

**English Productions of *Measure for Measure* on Stage and Screen:
The Play's Indeterminacy and the Authority of Performance**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the Department of English and Creative Writing
Lancaster University**

March, 2016

Rachod Nusen

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Alison Findlay. Without her advice, kindness and patience, I would be completely lost. It is magical how she could help a man who knew so little about Shakespeare in performance to complete this thesis. I am forever indebted to her.

I am also indebted to Dr. Liz Oakley-Brown, Professor Geraldine Harris, Dr. Karen Juers-Munby, Dr. Kamilla Elliott, Professor Hilary Hinds and Professor Stuart Hampton-Reeves for their helpful suggestions during the annual, upgrade, mock viva and viva panels.

I would like to acknowledge the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, the National Theatre Archive, the Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archives, the Theatre Collection at the University of Bristol, the National Art Library and the Folger Shakespeare Library on where many of my materials are based. Moreover, I am extremely grateful to Mr. Phil Willmott who gave me an opportunity to interview him.

I also would like to take this opportunity to show my appreciation to Thailand's Office of the Higher Education Commission for financially supporting my study and Chiang Mai Rajabhat University for allowing me to pursue it.

Last but not least, I thank my family for their love and unyielding support.

Without them, every success would mean nothing.

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Abstract

This thesis offers the first full study of English productions of *Measure for Measure* on stage and screen from the Jacobean period to the early twenty-first century, based on archival research examining primary sources such as prompt books, video recordings and photographs. Because of its ambiguity and open silences, *Measure for Measure* is an ideal text to demonstrate W. B. Worthen's thesis that, in performance, meanings are produced through various theatrical factors which necessarily go beyond the text. In this thesis, I argue that the ambiguity of *Measure for Measure* maximises its potential in production to reflect social and political climates of the time, anticipate changes and shape spectators' perceptions of difficult issues such as authority, morality and gender politics. This argument is supported through my investigation into archival research which reveals how social context influenced productions and how those productions, in

turn, shaped future productions and society.

The Introduction argues that *Measure for Measure* is an ideal text to demonstrate Worthen's concepts that the 'work' is always absent, and that 'Shakespeare' and the words in the text are not the most important sources of meaning. There are many crucial gaps in the text that performances need to fill. The Introduction analyses space, audience, actor and scenography as important factors which shape meaning and effect. In the first chapter, I argue that, because of its indeterminacy, in the early modern period, *Measure for Measure* helped not only to reaffirm the absolute authority of the monarchy but also to cultivate scepticism towards it, and how spectators at Whitehall and the Globe read performances would have depended on the conditions of the playing venues, spectators' social statuses, gender and religious beliefs. Chapter Two argues that, in adapting the text of *Measure for Measure* or transcoding it into a different, two-dimensional media of the screen, the adaptor sets himself up as a rival authority to that of Shakespeare and, in consequence, changes our perception of the 'work'. The adaptations of *Measure for Measure* from the Restoration to the modern period, both on stage and on screen, are covered in this chapter. Chapter Three argues that performance spaces have a strong impact on playgoers' reactions towards performances and the spectators' attitudes towards the genre and issues of authority and morality. This chapter focuses on the 'Elizabethan' revival productions of William Poel, arguing that it contributed to the view of *Measure for Measure* as a 'problem play'; the production by John Dove, which revived its reputation as a comedy, and modern touring productions. Chapter Four argues that productions of *Measure for*

Measure from the Georgian period to the 1960s tried to solve the play's ambiguous treatment of morality, authority, gender politics and 'vulgarity' and, in so doing, such productions reflected, anticipated and shaped not only 'Shakespeare' but also society. The final chapter argues that, as publicly-funded theatres, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre have a commitment to speak to the nation and, due to their agendas and policies, the productions of *Measure for Measure* after 1970 at the National successfully engaged with contemporary issues of gender politics, racial equality and state power while the Royal Shakespeare Company largely failed to engage with these difficult issues.

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Introduction

The ‘Work’, the ‘Author’ and the Authority of Performance

This thesis offers the first full study of English stage and film productions of *Measure for Measure* which, as Jane Williamson maintained in 1975, ‘stands in need of a thorough study’.¹ In spite of valuable, shorter accounts like that by Stuart Hampton-Reeves,² Williamson’s statement still holds. Based on archival research that examined primary sources such as prompt books, video recordings and photographs, I studied 39 productions from 1604 to 2011, an unprecedented scale in terms of number and timespan.³ In conducting this research, I have noticed two things about sources used in studying the history of *Measure for Measure* in performance. Firstly, the kind of sources available for a production closely connects with its historical context and the prevalent archival process practised at that time. Secondly, each source possesses both uses and limitations. For productions in Shakespeare’s time, no primary materials have ever been found and so my discussions of them are necessarily based on secondary contemporary accounts and recent studies of the traces of early modern performance conditions. Hence, a discussion about a particular performance and spectators’ responses needs to rely on speculations based on the architectural and contextual evidence that has survived. In the case of productions from the Restoration period, a number of spectators’ comments on the productions are available. These

¹ Jane Williamson, ‘The Duke and Isabella on the Modern Stage’, in *The Triple Bond: Plays, Mainly Shakespearean, in Performance*, ed. by Joseph G. Price (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), pp. 149-169 (p. 149).

