thévenin on *The secret art of Antonin Artaud* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1998).

"monstrous other"), in order to practice hospitality to the figure of "the animal" informing the other "question" by Derrida, *Che cos'è la poesia?*[13]

What is poetry? What is hospitality? What is the dream of the foreign language?[14] Unconditioned or conditioned, the enigma refuses any closure or unveiling: it stays in difference, while practising the encountering of writing, infinitely dreaming of its destination, its destinal transit (in "reserve"- that reserve that is literature and its promise[15]) towards the future-to-come. This can mean to bring it "abroad", *à l'etranger* - Leeds and Strasbourg;[16] it means to transit it towards our next PhD seminar: "Between the sacred and the sublime"[17]. Maybe, the unique and only response to the "question" of hospitality (of language, of poetry) might sound in the voice of those angels (their flights resound in Serena Guarracino's "musical" essay) closing Derrida's text to reappear in the closure of the 2002/3 seminar through Walter Benjamin's "angel of history"...

[13] Derrida, "*Che cos'é la poesia?*", in Elisabeth Weber (ed.), *Jacques Derrida, Points... Interviews, 1974-1994* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

[14] It is the relevant transit from *Of Hospitality* to *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) on the question of "language" and its aporetic post-colonial 'belonging'.

[15] See Peggy Kamuf, *The Division of Literature or the University in Deconstruction* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 4. See also Joseph G. Kronick, *Derrida and the Future of Literature* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), and Richard Rand (ed.), *Futures of Jacques Derrida* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

[16] Some members of the PhD group took part to The CongressCATH 2002 (21-23 June, Leeds Town Hall, G.B.) devoted to "Altering Hospitality. Translating Class", in the panel "Architectures of hospitality" organised by Iain Chambers. Silvana Carotenuto and Maurizio Calbi, with John J. Joughin, functioned as the convenors of the seminar "The question of the 'foreigner' – texts and theory in colonial and post-colonial Europe" in The Sixth Conference of the European Society for the Study of English (August 30- September 3, 2002), Strasbourg - Marc Bloch University.

[17] "*Hyperbole always comes first of all as a question. It sets at a distance the limits of the field of the thinkable, approaches disturbing lands by placing them at the heart of a territory you thought was familiar. It revives questions held in forgetfulness or secrecy, as in this remark. "If you don't do justice to hospitality to animals, you are also excluding gods". This quasi-sibylline sentence of Derrida's not only raises the immense problem of the relation between the sacred and the profane, but also suggests that the essences of animal and god perhaps have some unknown correspondences*", *Of Hospitality*, 140-142.

THE QUESTION OF THE STRANGER

Maurizio Calbi

Being a Guest But Not Quite ... White: *Othello* and Hybrid Hospitality in the Mediterranean

The opening of Jacques Derrida's essay *Of Hospitality* dwells on the multiplicity of meanings of the expression *question d'étranger*.[1] Bearing in mind this multiplicity, I want to start with a scene of hospitality in which the question addressed to the foreigner — one of the meanings of *question d'étranger* — takes centre-stage. This scene appears in the second book of John Leo's travel history, written in Arabic and translated into English in 1600 as *A Geographical History of Africa*. John Leo *alias* Leo Africanus observes that in Tesegdelt, a town in Morocco, there are "certain warders or watchmen" at every gate who

> do most lovingly receive all incommers, enquiring of them, whether they have any friends and acquaintaine [sic] in the town, or no? If they have none, then are they conducted to one of the best Innes of the towne, and having had entertainement there, according to their degrees and place, they are friendly dismissed: and whatsoever his expences come to, the stranger paies nought at all, but his charges are defraied out of the common purse.[2]

He adds that "this people of Tesegdelt are subject also unto iealousie".[3]

[1] Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 3.
[2] Leo Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, trans. John Pory (London, 1600) (repr. Amsterdam, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum and Da Capo Press, 1969), 52.
[3] Ibid.

At first, the reference to jealousy reads as a casual addition to Leo's account of hospitable behaviour. Yet if one considers *A Geographical Description of Africa* as a whole, an odd pattern begins to emerge. On the one hand, being "hospitall" and "favourable to strangers" is shown as the pre-eminent sign of a "liberall and civill disposition".[4] On the other, there never seems to be any mention of "civilitie" or "humanitie" without a reference to jealousy.[5] One persistently calls for the other.

Derrida has recently insisted on the uncanny conjunction of hospitality and hostility that structures even the most benevolent welcoming of the stranger from within. He argues that "hospitality is a self-contradictory concept and experience which can only self-destruct".[6] He speaks of a "law of hospitality which violently imposes a contradiction on the very concept of hospitality", in that

> hospitality is ... the greeting of the foreign other as a friend but on the condition that the host ... the one who receives, lodges or *gives asylum* remains ... the master of the household, on the condition that he maintains his own authority *in his own home* ... and thereby affirms the law of hospitality as the law of the household, *oikonomia*, the law of his household ... thus limiting the gift proffered and making of this limitation, namely, *the being-oneself in one's own home*, the condition of the gift and of hospitality.[7]

[4] Ibid., 40. Derrida argues that "there is no culture that is not also a culture of hospitality.... Hospitality — this is culture itself". See Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, ed. and with an introduction by Gil Anidjar (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 361.

[5] Speaking of another city, for instance, Leo points out that its inhabitants are "very liberall and exceeding jealous" (54), and there are many other examples of the same pattern in his text.

[6] Derrida, "Hostipitality", trans. Barry Stocker with Forbes Morlock, *Angelaki* 5.3 (December 2000), 4.

[7] Ibid., 4. Derrida's italics. Derrida, of course, is not advocating the purity of the law of hospitality, a clear-cut separation of ethics and politics, even if individual acts of hospitality continuously transgress the unconditional law which transgresses them. In more practical terms, he is not claiming that we refuse to receive the foreigner for fear of symbolically reinforcing our identity, an idea according to which the most perfect form of hospitality is inhospitality. He is inviting us to think from the aporetical place of the tension between the unconditional 'mad' law of hospitality and the laws of hospitality. The Italian government has recently passed a bill which requires immigrants from outside the European Union to

It is this juxtaposition of hospitality and hostility, I would argue, which explains the re-emergence of the 'subplot' of jealousy qua hostility in Leo's text. This is a 'subplot', therefore, which supplements, in more senses than one, the manifold scenes of hospitality presented therein. Yet, following Derrida's remarks on the aporetical and antinomical concept and experience of hospitality, it is also possible to begin interpreting differently the question with which I started: the question addressed to the foreigner. This is not a question which comes first. It is itself a somewhat hostile response to the fact that the foreign other, even if only by his mere presence, "puts me in question",[8] where this "me in question" should be taken in all the senses Derrida hints at, as the presence to itself of the self, as "nothing other than ipseity itself, the same of the self-same".[9] Giving this a more psychoanalytic slant, questioning the foreigner is a kind of defense mechanism, an anxious and oblique acknowledgment of the overproximity of the 'object-foreigner': s/he is too close, unbearably proximate.[10]

I now want to move on to a text which has been read, especially in recent years, as hosting John Leo's travel account, Shakespeare's *Othello*.[11] I shall argue that *Othello* is an emblematic tragedy of hospitality. It bears out Derrida's aporetical definition of hospitality as being "only ... possibile on condition of its impossibility".[12]

submit to fingerprinting on arrival to Italy. One cannot afford to give up even the 'liberal' concept of hospitality Derrida is relentlessly questioning. On ethics and politics and their relation to Derrida's work on hospitality, see Mireille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), esp. 11-15.

[8] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 3.

[9] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 15.

[10] Freud is often behind Derrida's argument on hospitality. Freud, for instance, speaks of "the fundamental kinship of the concept of 'stranger' and 'enemy'" in "Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality" (1922), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XVIII, ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953-74), 226.

[11] See, for instance, Rosalind Johnson, "Parallels between *Othello* and the Historical Leo Africanus", *Bim* 18 (1986), 9-34. For a stimulating reading of Leo Africanus's text, see Jonathan Burton, "'A Most Wily Bird': Leo Africanus, *Othello* and the Trafficking in Difference'", in Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, eds., *Post-Colonial Shakespeares* (New York and London: Routledge), 43-63.

[12] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 5.

Moreover, as a tragedy of hospitality, this is a text which incessantly keeps on raising questions about the 'question' of the foreigner, between and across boundaries of race, ethnicity and gender.

Othello is obsessed by the question of the foreigner from its very beginning, as we observe Iago and Roderigo coming to the stage to play the part of 'warders' and 'watchmen' policing the 'gate' of Venice. Without any ambiguity, they express hostility towards the Moor, jealously drawing attention to the fact that the foreign other does not abide "by the old gradation, where each second / Stood heir to the first" (1.1.37-8).[13] Othello has chosen Cassio, another foreigner, as his lieutenant. Moreover, in Roderigo's eyes, he has supplanted "the wealthy curled darlings of [the Venetian] nation" (1.2. 68). Paradoxically, Iago and Roderigo, by arousing Brabantio in the middle of the night, infringe the rules of hospitality, "the sense of all civility" (1.1.131), to warn him of the abherrant violation of hospitality which is taking place:

> *Rod.* What ho! Brabantio, Signior Brabantio, ho!
> *Iago.* Awake! what ho, Brabantio: thieves, thieves, thieves!
> Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags.
> Thieves, thieves ... Are all your doors lock'd?
> (1.1. 78-81; 84)

Their paranoid response to the question of the foreigner is the weaving of lurid fantasies around the breaking down of the boundaries of the human:

> *Iago.* Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul.
> Even now, very now, an old black ram
> Is tupping your white ewe.
> (1.1. 87-89)

How can one ever welcome two animals copulating? How can one ever welcome bestiality? Iago carries on:

[13] All references to *Othello* are from the New Arden Edition, ed. M.R. Ridley (London and New York: Methuen, 1965), and are included parenthetically in the text.

> *Iago.* [Y]ou'll have
> your daughter cover'd with a Barbary horse; you'll
> have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have
> coursers for cousins, and gennets for germans.
> (1.1. 110-13)

Yet the unconscious, with its peculiar insistence, has already alerted Brabantio to the violation of hospitality which is being perpetrated: "This accident is not unlike my dream" (1.1. 142). It displays the reverse side of Brabantio's initial affectionate welcoming of the stranger Othello, suggesting once again the continuity between hospitality and hostility.

Let's now shift from the inner to the public *forum*, to the third scene of the first act, in which Othello is summoned before the Venetian senators and the Duke. This is a scene which proceeds by juxtaposing two kinds of threatened invasions. On the one hand, it presents the threat posed by the 'enemy within' (i.e. Othello, the Ottoman corsair seizing Desdemona), which, as far as Brabantio is concerned, has already become a nightmarish reality and is likely to affect the public domain: "For if such actions may have *passage* free, / Bond-slaves, and pagans, shall our statemen be" (1.2. 97-98).[14] On the other, it shows, by report, the outside threat - the Ottoman fleet heading for Cyprus.[15]

Yet one might raise the objection that a reading of this scene which insists on the doubling of the threat of invasion can only be produced by identifying with those characters who operate through strategies of demonisation of the foreign other. For instance, one might want to object that it is only from Iago's point of view that Othello's access to the body of Desdemona is yet another episode in his "travel's history"

[14] My emphasis. As we shall see, the sea-faring imagery dominates the first act of the play.

[15] For the relevance to the play of the Ottoman 'context', see especially Daniel J. Viktus, "Turning Turk in *Othello*: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48 (1997), 145-76. See also Maurizio Calbi, "Speaking in Terror: Femininity, Monstrosity and 'Race' in Early Modern Culture', in Maria Teresa Chialant, ed., *Incontrare i mostri: Variazioni sul tema nella letteratura e cultura inglese e angloamericana* (Napoli: ESI, 2002), 65-82.

(1.3. 139), showing the extent to which he pursues his career as an "erring" (1.3. 356) Barbarian pirate in Venice. It is only by adopting Iago's perspective that one can see Othello's wedding as a buccaneering exploit: "[H]e to-night hath boarded a land carrack: / If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever" (1.2. 50-1). What about the Duke, welcoming the Moor and addressing him as "valiant Othello" (1.3. 48) as soon as he comes on to the stage in I.iii.? After all, the Duke claims that the Moor's "tale would win [his] daughter too" (1.3. 171). Moreover, he asserts that "[Brabantio's] son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3. 290). For the Duke, then, Othello is 'one of us'. He is an honorary white.[16] He is a guest but not quite. Yet I would argue that the Duke voices the *real politik* of hospitality, a politics of quota and limits, calculation and management, a politics of borders, including the border between "fair" and "black". Othello can cross over to the positively connoted side of the opposition "fair" versus "black", but the opposition itself remains intact. One can moor (i.e. secure) the 'more' (i.e. the excess) of the Moor, and then, to recall John Leo, "friendly dismiss" him. To substantiate my point about the Duke's ambivalent politics of hospitality, I shall cite his greeting of Othello: "Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you, / Against the general enemy Ottoman" (1.3. 48-9). If one interprets "general" as an adjective, the "Ottoman" is the "general enemy", the enemy of the Venetian nation as a whole, a nation within whose boundaries Othello is included. Yet, if one reads "general" and "enemy Ottoman" as nouns in apposition, it is Othello himself, frequently called 'general' in the play, who is associated with the "enemy Ottoman".[17] Once again, the unconscious speaks of an uncanny continuity where one would expect to find a clear-cut opposition.

After Brabantio brings to everybody's attention his charges against the Moor, the council chamber scene increasingly focuses on the question of the foreigner, in the sense of the question addressed to the foreigner. Othello is invited to speak over and over again: "What in

[16] Cf. Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), 49-64.

[17] Cf. Ian Smith, "Translating Gender, or The Queer Moor", paper presented at the VII World Shakespeare Congress "Shakespeare and the Mediterranean" (Valencia, 18-23 April 2000).

your own part can you say to this?" (1.3. 74); "But, Othello, speak, / Did you by indirect and forced courses / Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?" (1.3. 110-2); "Say it, Othello" (1.3. 126). Othello answers by recalling another questioning:

Oth. Her father lov'd me, oft invited me:
Still *question'd me* the story of my life,
From year to year: the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
To the very moment that he bade me tell it.
(1.3. 128-33)[18]

Othello, therefore, evokes Brabantio's warm welcome, his being invited repeatedly into the Venetian senator's house to reiterate "the story of [his] life", his "travel's history" (1.3. 139). He is not a sporadic guest. As to Brabantio, he is, indeed, a *père sévère*, a strict father who perseveres by continuing to invite Othello. One might want to interrogate this double repetition, the reiteration of the invitation as well as the reiteration of the "travel's history" up to "the very moment that [Brabantio] bade [Othello] tell it". What difference does repetition make? On the one hand, it is through repetition and in the name of hospitality that Brabantio's 'patriarchal' mastery over his household reasserts itself. It is through repetition that the *fixity* of the roles of host and guest — in short, hostipitality — is rearticulated. This fixity, I believe, is what Derrida calls the "essential *coloniality* ... of hospitality when the latter ... auto-limits itself into a [conditional] law'.[19] On the other hand, it is through the reiteration of the story up to "the very moment that [Brabantio] bade [Othello] tell it" that it (the story) inexorably begins to include Brabantio and Desdemona as characters. They are inscribed, at least in their dreams and fantasies, in a scenario made of "most disastrous chances, / Of moving accidents, ... Of hair-breadth scapes" (1.3. 134-6), and so on.[20]

[18] My emphasis.

[19] Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 25.

[20] Yet, of course, this is not simply *the Moor's* story. It is also John Leo's story. Or,

In a sense, therefore, Brabantio and Desdemona are 'hosted' by the "travel's history" of the guest. Othello is a guest but not quite. He masters the master. He is a guest who "fetch[es] [his] life and being / From men of royal siege" (1.2. .21-2). If, as Derrida points out, hospitality "tends to begin by dictating the law of its language and its own acceptation of the sense of words",[21] Othello is a guest who may present himself as "rude … in [his] speech, / And little blest with the set phrase of peace" (1.3. 81-2), but nonetheless turns out to be extremely proficient in the language of the host culture (*Othello* is not *The Tempest*). In fact, one could argue that he is at first *too* proficient. It is only later on in the play that his language begins to prove inadequate: "I have not those soft parts of conversation / That *chamberers* have" (3.3. 268-9).[22] One needs to underline "chamberers". Othello does not achieve good marks on the idiom of the host culture. For instance, as Iago insists, he is not entirely familiar with the Venetian "country disposition". He is not able to discern "the pranks" of Venetian women (3.3. 205-6).[23]

I now want to consider Desdemona's position more fully. From Brabantio's point of view, she is clearly an 'object' likely to be stolen and corrupted, an item of his household over which he exercises his—necessarily anxious—jealous mastery. As such an object without agency, "still and quiet" (1.3. 95), she cannot give hospitality. She is herself a guest, a temporary resident who has put on hold "the wealthy curled darlings of [the Venetian] nation" (1.2. 68). As a guest, she

rather, it is John Pory's narration of John Leo's story. In his preface "To the Reader", the translator John Pory describes John Leo as "by birth a Moor and by religion a Mahumetan, but of noble lineage and converted to Christianity". He speaks of his being captured by Italian pirates, and recounts how "the Pirates presented him and his Booke unto Pope Leo the tenth", who "esteeming of him as of a most rich and invaluable prize … greatly reioiced at his arrivall, and gave him most kinde entertainement and liberall maintenance", as well as his own name.

[21] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 7.

[22] My emphasis.

[23] Yet, one could argue that the other, in terms of sexual difference, in relation to which Othello's masculinity defines itself is always problematic, whether she is construed as a Christian Venetian woman or as a Muslim woman from 'Barbary' (i.e. North Africa). Leo Africanus's description of the women of North Africa is crucial to an understanding of Othello's masculine anxiety. See Calbi, "Speaking in Terror", 78-79.

comes and goes in her father's house. She is keen, exceedingly keen, on Othello's story. "[W]ith a greedy ear" she "devour[s] up [Othello's] discourse" (1.3. 149-50), which shows the extent to which the violation of hospitality, at least from the point of view of the Law of the Father, is figured through the openings of a woman's body. Yet, "the house-affairs would draw her thence, / And ever as she could with haste dispatch, / She'ld come again" (1.3. 147-9). As Desdemona comes and goes in the house, there are interruptions and dilations, gaps and sighs: desire cannot be far behind. Or, rather, Desdemona crosses the line which sets desire and identification apart. She wants the man who tells the story; she wants to *be* the man who tells the story — the ambiguity of "she wish'd / That heaven had made her such a man" (1.3. 162-3). She wants to welcome the man who tells the story; she wants to be the man who is welcomed as a guest but hosts the story.[24]

Desdemona is a guest but not quite, a hostess but not quite. It is this incessant affirmation of the 'dis-placement' of the roles of host and guest — what may be called 'un-mooring' — that I want to associate with love. Is love the chance hospitality awaits? Does it stand a chance? This brings me back to Derrida, to the end of his essay on "Hostipitality". Derrida, against misunderstandings of his position, argues as follows:

> In saying that hospitality always in some way does the opposite of what it pretends to do and immobilizes itself on the threshold of itself,… I am not claiming that hospitality is this double bind or this aporetic contradiction and that therefore wherever hospitality is, there is no hospitality. No, I am saying that … hospitality can only take place beyond hospitality … overcoming the hospitality that paralyzes itself on the threshold which it is…. [H]ospitality awaits its chance.... *In this sense hospitality is always to come, but a "to come" that does not and will never present itself as such*, in the present.... *To think hospitality from the future ... is to think hospitality from death* no less than from birth.[25]

[24] Let's not forget that, qua 'foreigner', she *herself* is questioned in the council chamber scene.

[25] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 14. My emphasis. After this, Derrida refers to the

Derrida'a argument here is extremely complex. I will remain on the threshold of this citation. One might want to re-read the long-standing, often prurient, debate on whether Othello and Desdemona ever consummate their marriage — the interruption at the Sagittar; the "brawl" which erupts in Cyprus in Act II — in the light of Derrida's remarks. "The profit … 'twixt [Othello] and [Desdemona]" is "yet to come" (2.3. 10). It remains … to come, indefinitely. It doesn't present itself as such. It undermines from within the *economy* of hospitality. The hospitality of love, the text seems to be saying, can take place only on condition that it maintains an "unhoused … condition" (1.2. 26). It can only take place, in other words, by taking the place of *the* place, if by 'place' one means the ground of ipseity, the security of the presence to oneself as *either* host *or* guest. Paradoxically, it is precisely in the name of love, of his love for Desdemona, that Othello is prepared to "put into circumscription and confine" his "unhoused free condition" (1.2. 26-7). Yet, for the moment, I want to stop on this side of the threshold of a domestic and domesticated love, which will replace the 'place-lessness' and bring to the surface violence and murderous fantasies, in order to recall the meeting of the lovers on the shore of the island of Cyprus, where Othello welcomes Desdemona ("Oh my fair warrior") who welcomes him ("My dear Othello!") (2.1. 182) to be welcomed again: "Once more well met at Cyprus" (2.1. 212). This may indeed be called a 're-cypro-cal' gesture of welcoming. There is, therefore, hospitality on the shore, in this in-between, liminal place where Othello rejoices in a "content so absolute" (2.1. 191) that doesn't seem to require any addition. The Moor announces: "If it were now to die, / 'Twere now to be most happy" (2.1. 189). Yet, Desdemona calls for more, for an impossible "increase / Even as our days do grow" (2.1. 194-5). Ania Loomba reads Desdemona's demand for the impossible as contributing to Othello's masculine anxiety.[26] Yet it seems to me that this speech, as well as the scene as a whole, can be interpreted differently. First of all, it marks once again the displacement of rigid gender and sexual identities (e.g. Desdemona's active role in asking for

protagonists of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* as examples of "comrades-in-death".

[26] Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*, 48-62.

'more'). Second, even as it proleptically points towards the death that takes place in the fifth act, it inscribes the possibility of a supplement to death as *jouissance* or *jouissance* as death, a supplement to death that *presents* itself. It suggests, to refer to Othello's previous lines, that it is possible for the "the winds [to] blow, till they have waken'd death" (2.1. 185-6). This is, indeed, the poetical way in which the lovers begin "to think [the] hospitality [of love] from death", from death to come, from a death which is always *à venir*.[27]

I now want to move from the seashore to the castle, from the nomadic to the sedentary. Once in Cyprus, Othello attempts to finalise his project of "put[ting] into circumscription" and confine his "unhoused free condition" (1.2. 26-7). This goes hand in hand with a recasting of himself as the new master of the household, a jealous host with a white mask. Othello, to an extent, replaces Brabantio. Woken up in the middle of the night by what he calls a "barbarous brawl" (2.3. 163), he marks his 'Christian' distance from the Ottoman 'other' just vanquished by a providential storm: "Are we turned Turks?" (2.3. 161). He appeals to the 'propriety' of the island (2.3. 167). He ostracises the Turk he *is* in some chapter of his "travel's history". He closes off the door to the multiplicity of identities he hosts. Or, rather, he keeps one of his selves, his Ottoman self, inside as an outsider, enacting the logic of the crypt as described by Derrida.[28]

After the dismissal of Cassio, Othello's hospitality becomes synonymous with male bonding. He only welcomes Iago, the 'honest Iago'. He goes as far as to utter some kind of marriage vows: "I am bound to thee forever" (3.3. 218), which are reciprocated by Iago later on: "I am your own for ever" (3.3. 486). If Desdemona "devour[ed] up [Othello's] discourse" with a "greedy ear"(1.3. 149-50), Othello now absorbs little by little the "pestilence" Iago "pour[s] into his ear" (2.3. 347). In order to undermine the image of Othello qua white host, Iago mainly uses two forms of "pestilence" which are juxtaposed to one another. First of all, he repeatedly brings to the fore the Islamic and black 'enemy within', the one who subterranously resides in

[27] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 14.

[28] Cf. Derrida, "Fors", trans. Barbara Johnson, *The Georgia Review* 31 (1977), 64-116.

Othello's household. He successfully forces Othello into an identification with it, while implying that this identification is nothing but a regression. One might go as far as to argue that Iago has in mind some kind of symbolic repatriation of the Moor:

> *Iago.* Sir, there is especial command come from Venice,
> to depute Cassio in Othello's place.
> *Rod.* Is that true? Why then Othello and Desdemona
> return again to Venice.
> *Iago.* O no, he goes into Mauritania, and takes away
> with him the fair Desdemona.
> (4.2. 220-25)

Iago suggests, here and elsewhere in the play, that Desdemona is metaphorically black, inextricably associated with the negatively connoted mark of blackness. For Desdemona "not to affect many proposed matches, / Of her own clime, complexion and degree" (3.3. 233-4) is a sign of "a will most rank / Foul disproportion; thoughts unnatural" (3.3. 236-7). Indeed, Iago's second — and related — form of "pestilence" is tantamount to insinuating over and over again that the 'fair' hostess Desdemona keeps on welcoming men, and that she does this through the back door of the master's household. I will only cite the first instance:

> *Oth.* Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?
> *Iago.* Cassio my Lord? … no, sure, I cannot think it
> That he would sneak away so guilty-like,
> Seeing you coming.
> (3.3. 39-41)

From this moment on, any request on Desdemona's part that Othello "name the time" (3.3. 63) of the welcoming back of Cassio cannot but backfire.

As I have argued, one of the effects of Iago's "pestilence" is that Othello is seduced into seeing himself, through the eyes of a demonising Other, as an abject black and Islamic guest, as a "fixed" stereotypical "figure" (4.2. 55). It is from this perspective that he begins to observe and judge Desdemona, too. His wife's liberality, the fact that

she is "fair, feeds well, loves company" (3.3. 188), turns into a damning sign of inappropriate hospitality. Her hand becomes "a liberal hand" (3.4. 42) which gives hospitality by giving away the hospitality of her lord and master. For Othello, she remains in *errance*. She keeps on 'erring'. She becomes the "extravagant and wheeling stranger / Of here and everywhere" (1.1. 136-7) Roderigo accuses the Moor of being earlier on in the play. As such, she continually and by definition makes mistakes of judgement. Towards the end, she is seen as a warder at the gate, but the gates are those of hell:

> *Oth.* I took you for that cunning whore of Venice,
> That married with Othello: you, mistress,
> That have the office opposite Saint Peter,
> And keeps the gates in hell.
> (4.2. 94).

Through the two interconnected strategies I have indicated, Iago attempts to contain the question of the foreigner(s). Taking on the role of stage-director of Shakespeare's play, he transforms the Moorish guest who hosts the story of his host(s) into a submissive and patient listener: "Confine yourself but in a patient list" (4.1. 75); "encave yourself" (4.1. 81). As Othello passively listens, inside the story which is Shakespeare's *Othello* but now as an outsider, the "tale" is told "anew" (4.1. 84) again and again. As many critics have pointed out, this is a tale which points towards an 'ob-scene' off-stage scene which is simultaneously hidden and displayed and can only be glimpsed through some kind of *jalousie*.[29] For my purposes here, I only want to point out that Othello, confined to the position of the voyeuristic guest who peeps through the keyhole into his own household / unconscious, is repeatedly shown what it is impossible to see:

> *Iago.* [B]ut, how, how satisfied, my lord?

[29] See especially Michael Neill, "Unproper Beds: Race, Adultery, and the Hideous in *Othello*", *Shakespeare Quaterly* 40 (1989), 383-412 and Patricia Parker, "*Othello* and *Hamlet*: Dilation, Spying, and the 'Secret Place' of Woman", *Representations* 44 (1993), 60-95.

> Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on,
> Behold her topp'd …?
> It were a tedious difficulty, I think,
> To bring 'em to that prospect …
> If ever mortal eyes did see them bolster
> More than their own; what then, how then?
> What shall I say? where's satisfaction?
> It is impossible you should see this,
> Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys.
> (3.3. 400-9)

In other words, Iago, also by relating Cassio's dream, continually lures Othello to the "door of truth" (3.3. 413) in order to offer a glimpse, from the 'racist' perspective the Moor himself is forced to incorporate, of what hospitality without any doors — the impossible itself — might look like. Hospitality without any doors: this is what Derrida calls unconditional hospitality, a kind of hospitality whereby "anyone can come at any time and can come in without needing a key for the door".[30] It is worth clarifying that, as Othello "grossly gape[s] on", it is not simply the 'sodomitical' copulation of Cassio and Desdemona which is diplayed and hidden from view. In a play such as *Othello*, whose language incessantly travels and whose central trope is substitution, the 'impossible scene' is a 'primal scene' of 'perverted' hospitality in which an endless series of partners alternate through multiple identifications; in which homoeroticism and heteroeroticism endlessly circulate and replace one another: Cassio and Desdemona, Othello and Desdemona, Othello and Iago, Cassio and Iago, Othello and Cassio, Iago and Desdemona, Othello and Emilia, Cassio and Emilia, and so on. Without any doors or boundaries, the inhospitable Iago suggests, there can only be a multiplication of forms of obscene and pornographic hospitality. This kind of hospitality is disruptive of all types of thresholds. It is austerely rejected and yet highly fantasised in the unconscious of the host culture.[31]

[30] Derrida, 'Hostipitality', 14.

[31] This does not mean that unconditional hospitality is without risks, quite the contrary. As Derrida argues, "to be hospitable is to let oneself be overtaken, to be ready not

At the end of the play, after murdering Desdemona by tragically adopting the perspective of hospitality as a relation between men which *de facto* excludes him, or includes him only in a subordinate role,[32] Othello momentarily takes back the power of narration: "Soft you, a word or two" (5.2. 339). He speaks of, as well as from, the multiplicity of positions he hosts (i.e. the Christian Venetian general, the "base Indian" or Judean, the Arabian, the "turban'd Turk"), even if this multiplicity has now become equivalent to a schizophrenic division.[33] In fact, he writes the last chapter of his "travel's history" in blood: "O bloody period" (5.2. 358) is Lodovico's reaction as Othello stabs himself. Paradoxically, he attempts to heal his schizophrenic split by opening a fatal wound in his body, and he does so for his body and blood to bear the value of testimony and thus be hosted in another story: "I pray you in your letters, / When you shall these unlucky deeds relate" (5.2. 341-2); "then must you speak" (5.2. 344); "set you down this, / And say besides" (5.2. 352-3). The play itself ends with the word "relate", as Lodovico announces: "Myself will straight aboard, and to the state / This heavy act with heavy heart relate" (5.2. 371-2).

This article has tried to respond to the foreign other's tragic invitation to "speak" and "relate". More generally, I have attempted to answer *Othello*'s call by reading it as an emblematic tragedy of hospitality. Yet I have also suggested that there are a few 'asynchronous moments' in which the hospitality of love produces itself affirmatively as the impossible and, by doing so, shakes the law of the household and its 'de-limitations', borrowing its resources from a time which the text inscribes within itself as irrevocably 'other'.

to be ready … to be surprised, in a fashion almost violent, violated and raped, stolen … precisely where one is not ready to receive" (Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, 361). Also, Derrida ends his essay *Of Hospitality* with two biblical episodes by means of which he raises the question of whether one can place the unconditional law of hospitality above a certain ethics and politics. See Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 149-55.

[32] "Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men" (5.2. 6). Cf. Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*, 59.

[33] Cf. 5.2. 345-57. "Iudean" is the Folio reading.

Marta Cariello

Bad Audience and Perfect Guests

Iago's Hospitality

Within the discourse on hospitality in and around Shakespeare, I wish to focus on a fundamental dimension of the Shakespearean text: its theatrical matrix. As Serpieri points out:

> A semiotic reading of the dramatic text must be aware not only of the cultural pragmatics of its historical context, but also of the potential pragmatics of the *stage* relationships that are inscribed in the strictly verbal make-up of the text itself.[1]

Stage relationships occur between characters, *within* the text, but they are, too, relationships between the text and the audience.[2] The theatre is the place where this encounter takes place, between the spectator and the performance. The relationship that is born from this encounter undeniably varies, but there seems to be, at the bottom, a

[1] Alessandro Serpieri, "Reading the Signs", in John Drakakis, *Alternative Shakespeares* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), 122.

[2] I use the term "audience" as well as spectator, here and throughout the text, aware of the complexity of both terms and of the debate over the various definitions given in spectator studies, audience reception theories and so forth. For a detailed analysis of this discussion, see J. A. Anderson, "The Pragmatics of Audience in Research and Theory" and Martin Allor, "The Politics of Producing Audiences", both in James Hay, Lawrence Grossberg, and Ellen Wartella (eds.), *The Audience and its Landscape* (Boulder: Westview, 1996). These two texts discuss the category of *audience* within the frame of media studies and mass communications, but provide an interesting insight on the instability of the concept of "audience".

work of exchange, an offering and a receiving, which rings very close in its gestures to hospitality. Is the relationship between a play and the audience a relation of hospitality? Surely something is given (the representation, and the more the performer 'gives', the better the representation); this same thing is received (kindly or badly, it makes no difference, it is still received), and in return a 'disposition' is offered: 'I come to the theatre and listen to you, I give you my time (and money) and I applaud you if I like you'. There is certainly an economy of hospitality at work.[3] This not only confirms the close relationship between the dramatic text and the genre of hospitality, it also raises the necessity of an investigation into how and why hospitality is represented in the dramatic text.

Greek tragedy itself was born out of the mythical violation of hospitality carried out by Atreus against his brother, Thyestes. Atreus kills Thyestes' sons and feeds them to Thyestes during a banquet. The memory of this horrendous murder weighs on the Atridi family and on his two sons, Agamemnon and Menelaus; Agamemnon will sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, then will himself be killed by his wife Clytemnestra who will then be murdered by her son Orestes. Within five generations and within a relatively small family, the most monstrous crimes are carried out; siblings murder each other, spouses slaughter each other, offspring and parents massacre each other, and any kind of family relation stands on uncertain ground.

This ultimate form of violation of hospitality – feeding one's brother his sons at a banquet (which interestingly enough is present is Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*) – leads to an endless series of tragic events, of Tragedies. In Greek tragedies fate is at the center of the stage, man's destiny *is* tragedy, the inevitable destiny after the crimes, after the violation. In Shakespeare, though there is a destiny, a fate that awaits or comes towards the tragic hero, it is man (hardly ever woman) who is at the center, or better his questioning of his relationship with destiny. In this abrupt shift from the Greeks to Shakespeare, one red line traces the route: that of violation. Violation of a rule, of a body, of a reign, of virginity, is very often at the root of the Shakespearean text. Violation of hospitality is at the root of Othello.

In Venice, Othello is a guest. A *wanted* guest, until he violates the laws of hospitality by 'robbing' Barbantio of his daughter ("She is abused, stol'n from me", 1.3. 73), by robbing the white girl of her purity, and the Western world of its integrity.

"What does that mean, *this step too many*, and transgression [?]" Derrida asks, and goes further: "[does] the crossing of a threshold always remain a trangressive step?" and, "where do these strange processes of hospitality lead?" His answer is that "it is as though we were going from one difficulty to another. Better or worse, and more seriously, from impossibility to impossibility."[4]

Othello is a stranger, not only because of the evidence of his unspecified 'dark' skin, but also through his continuous 'self-presentations'. As Derrida (again) explains: "the question of the stranger is above all else a question *to* the stranger (who are you? Where do you come from? Where do you want to come to?)".[5] Othello answers continually, throughout the text, these silent questions; he tells us his story, which is apparently what has made Desdemona fall into his arms:

Oth: Her father loved me, oft invited me,
Still questioned me the story of my life
From year to year -, the battles, sieges, fortunes
That I have passed.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days
To th' very moment that he bade me tell it
[...]
(1.3. 145-154)

Othello is a stranger, then, and as such he trespasses the limits set by the laws of hospitality. He takes us from impossibility to impossibility. Out of his violation tragedy is born, and though he might seem to

[3] It might be more appropriate in this case to speak of what Kaufmann, following Klossowski, refers to as "gift", differing from the concept of hospitality as "absolute reciprocity", which "would entail a willingness to engage in a different form of encounter, one where the very identity of the interlocutor is at stake". (Eleanor Kaufmann, *The Delirium of Praise*, Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press, 2001, 131).

[4] Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 75.
[5] Ibid.

regain a status of respectability by virtue of Desdemona's confession of love, he isn't really fully accepted, truly hosted. Othello is bound for tragedy, and that unique servant/puppet master by the name of Iago pulls his strings all the way to his tragic ending.

It is Iago who orchestrates the tragedy, who literally directs the action on stage.

Iago is widely recognized as perhaps the most explicit of Shakespeare's director-characters, the list of which is not short and may certainly include Richard III, perhaps Enobarbus, Prospero of course. Without analyzing all the various and very fascinating studies made on the reasons for Iago's behavior and the nature of his hatred, what is interesting for my discussion is the way these typically Shakespearean figures of director-characters 'open' the text, in an invitation to see, and somewhat participate in the making of the action, of the play, of the meaning.

Laura Di Michele writes that "the dramatic discourses that arise from Shakespeare's genius seem to want to propose something the realization of which is possible only with the actual textual cooperation of the spectator/reader".[6] We are back to the metaphor of the theatre, back to the difficult invitation that links spectacle and spectator, that invitation that stands at the threshold, at the entrance of the theatre.

Renaissance theatre was an extremely 'open' space, in the sense that it assembled a multitude of different people, belonging to different social classes, and especially the lower-middle class. Artisans and merchants, but also illiterate, vagabonds, prostitutes crowded the public theatres of the early modern period. Theatrical experience was part of everyday life and was the space where a number of different social activities took place. Moreover, Katherine Maus explains that "Renaissance culture is a culture that tended to conceive of theatrical experience in erotic terms".[7] Maus' discourse may appear out of context here, as it points out the analogy between the positions of the early modern spectator and the very frequent

[6] Laura Di Michele, "Testi nel Testo", in Laura Di Michele, *Aspetti di Othello* (Napoli: Liguori, 1996), 245 (my translation).

[7] Katharine E. Maus, "Horns of Dilemma: Jealousy, Gender, and Spectatorship in English Renaissance Drama", *ELH*, 54 (Fall 1987), 563.

figure, in early modern drama, of the jealous man, both caught in a voyeuristic type of pleasure of seeing and not being seen. However, there is an aspect of this jealousy that relates to hospitality. Maus talks about the "distance and intimacy" which are experienced simultaneously by both the betrayed man who sees the act of betrayal, and the spectator. Distance and intimacy are also, it seems to me, characteristics of hospitality. The stranger feels distance and intimacy while she/he is *in* but not *of* the host country. Distance and intimacy are also what the spectator/guest feels towards the spectacle, which invites him/her to partake in the making of the action, yet does not – and perhaps cannot – erase the distance between actors and audience.

Iago, as we have seen, stands in the middle of this space, and through his invitation, becomes the host. He invites the spectator to see 'behind the scenes' of his constructions, and, like a good artist, tells us how his creations are born and the shape they take, when he tells Othello in a unique moment of true honesty:

> Iago: […] it is my nature's plague
> To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
> Shapes faults that are not.
> (3.3. 172-174)

The very nature of Iago's constructions is, as Annamaria Morelli points out, verbal in the first part of the play, and visual in the second, when the action moves to Cyprus. Iago, however, solidly maintains his position as host, first narrating and then directing the spectator's gaze onto the visions he produces. The gaze of the audience is filtered through Iago, which amounts to saying that it is filtered through dramatic representation. Iago at this point becomes the theatre, and the theatre itself is host to an audience that wants to be tricked. The audience finds itself in the same position as Othello, when Iago 'puts up the scene' of his own conversation with Cassio, giving Othello precise indications of what his interpretation should be, and doing the same with the audience in his *aside*:

> Iago: […] Do encave yourself,
> And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns
> That dwell in every region of his face.

> [...]
> As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad,
> And his unbookish jealousy must construe
> Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behaviors
> Quite in the wrong.
> (4.1. 96-98; 117-120)

Clearly, then, Iago opens a space within the text which is the space of theatrical representation. This concept of 'opening' a text is worth elaborating, as it is a key element not only specifically of Othello, but also perhaps of a much wider and more essential question, namely the question of how to read Shakespeare, and whether to look for a Shakespeare at the origin. Open texts exceed their borders, not only on a horizontal level, but also vertically and in every direction. The openings, rippings and holes perhaps constitute some kind of see-through origin.

Exceeding, spilling out, as Morelli tells us, is characteristic of the Shakespearean text, as is also intrinsic to baroque poetics. The suggestion that makes its way through the path drawn by the Shakespearean text on one side and baroque aesthetics on the other is that perhaps theatre itself is excessive. Theatre exceeds, spills out – from the stage and into the audience – an excess that *is* the audience itself. The audience is the excess of representation, coming back to it with a request, almost a longing. This resembles Derrida's stranger-guest always arriving with a question. Coming from an outside that is always, too, inside. And the relationship of interdependence is the same; there can be no spectacle without spectator, no spectator without spectacle, no guest without host and no host without guest.

Hospitality's double movement

The space opened by Iago, or by the nature itself of dramatic representation, also sets a distance between spectator and spectacle, which partly excludes the spectator from the action, in the simultaneity of distance and intimacy that Maus proposes for the spectator/voyeur. But this distance also seems to constitute a 'safety zone', which can in a way 'excuse' the passivity of the spectator, who

is partly authorized, by this distance, to 'receive' an interpretation instead of producing one. The audience may not take responsibility at the end of things for what is being represented, for the meanings that are being produced.

What is the nature, then, of the spectator's *participation* in the play? The very notion of participation needs to be analyzed in its complexity. It is what Anthony B. Dawson proposes, referring to the specifically Anglican form of *participation*, and suggesting that "the Elizabethan theatre absorbed and recast the rituals of pre-Reformation England, and the social desires that those rituals codified and enacted".[8] Following Hooker's reading of the Anglican Eucharist ritual as insisting on both presence (for the Catholic doctrine body and blood 'really' replace bread and wine) and representation (for the Reformed Protestants participation in the Eucharist is a matter of *reception*, of audience response and transformation, thus of representation), Dawson suggests that "in Shakespearean theatre, analogous habits of thought are in play, transferred to a secular realm". According to Dawson,

> The real and unreal presence of the actor's body is always sanctioned by meta-theatrical mediations: audience awareness of "personation" is always in play, while at the same time there is a forceful insistence on the value and meaning of theatrical experience. There seems to be a constant oscillation between two different and opposing constructions of the theatre, on one hand as mediated, self-conscious, meta-theatrical, on the other as immediate and present. Participation, involving presence and representation in the ritualized act of reception, is a notion that links the two conceptions.[9]

Beside drawing attention to the ritual aspect of theatre, which is somewhat close to Freud's theatre as "game", Dawson gives a definition of *participation* which I would like to use to characterize

[8] Anthony B. Dawson, "Performance and Participation: Desdemona, Foucault, and the actor's body", in James C. Bulman, ed., *Shakespeare, Theory and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1996), 38.
[9] Ibid.

precisely that double movement within the audience, of 'cooperation' in the production of meaning, and of distance from responsibility of this same production.

The notion of "vision", proposed by Morelli as linked to ancient Christian myths of desire, also has a double meaning, just as the audience is caught in a double movement, of participation and exclusion:

> [...] Christianity on one hand deplores vision, considering it as a means for desiring, and on the other celebrates it in mysticism as the means to access true knowledge. In Western culture, after all, [...] vision is what defines the examination of an object, its verification, but at the same time also the form of illusion and trickery, of fascination.[10]

Walton writes that "the work of art [is] an invitation to an act of make-believe with the picture as a prop in a visual game".[11] Again, the notion of game is here linked with the relationship between spectacle and spectator. And a *visual* game, this time. Keeping in mind the dual characteristic of vision which we have just examined, we can relate to a work of art as a dual game, an ambiguous game. Trickery and verification at the same time. Theatrical experience feeds necessarily on both, by nature of the physical presence of actors, an unavoidable evidence, and of the invisibility of the text, which does not exist without performance.

Michael Benton, too, in his essay on the spectator's role, speaks of an intrinsic dualism of spectatorship, recounting the "numerous incarnations", that appeared especially in the 1970s, of the roles of participant and spectator as two mutually exclusive roles. Benton, with Goodrich, affirms the ambiguity of those theories according to which there can be a distinction, often hierarchical too, between spectator and participant. "This is the nub of the matter and affirms

[10] Annamaria Morelli, *La scena della visione* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1997), 12 (my translation).

[11] Kendall Walton, quoted in Michael Benton, *Studies in the Spectator Role: Literature, Painting and Pedagogy* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000,) 26.

the essential dualism of spectatorship".[12] I would argue for a synchronic movement in two opposite directions.

Vision, as we have seen, is the common trait of both audience and Othello, and it is what Iago uses to direct both Othello's and the spectator's gaze. The fact that Iago is physically present on stage as director gives the text a particularly meta-theatrical dimension. Meta-theatrical mediation, one face of participation, is the safety-zone in which the spectator dwells, perhaps envying those who 'really' are inside the action, but safe all the same.

Meta-theatrical mediation is also chosen by Bene in his re-visitation of *Othello*, but this time there is an interesting shift: Iago appears to be sick; physically sick, one almost doubts his ability to set up the scheme against Desdemona, and the mediating role between text and audience is no longer Iago's, it is the technological means chosen by Bene for his representation: television. Not only the distancing effect which television itself has on the spectator, but also the particularly visionary editing of the images constantly reminds the audience of the fiction. Iago had taken the form of theatre and host, setting the rules of hospitality to be broken by the audience/guest; now the technological means stretches its hand in the connection between audience and performance, cutting up the images and re-editing them in a broken up vision of the text. Audience participation breaks up, following the text in its leaking out of the screen. Just like the performance spills out into the theatre.

In a text like Othello, meta-theatrical mediation is particularly evident; for we witness (and we are the only ones to know, except Iago himself) the plot being constructed and carried out. In early modern England, cultural construction of a vague (and vaguely Moorish, Turkish, African) otherness was then taking a more specific shape. England was in expansion, and this generated of course the encounter with 'different' people, which in turn generated "fears of a hungrily absorptive otherness which were expressed in complementary fantasies of dangerous miscegenation", as Neill puts it. *Othello* is a very clear expression of this fear of miscegenation, this

[12] Benton, *Studies in the Spectator Role,* 17.

"unease of hybridity".[13] It seems to me that the possibility for an audience to escape into that 'safety-zone' where meta-theatrical mediation takes place must have made the theatre not only a space of pleasure (as Renaissance theatre was), but also an extremely efficacious means for the production of meanings. The meaning, in this case, of a scary yet inevitable violation: the violation of the laws of hospitality.

Hospitality dwells in the broken up rules of reciprocity, finding in theatrical performance a particularly fertile ground, caught up as it is in the game of giving and receiving, of distancing and entwining. *Othello*, the tragedy, comes through almost as a Chinese box, containing the impossibility of hospitality for Othello on the part of the West inside the meta-theatrical violation of the laws of hospitality on the part of the spectator. The spectator requesting asylum from the very entity that spilled the spectator out of the stage. A game that leads from hospitality to hospitality, from impossibility to impossibility, with Derrida.

The tragedy of the false gaze

Othello, the stranger, finds himself within a false gaze, blind in a sense, dying in a land that is not his, his own territory literally lost, never mentioned and therefore lost. Derrida talks of Oedipus' blindness as he finally seeks a place for his own burial, at the end of *Oedipus at Colonus*.[14] There might be a certain resemblance - a blindness guiding the stranger to darkness, to the crypt, inside a theatre which hosts but leaks 'falsity' into the spectator's gaze, always leading on to a ritual darkness at the end of the performance. This game of false gazes, of 'blind spots' is explained by Barbara Freedman, following Heidegger's characterization of the early modern age as an effort to conceive the world as a picture: "[...] World picture, when understood essentially, does not mean a picture

[13] Michael Neill, "Mulattos", "Blacks" and "Indian Moors": Othello and Early Modern Constructions of Human Difference', *Shakespeare Quarterly* (Winter 1998) Vol. 49, 4.

[14] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 87.

of the world but the world conceived and grasped as picture."[15] Thus, the spectator's consciousness plays a fundamental role in stage relations inside and 'outside' a play, namely in the guest-host relations that occur within the theatre. Freedman writes:

> Renaissance mirror games arrange for a flattering self-portrait to come into focus precisely in that moment when a distorted image could be relegated to a field of erring sight.[16]

In these games of "exclusionary self-fashioning"[17], the play of blind spots, of the blinded eye that is required for a 'correct' prospective view, is also what guides the exclusionary fashioning of the guest, and of the spectator. The sight of a picture, the world as a picture, to follow Heidegger, is the sight from one point of view only. It is the gaze that cannot see "from where the other is seeing"[18].

In Act 1, sc. 3, as the Venetian Senate is discussing the movements of the Turkish fleet attempting to divert the attention of the Venetian defense, one of the Senators states that these maneuvers are deceitful, and a specific metaphor is used:

> Senator 1: This cannot be
> by no assay of reason. 'Tis a pageant
> to keep us in false gaze.
> (1.3. 22-24)

The gaze, which is closely linked to the notion of vision and its fundamental role in a text like *Othello*, is also, here, associated with an adjective pervading theatrical representation itself: *false*.

The false gaze is the gaze of Othello who is deceived by Iago's constructions; the false gaze is, possibly, that of the spectator, seeing

[15] Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 129.

[16] Barbara Freedman, *Staging the Gaze, Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 7.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Jacques Lacan, quoted in Freedman, *Staging the Gaze*, 66.

all, but in a sort of 'false vision'; theatrical representation is itself always true and false at the same time, with bodies (actors) bringing about an undeniable fleshy truth, and acting out, at the same time, a reality which, by its very representational nature, is false. There is no solution and no stable point; rather, the dis-solution of true and false in the oscillating pause of theatrical representation.

Morelli points out that the Shakespearean representation of vision is outside that "which is to be seen", in Lacan's terms, imposed by perspective, or, in Cartesian terms, by the subject. Representation of vision escaping, thus, into a *false vision*, it seems. And false vision is the tragedy of this tragedy, of *Othello*. It is perhaps the tragedy of representation itself, the instability of the gaze, the 'wrong direction' that is always there waiting to be taken.

The scene in which the Senate discusses the movements of the Turkish fleet explains, in a superimposition of images, of false gazes, the whole action of the text. There is almost an analogical editing between the (false) maneuvers of the enemy fleet and the (false) maneuvers of characters in the play, moving continually in 'false steps', almost a dance of mistakes. Silvana Carotenuto writes that "[...] *Othello* remains, within the imaginary, a tragedy of 'falsities'".[19] The word 'false' recurs many times within the play and dominates, particularly, the final exchange between Emilia and Othello over Desdemona's dead body.[20] The famous Shakespearean 'double clock', in which 'playing time' and 'real time' alternate accelerating the action in Act 3 and 4, is also a 'false movement', creating the impossibility for Othello and Desdemona to have the time to know each other. Such an aquaintance would have saved Othello from believing Iago, saved him, in other words, from his false gaze.[21]

'Falsities' pervade the text, from Iago's entrance, the "second great false player"[22], to Brabantio's 'false' love for Othello, unable as he is to accept (host) him as a son in law. False movements continually deceive the viewers inside the text and the spectators outside it, once

[19] Silvana Carotenuto, "*Otello* o del falso movimento", in Laura Di Michele (ed.), *Aspetti di Otello* (Napoli: Liguori, 1996), 144.

[20] See 5.2. 135-153.

[21] Cfr. Carotenuto, "*Otello* o del falso movimento", 144.

[22] Ibid.

again through a permeable canvas which confuses its two sides because its vision is blurred, false. Othello is a tragedy of the false gaze. Concerning false perspectives and multiple viewpoints, Freedman argues:

> The Elizabethan theatre in the round offered an unusually provocative physical site for the performance of plays fascinated with subverting the truth of any private, individual, or fixed vantage point. [...] Shakespearean drama recurrently plays upon distinctions between flat and round characters, naturalistic and illusionistic acting styles, two- and three-dimensional spaces, reciprocal and non-reciprocal viewing, and individual and multiple viewpoints to figure the representational paradoxes in which Western models of subjectivity are entangled. The dream of seeing oneself seeing oneself, whether in theatre or psychoanalysis, is the fantasy of completed vision which Renaissance theatre exposes as such.[23]

The only one who is not entitled to *see*, through the gaze that is given to others, inside and outside the text, is Desdemona: she is only *seen*. There is, then, some power in gazing, of which Desdemona is deprived. She is not even a spectator, she is the excess of the excess.

I have been using the terms "false gaze" in the sense of "wrong direction", as several editions of the play suggest. This gives a specifically ethical dimension to the concept of false gaze, linking it with the Aristotelian concept of αμαρτία, "judgement mistake", as Lacan not unproblematically translates it.[24] Αμαρτία is certainly what Othello the character falls into, deceived as he is by Iago. But this "error of judgement" is something which must be more widespread in a semiotic universe in which the *gaze* is 'falsified' through a blotted out vision. Αμαρτία, then, the "wrong direction", becomes a sort of state of being inside *Othello*, inside, moreover, the Shakespearean text and perhaps early modern theatre itself. The spectator/guest has only the *gaze* as a means to access what the host is

[23] Freedman, *Staging the Gaze*, 25-26.

[24] Lacan, "L'essenza della Tragedia", in *Le Seminaire, Livre VII* (Torino: Einaudi, 1986), 127.

offering, whatever is on stage, and this gaze is inexorably false. Freedman states that by the end of Shakespeare's comedies "right and erring vision have changed places so often that we are thoroughly confused about what does and should constitute right vision."[25] Moreover, "both tragedy and comedy play upon this display of another's blindness. In the tragic we identify with the one seen as unseeing."[26]

Iago, the host, offers a play of αμαρτία to an almost blind audience, including Othello. Katherine Maus describes Othello's tragic mistake in the drama as "the mistake of a bad audience". A bad audience is a perfect guest for Iago.

[25] Freedman, *Staging the Gaze,* 24.
[26] Ibid., 75.

Manuela Coppola

"Gatekeepers of hell": Desdemona's impossible hospitality

You! Mistress!
That have the office opposite to Saint Peter
And keep the gates of hell
(4.2. 92-94)

An interesting essay by Paul Kottman defines "everyday hospitality" as "an *opening* (of heart, home, mind) which allows something to come in and have a place (a guest, an idea) or *take* place".[1] Such a definition presupposes the idea of ipseity in relation to hospitality; as Emile Benveniste has argued, the Latin word *hostis*, host, contains the root **pet* deriving from the Indo-European word **patih* (master, husband), connected to a whole semantic chain related to power (*potis*), possession (*pot-sedere*), authority (*despotes*), identity (*ipse*).[2] The *hostis*/host is thus defined as 'the lord of the guest', the legitimate master of the house and thus the only figure allowed to offer hospitality.

As a matter of fact, the necessary conditions for hospitality are a place (a house, a castle, a kingdom) and a master exerting power over it. Significantly, the very etymology of *domus* is connected to a place that has to be appropriated and *dominated* by a *dominus*. As Jacques Derrida describes hospitality as an obligation, a right, and a duty

[1] Paul Kottman, "Hospitality in the Interval: *Macbeth*'s Door", *The Oxford Literary Review* 18 (1996), 89.
[2] Emile Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966).

regulated by the law (the law of the household, the *oikonomia*), it can only take place as long as the conditions of welcoming the other are defined by "*he* who receives, who is the master in *his* house, in *his* household, in *his* state, ... in *his* city ..., who remains master in *his* house".[3] Hospitality as the affirmation of an exclusively male ipseity decidedly posits women at the margins of what can be defined as *active* hospitality; excluded from the sphere of power, they are merely deployed as *instruments* of male assimilation in a foreign body, exchange objects in the economy of hospitality. Conventional hospitality is part of such an economy of exchange based on rigidly codified roles. Strangers and women both appear as a threat to the ordered microcosm of the master's house, thus requiring a domestication of their alterity according to an established set of rules and rituals. As we will see, Othello *and* Desdemona disrupt such laws of hospitality by questioning the roles and the very definitions of host and guest. Yet, Desdemona fails to go beyond conventional hospitality. Unable to realize the shift from the door as the space of inclusion/exclusion controlled by the master, I will argue that she is doomed to the demonic liminality of "gatekeeper of hell", where hospitality cannot take place.

Women's inhospitable body

Many scholars recognise that there was a 'crisis of order' in early modern England; as Karen Newman points out, "the fear that women were rebelling against their traditional subservient role in patriarchal culture was widespread".[4] Anxiety over the subversion of gender roles was assuaged through an ideologically structured system of representation in which women's behaviour was constantly supervised by the male gaze. Since women were continuously submitted to ocular control, transparency was considered one of the most valuable qualities in a woman, in the assurance that her physical

[3] Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality", *Angelaki* 5.3 (2000), 4, emphases added.

[4] Karen Newman, *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 40.

beauty was mirrored by her moral values. The lack of coincidence between outside and inside proves to be a disturbing and dangerous elusion of control; as a container of Othello's honour, Desdemona presents herself as dangerously 'open' to her husband. Othello establishes the connection between female openness and desire when he affirms that Desdemona's frank and liberal hand signals the openness of a woman and her sexual appetite:

OTHELLO Give me your hand. This hand is moist, my lady.
DESDEMONA It yet hath felt no age, nor known no sorrow.
OTHELLO This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart:
Hot, hot, and moist. This hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout,
For here's a young and sweating devil, here,
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,
A frank one.[5]

Her permeability threatens him so that her body needs to be interrogated and deciphered, "but the voyeuristic gaze encounters only the opaque surfaces of the body".[6]

Othello's association of the idealized virtuous woman with crystalline transparency testifies to his anxiety about women's destabilizing desire. After he has murdered Desdemona he states that "Had she been true, / If Heaven would make me such another world / Of one entire and perfect chrysolite, / I'd not have sold her for it" (5.2. 139-142), thus revealing his obsession with what cannot be seen. As a matter of fact, the menacing aspect of women lies in their very opaqueness, since the 'openings' of their anatomy conceal and hide [her] 'essence'.[7]

[5] William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann (Arden, 1997), 3.4. 36-43. All references are to this edition.

[6] Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed", in Margaret Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan and Nancy Vickers, eds., *Rewriting the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 136.

[7] As Dympna Callaghan has stated, "Opaque femininity is hypostatised as demonic.

The ambiguity of the ocular surveillance women were subjected to parallels the obsession in early modern England with things done in secret; the activity of delators, informers, and spies crowding Elizabethan and Jacobean courts resonates in *Othello* in the play's concern about the disclosure of the 'secrets' of women and their 'privy' or 'close' place, revealing what Patricia Parker defines "the quasi-pornographic discourse of anatomy and early modern gynaecology that seeks to bring a hidden or secret place into light".[8] Yet, as Parker has noted, "[w]hat is in this almost literal sense finally exposed or brought to light – the hidden place of Desdemona's sexuality and her 'crime' (5.2. 7) – is, almost as soon as it is shown, re-hidden and re-closed".[9]

As a matter of fact, Iago exemplifies such dynamics of showing and hiding in his contemporary invitation to and prohibition of the ocular. The projection mechanism enacted by Iago shows the conflation of hidden and hideous in relation to Desdemona's inside, reinscribing her anatomy as a disgusting and indistinct object/abject. Othello's "violent abjection of the feminine body as a dark matrix or

Woman, as a category of excess, paradoxically always poses the problem of being or having an 'essence that's not seen'" (4.1. 16). *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy: A Study of* King Lear, Othello, The Duchess of Malfi *and* The White Devil (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), 116.

[8] Patricia Parker, "*Othello* and *Hamlet*: Dilation, Spying and the 'Secret Place' of Women", *Representation* 44 (1993), 60. She also argues that in the 'close dilations' referred to in the Temptation Scene, 'close' is understood as 'secret' and 'private' in a sexual sense, "a hidden place that only through opening could be displayed or 'shown'", 64. Lidia Curti also analyses ocular inspection in relation to Hamlet's obsession with women's 'mystery', the unexplored country of the impossible return to his mother's womb. "Tracce intervalli indugi", in Lidia Curti, ed., *Ombre di un'ombra: Amleto e i suoi fantasmi* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1994).

[9] Ibid., 71. Patricia Parker has widely discussed the dynamics of showing and hiding in *Othello*. She assumes that Othello's travel dilations and Iago's manipulation of the ocular 'evidence' of a Venetian woman's *crime* are part of the play's obsession with offstage events and the desire to 'bring to light' both the *secrets* of a woman and the troublesome origins of a stranger, in a "chiastic crossing of foreign and domestic, exotic and sexual". Parker, "Fantasies of 'Race' and 'Gender'. Africa, *Othello* and Bringing to Light", in Margo Hendriks and Patricia Parker, eds., *Women, 'Race' and Writing in the Early Modern Period* (London: Routledge, 1994), 92.

place of origin"[10] transfigures Desdemona's womb in "a cistern for foul toads / To knot and gender in" (4.2. 62-63).

The disgust and fear for women's obscure and 'secret place' is – according to Julia Kristeva – the fear of the indistinct abject which lies in the 'reproductive chaos' of the womb, in the disorder and blackness of her corporeal cavity. The uncanniness of the womb derives from its being "familiar – as it embodies a return to something where each of us has been – and mysterious at the same time, representing that which cannot be known, or even *looked at*".[11] The construction of women as obscure/obscene creatures, vulnerable and mutable, whose very anatomy deceives, implies the representation of the female body as dark and disorderedly, naturally *grotesque*: an inhospitable 'cistern for foul toads'.

Women came to signify an unrepresentable void, a black and empty cavity where each 'opening' could be filled with white, male discourse. The primary concern about women was thus taming their wilderness through a constant surveillance upon three areas: the mouth, sexual organs and the threshold of the house. As Peter Stallybrass has pointed out, the three areas were often connected, so that a silent woman, with her mouth closely shut, came to be a symbol of chastity.[12] Not only do doors and windows represent the liminal space where hospitality can or cannot take place, the limit of exclusion or inclusion, but they can also be seen as a metaphor for women's dangerous 'openness'.

The ordered macrocosm of the State was mirrored by the domestic microcosm, and the family became one of the main institutions of control. Fathers exercised their power over their daughters' bodies to preserve the family's – and thus the whole community's – order.[13]

[10] Philippa Berry, *Shakespeare's Feminine Endings: Disfiguring Death in the Tragedies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 99.

[11] Curti, *Female Bodies, Female Stories: Narrative, Identity, and Representation* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 109.

[12] Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories", 126-127.

[13] Yet, since women were regarded as being morally inferior to men, parental authority was never shared. Significantly, Desdemona's mother is absent as many other Shakespearean mothers are; either she is dead or just ininfluential, she is once again silenced and repressed.

Iago and Roderigo shouting under Brabantio's windows, wanting to know whether his doors were safely locked, are referring not only – of course – to his material goods;[14] Iago is also hinting at his daughter's chastity since his own preoccupation with 'proper' places and openings reveals deep anxieties about sexuality.[15] Moreover, Othello himself is quite significantly disturbed not by Desdemona's words but rather by her corporeal openings: "It is not words that shake me thus. Pish! Noses, ears and lips. Is't possible? Confess? handkerchief? O devil!" (4.1. 41-43).

The dangerous passages opened by these female corporeal parts are necessarily to be disciplined and ritually closed. The thresholds of the female body require a constant male surveillance since they are bound to be improperly filled; Desdemona's excessive sexuality results disturbing even for her husband as she is represented devouring his travel accounts with a 'greedy ear'.[16] Desdemona's ears have already been penetrated by Othello's charming dilations, confirming the necessity for the female body to be enclosed and for all its orifices to be cleansed, in order to emphasize "the borders of a closed individuality".[17] Yet, as Desdemona's sexuality has not been contained within the domestic space of paternal authority, she has been contaminated and identified with Othello's monstrosity.[18].

[14] The notion of the unstable nature of woman and wealth is here underlined by the fact that, being an unmarried woman, Desdemona was considered her father's property.

[15] The anxiety about the play's threatening sexuality is sublimated in an early nineteenth-century caricature through the transformation of Desdemona into an obese black woman; what Michael Neill sees only as the expression of the racial fear and revulsion the play provokes, also reveals male's anxiety about women's dangerous openings, since the caricature represents Desdemona with her "snoring mouth grotesquely agape". Michael Neill, "Unproper Beds: Race, Adultery, and the Hideous in *Othello*", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40.4 (1989), 391.

[16] Newman, "'And Wash the Ethiop White': Femininity and the Monstrous in *Othello*", in J. E. Howard and M. F. O'Connor, eds., *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1987), 152.

[17] Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories", 125.

[18] Karen Newman has been one of the first scholars to underline the association of black and female in a common 'monstrosity'; both Othello's and Desdemona's 'monstrous' sexuality represent a threat to the white sexual norm. Moreover, they are both caught in a discourse of lack; stereotyped representations of vulnerable, mutable and credulous women and black men are connected to the idea of *naturally* void creatures

Moreover, as she deviates from the sex/race norms of her time, Desdemona is twice punished; not only does her desire display a threatening non-phallic sexuality, but it is also a desire for a racially different male body.[19] If Christopher Norris has pointed out that *Othello* criticism can be seen as an effort to reduce "the unruly energies of the text to a stable order of significance",[20] Ania Loomba has underlined that such a stability could only be achieved by the simultaneous exclusion of both gender and race.[21] Loomba argues that many critics have ignored the question of race, presenting *Othello* merely as a play about jealousy, and have misrepresented women, sustaining Iago's misogynistic view. Though Othello's blackness had been a problem for critics,[22] historical evidence of racism in the Elizabethan period has provided a frame in which the "black presence was both perceived and constructed as a threat by the state".[23] Besides an old tradition of hatred and diffidence towards blacks, Loomba traces "a more complex ideology of racism" shaped by the new mercantile and colonial situation. Moreover, Daniel Viktus has convincingly demonstrated that by the late sixteenth century Europe was haunted by the "fear of being conquered, captured and converted"[24] by the religious domination of the 'other'. In Derridean

whose interiority could be easily filled with white male discourse. Significantly, it is Iago who instills the 'green-eyed monster' into Othello by pouring into his ears his own poisonous words; as a matter of fact, Arthur Little Jr. notes that Othello "is understood to have at his core an essential absence, to have at his essence a lost and unlovable blackamoor 'self' – savage, degraded and destructive". Arthur L. Little Jr., "'An essence that's not seen': The Primal Scene of Racism in *Othello*", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44.3 (1993), 309.

[19] Newman, "'And Wash the Ethiop White'", 152.

[20] Christopher Norris, "Post-structuralist Shakespeare: Text and Ideology", in John Drakakis, ed., *Alternative Shakespeares* (London: Methuen, 1985), 66.

[21] Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 40.

[22] Othello's blackness has been either ignored or denied by some critics on the grounds that Shakespeare did not intend him to be black but rather 'tawny' or Arab. As it has been stated, "Debates over whether Othello was black, brown or mulatto anxiously tried to recover the possibility if his whiteness from this ambiguity which, on the contrary, alerts us to the very construction of the 'other' in Orientalist and colonial discourses". Ibid., 49.

[23] Ibid., 43.

[24] Daniel J. Viktus, "Turning Turk in *Othello*: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48.2 (1997), 147.

terms, the fear of losing the status of master in their own house could be interpreted as one of the factors preventing the bourgeois communities from welcoming strangers as guests, rather than as enemies.

The domestication of female mobility

As it has been noted, "[w]ithin the dominant discourse of early modern England ... woman's body could be both symbolic map of the 'civilized' and the dangerous terrain that had to be colonized".[25] The female body was viewed and treated as a *tabula rasa*, a territory to conquer and discipline. Desdemona's body itself is a curious example of *tabula rasa*: "She is pure, white, and also blank..., and, since blank, open to any inscription and, therefore, in a sense, undecipherable... She has become Othello's text even if the reading of it is not a stable activity".[26]

The assimilation of the female body with a territory is strengthened in *Othello* by the myth of Venice as the "virgin bride of the Mediterranean", whose independence depended on her 'chastity'.[27] The idea conveyed by the feminisation of territory was that of immobility and stability as female permanent characteristics opposed to male movement.

Since urbanisation implied the creation of new spaces of aggregation for women and the consequent difficulty of an effective male supervision, the transition from feudalism to capitalism is seen by Loomba as contributing to the increased fear for female mobility. On Renaissance stages "the possibility of mobility becomes an aspect of female disobedience,"[28] and stability is consequently viewed as a moral value. It is thus significant that the tragic heroine is often

[25] Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories", 133.

[26] Callaghan, *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy*, 78.

[27] As Vitkus points out, then, the fact that an alien, a foreign, a wheeling stranger was given charge of the protection of Venice against the Turks "would have been [to the English audience] almost as shocking as the elopement and miscegenation permitted by the Venetian senate". "Turning Turk in *Othello*", 164.

[28] Loomba, *Gender,* 68.

located within domestic spaces, safely lodged in castles or houses; any attempt at unauthorized moving is punished, as in Desdemona's case, by a violent death.

The prohibition of female mobility is evident in the gendered definition of travel as an event marking the difference between men and women. In many societies men are travellers while women – especially for reproductive necessities – are identified with the domestic space. Moreover, in the Renaissance period "[w]omen ... were excluded from the projected ideals of self-fulfilment and self-fashioning, of personal achievement and mobility".[29]

If we consider the etymological root *MEI, the essential root of movement, we may distinguish four related semantic areas and terms: the first one concerns the Latin word *meatus*, meaning narrow path, route; the second term is 'remuneration', a particular kind of movement intended as an exchange of goods, a reward for a service; the third semantic area is that of migration, a movement, a changing of places; and the last one is 'mutation,' intended as a change of place or status.[30] The figure of Othello is inevitably linked to movement. It can be argued that he is involved in at least three of these terms since he migrates, mutes (he is a convert), and is presumably remunerated by Venice for his services.

Since women can provide a fuller assimilation into an alien social body, we can even assume that Othello might see his marriage to Desdemona as a compensation, a remuneration for his job and a way to exchange his status as a "wheeling stranger" for a domestic and sedentary condition as [un]assimilable guest in the aristocratic Venetian society. Here Desdemona's body is a mere exchange object, a property passing – like any another woman of the time – from one mastery to another.

As female chastity was considered a powerful means of exclusion or inclusion used to mark the male belonging to a social group, the possibility of female mobility was thus incorporated by patriarchal norms, and marriage – being an unsettling movement from father to

[29] Ibid., 44.

[30] Cristina Vallini, "Introduzione. Le parole del viaggio", in Andreina De Clementi e Maria Stella, eds., *Viaggi di donne* (Napoli: Liguori, 1995), 13-15.

husband – had to be institutionalised and made functional to the sanction of a male belonging. Yet, Desdemona's marriage is only partially a 'proper' opening. Not only does she neglect her 'house affairs' to hear Othello's tales of "undomesticated landscapes", but she also challenges the Venetian aristocracy's ritual of combined unions in order to preserve the purity of blood.[31]

The endogamic practice is functional to the control of the social body, while Desdemona's exogamic marriage is a forbidden movement and a dangerous opening toward the outside. As Roderigo points out, Desdemona's gross revolt consists in her "Tying her duty, beauty, wit and fortunes / In an extravagant and wheeling stranger / Of here and everywhere" (1.1. 133-35). According to the analogical reasoning of a male lineage of power in which "power emanates from King down to all fathers",[32] domestic revolt was a threat also to the sovereign authority of the State.

Desdemona's marriage thus marks a fundamental female transgression: not only does she challenge patriarchal authority and assert her desire subverting gender roles; she also transgresses the boundaries of kind itself by disrupting the alleged system of gender differences at the basis of the Jacobean society.[33]

Desdemona endangers the safe boundaries of the State by marrying a stranger of 'unhoused condition', with no properties or belongings: her disobedience is no longer the necessary assumption for the chastity which was supposed to protect the state's and the family's borders. Desdemona becomes a 'troublesome excess'. Her husband and her father discuss her 'fit disposition' since even after her marriage she does not hold a stable place in Venetian society, perceiving "a divided duty" between her two lords:[34]

[31] See Brabantio when he affirms that Desdemona was so opposite to marriage "that she shunned / The wealthy, curled darling of our nation" (1.2. 67-68).

[32] Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha*, 1680, quoted in Callaghan, *Women and Gender in Renaissance Drama*, 15.

[33] Neill, "Unproper Beds", 410.

[34] Philip Armstrong, "*Othello*: Black and White Writing", in *Shakespeare's Visual Regime: Tragedy, Psychoanalysis and the Gaze* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 74.

OTHELLO: ... I crave fit disposition for my wife,
Due reverence of place, and exhibition,
With such accommodation and besort
As levels with her breeding
DUKE: Why, at her father's.
BRABANTIO: I'll not have it so.
OTHELLO: Nor I.
(1.3. 237-241)

Brabantio himself affirms his unwillingness to have Desdemona in his house while Othello is in Cyprus since his daughter has been irremediably 'possessed.' Once the doors of his house have been deceitfully unlocked and his daughter 'bedevilled', Brabantio cannot host Desdemona in his domains; she has left paternal authority to marry a wheeling stranger, a former *hostis* turned into a *hospes*, and she herself has turned into a *guest* seeking hospitality.

Troubled hospitality

Ania Loomba argues that although the mutability of women provokes anxiety by threatening social stability, it is nonetheless necessary to strengthen alliances and take possessions of new lands. Women make hospitality possible and secure patriarchal alliances by adopting alien cultures; as Loomba has stated, "the convertible body of women is ... the 'delicious traffick' between cultures, religions and races".[35] Yet, the exchange of women also reveals the vulnerability of cultural frontiers, providing a fluid and shifting border between people, although never really questioning the frontiers themselves.[36]

The biological and ideological construction of women's interior darkness thus implies an ambiguous construction of femininity oscillating between mutability and obedient stillness. Desdemona is

[35] Loomba, "'Delicious Traffick': Alterity and Exchange on Early Modern Stages", *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999), 214.

[36] "Foreign queens were an integral part of European feudal courts and their transnational alliances. They brought along a different culture and would, if not properly assimilated, breed 'alien heirs'". Ibid., 213-214.

alternatively represented by her father as the perfect daughter ("A maiden never bold, / Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion / Blushed at herself", 1.3. 95-97), or as the changeable and deceptive daughter ("Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see: / She has deceived her father, and may thee", 1.3. 292-294), while Iago always depicts her as a mutable and immoral figure, as he confidently affirms: "She must change for youth; when she is sated with his body she will find the error of her choice: she must have change, she must" (1.3. 350-52). Yet, according to Iago, she must change not just because she is a "super-subtle Venetian" used to deceit, but also, quite 'naturally' because she is a woman. This is particularly true if we consider the relationship between women and conversion – considered a 'turning' par excellence – on the Renaissance stages.

The permeable boundary of religion was viewed as a threat to stable and 'pure' identities and the fear of contamination or 'turning' was also extended to ethnicity.[37] The possibility of self-fashioning threatened the neat classification of races and social groups, and the fluidity of the self of alien figures was also marked by the changing boundaries of faith or the nation, arising anxieties about identity.[38] The blurring or transgression of boundaries between English people and gypsies, Christians and Muslims, sameness and difference, was especially performed by women.

As we have seen, since chastity became the prerequisite for social, cultural, religious stability, the normative woman – whose virginity had to be constantly controlled – came to symbolize "the perfect and impermeable container, and hence a map for the integrity of the state. The state, like the virgin, was a *hortus conclusus*, an enclosed garden walled off from enemies".[39] Yet, in *Othello*'s case, Desdemona's subversive sexuality disrupts the State's boundaries from within, seeking to provide hospitality and integration in the community for a stranger who is also a religiously 'other'.

As Loomba notes, the converted Moor on the Renaissance stage is

[37] As Loomba has convincingly demonstrated, "Religious conversion, by signalling the possibility of crossovers, necessarily engenders several kinds of anxieties about authenticity". Ibid., 207.

[38] Ibid., 209.

[39] Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories", 129.

often a (black) woman *turning* to a Christian husband. In this case rather than a self-fashioning, hers is a re-fashioning by a male power demonstrating the possibility of a controlled exchange of a fearful alterity.[40] Yet, Desdemona's turning is not simply a reversal of this stereotype, since her marriage to Othello is represented as a sort of reciprocal and continuous turning from black to fair, and vice versa, each one contaminating and projecting unto the other his/her own masks.

The access to a Venetian maiden's body is supposed to guarantee Othello "the attainment of the 'normative' body of white masculinity"[41] and, thus, the status of the noble Moor of Venice. Nevertheless, as it has been pointed out, Othello's assimilation into Venetian society through his marriage "is jeopardized by Desdemona's potential waywardness: she 'can turn and turn, and yet go on / And turn again (4.1. 254-55)".[42] Desdemona's multiple *turnings* thus contribute to Othello's status as [un]assimilable guest; not only does her suspected adultery question the safe boundaries of the State, but it also disrupts her husband's assimilation in the Venetian society. As a Christianised Moor, Othello is suspect and liable to relapse; his "oxymoronic epithet, 'the noble Moor', signifies a split identity, something unstable and unnatural".[43] Since his cultural and religious identity "are all questionable", his assimilation cannot rely on Desdemona's inhospitable body – marked by dangerous openings and excess – which can only provide a precarious integration according to the patriarchal laws of hospitality. As a matter of fact, Desdemona's insistent plea for Cassio reveals her ambiguity as guarantee of Othello's integration. Her impetuous assurance to Cassio ("I give thee warrant of thy place", 3.3. 20) seems to disrupt the very conditions of her hospitality to Othello.

[40] Loomba, "'Delicious Traffick'", 210.

[41] Maurizio Calbi, "Speaking in Terror: Femininity, Monstrosity and 'Race' in Early Modern Culture", paper delivered at the conference *Incontrare i Mostri. Variazioni sul tema nella letteratura e cultura inglese e anglo-americana*, Università degli Studi di Salerno, 12-13 ottobre 2001.

[42] Loomba, "'Delicious Traffick'", 213.

[43] Viktus, "Turning Turk", 162. This view is exemplified by Iago's conviction that "These Moors are changeable in their wills" (1.3. 347).

Since the essence of the hostess (and, thus, her power to exercise hospitality) is "subjected to restraint by her actual existence as mistress of the house", Klossowski argues that "the sole function of *betrayal* ... is to lift this restraint".[44] Desdemona's right to host Othello in her (father's) house depended on her fidelity to the host: her refusal to acknowledge her father's mastery through her unauthorized decision to marry her (father's) guest, denies her the possibility to assimilate Othello in her community. Brabantio's subsequent status as a *hostage* – securing Othello's possession and place in the Venetian society – is invalidated by his own refusal to acknowledge his authority over her now 'bedevilled' and wayward daughter.[45]

In the English drama of the seventeenth century, conversion was often described in erotic terms, and "to turn Turk" had a precise sexual implication. Desdemona's imagined sensual turnings are opposed by the male desire for stasis and control and, as forbidden movement, her ambiguous motions are to be stopped.[46] Othello kills Desdemona to prevent her from licentious moving ("Ha! No more moving? / Still as the grave" 5.2. 92-93); her bloodless murder performs a purification of her contaminated body since it "restores her virginity".[47] Desdemona's menacing and 'open' sexuality – connected to obscene movements and turnings – needed to be interrupted and purified into the stiffness/stillness of death to let Othello safely acknowledge his own desire. Desdemona's nuptial bed thus becomes the metaphor for Othello's impossible hospitality. Significantly hidden and prohibited to the audience's gaze until the end of the play, Desdemona's bed symbolizes the place of non-legitimation. It is not

[44] Pierre Klossowski, *Roberte Ce Soir* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1971), 13-14, quoted in Derrida, "Hostipitality", 10.

[45] In the reversal of roles described by Derrida, "the master in his own home ... can only accomplish his task as host, that is, hospitality, in becoming invited by him whom he welcomes, in receiving the hospitality he gives.... The one inviting becomes almost the hostage of the one invited, of the guest". Ibid.., 9.

[46] Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays,* Hamlet *to* The Tempest (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 73.

[47] Ibid., 70.

licensed by her father's authority (the real host) and it is consequently bound to lodge 'the object that poisons sight'.

Beyond conventional hospitality

In *Othello*'s case, alterity cannot be accommodated in the social body. Dramatically pushed to the margins of the play, both gender and race are inhospitable because of their questioning and transgressing borders and norms. If hospitality depends on a display of power, the power to welcome someone in one's own house, such a 'reaffirmation of mastery', as Derrida calls it, cannot be made by subjects constructed as powerless and marginal.[48]

Desdemona's hospitality to Othello is impossible as she questions and repeatedly violates the very norms that construct not only national, but also gender and race frontiers. On the one hand her alleged ambiguity only disrupts Othello's supposed interior unity, making an alliance or even a mere 'opening' towards alterity impossible. Desdemona's exoticised and lustful gaze is no condition for hospitality; as she is incapable to let her subjectivity be contaminated and questioned by Othello's difference, her desire fails to be transformed in her encounter with otherness. The refusal to accept the risks and the uncertainties of a mutual interrogation implies that "my desire continues to reproduce the cycles of hegemony that subject the other to *my* categories, to *my* need for alterity".[49] As Ben Okri argues,

> the play is less about jealousy than about accepting the other, about opening the doors of consciousness to more of reality.... Rejecting is easy: all it takes is confusion and ignorance. But facing the

[48] Significantly, Derrida states that "the host, he who offers hospitality, must be the master in his house ... (*male in the first instance*)". "Hostipitality", 14, emphasis added.

[49] Iain Chambers, "Signs of Silence, Lines of Listening", in Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti, eds., *The Post-colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 54.

complexity of others, their history, their raw humanity – that takes courage, and is rare.[50]

It can be assumed that Desdemona refuses what Levinas has called the ethical responsibility of being the hostage of the other: "[i]t is through the condition of being a hostage that there can be pity, compassion, pardon and proximity in the world".[51]

On the other hand, Desdemona's hospitality is made impossible for 'structural' reasons; if Othello stands for the enemy of Venice, the never-accepted "erring Barbarian" who creeps into the Christian world by taking possession of an object of exchange which should not be allowed him, Desdemona is equally a stranger to her community; since she has turned into the 'enemy within', being a *naturally* wayward creature, she cannot but be a threat to social unity. A union between an "erring Barbarian and a super-subtle Venetian" (1.3. 356-57) is nothing but a "frail vow" since they both stand at the margin of the social body, both condemned to such a liminal status by their mutability and upsetting, 'monstrous' sexuality.

Desdemona's disobedience and threatening *turnings* move her away from the authority of the paternal house and bind her to an irredeemable stranger, proving that no space can be inhabited by otherness. Moreover, her ambiguous status as a woman, as a disobedient daughter and an (alleged) unfaithful wife, *turns* Desdemona into a figure of impossible hospitality since her lost belonging to the house of the father denies her the right to host and finally incorporate Othello. Considered at first "the gate to white humanity", providing Othello with an albeit precarious integration into white society and the acceptance as 'honorary white', Desdemona is progressively constructed as a devil, as a foul thing whose domain cannot but be hell. Associated with infernal and filthy images, Desdemona has *turned* black, too, and she is now the demon (Des*demon*) who revolts against her father and her husband. Othello

[50] Ben Okri, "Leaping Out of Shakespeare's Terror: Five Meditations on *Othello*", in *A Way of Being Free* (London: Phoenix House, 1997), 85.

[51] Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, quoted in Derrida, "Hostipitality", 9.

places her in her new house, the 'infernal lodgings' where no hospitality can take place, and to which Emilia holds the keys: "You, Mistress! / That have the office opposite to Saint Peter / And keep the gates of hell" (4.2. 92-94). Deprived of a *domus*, refusing the paternal authority that would make hospitality possible, Desdemona questions and unsettles her race, gender and nation boundaries, and is condemned to the liminal status of gatekeeper of hell, as a punishment for her transgressions.

Despite her questioning of an exclusively male ipseity, it can be argued that the *invitation* to do the impossible, to go beyond hospitality in order to let hospitality take place, is yet unrealised by Desdemona.[52] Firmly trapped by the patriarchal discourse that has constructed her, Desdemona misses the possibility of being parasitized by its opposite (hence *hostipitality*) in a sort of contradictory dynamics of *hostis/hospes* which can disclose multiple interpretations in the textual body of hospitality itself. It is only by shifting the focus from the threshold and the master that the premises for a hospitable text can be laid.

[52] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 14.

Simonetta de Filippis

A Stranger in the Mirror: *Pericles* and the Search for Identity

Hospitality. Friendship. Betrayal. Fear. Jealousy. Strong passions and unconscious conflicts of the mind. Loss of identities. Some of the many mirrors that Shakespeare 'holds up to his audience'[1] in the fascinating and complex writing of his last plays; a phase in which the psychological insight of the playwright finds its way through the symbols and allegories typical of *romance*, thus resulting incredibly close to today's 'structures of feelings'.

The dramatic structure of the last plays is particularly suited to the development of the theme of hospitality, based as it is on adventures extending through a long span of time and moving from place to place.Characters are often confronted with otherness, with strangers, both as hosts and as guests, and many events descend from the dynamics that are produced by these kinds of relationships. At the same time, otherness works as a mirror in which characters can contemplate their own innermost self,their unconscious, their 'repressed' self.

Pericles is highly significant in this respect, from the very beginning; indeed, it opens with the representation of one of the most delicate and complex aspects of sexuality and the unconscious: the incestuous relationship between a father and his daughter.

[1] Samuel Johnson, in the "Preface" to his edition of Shakespeare's plays (1765), defines him as "the poet of nature ... that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life."

Gower[2]–the ancient poet who comes back to life "from ashes" in order to play the role of Chorus, "To glad your ear, and please your eyes" (1.CHORUS 2; 4)[3] – offers information about the site where the action takes place ("This Antioch") and the king of that reign, "Antiochus the Great", a widower, who lives with his exceptionally beautiful daughter, "With whom the father liking took, / And her to incest did provoke" (ll. 25-26). These explicit and shocking words make the opening of this play deeply uncanny, though their dreadful meaning is partly softened by those previous lines in which Gower declares that it is "… a song that old was sung, / … / … at festivals, / On ember-eves and holy-ales; / And lord and ladies in their lives / Have read it for restoratives" (ll. 1-8). Gower informs the audience of the riddle that many princes had tried to solve in order to gain the beautiful princess as a wife, thus losing their own heads, as the macabre scenery in the background indicated by Gower ("yon grim looks", l. 40) testifies. The view of a significant number of heads fixed on poles produces a truly effective and disturbing objective materialisation of the uncanny; the ominous scenery can in no way be ignored and clearly indicates to new suitors what they may expect, embodying, in this respect, the law that every stranger is obliged to know and accept.[4]

In the first scene of the play, Pericles, the new suitor, is presented to the audience by his *host*, the king Antiochus, in his opening speech:

[2] Gower is the most interesting theatrical invention of this play for his different roles as Chorus, narrator, and writer. The poet John Gower retold the well-known story of Apollonius of Tyre in *Confessio Amantis* (ca. 1390) which is the main source of Shakespeare's *Pericles* (1608).

[3] William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, edited by F. D. Honiger, Arden edition (London: Routledge, 1990).

[4] Jacques Derrida, in his study on hospitality, discusses the text *Roberte ce soir* in which a document entitled "The laws of hospitality" hangs on the wall above the bed in the guest room: "Les voilà donc suspendues, en hauteur: c'est la place des lois, cette verticalité du très-haut … Inévitables et inaccessibles, intangibles, ces «pages manuscrites» sont placées au-dessus du lit, comme la loi, certes, mais aussi menaçantes qu'une epée au-dessus de la tête, en ce lieu où l'hôte repose mais aussi là où il n'aura pu, là où il n'aurait pu, là où il n'aura (it) pas dû manquer de lire les textes d'une loi que nul n'est censé ignorer" (*De l'hospitalité*, Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1997, 79). The same sense of verticality is present in the stage representation of those heads on poles.

"Young prince of Tyre, you have at large receiv'd / The danger of the task you undertake" (1.1. 1). Pericles has therefore been already received at Antioch's court as a *guest*, and has been informed of the laws in force in that reign. As Ruth Nevo observes, it is "a classic double bind: if he solves the riddle he falls a prey to Antiochus's rage at being discovered; if he doesn't, he dies. Freudian symbologists will immediately identify a castration fantasy".[5]

Being a stranger who has chosen to go to Antioch on predetermined grounds, he has no need to ask what Derrida defines 'the first question';[6] however, when he discovers the awful, incestuous secret by solving the riddle, he brings into question Antiochus's authority as king / head, father, and host:

> L'étranger secoue le dogmatisme menaçant du *logos* paternel … Comme si l'Étranger devait commencer par contester l'autorité du chef, du père, du maître de la famille, du «maître de céans», du pouvoir d'hospitalité …[7]

Pericles fully understands the meaning of the riddle and, when invited by Antiochus to "Either expound now or receive your sentence" (1.1. 91), his speech in reply is a series of maxims which seem to pose new riddles, new questions, but which clearly reveal to Antiochus that his secret has been unveiled:

> Who has a book of all that monarchs do,
> He's more secure to keep it shut than shown;
> …

[5] Ruth Nevo, "The Perils of Pericles", in Kiernan Ryan, ed., *Shakespeare: The Last Plays* (London: Longman, 1999), 65 (reprinted from Ruth Nevo, *Shakespeare's Other Language*, London: Methuen, 1987).

[6] "… la question de l'étranger est une question *de* l'étranger, une question venue *de* l'étranger, et une question à l'étranger, adressée *à* l'étranger. Comme si l'étranger était d'abord *celui qui* pose la première question ou *celui à qui* on adresse la première question. Comme si l'étranger était l'être-en-question, la question même de l'être-en-question, l'être-question ou l'être-en-question de la question. Mais aussi celui qui, posant la première question, me met en question". Derrida, *De l'hospitalité*, 11.

[7] Ibid., 13.

Kings are earth's gods; in vice their law's their will;
And if Jove stray, who dares say Jove doth ill?
(1.1. 95-6; 104-106)

Antiochus easily decodes the meaning of Pericles's riddles, and his *aside* leaves no doubts about his own intentions as a host who has now become his guest's most dangerous enemy: "Heaven, that I had thy head! He has found the meaning" (1.1. 110).

The question one poses is: why does Antiochus continually jeopardise his abominable secret by offering his daughter's hand as the prize for the solution of that very secret? Perhaps, as Derrida says, he is

> … un maître impatient qui attend son hôte comme un libérateur, son émancipateur. C'est *comme si* l'étranger détenait les clés … C'est *comme si* … l'étranger, tel Œdipe en somme, à savoir celui dont le secret gardé sur le lieu de la mort allait sauver la ville … *comme si* l'étranger, donc, pouvait sauver le maître et libérer le pouvoir de son hôte; c'est *comme si*le maître était, en tant que maître, prisonnier de son lieu et de son pouvoir, de son ipséité, de sa subjectivité (sa subjectivité est otage). C'est donc bien le maître, l'invitant, l'hôte invitant qui devient l'otage – qui l'aura toujours été en vérité. Et l'hôte, l'otage invité (*guest*), devient l'invitant de l'invitant, le maître de l'hôte (*host*). L'hôte devient l'hôte de l'hôte. L'hôte (*guest*)devient l'hôte (*host*) de l'hôte (*host*).[8]

If Shakespeare's text is analysed in this perspective, Pericles can be seen as a liberator: by solving the riddle, he sets Antiochus free of a secret which has enslaved him; at the same time, however, Pericles

[8] Ibid., 109-111. Derrida refers here to the secrecy of Oedipus' burial place which is known only to Theseus in order to save Athens from possible future wars; the same observations can be applied, however, to the initial events of the story of Oedipus who, by solving the riddle of the Sphinx, saves all those future travellers who, on their way to Thebes, would be killed by the monster simply for their incapacity to 'understand'. Pericles, by solving the riddle, sets future young suitors free from the danger of a possible beheading; at the same time, however, he frees the monster in Antiochus (and in himself) by breaking a mechanism of abjection and assassination.

is forced to question himself on a sin from which he tries to escape in horror but which inhabits his own unconscious.

When he had first met the daughter of Antiochus, Pericles had felt deeply attracted by her beauty and all his senses had been inflamed:

Her face the book of praises, where is read
Nothing but curious pleasures …
You gods, that made me man, and sway in love,
That have inflam'd desire in my breast
To taste the fruit of yon celestial tree
Or die in the adventure, be my helps,
As I am son and servant to your will,
To compass such a boundless happiness!
(1.1.16-25)

The explicit reference to the forbidden "fruit" of the original sin that he desires to "taste" in order to enjoy "curious pleasures" and a "boundless happiness" – a lexicon accurately chosen in order to emphasise the sinful nature of Pericles's desire – strongly links Pericles to sexual guilt; somehow, his words are a declaration of guilt from the very beginning,[9] and all his subsequent pains can be explained as a consequence of this sexual sin which has led to the loss of his Eden, his peace of mind and his identity. Pericles, aware now not only of the terrible guilt of Antiochus and his daughter but also of his own sinful feelings, tries to distance himself from his own desire and can only comment:

Fair glass of light, I lov'd you, and could still,
Were not this glorious casket stor'd with ill.
But I must tell you, now my thoughts revolt;
For he's no man on whom perfections wait
That, knowing sin within, will touch the gate.
(1.1. 77-81)

[9] Pericles's first speech consists only of a brief answer (1.1. 3-5) to Antiochus's first two lines, whereas this second more extended speech is the first spontaneous expression of his thoughts and feelings and seems to spring from his very soul, thus indicating its importance in the interpretation of the text.

Pericles flees then from the moral risk of his own nature and from the physical danger of Antiochus's revenge ("… lest my life be cropp'd to keep you clear, / By flight I'll shun the danger which I fear", 1.1. 142-3); at the same time, however, he has turned himself into a threat for his host, no longer a welcome guest but a public enemy who can question the authority of the king.[10]

Questioning (and endangering) his host's identity, indeed Pericles questions his own identity: from this very moment Pericles, the stranger, mirrors himself in his enemy/stranger, thus becoming 'stranger to himself'. He has unveiled a terrible truth and, like Oedipus, he now has to confront his own unconscious in order to disclose the truth of his own hidden self. Freud discusses several possible causes from which the *uncanny* emerges and these causes seem to be reflected, in many respects, in the relationship between Pericles and Antiochus, such as the phenomenon of the 'double':

> … we have characters who are to be considered identical because they look alike … Or … the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his own. In other words, there is a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self. And finally there is the constant recurrence of the same thing – the repetition of the same features of character-traits or vicissitudes, of the same crimes, or even the same names through several consecutive generations.[11]

Antiochus is the mirror of otherness and of Pericles's unconscious at the same time, thus forcing him into awareness. As Julia Kristeva says:

[10] It is interesting to remember that Emile Benveniste traces the historical development of the Latin word *hostis* from the meaning of 'guest', to that of 'stranger', and then to 'public enemy', a change connected with the parallel evolution of the concept of community (*civitas*) to that of the Roman State, with its wider legal and political implications. See Emile Benveniste, "Don et échange dans le vocabulaire indo-européen", in *Problèmes de linguistique générale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966, Tome 1), 315-326.

[11] Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", in *Art and Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), 356.

> … the foreigner's face forces us to display the secret manner in which we face the world, stare into all our faces … Furthermore, the face that is so *other* bears the mark of a crossed threshold that irremediably imprints itself as peacefulness or anxiety.[12]

Pericles has gone beyond that threshold, an act which causes him anxiety and creates a need to sound his own unconscious. At the opening of the following scene, back in his own reign, Tyre, he pursues a physical and moral solitude and poses questions; indeed, he questions himself:

> Why should this change of thoughts,
> The sad companion, dull-ey'd melancholy,
> Be my so us'd a guest, as not an hour
> In the day's glorious walk or peaceful night,
> The tomb where grief should sleep, can breed me quiet?
> (1.2. 2-6)

Pericles is now the host of his own melancholy and anxiety, a feeling which is in fact the guest / stranger that now dwells in him – "the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity"[13] – andthat forces him to look into the depths of his soul and mind and face the problem of 'knowing', of bringing to the surface an awareness that had been buried in the sleep of unconsciousness. Pericles realises that his problem after all is not Antiochus "Whose arm seems far too short to hit me here" (1.2. 9); and yet he feels anxious and lost, a stranger to himself. He begins to look inside himself and to perceive his truth:

> Then it is thus: the passions of the mind,
> That have their first conception by mis-dread,

[12] Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (1988), translated by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 3-4. While commenting on Aeschilus's *The Danaïd*, Kristeva writes: "The incestuous man was able to solve the Sphinx's riddles … Oedipus wanted to know, even though it would cost him plenty, including his eyes" (ibid., 43). The similarity between Pericles and Oedipus in this perspective is self-evident.

[13] Ibid., 1.

Have after-nourishment and life by care;
And what was first but fear what might be done,
Grows elder now and cares it be not done.
(1.2. 12-16)

Pericles projects his own inner shadows over Antiochus, the stranger that by now dwells in him; and those shadows grow larger once his awareness has crossed the threshold:

With hostile forces he'll o'erspread the land,
And with th' ostent of war will look so huge,
Amazement shall drive courage from the state,
…
(1.2. 25-27)

The shadow of awareness becomes "huge", "hostile", creates "amazement", and, as Pericles confesses to his faithful counsellor Helicanus, "Drew sleep out of mine eyes, blood from my cheeks, / Musings into my mind, with thousand doubts / How I might stop this tempest ere it came; / …" (1.2. 96-98).[14]

Anne Dufourmantelle, in her interesting introduction to Derrida's essay on hospitality, refers to the Czech philosopher Jan Patocka and his discussion about "le savoir diurne" as opposed to the true knowledge one can only reach in darkness where man "est tenue de laisser croître l'inquiétant, l'irréconcilité, l'énigmatique …"[15] Dufourmantelle writes:

[14] "'Experiencing hatred' … Constantly feeling the hatred of others, knowing no other environment than that hatred … Like a child that hides, fearful and guilty, convinced beforehand that it deserves its parents' anger. In the world of dodges and shams that make up his pseudo-relationships with pseudo-others, hatred provides the foreigner with consistency … Hatred makes him real, authentic … it causes to resound on the *outside* that other hatred, secret and shameful, apologetic to the point of abating, that the foreigner bears *within himself* against everyone, against no one, and which, in the case of flooding, would cause a serious depression" (ibid., 13).

[15] Jan Patocka, *Liberté et Sacrifice* (Grenoble: éd. Million, 1990), 36, cited in Anne Dufourmantelle, "Invitation", in Derrida, *De l'hospitalité*, 40.

La Nuit est, pour Patocka, «l'ouverture à ce qui ébranle». Elle nous demande de traverser l'expérience de la perte du sens, expérience dont découle l'authenticité de la pensée philosophique … La nuit est ce à partir de quoi peut venir à la parole «ce qui obsède …»[16]

Pericles experiences his night and begins his journey towards self-awareness; only at the end will he be able to voice his own obsession. The sense of uncertainty connected to the lack of a solid identity sharpens also as a consequence of his confrontation with the ambiguous father figure represented by Antiochus[17] who awakens Oedipal situations and brings the original wound from unconscious memory to the surface; as Oedipus flees from the horror of incest, rejecting his own children and imposing the secret on the place of his burial, so Pericles flees from Antioch horrified and begins his wanderings on the sea of his inner tempest:

… what Pericles experiences in Antioch is not just a quick, horrified glance at somebody else's sin, but an initial encounter with sexuality itself, including his own sexuality, an encounter that leaves him repelled and shaken … the scene in Antioch is the hero's sexual initiation, one that goes badly because his first encounter is with the dark side of sexuality.[18]

The opening scene, therefore, functions as a primal scene:

Gower remembers, and recounts the story, Pericles re-enacts it, and in the re-enacting itself, *en abyme*, is a compulsive repetition.
What Antiochus thus triggers in Pericles, by way of condensations of primary-process fantasy, is, we intuit, a repetition of himself, an unconscious recognition. Antiochus is his uncanny double, and the

[16] Ibid., 48; 52.

[17] Enchanted by the vision of the princess's beauty, Pericles is shaken from his 'sinful' considerations by Antiochus and replies expressing his wish to be his son: "*Ant.* Prince Pericles—/*Per.* That would be son to great Antiochus" (1.1. 26-27).

[18] Alexander Leggatt, "The Shadow of Antioch: Sexuality in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*", in L. & P. Fothergill-Payne, eds., *Parallel Lives: Spanish and English National Drama 1580-1680* (London & Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1991), 169-170.

progress of the play is the haunting of Pericles by the Antiochus in himself, the incest fear which he must repress and from which he must flee.[19]

Pericles's first destination is Tharsus where the state and its population have been debilitated by a devastating famine. Explicitly comparing himself to Ulysses, Pericles reverses the myth of the Trojan horse and presents himself as a stranger whose ships, full of food, are bringing life and hope:

> … these our ships, you happily may think
> Are like the Trojan horse was stuff'dwithin
> With bloody veins expecting overthrow,
> Are stor'd with corn to make your needy bread,
> And give them life whom hunger starv'd half dead.
> (1.4. 92-96)

After a short period at Tharsus, Pericles is forced to leave again because he is informed that Antiochus is still after his life; however, his real drive to wandering seems to come from deep down, connected as it is to his sense of guilt. As Kristeva suggests, "A secret wound, often unknown to himself, drives the foreigner to wondering."[20]

Again at sea, Pericles has to face the inner tempest of his soul and finds himself at the sea's mercy. In a disastrous shipwreck he loses everything and finds himself alone on the coast of Pentapolis, for the first time a total stranger; indeed, this time he is at complete loss and does not even know where he is. However, when he meets some fishermen who offer their help, he does not ask 'the first question' and seems to give answers to questions that come from himself rather than from the fishermen, in an attempt to recover the sense of his own

[19] Nevo, "The Perils of Pericles", 69. Nevo states that Pericles will always be "death-driven" and that this "Periclean fantasy", along with his consequential need for self-punishment, can explain Pericles's sad musing and his decision to run away from Tyre: "The primal scene of the play – Act 1, Scene 1 – triggers a primal-scene fantasy for Pericles, which powers thenceforth his guilt-stricken, haunted drivenness" (71).

[20] Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 5.

identity so disrupted by his inner tempest. When one of the fishermen comments, "What a drunken knave was the sea to cast thee our way!" (2.1. 57-58), Pericles replies as if he was asked the 'first question', trying, in fact, to define an identity which is indefinable:

> A man whom both the waters and the wind,
> In this vast tennis-court, hath made the ball
> For them to play upon …
> (2.1. 59-61)

But why do the fishermen not ask him the 'first question'? As fishermen, they cannot be hosts of the royal guest / stranger; with the common sense of common people, they only ask him: "Cans't thou catch any fishes then?" (2.1. 66); again, Pericles replies on a different level, trying to describe his inner confusion:

> What I have been I have forgot to know;
> But what I am, want teaches me to think on:
> A man throng'd up with cold. My veins are chill,
> And have no more of life than may suffice
> To give my tongue that heat to ask your help;
> …
> (2.1. 71-75)

A 'stranger to himself' Pericles is, in fact, speaking to himself. In the end, through the voice of the fishermen, his role of 'stranger / other' emerges; indeed, the fishermen ask those questions that the stranger should pose and they also offer the necessary answers: "… do you know where ye are? / … / Why, I'll tell you: this is call'd Pentapolis, and our king, the good Simonides" (2.1. 95-98).

Now prince Pericles knows where he can ask for hospitality and, at last, he poses a precise question: "… How far is his court distant from this shore?" (2.1. 103-104). Informed of the tourney that will take place at court in a chivalrous bid to win the princess's hand, Pericles considers this opportunity as a second chance; besides, although the riddle was by its nature intimately linked to ambiguity, this time he can offer a limpid and open demonstration of his own courage and worth as is proper for a true hero / knight. Having

recovered his treasured armour from the waves – a gift from his father to defend him from death[21] – Pericles goes to king Simonides's court as a perfect stranger, revealing his identity to no-one, as he still needs to re-define it to himself in the first place. A stranger to himself and to everybody else, Pericles seizes the opportunity of the tourney to recover his identity as a prince, an immaculate hero, a guiltless suitor.

Princess Thaisa, while describing the various knights, immediately perceives him as a stranger – "He seems to be a stranger" (2.2. 41) – and later she will crown him as the winner calling him "my knight and guest" (2.3. 9). This time Pericles seems to take no notice of Thaisa's beauty while his attention is focused on the king who reminds him of his own father – "Yon king's to me like to my father's picture" (2.3. 37) – a father and a king of great virtues. Pericles, however, cannot free himself of his melancholy in spite of the joyful atmosphere of the celebrations in his honour. As Kristeva observes:

> Hard-hearted indifference is perhaps no more than the respectable aspect of nostalgia. We all know the foreigner who survives with a tearful face turned toward the lost homeland. Melancholy lover of a vanished space, he cannot, in fact, get over his having abandoned a period of time. The lost paradise is a mirage of the past that he will never be able to recover … in the intervening period of nostalgia … the foreigner is a dreamer making love with absence, one exquisitely depressed. Happy? [22]

Simonides realises that "Yon knight doth sit too melancholy" and encourages his daughter "… to make his entrance more sweet, / Here say we drink this standing-bowl of wine to him" (2.3. 54, 64-65). Thaisa, prize and object of the tourney, feels attracted to the stranger ("To me he seems like diamond to glass", she had revealed to herself and to the audience in the aside 2.3. 36); however, she first pretends

[21] The memoir of Pericles's father is recalled here and elsewhere as a positive mirror, a model of virtue both as a father and as a king. King Simonides will be compared to him for his virtues, also in order to emphasise a profound contrast with Antiochus (the other king and father of the play) and to establish the unquestionable morality of his relationship with his own daughter.

[22] Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 9.

to be reluctant – "Alas, my father, it befits not me / Unto a stranger knight to be so bold; / He may my proffer take for an offence, / Since men take women's gifts for impudence" (2.3. 66-69) – and then accepts her duty as a 'hostess', to offer wine to the stranger and to ask him those questions that Simonides, the host, formulates for the stranger / guest: "… tell him, we desire to know / Of whence he is, his name and parentage" (2.3. 73-74). To this question scrupulously reported by Thaisa ("… he desires to know of you / Of whence you are, your name and parentage", 2.3. 79-80), Pericles replies revealing his name but hiding his lineage (he defines himself "a gentleman of Tyre", 2.3. 81) and briefly refers to the wreck which had bereft him of everything and had brought him to those shores (this time, too, Thaisa reports the stranger's words back to her father exactly, like an echo).

In his encounter with the princess, Pericles betrays no emotions towards her; only when the king asks him directly: "What do you think of my daughter, sir?", he replies laconically: "A most virtuous princess" (2.5. 33-34), thus emphasising her inner beauty, in order to distance himself from any possible link to sensuality, or perhaps, by stating Thaisa's virtue so firmly, he intends to exclude the possibility of an incestuous relationship between father and daughter. Simonides still presses him: "And she is fair too, is she not?"; Pericles is therefore forced to admit: "As a fair day in the summer, wondrous fair" (2.5. 35-36). By drawing a comparison with daylight and summertime, he conveys a sense of clarity and transparency and implicitly underlines the lack of those shadows and ambiguities which had so strongly darkened his previous courting.

When Simonides shows Pericles a letter in which Thaisa reveals her love for the stranger and pretends to accuse him of treason[23] – "Thou hast bewitch'd my daughter, and thou art / A villain" (2.5. 49-50) – Pericles kneels before him declaring to be only "A stranger and distressed gentleman, / That never aim'd so high to love your daughter" and that "My actions are as noble as my thoughts, / That

[23] An anticipation of Prospero's behaviour with Ferdinand in *The Tempest* ("… thou dost here usurp / The name thou ow'st not; and hast put thyself / Upon this island as a spy, to win it / From me, the lord on 't", 1.2. 456-458), and an echo of Brabantio's voice in his accusation against Othello of having bewitched Desdemona ("Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her", 1.2. 63).

never relish'd of a base descent. / I came unto your court for honour's cause, / And not to be a rebel to her state" (2.5. 46-47; 58-61). If we recall the evolution of the Latin word *hostis*, it seems here that Pericles tries to establish a connection with the original meaning of the word stressing his role of a stranger perfectly respectful of the laws of hospitality and rejecting the role of enemy.[24]

The happy ending of Act 2, marked by the wedding with Thaisa, seems to suggest that Pericles has completed his process of self-awareness with the full recovery of his integrity and identity. He is now a member of the royal family and no longer plays the role of a stranger. However, in the opening speech of Act 3, we are informed by Gower that Pericles has received a letter from Tyre requesting his return to his role as prince of that reign (there is no more danger for him since Antiochus and his daughter are dead, killed by "A fire from heaven", 2.4. 9). The surprised reaction on Simonides's and Thaisa's part in discovering that Pericles is a prince leaves the audience just as surprised. Why is Pericles still keeping his lineage secret, even after his wedding and now that his wife is pregnant? Why has he revealed only his name and place of origin, when these elements could have laid the trail for Antiochus's revenge, the official reason for Pericles's wanderings, and the only reasonable justification for keeping his identity secret? One can conclude that the objective danger, Antiochus's revenge, is not the only true reason for Pericles's silence. A possible answer to this puzzling question can therefore lie in the reading of his 'odyssey', just as Ulysses, as a journey in search for that identity which had been shattered after being mirrored in the evil of Antiochus, and whose fragments still need to be reassembled. Pericles is still in the process of recovering himself but his identity is not fully rebuilt and he therefore cannot define himself fully. It is evident that not even his marriage to Thaisa has quietened his anxieties and he cannot yet say who he is.[25]

[24] See above, n. 10.

[25] Like Ulysses, his journey will end when he goes back home, with "a journey back to the self, as with Ulysses (who, in spite of meanderings, came back to his homeland) …", Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 43.

Pericles's misfortunes after his wedding are discussed by Ruth Nevo in psychological terms: "if, at a level more covert, the sea is a displaced signifier of the maternal oceanic,

One can detect many dark sides in Pericles's following misfortunes, too. A question always posed is why after the terrible storm – during which Thaisa dies,[26] giving birth prematurely to Marina – he leaves the newborn baby with Cleon and Dionyza at Tharsus, waiting fourteen years before going there to ask for his daughter back (see 5.3. 8.), just when Marina is "a wench full-grown, / Even ripe for marriage rite" (5.GOWER.16-17).[27] Some critics suggest that Pericles decides to keep Marina at distance for fear of falling into the sin of incest:

> … Pericles' desire to leave Marina in Tharsus and his determination not to cut his hair till she is married … may suggest a desire to submit to an ordeal and a period of separation till his daughter is safely out of his reach.[28]

then Pericles's tale is very easily retold … Pericles travels out and away and back. He cannot escape, cannot cut the umbilical cord, and cannot resolve the later Oedipal guilt. The sea is indeed his beloved enemy, as his sun-father is his envied and hostile rival. Antiochus represents at the outset the threatening father-figure, and whatever person Pericles seeks is a symbolic personage representing the mother, lost and forbidden. It is therefore always by the incest fear that he is haunted. Derivatives of these primal constellations erupt in language and situations throughout: the very name he gives his daughter is the name of the sea". Nevo, "The Perils of Pericles", 78-79. This reading recalls Freudian concepts; more specifically, Nevo quotes Lacan's statement: "the displacement of the signifier determines the subjects in their acts, in their destiny, in their refusals, in their blindnesses, in their end and in their fate", ibid..

[26] Thaisa's coffin will be fished out at Ephesus where she is revived thanks to Cerimon's medico-magical ability and where she remains as a Vestal at Diana's temple. Kristeva, while commenting on *The Suppliants* by Aeschylus, states: "The shelter of Zeus' temple … along with ritual gestures and modest behaviour will guarantee foreigners a proper welcome. Thus a religious space … secured for the foreigner a place where he was untouchable", *Strangers to Ourselves*, 47. Leggatt, too, comments: "Like Pericles when he abandons Marina, she makes a decision that looks arbitrary but may suggest, by its very arbitrariness, an instinct to reject human involvement", "The Shadow of Antioch", 174.

[27] Indeed, Gower is here referring to Philoten, Cleon's and Dionyza's daughter, and Marina's peer.

[28] Leggatt, "The Shadow of Antioch", 173. Leggatt refers to 3.3, particularly to 27-30: "… Till she be married, madam, / By bright Diana, whom we honour, all / Unscissor'd shall this hair of mine remain, / Though I show ill in't."

> The recovery of Thaisa, belched forth from the sea, is a rebirth fantasy in the text ... but in the progress of the fable her loss at sea represents regression in Pericles. As his abandonment of his baby daughter to the care of others also indicates, he is still not enfranchised, not ready to accept fatherhood, still haunted by the spectre of incest.[29]

This, however, does not explain why he looks for her just when she is at the age most at risk in that sense. My feeling is that incest is the haunting shadow which keeps pursuing Pericles, as "a secret wound" which "drives the foreigner to wondering";[30] in order to close his wound, he needs to confront himself with danger at its deepest.