² Stuart Hampton-Reeves, *Measure for Measure: A Guide to the Text and its Theatrical Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

³ The table of studied productions in the thesis is available in the Appendix.

comments inform us what happened at some moments and what effects the performances had on some theatregoers. However, the eyewitnesses' accounts are clearly limited. They record only a few moments of the whole performances and they do not necessarily reflect the impressions of the majority of audience members. Prompt books and photographs of the productions from the early nineteenth century to the present can be found in archives around England. These materials record what is designed to happen at a particular moment and the uses of scenography. Nevertheless, what is written in the prompt book might not actually materialise in performance. In addition, the prompt books and photographs do not record the responses of theatregoers. These limitations are partially solved by consulting video recordings, which are available for the productions at the national theatres after the 1980s. Nonetheless, the recordings normally focus on the performances while the responses of the theatregoers, apart from their laughter, are largely left out. Thus, I study these materials alongside the reviews of critics.

One thing that one needs to keep in mind is that these reviews came from specialised professionals which might differ from the unrecorded reactions of other spectators. It is important to avoid talking about the audience as a single entity that authorizes theatrical meaning. The term 'audience' represents spectators who come from different backgrounds and respond individually to different aspects of what is presented on stage, as I discuss below with reference to the work of Stephen Purcell. Hence, I look for the social and theatrical elements in a particular performance which might have encouraged spectators to read the

performance from a particular perspective that might be different from those of the critics or from the obvious responses, such as applause or laughter, from what we assume would be the ‘general’ audience.

By trying to capture a large timespan, this thesis encounters several limitations. To understand a production, it is necessary to put it into its social context. However, every historical era is extremely complex and people from different social backgrounds did not necessarily experience it in the same way. To avoid generalisations and bypass my lack of expertise, I approach history through productions, focus on the pieces of evidence that can be found, and quote historians when appropriate. Moreover, for reasons of space, this thesis cannot offer a full analysis of each individual production. Due to the same reason, my study of English screen productions, in Chapter 2, does not include internet re-workings of *Measure for Measure*.

Although the decision to track the development of *Measure for Measure* from 1604 to 2011 produces some limitations as discussed above, the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. Because it surveys an extensive period, this study can be beneficial to a variety of researchers on Shakespeare, early modern drama and modern theatre studies. I hope that this thesis will facilitate and encourage people to pursue more in-depth research of a particular production or issue outlined in this study. For future researchers, I footnote primary sources for each production and I provide the transcript of my interview with Mr. Phil Willmott, the director of *Measure for Measure Malaya*. My long study rediscovers many productions

which have been ignored by critics, though these productions are crucial in shaping the current perception of *Measure for Measure*. For example, productions in the eighteenth century laid down some basis for the reputation of *Measure for Measure* as a problem play, and the production of Frank McMullan in 1946 indirectly led to the creation of this play as a dark comedy. The long study also helps me to see the repetitions and the original contributions of each production of *Measure for Measure* on stage and screen. This insight strengthens my argument concerning the productive energy that passes from a production to another production.

This thesis argues that, because of the text's ambiguity, productions of *Measure for Measure* are endowed with a high potential to be responsive to changes in social attitudes towards authority, gender politics, class structures and the changing image of 'Shakespeare', and, by engaging with such social changes, they anticipate and shape future attitudes to these issues. I follow Louis Montrose's suggestion that Shakespeare's drama 'creates the culture by which it is created'.⁴ In that article, Montrose focuses exclusively on the role of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Elizabethan period. Thus, it cannot demonstrate how the play shaped culture of the future, a task undertaken by Gary Jay Williams in his book, *Our Moonlight Revels*.⁵ Since there is no equivalent volume covering the full performance history of *Measure for Measure*, this thesis fills that gap.

Throughout the thesis, I argue that *Measure for Measure* is a text especially suited

⁴ Louis Montrose, "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture', *Representations*, 2 (1983), 61-94 (p. 86).

⁵ Gary Jay Williams, *Our Moonlight Revels: A Midsummer Night's Dream in the Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997).

to demonstrate that drama ‘creates the culture by which it is created’ because of the ambiguous motives and open silences in the script, and especially in the play’s final scene.