It is possible to draw a comparison between Pericles and Leontes, the protagonist of *The Winter's Tale*, who acknowledges his guilt after losing his son and his wife and only recovers a humanity which he had completely lost in the tragic awareness of his own folly. He therefore becomes the protagonist of a new tragedy, the tragedy of mourning and solitude that he plays, in fact, off stage.[31] Like Leontes, Pericles needs to work out his mourning, in isolation, and he lets time go by for a very long period (Leontes appears again on scene after sixteen years, Pericles after fourteen years), a time in which we can imagine him in a similar state of mind as Leontes. Even if Pericles does not have a tomb on which to shed his tears (later, as Leontes has done for many years, he will shed tears on an empty tomb!), we can supposedly picture him spending his time in contrition and purification, celebrating funeral rites in memory of his wife; only when he feels ready and purified, does he go in search of Marina in order to verify the strength of his integrity in a confrontation with his daughter as a young woman. This confrontation will not take place at

[29] Nevo, "The Perils of Pericles", 80.

[30] See above, n. 20.

[31] "... Prithee, bring me / To the dead bodies of my queen and son: / One grave shall be for both: upon them shall / The causes of their death appear, unto / Our shame perpetual. Once a day I'll visit / The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there / Shall be my recreation. So long as nature / Will bear up with this exercise, so long / I daily vow to use it" (3.2. 234-240). For a wider discussion of this aspect see Simonetta de Filippis, *Teatro come sperimentazione. Shakespeare e la scrittura romanzesca* (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 2003).

Tharsus where he receives the false news of Marina's death, but on the ship which drives him into Mytilene's harbour.

Like her father, Marina – who happens to live at Mytilene after a number of misfortunes – has revealed her identity to no-one, though probably making her social status known would have saved her many pains. Again, one asks: why does she say nothing? Perhaps Marina, rather than a 'stranger to herself', is a stranger to a place – Mytilene and its sins – that does not suit a character who, like an ancient morality, seems to represent the perfection of virtue. In this respect, she also functions as a mirror: a stranger and guest at Tharsus, she forces Dionyza to show her evil side; a stranger and guest at Mitylene, she questions the sexual customs of the place.

A comparison with the young heroines of Shakespeare's other romances – Imogen in *Cymbeline* and Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* – is useful to support this interpretation of Marina's behaviour; in fact, like Marina, both Imogen and Perdita have to face the problem of their own identity.[32]

Imogen's identity is linked to her relationship with men: her father, Cymbeline, repudiates her as daughter ("... let her languish / A drop of blood a day, and being aged / Die of this folly", 1.2. 87-89); her husband, Posthumus, disowns her as wife (and with her he rejects the whole female gender: "... I'll write against them, / Detest them, curse them: yet 'tis greater skill / In a true hate, to pray they have their will: / The very devils cannot plague them better", 2.4. 184-186); her guest, Iachimus, betrays her as hostess and, violating the laws of hospitality, he turns her generous welcoming into a fatal trap.[33] Imogen thus loses all the fundamental tenets of her identity – "What shall I do the while? Where bide? How live? / Or in my life what comfort, when I am / Dead to my husband? / ... / No court, no father ..." (3.4. 130-133) – and ends up by hiding her own gender assuming the clothes and the identity of a young page, Fidele. A guest in her disguise, she arrives atthe cave where her brothers live (they are also 'strangers to

[32] Miranda in *The Tempest* plays a role of lesser importance compared to her 'sisters', at least as to the problem of her identity; indeed, she only partly ignores it, as she does not know that her father is a Duke.

[33] He asks her to host in her room a trunk where, in a repetition of the myth of the Trojan horse, he hides himself.

themselves' as they ignore their identity, and even their true names); after the first questions the two young men pose to the young stranger – "Wither bound? ...What's your name?" (3.7. 30-32) – the conversation continues emphasising the confusion of identities of the various characters both in reference to their real but still unknown kinship and to the gender disguise, an aspect which in Shakespeare's time was amplified by the presence of boy-actors in female roles. The allusions to homo-eroticism and a possible incestuous relationship between brother and sister are self-evident:

Gui. Were you a woman, youth,
I should woo hard, but be your groom in honesty:
I bid for you as I do buy.
Arv. I'll make't my comfort
He is a man, I'll love him as my brother:
And such a welcome as I'd give to him
(After long absence) such is yours. Most welcome!
Be sprightly, for you fall 'mongst friends.
Imo. 'Mongst friends?
If brothers: [*Aside*] would it had been so, that they
Had been my father's sons, then had my prize
Been less, and so more equal ballasting
To thee, Posthumus.
(3.7. 41-51)

In *The Winter's Tale*, Perdita – 'stranger to herself' from her very birth because of Leonte's repudiation ("...Take up the bastard, / ... / ... This brat is none of mine; / ... / carry / This female bastard hence, and ... bear it / To some remote and desert place, quite out / Of our dominions...", 2.3. 75; 92; 173-176) – grows up as an unaware guest in the Bohemian countryside and becomes the protagonist of an exasperated game of disguise, both explicit and implicit. Indeed, she is a young princess (daughter of the king of Sicily), dressed up unawares as a young shepherdess (abandoned as a new-born baby, she is found and brought up by a shepherd), whom we see in the role of queen at the sheep-shearing Feast, and who then flees in men's clothes (crossing gender, she disguises herself making no concessions to her womanliness, in a total nullification of her identity: "... you must retire

yourself / Into some covert: take your sweetheart's hat / And pluck it o'er your brows, muffle your face, / Dismantle you, and (as you can) disliken / The truth of your own seeming", 4.4. 649-653); then, disguised as a princess, she is presented at the court of Sicily where she is finally given back her proper royal clothes along with her true identity (it goes without saying that the disguise game is further emphasised by the presence of the boy-actor). It is interesting to remember that Perdita's mother too, Hermione, a true stranger in Sicily ("The Emperor of Russia was my father", says Hermione during her trial, 3.2. 119), denies even her own existence after her husband's repudiation pretending to be dead for sixteen years. It is by no means insignificant that the two women, in the final scene, do not speak to Leontes, the cause of the loss of their identities, but only to each other acknowledging their recovered identities as daughter ("... Lady, / Dear queen, that ended when I but began, / Give me that hand of yours to kiss", 5.3. 42-46) and mother ("... Tell me, mine own, / Where hast thou been preserv'd? where liv'd? how found / Thy father's court? for thou shalt hear that I, / ... / ... have preserv'd / Myself to see the issue", 5.3. 123-128).

Going back to Marina, she is the only female character who knows perfectly well who she is and who her parents are; she never disguises herself either by crossing gender, or by assuming a different identity, and remains solidly herself, all the time, only choosing to keep her identity secret to save it from being stained by the mere sound of her name spoken in a place of sin. Indeed, her name will be pronounced like a liberation only in the end, during the moving recognition between father and daughter which takes place, not by accident, at sea, with its cathartic value and symbolic meaning of re-birth (Marina, born on the sea, is now, in a way, newly christened). Pericles, in turn, can now reveal his own identity, "in a scene that depends on establishing true names and true identities".[34]

Re-born to new life, however, Pericles's words sound rather ambiguous – "... O, come hither, / Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget" (5.1. 194-195) – partly echoing the words of the initial riddle – "He's father, son, and husband mild; / I mother, wife, and yet

[34] Leggatt, "The Shadow of Antioch", 168.

his child" (1.1. 69-70) – in what may seem a 'repetition compulsion' of those incestuous ambiguities which had made him lose his self. After posing a number of questions to the young woman and having regained his certainties, free at last from his obsession, Pericles can finally say: "I am Pericles of Tyre" (5.1. 204). A stranger in the many places of his wanderings, Pericles can put an end to his quest in a place / non-place, on a ship highly symbolic of the tempests that his soul has wrestled with before reaching the quiet (?) harbour of self-awareness:

> Always elsewhere, the foreigner belongs nowhere … bent with a passion … for another land, always a promised one, that of an occupation, a love, a child, a glory.[35]

> *... l'hospitalité ne peut être offerte qu'ici et maintenant, quelque part ... Comme si le lieu dont il était question dans l'hospitalité était un lieu qui n'appartenait originellement ni à l'hôte ni à l'invité, mais au geste par lequel l'un donne accueil à l'autre – même et surtout s'il est lui-même sans demeure à partir de laquelle puisse être pensé cet accueil.*[36]

The last stage of Pericles's pilgrimage is Ephesus. Here Pericles becomes the narrator of his tribulations; as a stranger replying to a question which Cerimon, the host at Diana's temple, may have posed, Pericles this time does not hesitate in declaring "I here confess myself the king of Tyre" (5.3. 2), thus confirming his recovered identity and allowing recognition and reconciliation with his wife.[37] Embracing Thaisa again after their long separation, Pericles says: "… O come, be buried / A second time within these arms" (5.3. 43-44), a metaphorical burial celebrating the resurrection and re-birth of many recovered identities: Pericles as father and husband, Thaisa as mother and wife,

[35] Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 16.
[36] Dufourmantelle, "Invitation", 60-62.
[37] Like Hermione, Thaisa has retreated from life into the temple, never trying to search for her husband and child. Her behaviour opens new questions; a possible explanation is that disappearing from the scene and devoting herself to chastity, she allows Pericles to pursue his search and to find her at the end of his journey as virtuous as ever.

Marina as daughter. They can all return now to the 'promised land',[38] no longer strangers in foreign places, no longer strangers to themselves.

As always happens in Shakespeare plays, however, the ending is open and the solution does not wipe out all the ambiguities of the text. In the recovery of his identity as a father, Pericles recalls the possibility of an incestuous relationship; the words marking his encounter with Thaisa seem to point towards ambiguous directions and interpretations. Ruth Nevo has also suggested a possible 'open' view of the ending, particularly commenting on the speech in which Pericles 'buries' Thaisa in his arms and posing new questions: "Eros? Thanatos? … Does the text crumble to its own deconstruction at the end, with nothing resolved or exorcized, but all to be done again?" The critic recalls André Green's words – "We shall often feel a renewed disappointment faced by [the text's] refusal to take us anywhere except to the point of origin from which it took its own departure" – and wonders:

> Is this the case in *Pericles*? And is it disappointment that we feel? Or is this refusal simply a sign that the play has put us in touch with the familiar ghosts – the desires and the terrors – that habitually haunt our minds?[39]

It is again a mechanism of 'repetition compulsion', an endless *mise en abyme* of Pericles's story which continues to work as a mirror for the spectators: after being confronted with the mirror of the stage action, the spectators are invited to look into their own unconscious depths, to re-consider the meaning of their family ties, to re-define their concept of hospitality and acceptance of the other.

[38] See above, n. 35.
[39] Nevo, "The Perils of Pericles", 85.
Sigmund Freud, quoting Schelling as to the meaning of the word *Heimlich* taken from the dictionary of German by Daniel Sanders, reminds that *Unheimlich* is "everything … that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light". "The 'Uncanny'", 345.

Bianca Del Villano

Hospitality and Friendship in *The Winter's Tale*

The Winter's Tale starts by presenting a typical Renaissance friendship, between Leontes, king of Sicily, and Polixenes, king of Bohemia, who have been friends since their childhood. The celebration of their mutual understanding and similarity does not simply describe the nature of their personal bond, but also involves the political thought of the time.

As Shannon explains at length in *Sovereign Amity*,[1] Aristotle, Plato and Cicero's classical works on friendship, where the friend is described as another self, become topical in English Renaissance, in order to respond to the hierarchical system of the time. At the same time, the likeness ingrained in the idea of friendship implies that civil equality can be shared only by those who are perfectly symmetric, like Leontes and Polixenes. Symmetric are also the 'practises', like reciprocal visits, used to maintain this kind of relationship, confirming the importance of hospitality in the economy of the two monarchs' friendship, as is evident in the opening of the play.

However, hospitality itself is the trigger that causes the end of Leontes and Polixenes's bond. In fact, in order to persuade his friend to remain in Sicily and thus prolong his stay there, Leontes asks his wife Hermione to speak to his guest. Hermione's warm words have the required effect but her affability is interpreted by her husband as a betrayal. Driven mad by a simple suspicion, Leontes accuses Hermione of adultery, while Polixenes escapes his friend's fury by

[1] Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

secretly leaving Sicily with the help of Camillo, Leontes's faithful counsellor.

Leontes's mighty passion disrupts a whole system of relationships and its cause may be traced in his latent narcissism, of which the system of likeness is a symptom. Hospitality and friendship, together with the evolution of Leontes's narcissism, will be the object of this paper, supported by Derrida's theory.

Hospitality and friendship

The Winter's Tale is mainly constructed, as I have anticipated, around the concept of friendship between Leontes and Polixenes, described as follows:

> We were as *twinned lambs* that did fisk i'th' sun,
> And bleat the one at th'other; what we changed
> Was innocence for innocence – we knew not
> The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dreamed
> That any did.
> (1.2. 66-69, italics mine)

The idyllic past, recollected with some nostalgia on the part of Polixenes, has been troubled by their political roles; now the two monarchs can vivify their friendship with gifts, letters and visits, as the words of a courtier clarify:

> Since their more mature dignities and royal necessities made separation of their society, their encounters, though not personal, hath been royally attorneyed with *interchange of gifts, letters, loving embassies*, that they have seemed to be together, though absent, shook hands as over a vast, and embraced as it were from the ends of opposed winds.
> (1.1. 23-30, italics mine)

The mutual interchange of gifts, letters and loving embassies emphasises the necessity of reciprocity in these manifestations of love and makes hospitality central in Leontes and Polixenes' relationship.

This is evident in the following passage, just after Camillo and Archidamus have informed the audience that Polixenes has been hosted by Leontes for nine months when the play opens:

> If you shall chance, Camillo, to visit Bohemia on the like occasion whereon my services are now on foot, you shall see, as I have said, great difference betwixt our Bohemia and your Sicilia ... Sicilia cannot show himself over-kind to Bohemia. They were trained together in their childhoods, and there rooted betwixt them then such an affection which cannot choose but branch now.
> (1.1. 1-4; 20-23)

The originary affection shared by the 'twin friends' has brought them to construct their two realities symmetrically, as if by a (male) parthenogenesis the original world, symbolised by their infancy, had given birth to two twin systems, where the two friends must be one the mirror of the other. In fact, Polixenes and Leontes are equal in everything, above all in their political roles, and their 'sameness' is expressed also by the similarity between their kingdoms (Shakespeare's Bohemia is even touched by the sea, so as not to be different from Sicily!).

This model is inspired by the classics. Plato, Aristotle and Cicero have all written about friendship.[2] In the Renaissance, this trope was also in fashion because of the political and philosophical debate on the "ideal best friend". Montaigne, with his *De l'Amitié,* is the most representative in this respect and is considered to have influenced Shakespeare's writing on even more than one occasion.[3] What emerges from his philosophical speculation is a homogeneous idea of friendship as the highest and purest feeling involving two adult men in an exclusive relationship.

The best friend is another Self, a self-projection, with whom the Self plays host to a mutual exchange of love, rather than of goods and

[2] I am referring to Plato's *Lysis*, Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, and Cicero's *De Amicitia*.

[3] See Agnes Heller, "The Beauty of Friendship", *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 97.1 (Winter 1998), 19.

gifts. The rhetorical mode which idealises friendship, however, hides a narcissistic tendency. The formula of the twin friends, in fact, means that the Self can only love his/her reflection, represented by the friend, which denies difference as a source of enrichment, and unconsciously supports a hierarchical structure of society.

Analogously, hospitality, appearing in the play as a mutual exchange of visits, functions on the same principle, the maintenance of a 'political' similarity. The point, however, demands further investigations. In every culture, from the most archaic societies on, hospitality has represented a guarantee for peaceful relationships between communities. Hospitality implies a house, a nation, a place in which the authority of the host (a male host as Derrida suggests below) is the law; outside of this authority no hospitality can be offered:

> Hospitality is certainly, necessarily, a right, a duty, an obligation, the *greeting* of the foreign other [*l'autre étranger*] as a friend but on the condition that the host ... maintains his own authority.[4]
>
> ... the host, he who offers hospitality, must be the master in his house, he (male in the first instance) must be assured of his sovereignty over the space and goods he offers or opens to the other as stranger.[5]

Besides, the guest is welcomed insofar as he/she can reciprocate the hospitality received. It is no surprise that *xenia,* hospitality in ancient Greek, also means 'pact'. Hospitality and all the rites connected to it, i.e. banquets, gifts etc., are based on this pact in order to last in time. The guest as the intruder-stranger and so the other is accepted only according to fixed and precise conditions and in any case within the law of the place.

For Derrida, however, this means that no real hospitality takes place and consequently no real friendship. Hospitality as a free gesture of opening towards the Other is an impossible concept, an aporia, if it implies two non-exchangeable roles, those of host and guest. 'Absolute hospitality' as 'good friendship' means giving without any expectation

[4] Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality", *Angelaki* 5.3 (December 2000), 4.
[5] Ibid., 14.

of receiving. It is a free act of love towards the Other which sets aside the I/Other dialectic, accepting the Other beyond Law and Authority,[6] and beyond likeness.

In the play, this does not happen. We witness a breaking of reciprocity, when Leontes is assailed by the suspicion he has been betrayed, which preludes to the collapse of the system, and of the illusion of parity between 'selves'. In being the copy of the Self, indeed, the friend is also an *other* Self, which makes an uncanny presence arise between them. This perspective opens the door to a paradoxical *differance* between the two selves: at first united in an idyllic relationship, they soon find themselves in opposition; the friend suddenly becomes an enemy, the welcomed guest a dangerous intruder.

Benveniste's analysis of the etymology of hospitality can explain the connection between the semantic categories discussed so far. He concentrates his research on two Latin roots, *hostis* and *hospes*, which come respectively from the two Indo-European words **ghosti* and **ghosti-poti-*. *Hostis* initially meant a stranger with the same rights as Roman citizens, a favoured guest, favoured insofar as he/she could return those rights; with the expansion of the Empire and the advent of a more nationalised organization, the favoured guest becomes an enemy.[7]

Hospes, instead, deriving from the double form **ghosti-poti-*, then **hosti-potis*, has maintained the double meaning of host and guest but, in its original connotation, it meant precisely 'master of the

[6] Derrida makes a distinction between common hospitality, which is delimited by the laws and rules of the community, and absolute hospitality, which transcends them: "It is as though hospitality were the impossible: as though the law of hospitality defined this very impossibility, as if it were only possible to transgress it, as though *the* law of absolute, unconditional, hyperbolical hospitality, as though the categorical imperative of hospitality commanded that we trangress all the laws (in the plural) of hospitality, namely, the conditions, the norms, the rights and the duties that are imposed on hosts and hostesses, on the men or women who give a welcome as well as the men or women who receive it. And vice versa, it is as though the laws (plural) of hospitality, in marking limits, powers, rights, and duties, consisted in challenging and trangressing *the* law of hospitality, the one that would command that the "new arrival" be offered an unconditional welcome". Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 75-77.

[7] See Emile Benveniste, "Dono e scambio nel vocabolario europeo", in *Problemi di linguistica generale* (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1966), 376-389; see also *Online Etymology Dictionary,* http://www.etymonline.com/h3etym.htm.

guest'. Besides, as Derrida suggests, *poti* means 'master' in a variety of ways: not only *despotes*, and *potens*, as in Greek and Latin, but also husband, according to the Sanskrit derivation.[8]

The Winter's Tale reflects this confusion between semantic categories, which might represent the different roles in the play. On the one hand we have a favoured guest who becomes an enemy after nine months of hospitality (Polixenes as *hostis*); on the other hand there is a host-husband, who becomes a jealous tyrant (Leontes as *hospes*).

The reason why this semantic shift takes place, is represented by Hermione, who embodies the *differance* between the two selves. Her disruptive agency starts by the challenge of the rules of hospitality, determining all the roles within the economy of the system.

Hermione

Hermione enters the play actively when Polixenes decides to leave. Unable to persuade him to stay, in fact, Leontes asks her to intervene: "Tongue-tied, our queen? Speak you" (1.2. 27).[9] With this question, Leontes invites her into his relationship with Polixenes and, above all, he invites her in order to invite in turn.

Hermione, then, becomes the guest in Leontes and Polixenes' friendship but also a host, because she is given the power to invite. Indeed, as a host, she replaces Leontes so brilliantly that she manages to persuade Polixenes to stay, usurping Leontes's power and affirming her own: "a lady's 'verily' 's / As potent as a lord's" (1.2. 49).

[8] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 13.

[9] The way in which Leontes orders his wife to speak and then forces her to silence with death, which is in line with the wider problem of women's silence, was very topical in Jacobean times. The act of opening and interrupting speech, a full act of violence, determines the woman's reification as a consequence as happens to Hermione who becomes a statue. The emphasis on her silence reminds me of other Shakespearean examples of women forced to silence. Among them Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, whose final silence at the Duke's proposal reinforces the image of the strength of male power. In fact, the Duke, after having 'exploited' Isabella by making her act in his plot, introduces her into his system through marriage. As we shall see later, marriage is the favoured channel for controlling women.

Simultaneously, she formulates a question as to the origin of the reciprocal system, implicitly questioning it: "Come, I'll *question* you / Of my lord's tricks and yours when you were boys" (1.2. 59-60).

In his answer, Polixenes expresses his and Leontes' model:

> We were, fair Queen
> Two lads that thought there was no more behind
> But such a day tomorrow as today
> And to be boy eternal.
> (1.2. 61-64)

Polixenes could scarcely have been more explicit in outlining the system he and Leontes would like to perpetrate, a world without difference, where time does not produce any change. It is not by chance that Mamillius and Florizel are described as their fathers' mirrors.[10] From another perspective, Neely comes to the same conclusion:

> ... the *Winter's Tale* begins in a static barren, masculine world that appears determinedly self-sufficient, capable of sustaining itself without the violent trauma of birth. It purports to control time and space through the unchanged boyhood friendship of Leontes and Polixenes ...[11]

It is not surprising that in this logic the real stranger is Hermione, a woman. On the other hand, when Polixenes, recalling their common childhood, regrets those past times as an innocent state in contrast with that of the present, when they are married men, Hermione exclaims: "Of this make no conclusion, lest you say / Your Queen and I are devils" (1.2. 80-81), hinting ironically at the exclusion of women from the system.[12]

[10] "... they say we are / Almost as like as eggs" (1.2. 128-129). "Why, that's my bawcock – what, hast smutched thy / nose? / They say it is a copy out of mine" (1.2. 119-121).

[11] Carol Thomas Neely, "*The Winter's Tale*: Women and Issue", in *Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Plays* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 192.

[12] "Temptations have since then been born to's, for / In those unfledged days was my wife a girl; / Your precious self had then not crossed the eyes / Of my young playfellow" (1.2. 75-80).

In this respect, it is essential to recall that Hermione is a 'real' stranger – "The Emperor of Russia was my father" (3.2. 117) – who 'from outside' (since she is not even contemplated in the perfect world of the two friends) calls the patriarchal *logos* into question as the Derridian stranger-guest:

> The foreigner shakes up the threatening dogmatism of the paternal *logos*: the being that is, and the non-being that is not. As though the foreigner had to begin by contesting the authority of the chief, the father, the master of the family, the "master of the house," of the power of hospitality, of the *hosti-pets* which we have talked about at such length.[13]

The stranger starts by contesting the authority of the master of the law, of the house, as Hermione inaugurates the collapse of the rules of hospitality, which are the rules of identity too. Derrida in *Hostipitality* talks of the law of hospitality as:

> ... the law of the household, *oikonomia*, the law of his household, the law of a place (house, hotel, hospital, hospice, family, city, nation, language, etc.), the law of identity which de-limits the *very* place of proffered hospitality and maintains authority over it, maintains the truth of authority.[14]

In replacing the official host, even succeeding where he had failed, Hermione deconstructs 'the truth of Leontes's authority', triggering a chain of consequential displacements. Leontes, indeed, perceives Hermione's brilliant speech as a menace to his own subjectivity and feels dispossessed of his power. His reaction to Hermione repeats that of Polixenes, like his friend, Leontes looks at the past in search of safety:

> Hermione: ... Are you moved, my lord?
> Leontes: No, in good earnest
> How sometimes nature will betray its folly,

[13] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 5.
[14] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 4.

> Its tenderness, and make itself a pastime
> To harder bosoms! Looking on the lines
> Of my boy's face, methoughts I did recoil
> Twenty-three years, and saw myself unbreeched ...
> (1.2. 148-154)

The similar reaction of the two friends confirms their likeness and emphasises the importance that childhood has had for them. The affection for that originary lost world is typical of narcissists.

According to Freud, narcissism in the adult is the symptom of a regression of subjectivity, due to the incapacity to overcome the loss of a primary narcissism, representing a necessary phase of one's infancy.[15] In other words, the loss of that phase, marked by a sense of omnipotence and self-sufficiency on the part of the child, constitutes a fundamental component in the development of his/her subjectivity. Narcissism as a disease, instead, depends on a pathological refusal to face any loss, and on the obsessive attempt to re-create the conditions of the omnipotence of infancy.

After his wife's questioning, Leontes begins to lose the illusion of being omnipotent and, unable to recognise Hermione's superiority, perceives her as an intruder. In the following passage, indeed, the spider may be read as a metaphor of Hermione's disturbance rather than only as a reference to jealousy:

> Leontes: There may be in the cup
> A spider steeped, and one may drink, depart,
> And yet partake no venom, for his knowledge
> Is not infected; but if one present
> Th'abhorred ingredient to his eye, make known
> How he hath drunk, he cracks his gorge, his sides
> With violent hefts. I have drunk, and seen the spider
> Camillo was his help in this, his pander.
> There is a plot against my life, my crown;

[15] Sigmund Freud makes a distinction between a primary normal narcissism and a secondary pathological narcissism. See *Introduzione al narcisismo* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1975).

All's true that is mistrusted.
(2.1. 39-48)

The use of an image of infection associated to the "eye" emphasises how after the contagious entrance of the alien element, the spider-Hermione, Leontes's sight is distorted, and consequently he looks at Polixenes and Hermione as lovers and Camillo as a complaisant-conspirator; besides, "eye" is also the transcription of the pronunciation of I, which opens the door to a reflection on the connection between sight and identity in relation to Leontes: his deformed sight corresponds to his fragmented subjectivity, which is gradually falling apart. What is striking here is that it is not important that the spider is in the cup, what counts is that it must remain unnoticed.

In this respect, the intrusion of Hermione can also be analysed in relation to another aspect of the culture of the period: the exclusion of women from power circuits. Her betrayal involves a struggle for visibility within a structure banishing femininity. So the cause of Leontes's jealousy should be detected in the patriarchal contest of the time with its strategy of self-perpetration, interwoven with hospitality and friendship.

To discuss this point, we have to consider not only the classical heritage analysed so far, but also the Renaissance vision of friendship. An article written by Alan Sinfield, about the homoerotic element in *The Merchant of Venice,* shows that Shakespeare's production is full of couples of friends, whose relationship leads to homoeroticism:

> Friends shared beds, they embraced and kissed; such intimacies reinforced the network of obligations and their public performance would often be part of the effect. So the proper signs of friendship could be the same as those of same-sex passion.[16]

As I have anticipated previously, this custom, commonly-accepted at the time despite religious invectives against sodomy,[17] was not in

[16] Alan Sinfield, "How to read *The Merchant of Venice*", in Kate Chedgzoy, ed., *Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 126.
[17] Ibid., 123.

contrast with the classic ideal of 'friendship'; conversely, they were two sides of the same coin, since desire was a consistent element in the original Aristotelian model.[18] If not explicitly homosexual, "relations between men enjoyed the kind of privilege marking heterosexual relations in later eras".[19]

What we could hazard is a double jealousy of Leontes towards his wife and his friend (which however indicates that he is only inevitably jealous of himself). When he sees the two hand in hand, he says: "As now they are, and making practised smiles / As in a *looking-glass*" (1.2. 115-116, italics mine). In a way he is afraid that Hermione could replace *him* in the mirror-relationship with his friend, as she has replaced *him* as a host, which makes her once again an unwelcome guest. In fact, Leontes's famous cue "Too hot, too hot" (1.2. 108), which hints for the first time at a possible 'betrayal', responds to Hermione's acknowledgement of Polixenes as *her* friend:

> Hermione: 'Tis grace indeed,
> Why, lo you now, I have spoke to th' purpose twice.
> The one for ever earned a royal husband,
> Th'other, for some while a friend ...
> Leontes: Too hot, too hot!
> To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods ...
> (1.2. 104-109)

In this respect, Hermione disturbs the system, 'mingling friendship with blood', thus confusing the 'normal' categories of thought, in which she introduces herself as an element of *differance*. Hermione, then, represents 'the familiar strangeness' arising within the Self and its *exemplar*, in order to contrast the political exigency of keeping a certain and fixed order, based on what Shannon defines 'the privileging of likeness':

> In the Renaissance setting, this mirroring form of sameness signified a radical (or at least exotic) political equality in an otherwise fully

[18] See Heller, "The Beauty of Friendship", 10.
[19] Shannon, *Sovereign Amity*, 9.

hierarchized world as much as, if not more than, its privileging of likeness indicates a philosophical replication of the same.[20]

In addition, at the time, the exclusion of the woman from friendship was justified by her nature, prone to *eros* more than to *philia,*[21] which made her dangerous and in need of control through institutions like marriage.[22]

Sinfield shows how one of the most disquieting tropes of the time was the proper role of women in the system, inasmuch as it appears in most of the cultural production of the period. In addition, the use of boy actors in place of women, unlike what happened on the continent, was a reaction to the fear of female sexuality, which leads Sinfield to conclude:

> Same sex passion ... was thought compatible with marriage and perhaps preferable to cross-sex infidelity. The preoccupation, in writing of this period, is with women disturbing the system, resisting arranged marriages, running off with the wrong man, not bearing (male) children, committing adultery, producing illegitimate offspring, becoming widows and exercising the power of that position. ... Shakespearean plays, as much as the rest of the culture, are obsessively concerned with dangers that derive from women.[23]

It is no surprise that a powerful woman is associated with all the negative connotations enumerated by Sinfield. These fears are all reflected in *The Winter's Tale* where an insecure husband provokes a disaster within his family as a result of *his* anxieties, all involving the fidelity of *his* wife and *his* lineage.

[20] Shannon, "Monarchs, Minions, and "Sovereigne" Friendship", *The South Atlantic Quaterly* 97.1 (Winter 1998), 92.

[21] Derrida, *Politiche dell'amicizia* (Milano: Cortina, 1995), 331.

[22] Simon Palfrey adds also the fact that marriage was contemporarily the only way women were allowed to enter "means and places, albeit only through the *de jure* permission of the husband". *Late Shakespeare: A New World of Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 197. In any case, this does not change the subalternity into which women were forced.

[23] Sinfield, "How to read *The Merchant of Venice*", 124.

Leontes's narcissistic wound

Leontes reaches the zenith of his madness when, in the attempt to find a foundation to his obsessions, he summons a double trial, human and divine, in which Hermione, again, proves a convincing orator, making him even more furious. Neither Hermione's self-defence nor the favourable response of the oracle of Delphi, make him change his mind and Hermione is sentenced to death. The condemnation is never put into practice because Hermione faints when she hears the news of Mamillius's death, and later she is reported to be dead.

> In cultural representations, the elimination of a feminine body serves to stabilise a perturbing ambivalence in ... various aspects. ... Over her dead body a clear boundary between self and Other, as this implies the primary distinction between living and dead, can be reaffirmed.[24]

As Bronfen suggests, Hermione's disappearance traces a line between her as the Other and Leontes as the Self. Now that the dangerous intruder has been expelled, Leontes acquires his calmness again, passing from attacks of rage to a melancholic phase. Apparently, his depression is due to sorrow for the queen's death; actually, it reveals Leontes's despair for the loss of his own identity as husband and father.

Indeed, when he is told of his wife's death, he immediately plans how to regenerate *himself,* rather than mourning his partner's disappearance: "Once a day I'll visit / The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there / Shall be my recreation" (3.2. 236-238).

Later, in Act 5, he seems to blame himself for the harm done: "Whilst I remember / Her and her virtues, I cannot forget / My blemishes in them, and so still think of / The wrong I did *myself,* which was so much / That heirless it hath made kingdom" (5.1. 6-10, italics mine). In fact, he is just worrying about the wrong he did himself, since now the kingdom has no successors. Moreover, when Paulina reminds him of the queen he killed with his mad behaviour, he answers:

[24] Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over her Dead Body* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 192.

... killed?
She I killed? I did so, but thou strik'st me,
Sorely to say I did. It is as bitter
Upon thy tongue as in my thought. Now, good now,
Say so but seldom.
(5.1. 16-20)

In refusing to remember Hermione, he confirms that actually he is mourning *another* loss, the loss of himself, mirrored by the lack of heirs (5.1. 10) symbolising this incompleteness.

Indeed, if on the one hand Leontes has got rid of the dangerous side of Otherness, represented by his wife, on the other hand, he has also lost the Other as self-reflection, embodied by Polixenes, the ideal self, and by Mamillius, the perpetrator of that image, which implies that he is now mutilated in his identity:

> Against an experience of destability arising from the acknowledgement of real difference between the self and another being, a recuperation of the self involves two steps; firstly, reassuring oneself that the Other functions as the lost object ... and secondly clarifying any ambivalence by drawing a stable boundary between self and Other, that eliminates real Otherness from conceptions of the conscious self. The Other serves as the limit against which the self can be defined and as the realm on to which it can project what lies within. Its function is fundamentally contradictory, in so far as it is both mirror, confirming or rejecting aspects of the self and limit to the self, embodying a form of radical Otherness beyond the self's narcissistic reflection.[25]

Leontes's disease derives from the impossibility to eliminate "real Otherness" without eliminating the Other within "the self's narcissistic reflection", which is his source of spiritual supply. This condition leads him to become the hostage of the absence of his ideal self, which he needs in order to cure his wounded soul.

[25] Ibid., 190.

Unlike what happens to the host described by Derrida and inspired by Klossowski's *Roberte, Ce Soir*, who at the end "becomes the hostage of the one invited, of the guest",[26] Leontes becomes the hostage of the act of 'non-hosting' his other self.

The Sicilian monarch is waiting for a guest, who coming as a liberator would set him free from being the hostage of himself by giving him back his role as a host. Indeed, to emerge from his self-reclusion, the king has to put into practice a hospitality, which we could call 'narcissistic', inasmuch as the guest functions as his reflection. This would be the first step towards recreating his old world, since the displacement of his subjectivity has started from the deconstruction of his status as master of the house. In this respect, the arrival of Polixenes's son, Florizel, his first visitor in sixteen years, fits Leontes's exigency, offering him the occasion to recover his own identity and his relationship with his best friend.

Indeed, Florizel flees to Sicily in order to escape his father's hostility to his marriage to Perdita, a beautiful shepherdess who is, in fact, the new-born baby Leontes had refused to acknowledge as his own daughter and who had been abandoned in Bohemia sixteen years earlier.

As soon as Leontes looks at him, he is struck by his resemblance to his father and feels nostalgia for the past:

Your mother was most true to wedlock, prince,
For she did print your royal father off,
Conceiving you. Were I but twenty-one,
Your father's image is so hit in you,
His very air, that I should call you brother...
I lost ... the society,
Amity too, of your brave father, whom,
Though bearing misery, I desire my life
Once more to look on him.
(5.1. 123-126; 134-138)

So, when Florizel confesses that he is at odds with Polixenes because of Perdita, Leontes promises Florizel to intercede in his

[26] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 9.

favour, in the hope of restoring his friendship: "I now go toward him, therefore follow me, / And mark what way I make. Come, good my lord" (5.1. 231-232).

From this passage, a self-confident Leontes emerges in contrast with the desperate and passive Leontes who saw Florizel and Perdita as reminders of his lost children. "What might I have been, / Might I a son and daughter now have looked on, / Such goodly things as you!" (5.1. 175-177).

"And mark what way I make" (5.1. 232), then, puts a particular emphasis on the fact that the Sicilian monarch has reacquired an active and central position in the development of the action; it underlines his energy in opposition to the passivity of his previous phase of isolation. In other words, to be a host again is for Leontes the best way to recover, inasmuch as in virtue of the authority regained as master of the house, he can reconstruct his system. In fact, almost contemporarily, he embraces Polixenes and discovers that Perdita is his lost daughter and, last but not least, in the final scene, Hermione is also magically resurrected, reuniting the family.

Host, friend, father and husband: Leontes is definitely healed.

The conclusion of the play more or less re-presents the beginning. The crisis triggered by Hermione has not been sufficient to change the coordinates of the system, still based on friendship and hospitality and on a centralistic male authority.

In addition, the union of Sicily and Bohemia, through the marriage of Florizel and Perdita, symbolises the realisation of Leontes and Polixenes' narcissistic dream: the fusion of their kingdoms becomes a metaphor of the happy autarkic infancy, evoked as a shelter against the *differance* represented by Hermione. As a result, in *The Winter's Tale*, the problems raised in the course of the action remain unresolved.

Hermione's resurrection, however, may represent the return of the repressed and in that sense she can still signify danger for male friendship.

OTHERING THE GUEST/HOST

Claudia Buonaiuto

'Monstrous Bodies': Sycorax, or the Feminine Grotesque

Prospero, the host

> At this hour
> Lies at my mercy all mine enemies
> (5.1. 260-61)[1]

Prospero, the Patriarch in *The Tempest*, arrives on the island exiled from his place of birth and deprived of his dukedom of Milan. Yet, he does not wait too long before recuperating his role as a ruler, this time over the things and the inhabitants of the island, turning everything and everyone into his objects/'subjects'. From the first to the last act, Prospero is the King, the Master and the Father. Already on the island when he arrives, Ariel is nonetheless presented as the servant who obeys his law; the black Caliban, after being instructed how to speak and behave, will be converted into his slave; his daughter Miranda will be taught how 'to exist' only to become his product. Prospero is commanding the space as his own possession, and the island people as if they were his guests - he is undoubtedly their "host":

> According to the chain we are now familiar with (*hosti-pet-s*, *potis*, *potest*, *ipse*, etc.) the sovereignty of power, the host's *potestas* and

[1] All the quotations from William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* are from Stanley Wells et al., *The Oxford Shakespeare. The Complete Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

possession, remain those of the *pater familias*, the head of the house, the *maître de céans*.[2]

As King, Prospero represents the sovereignty of Power; as Master, he is the one who dictates the symbolic law of the Logos; he also has the authority of the Father; finally, as a host, he coercively subjugates his guests: Caliban, Ariel, and Sycorax. Still, the nature of his authority is so ambiguous that he cannot help feeling his power is in danger. Fighting whoever could menace his rule, he defends his integrity of host and *pater familias* by raising impossible barriers. When Prospero meets Ferdinand for the first time, he enacts a bizarre duel against him with an inexplicable reason:

> Thou dost here usurp the name thou ow'st not,
> And has put thyself upon this island as a spy,
> To win it from me, the lord on't.
> (1.2. 456-459)

Why would Ferdinand win the island from Prospero? Maybe because of Miranda? For sure, Caliban proves Prospero's unstable sovereignty when he shouts:

> This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
> ...
> (1.2. 333)

His mother owned the "enchanted island" – Caliban is clear about the issue of 'usurped authority'. The island does not belong to Prospero, yet he has enforced his order of things on it, imposing the dominant

[2] Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 41. The philosopher explains how hospitality in the Western tradition of thought, from the Bible to Kant, is a crucial point for the understanding of the relationship between the host – the master, the state – and the guest – the other, the stranger. Derrida turns hospitality into a conceptual source of analysis of how, throughout history, Western civilisation has been able to deny solidarity and hospitality to foreigners, transforming their presence into an everlasting obstacle to the integrity of the host.

[3] Indeed, Prospero teaches Caliban his language, possibly admitting him into

language of the European male logos.[3] He masters discourses for the sake of power and as a modern *principe* he founds the endurance of the state on imperative political reasons. He disposes of the land and people as his own kingdom, and with the strength of a European Father he can bring civilisation to the "bare island". Prospero's integrity is a matter of usurpation, violence and subjugation of alterity, as in any absolutist, colonial and misogynist endeavour.

Female witchery

The Tempest is focused on Prospero's figure and his "particular accidents" on the island - the practice of "secret studies" and of his mysterious "art" raise his status above patriarchal power. Indeed, Prospero is a 'powerful magician', and his authority so incisive because of his witchcraft: he is the one who can make people fall asleep by manipulating their will and bodies, and he can provoke unnatural events through the command of spirits in order to control the future. Furthermore:

> I have bedimmed
> The noontide sun called forth the mutinous winds,
> And 'twixt the green sea and the azurd vault
> Set roaring war – to the dread rattling thunder
> Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
> With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory
> Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
> The pine and cedar; graves at my command
> Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth
> By my so potent art.
> (5.1. 41-50)

As an ideologically grounded idea, witchcraft is a practice of power antithetical to state influence, therefore Prospero's magic rule

European manhood, but violently denying Caliban any element of humanity, forcing him into the most miserable condition.

will make "wonders", and his "potent art" will be described in such 'neutral' terms as "prescience" and "secret studies", avoiding any open reference to witchcraft.[4] On the contrary, 'pure' magic brings forth monsters and is exclusively a 'feminine' domain; in the play, the only witch described as such, and with negative/black connotations, is Sycorax, Caliban's African dead mother:

> This damned witch Sycorax,
> For mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible
> To enter human hearing, from Algiers
> Thou know'st was banished. For one thing she did
> They would not take her life. Is not this true?
> (1.2. 264-68)

Sycorax is the "foul witch", absent and spoken for. The fragments of memory that Prospero, Caliban and Ariel disseminate all along recollect her story, remembering her as a very strong witch and reinforcing the image of a horrifying and grotesque woman:

> The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy
> Was grown into a hoop?
> (1.2. 259-60)

And further:

> This blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child,
> And here was left by th' sailors. Thou, my slave,
> As thou report'st thyself, was then her servant;
> And for thou wast a spirit too delicate
> To act her earthy and abhorred commands,

[4] Witchcraft represents a controversial political context for many Elizabethan and following plays. Also, King James I had written *Daemonologie* (Edimburgh, 1597), a treaty on magic. For a discussion and literature on magic at the time of the writing of *The Tempest,* see Kurt Tetzeli Von Rosador, "The Power of Magic: From *Endimion* to *The Tempest*", *Shakespeare Survey* 43 (1991); for the relation between magic and Prospero's authority crisis, see Jane Kingsley-Smith, "*The Tempest*'s Forgotten Exile", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47 (1996).

> Refusing her grand hests, she did confine thee
> By help of her more potent ministers,
> And in her most unmitigable rage,
> Into a cloven pine;
> ...
> (1.2. 270-78)

Even though Prospero's magic can be as equally dangerous as Sycorax's, she is depicted as a demonic figure and presented as evil, revealing a precise intent of constructing a 'monster' through a profound misogynist light. Shakespeare's display of a wide vocabulary of female horror and abjection through Sycorax relies upon a very recurrent idea about witchcraft, as a diabolic art only linked to women:

> Practicing power for the sake of power — an idea implied in the widely assumed image of the witch as exclusively an evildoer — is an inheritance, I suspect, of the 'civilised' mind. […] The line dividing the good and the evil, magic and witchcraft, does not always seem to be as clear-cut as it should be.[5]

'Civilised minds' are as fearful of woman as procreator of life just as of witches and their power to kill, therefore the image of the witch is consistently equated with a supernatural, malefic and destructive power, linked to punishment and irrevocable loss. As Trinh Minh-ha asserts, this power is currently used to refer to native black mothers in literature, as they are objects of negative stereotypes.[6]

Sycorax, an African woman and mother, is a figure that embodies and possesses this ambiguous power, appearing as the motherwitch *par excellence*. In addition, Sycorax the "hag" and the "hoop" recalls mythological witches of traditional narrations like Circe and Medea: she mutates humans into animals and uses dangerous charms on men like her preceding figures of female magic with their demonic marks.[7]

[5] Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman Native Other* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 128.

[6] Trinh T. Minh-ha, "Mother's Talk", in Obioma Nnaemeka, ed., *The Politics of (M)Othering* (London: Routledge, 1997).

[7] In "'The foul witch' and Her 'freckled whelp': Circean Mutations in the New

Indeed, throughout the centuries, women have been represented as witches, for their bodies have been specifically connected to the grotesque. The word grotesque comes from 'grotto', the cave: "as bodily metaphor, the grotesque cave tends to look like the cavernous anatomical female body".[8] The dividing frontier between women, mothers and witches is always liminal in their traditional (mis-re)presentations, thus the use of the grotesque as an aesthetic expedient is particularly meaningful for mothers' and women's bodies. Sycorax, as part of this literary custom, symbolises the female grotesque in the play, offered as an African generator of monstrosities.[9]

Accordingly, Sycorax's witchcraft is the reign of unruliness and of disorder which transgresses the rational law of the Father, and of humanity. Her magic transfigures and transforms, overcoming the barriers between man and beast, giving birth to monstrosities against Prospero's "wonders" which promise integrity.

World", Marina Warner argues that these spells recall the figures of Circe both in Homer's *Odyssey* and in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (in Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman, eds., *'The Tempest' and its Travels*, London: Reaktion Books, 2000).

[8] Lidia Curti, *Female Stories Female Bodies* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 107.

[9] The fascination with monsters in *The Tempest* is a very intriguing matter discussed by many scholars from different angles. In "The foul witch" Marina Warner argues that it can derive from the perception of the New World circulating at the time of the writing of the play, especially for that intermingling of horror and wonder for the Americas. See, for instance, the analysis that she makes of the figures that stay on the top of the *infolio* edition of *The Tempest*, where there appear all the "monsters" of the new world. Nevertheless, despite the different sources from which monsters might have been drawn - medieval mythologies, ancient Greek mythologies, or travellers' tales - Mark Thornton Burnett argued that "in early modern England monsters defined as '*things brought forth contrary to the common decree and order of nature*' occupied vexed places in popular culture and scientific debates. [*The Tempest*] reveals charged connections with [early modern] wonder books in which monsters and prodigies are an area of vigorous enquiry". Furthermore, monsters might have referred to the representation and perception of Africa. In fact, he affirms that "the association of the monstrous races, monstrous births and Africa was proverbial". Burnett's discussion could explain why, in the imaginary of early modern people, Sycorax, an African woman, had to create monsters. See her "'Strange and Wonderfull Syghts': *The Tempest* and the Discourse of Monstrosity", *Shakespeare Survey* 50 (1997), 187-188.

> The contrast between the two magi of the play – the living male duke and the dead female hag – [...] lies in the difference between metamorphosis and stasis. [...] In other words, pagan notions of physical identity as multiple and shapeshifting clash on the isle with a Christian idea of fixed, stable and seemly bodily identity.[10]

The Father's art is supposed to be benevolent and with Christian attributes: the tempest at the beginning of the play, though artificially provoked, leaves those involved completely intact; whereas witchcraft paradoxically calls into question Prospero's absolutist rule and governance. In a sense, the magic sub-text of the play is implicitly 'monstrous', thus deviant from the Father's rule. Prospero himself is subjugated by witchcraft, admitting to be a poor magic practitioner only on the island:

> ... I am more better
> Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell.
> (1.2. 20-21)

He, too, is unable to grasp the irrationality of the place:

> You do yet taste
> Some subtleties o'th' isle that will not let you
> Believe things certain.
> (5.1. 125-27)

Yet, only in the very end will he renounce his control as insubstantial:

> This rough magic I here abjure.
> (5.1. 50)

Witchcraft exceeds Prospero's norm and his essence as Master, overcoming his language of signification. The island seems to escape Prospero's understanding while obeying a widely spread grotesque

[10] Warner, "The foul witch", 98.

unruliness: Sycorax's magic with her devilish and pagan attributes is still at work, and causes fear for its potential substitution of the Master's law. Prospero will prove to be an uncertain Patriarch because he has usurped the island superseding Sycorax's 'female rule', and will be haunted by her persona and magic. He still and overtly acknowledges Sycorax's strength:[11]

> This misshapen knave,
> His mother was a witch, and one so strong
> That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,
> And deal in her command without her power.
> (5.1. 271-74)

Even though her death has occurred many years earlier, she is always there influencing the island. Despite her absence, she continues to display her sacred authority. In fact, Caliban is sure that his mother's spells can threaten the Master, when he calls on Sycorax's magic against Prospero's menaces with the following words:

> As wicked dew as e'er my mother brushed
> With raven's feather from unwholesome fen
> Drop on you both! A southwest blow on ye,
> And blister you all o'er!
> (1.2. 323-26)

Prospero is seized by an uncanny rage and answers abruptly:

> For this be sure tonight thou shalt have cramps,
> Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up. Urchins
> Shall forth at vast of night, that they may work
> All exercise on thee. Thou shalt be pinched

[11] The fact that her absence does not weaken her strength recalls the allegory that Jacques Lacan recognises in the "haunting of the repressed" – Sycorax continues to live in the reign of memory – especially in the encounter with the other/double; see Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience", *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977).

> As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging
> Than bees that made 'em.
> (1.2. 327-332)

The Master feels his dominion attacked by this other/influence, for the rational law of the Father – the white male European system of meaning – cannot have full effect on the island, as it should. The place 'grotesquely' disobeys the master's will of fixation and immutability: the island is an enchanted place inhabited by animals of a circus [wolves and bears in 1.2. 289-90; dogs in 1.2. 385; bulls and lions 2.1. 317; apes and hedgehogs in 2.2. 9-10], and by hybrid creatures and unfamiliar shapes, phantoms and monsters, spirits and apparitions. Very few characters in the play have bodily shapes and integral aspects, most of them are hybrid and deformed by magical mutations. The barriers between the human and the beast, the natural and the unnatural are uncertain, and the threat of metamorphosis lies heavily on their condition, as on Prospero himself. Sycorax's transformative witchcraft and female (dis)order is still operative and the Patriarch is subjugated by the 'grotesque'.

> The grotesque is the aesthetic genre that obeys no principles, only whims, just as witchcraft is the practice of power that disobeys nature's law of property.[12]

The grotesque is a suspension of the law, thus of sovereignty, to be translated into a crisis of authority. Prospero cannot but be entrapped by the island-limbo and grow into a "master of a poor cell".

Witchcraft is the discourse in the play that destabilises, deteriorates and deterritorialises authority, seemingly creating an/other space – the liminal space for the Other where no 'human' principle can apply. Sycorax dwells in this space of the beyond, afar and within at the same time: the aporetic place between the human and the divine where Derrida positions the 'absolute' guest.[13] She is the 'monster' who haunts the island and the characters. As a guest she

[12] Warner, "The foul witch", 113.
[13] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 35.

keeps her host in perpetual hostage or as the uncanny she is repressed but not fully suppressed.[14] Over and over again, the grotesque Sycorax questions the logos and the *pater familias*.

A demonic resistance

As Gayatri Spivak argues analysing the Kantian 'categorical imperative', the modern state rises on the basis of a cultural, political and social shift from a religious to a philosophical ethics: the state secularises its foundations by rejecting the religious standpoint, coming to entertain a privileged relation with philosophy. However,

> [T]he dangerous transformative power of philosophy is that its formal subtlety can be travestied in the service of the state. Such a travesty in the case of the categorical imperative can justify the imperialist project by producing the following formula: *make* the heathen into a human so that he can be treated as an end in himself.[15]

Western Europe's expansion into the Americas, and previously into Africa, has had its own legitimating systems in accordance with its needs as a conquering power. The codes by which the 'inferior' was conceptualised have been part of a religious vision of the world. However, the Other has come to be perceived in a wider secular understanding. Indeed, throughout modernity the European Self has had to secure itself, a 'philosophical standpoint', at the detriment of the Other/Native – a motif of the overall period of European colonisation. Explicitly in *The Tempest*, Prospero expropriates the native's land, motivated by a 'rational' sense of supremacy. Indeed, Prospero and Caliban's relationship is seen in imperialist and colonial

[14] "So it is indeed the master, the one who invites, the inviting host, who becomes the hostage – and who really always has been. And the guest, the invited hostage, becomes the one who invites the one who invites, the master of the host. The guest becomes the host's host. The guest (*hôte*) becomes the host (*hôte*) of the host (*hôte*). These substitutions make everyone into everyone else's hostage." Ibid., 123-125.

[15] Gayatri C. Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and Critique of Imperialism", *Critical Inquiry* 1(12, 1985), 248.

terms, in the light of the modern master/slave dichotomy.[16] Nevertheless,

> ... for the first time in history [difference] was no longer *primarily* encoded in the male/female gender division as it had been hitherto in the symbolic template of all traditional and religiously based human orders, but now in the cultural-physiognomic variations between the dominant expanding European civilization and the non-Western peoples that, encountering, it would now stigmatise as "natives". In other words, with the shift to the secular, the primary code of difference now became that between "men" and "natives", with the traditional "male" and "female" distinctions now coming to play a secondary role within the system of symbolic representations.[17]

Starting from the seventeenth century, a shift took place from the epistemology of Woman as Other to the Other as Native, as a consequence both of the secularisation of the state and of European imperialism. *The Tempest* can be inscribed onto this epochal change, for the absence of women in the play (except for Miranda) can be read as an allegory of the all-modern understanding of difference. For instance, Miranda, the only (white) woman, symbolises no more than

[16] In this respect, the condensation of geographies in *The Tempest* – the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, etc. – is one of the crucial aspects of contemporary post-colonial debates on the play. See Jerry Brotton, "'This Tunis, sir, was Carthage': Contesting Colonialism in *The Tempest*", in Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, eds., *Post-Colonial Shakespeares* (London: Routledge, 1998), where he contests any precise form of colonialism referred to the New World, in favour of a more North African, thus Mediterranean cultural, political and economic setting of *The Tempest*; while most of the essays in Hulme and Sherman, eds., '*The Tempest*', are for a reading of an already colonialist endeavour related to the Caribbean. I am here referring to recent criticism around colonial matters of exile and property in the play; in particular, see Hulme, "Reading from Elsewhere: George Lamming and the Paradox of Exile", and Patricia Seed " 'This island's mine': Caliban and Native Sovereignity", both in Hulme and Sherman, eds., ibid.; and Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[17] Sylvia Wynter, "Beyond Miranda's Meanings: Un/silencing the 'Demonic Ground' of Caliban's 'Woman'", in Davies Boyce et al., *Out of the Kumbla* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1990), 357-8.

a possible object of desire both for Ferdinand, the white man, and Caliban, the black man.[18]

If woman no longer represents the category of difference, Caliban, the native, becomes the historically domesticated alter ego of the imperialist self, "because the project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have been the absolutely Other into a domesticated Other".[19] Still, Sycorax symbolises the 'absolutely excluded other' as *woman*, *mother* and *native* at once. She is completely removed from the white male system of identification through the dichotomy with the alien native black man: doubly silenced, Sycorax is doomed to a ghostly existence.

The suppression of women in *The Tempest* is even more evident in the way Prospero competes with women as makers. He is able to acquire maternal functions, which are not inscribed onto all women, but particularly and more apprehensively onto black (African) women.[20] In fact, Prospero has a gendered/feminine dimension in his will to be self-sufficient, incorporating his wife and acting as both mother and father for Miranda and Caliban: Miranda is the product of his education [1.2. 173-4], while the "thing of darkness" Caliban is his [5.1. 278]. Prospero's mental attitude highlights his will to power which is entirely deprived of women: he appropriates the power of mothers to give birth, pushing to the extremes his parthenogenesis, and transforming his productive brain into a man's womb.[21] His 'beating mind', as Miranda defines it, 'created the creatures that were his' products of reality as much as of fancies or nightmares.

[18] In recent criticisms Miranda has been considered as a weak female character, symbolising in Belinda Edmondson's words "the absence of feminist discourse in postcolonial narration and the absence of racial discourse in feminist narration"; see Belinda Edmondson, *Making Men* (London: Duke University Press, 1999), 110.

[19] Spivak, "Three Women's Text", 253.

[20] Black mothers in the white masculinist ideology have always represented a monstrous threat: the body of black women can be a double menace to white patriarchal authority and dominance, both as female alterity and as a body that terrifies the white man and race with her power to "race the mulatto child"; see Edmonson, *Making Men*, 107.

[21] See Burnett, "Strange and Wonderfull Syghts"; see also Curt Breight, "'Treason Doth Never Prosper': *The Tempest* and the Discourse of Treason", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990), in which he discusses Prospero's manipulation of narrative and of the characters' bodies.

Sycorax can be re-presented as a human being or be a subject of discourse, only through a new reading of a 'monstrous and female' politics of difference and a recovery of her grotesque resistance to the Father.[22]

> [This counter project] by refusing the "water with berries" strategy sets, of all our present hegemonic, theoretical models in their "pure" forms, based on their isolated "isms", [will enable] the move, however preliminary, on to the "demonic" and now unsilencing trans-"isms" ground of Caliban's woman. This terrain, when fully occupied, will be that of a new science of human discourse, of human "life" beyond the "master discourse" of our governing "privileged text", and its sub/versions.[23]

The imposition of silence on native black women for some five centuries on the part of white hegemonic patriarchal discourse and by masculinist discourse regardless of race, must be undone on a 'demonic ground', out of a new understanding of human life. As Sylvia Wynter explains, this new ground has to enable native black women to 'speak', as it represents an attempt to destroy existant systems of meaning. 'Privileged texts' about women have to be subverted in order to launch a wider epistemological consciousness of the pair female and black. The symbolic representations of women as monsters or of mothers as witches, which have repressed their voices, especially the black ones, have to be untied from their negative burdens. To speak of Sycorax and to listen to her absence, therefore, has the effect of questioning the systemic obliteration and inhospitality of native black women's presence in master discourses. In more general terms, it also leads to questioning the condition of women's speechlessness and, as a consequence, their grotesque versions throughout history, in the frame of false or inadequate structures of representation.

[22] I am here using the word "resistance" paraphrasing Barbara Harlowe, *Resistance Literature* (London: Methuen, 1987) and the idea of multiple theoretical structures of struggle and resistance to dominant discourses on Africa.

[23] Wynter, "Beyond Miranda's Meaning", 366.

> Within a pervasively masculinist language, a phallogocentric language, women constitute the *unrepresentable*. In other words, women represent the sex that cannot be thought, a linguistic absence and opacity. [...] Both the subject and the Other are masculine mainstays of a closed phallogocentric signifying economy that achieves its totalising goal through the exclusion of the feminine altogether.[24]

In language itself – in the Father's language, indeed - women cannot exist as subjects of discourse and are doomed to be opaque figures in distorted masculinist depictions. Sycorax is represented as calamity and evil, inevitably silenced, absent and obliterated. But, paraphrasing Derrida, to be silent is already a possible modality of *speaking*, for impossibility is in itself a condition of possibility.[25] Following this reasoning, absence is a trace of presence, thus Sycorax is absent but she *exists* under an impossible erasure. She is an 'absent/present' character — her *un-existence* is inscribed in the European logos.

> ... her mysterious, indeterminate story and character suffuses *The Tempest*; the 'foul witch Sycorax' occupies the drama like a prompter who accompanies the action throughout, hidden and unheard, beneath the stage.[26]

Sycorax reveals how her diabolical representation is a symbolic imposition of the masculinist gaze. In the light of contemporary and feminist criticism, she can rescue her absence through that very monstrosity and grotesque.[27] As Toni Negri argues, monsters appear every time normative power is exercised in an absolute and definitive

[24] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 1990), 9.
[25] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 135.
[26] Warner, "The foul witch", 97.
[27] See Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); see also Jeffrey John Cohen, ed, *Monster Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

order: they are its implicit counterpart.[28] They pertain to the realm of disorder because they are abnormal, unusual, sometimes repugnant, and escape classification. Monsters create social disorder discarding the hierarchies of power and questioning the law that excludes them. Their emergence disavows the arbitrariness of universal beliefs, and through the disruption of normality, they invent an alternative reality.

Sycorax has a demonic connotation in the play, but it is out of that position that she disturbs dominant discourses on black native women. The fact that she brings forth monstrosities – she is the mother of the "freckled whelp", a "foul witch" herself, from an enchanted island, outside the rationale - is precisely her 'monstrous' alternative to a reality that wants her dead and subjugated.

> ... Sycorax is still a force to reckon with.
> She's been dead now for some time, though the exact moment when *she could say* she ceased to be has become a blur. She thinks – and speaks – of her death.[29]

[28] Toni Negri, "La Linea del Mostro", in Toni Negri et al., *Desiderio del Mostro* (Roma: Manifestolibri, 2001).
[29] Warner, *Indigo* (London: Vintage, 1993), 77. *Indigo* is a novel which gives Sycorax a new life (emphasis mine).

Anna Maria Cimitile

Inhospitable Shakespeare

What does a Western monument do in globality and postcoloniality? Shakespeare is the 'monument' of European and Western culture. Cultural analyses, dealing with issues of race, gender, class, have offered an exploration of the Shakespearean canon that is at the same time a contribution to the construction of a "Shakespeare" for our times. Globality and postcoloniality cast their light on early modernity, which has turned into one privileged field for the re-vision of culture. But if one question that this intersecting of discourses more immediately seems to prompt, and answer, is "what does postcoloniality do to Shakespeare", it is also possible to rephrase that question as its reverse: What can Shakespeare do *in* postcoloniality and globality? How does the contemporary engagement with Shakespeare articulate reflections on new, global identities and postcolonial agencies? Lying at the core of the English literary canon, Shakespeare has represented a site for the questioning of certain ideological structures – mostly reflecting West-centred and patriarchal interests – which have been seen extensively at work in the texts. Shakespeare is also, nevertheless, a site for powerful cultural critiques of globalisation: in the updated story of the "pair of star-cross'd lovers" in Baz Luhrmann's *Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996), it offers a persuasive rendition of the contemporary feud between family-run societies in an ad-stricken 'global' metropolis; and it is even more pointedly revisioned for a strong, visual critique of high technology and corporate economics in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet 2000* (2000). As Shakespeare is both a reiterator of a past that is to be overcome and a clever anticipator of a present-future that is equally to

be bewared of, the alternate visions of his texts also revision, in turn, postcoloniality and globality themselves.

Cultural studies has pointed to the relevance of culture in configuring social, economic and political structures, as well as in defining boundaries – national, sexual, racial, and ethnic. Cultural practices are sites for the production of meaning; it is through them that narratives of identity, difference, hybridity are created, altered, and even undermined or silenced. Literature, culture, and the imaginary have been sites for the colonial representation/construction of a world system and are the battlefield for the postcolonial rephrasing of the same. The critical and cultural engagement with Shakespeare is one ulterior cultural practice where narratives – of Shakespeare as well as of identity, subjectivity, agency – are produced, part of the complexity of postcolonial and global space. And if for Arjun Appadurai globalisation is marked by a tension between "cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization",[1] then the question asked above is also about the extent to which "Shakespeare", the critical Shakespeare, intervenes in that tension.

To think of Shakespeare *in* the present is to think a question of hospitality. While diasporas and great fluxes of people moving across state borders – often clandestinely – have brought to the forefront of critical discussions reflections on juridical – and sometimes violent – treatments of the foreigner, the term enters contemporary debates as an invitation to rethink the practice of "letting the other in". The relation between Shakespeare and this kind of contemporaneity can also be thought of in terms of how the two reciprocally welcome each other. How Shakespeare relates to hospitality, whether it hosts or unhosts the sense of hospitality is obviously one way of reflecting on "Shakespeare and hospitality". But Shakespeare (as unaccommodating early modernity, textuality, etc.) can also be envisaged as inhospitable. It would then be a matter of thinking how such inhospitality engages with the present and refigures the ethics of hospitality itself.

[1] See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

The postcolonial critic as host

The title of this section blends together Gayatri Spivak's *The Post-Colonial Critic* (1990) and J. Hillis Miller's "The Critic as Host" (1979). In Spivak the specificity given to critical practice by the term "postcolonial" always involves the *position* (the singular 'crossroad' between race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, history etc.) whence the critical 'speaking' is done, as well as the *use* that the critic makes of it, i.e. the way critical practice is deployed and made to signify in her/his investigations.[2]

The relation between power and knowledge holds centre-stage in postcolonial studies, for, as Edward Said exhorted, the latter "formulate[s] the relationship between empire and culture".[3] But this is no easy task and the complexity of that relation has risked obliteration. Postcolonial studies has at times posited itself as the space where those previously constructed as voiceless gain voice, enabling a revision of culture and history. Enter Shakespeare, and this process of self-construction makes Caliban in *The Tempest* be taken up and over-exploited as an example of the slave or the colonised. The character emerges in postcolonial criticism in a double role: 1) representing the marginalised who have become the focal object of investigation, and 2) taken to metaphorise critical voices from the margins. For all its intricacies,[4] Spivak sees this double-act as somehow still limiting; this is why the post-colonial critic, in an alliance with deconstruction, should go beyond it:

> ... we cannot merely continue to act out the part of Caliban. One task of deconstruction might be a persistent attempt to displace the reversal, to show the complicity between native hegemony and the axiomatics of imperialism.[5]

[2] See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Post-Colonial Critic", in *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 67-74.

[3] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) (London: Vintage, 1994), 71.

[4] Houston A. Baker, Jr. has even tripled Caliban's role as postcolonial critical voice in "Caliban's Triple Play", in Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed., *"Race", Writing and Difference* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 381-395.

[5] Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing*

Pouvoir/savoir as the "making-sense-ability" of imperialism, the restrictions on the knowledge one is empowered to, is what should be understood and critiqued: "if the lines of making sense of something are laid down in a certain way, then you are able to do only those things with that something which are possible within and by the arrangement of those lines".[6] The postcolonial critic should shift between inside and outside her/his field of investigation: working from *within* the heritage of the axiomatics of imperialism yet *more able* than the latter would allow. Postcolonial critical practice would then be the excess that deconstructs power/knowledge even while "making sense" of it.

Miller's essay analyses the relation between criticism and text as a work of hospitality. This is of a peculiar kind: it is reciprocally parasitical.[7] Miller is concerned with the way deconstruction is envisaged by some critics. He re-proposes the relation between what is allegedly an "obvious meaning" of the text and its "deconstructive", "parasitical" interpretation in these terms: obvious meaning already has the equivocal richness which the deconstructive strategy of interpretation is said to create. Miller redefines the many encounters that occur whenever one engages in critical practice (between text and critic, critic and critic, univocal and plural language, and so on) to expose the varied possibilities opened up by a parasitical relation, which here, in its reciprocality, makes both literature and criticism at once host and guest, each feeding on the other as well as feeding it.

Presenting postcolonial criticism as host has its implications. Miller's fruitful elaborations on the etyma of "host", "guest" and "parasite" show the role of figure in a critical reading of criticism:

Present (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard U.P., 1999), 37.

[6] Spivak, "More on Power/Knowledge", in *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 34.

[7] J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host", in Harold Bloom et al., *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), 217-253.

> ... there is no conceptual expression without figure, and no intertwining of concept and figure without an implied narrative, in this case the story of the alien guest in the home.[8]

The postcolonial critic as host *and* "alien guest" figures a specific form of agency, two key features of which I single out here: the investigations of power/knowledge, which question and negotiate representations, alongside the reciprocality of hospitality, whereby the critic is host/guest of the text, as a form of self-empowerment. Or, to rephrase it: self-empowerment taking place as a critical practice that is hosted by, as well as hosting, the text.

Shakespeare has been at once target and mainstay of postcolonial critical practice. For some, Shakespeare outside the centre serves "a common interest in interrogating the designs of metropolitan criticism".[9] Martin Orkin, investigating Shakespeare teaching in South Africa, writes that the study of Shakespeare should be conducted as "research into the reception of the Shakespeare text within South Africa and the process of its institutionalization".[10] For him Shakespeare's negotiations of cultural difference make the reading of a Shakespearean text quite useful for an understanding of similar negotiations within the postcolonial present, but to achieve that it is important "to register its own cultural difference from (as well as its similarities to) our condition/location", "to provincialize the text, to return it to Europe" and to "separat[e] ourselves from that in the Shakespeare text which is 'other'".[11] Shakespeare, looked at as "cultural shorthand"[12] for a certain cultural supremacy, becomes a

[8] Ibid., 223.

[9] Michael Neill, "Post-Colonial Shakespeare? Writing Away from the Centre", in Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, eds., *Post-Colonial Shakespeares* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 167-168.

[10] Martin Orkin, "Possessing the Book and Peopling the Text", in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, 193.

[11] Ibid., 203. The encounter and ensuing 'vicinity' with Shakespeare's otherness is nevertheless inevitable, as the many rewritings of the Shakespearean canon show. On the important revisions of Shakespeare in Africa see Jane Wilkinson, *Remembering "The Tempest"* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1999).

[12] Arthur L. Little, jr., *Shakespeare Jungle Fever: National-Imperial Re-visions of Race, Rape, and Sacrifice* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2000), 20.

means to investigate the ways through which that supremacy has been constituted.

But Shakespeare is also a figure in postcolonial critical practice, the host that encircles it, as Spivak's reference to Caliban signals. And, as a figure forging 'postcolonial' meanings, it keeps changing ground, becomes one floating signifier of postcoloniality, an unreliable host; in the same text Spivak uses Caliban to signify quite different things: besides using the character to metaphorise the postcolonial critic, she writes of Caliban as "an inaccessible blankness circumscribed by an interpretable text".[13] I think that we should consider this shift of the Shakespeare figure when reflecting on Shakespeare and postcoloniality and critical practice, and also bear in mind the cultural constructions of the Shakespeare trope (whereby the first 'Caliban' in Spivak is also a creation of postcolonial readings). The hosting Shakespeare turns into the unsettled alien guest of postcolonial studies; interestingly, its foreignness also comprises all its 'homely' cultural layers. Taking my cue from Spivak and Miller, I read Shakespeare as a hosting alien guest in postcolonial critical practice, an affecting "inaccessible blankness" even when it seems most domesticated, a textual agency within critical discourse. And I want to reflect on the specific forms of self-empowerment that the critical encounter with this 'Shakespeare' offers to our times.

Shakespeare and canon-breakdown

Shakespeare, name it author or author-function, is *canon*. It is cultural capital. Capitalized indeed, feeding, as it were, on its own flesh: never-ending criticism, uncountable quotations in other texts – capital on capital – and rewritings almost from its own times up to today. Shakespeare is drama yet it[14] seems to have features exclusively attractive for other discourses – philosophy, psychoanalysis – which have been drawn to it more than once to explore themes and support

[13] Spivak, *Critique*, 118.

[14] As I think of "Shakespeare" as the corpus of texts and their cultural value, I will use the pronoun "it" everytime I refer to it.

theories. The comprehensiveness of Shakespeare has in time led to a definition of *genius*. This secures eternity, and twice over: not only does genius combine both universalism and uniqueness, but it is also, in Kantian terms, exemplary, "rule breaking but also *rule making*". And even if we interpret genius as producing a "work of following as a form of creative con-sequence" rather than mere imitation,[15] then 'Shakespeare remains' as an instiller of originality. Charles Marowitz wonders whether "Shakespeare is really a kind of irresistible magnet only for the mad and deluded people of the world";[16] yet Shakespeare's value on the critical and cultural marketplaces keeps constantly high.

It is difficult to confront this unflickering presence without risking an argument for authorial excellence. This is why recent criticism takes up the issue of authorship again, to address Shakespeare mainly through a critical practice that questions its monumentalisation and the latter's ideological energy. Thus, for instance, Courtney Lehmann attempts a negotiation by looking for a possible way of "eliminat[ing] the oppressive ideology of the Author while retaining a viable, responsible concept of agency".[17] Drawing on film theory to read the author as "montage-effect", Lehmann proposes not to do away with "Shakespeare" altogether, but to look at it in terms of "auteur-as-*remainder*", a surplus similar to "the remainders, gaps, and seams in the filmic text and texture that betray a struggle for agency occurring beneath the cinematic surface".[18] Barbara Hodgdon instead reflects on "Shakespeare" and its cultural formations by getting rid of the "myth" of the 'author' as a trope of criticism. She reads contemporary cultural practices that appropriate Shakespeare as trade-offs enacted between different spaces (high and low culture, national and local histories). For her the Shakespearean performances are "as cultural productions or even commodities that, by dissolving Shakespeare's text into reading or consuming relations, circulate with, borrow from, and

[15] John J. Joughin, "Shakespeare's Genius: *Hamlet*, Adaptation and the Work of Following", in Joughin, ed., *New Aestheticism*, forthcoming.

[16] Charles Marowitz, *Recycling Shakespeare* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 18.

[17] Courtney Lehmann, *Shakespeare Remains: Theater to Film, Early Modern to Postmodern* (Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 2002), 10.

[18] Ibid., 18.

challenge other discourses in a kind of reciprocal tension which rearticulates how 'Shakespeare' generates meaning". She finally suggests we "attempt to stake out the trade-offs between representational and symbolic economies of Shakespearean drama and those in which the plays, and the figure of Shakespeare, now function".[19]

For Richard Burt the ending of authorship has become a topic in its own right when dealing with Shakespeare; he reads the contemporary cultural space as one where the identity of Shakespeare as author/author-function is called into question and ascribes this fact to the present interdependence between mass culture and academia, which has as a consequence "the end of the Shakespearean, the signature effect within the writings themselves, which separates the Shakespeare canon from the Shakespeare apocrypha".[20] For Burt the proliferation of Shakespeare in mass culture is to be read as "a symptom of this psychotic breakdown of authority rather than an expansion of it".[21] Arguing for a positive role of what he calls the "infantilization" or "dumbing down of culture in 1990s America" (which he sees as a critique of Shakespeare and American mass culture), Burt also detects an American *postcolonial anxiety* about the secondary, sequel status of U.S. popular culture; Shakespeare, as guest of specific action films, enters his argument thus:

> Shakespeare functions both as the signifier of a foreign, excessively violent villain or villains *and* as a native icon that legitimates their extermination by American heroes and heroines. On the one hand, he triangulates America's relation to the foreign. As icon of (Western) civilized values, Shakespeare authorizes an all-out attack both on the Third World and on immigrants (and ethnic and racial minorities) while at the same time distancing the U.S. from British imperialism. On the other hand, Shakespeare gives rise to a national fantasy of supplanting America's postcolonial status altogether. He is Americanized.... In the context of a global market for made-in-America entertainment and weapons, Shakespeare the icon enables the articulation of a foreign critique of the racism underlying an American imperialistic multiculturalism.[22]

These critical voices place authorship, canon formation and cultural capital at the centre of literary investigations. Canonicity is questioned in one of the very places where it is created. The ensuing "Shakespeare" – as fragmented agency or cultural layers implied every time it is named, addressed or used – does disrupt specific 'legitimated' knowledges and powers.[23] Indeed, canon and authorship are inextricably knotted and no questioning of the former is done without involving the other. Yet it would be enough to consider that early modernity did not frame authorship in the sense we commonly ascribe to it for the western canon to need rethinking, much Shakespeare criticism to need rephrasing, and for cultural values to be re-envisioned.[24] If dismantling monumentalisation and unveiling cultural domestications of Shakespeare (which is what most

[19] Barbara Hodgdon, *The Shakespeare Trade: Performances and Appropriations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), xi.

[20] Richard Burt, "*Shakespeare in Love* and the End of the Shakespearean: Academic and Mass Culture Constructions of Literary Authorship", in Mark Thornton Burnett and Ramona Wray, eds., *Shakespeare, Film, Fin de Siècle* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 207.

[21] Ibid., 227. Elsewhere the presence of Shakespeare in contemporary "plain bad" films (action films like *The Naked Gun* and *Last Action Hero*) is said to be "distinctly American in assuming that an audience won't know much Shakespeare, if any, or care about their ignorance". Burt, *Unspeakable Shaxxxspeares: Queer Theory and American Kiddie Culture* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 136.

[22] Burt, *Unspeakable Shaxxxspeares*, 131-132.

[23] In different ways the studies redefine the cultural space produced by Shakespeare, although their arguments are arguable in many respects. Lehmann writes of a "crisis of legitimacy" which is in tune with postcolonial times, but I would question her notion of the author as remainder and insist on the gaps, rather than the willed integrity and authorship, on the breaches in agency, rather than the will-to-agency. As for Burt, he finds ways of saving the dumbed-down media culture and people as a critique of Shakespeare. For me the dumbing down is precisely that, a 'normalisation' of the texts in which I see no critical insight. The dissemination of Shakespeare in culture is something worth noting, and it is also true that a disruption of the monument ensues from this, but it should not let us forget the dangerous aspects of an "infantilization" of culture.

[24] As Lehmann too writes: "Shakespeare's relationship to the apparatus of dramatic production ... works against the ideology of possessive individualism typically associated with the figure of the Author" (Lehmann, *Shakespeare Remains*, 12). This is a feature by which Lehmann links the Shakespearean era to our present; in particular she identifies a "crisis of legitimacy" as "form[ing] the historical continuum between early modern and postmodern authorship". Ibid., 21.

contemporary readings do) offer a productive interrogation of cultural value, I also think that another practice should be placed alongside them, one that returns Shakespeare to its alterity. For Shakespeare best disrupts the canon and exceeds "making-sense-abilities" when welcomed in its difference – historicised and otherwise.

"Difference" is of course a key-word of poststructuralism and deconstruction. It is at once enabling the production of meaning and subversive of any alleged, willed or constructed fixity of meaning. In Imtiaz Habib's interesting exploration of race in Shakespeare difference emerges as a resistance, within the texts, to the latter's representations of alterity. Habib sees the narratives of the Shakespeare texts figuring racial alterity as "collectively register[ing] the struggle of the black subaltern against his/her insculpture within the performance of the colonizer's cultural narrative". Shakespeare's 'black' characters present "a poetics of subalternity", as they "contest their cultural narratives and re-write them by writing in their unwriteability".[25] I mention this insightful reading of Shakespeare as an example of a deconstructive approach attuned to postcolonial issues, and to make my point that similar analyses, for all their richness, could nevertheless be supplemented. I propose that we look for difference in Shakespeare in other senses too, and consider, for instance, that the resistance detected takes place within an early modernity that is also, as a whole, *epistemically distant* from our present. In looking for the 'birth' of a colonial oppressive culture, intent on establishing the continuity between western early- and late-modern colonial ideology, that distance is what some contemporary readings of Shakespeare tend to obliterate.

Early modern texts are in many ways excessive: fluctuating writing conventions, possibly a "poetics of incomprehensibility", an order of things relying on analogies and a vision of sexual difference far more flexible than the one we have inherited from the Enlightenment, make for their distance from the present. Those elements add up to the radicality of Shakespeare for us. In this sense, philological research on the 'original' folios and quartos should not be

[25] Imtiaz Habib, *Shakespeare and Race: Postcolonial Praxis in the Early Modern Period* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2000), 11, 12.

underestimated. Current editorial practice is subversive of the texts only in the sense that it minimises their excess, and allows editors to "impos[e] their own agendas on the relics of Western culture".[26] Instead, we should pay attention to the elements of the texts that sound disconcerting to our ear. Take, for instance, the 1623 First Folio *As You Like It*'s phrase "ioyne his hand with his", referred to Rosalind, disguised as Ganymede, and Celia, which is today still confined to the small font of the editorial notes. To take into account phrases like this through a more 'conservative' editing, would, as Jeffrey Masten writes, "put in play meanings that are, in complicated ways, radical".[27]

With this example I do not want to propose a mere historicising of Shakespeare. I agree that Shakespeare is most subversive and non-canonical when read *closely*; I also agree that this means forgetting about an impossible authorship and being ready to welcome all the idiosyncracies of the typescripts and "hands" in them, taking the pastness of Shakespeare as irretrievable unless read *including* what – from a normalising perspective – we see as alterations and transformations. But I want to stress the relevance of this when we relate Shakespeare to the present. In other words, how *strategic* can the radicality coming from another time, another place, be in the contemporary cultural debate? If we recall Appadurai's formulation of globalisation as a "tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization", then the peculiarity of Shakespeare's radicality becomes important for that tension. As radicality is a cultural value, changing according to time, space and perspective, and as Shakespeare is cultural capital today as ever, to retain the "distance" of Shakespeare releases new possibilities for cultural globalisation as such.

My point here is how to combine a specific early modern studies Shakespeare with the postcolonial studies Shakespeares. The difference of Shakespeare is what should be considered, not exclusively in terms of disclaiming or appropriating cultural values

[26] Jeffrey Masten, "Textual Deviance: Ganymede's Hand in *As You Like It*", in Marjorie Garber et al., eds., *Field Work: Sites in Literary and Cultural Studies* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), 154.

[27] Ibid., 158.

(Shakespeare's *Othello* fashioned in turn as part of a racist or non-racist early modernity) but as an acknowledgment of an ungraspable presence too, a haunting host that, through and beyond its very monumentalisation, offers its distance as a radical meaning actualisable for postcolonial times. Cultures are dishomogeneous, cultural formations inconsistent at best. Burt's Shakespeare, as a symptom of America's postcolonial anxiety, proves it for contemporaneity – by pointing to the ambivalence of the sedimented domestication of Shakespeare, it discloses the delusiveness of culture's coherence. This inconsistency applies to early modernity too, and is therefore redoubled in our readings of that culture.

The ungraspability of Shakespeare is not an essence, although I acknowledge, with Foucault, an early modern epistemic difference. But, as Catherine Belsey lucidly argues, we can see such difference only in its encounter with the present. The contemporary analysis of Shakespeare cannot not take into account this double bind of dealing with the pastness of the past. Again, I am reflecting here on the possibility of an encounter between a certain early modern studies Shakespeare and the postcolonial predicament. Shakespeare is monumentalised past but its monumentalisation never totally domesticates it. Like Hermione's 'statue' in *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare comes alive and shocks our perspective. Belsey points out that it is the pastness of the past we should consider too, the fact that we have no access to it if not through its remains, texts we make signify again and which, as residues of an ungraspable moment, "testify in their stubborn otherness to the previous existence of a world that is more than the product of our current imagination".[28] What we know of the past is always the result of a "conjectural knowledge", part of which is also "the recognition of the otherness of past cultures".[29] Shakespeare is interpretable signifiers, as Belsey

[28] Catherine Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 12. The opacity of early modernity has been historicised by Stephen Orgel, who has read the obscurity of Shakespeare's language as a feature of early modern writing: "the age often found in incomprehensibility a positive virtue". Stephen Orgel, "The Poetics of Incomprehensibility", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 (1991), 436.

[29] Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden*, 3; 18.

proposes in her "history at the level of the signifier";[30] if our gaze shapes the form and dis/continuity of early modernity with our present, when we enter a Shakespeare text we become guest to archaic signifiers (not essences) which in their pastness demand each time a modification of our present knowledge-ability.

Indeed, the unpresentability of Shakespeare, its *incomprehensibility*, is made significant in contemporary critical practices. Shakespeare is not exclusively tradition, western canon and cultural constructions to be deconstructed for new orders to be set in place; the acknowledgment that not all is explicable or translatable into present grids of values helps critical self-empowerment: it too entices a different perspective. On the other hand, however, only too often have postcolonial readings of Shakespeare focussed on its connivances with the western colonial ideology arising in early modernity and shaping world structure up to the present. Shakespeare the 'coloniser', the 'patriarch', the Author and canon also tell of a critical view that detects historical *continuity* in culture, thus contributing to a historicism that, to prove its point about the working of power, looks for/detects its sources in the past. But remembering here that the aspect of postcolonial criticism I have singled out is its critique of power/knowledge as a form of self-empowerment through a reciprocal parasitical relation between text and critic, I want to stress the positive difference of encountering a *different* Shakespeare.

Inhospitable Shakespeare

The question of hospitality is highly relevant to this discussion. I read Shakespeare as resisting 'hospitality', and in more than one sense. The canonised Shakespeare is, in its preserved distance, inhospitable to normalisation. And the way hospitality itself is exploited in some texts refigures it in interesting and actualisable ways, as a few examples will make evident.

One ritual of hospitality is the offering of food, meaning welcoming, introducing the strangers into one's own space – home,

[30] Ibid., 5.

family, nation, culture. As an invitation to others to share what is *our own*, hospitality defines property and belongingness in the very act of hosting:

> ... the law of hospitality [is affirmed] as the law of the household, *oikonomia* ... the law of a place ... the law of identity which de-limits the *very* place of proffered hospitality and maintains authority over it, maintains the truth of authority, remains the place of this maintaining, which is to say, of truth, thus limiting the gift proffered and making of this limitation, namely, the *being-oneself in one's own home*, the condition of the gift and of hospitality.[31]

Shakespeare preposterously presents instances of delusive hospitality. In *The Tempest*, the courtly party, shipwrecked on a nameless island by Prospero's art and for Prospero's project, are offered a rich banquet which is made to vanish as soon as the men approach it. In *Titus Andronicus*, Titus, whose daughter Lavinia is raped and mutilated by Tamora's two sons Chirus and Demetrius, who also killed Lavinia's husband, whose own sons are then wrongly killed for the murder of his son-in-law, and who himself is finally subjected to more mutilation, asks Tamora to sit at a feast for which he "play[s] the cook", only to make her eat her own children. Early in *The Merchant of Venice*, the Christians invite the Jewish usurer to dinner and this time the guest's view reveals the character of the invitation: "I am bid forth to supper ... / ... but wherefore should I go? / I am not bid for love, they flatter me, / But yet I'll go in hate to feed upon / The prodigal Christian".[32]

In *The Tempest* the guilty are punished not by denying them hospitality, but by subtracting a hospitality apparently given, but then made to melt into thin air. In *Titus Andronicus* revenge takes place as a cruel hospitality, one that, announced as such to the audience, reveals itself to the guest Tamora only when it has been accomplished; asked to fetch her sons Titus replies: "Why, there they

[31] Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality", *Angelaki* 5.3 (December 2000), 4.

[32] William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, The Arden Shakespeare, ed. John Russell Brown (1955; reprinted London: Routledge, 1988), 2.5. 11-15.

are, both baked in this pie, / Whereof their mother daintily hath fed, / Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred".[33] In both plays guests are more like victims; and they are prey to their hosts' vengeful machinations because they believe in and accept hospitality, or, more precisely, because they do not detect the enmity that lies at its heart. More interestingly, the fact that in both cases the unfortunate guests are the evil party makes us forget that it is the good or wronged ones who practise a nasty hospitality and that rituals of hosting here prove the best means of hostility. As for *The Merchant of Venice*, there is a different sort of guest there. Because Shylock sees the inhospitable aspect of the invitation, he can turn from prey to predator, at once making evident the hostility of hospitality and appropriating it as guest. Hospitality appears again in enmity, turned into a hate game between host and guest. Hospitality is deviated; but deviation, as always, reveals more aspects of the 'deviated' thing.

Hospitality cuts across different spaces. If hospitality as offering what is one's own is tricky to the point of forcing cannibalism, the hospitality of language is similarly disquieting in Shakespeare. In *The Tempest* again, the gift of language to Caliban is most ambivalent: it does not allow the other to speak his own language if not in a translation that reduces Sycorax's powerful spells to Caliban's ineffective curses.[34] Yet this (in)hospitality is also the site for an emergence of the other's otherness, as Sycorax, who appears *only* in language, is dreaded and Caliban's curses punished as if they still retained some of the old power. In *Pericles* language, in the form of a riddle, hosts the incestuous truth about the king Antiochus and his daughter, for all suitors to read and, failing to decipher it, to die according to the king's will, and for Pericles to understand its meaning and risk an equal fate when he reveals it. And in *Macbeth* the witches' language prophesies a destiny for Macbeth which is unravelled by its very utterance. Language is here a "purveyor of truth" under one condition: that the riddles' truthfulness remain

[33] Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, The Arden Shakespeare, ed. Jonathan Bate (London: Routledge, 1995), 5.3. 59-61.

[34] I have made this point and discussed it at length elsewhere. See Anna Maria Cimitile, *Shakespearean Orders: Language, Representation and Epistemic Subversions* (Napoli: Liguori, 2000).

undecipherable to Macbeth, opaque for the man they are destined to be read and actualised by, until their truth is accomplished. Macbeth does not identify the perilous truth hosted in the utterances "none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth" and "Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until / Great Birnam wood to high Dusinane hill / Shall come against him", until it is too late.[35] In these examples as elsewhere in Shakespeare, language attempts the representation of an unpresentable truth. The relation with language renders the hosted real opaque, yet the real is actualised in that opacity; if in Lacanian terms this is the inevitable relation between the real and the symbolic, in Shakespeare what we have is in a sense a *spectacularisation* of the "inaccessible blankness circumscribed by an interpretable text". And, to take up what Dympna Callaghan calls "the specifically political dimension of the dense philosophical problems posed by dramatic representation",[36] and to refer it to my topic here, in Shakespeare we are confronted with the task of working with the political dimension of a hospitality that deviates/is deviated and renders opaque what it hosts.

Finally, a reference to the 'opacity of opacity' in Shakespeare. In *The Tempest*, in offering to disclose the secrets of the island to Trinculo and Stephano, Caliban promises to get them "Young scamels from the rock". As we do not know the exact meaning of "scamel", which is not recorded anywhere else as a literary word, we can only make conjectures about it. This instance of the opacity of language differs from the ones mentioned above insofar as it remains unclear here whether the obscurity is such for the other characters on stage as well as the early modern audience, or just for us. Caliban's submissive hospitality is suspended by an opaque signifier and interpretation comes to a halt: because we cannot tell for whom the noun is opaque, we cannot make any statement about the hospitality Caliban offers. An archaic signifier makes us reflect on the possibility and value of interpretation.

[35] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, The Arden Shakespeare, ed. Kenneth Muir (London: Methuen, 1984), 4.1. 80-81, 4.1. 92-94.

[36] Dympna Callaghan, *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Race and Gender on the Renaissance Stage* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 2.

Miller wrote that any critical reading, no matter how much it strives to clarify the text, always leaves "a remnant of opacity, or an added opacity, as yet unraveled".[37] I do not mean to essentialise the "opacity" either. What I make significant here is rather the space of critical undecidability existent between an opacity possibly intended for the other characters/the early modern public and one that is so just for us. The *suspension* between the two with which we are left is the text's inhospitable hosting of our critical practice. Produced by the resisting signifiers of a text from the past, by what creates a poetic elusiveness – as Caliban's "scamels" do – this 'state' in which the critical practice is caught is a privileged site, the agency of Shakespeare in postcoloniality.

"'Senseless' signifiers" are meaningful. Homi Bhabha has insightfully identified them as the moment of a true 'encounter' between the colonising and colonised cultures; he has read their presence in colonial texts as the inscription of an "uncertain colonial silence" emerging in the attempt to articulate what nevertheless refuses to be translated, as the introduction of an unassimilable 'archaic' which, more than signifying its own absolute Otherness, "display[s] the alienation between the transformational myth of culture as a language of universality ... and its tropic function as a repeated 'translation' of incommensurable levels of living and meaning".[38] The archaic character of Shakespeare – as incomprehensible signifiers, spectacular opacity, or deviations – signifies in a similar way. This does not deny Shakespeare's historical belonging in the early modern European colonial enterprise and figuring of the world (which many postcolonial readings have rightly unveiled), but presents, in addition to that, a radical alterity which revisions our contemporaneity.

A critical practice ready to be guested by the archaic productively challenges the present. Shakespeare's deviated hospitalities offer the 'case-study' of this practice; as they ask of today's hospitality: who

[37] Miller, "The Critic as Host", 247.

[38] Homi K. Bhabha, "Articulating the Archaic: Notes on Colonial Nonsense", in Peter Collier and Helga Geyer-Ryan, eds., *Literary Theory Today* (London: Polity Press, 1990), 205.

hosts? when? for what reason?, Shakespeare's (in)hospitalities complexify the straightforwardness of those questions.

Can the subaltern host?

Shakespeare proposes an inhospitable hospitality. Postcolonial analysis of power/knowledge is rephrased when critical practice is hosted by Shakespeare's deviations. Today the question of hospitality is particularly urgent. We live in a world where the greater mobility of peoples, disruption of nation-states and permeability of borders bring differences so close that the representation of this nearness becomes "the dominant mode of understanding the present condition of globalization".[39] And as the divide between 'first' and 'third' worlds is more evident in this vicinity, hospitality itself proves not only a social and ethical practice but another "mode of understanding", a framing epistemological principle.[40] Hospitality sets a hierarchy between host and guest, creates or shows a dissymmetry in a relation between two parties. In a world where egalitarianism is a necessary utopia, hospitality implies both a discrepancy and at the same time the illusion of being able to *solve* it. Derrida argues for the reciprocality of hospitality between host and guest and also for the hostility implied by it. He thus proves the impossibility of hospitality and offers one way of critically overcoming the dissymmetry. In the examples given above, Shakespeare's (in)hospitality bypasses the question of reciprocity to assert the deviations of hospitality as well as rendering the hosted as opaque as its modalities. How can this relate to postcoloniality?

Subalternity is among the key concepts and conditions whose exploration has become an investigating tool of postcoloniality. Hospitality is evidently connected to it. Here is my last example from Shakespeare: Macbeth hosts the king in his castle for one night only,

[39] See Okwui Enwezor, "The Black Box", *Platform 5_Documenta 11*, Exhibition Catalogue, Hatje Cantz, 2002, 44.

[40] Examples of this are Derrida, *De l'hospitalité* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1997) and Mireille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2001).

when he kills this uninvited guest. The king is welcomed because he is wanted dead; once more, the guest falls victim to the host because he trusts what he, on the basis of his regality, thinks he sees: the unconditional love of the subaltern. But can the subaltern host? Can those who, like Macbeth (or even Shylock for that matter), have no (access to) power, visibility, voice, if not within the limits of their subalternity act as hosts? The 1997 BBC production of the Shakespeare play makes it evident that the answer to that question is 'no'. Set on the peripheral council houses of a Scottish red brick city, the adaptation shows Macbeth as the leader of a local gang, small fry aspiring to get big, who kills the boss of the area to take his place. After falling asleep in Macbeth's flat after a wild party night, the king is slaughtered. In a setting of decay, extreme poverty and rottenness, Penny Woolcock's *Macbeth on the Estate* makes it evident how where there is no welfare there can be no hospitality. The subaltern cannot host.[41]

For a critical gaze 'not' does not mean a closure. Shakespeare's deviations provide a viable path for thinking the ethics of hospitality in postcoloniality. The Shakespearean phrasing of the subalternity-hospitality combination (my reading of it) opens to several reflections. The impossibility of the subaltern's hospitality enhances the dissymmetry in hospitality. After Derrida, Shakespeare reminds us that the reciprocity of hospitality happens in asymmetry. Postcoloniality and globality are the spaces of this asymmetry, which is denounced, deconstructed, revised, but nevertheless fed upon. Shakespeare lets us figure out hospitality as the *acknowledgement* of dissymmetry, rather than its solution. Hospitality turns into a catachresis, a misnomer, and a means of critical intervention as such; moving from Shakespeare to the present, it becomes a deconstructive tool with a twist.[42] Spivak has pointedly argued on the 'aspirations' involved in naming "the subaltern" or "class":

[41] Of course, there is the question of *desire*, the desire for power, coming into the tragedy of Macbeth. But the point remains, and is broadened if anything by questions on a desiring (what, how, why) subalternity.

[42] The notion of catachresis is borrowed from Spivak, who applies it to other terms, such as "history".

> ... if you have any kind of political interest you name it in the hope that the name will disappear. That's what class consciousness is in the interest of: the class disappearing. What politically we want to see is that the name would not be possible.[43]

What can Shakespeare do in postcoloniality? It tells that the subaltern cannot host. To name the subaltern today through Shakespeare's early modern catachretic (as well as aristocratic) hospitality is one possible critical reading in the interest of subalternity-disappearing. In this I see one radical and still auspicable aim of the postcolonial practice, a means for critical self-empowerment.

For Spivak the text is an "accomplice".[44] When reading Shakespeare the inaccessible becomes our accomplice. Reflecting on critical practice, I have called it a form of self-empowerment that takes place through a reciprocal parasitical relation between text and critic. When reading Shakespeare *and* hospitality the critical agency is hosted by a deviated, absent or opaque-to-interpretation (although never uninterpretable) hospitality. Shakespeare-our-accomplice enables new perspectives on the postcolonial. At the same time, inhospitality is also what concerns the critical encounter with Shakespeare's early modernity.

Shakespeare is the inhospitable host-guest of a certain critical practice and as such it enables a positive self-empowerment; and Shakespeare's inhospitality can be an ally to that critical practice in its political interests (to overcome subalternity is my example). Shakespeare is the ghost/host/guest of postcolonial discourse, the unfinished business of postcolonial studies: the "resident alien" of postcoloniality.

[43] Spivak, "The New Historicism: Political Commitment and the Postmodern Critic", in *The Post-Colonial Critic*, 158.

[44] "I would rather think of the text as my accomplice than my patient or my analysand". Ibid., 164.

Serena Guarracino

Hosting the Bo(d)y Actor in Shakespeare's Romances: An Experiment in Listening

> O, mistress mine, where are you roaming?
> O, stay and hear, your true love's coming,
> That can sing both high and low.
> (*Twelfth Night*, 2.3. 38-40)

> I would this music would come.
> (*Cymbeline*, 2.3. 11)

As I am going to write about boy singers in Shakespeare's last plays, I am first confronted with the limits of my own power of hospitality. Much as I will try to portray, describe, and analyse how the presence of boy singers makes itself heard in Shakespeare's romances, I myself will be unable to comply with the original request of the singer from *Twelfth Night*, to "stay and hear". The core of the following essay was a set of reflections triggered by a recording of the *aubade* featured in *Cymbeline* (2.2. 19-25), performed by the soprano Emma Kirkby;[1] yet, paradoxically, I am not able to host her voice, or any other for that matter, in this space of writing. I can only invite the reader to listen to the *aubade* in another space and time, inevitably different from the space and time of reading; yet it would be chronically late – where belatedness, Derrida teaches, is a feature of hospitality.[2] Like

[1] This recording is included in the miscellany *Shakespeare's Lutenist: Theatre Music by Robert Johnson 1993*.

[2] Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000).

Cloten's musicians, music, my guest of honour, is late and may never come.

Yet this will not restrain us, writer, readers and audience, host and guests alike, from waiting for the boy's arrival, or better for his return: for, we will see, the boy singer is already there, at Blackfriars, waiting for master Shakespeare to come.[3] In the years between 1606 and 1608, as Shakespeare was writing his first experiment in the romance form, *Pericles*, a few choirboys and actors, the leftovers from the recently dismantled company of boy actors, the Children of the Chapel Royal, lived on the premises of the Blackfriars theatre.[4] Their treble voices shape the *aubade* as performed by Kirkby; yet they also call to mind, and ask for performances by today's falsettists or countertenors, the main performers of baroque music, who try to give back to us the allure of a high-pitched, or 'female', voice coming from an anatomically male body.[5] Together with Kirkby singing the 'man's part' of the *aubade*, a countertenor Desdemona singing her "Willow Song" haunts my reflections.[6] In this unstaged performance, where a woman Desdemona is today the norm, I delude myself I can rediscover those 'angel-like', pre-pubescent voices Shakespeare's audience heard. Yet, what Shakespeare's audience heard is irrecoverably beyond our reach, and these recordings can only underline the marginality of a discourse about music in Shakespeare's plays. Their textual factuality excludes what my

[3] This, too, is a feature of Derrida's hospitality: "the master of the house, the master in his home, the host, can only accomplish his task as host, that is, hospitality, in becoming invited by the other into his home, in being welcomed by him whom he welcomes, in receiving the hospitality he gives." Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality", *Angelaki* 5.3 (December 2000), 9

[4] The children were also named the Chapel Children, and renamed Children of the Queen's Revels after being invested by the Queen's patronage with a special patent in 1604. See E.K.Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 37 ff; M.C.Bradbrook, *The Rise of the Common Player: A Study of Actor and Society in Shakespeare's England* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1964), 215 ff.

[5] What Dympna Callaghan calls "the aesthetics of eunuchism ... in the use of young male actors on the English stage" in her *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage* (London: Routledge, 2000), 66.

[6] As featured, for example, in the miscellany *"Shakespeare Songs" 1970, 2000*, recorded by the Deller Consort for Harmonia Mundi.

own text must perforce leave out, the singer and the unique physicality of his/her performance.[7]

Then, while confessing my inability to host this voice, even in its contemporary counterparts, I must also admit my inability to shut it out. "This is the difference, the gap, between the hospitality of invitation and the hospitality of visitation. In visitation there is no door. Anyone can come at any time and can come in without needing a key for the door."[8] The gap, the blank space between the Shakespearean text and contemporary performances of its music, marks the place of the boy singer, whose presence/absence disrupts the supposed unity of the text. It is perhaps enlightening that, in the plays we are going to read, in the most traditional of fashions, the presence of this unexpected guest is marked by the silence of lost musical settings, or of Shakespeare's heroines themselves. In the polyphony of the Shakespearean text, this silent "music of the spheres" (*Pericles*, 5.1. 228) is the counterpoint we will try to pay heed to.[9]

Angels and women: scenes of hospitality

In the series of tales featured in Derrida's essay *On Hospitality*, the last-comers are two distinguished guests, two biblical accounts of hospitality.[10] In the second tale, a pilgrim is saved by his host from the lust of Belial's sons; in the first one, the guests are two angels who are the object of perverse desire in Sodoma, and have taken refuge in Lot's house. This situation, as Derrida states elsewhere, pushes his

[7] Here I fail to host another voice, that of actual boy singers in the present, as for example the gifted choirboys of the Westminster Choir School. Yet, their repertoires rarely include theatrical performances, or performances of theatre music; and, more importantly, the relationships between voice, repertory and impersonation in this case work quite differently from the ones I'm trying to define here.

[8] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 14.

[9] I use the term counterpoint here to try and name the relation among the different narratives which will intertwine in this essay; or, in Derrida's own use of the term: "Counterpoint: secondary motive, relatively independent and superimposed polyphonically." (*Of Hospitality*, 93).

[10] Ibid., 151 ff.

reflections to the limit, posing the question of the hospitality that is owed to categories beyond that of the 'human', first and foremost to the divine: angels, or angel-like guests, can and must be hosted unconditionally, without even being asked the name which would inscribe them in the conventional economy or pact of hospitality.[11]

In Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, we witness a similar scene as the boy Fidele is found by Belarius and his sons in their cave – an unexpected guest. Belarius' words, before the boy even appears to the audience, stage Fidele's appearance as a true epiphany, a revelation of the godly within the earthly:

> By Jupiter, an *angel*! or, if not,
> An earthly paragon! Behold *divineness*
> No elder than a *boy*!
> (3.7. 15-17; my italics)

The mountaineers, who worship Nature and the heavens (3.3. 3-9), hail Fidele as a messenger from another world, or at least as someone whose outer features are modelled, as a "paragon", on a "divineness" which calls for unconditional welcome. Keeping to these first verses, it could be that here, in this forgotten corner of Britain – and of the Shakespearean canon – Derrida's absolute hospitality could take place, find a place to take, in this cave where it is offered

> to who *or what turns up*, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any *identification*, whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest, or an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is the citizen of another country, a human, animal, or divine creature, a living or a dead thing, male or female.[12]

Fidele, of course, is no angel. As the audience knows quite well, he is a woman, Princess Imogen of Britain. Yet in Shakespeare's Welsh landscape, as in Derrida's tales, being a woman is not the safest thing

[11] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 4.
[12] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 77 (italics in the text).

for a guest, although, paradoxically, the guest turns out to be a woman, or at least runs the risk of being taken for one. In both biblical narratives the guests are involved in a dynamic involving both sodomy and sexual difference: they are the object of other men's desire to abuse them. The danger, as Arthur Little describes it, is of "posing as and assuming the sexual position of a whore, the position of *retrosum* (the posterior pose), common with both harlots and sodomites".[13] To avoid the prostitution/pollution of the sacred guest's body, female bodies are sacrificed in its place. It is to defend the pilgrim that the host in the second tale gives his concubine to Belial's sons to use at their pleasure; in Lot's tale, to protect his guests "*at any price*",[14] the host offers his two virgin daughters, creating what Derrida names "a sort of hierarchy of guests and of hostages", where the woman is always the exploitable element, both marketable and sacrificial.

In *Cymbeline*, it is Imogen's cross-dressing as Fidele that saves her from being wooed by Guiderius and Arviragus. This freedom from sexual desire allows for a true and disinterested welcome:

> Guiderius: Were you a *woman, youth*,
> I should woo hard, but be your groom in honesty:
> I bid for you as I do buy.
> Arviragus: I'll make my comfort
> He's a man, I'll love him as my brother:
> And *such a welcome* as I'ld give to him
> (After long absence) such is yours. *Most welcome*!
> Be sprightly, for you fall 'mongst friends.
> Imogen: *'Mongst friends?*
> *If brothers*: […].
> (3.7. 41-48; my italics)

"Woman" and "youth" are opposed terms whose interplay explores the different identities inscribed on Imogen's body: a youth, a woman,

[13] Arthur L. Little, jr., *Shakespeare Jungle Fever: National-Imperial Re-Visions of Rape, Race and Sacrifice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 175. Here Little refers to Shakespeare's Cleopatra, or better to the boy actor playing her.
[14] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 151 (italics in the text).

but also a boy actor. Yet this body, in all its polymorphous physicality, has to be cleansed from every possible danger of sexual desire and pollution: as Guiderius and Arviragus are actually not Belarius' sons, but Cymbeline's, the king of Britain, and thus Imogen's brothers, cross-dressing here frees the play from the threat of incest, as well as from any possible homosexual overtones. Imogen's answer to the mountaineers' proffered hospitality, however, is strangely elliptical, haunted by a silence which, as we shall see, will mark other moments of this character's tale. Her identification of "brothers" with "friends" indeed, describes the unusually friendly atmosphere of this first encounter. Yet it also suggests another possible reading: according to J. M. Nosworthy, Imogen could "mean [...] to imply, with a whimsical quibble that is not uncharacteristic, that [the mountaineers] are *friends* so long as they regard her as a *brother*, but would become *enemies* if they knew that she was a *woman*".[15]

In Belarius' cave, however, Fidele ends up by playing the part of the woman of the house. This turns out to be part of the pact of hospitality which, after the first moment of revelation, is instituted between the princess-turned-boy and her host:

Belarius: Pray be not sick,
For you must be our *housewife*.
Imogen: Well or ill,
I am bound to you.
(4.2. 44-46; my italics)

The guest's body, its ability to attend to her duty within the economy of hospitality, becomes a matter of concern for the host: the divine boy who appeared to Belarius as a "paragon" of "divineness", has become nothing but a 'boy' – that is, a servant, as in colonial Africa or India.[16] In this economy (Derrida's "*oikonomia*, law of the

[15] Note to 3.7. 47-48 in William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, ed. by J. M. Nosworthy (London: Routledge, 1994), 113 (my italics). Here, as we will also see elsewhere, hospitality borders dangerously on hostility.

[16] As Marjorie Garber notes, in English "'boy' functions as a term of domination, a term to designate an inferior, to create a distinction between or among men – of any age".

household"[17]) the part played by the boy-guest is both female and subordinate. Guiderius praises Fidele's "neat cookery" (4.2. 49), which refers back to his/her role as "housewife" and prepares for the superimposition of Imogen's character on that of the boys' step-mother Euriphile in the funeral scene that follows (4.2. 238). Yet Arviragus praises another of Fidele's qualities, one that recalls his first appearance as a divine boy. "How angel-like he sings!" (4.2. 48), he states, linking the boy's pre-pubescent body and angelic appearance to what angels are deemed to do best – singing.[18] Imogen's singing abilities, indeed, receive some attention also earlier in the play, when her servant Pisanio advises his lady about how to obtain hospitality at the court of Lucius, the Roman ambassador:

... 'Fore noble Lucius
Present yourself, desire his *service*: tell him
Wherein you're happy; which will make him know,
If that his head has ear in music, doubtless
With joy he will embrace you....
(3.4. 174-178; my italics)

Imogen, then, must offer her service to Lucius as a singing-boy: to this purpose she must "forget to be a woman" (3.4. 156), and, more specifically, "change / Command into obedience." (156-157) This suggestion, apparently upsetting the usual hierarchy of 'male' and 'female', actually underlines that Imogen is not only a sexual, but, maybe more centrally, a class cross-dresser: Imogen must forsake her aristocratic attitude to play the part of a boy servant – more specifically, of a boy singer.

Imogen's pattern of behaviour finds a powerful antecedent in

Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 89.

[17] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 4.

[18] Remember Lorenzo's description of the heavens: "There is not the smallest orb which thou behold'st / But in his motion like an angel sings, / Still choiring to the young-eyed cherubins". *The Merchant of Venice*, 5.1. 60-62. Cherubins are pre-pubescent boys, and their voice, of course, is treble.

Marina, *Pericles*' heroine. In the so-called 'brothel scenes' (4.2. and 6) of this play, she too avoids the corruption of her body by resorting to both her singing abilities and her female accomplishments. These indeed prove a valuable source of profit:

> If that thy master would *gain by me*,
> Proclaim that I can *sing, weave, sew,* and *dance*,
> With other virtues which I'll keep from boast;
> And will undertake all these to teach.
> (4.6. 181-184; my italics)

These abilities allow her to find hospitality in an "honest house": in particular we are told that "she sings like one immortal, and she dances / As goddess-like to her admired lays" (5. chorus). Her performances share the 'divineness' of Fidele's first appearance – and the same commodification. As she steps on the ship where her unknown father Pericles lies in a state of utter abjection, she is asked to cure him with the power of her music; according to Mytilene's governor Lysimachus, she will be well paid for this:

> Fair one, *all goodness that consists in beauty*,
> Expect even here, where is a kingly patient,
> If that thy prosperous and *artificial* feat
> Can draw him but to answer thee in aught,
> Thy *sacred physics* shall receive such *pay*
> As thy desires can wish.
> (5.1. 70-75; my italics)

Marina's healing is 'sacred', and partakes of the unblemished quality of her goodness and beauty: yet Lysimachus also plainly recognizes hers as an art, an 'artificial' feat – a performance, for which 'pay' is the appropriate fee.

Marina's and Imogen's eligibility as guests comes, among other things, from their being singers, from their playing their part in the pact of hospitality with a musical performance. Yet the place that should be occupied by their singing voice is in both cases marked by a blank in Shakespearean text. *Pericles*' much discussed textual tradition could be at the origin of the gap after the stage direction

"Marina sings" between verses 78 and 79 in 5.1.[19] As for Imogen, traditional scholarship is still puzzled by the references to Imogen's 'angel-like' voice, as she sings nowhere in *Cymbeline*: "No songs are given to Imogen in F [First Folio] though we later hear how 'angel-like' she sings. In the present passage [3.4. 174-178, quoted above] it is presumably the musical quality of her speaking voice that is meant".[20] The difficulty here is resolved with the erasure of the disturbing presence of the boy singer that Imogen should impersonate – and that could have impersonated her. This removal is exposed in the misquoting of Shakespeare's line: of course, as we have already noted, we later hear "how angel-like *he* sings!" (4.2. 48; my italics) In the plays, in their textual as well as in their critical tradition, what is left of the boy singer's voice is a gap, a silence.

Guests on the Threshold

There are no scores included in the First Folio. The settings which are attributed to the songs featured in Shakespeare's plays result from a thorough analysis of miscellanies of the time, where some songs corresponding to the texts of the Folio have actually been found.[21] These 'other' texts, however, still linger at the margins of the Shakespearean canon: authorship, and with it authority, is a troubled and fragmented space when one comes to music. 'Shakespearean' music is indeed not by 'Shakespeare' – whatever we mean by this name; one of the few things we know for sure is that he was no composer. In some cases the author recurred to songs from the popular

[19] *Pericles* was not included in the First Folio, and all the printed versions we know descend from a bad Quarto (published in 1609), probably the result of reconstruction by memory. For a detailed account of the question see the introduction to the Arden Edition (Croatia: The Arden Shakespeare, 2001), xxiii ff.

[20] Note to 3.4. 176-177 in Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, 99.

[21] See Peter J. Seng, *The Vocal Songs in the Plays of Shakespeare: A Critical History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967); Bryan N. S. Gooch and David Thatcher, eds., *A Shakespearean Music Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Andrew Charlton, *Music in the Plays of Shakespeare: A Practicum* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1991).

tradition, as in the case of the 'Willow Song' in *Othello* or Ophelia's songs in *Hamlet*; other songs have been handed down to us under the names of composers like Thomas Morley, or Robert Johnson. Johnson worked for the Court, but was also a sort of 'guest composer' for the King's Men during the last years of Shakespeare's career: he probably composed most of the music for *The Tempest*, and his setting for the aubade "Hark, hark, the lark" in *Cymbeline* is today generally deemed authentic.

Music, then, as a disturbing guest, cannot be dismissed. Neither 'inside' nor 'outside' the text, it can find a place only in the appendices dedicated to "The Music" or "The Songs" in today's printed versions of the canon.[22] The text is haunted by its missing music, evokes it, and invokes it with its blank spaces: what the reader is given, however, is a surrogate presence, a critical discussion and the paradoxical silence of a score. Silence, however, can become not a way in which a voice is annihilated, but a different mode of expression and perception, as Trinh T. Minh-ha has observed:

> although you cannot be exhaustive and totalizing, you are not excluding either. Silence here resonates differently. It is not equated with absence, lacuna or emptiness; it is a different sound ... a 'soundless' space of resonance, and a language of its own.[23]

What is silent in the Shakespearean text is the musical performance of the boy actor – or boy singer – who first impersonated Marina, Imogen, or, as we will see, Ariel. Here performance, what Edward Said has termed the 'extreme occasion' of musical performance, represents the place where the social and cultural sites of musical production – the court, the theatre – coalesce with the irreducible uniqueness of a music

[22] This is true both for the Arden and the Oxford editions of Shakespeare's plays: see, for example Appendix C, "The Songs", to the Arden Edition of *Cymbeline* (London: Routledge, 1994), or Appendix C, "The Music", to the Oxford Edition of *The Tempest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[23] Trinh T. Minh-ha (in conversation with Annamaria Morelli), "The Undone Interval", in Iain Chambers & Lidia Curti, eds., *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 8.

which takes place, literally, in and through the body of the performer.[24] This body, and the performance within and without it, is the space where music can express what Said calls its power of 'trangression', "that faculty music has to travel, cross over, drift from place to place in a society, even though many institutions and orthodoxies have sought to confine it".[25] Here the space of this transgression, of this negotiation among different modes of representation and expression, is the boy's body, what we could start calling the bo(d)y actor. The actor's body, the boy's body, although and because it is irrecoverably beyond our reach, comes back to haunt our reading of the Shakespearean text. Yet his voice, as we will see, is marked by the gesture of erasure itself: it is, indeed, a silence.

Another movement of 'transgression', of crossing and re-crossing is in any case already written into the boy's body: the transgression of gender boundaries, in the practice of a cross-dressed theatre where boys were daily 'taken for women',[26] was paradoxically the norm. The boy actor, the chief impersonator of femininity in Shakespeare's theatre, has only recently become the object of scrutiny by Shakespearean criticism; and, since Stephen Orgel's provocative essay, the boy actor beneath every Shakespearean heroine has been the pre-text in which our categories of gender and sexuality may be read, a way to bridge what Paul Kottman has called "the irreducible interval or difference (historical, cultural, linguistic) between the text and myself".[27] As a powerful antecedent of today's 'camping', the boy's cross-dressing exposes the performativity of gender impersonations, in the Renaissance as well as today: "this 'boy' is a

[24] Edward Said, *Musical Elaborations* (London: Vintage, 1991), 3. This last point is not made explicit by Said; yet I think that his reflections about "the packaged virtuosity of a professional performer" allow for a peculiar importance of the hindrance, but also the pleasure, brought by the presence of the performer's skilled body to music in performance.

[25] Ibid., xv.

[26] Expression coined by Stephen Orgel in his breakthrough essay "Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?", *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88.1 (Winter 1989).

[27] Paul Kottman, "Hospitality in the Interval: *Macbeth*'s Door", *Oxford Literary Review* 18 (1996), 88.

provoker of category crisis, a destabilizer of binarisms, a transgressor of boundaries, sexual, erotic, hierarchical, political, conceptual".[28]

Marina and Imogen both fall into this system of representation, as they were both impersonated by boy actors – maybe even by the same boy actor, the well-known Nathan Field who, after the dissolving of the Chapel Children, was impressed into the King's Men around 1608 to become their *primadonna*. As masters in their own playhouse, in their new location of Blackfriars, the King's Men willingly hosted Field and his companions as their unexpected guests, educated in instrumental playing and singing as well as in acting. Their presence allowed for a kind of writing and staging which would have been unrealizable without them. Katherine Duncan-Jones, retrieving the interpretation of the island in *The Tempest* as a metaphor for the playhouse, finds traces here of the previously neglected presence of the boy singer:

> Though modern productions can rarely suggest it, *The Tempest* is the nearest Shakespeare ever came to framing a play for boys rather than men. It is this *unusually large and technically accomplished troupe of boy players* whose combined activities express the magicality of the island.... It is only on the island that a single girl (Miranda), and many 'spirits', *all roles to be presented by boys*, are to be encountered.[29]

Magic, the other-worldly, is written on the newly acquired bodies of these choirboys: and, in "this most musical of plays", as Marina Warner notes, it is Ariel, Prospero's boy servant, who playfully impersonates the boy actor himself.[30] As an actor he plays only female roles – a water-nymph in 1.2., a harpy in 3.3., and Ceres in the masque in 4.1. – and, I would add, he plays and sings 'heavenly'. His performance includes no less than five songs, among them the only ones whose settings have survived: "Full Fathom Five" (1.2. 337-403) and "Where the Bee Sucks" (5.1. 87-94), both, of course, for treble voice.[31] To cope with the discrepancy of a male character singing in a high-ranged voice, theatrical tradition has assigned this part to a woman as late as the 1930s; and the presentation was often noticeably 'angel-like', as in the case of Julia St. George at the Sadler's Wells in 1847.[32]

Today, Ariel's songs have been rearranged for a lower range, as in the *Shakespeare's Lutenist* miscellany: here it is not Emma Kirkby, who sings *Cymbeline*'s aubade, but bass David Thomas who sings a powerfully evocative "Full Fathom Five".[33] The choice of the male instead of the female voice is consistent with the character's gender, though not with the authority of the written score, and it complies with the necessities of staging, where the body of the performer is present in all its unique, testosterone-laden physicality. Yet for "Where the Bee Sucks", as performed in the same miscellany, an experimental setting brings together *both* the male *and* the female voice, as both Kirkby and Thomas, as respectively first and second voice, sing Ariel's freedom song. In the virtual space of recording, the performer's physicality is removed, and the singer is left "singing in the dark, singing without a body, singing from an erased, invisible

[28] Garber, *Vested Interests*, 90. For a general discussion about camping and the performativity of gender see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 134 ff.

[29] Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Ungentle Shakespeare: Scenes from His Life* (London: Arden, 2001), 238; my italics. I believe the massive presence of musical performances in *The Tempest* (more songs than in any other of Shakespeare's plays, and a masque) strongly supports Duncan-Jones' argument.

[30] Marina Warner, "'The foul witch' and Her 'freckled whelp': Circean Mutations in the New World", in Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman, eds., '*The Tempest' and Its Travels* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 102.

[31] These songs, like the *aubade* from *Cymbeline* we are going to 'listen to' later, are variations on the 'consort-song', a composition for a consort of viols, lute, or recorder, and a solo vocal part in the upper lines, generally within the range of a boy's voice. The performance of these songs required the recruiting and education of pre-pubescent boys, whose voice would fit the musical tastes of the times – and whose bodies populated English courts and stages. See Tim Carter, "Secular Vocal Music", in Roger Bray, ed., *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain. The Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 176 ff.

[32] For a thorough discussion of Ariel and his/her impersonations see Stephen Orgel's introduction to the Oxford edition of *The Tempest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 70 ff.

[33] Citing – but, again, not hosting – another possible interpretation of this song, I have to send the reader back to another miscellany, *Shakespeare Songs*, where countertenor Alfred Deller performs an equally suggestive "Full Fathom Five" in its original, treble-voiced setting.

place in the universe".[34] Here, male and female voices can merge, and find a common space of hospitality at the margins of the Shakespearean text. Yet this synthesis, between the male voice of Ariel's sexual identity and the treble (here female) voice of his performance, marks the gap between then and now, Shakespeare's bodies and ours. Where two voices sing today, one resonated in Shakespeare's theatre, one that could host the voices of masculinity and femininity in one, single, unique body: the bo(d)y actor.

The woman's part

The boys, then, were hosted in the economy of the theatre for their performative ability in singing or playing female roles. This allowed them to be impressed into the adult companies as apprentices, and, with time, even to become shareholders of the companies. Their inclusion in this all-male household, however, did not preserve them from exploitation. On the contrary, as the role of the boy actor mirrored the 'woman's part' he played in the theatre, his role in the household was inscribed in his own performing body:

> the production of sexual difference in accordance with a male aesthetic does not privilege, or even necessarily benefit, the boys, who are open in theatre to direct abuse *merely by virtue of being physically present*, in a way women cannot be, simply by virtue of their absence.[35]

Sexual difference, indeed, here means a discourse where power hierarchies are put into being through dynamics of violence and abuse: the boys, like Derrida's guests, did actually run the risk of being 'taken for women', of becoming the object of sexual desire and, more often than not, exploitation. Through its performance of femininity, the body of the boy actor, like Lot's virgin daughters or

[34] Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality and the Mystery of Desire* (London: Penguin, 1994), 11.

[35] Callaghan, *Shakespeare Without Women*, 69 (my italics).

the host's concubine, was cast as the rightful object of both desire and violence, as the boy's body can become subject to both the desiring gaze and economic exploitation by adult males. Ovid Senior complains in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*: "What! Shall I have my son a stager now? An *engle* for players? A gull, a rook, a shotclog to make suppers, and be laughed at?"[36] (1.1 my italics). Alan Sinfield explains 'engle' as "sexual partner", adding that "it is one of the demeaning futures that await young Ovid if he takes to the stage".[37] And demeaning it is, as the position of sexual partner, like that of boy servant, is inscribed in an imaginary which both creates and confirms the boy's subjection:

> masculinity has often been attached to the phallus, not the anus, penetrator and penetrated have been hierarchized, man and boy, master and servant. This assumption is particularly easy to make if it is assumed that the boy is wearing women's clothing, for then the hierarchy also involves one that structures invidiously the difference between man and woman in any number of western discourses.[38]

The figure of the choirboy, however, did not completely participate in this discursive, as well as very tangible, landscape. On one hand, the Chapel Children had already collaborated with the King's Men during performances at Whitehall, where both young and adult actors were guests under the last residues of courtly patronage. On the other, the children had also been one of the parts involved in the so-called 'war of the theatres': they were the "eyrie of children, little eyases, that cry out on top of question" (*Hamlet*, 2.2. 340-341) to which Hamlet is so hostile. The prince's outburst against them underlines the boys' treble voices as the primary, though ephemeral, source of their appeal: "Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing?"

[36] Ben Jonson, *The Poetaster: or, His Arraigment*, in *The Complete Works*, vol. II (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1936), 237.

[37] Alan Sinfield, "How to Read *The Merchant of Venice* Without Being Heterosexist", in Terence Hawkes, ed., *Alternative Shakespeares vol. II* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 130.

[38] Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992), 121.

(348). Acting and singing, for the Chapel Children, were contiguous practices: both pointed to the existence of the choirboys at the margins, this time 'inside' theatrical performance, but 'outside' the public playhouse. Yet Hamlet's hostility is itself a form of hospitality, "a word which carries its own contradiction incorporated into it, a Latin word which allows itself to be parasitized by its opposite, 'hostility', the undesirable guest [hôte] which it harbors as the self-contradiction in its own body".[39] Hamlet's tirade evokes the ghost of the bo(d)y actor hosted in the adult companies themselves: as he welcomes the actors ("You're welcome, masters, welcome all", 347-348), the undesirable guest shows up unexpectedly in the "young lady and mistress", the boy whose pre-pubescent body and voice are now the source not of trouble, but of wealth for the company: "Pray God your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring" (430-431).

The ring is the harmonious sound, the sublime performance of the treble voice, but it is also the 'ring', the 'woman's part' the boy pretends to have in his performance of femininity; it also beckons to the other 'ring', alluded to by the anti-theatrical pamphleteer Philip Stubbes in his *Anatomie of Abuses*, where he defines the boy players as "Arsenecke", a poison, as Jonathan Goldberg observes, "that spreads incontrollably, violating borders and differences – upside down, inside out, animal/human – as the very name of the poison ("Arse/necke") suggests when it is decomposed into its anatomical parts".[40] This geography written on the boy's body performs and impersonates the ambivalence of Western discourses of identity and sexuality. Upon this body the separate identities of angel and concubine, the welcome guest and the scapegoat, merge and are questioned. On one hand stands the 'arse', the place of penetration, violence and subjection, a stand-in for the woman's part, the place of the 'Other' of Western masculinity. On the other, the 'necke', neck, throat, the place from which the voice comes: "the throat, organ from which 'I' speak".[41]

[39] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 3.

[40] Goldberg, *Sodometries*, xvi.

[41] Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat*, 16.

Yet this subversive thrust is mastered by an act of fragmentation of this body in the very operation of signification and commodification. In Derrida's second tale, it is the host, the master of the house, who literally tears to pieces the woman's body: after having offered the woman's instead of the guest's body to be raped, "the guest, the 'master' of the woman, picked up his knife, took hold of his concubine, and limb by limb cut her into twelve pieces; then sent her all through the land of Israel".[42] In the same way, Boult can split up Marina's body, and spread it around through the language which marks her commodification in the economy of the brothel:

> Boult, take you the marks of her, *the colour of her hair, complexion, height, her age*, with warrant of her *virginity*, and cry "He that will give most shall have her first." Such a maidenhead were no cheap thing, if men were as they have been.
>
> (*Pericles*, 4.2. 53-57)

Marina's virginity, like that of Lot's daughters, is her most valuable, hence tradable, virtue: but so, as we have already seen, are her musical and feminine abilities. Marina's fate is indeed more favourable than that of her biblical 'sisters': her eloquence and education redeem every man who tries to approach her, and her body remains untainted. Her influence results in an appreciation for a music which is both feminine and redemptive: "Shall's go hear the *vestals sing*?" (4.5. 7; my italics), one of the anonymous gentlemen she 'converts' proposes. The absent vestal, mirrored on stage by a chaste, singing Marina, echoes the original role of the choirboys: although they subsequently began to be trained for the stage, boy singers were originally members of the choirs in London chapels, and they were recruited and educated on a vocational basis. The little 'angels', at least in the fiction of Shakespeare's play, are indeed protected from abuse.

Imogen too, as we have seen, finds hospitality and shelter in the albeit missing space of musical performance. Yet, as in Derrida's tales on hospitality, for her body to stay untouched, another must be

[42] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 155.

exposed and sacrificed. And this exposed body, this bo(d)y on display, is a performer who, for once, plays with representation by performing what he 'really' is – a boy singer. We are back to the beginning of the play and of this essay, to the *aubade* "Hark, hark, the lark" (*Cymbeline*, 2.3. 19-25). Here Cloten, would-be rapist and murderer, hires a group of musicians to offer Imogen a serenade. As the gods "tune" heavenly music at the end of the play, in the words of the Roman soothsayer Philarmonius ("The fingers of the powers above do tune / The harmony of this peace"; 5.5. 467-468), Cloten would in the same way like to "tune" Imogen to his wishes:

> I would this music would come: I was advised to give her music a mornings, they say it will *penetrate*. (*Enter musicians*) Come on, *tune*: if you can *penetrate her with your fingering*, so; we'll try with tongue too: if none will do, let her remain: but I'll never give over. First, a very excellent good-conceited thing; after, a wonderful sweet air, with admirable rich words to it, and then let her consider.
>
> (2.3. 11-18; my italics)

The musicians are late: not too late for the performance, maybe, but certainly too late to perform Cloten's wish to "finger" Imogen, both in the sense of "play upon (an instrument) with the fingers", and in that of "lay hands upon, apprehend" (OED). Of course, in the whole play Cloten never will be able to "finger" Imogen, as her impenetrability pairs with and stands for Britain's own firmness against the Roman host, and her body must consequently stay untouched and unpolluted.[43] In its stead, the body sacrificed and dismembered to ensure the recovery of order and the safety of the British soil is Cloten's, whose "clotpoll" is sent "down the stream in embassy to his mother" (4.2. 184-185) by Guiderius, the king's heir himself.

In Cloten's unsuccessful performance of masculinity, then, what we do hear is not a bass, baritone, or tenor voice – the *aubade*, like Ariel's songs, is set for treble voice. The asexual musician turns out to be a boy singer or, according to some readings, a male alto, what today would be called a countertenor: a not-mannish, even unmanned voice.[44] The troubled, and troubling, sexual identity of the singer comes out in Cloten's farewell words to his musicians: "If this penetrate, I will consider your music the better: if it do not, it is a vice in her ears, which horse-hairs and calves'-guts, nor the voice of *unpaved eunuch* to boot, can never amend" (2.3. 26-29; my italics). In this oblique, ironic coming out, the Shakespearean text acknowledges the presence of the boy as a wound in its own masculinity, as the unexpected but altogether necessary guest in its system of gender representation: "unlike beards, codpieces, and so on, voice is not available as stage property. Embodied rather than prosthetic, the voice accords presence".[45]

So, what voice do we hear? None, indeed. The boy, again, eludes us. Yet, as I still try and push on to the limits of writing, Shakespeare's, Derrida's, and mine, what I hear is a woman's voice, Kirkby's, giving voice and presence, with her powerful *vibrato*, to the skilled performance of the boy singer. Our little angel too, like Fidele, has turned out to be a woman: Kirkby's voice, a woman's in a playhouse where "the woman's part belongs to men",[46] signals the breach that the now silent voice of the boy singer leaves in the Shakespearean text. In the plays we have explored, the power of the boy's voice, a treble voice from an "angel-like" body, lies in the fact that the ideal it embodies must be protected *at any price*, turning the host into a hostage; this cost, on the other hand, turns out to be the inevitable sacrifice of the woman, the commodification and disruption of her body. Yet Kirkby's disembodied performance, by substituting a female voice for a treble, male one, plays with these hierarchies of mastery and subordination, together with those of sex and gender, exposing the contradictions of an economy of hospitality where the host is always "(male in the first instance)".[47] In parentheses in

[43] See Coppélia Kahn, "Postscript. *Cymbeline*: Paying Tribute to Rome", in *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds and Women* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 164.

[44] See, for example, Richard Noble, *Shakespeare's Use of Song: With the Text of the Principal Songs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966 [1923]), 133.

[45] Callaghan, *Shakespeare Without Women*, 52.

[46] Ibid., 69

[47] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 14.

Derrida's essay, this statement opens the question of hospitality to the problematic borderline zone of gender and sexuality – the bo(d)y actor.

Marie Hélène Laforest

A Caribbean Drama: George Lamming and *The Tempest*

Like all texts, *The Tempest* can be entered from many directions, but unlike most texts, *The Tempest* has not only been re-read, but also re-written countless times. Starting with F.G. Waldron who wrote a sequel to the play in 1797, to Dryden, Shelley, Auden to contemporary rewritings like those of Marina Warner (*Indigo,* 1992) and J.M.Coetzee (*Foe,* 1986).[1] The reason for this is in Anne Barton's view that *The Tempest* is ambivalent, not only "concentrated to the point of being riddling", but that "a surprising amount of the play depends upon the suppressed and the unspoken".[2] Critics have also pointed out the difficulty of representing Caliban as one of the reasons for *The Tempest*'s attraction as well as the unresolved question of why Prospero is so obsessed with Miranda's chastity. In Paul Brown's words *The Tempest* is "a limit text in which the characteristic operations of colonialist discourse may be discerned – as an instrument of exploitation, a register of beleaguerment and a site of radical ambivalence".[3]

[1] *Foe* is commonly defined as a rewriting of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe,* but Coetzee also weaves into the text important references to *The Tempest*. J.M. Coetzee, *Foe* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986).

[2] Anne Barton, Introduction to The New Penguin Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968),16.

[3] Paul Brown, "'This Thing of Darkness I acknowledge Mine'. *The Tempest* and the Discourse of Colonialism", in Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, eds., *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

Today it is viewed as "an appropriately iconic representative of the English canon".[4] Therefore in our times, it has been questioned as much as the canon itself. Postcolonial critics have read the text almost exclusively as a play about Europe and its Other, but so have earlier literary critics. Leslie Fiedler, drawing from Frantz Fanon and Frank Kermode, has indeed affirmed that "no respectable production of the play can afford to ignore the sense in which it is a parable of transatlantic imperialism, the colonization of the West".[5] This consensus over a colonial reading of *The Tempest* depends not only on the parallels which have been drawn by critics, but also on Caliban's physical attributes as well as his brute nature which, like other stereotypes about non Europeans, appear to be in the natural order of things. "Caliban does not threaten commonsense notions about black people or slaves in the same way as does Othello's emphasized nobility and heroism. While much critical effort was expended to prove both Othello's non-negroid lineage and his moral whiteness – despite abundant references to his blackness – there has been no parallel concern about the precise shade of colouring of Prospero's 'thing of darkness'; even though *The Tempest* is more ambiguous about Caliban's color and race".[6] As Homi Bhabha has written, "what is said about the Other needs no confirmation. It is an amalgam of citations, inventions, fragments of a text, quotations".[7]

Second wave feminists, instead, have entered *The Tempest* from their own perspective, obviously raising gender issues, not least that of matrilinearity – directly related to the question of hospitality in this

[4] Belinda Edmondson, *Making Men. Gender, Literary Authority, and Women's Writing in Caribbean Narrative* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999),108.

[5] Leslie A. Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1973), 209. As Trevor Griffiths has shown, this is not just a post-colonial perspective. At the end of the nineteenth century Caliban was interpreted as a colonial and in 1904 W.T. Stead had drawn a parallel between the situation in Rhodesia and England's imperialist project. Trevor Griffiths, "'This Island's Mine': Caliban and Colonialism", in Peter Child, ed., *Post-colonial Theory and English Literature. A Reader* (Edimburgh: Edimburgh University Press, 1999), 47.

[6] Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 143.

[7] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 70-71.

drama of usurpation – and that of the counter-culture of witches as pointed out by Patricia Seed.[8] Other issues have also been raised by, for instance, Laura Donaldson who has pointed to the similar ontological status of white women and colonized races.[9] But this link has been contested by women critics from the Caribbean, especially Sylvia Wynter who has rightly asserted that, unlike Caliban, Miranda's European origin prevents her from succumbing to savagery.[10] The "brute" Caliban has therefore much more at stake than other social groups in appropriating *The Tempest*. Indeed, starting from 1959 both African and Caribbean intellectuals have amplified the play's involvement with the colonial enterprise.

The Caribbean has produced as many critical readings of the play as re-writings. In 1952 Martinican Frantz Fanon wrote his well-known answer to Octave Mannoni who had recourse to a metaphor from *The Tempest* to explain what he saw as the dependency complex of colonized peoples.[11] In 1960, Barbadian George Lamming wrote *The Pleasures of Exile* which firmly set the play in the Caribbean, raising Caliban to the status of a revolutionary.[12] Since then *The*

[8] Patricia Seed, "'This island's mine': Caliban and Native Sovereignty", in Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman, eds., *'The Tempest' and Its Travels* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 210.

[9] According to Laura Donaldson white women also suffer the "ravages of colonialism". See her "The Miranda Complex: Colonialism and the Question of Feminist Reading", *Diacritics* 6 (Fall 1988), 71. While Lamming suggests a potential political alliance between Caliban and Miranda as two displaced and motherless youths, he is well aware of what he calls the "difference in their degrees of being". Ania Loomba also underlines Miranda's implication in the colonialist project and she uses the lines - "Abhorred slave…", 1.2. 352-362 - to prove her point, the same lines which editors of *The Tempest* have sought to transfer to Prospero "on the grounds that Miranda is too delicate and not philosophical enough to speak so harshly". Loomba, *Gender, Race*, 154.

[10] Sylvia Wynter, "Beyond Miranda's Meanings: Un/silencing the 'Demonic Ground' of Caliban's 'Woman'", in Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido, eds., *Out of the Kumbla. Caribbean Women and Literature* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990), 115.

[11] The "Prospero complex" refers to a sort of gene of dependency on the part of subjected peoples. A chapter in *Black Skin White Masks* confutes Mannoni's theses. Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire masques blancs* (Paris : Edition du Seuil, 1952).

[12] Georges Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995). There are other readings which situate the play in the Mediterranean. Jerry Brotton has pointed that the imprecision of the geography in the play and the references to

Tempest has been rewritten as a Caribbean drama by David Dabydeen Paule Marshall, E. Kamau Brathwaite, and Aimé Césaire.

In *Slave Song* (1984) and *Coolie Odyssey* (1998), Dabydeen portrays black and white liaisons, involving a white woman, Miranda/Britannia, who stands for beauty and civilization. In her short story *Brazil* (1961) Paule Marshall stages two characters, an old black comedian, Caliban, and his young blonde partner and mistress, Miranda, who profits from his success and thus from the colonial arrangement. E. Kamau Brathwaite in his poem "Caliban" (1969) describes the Caribbean as a space which needs to retrieve its African roots in order to save itself.[13] Césaire, instead, in *Une tempête* adapts Shakespeare's play for a black theatre. He keeps all of Shakespeare's characters, adding one, the African god Eshu – Lamming had pointed out that Shakespeare had not taken the African gods into account.[14] Césaire also specifies – and this is important in the Caribbean context – the phenotypes of both Caliban and Ariel. Ariel is a mulatto, a counter-revolutionary figure, a potential traitor as the mulatto middle-class has been seen. Césaire not only makes explicit Lamming's view that Ariel is "the privileged servant, a lackey of the colonials," but connotes him through his skin color.[15] Cuban critic Fernandez Retamar, instead, writing in 1971, from the location of Fidel Castro's revolution, denies any racial distinction between Ariel and Caliban, seeing Caliban as a symbol of *mestizaje*, instead of the enslaved black man.

George Lamming, too, rewrote *The Tempest* in his 1971 novel

Tunis and Carthage should place it in a Mediterranean context. Brotton, "This Tunis, Sir, was Carthage': Contesting Colonialism in *The Tempest*" in Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, eds., *Post-Colonial Shakespeares* (London: Routledge, 1998).

[13] E. Kamau Brathwaite, *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); David Dabydeen, *Slave Song* (Oxford and Mundelstrup: Dangaroo Press, 1984) and *Coolie Odyssey* (London: Hansib/Dangaroo, 1998); Paule Marshall, "Brazil", in Paule Marshall, *Soul Clap Hands and Sing* (Chatam,N.J.: Chatham Bookseller, 1961).

[14] In Césaire Caliban's songs also invoke the god Shango. Aimé Césaire, *Une tempête* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1968).

[15] "Ariel is not a slave. Ariel has been emancipated to the status of a privileged servant. In other words: a lackey". Lamming, *The Pleasures*, 99. During the Haitian revolution the mulatto class, described by Lamming has having a "half-and-half status" (127), had sided with the colonials before joining the slave revolt. Lamming cannot ignore this fact which C.L.R. James reports, but he plays it down in the text.

Water with Berries, where he enacts the return journey of a Caribbean man who, banned from his island, moves to England where he becomes the roomer of the widow of a former plantation owner.[16] The novel has not enjoyed the success of Lamming's criticism of *The Tempest* which itself was not appreciated by Shakespearean scholars until the 1980's. According to Peter Hulme, "In Shakespearean criticism of the 1970's and 1980's, *The Pleasures of Exile* is hardly quoted".[17] It is no coincidence that Lamming's text was not only scarcely quoted, but that the play itself was hardly staged in the 1950's and 1960's – as if the official culture were silencing the newly accrued West Indian presence in England and ignoring the defiance to colonial rule underway in Africa and the Caribbean.[18]

Thus *The Pleasures of Exile* is not a re-writing of *The Tempest* as many have affirmed. It begins with a reference to the Republic of Haiti and ends with Lamming's childhood memories; in-between are his reflections on *The Tempest*.[19] The book consists of ten essays which interplay with the Shakespearean drama, of which the most significant are his reading of C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins*, his memoirs about his arrival in London in the 1950's, and his first visit to West Africa and the United States.[20] Therefore if the text is valued today as a Caribbean critical reading of Shakespeare's play – as is Cuban critic Roberto Fernandez Retamar's – it must not be forgotten, as Sandra Pouquet Pachet has written, that it is also an important historicization of subjectivity.[21] In response to Prospero who positions

[16] In postcolonial texts, the return journey is not only a physical journey, but also the 'voyage in' as defined by Edward Said, "The voyage in - a conscious effort to enter into the discourse of Europe and the West, to mix with it, transform it, to make it acknowledge marginalized or suppressed, or forgotten histories." Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 216.

[17] Peter Hulme also writes that Lamming's text has not been placed "within the institution of Shakespearean criticism." In Hulme and Sherman, eds., '*The Tempest*', 233.

[18] "So, during the great period of British withdrawal from Empire there were few productions of *The Tempest*, and the play's colonial themes were largely uncanvassed". Trevor R. Griffiths, in Childs, ed., *Post-colonial Theory*, 52.

[19] References to *The Tempest* are also interspersed throughout the volume.

[20] *The Pleasures* also opens a dialogue with writers from the U.S. tradition, specifically with Whitman, Melville, and Mark Twain (153).

[21] Sandra Pochet Paquet, "Foreword" to *The Pleasures of Exile*.

him at the margin, the objectified Other places himself at the center. To read *The Pleasures* exclusively as a critique of *The Tempest* is to re-center Europe synecdochically, whereas Lamming's intent is precisely to decenter it like other temples of British culture such as the BBC, the ICA, and the Times Literary Supplement.

George Lamming landed in London in the 1950's along with other English-speaking Caribbean writers and would-be writers – E. Kamau Brathwaite, V.S.Naipaul, Samuel Selvon – and wrote *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960) from there.[21] "Caliban has travelled to England", Lamming writes, "to the tempestuous island of Prospero and his language"(13). His total identification with Caliban provides the reader with a key for entering the text. He is no longer the nameless slave who has lost his ancestral links. Time has passed; he is now a subject in his own right who can claim a life outside of his relationship with Prospero, and set his own agenda.

As Lamming reads *The Tempest* "against the background of England's experiment in colonization"(13), and exalts Caliban to the status of revolutionary and independence fighter, he presents him as a symbol of heroic resistance for the entire Caribbean.[22] The hero of the Haitian Revolution, Toussaint Louverture, becomes "Caliban as Prospero had never known him" (119).[23]

Underlying Lamming's passionate defense of Caliban is certainly a defense of himself and his writer friends, a group of black men newly arrived at the center of empire, who are "still regarded as the

[21] Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*. All quotations will be taken from this edition.

[22] "The entire Caribbean is our horizon," Lamming writes (118). Lamming has been criticized for excluding women from his revolutionary project. Edmondson, *Making Men*, 105-138. But women hardly appear in the history of revolutions. The only female figure represented in the annals of the Haitian Revolution is Désirée la folle although there must have been many others. Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone To Heaven* (London: Minerva, 1989) has been read as a revolutionary novel and so have several other texts by women. See, for instance, Myriam J.A. Chancy, *Framing Silence. Revolutionary Novels by Haitian Women* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

[23] Lamming, *The Pleasures*, 13. The other perspective he provides is to side with those who have seen the play as a drama of the mind: in the wake of the trauma of losing his kingdom, Prospero takes refuge on the island which is his mind and the spectator watches the embattled forces within him. Caliban is the shadow of Prospero's mind, his unconscious which he fears.

unfortunate descendants of languageless and deformed slaves (119). As a modern day Caliban, Lamming is forced to question this representation of himself, this truth which has taken on the status of myth and has been transmitted to Miranda. Thus his rebuttal, which anticipates the work of all those who would be writing back to the empire in the 1970's and 1980's.

Sandra Pouchet Paquet in her Foreword to the 1992 reedition of *The Pleasures* has indicated the prescient value of Lamming's text. In her view, it prefigures many of the arguments regarding "the Barthian Deep Me, the Written Me, the Subaltern and Postcolonial subject in contemporary postcolonial discourse".[24] Indeed, the subaltern who exhibits a 'self-authorizing will' is one of the main tenets of postcoloniality. Lamming urges the subaltern subject to take control of the word and act without asking Prospero for his permission. This is what Derek Walcott and Jamaica Kincaid will also propose later.

If Kincaid writes "to name is to possess", Walcott defines the Caribbean writer as a new Adam. In *My Garden (book)* where she equates the work of botanists with conquest and domination, Kincaid tells those "who look like her" to put to their own use the European tools, just like the Europeans have done with plants from the colonies: tea has become English, tulips have become Dutch, daliahs were renamed after the Swede Andreas Dahl, losing its Central American name and origin.[25] In the Caribbean, appropriation is legitimised, but Walcott has warned that the 'Adamic naming' he suggests "has the tartness of experience".[26]

Lamming's insights are so fecund and numerous that if Pouchet Paquet's following list were confronted with contemporary texts, *The Pleasures* would appear as the Ur-text of Caribbean writing.

> *The Pleasures of Exile* contains ideas and insights about the thematic obsessions of modern Caribbean writing – colonialism and

[24] Pouchet Paquet, "Foreword", xiii.

[25] Jamaica Kincaid, *My Garden (book)* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux,1999), 88.

[26] Derek Walcott, "The Muse of History", in Orde Coombs, ed., *Is Massa Day Dead?* (New York: Anchor Press, 1974), 6.

[27] Pouchet Paquet, "Foreword", xxiv. Belinda Edmondson has criticized Lamming for his misogynist statement about Miranda: "Caliban, does not wish it were so for the mere

nationalism, departure and return, emigration and exile, identity and ethnicity, language, history myth and legend, the interdependence of oral and written traditions, and the role of the writer in a time of revolutionary social change. [27]

These are indeed the great concerns of Caribbean writers, but what Lamming, as a man of his time, did not foresee was the surge of female writing in the Caribbean which has changed the literary scene of the archipelago, introducing new themes, revisioning old ones, intersecting them with gender. Women are outside the frame of his autobiographical text – apart from his mother "with her Victorian rod" and the prostitutes in Kensington Gardens (227, 221). As in the Shakespearean play, in the experience of exile, women are hardly represented.[28]

Still Lamming, like the women novelists who will come after him and, in common with writers from other former colonies, speaks with a collective voice. He unifies the entire Caribbean like Edouard Glissant and Antonio Benitez-Rojo will also do in more recent years. He also undertakes, like many postcolonials, the return journey, the contemporary version of the Middle Passage identified with the Empire Windrush voyage from the Caribbean to England in 1948.[29] Furthermore, Lamming's vision of the exilic condition as being possible even in one's birth place, like his notion of the colonized as "being in transit", recur in many postcolonial works. At the same time

experiment of mounting a piece of white pussy" (102). Edmondson, *Making Men*, 116. Lamming's anger is certainly misplaced as he foists upon the white woman a patriarchal construction aiming at controlling women's bodies.

[28] V.S. Naipaul's semi-autobiographical text, *Half a Life*, appears much later, but as the sentimental journey of a young man from the fringes of the empire, the story of his exile in London includes women - although male/female relations are problematic. Naipaul, *Half a Life* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2001).

[29] "One hundred and 25,000 people came from the Caribbean to Britain between the years 1948 and 1958. Between 1959 and 1962 approximately another 125,000 arrived, making a grand total of about 250,000." Caryl Phillips, *A New World Order* (London: Secker & Warburg, 2001), 268. Phillips himself also undertakes a journey from Guadeloupe to Dover, recounted in *The Atlantic Sound* (London: Vintage, 2000), to relive his parents' experience of crossing the Atlantic in 1958. Jean Rhys's novels began the women's journeys to the metropolitan centers.

the expressions, "the tabernacle of dead names" and the "sacred gang"(27) to refer to the canonical authors of English literature as well as the felicitous phrase, "Exiled from his gods, exiled from his nature, exiled from his own name!"(15) have been reproduced many times over. Some of his insights have been explored recently as in Marina Warner's essay, "'The foul witch' and Her 'freckled whelp': Circean Mutations in the New World" which seems to answer back to Lamming who had excluded Caliban from the redemptive philosophy of the play.[30] Thus, conscious or unconscious echoes of *The Pleasures* resonate in many contemporary works.

Its anticipatory force is as remarkable as *The Tempest*'s. Lamming writes that "*The Tempest* was prophetic of a political future which is our present" (13); *The Pleasures*, too, projects us into a future which is our present. Lamming wants Prospero to look ahead to the 'now', instead of reminiscing about a past culture, the great dead men of England, and his lost dukedom.

In Prospero's present, the drama of migration looms large. Thus Caliban's cry, "I must eat my dinner" – immediately preceding the most-quoted "this island's mine by Sycorax my mother" – is the line which keeps Lamming's attention. Today, in the present, in every present, human beings have the basic right to eat. People migrate in order to survive, to partake of the table of the Lord/master. But there is no unconditional hospitality at the table of the Lord, be it the First World or the world of English letters.[31] Derrida rightly reminds Europe of the sacredness of hospitality in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, but the stranger, the foreigner is not welcome in those privileged places; he has to elbow his/her way in.[32]

[30] Lamming writes that "The difference between Caliban and the sinner is this. A sinner remains a child of God, and redemption is not so much an order as a natural duty. Grace is the sinner's birthright. But Caliban is not a child of anything except nature" (110). Marina Warner, instead, places Caliban "in the zone of conversion". Marina Warner, "'The foul witch' and Her 'freckled whelp': Circean Mutations in the New World", in Hulme and Sherman, eds., *'The Tempest'*, 100.

[31] Rob Nixon has discussed the anxiety of Lamming the writer who, on arriving in England, is "conscious of being only ambiguously party to that language and culture." Nixon, "Caribbean and African Appropriations of *The Tempest*", in Childs, ed., *Post-colonial Theory*, 64.

[32] Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

Thus Lamming focuses on Caliban's history after the play.[33] "Caliban's history belongs entirely to the future" (107); he is the future. He is only 24 years old and has just regained his freedom. Against him stands Prospero who is growing old, envies the passion of youth, and fears that Caliban's future could mean his death. Lamming draws a clear parallel between *The Tempest* and the contemporary drama of migration. Caliban was Prospero's experiment. The white magician had applied language to the wild and savage nature of the slave, to transform "this thing of darkness," which is, however, already unredeemable.

Caliban is a condition, that of blackness.[34] Caliban "is not allowed to distinguish, for the eyes that register personality must belong to, must derive from a consciousness which could be regarded as person. And Caliban is a condition" (111). Sometimes man, sometimes less than man, at times needed, at others rejected, the formerly colonized have entered the master's house and will not dislodge. Prospero has to accept this change dictated by his history.[35] He must acknowledge it and change his ways, for time is running short. Caliban has warned him that "his privilege of absolute ownership is over" (63). He must recast his own island as a multicultural space.

> The time is ripe – but may go rotten – when masters must learn to read the meaning contained in the signatures of their former slaves. There may be more murders; but Caliban is here to stay (63).

[33] Even if its prehistory has also kept his attention, as Peter Hulme has written, in Hulme and Sherman, eds., '*The Tempest'*, 230. Lamming, indeed, speculates about Sycorax, Miranda's mother, and Miranda and Caliban's childhood. Cf. Crystal Bartolovich, "While the island in *The Tempest* seems to be a site that Europe permeates, the play ends before the other part of the story can be shown: the island permeating Europe". "'Baseless Fabric': London as 'World City'", in Hulme and Sherman, eds., *'The Tempest'*, 26.

[34] Recognition of this 'condition' still echoes today as in Jamaica Kincaid. Annie John's teacher reads *The Tempest*, while a slightly older character, Lucy, acknowledges her condition by affirming: "I was a young woman from the fringes of the world, and when I left my home I had wrapped around my shoulders the mantle of a servant". Kincaid, *Annie John* (London: Picador, 1985); *Lucy* (New York: Plume, 1991), 95.

[35] As Salman Rushdie has written in *The Satanic Verses*, "The trouble with the Engenglish is that their hiss hiss history happened overseas, so they don't know what it means". Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (London:Vintage, 1998), 343.

Caliban today inhabits the same spaces as Prospero but is conscious of his own genealogy and speaks his own tongue. He does not bet against the odds, he knows he has only two weapons at his disposal: time and the words he has learned from Prospero. In Lamming, as in those who will write after him, the struggle over language is crucial. Writers from the former British empire are tongueless or torn between tongues – in the Caribbean, Walcott, Kincaid, and Nourbese Philip, for instance.[36] The drama of being "colonized yet excluded by language" (15) continues to be voiced and the confrontation between English and alter-native idioms re-enacted. English as a language is Prospero's gift and Lamming recognizes it as such. But despite Prospero's prevision to keep him forever as a guest in that language, Caliban has made the language his. From Prospero's viewpoint, Caliban could not be the heir of language – he had to remain a guest, both the stranger and the barbarian postulated by Derrida.[37] Caliban's use of language had to be limited to his way of serving him. But Prospero miscalculated the risk he was taking, for Caliban has crossed the border Prospero had conjured up. Despite his brute nature, he has taken on the power to rename the world. He inhabits the language which he has subverted and expanded through mixtures of races, languages and traditions in that productive in-between space.

> The old blackmail of language simply won't work any longer. For the language of modern politics is no longer Prospero's exclusive vocabulary. It is Caliban's as well and since there is no absolute from which a moral prescription may come, Caliban is at liberty to choose the meaning of this moment (158).

[36] "For isn't it odd that the only language I have in which to speak of this crime is the language of the criminal who committed the crime?". Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (New York: Plume,1988), 31. Marlene Nourbese Philip, *She tries her tongue, her silence softly breaks* (London: The Women's Press, 1993). Cf. E. Kamau Brathwaite on the 'calibanization' of English and the notion of 'nation language' as oppositional to Prospero's authority.

[37] Derrida makes a distinction between the two figures: "the difference, one of the subtle differences between the foreigner and the absolute other is that the latter cannot have a name or a family name...". Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 25.

English has been decolonized, opened up to the sound and syntax of other histories. Caliban is now a polyglot, while the master remains monolingual. Drawing inspiration from a poetry competition in which it was specified that entries in dialect would not be accepted, Caribbean novelist and poet Merle Collins wrote "No Dialects Please".

> …To think how dey still so dunce
> An so afraid of we power
> Dat dey have to hide behind a language
> Dat we could wrap round we finger
> in addition to our own
> Heavens o mercy!
> Dat is dunceness oui!
> Ah wonder where is de bright British?[38]

Prospero has hosted Caliban in his language/home, but Caliban has refused to be silent. Lamming's view is that it is precisely this refusal which bullied Prospero into "the crucial change". By contesting Prospero's 'truth' he has shaken the ground on which Prospero has rested his hegemonic power. Prospero's reaction is immediate:

> Thou most lying slave,
> Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have
> Used thee,
> Filth as thou art, with human care, and
> Lodged thee
> In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate
> The honour of my child.
> (1.2. 344-350)

Caliban's answer "Oho, Oho! Wouldn't had been done!" could

[38] Merle Collins, "No Dialects Please", in Rhonda Cobham and Merle Collins, eds., *Watchers and Seekers,* (London: The Women's Press,1987), 119. On islands like Grenada, St. Lucia, and Dominica two patwahs are spoken, one French-based, the other, English-based.

translate as: "I wished it were so". Lamming conjectures that Caliban wished he could people the island. If he had numbers on his side, he might have taken some political action. If there were a population of Calibans, "he could organize resistance against this obscene and selfish monster" (102). The debate over Caliban's rape has a long history in Shakespearean criticism, while Caliban's solitude has drawn less attention. However, it is a fact of the play that since the wreck, Caliban is outnumbered on the island and stands alone against Prospero.[39]

"Thou most lying Prospero" should have been Caliban's reply. From Lamming's viewpoint, it is Prospero who is lying; Prospero has lied and has misrepresented Caliban. However, even if he had not, the charge of rape would still stand. The myth has been constructed, has become truth and has entered history.[40]

> It is through Miranda, the product of Prospero's teaching, that we may glimpse the origin and perpetuation of myth coming slowly but surely into its right as fact, history, absolute truth" (111).

Once again, Lamming/Caliban's personhood is at play. He takes personally and very seriously the suspicion that every black man is a potential rapist. Conscious of the difficult terrain on which he treads, of the colonizer/colonized arrangement still mentally in place in a country which has lost an empire, Lamming has no illusions. England as nation and as empire has fashioned itself as ruler and is unable to accept its new destiny.[41] It can not reconcile itself to the idea that

[39] Sylvia Wynter has questioned the absence of Caliban's mate; while Ania Loomba brings up the question of Caliban's phallocentricism which is " ironically undercut by his subordinate racial position." Wynter, "Demonic Ground", and Loomba, *Gender, Race,* 156. Patricia Seed has instead pointed that the Elizabethan audience would have laughed at Caliban's answer since the colonizing project aimed precisely at peopling the conquered lands. Seed, "'This island's mine'".

[40] The political use of the myth of the black rapist is clearly shown in the case of India where it appeared only after the 1857 Sepoy Revolt and substituted that of the "tame Indian". See Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/ Postcolonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 79.

[41] In a talk at the 2002 Leeds conference "Translating Class/Altering Hospitality", Paul Gilroy described England as suffering from a "postcolonial melancholia" since the loss of Empire. Congress CATH 20-23 June 2002, University of Leeds.

Caliban is no longer elsewhere but in Europe and much less to the fact that the script of their relations has to be rewritten.

The spectre of being contaminated by Caliban to whose nature pollution is innate (107) has dictated English colonial policies. Miscegenation has appeared as apocalyptic in colonial texts. It is also Prospero's great fear which *The Tempest* anticipated. Lamming predicts that anxiety about the future could reduce Prospero to "madness or impotence"(85), two terms which can characterize as much the immigration policies of Fortress Europe as the teetering underway to redefine the national literatures in English.

The ever-changing laws which aim at containing immigration are a sign of Europe's impotence, but also of its short-sightedness. The invited but unwelcome guest, confined to a ghetto, must sooner or later rebel against this treatment of him/her and become a revolutionary.[42] In the metaphorical home of literature, which more privileged immigrants, the writers from the former colonies, have occupied, the terminological oscillations to redefine this home exemplify the "madness and impotence" of Prospero. A separate category of 'Commonwealth literature' was indeed created to contain the work of Caliban.

> 'Commonwealth literature', it appears, is that body of writing created, I think, in the English language, by persons who are not themselves white Britons, or Irish, or citizens of the United States of America. I don't know whether black Americans are citizens of this bizarre Commonwealth or not. Probably not.[43]

This unhappy choice, which excluded South Africa, for instance, was followed by an array of other names with the same exclusionary function of separating the West from the Rest. Unable to dominate the world of letters today, Prospero has withdrawn from the competition creating distinct categories such as "ethnic literature" and even the

[42] In Césaire's play Caliban lives in a ghetto and refashions himself as X. "Call me X. That would be better; that is, the man without a name or more precisely the man whose name has been stolen" (translation mine). Césaire, *Une tempête*, 28. Cf. E. Kamau Brathwaite's poem "X/Self".

[43] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), 63.

paradoxical "world literature" which keeps the Prosperos distinct from members of the 'world'. Still, the bond of language is unbreakable; Prospero's and Caliban's destinies are forever linked. Prospero has no choice, but that of negotiating the future with Caliban. Neither can act alone. In Lamming's words, "Withdrawal is impossible: He must act; and he must act with Caliban; or he must die…"(85). Some sort of fusion is needed, "both physical and other than physical: a fusion which, within himself, Prospero needs and dreads!"(102).

Caliban has already been transformed since he has always been "part of the island of China, and the island of Africa and the island of India" (154). This has allowed him to draw from Prospero's as well as from other traditions. Also, he can provide an alter-native lineage, starting with the Hatian revolutionaries of 1791 whom Lamming cites by name, through Eric Williams, C.L.R. James, and Aimé Césaire.[44] Lamming clearly postulates a creolised Caribbean and a New World subject, always aware of his many legacies.[45] After all, he is in England to perform the supreme act of language, assert his command over Prospero's language. He will see his words printed like those of Samuel Selvon and V.S. Naipaul, the two Indo-Caribbeans, who are in London with him. They are already leaving their marks in the very center which had excluded them. Lamming defines Selvon as the "folk poet" who goes back to his peasant culture and is able to invent a new language (225). Naipaul is the assimilationist, who writes harsh criticisms of the Caribbean and biased representations of the colonial encounter – at least until the publication of *A Way in the World* (1994). Lamming presents two writers with radically different sensibilities, almost as a warning to First World critics who will nonetheless, in later years, propose a univocal vision of writers from the former empire. The nightmare of colonial history continues.

The only way out is to negotiate. In Lamming, the Haitian ceremony of the souls – a ritual in which the living call upon the

[44] Rob Nixon points out how Fernandez Retamar has extended this "endemic lineage of cultural-cum-political activists" to thirty-five "exemplary Calibans". Nixon, "Appropriations", 67,71.

[45] However in the 1970's many intellectuals from the English-speaking Caribbean, like Brathwaite, will try to renounce their European heritage in favor of their African roots.

dead, who had been waiting in the water, in a purgatorial space – becomes charged with symbolic value. Like the characters in *The Tempest* who are resurrected from the water after the wreck, the dead, who in the voodoo religion await in the water before reaching Africa, return to confront the living. "It is among the living that the awkwardness of the past must be resolved" (97).

Caliban has proposed and will continue to offer alternatives to Prospero's ways – this is the note on which Lamming closes *The Pleasures of Exile*.

> But the mystery of the colonial is this: while he remains alive, his instinct, always and for ever creative, must choose a way to change the meaning and perspective of this ancient tyranny (229).

The tyranny of language, like that of literature has ended and if, on arriving in London, Lamming was concerned about his prospects as a writer, today he no longer stands alone.

Francesca Recchia

With the Eyes of the Other

> Words are their words,
> but song is ours.
> (Théophile Obenga)

A Premise

Questions of freedom and liberation accompany and justify diverse suggestions coming from literature, visual arts, music and critical theory that flow into the kernel of my discussion of the figure of Caliban. Considerations of the interpretation, transformation and symbolic power of Caliban, as both a veiled metaphor and the bearer of my argument, will take us to a discussion on *créolité* and the Caribbean. His presence/absence, voice/silence, visibility/invisibility propose the exploration of (post) colonial dialectics, opening out on to an understanding of artistic and intellectual creativity as fundamental to political and cultural liberation. A double register will characterise my argument: the combination of a critical language with a creative one will be yet another device to highlight the complexity of Caliban, while at the same time creating a dialogue between the different issues and nuances present in this essay.[1]

* I wish to thank Iain Chambers for his trust and support.
[1] My own poem is signalled by italics on page 196.

Redemption songs

Old pirates yes they rob I
Sold I to the merchant ships
Minutes after they took I
From the bottomless pit
But my hand was made strong
By the hand of the Almighty
We forward in this generation
Triumphantly
All I ever had, is songs of freedom
Won't you help to sing, these songs of freedom
Cause all I ever had, redemption songs
Redemption songs

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery
None but ourselves can free our minds
Have no fear for atomic energy
Cause none of them can stop the time
How long shall they kill our prophets
While we stand aside and look
Some say it's just a part of it
We've got to fulfill the book
(Bob Marley)

Trenchtown, Kingston - Jamaica in the 1970s. I can hear the echo of a timeless quest: the cry for a voice, for the possibility of a freedom. A memory from the present echoes in the noises of the past. It goes beyond verbal drama, through a sound system that resonates in the throats of the exploited all over the world: *all I ever had, redemption songs*.

The West Indies in the sixteenth century. I can hear the vibration of a whispered song in the plantation fields. A song that helped to carry on, to bear the hard labour, contributing to preserve – despite the subhuman working conditions – an uncontrolled space for dignity. The language of songs and prayers is one that the master cannot understand; it is one that escapes supervised rules and codes. It is a language that contains a subtle revenge, a margin of resistance, a *seed of revolt* as George Lamming calls it:[2] *Won't you help to sing, these songs of freedom*.

There is a quite significant gap in terms of time between the two examples, but there is also a striking continuity. In different conditions of mental, moral or physical oppression, there is always a leak that escapes surveillance; there is always an interstice in which to act in order to insure one's survival. The chance of using the voice, even just to sing or pray, is already a means of resistance, frustrating forms of censorship or boundary. It may sound rather naïve, but in a time of highly technological control, voice, sounds, and songs can still circulate through a subversive chain of 'Chinese whisper'. And those who seek to contain all within a preordained scheme are – as always – disappointed by this leak, as well as by any possible *seed of revolt*.

I find the strategies deployed by both sides in this struggle for both power and/or survival extremely interesting. This is what this writing will deal precisely with: the clashes, the encounters and the intermingling of these two positions, together with their own strategies of affirmation and resistance. On the one hand, there are the representatives of authority, of those who invent rules and uphold stigmas and biases in order to minimise any possible space of subversion or intervention that exceeds their perfect grid. On the other hand, there is a constant microscopic movement that seeks to detect any small void that can be occupied and gradually enlarged so as to create a new space for independence.

This opposition can be thought of in terms of an agonistic encounter between two different creative strategies. In this sense, artistic expression – that is, the fruit of a creative process, whatever means or technique it utilises – is understood in dialectical and dynamic terms, thus we inevitably come back to my initial premise: namely, creativity and freedom of speech and thought are the bases upon which any form of independence is founded.

[2] George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Allison & Busby, 1984), 98.

Caliban / Cannibal

Caliban

To question our culture is
to question our very existence.
(Roberto Fernández Retamar)

One of Shakespeare's most inspiring characters is Caliban, the savage and deformed creature, who lives on the island where Prospero happens to be shipwrecked in *The Tempest* (1611). Prospero immediately after landing (and realising he is still alive) imposes his authority over Caliban's island with the aid of his magical books. As in most colonial narratives, Prospero behaves as if the island were empty; or better, as if it were there in order to be conquered and ruled by his superior system of laws. Peter Hulme, examining the first contact between Prospero and Caliban, highlights how closely it resembles the so-called New World narratives, that is to say the narrations of the very first encounters between the Europeans and the Amerindians.[3] Prospero feels *naturally* entitled to impose his power and patronage over the island and its *inhabitant*. When they first meet, Caliban and Prospero face each other as foreigners; to borrow Derrida's terminology, they become a question for each other – or better: Caliban becomes a question for Prospero, even though he is the one who comes from *outside*.[4]

For Derrida, the foreigner represents the embodiment of the question, or better: of a double question. The foreigner, in fact, is both the person who asks the first question and the person of whom the first question is asked. In these terms he lives a double condition: he *is* the question while at the same time *being in* question. This ambivalence is also projected on to the host, who enters himself the condition of being in question because of the puzzling presence of the foreigner/guest. In this way, the question of the foreigner or the

[3] Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 131.
[4] See Jacques Derrida, *Sull'ospitalità* (Milano: Baldini & Castoldi, 2000), 39 and following.

foreigner as the question is the moment in which what (who) is *outside* calls for a space and a recognition inside.

In *The Tempest* Prospero is actually the one who comes from the outside; it is he who has to be in the position of the guest, the one who has to be welcomed and recognised in Caliban's house/isle. He behaves, though, as if he were in the opposite condition; by reversing the logic of his interaction with Caliban, he becomes the guest who hosts the host. Prospero's self-awareness of his (racial, social, cultural) superiority allows him to do so. He behaves as if he were the host, the *pater familias*, entitled to rule the house/isle and to control the access at the gate. Caliban, therefore, becomes the unwanted guest that Prospero immediately turns into his hated, but indispensable slave.

So far, Caliban is not yet on stage. His first appearance in the play is, in fact, via his invisibility: Caliban is first *narrated*. He is introduced by the master's words. We do not immediately encounter Caliban, nevertheless we already have a second-hand knowledge of him. He is "A freckled whelp hag-born – not honoured with / A human shape" (1.2. 283-84). The series of adjectives that follow this first definition is no less ignominious: he is in turn a "tortoise" (1.2. 317); a "poisonous slave" (1.2. 319); or simply as dull as "earth" (1.2. 314), inherently unable of any abstraction.[5]

When Caliban comes on stage we have already heard that he is incapable of any kindness, but the way he faces Prospero is definitely not typical of a master/slave relationship. He answers back – he fears his master's magic power, certainly, but still does not seem to avert his eyes. His 'visiting card' is, in fact, a curse that he throws in Prospero's face. The dynamics of their interaction is unruly: there is something unusual going on.

Caliban's second move, immediately afterwards, is to reclaim his right of ownership of the island against the supposedly indisputable authority of Prospero. "This island is mine … / Which thou tak'st from me." (1.2. 331-32). It is, indeed, a strong and powerful claim. It is also a timeless one: reclaiming one's own expropriated land has a

[5] Throughout the whole play references to Caliban's monstrosity are recurrent, he is in fact also defined as "the monster of the isle with four legs" (2.2. 66); "a born devil" (4.1. 188); "a plain fish" (5.1. 266).

history perhaps as long as man. Caliban now lucidly draws the map of their first encounters; he reminds Prospero of how he welcomed him and his daughter Miranda, of his desire to share the beauties of the island with them, and of his goodwill towards them. This speech appears to be a smart strategy that, sharply juxtaposing the two different attitudes, highlights the exploitative operation with which Prospero has mastered Caliban's possessions. The old sorcerer steps back in a defensive manner, he refuses to engage with him on this subject; there is something disquieting in Caliban that disturbs him.

Peter Hulme highlighted how

> … Prospero is clearly disconcerted. His sole – somewhat hysterical – response consists of an indirect denial ('Thou most lying slave' (1.2. 346)) and a counter accusation of attempted rape ('Thou didst seek to violate / The honour of my child' (1.2. 349-50)), which together foreclose the exchange and are all that Prospero ever has to say about his early days on the island.[6]

Prospero's answer, though, is sly; he insinuates a suspicion in the audience. It is he, Caliban, who is full of ingratitude; so much so that he tried to violate the young, beautiful and pure Miranda, despite the hospitality his master gave him in his cell.[7] This accusation, though, hardly deviates Caliban from his present mode of thinking: he wants to state his position immediately, and once again questions the power that Prospero claims for himself:

> For I am all the subjects that you have,
> Which first was mine own king, and here you sty me
> In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
> The rest o' th' island
>
> (1.2. 341-44)

Again, in rapid succession, Caliban undermines the claims of

[6] Hulme, *Colonial Encounters,* 124.

[7] Very interesting is Hulme's argument about the role of Miranda's virginity and of Prospero's subject(s)'s gratitude/ingratitude in the construction of his psychology and political plans. Ibid., 126.

Prospero's legitimate sovereignty over the island. Through this act, Caliban shakes the whole self construction of Prospero's figure: as the foreigner of Derrida's book on hospitality, he questions the very notion of the paternal, Western authority of the *logos*.

In this exchange between Prospero and Caliban – an exchange that is constructed on a mixture of hate and necessity – the intriguing double meaning of the Latin word *hostis* also seems to emerge. It refers to both the *host* and the *enemy*, a duality that is, once again, embodied by (and projected on to) the foreigner.[8] Derrida unravels this contradictory relationship in the word *hostipitality,* namely the ambivalent, but inevitable fusion between *hospitality* and *hostility.* Further on in his book, Derrida highlights the collusion/collision of hospitality and power, of sovereignty and hospitality. The host chooses his guests, he decides who will be welcomed in his house. This very choice is an act of selection, an act of inclusion – and, therefore, an act of exclusion as well. Through his protest, Caliban questions the very authority (as well as the possibility of choosing and excluding) that Prospero claims for himself.

Are we confronting a legitimate authority? And again, what is a legitimate authority? Is there any such thing?

We know that each element owes its definition and complexity to its opposite. The master – we can hear the echo of Frantz Fanon – requires the existence of the slave in order to be recognised in his own position. Taking a confrontational stance, Caliban disrupts the fluidity of this binary logic. He enacts a moment of challenge and resistance, and enters the gap from which to elaborate the strategy of a counter discourse – which is, indeed, a displacing one, one that who is in a power position is not used to handling. "He confronts Prospero as a possibility; a challenge; and a defeat".[9] An antagonistic stance becomes the embodiment of a complex culture of survival, the response of the colonised (slaves / Calibans) to the homogenising violence of the colonisers (masters / Prosperos): the site of a counter culture of the imagination. The claim of an absolute and unquestionable authority is displayed here in all its ambivalence and ambiguity.

[8] Derrida, *Sull'ospitalità*, 64.

[9] Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile,* 108

Cannibal

Peter Hulme in *Colonial Encounters* broadly discusses the historical and ideological transformations of the word *cannibal.*[10] It was imported in the English language from Spanish, coming from the aboriginal American word *Carib* that was used to indicate the native populations of "the extended Caribbean".[11]

Shakespeare made up the word Caliban through the anagram of the term *cannibal* — which at the time was commonly intended to be yet another way to say 'man-eater'. From his very name we have a clear connotation of the character of Caliban: the name, in fact, embodies his monstrosity, his uncivilised attitude and subhuman condition, therefore his inability to *master* any articulate language or abstract knowledge. And this is exactly one of the tools that Prospero uses to reinforce his power: that is, his intellectual superiority deriving from his wider knowledge. He *knows*: it is as simple as that; and his authority is supported by the wisdom and the uncanny messages of his books. He is the one who taught Caliban all he knows: without his gift, Caliban would understand nothing. George Lamming sees this moment as one of the strongest bases for the affirmation of Prospero's authority: his gift, indeed, turns out to be Caliban's prison.

> Only the application of the Word to the darkness of Caliban's world could harness the beast which resides within this cannibal. This is the first important achievement of the colonising process. The gift of Language is the deepest and most delicate bond of involvement.[12]

By giving Caliban the gift of Language, Prospero provides him with access to the coordinates of History with a capital H: a History that does not speak about his life, but rather about a political system

[10] See especially the chapter "Columbus and the cannibals" also for the ways in which the term *cannibal* changed its neutral connotation to become synonym of the word anthropophagus. Hulme, *Colonial Encounters,* 13-43.

[11] That is the whole area of the actual Caribbean islands including Cuba, the Latin American countries on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean down South until the northern part of Brazil. Ibid., 4

[12] Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*, 109.

whose references are elsewhere. The doors of knowledge seem to be disclosed and locked at the same time: whatever Caliban will be able to grasp, it will be exclusively within the framework of Prospero's rule and horizon.[13] This assumption seems to have another side: authority comprehends only its own language, whatever falls outside of it either means nothing, simply does not make sense, or is a lie – to use Prospero's words. But Caliban actually appears to operate in a disruptive way *within* this official linguistic system. He is able, in fact, to express himself and articulate his sentences in a manner that carries him and us far beyond orthodox speech.

> You taught me language, and my profit on't
> Is I know now how to curse. The red plague rid you
> For learning me your language!
> (1.2. 362-64)

I doubt that Prospero in teaching Caliban how to speak (and therefore how to think, and vice versa) would have foreseen or wanted this sort of linguistic abuse. The patronising logic of the master who imposes his language, expressions and ways of feeling over his slave here seems to vacillate. Caliban is supposed to understand and use Prospero's language – that is, the only possible and acceptable one: the only one existing – as far as obeying and executing duties are concerned. Caliban is not entitled to a *creative* use of the language, even less to use it for any subversive reason. The perspective now appears to be quite different: it does not seem to be true that Caliban would know nothing without Prospero.

One of the advantages of a position of power, though, is being able to decide what reality is or what it must look like; this is accompanied by imposing it over its subjects as the only true and original one. Is Caliban the monstrous creature we have encountered from the very beginning through Prospero's eyes or is he the person we can glimpse at from his own unauthorised words?

He may be both.

[13] The importance of language as a discriminatory element of power in the construction of the relation to the foreigner is stressed throughout the whole argument of Derrida in his essay.

Calibanistic Thoughts

Again, an invisible leak emerges and cracks this apparently flawless system. What if we acknowledge that we are facing the incommensurability of two different intellectual systems? Following this line of thinking, it seems that Caliban is creating his own system of references within the strict code of his master's rules. Prospero, on the other hand, is somehow forced to recognise that the boundaries of his control and domain are not so tight; they are porous, in fact, and leave space for unwanted interventions.

What would *my* Caliban answer to this apparent entrapment? What would his words be if I were to write them?

I can imagine a radical thinking that would subvert any rigorously rationalising logic: its un-systematic procedure would disorder a consequential understanding of reality and give relevance to empathy as a fundamental element to create a minute and uncontrollable alternative knowledge. A musical visionary logic that will generate a multi-sensorial vision of the world. This would be a cannibalistic/calibanistic body of knowledge.

my belly is full of words and worlds,
i want to eat everything i encounter on my way:
people – time – space – history – memories
i wish to eat you, because i want to meet you
i want to be a cannibal of culture,

a barbaric cannibal of life:
ritual assumption, solemn digestion
evacuation of the excess, preservation of the extra-ordinary

my belly is full (fool?) and my brain is void:
a booming echo of lost ideas wandering in my stomach
whilst
my gastric juices are transforming and building
a new knowledge, an alimentary wisdom.

We move once more away from a hopeless subjugation and begin to wander in a new dimension. The initial moment of oppression is

transformed into a political exchange. The creative potentiality of a non-codified language out of control cracks the monolithic understanding of one, official, accepted knowledge. The mis-use of the universally recognised linguistic system generates an alternative line of thinking inside the system itself: a microscopic hole that mines the code from within. A form of *poetic* thinking becomes *poietic* of a *political* space, where cultural processes display and acknowledge their ambivalence, challenging a unified understanding of cultural and political relations.

To enter the binary opposition with an alternative proposal – in this case, with an-other logic – represents the first step in disrupting a uneven system. This process, according to Homi Bhabha,

> ... reveals the ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority and enables a form of subversion, founded on that uncertainty, that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the ground of intervention.[14]

The silenced voice thus obtains visibility (sound) and the two poles of a rigid dichotomy become instead two mobilised positions. The leak has become a space for intervention and stresses the ambiguity of any claim of cultural superiority: cultural systems, in fact, appear to be defined through this very process of differentiation. The logic seems now to be totally reversed. This small gap provides the premise to shift from a frontal clash to a fluid moment of transaction, of *negotiation* rather than *negation*: it is, indeed, the pre-condition for the articulation of cultural difference. It is, in fact, exactly at the meeting (or clashing) point of what now appears as two different cultures that culture itself emerges as a problem: now having to face its relativity and the displacement of any authoritarian claim.

[14] Homi Bhabha, "Signs taken for Wonders", in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 35.

On the name – Call me X.

CALIBAN	Just this: I've decided I'll be Caliban no longer.
PROSPERO	What kind of bilge is this? I don't understand.
CALIBAN	As you like; I'm telling you that, as of now, I'll no longer be answering to the name Caliban.
PROSPERO	And whence sprang this pearl?
CALIBAN	Well, because Caliban isn't my name. It's simple.
PROSPERO	It's mine, I suppose!
CALIBAN	It's the nickname your hatred attached to me, whose every utterance is an insult.
PROSPERO	My, how sensitive we've become! Well then, suggest another... I must call you something. What will it be? Cannibal would suit you well, but I'm sure you wouldn't want it! Let's see... Hannibal! Why not! They all like historical names!
CALIBAN	Call me X. That's best. Like a man without a name. Or, more precisely, a man whose name was stolen. You speak of history. Well that's history, known far and wide! Every time you'll call me that will remind me of the fundamental truth, that you stole everything from me, even my identity! Uhuru! *(He exists.)*[15]

In the Chinese tradition, the name is one of the most important things we carry with us: it is, in fact, tightly bonded with our essence and personality. To be called with a different name is a displacing experience if not the most vulgar of insults. It is as if someone has being deprived of something very valuable and fundamental. To embody another name is not just like wearing a mask, it is rather like undertaking a sort of separation from one's own self.

Césaire's Caliban seems to be very aware of this. If we read the above passage of *A Tempest* through this lens, the conflict appears even stronger. Here Caliban is the black rebellious slave: harsh in his answers and ferocious in his hate for the master. He is aware of the injustice of his condition and perfectly understands the arbitrary

[15] Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest* (London: Oberon Modern Plays, 2000), 21-2.

claims of Prospero's authority. Giving Caliban his name, Prospero pushes further "the gift" of Language offered; in this way, the master completely takes over his slave: he totally possesses him since he is the owner of his name.

We are at the opposite edge of what Derrida defines as "the absolute other", that is the paradoxical condition of total hospitality where there is no need for the name to be asked as the seal of the pact of hospitality. Here the relation seems to be of *absolute hostility* where the name is – as a tool of total domination and refusal – not even asked, but directly given.

Naming is the most authoritative act that a man performs. From the ancient days when God in Eden entitles Adam to name what surrounds him, man through this gesture imposes his power over the world. It is this very action that brings the world into life, that makes things really exist: without a name, in fact, they are not yet. The act of naming is also a central moment in Western subjectivity: this is the act through which the subject starts to exist. By naming, the subject defines and differentiates what is radically other as such; in this way, he creates his space and relevance on a different superior level form anything else. The act of imposing a name is the performative moment in which the subject comes into being as an independent individual by stating his own position together with his authorship/authority on the outside world.

The act of the master who names his slave appears, therefore, both as the foundational act of the master himself and as a deep gesture of violence and violation. Only in this moment, through the master's words, does the slave somehow start to exist. He enters a new dimension, he starts a different life. Nevertheless he is no longer (has he ever been?) a person, he is a new reality under the master's control and domain.

Being given a name, as inevitable consequence, also deprives the slave of the possibility of being himself able to name – that is, to have power and control over what surrounds him. Yet if someone is not allowed to name, then that person is incapable of differentiating. It is in this sense that George Lamming defines Caliban "a condition" rather than a person, for he is not able to make distinctions.[16] The

[16] Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*, 111.

master has already given the code by which to read reality: now it has merely to be applied. Caliban-as-a-condition has no need to discern; Prospero has already given him what he needs: namely, the words to answer to his requests. Caliban is not supposed to have any other word beyond obedience. He is not allowed to name and therefore to position himself in the world, calling it with his own expressions.

Furthermore he has been given a name that constantly speaks about his subjugation. His name, or better the name given by the master, is like a scar that reminds him of his loss – of his master's theft, following the words of Cesaire's Caliban. The process of becoming someone else's name blinds a person to his own image: it is as if there were no image reflected in a mirror, for there is no Self to be recognised and called with its proper name. A person with no image and no name does not exist, therefore there is no hi-story to be told. Denying Caliban his own name, Prospero pushes him in the grey area of invisibility: Caliban, that is Prospero's name (or possession), seems to be condemned to exist solely in the space of his master's voice and code.

However, the connotation that Césaire gives of Caliban in his *A Tempest* is quite a different one. Caliban questions Prospero's authority of defining him, thereby confining and encapsulating him in a false image of himself.[17] Caliban – whom, at this point, has become *X* and therefore not any longer Prospero's name – is on the other side of that language: he has suffered its effects, but now he *knows*. He has become aware of the subjection he was undergoing. At the end of the play, he can see Prospero clearly and *name* his real nature.

> Prospero, you're a great illusionist:
> you know all about lies.
> And you lied to me so much,
> lied about the world, lied about yourself
> that you have ended up by imposing on me

[17] We shall see further on how the imposition of a certain kind of self-understanding and self-definition through a subtle but violent process is painfully present in Brathwaite's comments on Jamaican colonial experience.

> an image of myself:
> underdeveloped, in your words,
>
> incompetent,
> that's how you forced me to see myself,
> and I hate that image! And it is false!
> But now I know you, you old cancer,
> and I also know myself!
>
> (3.5)[18]

In-visibility

The Caribbean Caliban of Cèsaire's *A Tempest* leads to the last step in this journey and to the exploration of another space of cultural difference and resistance.

We have so far acknowledged how the systematic denial of free expression and the continuous attempt to discredit the dignity (sometimes even to question the very existence) of any linguistic system outside the codes imposed by the master cause the impossibility to produce a free self-representation together with the inability to clearly locate one's self in the world. A similar condition has been experienced by Creole peoples in the Caribbean. They have had to face the prejudice of those who did not recognise Creole as a proper language. Edward Kamau Brathwaite highlights how this threat has come from the inside as well as from the outside: the Caribbean educational system, for example, has contributed to this situation by imposing the colonial language and culture as the only official one.[19] One of the consequences of this process is that most of

[18] Césaire, *A Tempest*, 58.

[19] Very interesting, in this sense, is Brathwaite's argument on the difficult task to develop a local sensitivity through an alien frame of cultural and linguistic references. He says that Jamaican people end up by understanding and describing a snowfall better than the hurricane. This contradiction creates a fracture between feelings, experience and expression. "This is why there were (are?) Caribbean children who … wrote 'the snow was falling on canefields' trying to have both cultures at the same time." Edward Kamau

the cultural and literary production of the local artists so far has been mainly generated in French or English.[20]

Creole was (and often still is) considered an instrumental form of communication, useful only for the mean, practical activities of everyday life. The shadow of Prospero returns: the language of knowledge remains that of the master. Creole, however, is the language of experience; the language through which the world is discovered and understood. The denial of any ability of abstraction, and therefore the denial of its dignity as a proper language, determined the definition of Creole as simply a dialect.

This attitude has obviously generated a sort of alienation, a detachment from one's own roots and culture that derives from the incapability to integrate the local, oral tradition in the process of reshaping a new cultural identity[21]. This disconnection operates in a way that inhibits the search for memory beyond the obscure, false

Brathwaite "Nation Language", in Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader,* 310-11.

[20] Creole has both a French-based and an English-based tradition in relation to the colonial powers different areas have been subjected to. Creole is spoken by some millions of people all over the world (seven million only in Haiti). Creole intellectuals – both from English-speaking and French-speaking countries – are struggling for their traditions to be acknowledged both as proper languages (rather than as pidgins or dialects) and as independent cultural heritages, as well as to obtain a space of recognition and expression in the international cultural panorama. The literary production, in areas where Creole was the daily spoken language, has been so far mainly in the language inherited by the colonial period. Creole has been, therefore, for long only a spoken language without a written tradition. One of the challenges of Creole writers, and artists in general, is to create a vocabulary and a code through which Creole peoples can become not only listeners, but also readers (and writers themselves) in their own language. This would be the first and fundamental step to recuperate and rediscover a vision of the world (and of *their* world) free from the external mediation of an imposed language.

[21] Okwui Enwezor and the co-curators of Documenta11 organised - as one of the central moments in the conception of the exhibition – a series of four platforms in different parts of the world, in order to discuss and understand the bases on which postcolonial world is founded. The third of these platforms was about *Créolité and Creolization,* it took place in January 2002 in St. Lucia in the Caribbean. It was conceived as a workshop where prominent scholars – coming from both a French-based and an English-based cultural tradition – met and debated the questions related to the recognition of the dignity of Creole as a proper language, as well as the idea of *Créolité* as a lens through which we can understand the complexity of contemporary cultural relations.

memory of colonial history. The first important step for Caribbean artists and intellectuals has been, in fact, to recuperate the dimension of *orality*, as the Creole mode of understanding the world.

> The poetry, the culture itself, exists not in a dictionary but in the tradition of the spoken word. It is based as much on sound as it is on song. That is to say, the noise that it makes is part of the meaning and if you ignore the noise … then you lose part of the meaning.[22]

This noise/sound/meaning is the means to give voice and representation to those who were long silenced in contrast to an imposed, fake idea of Caribbean-ness. Edward Kamau Brathwaite, elsewhere, speaks about the "obscure force" that modelled from within Jamaican society, imposing on it an image of itself that soon people started to believe in. This violent process, though, was a two-way one: he describes this moment of friction in creative terms, and calls it *creolization*: "a way of seeing the society, not in terms of white and black, master and slave, in separate nuclear units, but as contributory parts of a whole."[23]

A creole vision of the world becomes an alternative strategy to the power play that pushes the former subject of the colonial system to the margins of the postcolonial world. Okwui Enwezor in his introduction to Documenta11-Platform3 states that "one of the salutary elements of creolness is its inversive logic, that is, its ability to invert and convert the logic of hegemonic sphere into the symbolic capital of cultural difference."[24] Artists, writers, and intellectuals occupy a fundamental position in this sense: for they articulate the space for the recognition of an *oraliture* – to use Edouard Glissant's term – in opposition to the blueprint of the master's *literature.* Artists are asked through their works to promote and keep alive an "ethics of vigilance"; that is to say, their activity has to mark a path towards

[22] Brathwaite, "Nation Language", 311-12.

[23] Brathwaite, "Creolization in Jamaica", in Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader,* 203-4.

[24] Okwui Enwezor et al., Documenta1_Platform3 *Créolité and Creolization* (Introductory Brochure), 4.

visibility and has to help the construction of the outside world through the means of an interior vision.[25] Against the subtle form of oppression that puts the Creole Caribbean subject (as happened to Caliban) in the position of being told or of expressing her/himself in a language that is foreign to the intimacy of her/his thoughts, the Creole artist searches for a hybrid and distinctive imagery that models her/his own way of experiencing and expressing life and allows her/his people a non mediated and creative self-representation.

Visions from the inside

Creolization takes the shape of a civilisation in progress. It is a question to be lived in the very process of its making.[26] In the book *In praise of Creoleness,* Créolité is defined as an open specificity, as what "opposes to Universality the great opportunity of a world diffracted, but recomposed, the conscious harmonization of preserved diversities."[27] It is an intimate attitude, a way of building one's own consciousness of the outer reality using her/his own values and expressions, through the means of an internal observation. It is the choice to conquer the realm of the unspeakable, of an abstract, creative articulation that allows to establish "a new look capable of taking away our nature from the secondary or peripheral edge so as to place it again at the center of ourselves."[28]

Acknowledging the risks of essentialist claims, the challenge of

[25] Ibid., 2.

[26] The point is not to give a static reading of cultural phenomena through the denial of the historical complexity and stratifications that contributed to their very creation. In other words, it is not to deny the encounter between Prospero and Caliban, so as to recuperate a pure and original image of the latter without the interferences of Prospero's domination. It would be an ideological interpretation that does not do justice to the complex and tough set of experiences Caliban has undergone. The challenge is, instead, to read through the layers that constitute such an encounter in order to recognise the persistence, the contaminations and the transformations which create the totality of a person or of a cultural experience.

[27] Jean Bernabé, Patrik Chamoiseau, Raphael Confinant, *In Praise of Creoleness* (Paris: Édition Gallimard, 1989), 88.

[28] Ibid. , 85.

the process of creolization is to extract from a long silence, the words-sounds-whispers-noises of a culture condemned to mere exteriority.

> We have seen the world through the filter of western values and our foundation was 'exoticized' by the French vision we had to adopt. It is a terrible condition to perceive one's interior architecture, one's world, the instants of one's days, one's own values with the eyes of the other. All along overdetermined, in history, in thoughts, in daily life, in ideals (even ideals of progress), caught in the trick of cultural dependence, of political dependence, of economic dependence, we were deported out of ourselves at every moment of our scriptural life.[29]

Therefore, the possibility of an independent expression, free to articulate its own modulation, is not simply a linguistic concern. It is rather a complex structure that reveals a fundamentally politicised discourse.

As Pearlette Louisy stressed in the paper she gave in Documenta11_Platform3, a nation that is deprived of its indigenous expression cannot find its own original way for emancipation and development, not only at the level of culture, but also in terms of social, political and economic growth. The political radicalism of such a claim does not concern only the limits of the nation state.

In the contemporary diasporic world, the re-appropriation of one's own inner expression, of the sounds of one's own land, becomes the very motherland for those who are exiled or live far from their homes. At the same time, this creole mobilised motherland, displaced and un-rooted, becomes the ground for a productive process of transformation: the ground on which Caliban moves in his appropriation and translation.

In the three screens film installation titled *Paradise Omeros* (2002), Isaac Julien operates an allegorical, visual exploration of this very issue. It is a non narrative story that connects the two edges of a migration; it unfolds the relationships between two different islands – St. Lucia and England – from the intimate point of view of a teenage

[29] Ibid., 76.

boy. The piece puts together the visions and the sounds of two faraway experiences that combine to create the multi-dimensional heritage of a diasporic subject. *Paradise Omeros*

> … tries to reveal the poetic structures of a feeling of a certain kind of 'creoleness', to transfigure the historical processes of globalization onto the personal sphere where they come to inhabit the imagination and the body of the postcolonial subject.[30]

The images in the screens blur into one another; at times they are multiplied; in other passages they establish a dialogue with each other: a puzzling coexistence of present and past, reality and memory. The historical and the personal sphere overlap, filtered by the individual's point of view. The colours are sharp and totally saturated, the beauty of the images recalls the idea of Paradise(s): the Caribbean island of St. Lucia as the exotic paradise of the tourist; London as the emblem of the promised paradise of the West; flashbacks and sounds of the imagined paradise of a lost motherland. Through the combination of these different visions, the viewer experiences a poetic and vertiginous amount of images and sensations that "both prepares the spectator for a kind of loss of innocence and explores the ambivalent position that the black European subject occupies in the West."[31]

Derek Walcott in his poem "The Schooner *Flight*" highlights the complexity and the painful dimension inherent to this stratification; he writes

> I had a sound colonial education,
> I have Dutch, nigger, and English in me,
> and either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation.

And later:

[30] Isaac Julien, *Paradise Omeros,* in Enwezor et al., Documenta1_Platform5: Exhibition (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2002), 572.
[31] Ibid.

> …
> I had no nation now but the imagination.
> After the white man, the niggers didn't want me
> when the power swing to their side.
> The first chain my hands and apologize, "History";
> the next said I wasn't black enough for their pride.[32]

Speaking from the hybrid non place of the endless flow of variation, the Creole voice claims for a space that is defined by presence and affirmation rather than by erasure and negation. In this way, the project of creolization inscribes itself in the anti-colonial struggle by liberating the local voice, its literature and visual imagery, formerly belittled by the coloniser.

The re-appropriation of an exploded singularity through the Creole voice propels us into a polyphonic vertigo. From Caliban to Bob Marley's *Redemption Songs*: the re-construction and re-appropriation of a denied voice, the possibility to speak and sing of one's dreams in the very language in which they have been dreamt, provides the very tissue of liberation and self-emancipation. Following the musical metaphor I wish to conclude by subscribing to the terminology that Annie Paul employed in St. Lucia. In the struggle for political, social, economical, cultural liberation the *sound system* of one's own innermost and uncontrolled words expresses people's uneasiness, discontent, joy, anger in full and innovative terms against the *unsound system* of the oppressive laws of any unequal power.

> We have nothing but the youth of our eyes, the intuition of our Creoleness which is supposed at every moment to invent every move.[33]

[32] Derek Walcott, *Mappa del nuovo mondo* (Milano: Adelphi, 1992).
[33] Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confinant, *Creoleness*, 102.

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VISITATIONS AND RE- VISITATIONS

> [illegible] the present, [illegible] to come [illegible] finally, for something new to happen, and for thinking always to happen in thought [*pour qu'arrive enfin quelque chose de nouveau, pour que penser toujours arrive à la pensée*]. Thought thinks its own history (the past), but in order to free itself from what it thinks (the present), and to be able, finally, to "think otherwise" (the future).
>
> (Gilles Deleuze)

This paper is structured around the notion of 'translation', perceived and analysed in terms of the creative process of "re-writing" as it emerges from Carmelo Bene's *Macbeth Horror Suite*.[1] My analysis will not be an attempt at an academic, critical enquiry; in other terms, it will not try to understand what this translation says of the original; on the contrary, it will be a sort of re-reading, meaning by this what Deleuze would have considered as "style".[2] In particular, my

[1] Carmelo Bene, "Macbeth Horror Suite", in *Opere con l'Autografo d'un ritratto* (Milano: R.C.S. Libri & Grandi Opere, 1995). Hereafter quoted as *MHS* with indication of page in the text.

[2] In his recent book on *Deleuze and Language* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2002), 221, J. Lecercle explains Deleuze's notion of 'style': "style is what makes you a stranger in your own language, what opens up for you, as speaker or writer, the lines of flight that will

Lucia Ielpo

Carmelo Bene's *Macbeth Horror Suite*: An Unexpected Translation

> To think the past against the present, to resist the present, not for a return but "in favour, I hope, of a time to come" (Nietzsche): this means making the past active ..., in order, finally, for something new to happen, and for thinking always to happen in thought [*pour qu'arrive enfin quelque chose de nouveau, pour que penser, toujours, arrive a' la pensée*]. Thought thinks its own history (the past), but in order to free itself from what it thinks (the present), and to be able, finally, to "think otherwise" (the future).
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reflection will prove to have many entrances or points of departure allowing several possible analyses: if my object is far from providing a straight, representative or even interpretative perspective, these entrances are 'oblique gazes' expressing different disciplinary approaches to the notions of translation and writing, finding in them a possible solution of proximity, even though they remain 'different' in their individual features.

The 'line of flight' enabling the crossing of these 'different' approaches is represented by the two major focuses of my re-reading: Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida. Deleuze will provide the main theoretical background with his concept of "minor literature".[3] If a minor literature is the result of a process of 'becoming-minor' produced within a major literature, I will try to show to what extent and with what tools a major literature is allowed to become 'minor'. The tool with which this process can be observed is the opening channel of a 'minor' process, its 'translative practice': it is in this context that Derrida's notion of hospitality will help me discover and define, to a certain extent, the nature of this opening as a space of hospitality enabling radical ruptures, passages, and new beginnings.

Macbeth Horror Suite: an example of minor literature

Why is *Macbeth Horror Suite* an example of 'minor literature'? At first, the answer appears easy: Bene's re-writing incarnates, somewhat 'naturally', the referential features of a 'minor process': 1) linguistic deterritorialization; 2) political commitment; 3) communal value.

The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblages of the enunciation. We might as well say that minor no longer designates

allow thought to visit your utterance". I use this concept here to refer to the minor literature as a stylistic impersonal experiment, whose object is to reach collective and political goals.

[3] Cf. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Terry Cochran (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

specific literature but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature.[4]

In their *Kafka,* Deleuze and Guattari focus on the fact that a 'minor literature' is not the cultural 'product' placed in a marginal position; on the contrary, it flourishes within the 'major literature' as its intrinsic deconstructive opposite, its 'inside-out' designating the ruined frame of the major literature's ethics. *MHS* might be appropriately considered the internal rupture of the Shakespearean text, its 'controcanto' incarnating a 'becoming-fragment' movement at the heart of the major language.[5] Rather than as a coherent and reliable linguistic structure, Bene's re-writing's 'visceral irruption' emerges from the depth of the body as a suffocating, aborted and stammering whisper:

> DUNCAN (Vento, belati, muggiti, latrati, canto di galli)
> (controcampo sonoro dei verso in play-back)
> Chicchirichì Chicchirichiii
> Cri cri Cri Cri cra Cra Mbee Mbee
> Bau Bau Bau Bau
> Rrrmarrauuu Rrrmarrauuu
> STREGHE (Vento e suoni amplificati. Dizione Metallica)
> Spersa l'orgia l'orgia spersa
> La battaglia vinta e persa
> Cri Cri Cra Cra Cra
> (risate intermittenti al contatto di un cencio).[6]

[4] Ibid., 17.

[5] The opening monologue of the play is a puzzling mixture of onomatopeic and artificial sounds produced technically with sonorous devices. This passage is one of the most ironical, desecrating moments of Bene's performance; the tragic atmosphere of the original Shakespearean drama is re-created with an instrumental, phonic counterpart. The stress on the carnal body reduces the more abstract and tragic pathos of the original scene. The shift from one character to another (Bene incarnates all the characters, apart from Lady Macbeth) is performed thanks to a change of costume. The suggestion comes from Réda Bensmaia who undermines any grandiose attempt at linguistic subversion; he insists, rather, on the urgency of using pre-existing models by adopting 'new tools' in order to enhance a revolutionary tactic of linguistic transformation.

[6] *MHS*, 1207.

As the passage shows (a sonorous version would have been much more incisive, of course), language has been taken to the threshold of its expressive potentialities; words have been carried to the limit where they no longer correspond to De Saussure's block of signifier and signified. The 'language of words' has been transformed into a 'language of voices' implying a 'vanishing of words': the collapse produces an effect of estrangement to the extent that words deterritorialize into voices 'becoming-animals'. This particular form of deterritorialization expresses the necessity of escaping 'language'; indeed, every becoming aims at such an 'outside of discourse'. This process's signifying feature is that it relates to an almost impersonal becoming (every becoming is impersonal), not having a definite speaker and not showing the remotest shadow of signification:

> ROSSE: (erutta e orina; va verso l'armadio dove indossa un corpetto e una pelliccia)
> Dio salvi il re
> DUNCAN: Da dove vieni
> ROSSE: (Musica villereccia in progressione che si conclude con l'ultima battuta. Dizione strozzata e monosillabica).[7]

Onomatopoeic and visceral sounds cross, constructing, as a consequence, a 'multiple, choral speech' that resembles Barthes' *bruissement de la langue*. What is obtained is a collapse of the author's and the character's subjective 'I'. The amputation of the subject as the marker of power is dictated by the writing's need to be engaged, within a political arena, in the struggle for the affirmation of 'a people', the 'minor people'. As Deleuze states, "to write is to resist" and, by resisting, to end every imperialistic power. In this sense, literature must contribute to the creation of a people; or at least, it must address a "people that is lacking":

> It is literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of scepticism, and if the writer is in the margins or completely outside of his or her community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility

[7] Ibid., 1208.

> to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility.[8]

The point is not to create another 'major language' that suppresses and substitutes colonial language or the language of power; the intent is to deterritorialize that same language without replacing it. Bene achieves such a communal apparatus by a range of technical devices: playbacks, amplifications, and vocal crossings. His criteria are directed at prioritising 'expression' over 'content', if only because it is through the changing of 'forms' that a language can become revolutionary 'minor'. What Bene proves here - and Deleuze assumes this point as a priority for his own thought - is that a real oppositional writing refuses the transformation of content, which still represents a vector of power, while addressing an 'expressive' change. New tools can articulate this process of becoming even while working within a major literature frame.

In Bene's text, the lines I have referred to are being spoken with the use of playback - the voice sounds doubled, as if other external voices were involved within a movement of repetition; the vocal interference gives rise to an artificial nuance by contributing to a noisy mixture of unutterable sounds. Indeed, the performance seems to be closer to delirium than to a punctual linguistic expression. In addition, the vocal amplification works like a prosthesis that expands the frames of the words as a mechanism that emphasises visibility in the form of 'a vision of a shadow'. In the crime-scene, it is precisely the crossing of voices that is put on stage: Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's voices intermingle, producing two interconnected, even though independent, speeches. An orgasmic intensity crosses the characters' voice by providing an ironic counterpart to the original pathos of the scene.

All the devices *MHS* deploys contribute to a writing that, with Deleuze, I would define as 'rhizomatic' - it moves along lines of variations and assemblages by providing its language with a sort of 'agrammaticality', which is not subjected to any 'subject' but affects the summoning of 'a people', its 'expression':

[8] Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 17.

> The artist or philosopher is quite incapable of creating a people, each can only summon it with all his strength. A people can only be created in abominable sufferings, and it cannot be concerned any more with art or philosophy. But books of philosophy and works of art also contain their sum of unimaginable sufferings that forewarn of the advent of a people. They have resistance in common - their resistance to death, to servitude, to the intolerable, to shame, and to the present.[9]

The 'foreign language' towards which we never cease returning:

> How many people today live in a language that is not their own? Or no longer, or not yet, even know their own and know poorly the major language that they are forced to serve? This is the problem of immigrants, and especially of their children, the problem of minorities, the problem of minor literature, but also a problem for all of us [...] How to become a nomad and an immigrant and a gypsy in relation to one's own language?[10]

If I have succeeded in hinting at how a minor practice implies a political project whose target is to deconstruct the major literature's representational power, my result is the recognition of a rhizomatic language that challenges any 'organic narration', i.e. all writing based on principles of linearity and hierarchy, or on specific systems of judgement. The revolutionary aspect of such a rhizome is that it erases the traditional parameters of 'beginning' and 'end'; it moves against every 'either/or' structure sprouting in a different fashion from the 'middle'. *MHS* is always 'unexpected', as if coming from an 'in-betweeness'; the irruption of Verdi's music in the core of the porter scene, or the sonorous laughter breaking the sequence of words, are only some of the rhizomatic devices used by Bene:

> PORTIERE (tra musiche verdiane, rintocchi, rutti e rumori di scena)
> Bussa bussa Bussa bussa Portiere dell'Inferno Bussa Bussa L'inferno del Portiere è un bel chiavare Toc toc toc Tocca staffare Chi èèèèèè

[9] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Verso, 1994), 110.
[10] Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 19.

> Entra entra opportunista Spero Che s'è portato bonascorta de' fazzoletti Qui c'è da sudare Toc toc toc [.] Il bere provoca tre cose Che sono le tre cose Per la Madonna Naso rosso Sonno e Orina Quanto all'UCCELLO Lo provoca e non provoca [.] Perché il vino è nemico di
> Quell'affare che prima te lo illude e sul più bello te lo
> Butta giù.[11]

The shift from one vocal intensity to another, even from one specific genre to another (comedy, melodrama, tragedy), helps create the text's 'line of flight' - as Deleuze would call it. The becoming of the voice reinforces the idea of an 'impersonal' writing, which is not submitted, to any static order or status. To use again a Deleuzian terminology, this movement of radical a-subjectivity could go as far as 'becoming-imperceptible' - consider the last part of the play showing Macbeth covering his head with a veil: the revolutionary gesture challenges all principles of 'full presence' or visibility, staging the triumph of 'it' as a third impersonal intensity.

Quite obviously these 'becomings' designate the sort of 'anti-linguistic' position both Bene and Deleuze have been holding in their philosophies, in their respectively different contexts. This is why Deleuze invokes a 'becoming multilingual' society; it is the reason why Bene obtains, as his best reward, 'a linguistic oblivion' from his own performance. Partly in accordance with Foucault, somehow paraphrasing him, they both identify the mark of power in verbal language: their claim is that words have been invented by a political elite, and that peoples have been forced to speak a language that was not 'their own'. As Derrida recognises, language produces the problematic and hybrid feeling of 'belonging and not-belonging': "the only language that we speak… yet this language is not ours".[12] It is the 'fatal' destiny shared by many minor writers and every post-colonial literature; it is one of the main issues cultivated by feminist writing, and by all writers feeling dispossessed, foreign 'even to themselves':

[11] *MHS*, 1221-1222.
[12] Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 8.

> Is language in possession, ever a possessing or possessed possession? Possessed or possessing in exclusive possession, like a piece of personal property? What of this being-at home (*être-chez-soi*) in language toward which we never cease returning?[13]

In response to such questions, Deleuze and Bene theorise a language that paradoxically has the force to say 'no' by refusing to pass through the linguistic path it has been forced to engage with. But even 'silence' has become impossible - remember William Burroughs stating: "try to achieve even ten seconds of inner silence, and you will encounter a resistance organism that will force you to speak".[14] Deleuze and Bene invent a language closer to a "stammering", the indication of a "becoming-foreign" as a reaction against all imperialism of language. In a subversion of all rational pronouncements, Bene speaks of an 'uncanny language' that tries to 'forget language'.[15]

The plane of hospitality: an 'uncanny' encounter

The encounter I'm referring to occurs between the two poles of my analysis: tradition and translation. In his essay *Of Hospitality*, Derrida writes that unconditioned hospitality 'happens', an event which is not asking for permission, a visitor who arrives without being invited or asked to prove his/her identity.[16] It is the arrival of the stranger who questions the Law of the Father/Host/Master. I will try to show the possible margin of such hospitality that starts with a 'fragmented, whispering, foreign voice'. Walter Benjamin's notion of *jetztzeit* – the relationship between past and present, the link between past and future – alludes to the necessity of re-discovering and re-writing History by connecting it to the present. This is the important moment that allows History itself to be 'verified' and 'understood', even though within a 'certain' margin of possibility. It is the movement of translation that allows such a practise of re-writing, that is, of

[13] Ibid., 17.
[14] S. W. Burroughs, *The Ticket that Exploded* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1968), 49.
[15] Interview, broadcast by Rai 2 in 1996.
[16] Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

changing the frozen and isolated segment of past history into a lived experience of the 'multiple'. Translation represents the opening of hospitality enabling the strange and foreign language to deterritorialize History – as if erasing the 'Name' of history itself – by forgetting it and by re-establishing a sort of Tower of Babel, the original undistinguished chaos/chora.

What is hospitality if not this process of becoming minor and of stammering? It is by forgetting our identity (if we really have one) that we can accept the other, beyond any presumptuous idea of 'understanding' or even 'representing' it. The body follows the same process of becoming-minor or -handicapped, playing a vital role in the realisation of translating-writing. In *MHS* the body is doomed to movements which are impossible, prevented or marked by failure, if only because the performance is a repetition of gestures that either describe a state of paralysis, or mark the body in its extreme sedentary condition. Macbeth's armour prevents him from making love or simply from moving – his movements echo the figure of the hedgehog described by Derrida in "Cos'è la poesia?": "It blinds itself. Rolled up in a ball, prickly with spines, vulnerable and dangerous, calculating and ill adapted…".[17] Macbeth's handicapped-body is a metallic prosthesis that, by putting the body in a condition of excess and by redoubling its external and apparent force, underlines its internal fragility, i.e. the lack of natural defence. As for language, the idea of prosthesis (amplification) works in terms of reduction as an unprogressive movement.

In the performance, the voice and language are also marked by a sense of loss and dizziness. The voice, for example, records its (aphasic) loss to re-emerge through an emphasised amplification that transforms it into a shout. The alternating process defines a variation of intensities: that is, a process of becoming. By the same token, the body's gestures are emphasised, reduced and alternated into a continuum that breaks without stopping. These gestures are not inscribed within an opposition; they simply coexist. In Bene's theatre, very few oppositional structures are to be seen; as Deleuze suggests, the work on variation opposes all

[17] Derrida, "Che cos'è la poesia?", in *Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 233.

conflicts, all forms of theatre based on power and force. *MHS* develops through relations of variation that eliminate the 'masters': Bene/Macbeth, dressing and undressing, moving without moving, seems to illustrate the notion of *piétiner* – a verb coming from *piéter* (to march) and describing the tension of moving while in a condition of stasis. The two movements are intermingled: they paradoxically coexist, eluding all oppositional dichotomies.

The paradoxical coexistence of oppositions covers the whole structure of the play: the tension between tragedy and comedy, or between pain and laughter, aims at redefining the space of theatre beyond classifying schemes or genres. The becoming-minor process is not interested in conflicts. Neither is Bene; as Deleuze points out, conflicts result from a normalizing project typical of master representations: they are an already institutionalized 'product', one that is subjected to a drastic purification, and then performed in an arrangement always already controlled by the institution.

Gestures are put in a condition of repetition: changing dress and armour signals a change of mood and identity. One could say that the armour and the dress are the 'identity', because nothing exists beyond them: they don't accomplish a referential function. Instead, they produce a sort of veiling of an identity that is absent because there is no real subject concealed behind it. It is not a coincidence that Bene repeatedly emphasises the function of the 'actorial machine'.

The metastasis body: 'infinite possibilities, creative chances'

The body incarnates this process of self-conscious annihilation or, at least, the movement of 'deterritorialization'; that is, the collapse of any sense of territory and belonging. It becomes a 'corrupted place' where no logic is allowed. It expresses a cerebral 'short-circuit' by escaping (as with language) any possibility of representation. It is a metastasis body or 'unproductive body' unable to work efficiently, placing itself in a space of excess and *dépense*, beyond production or exchange value; it is a 'schizophrenic body' in that it is 'pure sign', empty, unintelligible, arbitrary and seductive. Lacking subjectivity and sense, it is also doomed to pure exteriority. Being deprived of internal space, it is then impossible for it to be interpreted, decodified

or even represented – the irreversible impossibility of interpretation is due to the fact that it is a disorganised and useless machine that shows no secret or interiority to be explored and subjected to 'knowledge'.

In *MHS* the striking presence of blood on stage participates in this 'performance' of pure exteriority. Blood is only apparently connected with crime; rather, it is a fiction that appears and disappears from bandages and skin with no justified reason.[18] The porter-scene too is deprived of its original, frightening power; the beat of the stick on the stage is an exercise in 'self-frightening', which alludes to the frivolous fiction of the murdering act:

> The problem is not so much that of a writing of fragmentation. It is rather that of swiftness and decelerations: not writing slowly or swiftly, but rather such that writing itself, and everything else, should be the production of velocities and slownesses between particles. No form can resist it, no character or subject can survive in it.[19]

The movement of Bene's translation is double-faced, aiming at a principle of hybridisation and multiplicity that challenges all binary dichotomies. The opening movement linking past and present, tradition and innovation, is the real dictate of a translating process. I would risk indicating Derrida's concept of 'supplement' as the most suitable figure for translation – the supplement is what cannot "be included within philosophical (binary) oppositions, it deconstructs binary oppositions without ever constituting a third term; the supplement is neither a plus nor a minus, neither an outside not the complement of an inside, neither accident nor essence".[20] Paraphrasing Derrida in the context of the need for memory in a general discourse on hospitality, I would state that translation needs to be worked on within the field of tradition – but how

[18] The opening scene introduces Macbeth in the act of unrolling a bandage from his arm. Blood, visibly present on the bandage, gradually disappears: the skin shows no sign of suffering or spots of blood; here the crime is only acted through words. A wonderful, unexpected crescendo of Verdi's music separates Bene's porter scene from the original scene.

[19] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 329.

[20] Derrida, *Positions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 43.

can it avoid being enmeshed in its forms? The answer can be found in Derrida's words when he states that this writing "both marks and goes back over its mark with an undecidable stroke. This double mark escapes the pertinence or authority of truth".[21] In fact, this dis-rupture is not an event but what 'writes/is written'.

As it emerges from Niranjana's analysis of translation, the lines quoted establish a connection with the notion of citation-quotation introduced by Benjamin.[22] This practice enables a radical re-writing of the past. As Benjamin suggests, the source text 'asks for', desires, translation. Indeed, the past originates from the future because history is not regarded in terms of isolated segments of time but as a permanent flow or becoming. The text 'becomes' only when translated; its life depends on its 'after life'. This provides the reading of history with a different perspective: historical facts or events are not seen as given, or finished in themselves. They are interpreted on the basis of the effects they have produced in the present or future. This explains why history (I would say culture, broadly speaking) can never be fully represented with transparency and coherence - its analysis is a work in progress, ad infinitum.

At the end of my journey along the intrinsic movement of translation, the only 'critical' result worth being considered is that writing should be creativity. It is for this reason that *MHS* seems to incarnate an incommensurable potential: while representing a project of deconstruction of a major text, it struggles to actualise an 'affirmative plane of immanence', a vital process capable of creating new concepts. This writing addresses the past in order to move on then to the future by celebrating the 'advent' of something new. It is our only way out: 'infinite possibilities, creative chances'.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Cf. T. Niranjana, *Siting Translation. History, Post-structualism and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

Alessandra Masolini

Romea's Roaming and Giulietto's Swing: (Ho)staging Shakespeare on a Screen

As Philip Armstrong has pointed out, *Romeo and Juliet* has become "the crucial text in the popular dissemination of a psychoanalysed Shakespeare at the end of the twentieth century", and for that reason recent filmic adaptations of the tragedy deserve particular attention.[1] The Italian film *Sud Side Stori* (2000) by the director Roberta Torre is not included among those analysed in the last chapter of Armstrong's *Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis* – a critical essay on movies produced in the second half of the 1990s – but is a good example of the popularization and psychoanalysing of Shakespeare about which the author writes.[2]

My analysis of Torre's film will follow Armstong's transversal approach to Shakespearean studies and contemporary popular culture in the attempt to create a dialogue between Anglophone and Italian filmic texts; but it will also focus on marginality, migrancy and

[1] Philip Armstrong, *Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), 6.

[2] Roberta Torre, *Sud Side Stori* (Istituto Luce: 2000). The film opens as the beautiful Nigerian prostitute Romea Wacoubo comes to Palermo with her 'sisters' Mercuzia and Baldassarra, and falls in love with a shabby Sicilian rock singer she sees at the balcony in front of her home: Toni Giulietto.

Toni loves Romea in return, but he is engaged to a Palermitan girl named Maria that his three terrible aunts, with whom he lives, have picked for him. Romea and Giulietto are obstacled by the Nigerian procures and the aunts of Giulietto, and are repeatedly warned by their friends.

The setting is one of the poorest districts of Palermo, the Vucciaria, where ethnic, social and criminal conflicts reach the climax.

homelessness as necessary conditions to the welcoming of the "Other" and to the opening to new dialogues.

In *Sud Side Stori* all the characters are somehow exiles randoming or fluctuating on the scene, and the city of Palermo, where the tragicomedy of Romea and Giulietto is set, is "no longer the expression of a unique tradition or history".[3] The Sicilian and Nigerian cultures that the director explores – as much as Shakespeare's original work and other versions of *Romeo and Juliet* – become migrating texts, in search for hospitality. As Iain Chambers would put it, such a nomadic experience of texts, cultures and languages:

> … inevitably implies another sense of 'home', of being in the world. It means to conceive of dwelling as a mobile habitat, as a mode of inhabiting time and space not as though they were fixed and closed structures, but as providing the critical provocation of an opening whose questioning presence reverberates in the movement of the languages that constitute our sense of identity, place and belonging. There is no one place, language or tradition that can claim this role.[4]

As I will try to underline, *Sud Side Stori* is an interesting work above all because it questions the role of places, languages, traditions, genders and genres in the telling of a Southern, but nevertheless Shakespearean, story.

While Roberta Torre's first full-length film *Tano da morire* (1997), with its creative intermingling of musical and trash-comedy, amazed the public of the International Film Festival in Venice, the much awaited *Sud Side Stori* – a musical re-elaboration of *Romeo and Juliet*'s plot dedicated to the lives of Nigerian prostitutes in Palermo – has been considerably criticised for being an excessively self-referential and redundant work that has only vague connections with Shakespeare's tragedy.[5]

By underlining some points in common between *Sud Side Stori*

[3] Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 4.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Roberta Torre, *Tano da morire* (Lucky Red Distributions: 1997).

and *Romeo and Juliet*, and by briefly relating the film to other contemporary rewritings or adaptations of Shakespeare's work, I would like to suggest that Torre's musical tragicomedy ambiguously plays with stereotypes and icons by means of a flamboyant style that consistently works with the disruptive potential of repetition. Through a strategic use of oneiric visions, the film-maker gradually questions notions of love, multiculturalism and identity, while recovering a social dimension of the tragedy and some carnivalesque elements of Shakespeare's theater that, as Philip Armstrong has noticed, had been less emphasised in other recent filmic adaptations of the play:

> … films based on Shakespearean texts have concentrated on contested interior motivation and intersubjective conflict, eschewing for the most part those political, historical and cultural interests that have dominated the last two decades of Shakespearean criticism.[6]

Sud Side Stori – as Shakespeare's text and its most famous contemporary musical rewriting *West Side Story*[7] – presents the personal tragedy of the lovers while giving voice to the concerns and hostility of two opposite parties, in this case the Palermitan natives and the Nigerian illegal immigrants. Although many other recent adaptations of Shakespeare's work emphasise the originary intertwining of personal and collective drama in *Romeo and Juliet*, Torre's style and her perspective on interracial relationships, hatred and corruption are somewhat peculiar.

Jerome Robbins's *West Side Story* and Baz Luhrman's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* had both re-interpreted the Montagues' and Capulets' enmity as ethnic conflict before *Sud Side Stori*.[8] Furthermore Luhrmann's film – together with Lloyd Kaufman's *Tromeo and Juliet* and John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love*[9] – had

[6] Armstrong, *Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis*, 207.
[7] Jerome Robbins et al., *West Side Story* (United Artists: 1961).
[8] Baz Luhrmann, *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (Twentieth Century Fox: 1996). In Luhrmann's film Juliet – as Robbins' Maria – is Hispano-American, while Romeo is 'White'.
[9] Lloyd Kaufman's *Tromeo and Juliet* (Troma Studios: 1996) is a parody of *Romeo and Juliet* which cynically reinterprets the lovers' passion and their families' hatred as

consistently played with travesty and parody. It must be said, however, that in none of these works as in Torre's are the elements of cultural, social and political satire so stressed and critically explored that the main characters almost disappear in the background of a choral drama.

Kaufman's reinterpretation of desire as lust and incest – with the lovers finally discovering they are brother and sister – offers a very ironic insight into the cultural and social phenomenon of everyday soap-opera familiar tragedies, and focuses mainly on intergenerational conflict and intricate, pathological personal relationships. Vice-versa Roberta Torre, by means of the relationship between the Nigerian prostitute Romea and the shabby Sicilian rock singer Toni Giulietto, explores the conflict between the communities to which the lovers belong, and focuses on the increasing gap between the Palermitan population and the public institutions by which it should be represented.

The battle between the black prostitutes and the terrible aunts of Giulietto is reflected in the hostility between a Palermitan and an African sorceress, and is amplified through the parallel staging of some citizens' street fights for the recognition of a Black Saint as the new patron of Palermo. Images of dialectical opposition between "blacks" and "whites" – just as between Saint Rosalia and the nameless Black Saint, or Mario Merola's Neapolitan melancholic melodies and Little Tony's rock'n'roll – are repeated and re-articulated throughout the film, while the mayor of the city blindly sings and preaches tolerance, peace and multiculturalism from a stage built in the middle of a square that is more of a battlefield.

To some extent Roberta Torre's vision of the contemporary multiethnic Palermo resembles that of Jerome Robbins' New York, with the Nigerian prostitutes singing and dancing their history of migration in the streets of the Vucciaria just as the Puertorican girls did on the roofs of Manhattan's West Side buildings. In *Sud Side Stori*, however, the conflict extends to the entire population of the city and it is far from being a dispute between juvenile gangs.

difunctional relationships. John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love* (Miramax: 1998) is an attempt to imagine what Shakespeare's life experiences and feelings could have been like at a time when he was writing one of his most famous tragedies and, maybe, falling in love himself.

Just as Shakespearean lovers' efforts towards individuality "remain circumscribed by social forces",[10] Romea and her Giulietto move and strive in a Palermo where their desire for each other catalyzes their communities' anxiety for an excessive proximity to the symbolic other. As Jeffrey Weeks has pointed out:

> (Sexuality acts) as a crossover point for a number of tensions whose origins are elsewhere: of class, gender, and racial relocation, of intergenerational conflict, moral acceptability, and medical definition.[11]

The lovers in *Sud Side Stori* threaten to blurr boundaries of class, gender and race; therefore their relationship is morally unacceptable. It is clear that Romea and Giulietto's transgression – a public affair, since the lovers meet for the first time in the crowded and poor district of Vucciaria, where nothing is private or secret – consists of their unconditioned welcoming of the "Other". The lovers appear out of time and confused by a space vorticosely spinning around them – as they ride into the tunnel-of-love at the amusement park, or run the streets in search for each other – precisely because their gesture of welcoming is a suspended paradox; the non-time and non-place of hospitality that Derrida has described referring to Klossowski's *Roberte Ce Soir* :

> … the temporal contradiction of hospitality is such that the experience cannot last; it can only last an instant, precisely because a contradiction cannot last without being dialectized (a Kierkegaardian paradox), or, as the text puts it, one cannot "at the same time take and not take".[12]

Falling in love with a black prostitute – who must take and be taken by white men without welcoming or being welcomed – is a denial of the dialectical process. Romea and Giulietto's love represents an impossible threshold where the white host is hostage to a symbolic

[10] Lloyd Davis, "'Death-marked love': Desire and Presence in *Romeo and Juliet*", *Shakespeare Survey* 49 (1996), 64.

[11] Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality and its Discontents* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 44.

[12] Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality", *Angelaki* 5.3 (2000), 8.

incarnation of the black womb of Africa, and the hostage of prostitution becomes desired guest and hostess in the master's house.

Actually Roberta Torre displaces the very idea of hospitality as something offered by a privileged master or host, since neither Romea nor Giulietto – who lives in his terrible aunts' house – fit into the place they are supposed to belong to. Furthermore, she focuses on two communities of marginalized and dispossessed people whose attachment to their role as masters of their house, or culture, is unjustified to the point of being ridiculous. Only the Mafiosi and the Africans who run the racket of prostitution have control over Palermo, and "hos(ti)pitality", as Derrida would name it, is vital to their business based on the lack of solidarity or coalition between those who live at the margins of society. In fact, if the inhabitants of Vucciaria need to reinforce their sense of identity by projecting their own marginality on the Africans, also the Nigerian women must reject their white exploiters in order to avoid the pain of being absorbed as mere objects of desire, over and over.

Above all, the relationship between Romea and Toni Giulietto causes an economical loss that damages the procurers and the Mafiosi; but also to the eyes of the Palermitan and Nigerian communities the unusual couple is a taboo, since it is an abject image of the obscure power of desire. The crazy lovers are lost and contaminated by one another to the point that Romea quotes master Shakespeare and sings Neapolitan songs, while a drunk Giulietto sings: "I wish I was black too. And if God were black He would bring our hearts together" (translation mine). Because of their foolish merging into each other, they become the favourite object of the communities' voyeurism, a projection of the desire for, and fear of absorption by, some absolute otherness; mostly the cannibalistic, devouring otherness of the black bodies of Africa.

Furthermore, the director stages the voyeurism of the very audience of the film, and disallows its "desire to perceive itself as constituted somehow outside of a reciprocal gaze".[13] In fact, the scenes of TV news she introduces now and then – also Baz Luhrmann did it in his work –

[13] Barbara Freedman, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca & London: Cornell U. P., 1991), 3.

somehow denounce the consumers' lack of reaction to the tragedies they acknowledge everyday. Besides, Torre's choice to have the actors often speaking directly to the camera creates the theatrical illusion of an ongoing exchange between the audience and the characters, so that the spectators are compelled to recognize their own participation to the scenery of perpetrating class and race prejudice.

An example of the director's ironic use of projection and mirroring images is the sequence that simultaneously displays the comments made by Toni's aunts on the Nigerians and those of Romea's friends on the "whites". Dialectically, Torre alternates sequences of the Giulietto women eating bananas while saying that the Nigerians are like monkeys because they are stinky savages and eat only bananas, to scenes shot in Romea's room where her friends Mercuzia and Baldassarra complain about the "whites" eating smelly cheese and never washing themselves enough. But bananas, symbolically related to the jungles of Africa and its wild animals, are never consumed by the Nigerian prostitutes who are portrayed as obsessed with their looks; while the Giulietto aunts and Maria, Toni's ex-girlfriend, are fat and slovenly shrews.

By having the Giulietto women stare at the camera while picturing their stereotypical and offensive vision of Africanness, Roberta Torre indirectly shows to her audience its own silent compliànce with the narrative construction of racial identities.

Thus, *Sud Side Stori* is a very good compromise between the transgressive nature of comedy and the cathartic function of a tragedy whose attractive protagonists – as Naomi Conn Liebler has noticed about Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* – often failed to be identifyed by the audience as a *pharmakos* to be expunged.

> If the tragedies more directly critique the myth of self-presence, the play of representation in the comedies makes them more *useful* to that critique.... Like dreams and jokes, the comedies display unconscious discourse, stage the relationship between desire and signification, and explore how the categories of knowledge and ignorance are generated.[14]

[14] Ibid., 4-5.

In fact, while capturing the gaze of her public on a flamboyant and visionary stage, Roberta Torre efficiently criticises commonsensical categories of knowledge. She uncovers the deadly and false nature of stereotypes, and shows how narrations of otherness – either positive as the mayor's or negative as the Giulietto aunts' – are based on a widespread ignorance that is shared at all levels of society and transcends the action on the screen.

Through its comic vein, *Sud Side Stori* accomplishes the function of Artaud's plague-like theater:

> ... like the plague, the theater has been created to drain abscesses collectively.... (the theater) invites the mind to share a delirium which exalts its energies; and we can see, to conclude, that from the human point of view, the action of theater, like that of plague, is beneficial, for, impelling men to see themselves as they are, it causes the mask to fall, reveals the lie, the slackness, baseness, and hypocrisy of our world....[15]

As a plague or an allergen, *Sud Side Stori* "discloses the operations of a society allergic to itself"[16] and is therefore highly subversive. Torre's Southern story is a testament to Gramsci's analysis of *The Southern Question* now that the still poor and underdeveloped south of Italy is a target of other Southern peoples' immigration, and it suggests that a coalition between ethnic minorities and other marginalised people could be a way out of poverty, criminality and oppression.[17]

As it was clear in Shakespeare's tragedy – from the chorus'prologue, to the verses pronunced by the prince of Verona during the final scene of recomposition of the public order after chaos – and, as it is underlined at the end of *Sud Side Stori*, the death of the lovers and their desire for each other, or I'd better say the "Other",

[15] Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and its Double*, trans. M.C. Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 31-32.

[16] Naomi Conn Liebler, *Shakespeare's Festive Tragedy: The Ritual Foundations of Genre* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), 153.

[17] Antonio Gramsci, *The Southern Question*, trans. P. Verdicchio (West Lafayette IN: Bordighera Inc., 1995).

has a considerable social relevance. As Philip Armstrong writes of *Romeo and Juliet*:

> ... the tragedy monumentalises, from beginning to end, the lover's inability to appropriate for themselves an individual domain of love separate from the socio-cultural determinations of their respective families.[18]

Torre suggests that each and everyone – the Palermitans, the immigrants, the Mafiosi, the politicians and the audience itself – should be held responsible, to some extent, for the lovers' tragic and symbolic destiny.

Furthermore, just to make clearer her perspective and enhance her audience's critical detachment, the director deconstructs that sonnet-like structure of the Shakespearean text that has determined, for centuries, its mesmerizing power. In fact, Torre challenges and puzzles her public by means of leaving Romea and Giulietto almost speechless, as if nothing else could be said or is worth saying about the private dimension of love and desire. Shakespeare's verses that Romea messily quotes now and then are ridiculously out of place, just as Toni's serenades, and every romantic scene is a parody of conventional love in striking contrast with the picturing of violence and hatred.

The authority of Shakespeare's words is recovered only twice in Torre's filmic text. First, the pink and fattish Saint Rosalia quotes properly the verses "Love goes toward love as schoolboys from their books, / But love from love, toward school with heavy looks" that Romea can only mutter.[19] Then, at the end of the tragedy, a journalist further comments on the "death-marked" affair of the "star-crossed lovers" by means of the last six verses of the Shakespearean play.[20] In contrast with the subversive chaos on stage, the garrulus voice of

[18] Armstrong, *Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis*, 195.

[19] Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. J. N. Loehlin (Cambridge UK: Cambridge U. P., 2002), 2.2. 156-157.

[20] The verses the journalist quotes – changing the names of the lovers as required by Torre's inversion of roles - are those of the speech by the Prince of Verona: "A glooming peace this morning with it brings, / The sun for sorrow will not show his head. / Go hence

Saint Rosalia and the professional detachment of the journalist restore the fragmented original text; but poetry dissolves after a few verses, and the full enjoyment of harmony and familiarity is once again denied.

Showing the implications of the conflict between desire and hatred, the director recovers – apart from the connections between a private/collective desire and social violence – other important aspects of Shakespeare's work that tend to be overwhelmed by the power of romance: the elements of the grotesque and the carnivalesque, and the opposition of materialism to idealism. Thus, if Ronald Knowles has proposed a Bakhtinian reading of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Roberta Torre's work can surely be read as a masquerade that questions identities and margins through the blurring of genres and roles.[21]

Analysing *Othello*, Armstrong noticed that on Shakespeare's stage it was impossible to show "in truth" either a black man or a woman, and that therefore the audience was used to unrealistic representations of such characters.[22] Nowadays, the public is generally provided with realistic representation of "blacks" and "women", and Torre's choice to stage real prostitutes on an oneiric setting is striking, since it denies the audience the immediate pleasure of consuming clear-cut stories and definitions.

Half documentary – since all the African actresses are prostitutes and many of the Palermitans are ordinary people playing themselves – and half musical, *Sud Side Stori* is a tragedy as much as a comedy; a flamboyant vision as much as an image of crude reality. Just as a play, Torre's film gives the illusion of presence while proposing ironical detachment; and if the resulting mixture of genres is too attractive and entertaining to show its paradoxical nature, a metafilmic reflection is provided through the dispute between Mario Merola and Little Tony.

Staging the conflict between sad, melodramatic songs and take-it-easy rock'n'roll, Roberta Torre stresses her unwillingness to choose a

to have more talk of these sad things; / Some shall be pardoned, and some punished: / For never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo." Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, 5.3. 305-310.

[21] Ronald Knowles, "Carnival and Death in *Romeo and Juliet*: A Bakhtinian Reading", *Shakespeare Survey* 49 (1996).

[22] Armstrong, *Shakespeare's Visual Regime* (New York: Palgrave, 2000).

privileged genre or media in her re-representation of Romea's and Giulietto's fiction/reality. Furthermore, the dispute between the singers is somehow a reflection and parody of *Romeo and Juliet*'s display of conflicting definitions of love and desire. In fact – if Shakespeare played with different images of desire by means of erotic tropes from the Petrarchan, Platonic and Ovidian traditions, as well as from popular sayings – Torre stages two different but coexisting visions of love in Italian contemporary popular culture and music.

Actually, in *Sud Side Stori* many are the icons of Italian and Sicilian popular culture that literally take life. For example the image of Saint Rosalia comments on the events from her frame while a human-size picture of Little Tony moves and sings; a bottle of red wine speaks, and an old Sicilian sorceress comes out of her trance once in a while to curse and cast a spell.

Beside the blurring of genres – and of facts and fiction – the film clearly stages a reversal of roles. How the element of masquerade – as related to questions of identity – is relevant both in Shakespeare's tragedy and in *Sud Side Stori* is evident from the scene of the lovers' meeting.

> The personal is as elusive as it is idealized, destined to slip back into constraining and distorting social forms. In retrospect, we may see this elusiveness prefigured in the lovers' first meeting, an intense bonding that occurs amid an elaborate ritual of masks and misrecognition.[23]

These words, written by Lloyd Davis about Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, apply to Torre's film, where the exchange of roles between Giulietto at the balcony in Elvis-like clothes and Romea in the street with her lively African sisters adds a few nuances to the romantic meeting and the balcony scene.

In terms of identity and names, the lovers have both very uncertain origins. Romea is an exile and slave with no legal identity, since she has no proper family and her passport has been taken by her procurers. Giulietto, son of a Sicilian prostitute and a mariner, is

[23] Davis, "'Death-marked love'", 64.

constantly swinging between different personalities, influenced by his mayor's speeches on multiculturalism and Little Tony's rhythm and blues, as much as by Mario Merola's tragic and melodramatic songs on love, misery and jealousy.

Since Romea is a roaming creature who sings that any street is her home, and Giulietto is an abandoned and disoriented guy, the lovers' inability to assert their will over people's prejudices is evident from the start. Furthermore Giulietto's lack of personality is related to the influence of maternal figures to the extent that his character could reflect the anxieties of Shakespeare's public around Romeo's effeminacy. In fact, if the uncanny female body represents a constant threat of absorption for the desiring but fearful adult male, Torre's Giulietto – as Janet Adelman would put it – is more a "girl-like" child who has never asserted his subjectivity and come out of the womb completely.[24]

Cherished and fed, Toni is like a baby to a wet-nurse, and his three aunts – with their fat, decaying and grotesque bodies – are both nurturing and suffocating mothers. In order to stress the three women's devouring attitude, Roberta Torre repeatedly shows them and Maria – Toni's ex fiancée – wildly consuming food while complaining about the Nigerian prostitutes and making decisions about Giulietto's life.

Toni's passivity and dangerous fascination for the womb – he kisses Romea in a tunnel-of-love that is a dark cavern, he shields in his womb-like room and is fascinated by huge bottles and barrels that could contain and protect his body – is opposed to the Palermitan community's apprehension at the invasion, both metaphorical and literal, by the dark continent represented by the African prostitutes. If the womb, as Freedman highlights, is like a tomb for the unborn baby, Giulietto's love for grotesque femininity and the maternal is the real mark of his death.

As both Freedman and Traub point out in their analysis of Shakespeare and early modern culture, prolonged infancy contaminates the male whose destiny is perceived to be marked by the infections and

[24] Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays,* Hamlet *to* The Tempest (London & New York: Routledge, 1992).

perversions of his mother. From this perspective Toni's character – infected by lust and prostitution from birth – is destined to be swallowed by a prostitute mother/female. Tempting but dangerous as the "tawny" Cleopatra, Romea drives Giulietto crazy and jealous as an Othello.

Actually, by turning Toni into an Othello and making him wish to be "black", Roberta Torre figures the grotesque effects of love when it is perceived as a dark contamination. Since Romea never goes with other men after falling in love with her Giulietto – in fact she rejects a client that eventually commits suicide – the deforming infection that grows horns on Toni's head, a symbol of cuckoldry in Italian culture, is but a projection of the Palermitans' anxiety and desire for the black prostitute. As Valerie Traub has stressed, "wherever there is desire, there is anxiety; wherever there is anxiety, there is desire. Like idealization and debasement, they are two sides of the same coin".[25] Following what Traub calls a "mutually interactive dialectic", the fight between the Giulietto aunt-nurses and the prostitute-seductress is the staging of two conflicting but coexisting images of grotesque and devouring femaleness, each generating desires and anxieties in the communities as much as in the audience.

In fact, if in *Romeo and Juliet* there is no representation of really powerful female characters and the only violence staged is masculine, in *Sud Side Stori* women impose themselves both over the narrative – the narrating voices are those of Saint Rosalia and Giuseppona "a Sbirra", a tough woman involved in the Mafia business – and over the action.

The episode of the Giulietto aunts turning to a white sorceress in order to break up by means of a charm the lover's relationship – the same way as the Nigerian prostitutes resort to a black one – shows female power and violence as traditionally connected with the subtle and uncanny realm of magic. Anyway, leaving aside anxieties related to the female grotesque body and its mysterious practices, it must be said that in *Sud Side Stori* death is always a consequence of male violence and economic interests.

The epilogue of Torre's tragicomedy is as follows: desperate for

[25] Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety. Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), 8.

Romea's return to Africa, Giulietto steals some money from the house of "a Sbirra" in order to join his beloved, and fakes his death. When the aunts Giulietto find the body, the Mafiosi – who protected Toni because his mother was the Boss'lover – hold Giuseppona responsible for his death and kill her. Romea, back from Africa, sees Toni's body just before he awakens and commits suicide thinking that he's dead, while the aunts and Toni are killed in revenge by Giuseppona's hacks.

The sequence of the killings is shot from an ironic perspective that leaves the public emotionally detached. On the chaotic scenery signifiers fluctuate and attach to people's skins like deforming masks and there is no sympathy for - or identification with - any particular character.

After the journalist's final speech, Saint Rosalia announces that the party of the Black Saint won and that she is now peacefully sharing with him the patronage of Palermo, though such things happen only in the holy Heavens, and it is clear that even the saints are not "all alike". The final comment however is left to the singing of the Nigerian women, who repeat a refrain that emphasizes the symbolic role of the black prostitute in Palermo as a cheap flight to an exotic land that can be easily explored every night, from six on.

In conclusion, Torre's vision of love as a means of overcoming hostilities is no more optimistic than Shakespeare's, and hospitality as an unconditional welcoming of the other is never staged in *Sud Side Stori*, since even the Black Saint is merely a silent and quiet hostage of Saint Rosalia's overwhelming mastery and exuberance, and all the prostitutes remain enslaved, or at least objectified.

The director's decision to offer no easy solution to the tragicomedy of Romea and Giulietto stimulates further reflections on the paradoxical nature of hospitality, and ironically hints at a past and present where the Italian Southern population itself is the object of prejudice. In 1926, Gramsci lamented the stereotypical notion that the inhabitants of the industrialised north of Italy had of Southern people: "Southerners are biologically inferior beings, either semi-barbarians or out and out barbarians by natural destiny".[26] Today that vision is

[26] Gramsci, *The Southern Question*, 20.

still shared by the Italian Northern League, and the same cliché has been extended to African and other immigrants. The eventual victory of the party of the Black Saint in *Sud Side Stori* suggests that new political coalitions between "guests" and "hosts" are possible, even if the concept of hospitality itself, as Derrida holds, is aporetic.

Commenting on Jan Patočka's *Heretical Essays*, Anne Dufourmantelle compares the Czech philosopher's concept of the nocturnal with Derrida's linguistic explorations, and stresses that both of them are obsessed with the disruptive power of the night. As she writes, "Night for Patočka, is 'the opening unto what disturbs'. It asks to go througt the experience of meaning…".[27]

The fascination for the nocturnal and the nonsense, that Patocka and Doufourmantelle poetically describe, is one that in different ways Mercutio, Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare's tragedy – and Romea and Giulietto in Torre's film – experience to the point of losing themselves.

Capturing *Romeo and Juliet* and hostaging its most romantic and dramatic scenes, Roberta Torre digs in the misterious, irrational and wild nights of the Nigerian prostitutes, as much as into the obsessions of the Palermitans and of her audience. At the end of her nocturnal journey into the streets of Vucciaria no homecoming is possible; in fact the nomadic Nigerian prostitutes – temporarily gone back to Africa but always in transit – sing that their thirty thousand feet will be perpetually moving and dancing around the world.

If Derrida writes that authentic hospitality can be offered only by the homeless, and Iain Chambers stresses that migrancy is opposed to travelling in that the former involves no certain point of departure or arrival, *Sud Side Stori* is definitely a text open to hospitality and migrancy. The prostitutes' words, as much as Torre's transgressive and trans-generic style, call "…for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation".[28]

[27] Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 46.
[28] Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, 5.

Marina Vitale

'This great loss': or, was Claribel's marriage 'sweet'?

In her long poem of 1949, *By Avon River*, Hilda Doolittle gave voice to one of the many women characters who are muted or even absent from the actions represented on the Shakespearean stage: Claribel the fair daughter of Alonso, King of Naples.[1] Without her marriage to the King of Tunis the succession of events constituting William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* would not take place. It is indeed on its way back from Tunis, after Claribel's wedding, that Alonso's ship is caught in the tempest conjured up by Prospero.

As H.D. reminds us, Shakespeare's text does not say much about Claribel. She is not even mentioned among the *dramatis personae* since she had remained in Tunis, while Alonso and all the Italian wedding-guests had sailed back home after her wedding:

> I came home driven by *The Tempest*;
> That was after the wedding-feast;
> *'Twas a sweet marriage* we are told:

[1] The first section of the manuscript is dated "Shakespeare Day", April 23, 1945; the last section is dated September 19 – November 1, 1946. The text was not published until 1949. As Martha Nell Smith remarks in her "H.D.'s 'The Tempest'" (in Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman eds., *'The Tempest' and Its Travels* [London: Reaktion Books, 2000], 250-256), it is ironical that although by 1949 Hilda Doolittle had been divorced for eleven years and separated for thirty years from Richard Aldington, she published *By Avon River* under her former married name, Hilda Aldington. While trying to set free the personality of a character whom Shakespeare had denied a voice endowing it only with a name, H.D. denied herself both her own anagraphical name and the pseudonym by which she had become famous as an imagist poet.

> And she *a paragon ... who is now queen,*
> *And the rarest that e'er came there;*
>
> We know little of *the king's fair daughter*
> *Claribel*; her father was Alonso,
> King of Naples, her brother Ferdinand,
> And we read later, *in a voyage*
> *Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis:*
>
> Claribel was outside all of this,
> *The Tempest* came after they left her;
> Read for yourself, *Dramatis Personae*.[2]

But, however scanty, the information released by *The Tempest* is ample enough to stimulate H.D.'s re-visionist imagination and invite her to read between the lines of the drama.[3] In the first section of her poem she focuses on Claribel's ghostly presence in Shakespeare's drama, putting together all the fragments of her story scattered in the clues of the various characters shipwrecked on Prospero's island. But soon she allows Claribel to speak in her own voice, liberating the potentialities of her personality and finding her own way to self-expression and self-fulfilment.[4]

With the visionary passion which is typical of her rewritings, H.D. aims at recapturing the mysterious process by which Claribel's character, *The Tempest* itself and, by extension, Shakespeare's entire work came to life at the intersection between different drives. Among

[2] H.D., *By Avon River* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), 5-6.

[3] The term 're-vision' was coined, or at least validated in contemporary critical idiom, by Adrienne Rich in "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision", in *On Lies, Secrets and Silence* (New York: Norton, 1979), 35. It is a perfectly appropriate term to define the largest part of H.D.'s production which was devoted to re-visit women's male-dominated literary past in order to re-write it from a feminine point of view. It is this re-inscription that H.D. refers to with one of her favourite terms: 'Palimpsest'. In her brilliant study of the question of representaton as a play between presence and absence (*Shakespearian Orders. Language, Representation and Epistemic Subversions* (Napoli: Liguori, 2000), 45-49), Anna Maria Cimitile used H.D.'s revision as a lens to read the "powerful absent presence" of Claribel in *The Tempest*.

[4] Part III of the first section is aptly entitled "Claribel's Way to God".

these, she imagined some deeply felt – though dramatically objectified – affections, such as the contradictory pressures of his fatherly love and guilty feelings towards his own children.[5] This subterranean urge was intertwined with the routine demands of the theatrical trade, such as the necessity to supply the court with an entertainment suitable to the festive atmosphere of a princely wedding. And, last but not least, there were the wider issues engrossing the political and cultural unconscious of his contemporaries: the cultural panics deriving from the continuous widening up of the geographical boundaries of the 'English' imagined community and from the growing contacts with a variety of ethnically different Others.[6]

H.D. connects the inception of the drama with the marriage of King James's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, to Frederick, the Elector Palatine: a Bohemian prince, a German-speaking foreigner.[7] Here is her rendering of the genesis of the drama:

> ....A new court festival, a masque?
> Elizabeth, our princess, is to wed
> The Elector Palatine – who's that?
> Frederick, I think. And where's the place –
> Bohemia? I don't think so,
> But anyhow it doesn't matter
> A foreign fellow is to wed our princess,

[5] H.D.'s interest for the intricacies of the connections between biographical and cultural urges at the basis of the artistic process finds a precedent in the famous lecture that Stephen pronounces in Joyce's *Ulysses* in order to "prove by algebra that Hamlet's grandson is Shakespeare's grandfather and that he himself is the ghost of his own father". This apparently paradoxical thesis was magisterially discussed by Hélène Cixous in *The Exile of James Joyce* (London: Calder, 1976), 566-59.

[6] The terms are freely borrowed from Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (London: Methuen, 1981), Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1972) and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

[7] It is outside the aims of this essay to enter any scholarly discussion about the stage history of the drama. Suffice here to refer to Frank Kermode's "Introduction" to the Arden edition of *The Tempest* (namely pp.xx-xxiv). It reaches the conclusion that the Elector's stay in London in the winter of 1612-13, between his betrothal and his wedding with Princess Elizabeth, was at least the circumstance that brought about the restaging and rearrangement of the play.

The grand-daughter of Scotland's Mary;
Occasion – compliment – another play!

In H.D.'s lines the groom's identity seems to recede into thick mist: the text is uncertain about his name, nationality and abode. What is foregrounded is that he is a "foreign fellow": somebody extraneous to the precisely located community to which "our" Princess belongs. One cannot overlook the emphasis laid on the mixed nature of such a marriage: a circumstance establishing a secret analogy with Claribel's wedding to the King of Tunis.

However correct H.D.'s reconstruction of the origin of the play might be, the matrimonial strategies displayed – both openly and metaphorically – in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* are no doubt redolent of the contemporary preoccupations about mixed marriages (especially about interracial and interethnic ones) and ridden with the identitary problems accompanying the early stages of the formation of the notion of 'Englishness'.[8]

Shakespeare's play harbours at least three (perhaps four) plots which problematize such matrimonial or sexual, strategies. Only one of these stories is acted out on the stage: Prospero's successful plan to have his daughter Miranda marry Ferdinand, Prince of Naples. Two other plots are only spoken of: Caliban's unsuccessful scheme to possess Miranda and generate little Calibans, and Claribel's 'sweet' wedding to the King of Tunis. As for the fourth matrimonial story probably lurking behind the events dramatised in *The Tempest*, it is only hinted at, but not discussed: Sycorax's sexual intercourse (a marriage, perhaps?) with Caliban's father.

If one looks at the anagraphical constitution of these partnerships, there emerges a variegated pattern. The different outcomes of the four

[8] In a recent essay, Maurizio Calbi throws light on the interconnection between the construction of monstrosity in Early Modern Culture and the bitter anxiety generated in the 'English' by the confrontation with the racial Other. The representation of sexuality and sexual and matrimonial strategies is indeed one of the main areas of construction of the Other as terror generating in that epochal historical conjuncture. See his "Speaking in Terror: Femininity, Monstrosity and 'Race' in Early Modern Culture", in Maria Teresa Chialant, ed., *Incontrare i mostri. Variazioni sul tema nella letteratura e cultura inglese e angloamericana* (Napoli: ESI, 2002), 65-82.

stories also suggest a hierarchy, which is not only fictional but also ethical and ideological.

Miranda and Ferdinand's marriage (the only one presented as a romantic liaison crowned by a matrimonial happy ending) is between two white, European, Christian young people. Caliban's allegedly attempted assault on Miranda would have involved a non-white, heathen, non-European male with the heavy menace of miscegenation explicitly spelled out by Caliban himself when he retorts to Prospero's accusation with the words "O ho, O ho! would't had been done! / Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else / This isle with Calibans" (1.2. 351-353).

We do not know much of the King of Tunis, except that he is an African to whom one of Europe's fair daughters has been given in marriage against her own wish and against the Courtiers' best advice. Here is the very reproachful description of the event given by Sebastian who accuses his brother, Alonso, King of Naples, of having caused the ruin of both his children:

Seb. Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,
That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,
But rather loose her to an African;
Where she, at least, is banish'd from your eye,
Who hath cause to wet the grief on't.
Alon. Prethee, peace.
Seb. You were kneel'd to, and importun'd otherwise
By all of us; and the fair soul herself
Weigh'd between loathness and obedience at
Which end o' th' beam should bow. We have lost your son,
I fear, for ever. Milan and Naples have
Mo widows in them of this business' making,
Than we bring men to comfort them;
The fault's your own.
(2.1. 117-129)

As for Sycorax's story, it is deeply hidden in what Prospero would call "the dark backward and abysm of time" (1.2. 50), from which it can be retraced only obliquely. Prospero provides the only overt piece of information about her in one of his rebukes of Ariel:

Pros. .... Hast thou forgot
The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy
Was grown into a hoop? hast thou forgot her?
Ari. No, sir.
Pros. Thou hast. Where was she born ? speak; tell me.
Ari. Sir, in Argier.
Pros. O, was she so? I must
Once in a month recount what thou hast been,
Which thou forget'st. This damn'd witch Sycorax,
For mischiefs manifold, and sorcieries terrible
To enter human hearing, from Argier,
Thou know'st, was banish'd : for one thing she did
They would not take her life. Is not this true?
Ari. Ay, sir.
Pros. This blue-ey'd hag was here brought with child,
And here was left by th' sailors. ...
(1.2. 257-270)

For all the negative light thrown on Sycorax as a mischievous witch, one cannot forget the fact that she herself was an exile. She had been banished to an "uninhabited island" like Circe, the mythical sorceress who had been exiled to an island as full of noises and metamorphoses as *The Tempest*'s enchanted island. As Marina Warner has remarked,

> [b]ehind Sycorax lie two of the most notorious witches of antiquity: Circe and Medea. These two, aunt and niece in divine genealogy, seem to be standing in the wings of the play and the lights behind them cast their interlaced shadows across the stage, forming the phantom, Sycorax, whispering to Prospero how to command the insubstantial pageant of the action.[9]

[9] Cf. Marina Warner, "'The foul witch' and Her 'freckled whelp': Circean Mutations in the New World", in Hulme and Sherman, eds., *'The Tempst'*, 97-113. The article offers a fascinating reconstruction of the complex web of analogies and cross-references between Prospero and both Sycorax and the magic figures of Circe and Medea as they are construed in the Homeric and Ovidian texts.

It is well known that both Circe and Medea are double-faced symbols of power and abjection. They were strangers in their husband's kingdoms who did not condescend to adopt the alien cultures into which they had wed. It was on account of their otherness that they were marginalized, expelled from the civil body of the community, transformed into monsters. They had fallen short of the symbolic role assigned to the foreign matriarch – like the biblical Ruth, the Moabyte exile who gave rise to the tribe of David – or to the foreign queen who secured patriarchal alliances both in medieval and early modern European courts.[10] They had slipped the wrong side of liminality, precipitating into abjection.

In an essay on alterity and exchange in early modern drama, Ania Loomba discusses the cultural significance of a number of cross-ethnic and cross-religious marriages staged in Jacobean dramas. In her reading, such liaisons were the markers of deep anxiety: the anxiety produced by the relative permeability of social and cultural boundaries at "a time which can be characterised as either the last period in history where ethnic identities could be understood as fluid, or as the first moment of the emergence of modern notions of 'race'"[11]. The circumstance of religious conversion as a prerequisite of mixed marriages constituted by itself a major element of anxiety, because it pointed towards individual and social instability and raised doubts about firmly rooted and easily readable national and religious identities. The nightmare of miscegenation was, obviously, a further cause of preoccupation and aversion.

The examples Loomba examines belong to three types. The most

[10] The complex role played by the marginality of Ruth in the making of the "Hebrew alliance" is touched upon by Julia Kristeva in chapter 3 of her *Etrangers à nous mêmes* (1988). The Janus-faced, liminal figure of the foreign queen is recalled in Ania Loomba, "'Delicious Traffick': Racial and Religious Difference on Early Modern Stages", in Catherine M.S. Alexander and Stanley Wells, eds., *Shakespeare and Race* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 218. Particularly interesting is Louise Olga Fradenburg's definition of the ambiguous symbolic role of the foreign queen quoted by Loomba: "Queens themselves, then, are talismanic; they are a potential threat – a foreign body let in through open and even decorated gates, capable of causing internal torment – turned into an aegis of protection, a banner under which to ride against the enemy" (Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament: Arts of Rule in Medieval Scotland*, in ibid.).

[11] Loomba, "'Delicious Traffick'", 203.

unhappy couplings are those of white Christian women with non one-hundred-per-cent Christian-and-white men, such as Jews or Muslims, blacks or Moors either converted or not: Turks, or Egyptians, Marranos and Moriscos.[12] The symmetrical marriages of black, Moorish or Jewish women with white Christian men are accepted in the dramatic plots only on condition such women convert to Christianity;[13] otherwise their intercourses with white men are not allowed happy endings.[14] The very acceptability of conversion depends on gender: the conversion to Christianity of feminine characters can be crowned with happy marriages while converted black male characters cannot aspire to the same happiness[15]. They are not even endowed with noble natures, unless they totally abstain from sexual inclinations towards white Christian women.[16]

If Loomba's typology is correct, the marriage of a European Princess like Claribel with a presumably black, non-Christian African King could not be presented as 'sweet' in an Elizabethan or Jacobean drama unless it were in jest.

As a recent essay by Andrew C. Hesse has pointed out, inter-civilizational dynastic marriages between members of European and non-European Mediterranean courts had become practically impossible in early modern times, as a consequence of the stage reached by the long lasting clash between Christian and Muslim civilisations in the area. Since the sixteenth century this opposition

[12] The most famous case in this category is the couple Desdemona-Othello: a white Venetian Christian woman married to a Moor who is both a Black and a converted Muslim.

[13] Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice* is the best known example of a converted Jewess marrying a Christian man.

[14] The examples given by Loomba include the woman made pregnant by Launcelot in *The Merchant of Venice* (mentioned as a Moor and a Nigro, 3.5. 37) and Zanche, the black maid in Webster's *The White Devil*.

[15] The acceptance of marriages between converted feminine characters and male Christian characters is obviously helped by the riches such women bring into the bargain. Jessica's wealth is an important element of her matrimonial appeal and even stronger is the attraction of the fabulous wealth brought into her mixed marriage by the converted Moluccan Princess Quisara in Fletcher's *The Island Princess*. The basic, unwashable racial and religious difference remains a gender difference. While Jessica's social position is changeable, Shylock's is not: it is written into his body through his circumcision.

[16] As is Joffer's case in Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*.

had undergone such a violent escalation that it had led to a drastic redefinition of the Mediterranean geopolitical configuration, with the consequent widening up of the existing gulf between Christian and Muslim areas of influence. Far from being "sweet", a marriage such as Claribel's would have been "a deeply unlikely occurrence". The inclusion of the theme of Claribel in the play must serve, therefore, some kind of "imaginative purpose", which Hesse identifies with the need "to provide a negative contrast for Miranda's marriage"[17].

It cannot be denied that, on the practical level, no dynastic strategy is detectable behind Claribel's marriage. It is a union where the 'marriage token' has been thrown away for nothing. It provides yet another dire model of 'unnatural' sexual intercourse, alongside Caliban's lewd fantasies and Sycorax's untold story. Such a marriage would be doomed to be unhappy and exalt, by contrast, Prospero's fostering of the intra-civilizational and intra-linguistic marriage between Miranda and Ferdinand.[18]

Indeed, the word "sweet" sounds derisory on Sebastian's lips, especially in the context of the irreverent jibes addressed by the younger courtiers against the boring and pedantic speeches of Gonzalo and Adrian. The former's relief for escaping a shipwreck justifies the comic tone of their exchange: not only have they not drowned, but even their garments are fresher and drier than ever before. The flippancy of their comments is also in line with the futility and ethical shallowness of these two characters: moral sins which will be confirmed by their covetous and conspiratorial behaviour later on in the play. For all its flippancy, however, this comical exchange – with the complex interplay of subtexts with which it is loaded – offers some important hints for a better understanding of the dramatic function of Claribel's exotic marriage:

[17] See Andrew C. Hesse, "The Mediterranean and Shakespeare's Geopolitical Imagination", in Hulme and Sherman, eds., *'The Tempest'*, 121-130.

[18] Imtiaz Habib detects an overall project of racial education in *The Tempest*. He lists Claribel's marriage among the lessons in racial policy he discusses in a chapter on "Caliban and Racial Education", in *Shakespeare and Race: Postcolonial Praxis in the Early Modern Period* (Lanham, New York and Oxford: University Press of America 2000), 207-252.

Gon. Methinks our garments are now as fresh as when we put them
on first in Afric, at the marriage of the King's fair daughter
Claribel to the King of Tunis.
Seb. 'Twas a sweet marriage, and we prosper well in our return.
Adr. Tunis was never grac'd before with such a paragon to
their Queen.
Gon. Not since widow Dido's time.
Ant. Widow! a pox o' that! How came that widow in? widow Dido!
Seb. What if you had said "Widower Aeneas" too? Good Lord,
how you take it!
Adr. "Widow Dido" said you? you make me study of that: she was
of Carthage, not Tunis.
Gon. This Tunis, sir, was Carthage.
Adr. Carthage?
Gon. I assure you, Carthage.
Ant. His word is more than the miraculous harp.
Seb. He hath raise'd the wall, and houses too.
(2.1. 66-84)

The gist of this longish dialogue is a parallel between Claribel's recent wedding and that of another *sans pareil* Queen, Dido, the mythically beautiful and notoriously foreign Queen of Carthage. The joke draws a mourning veil over the wedding of the King's daughter by projecting on it the sorrowful and ambiguous shadow of Dido, the unfaithful widow par excellence.[19]

Dido's theme accomplishes also another function: by establishing continuity between Carthage and Tunis, and identifying the modern town with the ancient one, Gonzalo introduces an uncanny element of linguistic and geographical confusion.[20] He refers to the same town with two different names – one of which, the ancient one, is unknown to some of the party – thus immersing a specific geographical site into a remote and almost unreal atmosphere. This effect of unreality is

[19] Dido had broken her vows to the memory of Sychaeus only to make Aeneas into her own widower, by committing suicide.
[20] Both Jerry Brotton ("Carthage and Tunis, *The Tempest* and Tapestries", in Hulme & Sherman, eds., *'The Tempest'*, 132-137) and Roland Green ("Island Logic", Ibid., 138-145) speculate on the early modern habit of conflating ancient Carthage and modern Tunis.

further increased by Antonio's and Sebastian's spiteful remarks on Gonzalo's habit of forging reality through rhetorics: he has fabricated a sham town (the transhistorical Tunis/Carthage) with the sound of words, like Amphion who erected the walls of Thebes with the music of his harp. The Mediterranean landscape becomes more and more misty and evanescent; the modern geography overlaps with the ancient and mythical one, and recedes into unreality; Tunis is and is not Tunis.

Frederick's Bohemia, too, is and is not Bohemia in the above mentioned lines from H.D.'s *By Avon River*. It is a foreign country with no certain name, lost somewhere on an uncertain map. As we read in the text:

…And where's the place –
Bohemia? I don't think so,
But anyhow it doesn't matter …

Does this mean that the marriage of "Elizabeth, our princess" with a foreign man – whose country nobody cares to identify on a map – would "loose her", like Claribel, to an unsavoury destiny? Would her marriage be "sweet", or would it rather be a "great loss" like Claribel's?

In H.D.'s texts, as in Shakespeare's, questions are never so clear-cut as to allow clear-cut answers. The only certainty is Claribel's liberation from the textual fetters that tied her to a muted and vicarious existence. *By Avon River* makes her free from the spectral presence to which she is condemned in *The Tempest*. She may come to the fore in person and speak in the first person. Not only is her musical and argentine name repeated from chime to chime, but she speaks in her own argentine voice. And, more importantly, she lives her own life, without being confined to a sham existence as "a mere marriage token": she is free to roam the world by herself, without the protection – or the oppression or the company – of a husband.[21]

[21] This process of textual 'empowerment' of a female character is part of H.D.'s life-long revisionary project. Her later *Helen in Egypt* (1961) was her most explicit effort to reinstate women as historical agents in classical myths and canonical stories of male heroes fighting for the possession of women. *Helen in Egypt* is also H.D.'s most direct answer to the theory

Unlike T.S.Eliot's Prufrock – the quintessential modernist non-heroic hero who could exist only to acknowledge his inferiority vis-à-vis his precursors, or, better, to admit his own non-existence – H.D.'s Claribel is free to become anything. She passes from the non-existence to which she was bound in Shakespeare's text, to a wide range of possibilities. In the ninth stanza of *By Avon River*, Part II, she is still referred to in the third person as an incorporeal minor character:

She never had a word to say,
An emblem, a mere marriage token,

Never even trod a rondelay
Or watched a play within the play

With other ladies –

In the eleventh stanza she begins to take shape and, although remaining a creature of ink created by the Bard, she speaks in the first person:

I only threw a shadow
On his page,
Yet I was his,
He spoke my name;

He hesitated,
Raised his quill,
Which paused,

expressed by Freud in *Moses and Monotheism* that the genesis of civilisations had to be traced to primal acts of violence generated by male rivalry over women. For an interesting discussion of this aspect of the complex and extremely creative relationship H.D. entertained with Freud, see Alice Gambrell, *Women Intellectuals, Modernism and Difference. Transatlantic Culture, 1919-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). The ambivalent relationship of H.D. with her literary and theoretical fathers was acutely discussed by Lidia Curti in "La seduzione della figlia", in Maria Del Sapio Garbero, ed., *Trame parentali/Trame letterarie* (Napoli: Liguori, 2000), 72-75.

Waited a moment,
And then fell
Upon the unblotted line;
I was born,
Claribel.

In the twelfth stanza she is still lamenting her second-rate condition as an invisible and voiceless character, a non-character, unable to wear the costume of a Juliet or a Portia, of an Ophelia or any other Shakespearean heroine:

I had no voice
To chide the lark at dawn,
Or argue with a Jew,
Be merciful;

I had no wit
To banter with a clown,
Or claim a kingdom
Or denounce a throne;

I had no hand
To snatch a dagger,
Or pluck wild-flowers,
For a crown.

Soon after, in the following stanza, her metamorphosis is completed (and underlined by a thorough switch in the metrical rhythm). She has become a free agent, open to whatever possibility, capable of going anywhere, capable of impersonating whatever role, from the hieratic Egyptian Princess belonging to H.D.'s life-long personal myth, to any demotic girl in an Italian market place:

I stand invisible on the water-stair,
Nor envy Egypt,
Drifting through the lilies;
I may go here or there,
Bargain for bracelets on the bridge in Venice,

Or buy ripe cherries in Verona's market;
Call me most proud who wait,
Even upon the very outskirts of the crowd,
At Carnival,
Or stand among the strangers at the gate,
Watching a burial.[22]

Still, questions are never clear-cut – neither in Shakespeare's nor in H.D.'s texts. Neither are there clearly spelled out answers.

It is true that Claribel has taken the liberty to say "I". It is true that in part III of the poem she has taken her life in her own hands after challenging the oppressive and deterministic law of the name ("What's in a name? / Everything, life, death, / Infamy or fame" is the first question she poses herself, coming to life in H.D.'s re-vision).[23] But what about the sweetness or bitterness of her marriage? Did she overcome the 'loathness' referred to by Sebastian in 2. 1? Was she rewarded or punished for her 'obedience'?

As is well known, Shakespeare does not give any hint about Claribel's wedded life in Tunis: we are left to wonder whether she was integrated or not into Tunisian culture. But, if Andrew Hesse is right in assuming that the theme of Claribel serves the rhetorical purpose of providing a negative contrast for Miranda's marriage, then we might imagine that she became a sort of Medea or Sycorax, soon to be marginalized and ab-jected; removed, perhaps, to yet another uninhabited island; doomed to pass from one exile to another, from one foreignness to another.

As for H.D., she mentions briefly the circumstance of Claribel's being the Queen of Tunis in connection with one of her travels in search

[22] It might be interesting to take into account the figures of liminality which define Claribel's new freedom in *By Avon River*. She is free to mix with people at Carnival, still she remains "upon the very outskirts of the crowd". She may attend social rituals, still she "stand[s] among the strangers at the gate". I thank Maurizio Calbi for drawing my attention to this aspect.

[23] She echoes in these verses (belonging to Part II, stanza XII) a long tradition of literary re-visitations of Juliet's famous interpellation of the name. For an illuminating analysis of the 'aphoristic' nature of the name and of Juliet's challenge to its law see Jacques Derrida, "Aphorism Countertime", in Derek Attridge ed., *Derrida. Acts of Literature* (London: Routledge, 1992), 414-433.

of God ("I pray your Lord a word with me; / He bowed before the Queen of Tunis / And said I'll wait before the dais / And name you to His Holiness", Part III, stanza III). But she doesn't speculate at all about her experience as a foreign Queen, as a white woman in an African country – as a noticeably *white* woman indeed, if we have to believe the promise written in her name, which underlines her being 'claribel', that is twice beautiful, beautiful because 'clare', 'clara', 'clair', or 'brightly-fair' (as H.D. calls her in *By Avon River,* Part III, stanza IX).

Neither *The Tempest* nor *By Avon River* articulates the smallest guess about the language she would speak in Tunis or anywhere else. Still, *The Tempest* is a remarkably language-conscious text.

Characteristically, the first encounters of the newcomers on the island with natives and settlers are dominated by linguistic preoccupations. Stephano expresses his amazement when he hears Caliban speak his own language ("This is some monster of the isle with four legs, who has got, as I take it, an ague. Where the devil should he learn our language?", 2.2. 66-68). Ferdinand includes language in his ecstatic praise of Miranda's gifts ("My language? Heavens!", 1.2. 428). She speaks his own language. She belongs to the same "European Tribe" as him (as Caryl Phillips might have put it).[24] They are linguistically, and therefore ethnically, compatible. Ferdinand himself defines his nationality on a linguistic basis ("I am the best of them that speak this speech, / Were I but where 'tis spoken", 1.2. 429-30).

The attention to the linguistic medium of these encounters is doubly revealing as a marker of early colonial attitudes towards foreigners and their languages. On the one hand, we may detect a mild, but sure, sign of Anglocentrism in the implicit dis-identification of the specific languages spoken by the Italian characters who happen to meet on Caliban's island: Ferdinand's Neapolitan would hardly be the language spoken by the Duke of Milan, by his daughter and their native pupil. On the other hand, it stresses one of the main elements

[24] For a perceptive discussion of Caryl Phillips, *The European Tribe* (1987), see Marina De Chiara, "A Tribe called Europe", in Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti, eds., *The Post-Colonial Question. Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 228-233.

of the inclusion/exclusion divide, and one of the main instruments of definition of the dominator/dominated relationship. As the ruling classes of all historical empires have always known, a unified language constitutes ideal cement, and a powerful weapon of subjugation. Caliban's dispossession of his mother tongue and the imposition of the master's language upon him are notorious and widely discussed by post-colonial critics. On a contemporary and theoretical basis, Jacques Derrida has discussed the poignant and paradoxical condition of a colonial or postcolonial subject imprisoned in a monolingualism that is the monolingualism of the Other.[25]

If we may take the liberty to imagine Claribel's off-stage experience as a former Neapolitan Princess who was given in marriage to an African King, we cannot avoid reflecting on the monolingualism that would have been imposed upon her together with, and because of, her sexual subjugation. Would she remain mutilated of her mother tongue without developing another language? Or would she have reached linguistic competence in the language of the Other? Would she have found herself in a linguistic plight similar, though racially reversed, to the experience that Grace Nichols and other black women-writers would describe four centuries later?[26]

Idle though they are from a textual point of view, these questions might find an answer of a kind in at least one other Shakespearian text. Two related scenes in *Henry V* – Katherine's language lesson (3.4) and Henry's courtship (5.2) – illustrate the apprenticeship of a Princess to the linguistic and sexual yoke of a 'foreign' King. Katherine's mangled English exposes her cultural inferiority while the sexual puns with which it is riddled expose her body metaphorically. The wooing scene with its concluding kiss has been read as a symbolic rape.[27] Both scenes are deeply permeated with linguistic

[25] Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[26] See her short poem *Epilogue*, in *i is a long memoried woman* (London: Caribbean Cultural International Karnak House, 1983), 80: "I have crossed an ocean/ I have lost my tongue/ from the root of the old/ one/ a new one has sprang".

[27] This interpretation was proposed by Lance Wilkox, "Katherine of France as Victim and Bride", *Shakespeare Studies*, 17 (1985), 61-76. It is convincingly argumented in Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, "Gender and Nation: Anticipations of Modernity in the

awareness: the clash with the Other is also a linguistic clash. And the linguistic arena is a field structured in dominance no less than the military one. The affirmation of both masculinity and 'Englishness' coalesce in the theme of Katherine of France to support the overall ideological project of *Henry V*, and both operate through the assumption of English as the language in dominance.

But what can we think of the off-stage linguistic apprenticeship of Claribel of Naples '[lost] to an African' (in Sebastian's words quoted above)? Would it be a linguistic spoliation adding more bitterness to a marriage that could be defined 'sweet' only in jest or jibe?

... and ...what if the marriage worked out well, after all?

In an essay written in a contemporary epistolary form (as a sequel of e.mail messages sent by Miranda, from mirnfer@island.temp, to Claribel, at Claribel@palace.tunis), Linda Bamber abandons herself to the dream of a happy ending for Claribel's interracial marriage.[28] "Thank God your marriage has worked out so well", this is Miranda's relieved comment to one of the messages she receives back from her sister-in-law, when at last she decides to get in touch with her. Miranda is sending her messages from 'the island' she is visiting for the first time (after "23 or 400 years, depending on how you measure time") since the famous tempest took place. The occasion has been offered by a special edition of the 're-enactment': a tourist theatrical attraction organised on the sites of the great scenes of *The Tempest*.[29]

Second Tetralogy", in Kate Chedgzoy ed., *Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2001), 93-114. See also Bruce R. Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 126-129.

[28] Linda Bamber, "Claribel at Palace Dot Tunis", in Marianne Novy, ed., *Transforming Shakespeare. Contemporary Women's Re-Visions in Literature and Performance* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 1999), 237-257.

[29] "The place is now a major tourist attraction, and the archipelago of which it is a part has become quite prosperous. Its people serve tourists from Asia, Europe and the Americas; from everywhere, in fact, but your part of the world, Claribel. Africans don't come. They are not interested in our story because the one (part) African in it, Caliban, was a slave. His mother, Sycorax, was black. These are matters I think more and more

Alonso has just died and his death spurs Miranda to try to get in touch with Claribel as she has always wished to do. Claribel's replies are not reported: her answers are only referred to in Miranda's messages. She remains, like the original, a mute character, spoken about by other people; a trace, an echo, a mirror image of Miranda (or the other way round, as the latter ends up to think). In her first message, Miranda writes:

> Our fathers, rivals who became in-laws, were at the exact same moment marrying off their daughters for their own political advantage [...]. Prospero of course wanted me to fall in love with Ferdinand first, whereas Alonso had no such scruples; but what would have happened if I hadn't obligingly done so is something I don't like to think about. Perhaps I knew I had no choice. [...] Would it have been better or worse, I wonder, to have it out in the open, as it was between you and Alonso? You, at least, got to say no, even though it didn't stick. On the other hand, our marriage didn't feel, as yours did, forced. Which of us did well? (237)

She has remained the 'paragon' she had been in *The Tempest* (2.1. 72); that is, a 'model', but also a 'contrast'. Miranda feels as if she were following in Claribel's steps. She is starting to understand and experience what Claribel has already lived through. She admits it when she writes to Claribel:

> It is very moving to hear news at last about what feels like my own life; that is my life in you.. [...] Yes, we knew the reason you fought your marriage. Of course we knew! I can see how far in the past all that is for you and how exhausted it makes you to talk about it at all. It gives me hope that I, too, will some day be emancipated from racial categories and feel as exhausted as you do when called upon to revisit them. (240)

about. I seem to have woken up in the middle of an ugly racial drama, and I don't like my role one bit". Ibid., 238.

Later on in their correspondence, Miranda addresses Claribel as her "listening ear".[30] From the start Miranda had felt that Claribel was her 'alter ego'(237). And, however excessive Linda Bamber's efforts to find neat answers to the questions left open in Shakespeare's drama may appear, her reading of Claribel as Miranda's 'alter ego' is interesting.[31] Especially so, if one thinks of the literal meaning of the expression 'alter ego'; that is, 'an other I': a figure of difference and sameness at the same time, a figure of 'variation', or 'bigarrure', to borrow a term used by Christine Buci-Glucksmann in her fascinating analysis of Shakespeare's drama.[32]

It would be interesting to bring Buci-Glucksmann's reading of Shakespeare to bear upon H.D's re-vision of *The Tempest*, given H.D.'s deep passion for the Baroque and Mannerist *bigarrure*, and for its classic precedent, the Greek *poikilia*.[33] It would certainly add new elements to the understanding of the subterranean correspondence between H.D.'s re-vision and the subtly *bigarré* constellation of situations that echo in *The Tempest*, with finely tuned variations. But I doubt it would be helpful in providing an answer to the question posed – half in jest – in the title of this paper: did Claribel's marriage turn out to be 'sweet'?

While the rich ambiguity of Shakespeare's texts has always invited and accomodated widely differing interpretations, the open-endedness of H.D.'s re-visionary texts tends not to close any possibility of

[30] "Dear Claribel, Dear Ear, my dearest listening Ear, I can't get over the happiness of telling you things. It is as if an occluded star has revealed itself and is listening attentively to my messages. And I am the astronomer who always knew it was there!": this is the opening of one of Miranda's messages. Ibid., 240.

[31] In this somewhat facile fictionalised essay the main critical hypotheses formulated in recent criticism about *The Tempest* figure in the documentary material scattered along the tourist itinerary set up on the island, in the visitors reactions, and in the director's guidelines for the 're-enactment'.

[32] Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Tragique de l'ombre. Shakespeare et le manièrisme* (Paris: Galilée, 1990).

[33] She had become familiar with it while translating Hellenistic poetry from the *Greek Anthology* (especially Anyte's, Meleager's and Sappho's poems). She discussed this aspect with deep passion in *The Wise Sappho* and she became addicted to this mode of composition in her own writing. See Diane Collecott. *H.D. & Sapphic Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 16-18,

interpretation. *By Avon River* threw light on one aspect of *The Tempest* that had not yet received enough critical attention: the spectral presence of off-stage feminine characters. H.D. concentrated on that aspect with a sensibility that pre-dates feminist criticism by a few decades.[34] In the case of Claribel's marriage she was certainly alert to the gender implications of her muted presence in *The Tempest*. She was specifically alert to the gender implications of being given in marriage to 'a foreign fellow' (be he an Elector Palatine or a King of Tunis), to somebody living somewhere, between Bohemia and Tunisia, in a foreign country nobody cares to locate on a map. One cannot really say that she was blind to the hardship a woman might face when entering a mixed marriage. But she does not seem to be particularly alert to the fact that such a marriage was also an interethnic marriage. This deafness to the ethnic questions posed by Claribel's marriage might seem surprising in an author like H.D. who had personally worked at such artistic and cultural projects as *Borderline*, the film directed by Kenneth Macpherson in 1930 and the *Borderline Pamphlet* she wrote in the same year.[35] Both the film and the pamphlet upheld the cultural and artistic right to refuse all barriers or confines, the right to inhabit the 'borderline': a psychological and cultural area free from social stereotypes and traditional commonplaces, an area where it was possible and necessary to interpellate people without prejudices. Here is a passage from the pamphlet:

> These people are the riddles, they ask "why" and they ask "what" and they say "when is this or that not that or this?" When is an African not an African? When obviously he is an earth-god. When is a woman not a woman? When obviously she is sleet and hail and a stuffed sea-gull.

[34] In her essay of 1919, *Notes on Thought and Vision*, in *Notes on Thought and Vision and The Wise Sappho* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1982), she had anticipated notions that would be clearly articulated much later by feminist thinkers like Hélène Cixous.

[35] The pamphlet was published in an unsigned form to promote the film in 1930. H.D. had also starred in that film together with her partner, Bryher, the famous black actor Paul Robeson and his wife Eslanda.

> [The director] says when is white not white and when is white black and when is black white?[36]

She is aware of the utopian, dreamlike, quality of such a vision. "*Borderline* is a dream and perhaps when we say that we have said everything", she writes later on in the pamphlet (121). In her dream there would be no ethnic divides and, perhaps, it would be idle to ask whether Claribel's marriage would be sweet or sour.

[36] H.D., *The Borderline Pamphlet*, in Bonnie Kime Scott, ed., *The Gender of Modernism. A Critical Anthology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 111.

Jane Wilkinson

Hosting, Healing and Hostility: Thresholds of Hospitality in Orson Welles's "Voodoo" *Macbeth*[*]

Mal. ... Comes the King forth, I pray you?
Doct. Aye, Sir; there are a crew of wretched souls,
That stay his cure ...
Mal. ... How he solicits Heaven,
Himself best knows; but strangely-visited creatures
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures; ...
... and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy;
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace.
(*Macbeth*, 5.3. 140-142; 149-152; 154-159)[1]

Strangely-visited creatures

"Strangely-visited creatures" is how Malcolm defines the patients who await the healing touch of Edward the Confessor in *Macbeth*,

[*] This essay is a rethinking, in terms of hospitality, of parts of my *The Cripples at the Gate: Orson Welles's "Voodoo" Macbeth* (forthcoming, Roma: Bulzoni, 2003).
[1] All quotations from *Macbeth* are taken from the Arden edition.

5.3. 150. Their bodies are marked by the disease or "Evil" they involuntarily host. An uninvited, hostile guest has invaded their inner beings and is now transforming their outer appearance into a grotesque spectacle of excess and rupture. Emphasizing their lack of agency, Malcolm represents them as the passive object of a visiting – a visiting whose "strangeness" defines it as undefinable, unknowable, a site in which the familiar and the unfamiliar are uncannily conjoined.

Edward's patients are caught in a double bind. In so far as the access to their inner selves was not something that depends on their volition, they cannot be considered hosts. Yet there is no doubt that their bodies *are* hosting an alien and alienating presence; and while this presence deprives them of the power to act as hosts, it also involves them in an ulterior form of hospitality. Hosting, according to Jacques Derrida's "first law of hospitality", requires that the host remain "the master of the household," that he "maintain his authority in his own home … thus limiting the gift proffered and making of this limitation, namely, the being-oneself in one's own home, the condition of the gift and of hospitality".[2] At the same time, hospitality is only hospitality if it goes beyond itself. It is in this sense that the creatures are the subject/object of hospitality: a hospitality which can only "produce itself as impossible, only be possible on the condition of its impossibility"; not therefore a "hospitality of invitation", but of "visitation".[3]

The manner of the visiting is in fact less "strange" than Malcolm's words suggest. The affliction that has struck the wretched souls actuates some of the negative acceptations of the term "to visit" listed in the O.E.D. (which outnumber its positive meanings). Immediately after the initial definition of "visit" as coming to persons: 1. "in order to comfort or benefit" (a form of visiting attributed to the Deity), and – more menacingly – 2. "in order to observe or examine conduct or disposition, to make trial of; to subject to test or scrutiny", comes a variety of negative meanings. The third and particularly the fourth are the most appropriate to the passage in *Macbeth*:

[2] Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality", transl. Barry Stocker with Forbes Morlock, *Angelaki. Journal of of the Theoretical Humanities*, 5 (December 2000), 3; 4.

[3] Ibid., 5; 14.

3. a. To inflict hurt, harm, or punishment upon…; to deal severely or hardly with…; † to cut off, cause to die….
   b. To afflict or distress *with* sickness, poverty, or the like….
   c. To deprive *of* something. *rare*….
4. a. Of sickness, etc.: To come upon…, to assail or afflict. Freq. in passive….
   b. *spec.* in *pass*. Bewitched.

Malcolm's "strangely" could however be linked not so much to the manner of the visit, or to its effects on its recipients, the hosting bodies, as to the "strange" nature of the visitor. The guest as stranger or foreigner is extraneous to the place that he is visiting; he comes "from outside", is "unknown to the locality of the visit", is "other than one's own" to borrow some of the O.E.D's definitions of "extraneous". Illness in *Macbeth* is almost always perceived as coming from without, an unsolicited presence of intrusive or invasive foreign bodies or parasitic guests that need to be expelled, whether by surgery or medicine. This applies to national infections: Scotland's contamination by the English – according to Macbeth – or its ravaging by the cancerous monster it has itself developed, the "self-contradiction [harboured] in its own body"[4]: Macbeth, according to his adversaries. But it also applies to individual ills such as the "rooted sorrows" that weigh on Lady Macbeth's "mind diseased" or the scorpions that have invaded the mind of Macbeth. Moreover, the "Evil", which can only be cured with heavenly soliciting and the touch of God's representative on earth, suggests a visiting of diabolical or, conversely and equally possibly, divine origin (cfr. the O.E.D.'s references to the Vulgate uses of the term as referring to an affliction, punishment or vengeance willed by God). Thus the wretched crew's guest may also be seen as a more absolute form of otherness, falling within the categories Derrida interrogates in "Hostipitality":

[4] Derrida's definition of "hostility" as the parasitic contradiction incorporated in "hospitality", ibid., 3.

what can be said of, indeed can one speak of hospitality toward the non-human, the divine, for example, or the animal or vegetable; does one owe hospitality, and is that the right word when it is a question of welcoming – or being made welcome by – the other or the stranger [*l'étranger*] as god, animal or plant …?[5]

Although "visited" is only explicitly applied to the illness of Edward's patients, Malcolm's anecdote also contains allusions to another visit, perhaps even other visits. The strangely-visited creatures are themselves the wanted, welcome guests of the royal Host who has the power to free them of their illness. Edward's healing hospitality is indeed a demonstration of his sovereign quality and mastery, sovereign in the sense both of "royal or supreme, and powerfully remedial".[6] And yet, although the function of hosting is undoubtedly attributed to the King – the scene takes place in "A room in the King's palace" according to the Arden stage directions – his hosting too has contradictory implications. Edward needs the wretched crew's illness in order to prove his worth as king. There is a give-and-take relationship between King and patients, royal doctor and diseased subjects, host and guests. The patients depend on their kingly curer, but he too depends on them and on *their* estranging guest, the Evil, for the recognition of his identity as saintly healer, host and king. Moreover, it is he who is expected to "come forth" and therefore 'visit' the guests who "stay his cure". It is I think significant that Malcolm should qualify as "strange" both the visiting illness and its antidote, the kingly gift or "virtue", underlining the aporetic crossroads on which both visits are located.

Finally, since visiting is intimately and etymologically connected with "seeing" (O.E.D.: "L. *visitāre* to go to see, to inspect, etc., frequentative of *vīsāre*, f. *vīs*, ppl. stem of *vidēre* to see), it is possible to detect a further variation on the theme in Malcolm's description of the swollen, ulcerous bodies as being "pitiful to the *eye*". But despite this reference to sight, neither Edward nor his patients ever appear on stage,

[5] Ibid., 4.

[6] Note to Lenox's use of the term sovereign in 5.2. 30 ("To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds"), Arden edition, quoting Clarendon, 143.

and the episode is usually eliminated in theatrical productions (together with almost all or all of the rest of the scene).[7] Within the play-text, the double, self-contradictorily and troublingly contaminating/curative manifestation of hospitality is only spoken of. Shakespeare's hosting of the strangely-visited creatures stops on the threshold. They are admitted to Edward's court and to the gaze of its regular visitors, becoming the object of their pity. But they are only admitted indirectly to the play in performance, hosted by the hearing and imagination of the audience, not its eye. They are part of Malcolm's narrative, not of the Shakespearean production. Talked about but not presented, their obscene bodies are kept off-stage, out of sight.

In Orson Welles's 1936 production of *Macbeth* at the Lafayette Theatre in Harlem, for the Negro Theatre Unit of the Works Progress Administration, the strangely-visited creatures are brought on stage, made to come forth on two separate occasions as the would-be guests of two different sovereigns. The first king that they await is no longer Edward the Confessor, but another saintly sovereign, Duncan; the second, his anything-but-saintly successor, Macbeth. Their double appearance is made all the more striking by their spectacularly 'monstrous' physical anomalies, which instead of keeping them out of sight, if not of mind, as in Shakespeare's play, ensure their visibility and memorability. Curiously, however, their presence seems to have been ignored in the reviews of the opening performance. And although the Cripples – as Welles defines them – are mentioned in a few more recent critical reconstructions, they are given little attention. Susan McCloskey opens her article with a wonderful description of one of their appearances, but doesn't follow this through with any specific comment.[8] Richard France sees them as "piteous reminders of Macbeth's damnation."[9] Bret Wood defines their presence as a "purely visual device" intended to heighten "the climate of deranged

[7] It is also absent from Paul Kottman's thought-provoking treatment of hospitality in *Macbeth* in "Hospitality in the Interval: *Macbeth*'s Door", *The Oxford Literary Review*, 18 (1996), 87-115.

[8] Susan McCloskey, "Shakespeare, Orson Welles, and the 'Voodoo' *Macbeth*", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 36 (Winter 1985), 406.

[9] Richard France, "The Voodoo Macbeth", in *The Theatre of Orson Welles* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977), 58-9.

humanity." This is interesting, as is his definition of them as "exaggerated mutants", but then, disappointingly, he concentrates on the religious implications of their search for a royal blessing, comparing them with the religious elements of Welles's film version.[10] Gherardo Casale connects them briefly to the motif of illness and disorder.[11]

In this article, I shall seek to redress the balance. There is a curious analogy between on-stage endeavours to lock the Cripples – and other troubling presences – not only out of the castle but out of sight and mind and the Harlem spectators' attempt to erase them from memory. In both cases, the Cripples are an unwanted presence. Unwelcome, uninvited visitors nobody wants to give asylum to, they are "perilous stuff", like Lady Macbeth's "rooted sorrows" or Macbeth's scorpions or, indeed, the swellings and ulcers they themselves are visited by.

If we compare the Cripples' presence in the Harlem production with that of Shakespeare's play, however, we see that although Welles brings them to visibility, their admittance to the stage does not imply an improvement in their status as visitors, or guests, of the royal healer/host. Quite the contrary. Not only is Duncan, unlike Edward, *not* going to "come forth" in the "Voodoo" *Macbeth*, but the Priest who accompanies them and provides the description of their ailment proceeds immediately to shut the gates, locking them out of the castle and himself with them. Moreover, in this first appearance, although they "fill" the gateway, they do not pass through it. According to the stage directions in the *Macbeth* script, they remain on the threshold, or just outside. On their next appearance, they cross the threshold and move beyond, entering the playing space as they come closer and closer to the site of kingly power and of royal hospitality and healing; but by the end of the scene, unwelcomed and unhealed, they are back in their original position: "The courtyard is in shadows. The Cripples are strange shapes, in the gateway". But if their positioning is the same, their appearance and visibility have changed. Shakespeare's "strangely-visited creatures" have been progressively dehumanised,

[10] Bret Wood, *Orson Welles: A Biobibliography* (New York, Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1990), 33.

[11] Gherardo Casale, *L'incantesimo è compiuto. Shakespeare secondo Orson Welles* (Torino: Lindau, 2001), 118.

transformed into "strange shapes". And they don't appear again. Not, that is, in either the "Voodoo" *Macbeth* or any of Welles's other *Macbeths*.[12] But they do appear in another Wellesian production: *The Unthinking Lobster*, staged in France and Germany in 1950, where, once again, their presence is disturbing and has to be removed.[13]

Walls, gates and thresholds

The gateway isn't the only access to the castle, but it is the most important. While the main emblems of kingly and military power, the tower and the throne, are given a lateral location, the gateway is at the centre or almost at the centre of the stage. A potential opening in the enclosure of the castle wall, it is intended to enable or prevent and in any case control all access from the outside world – which in Welles's production means the jungle. With the building of a wall, "a piece of space [is] ... brought together and separated from the whole remaining world," as Georg Simmel observes in his 1909 essay "Bridge and Door". "Precisely because it can also be opened," he continues, the presence of a closed door – or gateway – within the wall "provides the feeling of a stronger isolation against everything outside this space than the mere unstructured wall. The latter is mute, but the door speaks." The human being, Simmel concludes,

> is the connecting creature who must always separate and cannot connect without separating. ... And the human being is likewise the bordering creature who has no border. The enclosure of his or her domestic being by the door means, to be sure, that they have separated out a piece from the uninterrupted unity of natural being. But just as the formless limitation takes on a shape, its limitedness finds its significance and dignity only in that which the mobility of the door illustrates: in the possibility at any moment of stepping out of this limitation into freedom.

[12] In the film version, the only physical reminder of the appearance of the Cripples is Seyton (played by Welles's dwarf butler).

[13] I discuss the connections between the "Voodoo" *Macbeth* and *The Unthinking Lobster* in *The Cripples at the Gate*.

The gate, in Welles's production, "the image of the boundary point at which human beings actually always stand or can stand", connects the finite unity of Macbeth's castle to the unboundaried space outside. Bound to the gate more closely than are any of the other characters in the play, the Cripples share at least some of its qualities. "Bordering creatures who have no border", their silent presence conveys a possibility of opening, un-delimiting and un-defining similar both to that which is implied in Simmel's "permanent interchange" between finite unity and infinite space,[14] and perhaps to Derrida's positing of an unconditional, simultaneously doored and doorless, unknowable hospitality:

> To take up the figure of the door, for there to be hospitality, there must be a door. But if there is a door, there is no longer hospitality. ... [A]s soon as there are a door and windows, it means that someone has the key to them and consequently controls the conditions of hospitality. There must be a threshold. But if there is a threshold, there is no longer hospitality. This is the difference, the gap, between the hospitality of invitation and the hospitality of visitation.[15]

In Welles's production, the official space of hospitality is heavily delimited and conditioned. The design of the "Voodoo" *Macbeth* is based on an apparently very simple opposition between boundaried castle or palace and boundariless jungle, and thus between architecture and nature, the civilized and the wild, inside and outside, shelter and exposure. But this is complicated – and largely undermined – by the way the binary poles are represented. There is in fact a further opposition between the realistic, tridimensional, architectural volume and solidity of the tower and ramparts of Macbeth's castle and the stylised, bidimensional, forest backdrops which cover it in the jungle scenes or appear behind it as a constant reminder of what lies beyond. Rather than being a living, 'natural'

[14] Georg Simmel, "Bridge and Door", transl. Mark Ritter, in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, eds., *Simmel on Culture. Selected Writings* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997), 172; 174; 172; 173.
[15] Derrida, "Hostipilality", 14.

and therefore uncontrollable entity, the jungle is represented on-stage as a painted, constructed, man-controlled presence. Its stylised patterns recall textile designs, illustrations to popular literature on Haiti and the paintings of Le Douanier Rousseau. But also the tropical jungle motifs that decorated the night-clubs of Harlem's "Jungle Alley", where white New Yorkers could find an exotic heart of darkness conveniently close to home. In the "Voodoo" *Macbeth* these are developed into a more menacing though equally artificial version – or versions. Now appearing as stylised tree patterns, now as the transmogrification of gigantic bamboo stems into a reclining skeleton, infusing the spectacle with a sense of death, Welles's jungle appears and disappears, rises and falls, collapsing finally behind the battlements and ramparts of the castle as a scenic echo to the soldiers' discarding of the palm branches they have cut down in Birnam Wood.

The jungle provides a specular image against which – and therefore through which – the palace may assert its existence and its power. But by the end of the play it is difficult to establish which has supremacy. The danger of the jungle lies not so much in its apparent alienness, as in its being both external and internal to the palace: a potential trespasser, intruder and usurper. Its "strangeness" is something the palace can neither keep away from its own being, however many and varied the barriers it erects, nor ever fully acknowledge and either purge from its interior, or accommodate and comprehend as a guest in whom it recognizes another version of the self. In the final scene, when the army discards its branches and the jungle collapses, the mastery of the palace might seem definitive. Yet in Welles's production it is no longer Duncan's heir, Malcolm, but Hecate, the whip-bearing witch-master and forest-dweller, who "winds up" the spell of the performance with his closing but also re-initiating words.

In a context such as this, the function of the gateway is of paramount importance. By admitting or excluding access from the external world, it confirms or denies the authority of the host, separating and connecting and generally, as Simmel puts it, extending "our volitional sphere over space".[16] Hospitality in Welles's castle is heavily regimented and conditioned, as is

[16] Simmel, "Bridge and Door", 171.

evidenced at the start of the first palace scene both by the presence of a Porter beside the gateway and by the complex structure of the gate itself, including both wooden doors and railing. When the railing opens or is pushed aside and made to disappear into the wall, the jungle is fully revealed, but even when it is shut it is still possible to glimpse the jungle between the spokes. Photographs of the last scene show a third protective device in the form of a gigantic portcullis, which however, instead of offering added security to the gateway, is constructed in such a way as to cover the area above the palace ramparts with a somewhat ineffective grille, acting more as a typically Wellesian web- or cage-like prison for the inhabitants of the palace than as a defence against the outside world.

The protection of the gateway is in fact illusory. Hecate and the Witches are able to access the castle and its barriers at will, appearing and disappearing as, where and when they please, whether in visible, bodily form or through the sound of their derisive cackling, chants or voodoo drums. Unlike the other characters, they tend not to "enter" or "exit", but to "appear" and "disappear" mysteriously, whether in the palace courtyard or, more characteristically, on the ramparts or battlements of the tower. Their appearance *within* the palace underlines how much less secure Welles's castle is than Shakespeare's, where Banquo's ghost is the only visibly invasive supernatural presence, apart perhaps from the mysterious dagger. As the play proceeds, Welles's Witches penetrate further and further into Macbeth's stronghold, reaching Lady Macbeth's bedchamber in the sleepwalking scene and replacing the Doctor and Gentlewoman. Moreover, as already anticipated, in the final scene of the performance the world of the jungle is itself on stage, *within* the castle walls. Represented first, if only temporarily, by the leafy masking of Malcolm's army, then by the presence of the Witches, the voodoo men and women and Hecate, the jungle is part of the collective "*all*" of the new order that Hecate, not Malcolm, imposes:

HECATE
Peace!
(Drums, army, music, voodoo voices – all are instantly silent.)
The charm's wound up!

****

BLACKOUT

END[17]

Models of humanity

In Shakespeare's play, as De Quincey observes, the beginning of the process of exposure and restoration is signalled by the knocking on the gate, the Porter's drunken representations of farmers, Jesuits and tailors, and finally his opening of the gate to the world outside after the suffocatingly isolated horror of the murder. In Welles's text the popular world is represented by the Cripples (Brett Wood's "deranged humanity") and its admittance takes place in a very different fashion. The gate, for a start, has already served to grant ceremonial access to Duncan and his court. This processional, royal entry marks it as the most significant, empowering, official mode of acceding to the palace courtyard or "playing space", the main site of acting and the arena of human action and agency (*Ms* 6).

As the next representatives of humanity to appear at the gate after the entry of Duncan and his court and therefore of a paradigmatic image of fullness and perfection, the Cripples inevitably recall this model or 'paragon' of humanity. Like the court, they form a multiple presence. Although only five different actors' names are listed in the dramatis personae, the production photograph shows what appear to be six on stage. The stage directions give yet another number for the Cripples' second appearance, speaking of two figures entering one after the other and followed by "a dozen or so" (*Ms* 21). The orderly succession in which they limp or halt across the stage makes their relationship to Duncan's court even more evident, offering not only a low, grotesque version of the ceremonial visit, but a possible anticipation of other processional visitations: the Show of Kings; Macbeth's vision of the future as a sequence of infinitely identical, senseless

[17] *Macbeth* script, by courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 56.

"tomorrows", "creep[ing] in their petty pace from day to day"; the female funeral procession bearing Lady Macbeth's body into the courtyard to the accompaniment of "high pitched chorus wails" and voodoo song (*Ms* 53); or, finally, the arrival of Malcolm's army alias the "moving grove" of Birnam Wood or the jungle: "The tops of palm trees begin slowly to rise over the battlements, jungle creeps in the gates – slowly, slowly" (*Ms* 54).

Doomed to remain unhealed, since Macbeth has not only murdered their saintly healer, Duncan, but is unable to assume his kingly functions, the Cripples represent the future of humanity now that "renown and grace is dead." Both in Nat Karson's costume designs and in a production photograph, they appear to be not only deformed but "unfinished", "borderless" beings, "scarce half made up" like Richard III, or made twice over.[18] One of Karson's Cripples has a wooden stump instead of a leg and is headless, his elongated neck emerging from what seems to be a convict's ragged smock. Another is a hunchback, with bandaged feet, one arm rigidly akimbo, the other unnaturally long, though its length is partly hidden by its multiple articulation: where the wrist should connect with a hand the arm twists back in a double loop as if it were beginning again and the wrist had turned into a second shoulder leading to a second elbow and second wrist, terminating, at last, in a huge, simian hand. In the production photograph, the fifth Cripple may either be two separate beings or a figure with a double body and members, conjoined only in the formless, veiled excrescence that corresponds to a misshapen head or headless neck, at the base of which it is possible to make out the blurred form of what is or was perhaps a head. Their appearance recalls the "intolerable ambiguity" Elizabeth Grosz sees in freaks, "creatures at the limit", beings who are "a peril to the very definitions we rely on to classify humans, identities, and sexes – our most fundamental categories of self-definition and boundaries dividing self from otherness".[19]

[18] *King Richard III*, 1.1. 20-21.

[19] Elizabeth Grosz, "Intolerable Ambiguity: Freaks as/at the Limit", in Rosemarie Garland Thomson, ed., *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1966), 57.

The Cripples are however also Haitian. Welles's Haiti was largely invented, as he told a *New York Times* reporter: "it isn't Haiti at all. It's like the island *The Tempest* was put on – just a mythical place which, because our company is composed of negroes, may be anywhere in the West Indies".[20] Yet he and Karson did do a certain amount of research for the production. The first of the Cripples resembles the voodoo Papa Legba, for example, a degraded version of Eshu-Elegba, the West African god of thresholds, crossroads, market-places, traffic and communication, frequently identified as a divine messenger and guardian to the gates of paradise. In Haiti he became a "sort of doorman". Represented as an old, crippled peasant or beggar, in rags and tatters, his body bent over his crutch or cane, in keeping with his nickname, "Legba-pied-cassé", he is called on at the beginning of voodoo rites to "remove the barrier" and "open the gates" (*l'uvri bayé*) that divide men from spirits, allowing the spirits of the dead to visit the living.[21]

A double referent emerges. Malcolm's description, evoking a rite belonging to medieval and renaissance Europe, is recontextualized within Welles's representation of the culture of Haiti. This is and is not *Macbeth*. These are and are not Shakespeare's words. (Just as Welles's Haiti is and is not Haiti). The new location produces a sense of both proximity and distance. Its effect is similar to that of the flatness and unmimetic nature of the jungle backdrops, foregrounding the unreality and constructedness of Welles's adaptation and inducing the spectator to rethink the mechanisms of performance. If, as Rosemarie Garland Thomson suggests, anomalous bodies "gesture toward other modes of being and confuse comforting distinctions between what is human and what is not", proving "fundamental to the narratives by which we make sense of ourselves and our world", Welles's Cripples, too, are an "interpretive occasion", existing in a

[20] Bosley Crowther, *New York Times* (5 April 1936), cit. in Callow, 2.

[21] For a useful survey of the Haitian transformations of the West African Eshu, referring to work by Alfred Métraux, Max Beauvoir, Harold Courlander and others, see Donald Cosentino, "Who is that Fellow in the Many-colored Cap? Transformations of Eshu in Old and New World Mythologies", *Journal of American Folklore*, 100 (July-September, 1987), 397; 261-275.

"realm of hyper-representation"[22] and involving both the other characters they interact with and the audience in their problematic, puzzling presence. Both as freaks[23] and as versions of Papa Legba, they are figures of interchange and passage, expressing a will to connection and opening rather than to separation and closure.[24] But their will to connection is left without response.

Uninvited sights

When they first arrive on stage, the Cripples appear in the open gateway as Lady Macbeth is ending her lesson in duplicity with instructions to her husband to "Look like the innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't!" (*Ms* 9). They remain at the gateway after she has left, silently gazing at Macbeth as he begins his "If it were done when 'tis done" monologue. His speech is broken off half-way through the sixth line, after "We'd jump the life to come", at the arrival of the Priest, and is only resumed (with the omission of several lines, including, interestingly, his considerations on his duties as "host, / who should against his murtherer shut the door, / not bear the knife myself"), after he is once again alone. The relationship between Macbeth and the Cripples is in fact established not by his words or by those of the priestly interpreter-manager of the little band, but by an interplay of gazes. Macbeth is caught between two unwanted objects of vision: the Cripples' gaze on the one hand, which he tries to avoid, and, on the other, the tower that houses the bedchamber of his royal guest, which he "can't keep his eyes from". As "*strangely*-visited people... pitiful to the eye" (emphasis mine), the Cripples'

[22] "Introduction: From Wonder to Error. A Genealogy of Freak Discourse in Modernity", in *Freakery*, 1-3.

[23] Welles's "grotesque, silent, little army" (*Ms* 21), representing a series of faulty, freakish variations on the human form, is also a disturbing reminder of another grotesque little army, that of Tod Browning's film *Freaks* (1932), which had appeared amidst much controversy only four years before the "Voodoo" *Macbeth*. Here the freaks' revenge against a 'normal' couple and the monstrous metamorphosis the visiting of their revenge produces subvert the categories of normality and abnormality, monstrosity and beauty.

[24] I borrow the expression "will to connection" from Simmel, "Bridge and Door", 171.

strangeness recalls that which is exhibited in Macbeth's own aspect. "Your face, my Lord, is as a book, where men may read *strange* matters" is the beginning of the speech with which Lady Macbeth provides the cue for their appearance at the gateway. The sight Macbeth is trying to avoid is thus only indirectly that of the multiple but also mutilated, disabled, incomplete forms he finds before him. What he is seeking to cancel is the reflection, within their multiplicity and abnormality, of his own strangeness and of the double, flower/serpent identity he must now assume. What they restore to him is thus not only their image as alternative versions of humanity, but the image *of himself* that is hosted in their gaze.

Both of the Cripples' appearances seem to be a self-reflexive "horrid sight", the scene of an unwanted seeing of a seeing, projecting an "otherness" that interrogates the self, an abnormality that calls the normal into question. Leslie Fiedler's analysis of his own reactions to the sight of Siamese twins in a circus museum sideshow, the "Congress of Strange People", seems pertinent to the effect of the Cripples on Macbeth – and thus, at least indirectly, on his audience:

> Confronting them, I could feel the final horror evoked by Freaks stir to life: a kind of vertigo like that experienced by Narcissus when he beheld his image in the reflecting waters and plunged to his death. In joined twins the confusion of self and other, substance and shadow, ego and other, is more terrifyingly confounded than it is when the child first perceives face to face in the mirror an image moving as he moves, though clearly in another world. In that case, at least, there are only two participants, the perceiver and the perceived; but standing before Siamese twins, the beholder sees them looking not only at each other, but – both at once – at him. And for an instant it may seem to him that he is a third brother, bound to the pair before him by an invisible bond; so that the distinction between audience and exhibit, we and them, normal and Freak, is revealed as an illusion.[25]

[25] Leslie Fiedler, *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 36.

While the cue for the Cripples' first appearance was Lady Macbeth's description of the "strange" contents of Macbeth's visage and the need for him to assume a double identity, the cue for their return is Macbeth's lament about the voiding and debasement of life resulting from Duncan's murder. If their initial appearance may be seen as an embodiment – or projection – of the "strange matters" to be read in Macbeth's face, their second is a bringing to presence of the "mere lees" that remain behind when "The wine of life is drawn" (*Ms* 21). A dehumanizing process is at work, spreading throughout the world of the play and assuming new and different connotations in the process. Significantly, the Priest is no longer present.[26] In their first scene the Cripples appear to be under the jurisdiction – as subjects, patients and guests – of two different authorities and healers: the kingly authority of Duncan and the religious authority of the Priest; in the second, although they are the subjects and would-be patients and guests of the new king, Macbeth, they are far more evidently and intimately linked to the magic power and mastery of Hecate: closer, that is, to the "strange", misshapen, metamorphic world of the jungle than to the apparently clear-cut, fixed formations of the castle and of human institutions.[27] At the end of the scene, Hecate and the Witches appear as birds of prey, the Cripples – as we have seen – as "strange shapes in the gateway". Only Macbeth maintains a 'normal' human appearance, but his home – like his mind – is invaded by alien beings, and even as he witnesses the bestial transformations of his unwanted, uninvited visitors, confirming not only the predatory nature of their trespassing but their undermining of his dominion as householder and host, the "forbidding" of his own humanity is being announced by Hecate from the highest and therefore most authoritative, masterful position on stage: "the very top of the tower" (*Ms* 22).

From the beginning of the play, the distinctions between jungle and castle have been simultaneously emphasized and blurred. Here, too, in the identification of the Cripples' alternative masters, the Priest in their first and Hecate in their second appearance, a similar process

[26] At least according to the stage directions. In the production photograph he is present behind the Cripples.

[27] On the "strangeness" and excess of Shakespeare's Witches, see Alessandro Serpieri, "*Macbeth*: il tempo della paura", in *Retorica e immaginario* (Parma: Pratiche, 1986).

is at work. Far from distinguishing their respective owners as belonging to opposing spheres, both the Priest's staff and Hecate's whip recall the props of voodoo rites, the *bâtons* or *jonks* and bull-whips that are still carried in processions[28] and which, in turn, are a remembrance of the island's slave history and the sufferings of its slave population at the hands of plantation owners and cane- and whip-bearing overseers. A remembrance that does not belong solely to the history of Haiti, whose very existence as a state derived from the success of the slaves' revolt against their masters, but to the much longer slave history of America. A remembrance, too, that connects past with present, projecting towards the future as it recalls the colonial scenarios recently opened up by the US occupation of Haiti and now, at the time of Welles's production, by Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, viewed by African Americans as "an assault upon the last Black Nation".[29]

The Cripples do not appear again on stage in the course of the play. They seem to be absent even in the final scene, when Duncan's son, Malcolm, the new occupant of the royal throne, is hailed by the worlds of both palace and jungle and the "charm" is "wound up" again by Hecate. At the end of the play, the grotesque little army that came to greet Macbeth and seek a possible healing has been replaced by Malcolm's ungrotesque big army composed of human soldiers, enabled by their leafy disguise (a transformation produced by Hecate) first to be assimilated into the jungle and then, through its discarding, to be restored to the human world. Significantly, in Welles's version of *Macbeth*, the "moving grove" of Birnam begins to rise over the battlements and come or "creep" on stage, through the gates, "slowly, slowly", in a movement that cannot but recall the advancing on the one hand of the Cripples and, on the other, the "creeping" and "petty pace" of the endless succession of tomorrows Macbeth has just finished describing. Photographs of the final scenes of Welles's Macbeth show a heterogeneous population on stage where it is

[28] See Susan Elizabeth Tselos, "Threads of Reflection: Costumes of Haitian Rara", *African Arts*, xxix (Spring 1996), 59 and 64.

[29] Roi Ottley, *The Negro in New York. An Informal Social History 1626-1940*, ed. Roi Ottley and William J. Weatherby (New York, Washington, London: Progress Publishers, 1969), 281.

difficult to distinguish Malcolm's soldiers from the voodoo chorus. But if the Cripples are excluded from the final reunion, their freakish function as "absolute otherness" is not. A new anomaly, or "absolute other" of the reconstituted public order is displayed to the public gaze as Macbeth's head is raised.[30]

The goodly sight of the new king's enthroned figure may be intended to constitute a visual opposition to the monstrous image of the Tyrant's severed head. But although the stage resounds with the reunited population's hailing of its monarch, a word from Hecate reduces all to silence, confirming his identity as the true master, not only of the Witches and voodoo men and women, but of the whole of the community, Malcolm included: in Welles's version it is Hecate who utters the final words. The new king will be under Hecate's jurisdiction. No longer sought after as healer,[31] the 'sovereign' host is now a guest, in hostage to the jungle.

[30] Fiedler speaks of the way the "strangely formed body" has always represented "absolute Otherness" in his Foreword to *Freakery*, xiii.

[31] Among the many cuts in Welles's script is the definition of Malcolm as the "med'cine of the sickly weal" (5.2. 27).

REVIEWS

"Shakespeare nell'arte", Ferrara, Palazzo dei Diamanti, 16 febbraio – 15 giugno 2003
Londra, Dulwich Picture Gallery, 16 luglio – 19 ottobre 2003

Reviewed by Roberto D'Avascio

Ariel riding strange creatures looking like bats, Bottom's donkey head, Juliet's last kiss to Romeo: these are only some of the 18th-19th century illustrations of William Shakespeare's tragic and marvellous world. Since the end of the 17th century Shakespeare's dramas have been performed in the theatre more than any other playwright's and this exhibition "Shakespeare e le arti", organised by Ferrara Arte and the Dulwich Picture Gallery of London and selected by Jane Martineau and Maria Grazia Messina, presents a choice of eighty-two paintings inspired by Shakespeare's works during the 18th and 19th centuries. It is the first exhibition on the subject ever organised in Italy and the first in England for about thirty years. Around the middle of the 18th century Shakespeare became the paradigm of English genius and the success of Shakespearean subjects in painting began to influence and inspire painters of different historical periods and artistic tendencies: from exponents of the Sublime to Neo-classicists and Romantics, to Pre-Raphaelites. This bardolatry had its origin in England at the end of the 18th century, thanks to Shakespeare's Jubilee celebrated by David Garrrick in 1769 and to the creation of the Shakespeare Galleries by John Boydell and James Woodmason between 1789 and 1793.

The Ferrara exhibition testifies to the first steps and growth of artistic bardolatry between the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, showing imaginary portraits of the poet and paintings narrating equally imaginary episodes of his life, such as the *Imaginary Portrait of Shakespeare* by William Blake, *Shakespeare and his Friends at the Mermaid Tavern* by John Faed and the ideal portrait painted by Angelica Kauffmann. The chronological itinerary of the exhibition starts in 1730, at which time painters wished to represent contemporary performances according to the

spirit of the portraiture of the time. The paintings of William Hogarth, Francis Hyman and Francesco Zuccarelli are examples of this theatrical portraiture trend, which has its most famous painting in *Falstaff Reviewing his Troops* by Hogarth. This conventional painting is followed by the works of the painters of the Sublime, who expressed a different vision of Shakespearean dramas: this innovative style began to develop in the mid-eighteenth century, aiming to transpose into painting all the fantasy, feelings and passions of Shakespeare's poetry. The aesthetics of the Sublime had an important impact on the culture of the time, leading the painters who embraced this theory to a more passionate reading and painting of Shakespeare's dramas. Painters such as Runciman, Abilgaard, Barry, Füssli, Romney despise a naturalistic rendering of the subject, the marmoreal smoothness of forms and colours typical of the academic neoclassical style, seeking rather to find what was obscure and undefined to the senses. The impassioned Swiss painter Füssli shows a vivid and fantastical representation of the playwright's imagination in different paintings: in the mannerist Italian influence of *The Vision of Queen Katherine* and, above all, in the terrifying painting *The Three Witches* it is possible to grasp a strong visionary dimension of Shakespeare's plays, advancing beyond a naturalistic theatrical representation.

A large part of the exhibition displays paintings of theatrical productions between the 18th and 19th century in England: Shakespearean actors and actresses, staging and scenery. The most frequently represented actor in 18th century painting was certainly David Garrick, whose presence on the London stage greatly contributed to consolidating the cult of Shakespeare in England. Garrick was also a supporter of theatrical painting, through which he aimed to promote himself as well as to popularise Shakespeare's theatre. Garrick is depicted in several paintings: in 1771 Nathaniel Dance-Holland portrays him in the heroic pose of Richard III, the character he played in his debut in London in 1741. Garrick was enthusiastic about this portrait, which gave nobleness and greatness to his Richard, concealing the misshapen countenance of his character; in 1757 Benjamin Wilson represents him as Romeo both in a scene built in a Shakespearean inner stage and with Juliet, who wakes up before the poison takes effect on her lover. Johann Joseph Zoffany is the author of the most important work showing Garrick: *David Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard in Macbeth*. The couple worked together from 1748 to 1768, when Hanna Pritchard retired from the stage. The painting dates back to 1768 and shows the famous scene in which the look of terror

and the movement of his bloody hands offer an indisputable proof of Garrick's ability as an actor. In 1812 Füssli painted the same scene, with the title of *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth*. Many years before Füssli had seen Garrick playing the part of Macbeth: Garrick's and Pritchard's faces may be seen behind the fearful, infernal masks of the characters. Apart from Garrick, the exhibition shows other famous actors of the 18th century such as Mrs Cibber, who is depicted by Pieter Van Bleeck in the role of Cordelia, and Charles Macklin portrayed by Zoffany as Shylock, in which the actor's black body is surrounded by a shining halo causing it to stand out against the neutral background of the painting.

In the 19th century, Shakespearean painting showed other great actors of both the British and European theatrical scene as well as the development of theatrical costumes and settings. One of the most acclaimed interpreters of Shakespeare at the beginning of the new century was William Henry West Betty, who made his debut at Covent Garden in 1804 at the age of thirteen. A famous painting by James Northcote portrays him as Hamlet, his favourite role, on the steps of an imaginary temple dedicated to Shakespeare. After Garrick's retirement in 1776, John Philip Kemble and his sister Sarah Siddons dominated the London scene for more than forty years. George Henry Herlow's painting, which shows the famous family of actors in the scene of Queen Katherine's trial from *Henry VIII*, constitutes an important document of the changes taking place at the beginning of the century: additional care has been taken over the stage design, while the actors' contemporary costumes display great richness. The last great actor presented is François-Joseph Talma, who played the most famous Shakespearean roles in Paris. The painting by Anthelme-François Lagrenée depicts the actor dressed as Hamlet in a very touching pose, expressing an anguished, melancholy interpretation.

Another important part of the exhibition displays the collections of the first two Shakespearean galleries. The idea of the Shakespeare Gallery arose from a strong patriotic desire to honour the great national author. Thus, John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, a painting exhibition entirely dedicated to scenes from Shakespeare's plays, was opened in a specially built gallery in London in 1789, showing works painted by some of the most famous British artists of the time. In 1793 James Woodmason opened his own Shakespeare Gallery in Dublin.

"Shakespeare nell'arte" presents some of the most famous pictures for these Shakespeare Galleries: paintings by Francis Wheatley, Joseph Wright

of Derby, William Hodges, Robert Smirke, but the most important works of this group are two works by Johann Heinrich Füssli. Thanks to his originality and versatility, this painter was one of the artists most sought after for the Shakespeare Galleries: *Gertrude, Hamlet and Hamlet's father's ghost* and *Titania embracing Bottom*, painted between 1792 and 1793. The former, marked by the taste of the "awesome sublime" typical of Gothic narrative, illustrates one of the most theatrically spectacular moments in Shakespeare's drama: the appearance of the ghost before Hamlet. The countenance of the Danish prince shows all the sublime horror of his pale face, his upright hair, his wide-open eyes and his tightly shut mouth. The second painting portrays one of the most magical moments in *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*: in a strongly symbolic composition, Titania, queen of the fairies, embraces Bottom, depicted with his donkey's head.

The final part of the exhibition describes Shakespearean painting in the 19th century, in its Romantic version throughout Europe and in its Victorian developments in England around the middle of the century. English Romanticism is represented through works by John Martin and J. M. William Turner: Martin's painting illustrates the moment in which Macbeth and Banquo meet the witches for the first time and expresses the painter's taste for the Sublime; Turner's *Queen Mab's Cave* is a description of the fairy that appears in Mercutio's dream and is a masterpiece of Romantic painting, with yellow and brown landscape elements dissolving into a chromatic harmony. In French Romanticism, another important painter of Shakespearean subjects was Eugène Delacroix, three of whose paintings are exhibited: *Hamlet Sees his Father's Ghost* is probably his first Shakesperean subject; *The Death of Ofelia* illustrates one of the most lyrical passages of Shakespearean drama, in which the young maiden has slipped into the water and is about to sink; *Hamlet and Horace at the Cemetery* shows a romantic consonance between the landscape and Hamlet's state of mind.

In the last two rooms of the exhibition numerous paintings represent how Shakespearean subjects connected with the realm of fairies became greatly popular in British painting between 1830 and 1850, drawing magical elements from plays such as *Midsummer's Night's Dream* or *The Tempest*. The enchanted world of Shakespeare wondrously takes shape in paintings by George Cruikshank, Davis Scott and Robert Huskisson, but above all in a painting by Daniel Maclise, in which he shows the strong and fantastic vision of Bottom awakening with a scream and suddenly returning to reality as he is freed from the donkey's head, and in a painting by Joseph Noel

Paton, representing a meeting of magic creatures holding a bestial concert for Puck. The Victorian age witnessed a proliferation of Shakespearean pictures, expressing a very intimate interpretation of Shakespeare's works as in paintings by Charles Leslie and Frederich Leighton. In the middle of the 19th century the most important Shakespearean paintings belong to the Pre-Raphaelite group. The painters of the "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood", founded in 1848, was established: these painters wished to contrast the degradation and conventionality of the painting at their time. In Shakespeare they found a very rich source of subjects which fully satisfied their need to depict scenes rich in moral meaning, and their Shakespearean pictures are masterpieces of all time. It is possible to admire *Valentine Rescuing Silvia from Proteus* by William Holman Hunt, in which the painter represents passion, betrayal, innocence and jealousy in a strong realistic visual impact; two famous paintings by William Dyce and John Everett Millais' *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel*, another Pre-Raphaelite masterpiece, in which the painter achieves a very realistic vision, studying every single detail of the natural world, and showing Ferdinand and Ariel riding strange bat-like creatures.

The Ferrara exhibition gives full expression to this Shakespearean pictorial universe. It demonstrates how Shakespeare's dramatic poetry has produced a new imagery along the centuries and how painters have rewritten his works on the canvas. It is deeply moving for both scholars and readers to observe the flow of this Shakespearean universe: the struggle for power, the magical hidden aspects of life, the slipping of sense in the world of madness, love, death and doubt. These are constantly shifting topics, which painters in the 17th-18th century have expressed according to their own imagination and *Zeitgeist*, although they were already magically contained in Shakespeare's poetic world.

Shaul Bassi, *Le metamorfosi di Otello. Storia di un'etnicità immaginaria* (Bari: Graphis, 2000), pp. 188.

Reviewed by Gennaro Di Niola

This book shows how every critic, director and actor who has dealt with Othello has had to interpret his doubtful identity as a Moor, and reinvent what Shaul Bassi calls an *imaginary ethnicity*. The author shows how in the course of ages the representation of Othello has undergone a number of

critical and dramatic metamorphoses, reflecting changing attitudes towards otherness in various ages. In order to describe this process of differentiation, Bassi starts from the concept of *ethnicity*, a symbolic construction through which a group provides a definition of the self and/or the other. Our perception of difference depends on the cultural invention of a community which fashions some positive models for it to identify with and counter-models for it to distinguish itself from. Every age has reinterpreted Othello's ethnicity by projecting upon it the symbolic representations of different communities. Othello is not represented as he is but as they would like him to be. Bassi shows how this *imaginary ethnicity* has always been a source of critical, aesthetic and political problems but also an important site of experimentation, an opportunity to innovate and provoke which has played a meaningful role in the critical and dramatic history of the play.

The protagonists of this reinvention of the character are the actors who have embodied Othello's ethnicity. They have often met with objective and psychological obstacles in their identification with the Moor. The story of Othello's metamorphoses is the story of the bodies of the white actors who have played Othello by changing their bodies through make-up, costume and gesture. But it is also the story of the black actors and their bodies, constructed by white culture as a threatening presence, an "antibody". The black male has always been stereotyped and classified as a body and in particular as a sexual body. Othello's ethnicity is usually reduced to a superficial cosmetic question: Should Othello be played as a black, or as a tawny Moor? Bassi claims the story of Othello's ethnicity cannot be reduced to an inventory of the colours of Othello's make-up. His ethnic identity is a site of indistinction which has generated throughout the centuries different interpretations and representations, making Othello a complex and elusive character. Bassi integrates and deepens one of the first studies about Othello's metamorphoses, Marvin Rosenberg's *The Masks of Othello: The Search for the Identity of Othello, Iago, and Desdemona by Three Centuries of Actors and Critics* (1971), because by focusing on the bodies of the actors who have performed Othello's ethnicity his survey shows how the identity of the character is the result of these interpretations. Therefore the metaphor of the "quest" can be replaced by the concept of "invention" or "performance". Bassi's survey is very useful as a background for other more specialized studies on *Othello* such as *Quattro volti di Otello* (1996), *Othello: New Essays by Black Writers* (1997), and *Othello and Interpretive Traditions* (1999), that are particularly worth reading and usefully integrate Bassi's book.

Othello criticism falls into two groups, those who have provided an aesthetic reading of the play and others who have given an ethnic and political interpretation. The former have omitted or denied the question of ethnicity and racial conflict. The racist elements of the play have been considered marginal or unimportant. A number of reviewers have repeated Desdemona's attitude, seeing "Othello's visage in his mind". They remove or abstract Othello's ethnicity in order to react against their loathing for his blackness, depriving him of his body. Bassi's book takes into account the different ways in which Othello's ethnicity has been imagined in the course of four centuries, starting from the Restoration in which the two critical attitudes towards Othello became very popular: the former (Thomas Rymer) justifying and elaborating Othello's ethnicity and the latter (Charles Gildon) censuring and ignoring his Africanness. Othello was known as the most familiar of strangers, both a central presence in European culture and a borderline figure, both loved and hated, desired and feared. In the century of the exotic, Othello's ethnicity was first inscribed in the make-up of the performers, then in their costume and gesture. The Moor was again an *object* of ethnographic study, invented by western eyes combining different orientalist stereotypes.

In the Romantic age the foundations of modern discourse about Othello's ethnicity were laid. The main critics of the play such as Coleridge, Lamb and Hazlitt strove to deny that Othello was black. In this period a new conception of collective and individual identity was fashioned, so that the African was constructed as the other against which the European could assert a new perception of the self. Africa became a mirror in which the European beholder could see his/her own reflection overturned. Race was the most appealing subject for the scientists who exalted the aesthetic primacy of the Greek ideal and put the black man at the bottom of the racial scale. Coleridge tried to neutralize Othello's blackness. However those "thicklips" remained a "sign" of Othello's blackness in contrast to Desdemona's whiteness. This "labial obsession" hid the desire to eat and be the other. For Coleridge Othello's ethnicity was an uncanny obstacle to his identification with the character and for this reason it had to be removed. The Romantic age marked also the dramatic success of Edmund Kean who enacted the "whitewashing" of Othello theorized by Coleridge, breaking a long-standing tradition of face-blackening. For Kean, Othello's ethnicity was a mask with which to experiment a revolutionary method of acting. He removed the most visible sign of negritude by face-whitening, but adopted a number of stereotypes of

blackness such as animal fury, ferociousness and primitivism. The Romantics' interpretations of Othello showed how his ethnicity could be manipulated and controlled by white culture. However Ira Alridge, the first black actor in the role of Othello, came to break this rule and re-established the possibility of a black Moor. For him ethnicity was a condition inscribed in his own body.

In the Victorian age the obsessive classification of races was used for justifying scientifically the social and political supremacy of European middle class. Imperial ideology drew a distinction between the white and black races in which the former were given a civilizing mission justifying any kind of exploitation and subordination of the latter. Racial theory became racism. The question of Othello's ethnicity was regarded again as a disturbing element which had to be denied: "Othello was a white man". The Moor was perceived as a man with two or three conflicting identities in a single body. The performers had to govern a "British" identity polarizing Othello's moral attributes, an "oriental" identity based on an idealized perception of the Arabian world and an "African" identity constructed as a bestial, immoral, and lustful negation of civilization. The failure of British and American actors in the role of Othello resulted from an unsuccessful balance between these components in the presence of an audience looking for reassurance about their own identities. The tension between an English and an African Othello was solved by the mediating figure of the Arabian warrior of the travel books. According to the theories of hybridism, in the racial hierarchy the Arabians were a middle ground between Blacks and Anglo-Saxons. This "orientalized" Othello was inspired by Lawrence of Arabia who could internalize a number of Bedouin customs without renouncing his Englishness. Both Lawrence and the English performers in the role of the Moor were seen as negotiating between the self and the other. The Victorian Othello was supposed to have a gentleman's breeding, an Arabian look, and to repress his African unconscious. Othello was therefore seen as a potential Mr Hyde. William Macready, Edwin Booth and Henry Irving adopted an oriental costume and gesture evoking to a more exotic and harmless alterity. Othello's wildness was always about to come to life and for this reason it had to be bridled. The performer was supposed to strive to keep away from any ethnic reference. Face-blackening could change and enliven what was getting to be known as the unconscious.

In this period a "domesticated" and self-controlled interpretation of Othello prevailed. The performers tried to exorcize the threat of

miscegenation from their performances and neutralize the sexual passion between the Moor and Desdemona and the uncanny and subversive potential of the play in an age of racial conflict. Unlike this desexualized and de-ethnicized Othello played by the English actors, Tommaso Salvini adopted some African elements without regarding them as threatening to his identity. He accomplished a mediating task between the exoticism that the audience eagerly desired, and the negritude that they abhored. Laurence Olivier was the first English performer to acknowledge Othello's blackness and enter his skin. The Victorian fear of becoming Othello turned into the triumph of imitation.

In the last chapter Bassi deals with *Othello* in the twentieth century, divided into two sections: before and after multiculturalism. In the first half of the century criticism kept away from Othello's ethnicity. A number of essays about the play were written without mentioning the question of ethnicity. In the 1960s with the beginning of decolonization and the independence of African countries some black writers and actors (Paul Robeson) identified with Othello. They tried to understand his psychology, desires and fears, making Othello a subject. Generations of white critics and performers have constructed soft or abstract versions of Othello to exorcize black ethnicity, while Ben Okri, Murray Carlin and Caryl Phillips provide an interpretation of Othello through his eyes, though they deconstruct his myth. For Okri the Moor is not a faithful representation of a black man, but a creation of white culture. Some re-writings of *Othello*, such as *Not Now, Sweet Desdemona* and *The Nature of Blood* refuse to accept the secular white interpretation of the play and re-read the tragedy from the point of view of the native, shedding "light" on the reasons of the black men. *Othello* is again a very important subtext in black literature, showing its influence directly and indirectly in a number of works. In the 1990s, Othello's ethnicity became one of the main subjects of debate thanks to neo-historicism, cultural materialism and studies about the interaction between performance and ethnicity.

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Maria Teresa Chialant, ed., *Incontrare i mostri* (Napoli: Esi, 2002), 272 pp.

Marc Colavincenzo, *"Trading Magic for Fact," Fact for Magic. Myth and Mythologizing in Postmodern Canadian Historical Fiction* (Amsterdam / New York: Rodopi, 2003), 239 pp.

Geoffrey V. Davis, *Voices of Justice and Reason. Apartheid and Beyond in South African Literature* (Amsterdam / New York: Rodopi, 2003), 376 pp.

Faye Hammill, *Literary Culture and Female Authorship in Canada 1760-2000* (Amsterdam / New York: Rodopi, 2003), 245 pp.

Christian Mair, ed., *The Politics of English as a World Language. New Horizons in Postcolonial Cultural Studies* (Amsterdam / New York: Rodopi, 2003), 497 pp.

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SUMMARIES

Claudia Buonaiuto

Monstrous Bodies: Sycorax, or the Feminine Grotesque

The figure of Sycorax, Caliban's African dead mother in *The Tempest*, is an irreducible female absence/presence in the play. Transformed into a guest by the usurper Prospero, she symbolises the repressed in Shakespeare's representations of women as witches and monsters. Yet Sycorax calls into question the patriarchal law, and allows for a discussion of the ideological apparatus that, throughout the centuries, has discriminated female voices, especially black female voices.

Maurizio Calbi

Being a Guest But Not Quite... White:
***Othello* and Hybrid Hospitality in the Mediterranean**

This article reads *Othello* as a text that obsessively stages the 'question of the foreigner', in all its multiple meanings. It explores the relentless questioning of the 'foreign other' in *Othello*, arguing that this questioning is a sign of the continuous reassertion of the boundaries of self-sameness, and is in fact nothing but the reverse side of the host's utter hostility towards the 'stranger'. Thus, on the one hand, *Othello* bears out Derrida's aporetical definition of hospitality as being 'only possible on condition of its impossibility'. On the other, the Shakespearean text inscribes some emblematic asynchronous textual moments in which hospitality seems to take place beyond 'conditional' hospitality. This is the hospitality of love, which undermines the fixity of presence to oneself as *either* host *or* guest.

Marta Cariello

Bad Audience and Perfect Guests

This article focuses on the theatrical matrix of the Shakespearean text and its relation to the concept of hospitality as proposed by Jacques Derrida. Is the relationship between a play and its audience a relation of hospitality? Stage relationships occur between characters, *within* a text, but they are, too, relationships between the characters, the text, and the audience. The theater is the place where this encounter takes place, between spectator and performance. The relationship that is born from this encounter undeniably varies, but there seems to be a work of exchange, an offering and a receiving, which rings very close to hospitality in its gestures . The possibility and impossibility of hospitality take place within a game of vision and false vision, a constant false gaze, which constitutes the very nature of theatrical representation.

Anna Maria Cimitile
Inhospitable Shakespeare

The relation between Shakespeare and postcolonial studies is an important one. The essay reflects on the question of what Shakespeare can *do* for postcolonial reading practice today, and formulates it as a question of hospitality. Just as in Shakespeare hospitality as a theme proves itself to be inhospitable and a deviated hospitality, the essay reflects on how such inhospitality engages with our present and refigures the ethics of hospitality itself. The relation of hospitality between Shakespeare and critical practice today leads to a reflection on the possibility of critical self-empowerment arising in that encounter.

Manuela Coppola
"Gatekeepers of hell":
Desdemona's Impossible Hospitality

Drawing on the Derridean concept of "hostipitality", the article explores Desdemona's failure to go beyond conventional hospitality. It argues that she is doomed to the demonic liminality of "gatekeeper of hell", where hospitality cannot take place. Despite her questioning of an exclusively male ipseity, it can be argued that the *invitation* to do the impossible, to go beyond hospitality in order to let hospitality take place, is yet unrealised by Desdemona. Unable to shift her focus from the threshold and the master, she is trapped by the patriarchal discourse that has constructed her.

Simonetta de Filippis
A Stranger in the Mirror:
***Pericles* and the Search for Identity**

In *Pericles* Shakespeare revives the myth of Ulysses and presents the wanderings of his protagonist at sea, facing misfortunes, finding himself in different places and playing different roles, as a stranger, a guest, a friend, an enemy. Using studies by Kristeva (*Strangers to Ourselves*), Derrida (*De l'hospitalité*) and Freud ("The 'Uncanny'"), Pericles's wanderings are discussed as the consequence of 'a secret wound' (Kristeva), caused by his encounter with the sin of incest mirrored in a father-figure (the phenomenon of the double studied by Freud) whose authority as king/head, father, and host he brings into question (Derrida). Pericles's subsequent wanderings represent a search for his lost identity and an attempt to set himself free from the shadow of sin. The final confrontation with his own daughter allows him to pronounce his full name as a sign of liberation from his obsession and of the recovery of his identity.

Bianca Del Villano
Hospitality and Friendship in *The Winter's Tale*

The Winter's Tale opens with a situation of hospitality in which Polixenes, king of Bohemia, is a guest at the court of his friend Leontes, king of Sicily. Hospitality and friendship appear as crucial elements in the relationship between the two, but they are soon transformed into enmity by Leontes's jealousy, which seems to be determined more by his wife's intrusion in the two monarchs' friendship than by the possibility of adultery. This paper analyses the 'real' nature of the bond between Leontes, Polixenes and Hermione, revealing how friendship and hospitality support a system where Hermione is inevitably perceived as a stranger.

Serena Guarracino
Hosting the Bo(d)y Actor in Shakespeare's Romances:
An Experiment in Listening

This essay attempts the impossible task to host the voice of the boy actor in a reading of Shakespeare's last plays, focusing on *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*. With their peculiar need for treble-voiced musical performance, these plays open up the space of the text to the presence/absence of the boy's voice. The body of the boy actor here is experimentally called the bo(d)y actor, where the parenthesis stands for an historical erasure - that of the boy's body from Shakespearean performance and criticism - and for the *hantise* this missing body performs both in contemporary performances of Shakespearean music and in our reading of the texts. This absent body then becomes a space of transgression and of the negotiation of different modes of representation and expression, both in Shakespeare's times and texts, and ours.

Lucia Ielpo
Carmelo Bene's *Macbeth Horror Suite*:
An Unexpected Translation

The focus of the essay is on the theatrical adaptation-translation of the Shakespearean tragedy by Carmelo Bene, *Macbeth Horror Suite*. Inspired by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's theory of "minor literature", this text provides instances of a "minor theatre" that questions all standards of literary interpretation and structures of hegemony and privilege. As an examples of 'hospitality', the languages of this kind of theatre enables an alternative re-reading of history and of its "master narratives".

Marie Hélène Laforest
A Caribbean Drama: George Lamming and *The Tempest*

Caribbean intellectuals have seized upon the metaphorical implications of *The Tempest* to explore their own relationship with English culture. George Lamming was the first writer to enter the Shakespearean text with the authority of someone who has completely identified with Caliban and is now in a position to question Prospero's actions and propose a new script of their relations.
The article focuses on Lamming's presence in London as he struggles against Prospero's tyranny over language and literature. It also brings to the fore the anticipatory force of Lamming's reflections through their echoes in contemporary Caribbean and postcolonial texts.

Alessandra Masolini
Romea's Roaming and Giulietto's Swing:
(Ho)staging Shakespeare on a Screen

Romeo and Juliet has become a pivotal text in the popularization of Shakespeare in the late twentieth century movie industry. My analysis of Roberta Torre's film *Sud Side Stori* (2000) – an ironic and flamboyant rewriting of Shakespeare's sonnet-like tragedy, and of the musical *West Side Story* by Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise (1961) – moves between the field of Shakespearean studies and contemporary popular culture, stressing how marginality, migrancy and homelessness are the necessary and grotesque conditions for a welcoming of the "Other".

Francesca Recchia
With the Eyes of the Other

Questions of freedom and liberation are the main interests of this paper. These are considered within a range of diverse suggestions coming from literature, visual arts, music and critical theory. At the kernel of my exploration there is the figure of Caliban: both as a veiled metaphor and as the bearer of my argument. Considerations of the interpretation and transformation of this character will unfold into an analysis of the processes of creolization in the Caribbean context. Caliban's ambivalent and rich connotations – both in Shakespeare and in Aimé Cesaire's re-writing of *The Tempest* – open up to a discussion of (post) colonial dialectics, along with an understanding of artistic practices and expressions as the bases for cultural and political liberation.

Marina Vitale
'This great loss': or, was Claribel's Marriage 'sweet'?

This essay reconsiders Shakespeare's *The Tempest* from the vantage point of *By Avon River*, H.D.'s re-writing of 1949. This work brings to the fore the muted character of Claribel, Princess of Naples, whose off-stage inter-ethnic marriage to the King of Tunis is variously spoken of by the shipwrecked courtiers. H.D.'s re-vision endows Claribel with boundless possibilities of re-textualisation. Though emphasising the inter-civilisational nature of her marriage, along with *The Tempest* unresolved questions of gender, it also shows a utopian and historically-dated attitude to the questions of ethnicity.

Jane Wilkinson
Hosting, Healing and Hostility: Thresholds of Hospitality
in Orson Welles's "Voodoo" *Macbeth*

The starting point for this article consists in the uncanny intersections of hosting, illness and royal powers of healing in the description of the "strangely visited creatures" in *Macbeth*. The aporetic relations between patient and healer, subject and sovereign, guest and host are analysed both in the indirect representation of the "creatures" in the original play and in their visible, on-stage but unwelcome presence as "the cripples" in Welles's 1936 theatrical adaptation. Relocated in 19th century Haiti, in a castle surrounded and invaded by a jungle, Shakespeare's Anglo-Scottish, medieval-renaissance play is staged by black actors in Harlem as part of the Federal Theatre Project. The article focuses on the sites of access to the castle, openings and closings, entries and exits, boundary crossings and forms of liminality, and on the disquieting specularity of the cripples, mutely questioning and undermining the authority of Macbeth as healer, host and king.

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Bible, exile, prison poetry and postcolonial representations of the city. She is the author of *Orpheus in Africa: Fragmentation and Renewal in the Work of Four African Writers* (1990), *Talking With African Writers* (1992), *Remembering "The Tempest"* (1999) and *The Cripples at the Gate: Orson Welles's Voodoo Macbeth* (forthcoming).

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