My hypothesis that performance has power to produce new meanings comes from arguments originally proposed by W. B. Worthen in *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance*. In the first chapter of that book, Worthen reveals the instability of any text and the impossibility of the text to perfectly reproduce the ‘work’. He also deconstructs the authority of the written word by pointing out that stage performance always exerts its own authority and creates meanings which are ‘not determined [...] by the words on the page’.⁶ For Worthen, ‘[t]he production of the text’s meanings in the theatre’ cannot be adequately ‘derived from the text because it is engaged in making the text, producing it as theatre’.⁷ In the subsequent chapters of his book, Worthen shows how directors, actors and performance critics interact, challenge and/or appropriate the authority of ‘Shakespeare’ to authorise their works. By adopting these premises in my thesis, I demonstrate how a particular production of *Measure for Measure* created meanings which have gone beyond the boundary of the text, and identify which elements in that production have contributed to creating those meanings. I also show how each production interacted with ‘Shakespeare’ and his authority, and the influence of that interaction on the perceptions of spectators, an aspect that Worthen’s work does not fully investigate. Worthen focuses his study almost

⁶ W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 153.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 169-170.

exclusively on contemporary theatrical productions and practitioners. In so doing, he does not take into account the importance of the history of Shakespeare in performance and in modern media, and the great impact that that history has on a specific production and receptions of theatregoers. Worthen does not demonstrate how a production makes a historical impact on other productions after it. This is the gap which this thesis attempts to fill.

Theoretical frameworks used in this thesis appropriate not only the arguments of Worthen but also those of other leading performance critics, namely, Barbara Hodgdon, Robert Shaughnessy and Carol Rutter. In *The End Crowns All*, Hodgdon argues, as Worthen does, that performance does not merely reproduce what she calls the ‘playtext’. It produces a new work: ‘In reproducing or reconstituting the play’s social meanings as theatrical meanings, performances rework these elements in terms of variable processes of theatrical production and consumption’.⁸ As Worthen and Hodgdon suggest, performance creates another kind of text, the ‘performance text’.⁹ Two issues discussed in the first chapter of Hodgdon’s book are particularly relevant to my study. Firstly, she maintains that ‘closure in the history play constitutes a territory that generates and seeks to legitimize new kings, operating as a magnification mirror for the values and ideology of absolutism as well as for the incoherence of those beliefs’.¹⁰ Although *Measure for Measure* is not a history play, the idea of closure as an indeterminate place where discourses on government can be dramatised and their incoherence

⁸ Barbara Hodgdon, *The End Crowns All: Closure and Contradiction in Shakespeare’s History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 14.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

exposed to audiences is clearly applicable to the ending in *Measure for Measure*. In this thesis, I study how productions of *Measure for Measure* present the play's ambiguous ending and how those presentations reveal the productions' ideologies and/or unintentionally undermines those ideologies. Secondly, as Hodgdon states, a purpose of her study is to demonstrate 'how various textual configurations coexist [...] in complementary, contradictory tension, a relationship that is historically and culturally determined and defined'.¹¹ In the same way, my thesis demonstrates the interaction between the text, production, criticisms and historical contexts, and, unlike Hodgdon's book, it emphasises the effects that theatrical productions of the same play have on one another.

The effect and interrelation between performance, text and cultural authority are nicely explained by Robert Shaughnessy in *The Shakespeare Effect: A History of Twentieth-Century Performance*:

[P]erformance is often at its most interesting (if not its most 'successful') when [the] customary relationship [between performance, and textual and cultural authority] is challenged or otherwise put under strain, deliberately or otherwise. Although performance appears to be haunted by the presence of admonitory textual ghosts, and regulated by institutional and discursive constraints, which together comprise what I understand to be the Shakespeare Effect, the opportunities for remaking Shakespeare [...] are

¹¹ Ibid., p. 19.

themselves well in excess of the critical and ideological mechanisms that would seek to administer them.¹²

As Hodgdon's does, Shaughnessy's book reminds me of not only the interrelation between performance, text and 'Shakespeare' but also the effect of 'institutional and discursive constraints' on the presentation of 'Shakespeare', an issue that I focus upon in the final chapter of this thesis. Moreover, as Shaughnessy admits, his book does not offer 'a straightforward history of twentieth century Shakespearean performance', but 'a selective re-reading of aspects of that history'.¹³ In his book, Shaughnessy discusses six productions of different Shakespearean plays, ranging from William Poel's *Hamlet* in 1881 to Forced Entertainment's *King Lear* in 1999. Consequently, as a reviewer comments, the book 'doesn't carry through a clear development or narrative to the end' and there is 'little relation' between chapters and productions discussed in the book.¹⁴ To avoid these drawbacks, my thesis focuses on one play with an aim to create a sense of unity. In so doing, my emphasis is different from that of Shaughnessy who focuses on the unruly nature of performance:

[A] full recognition of the implications of performance's dispensation towards vibrant self-destructiveness is, potentially, dangerous and destabilising for both performance and performance criticism, since it

¹² Robert Shaughnessy, *The Shakespeare Effect: A History of Twentieth-Century Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 2002), p. 196.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁴ James Loehlin, 'The Shakespeare Effect: A History of Twentieth-Century Performance. By Robert Shaughnessy', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 55 (2004), 105-107 (pp. 105, 107).

threatens to dissolve the hegemonic unity of performed Shakespeare into a lawless and unpredictable space of textual-theatrical freeplay composed of an indeterminate miscellany of significations, experiences, perceptions, and momentary apprehensions'.¹⁵

Performance is undoubtedly 'unpredictable' and has power to undermine any rules which try to regulate it. Nevertheless, in this thesis, I want to emphasise not the destructive power but the creative power of performance. Carol Rutter explains the role of performance in creating a fairer society for women as follows: to concentrate on 'Shakespeare's playtext [...] is to concentrate on men', while to engage with 'performance texts means reimaging the canon, opening up its supplementary physical, visual, gestural, iconic texts, making more space for the kind of work women do in play'.¹⁶ In the same spirit, I demonstrate how productions of *Measure for Measure* give voice to voiceless people, in particular the actors playing Isabella and Mariana. Moreover, a theatre production is never created from nothingness. It bears the weight of previous productions. Rather than the production's 'freeplay', I explore the interplay between productions of *Measure for Measure*, in order to identify how a particular production helped create new options that subsequent directors and performers, critics and spectators, can take when they engage with this play.

¹⁵ Shaughnessy, *The Shakespeare Effect*, p. 12.

¹⁶ Carol Rutter, *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare's Stage* (London: Routledge, 2001), xiv-xv.

All these approaches are based on the premise that it is impossible for any production to perfectly copy the ‘original’ or ‘authentic’ ‘work’ since there is no such thing. My research asserts that, rather than reproducing Shakespeare’s ‘work’, every production is inevitably a new text and each production, in turn, influences subsequent productions and public perceptions of the play and issues explored in the production. Moreover, rather than passively receiving a message, the spectator, influenced by personal situations and the social context of that particular moment, actively interprets a selection of signifieds to construct a meaning. The participation of spectators in meaning-making inevitably leads to various interpretations. There is no definitive message or performance authorised by the text.

Before discussing the uniqueness of every production, and its power to reinvent the play and change spectators’ worldview, it is necessary to discuss the impossibility of performance to reproduce the ‘original’ meaning of the ‘work’, authorised by Shakespeare. As Worthen argues, ‘the work is always absent’.¹⁷ What we have is merely a revised text. The differences between the script of *Hamlet* in the First Quarto, Second Quarto and First Folio, for example, suggest that, rather than a completed ‘work’, this play is continually in a process of being revised and edited. Therefore, neither it nor any production based on a text is an exact copy of a hypothetical ‘work’. Worthen insists that ‘[a]ll productions betray the text, all texts betray the work’.¹⁸

¹⁷ Worthen, *Shakespeare*, p. 9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Theatre practices in the early modern period make it debatable whether Shakespeare had an absolute authority over his ‘work’. As Montrose asserts, scripts usually ‘were the exclusive property of the company’.¹⁹ When writing new scripts, Shakespeare knew that they were not going to be his private property. They belonged to his company. Besides, Richard Dutton argues that the Master of the Revels had a strong influence on the process of editing plays for court performance:

[T]he Master of the Revels was the ‘author’ of the whole event, the impresario who sponsored and supervised it, certainly requiring others to add or revise text, defining its acceptable parameters. Thus, in court performances, he was in every sense a collaborator – the *key* collaborator – with the actors and their dramatists.²⁰

Dutton uses Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair* as an example to demonstrate his argument. Due to the ‘misfit’ between ‘a preface to a show of “two houres”’ and ‘an acting text which takes four to five hours to perform’, Dutton believes that ‘the Induction was meant for a shorter, commercial theatre version’ and ‘the printed text was used at court’. Both of them were supervised by Sir George Buc and ‘[i]t would have been under his watchful eye that the parallels between Justice

¹⁹ Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 207.

²⁰ Richard Dutton, ‘The Court, the Master of Revels, and the Players’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 362-379 (p. 379).

Overdo and King James remained on the right side of respectful jocularity'.²¹

Considering that many of Shakespeare's plays, including *Measure for Measure*, were performed at court, it is possible that they might have been revised under the Master of the Revels's 'supervision'. Although censorship and its influence on productions is an important issue, and will be noted, especially in Chapter 4, a full consideration of the topic is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The idea of a single authority over the 'work' is also undermined by the fact that, as in the cases of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles* and *Macbeth*, Shakespeare collaborated with, or his plays were revised by other dramatists. It is now widely accepted that the text of *Measure for Measure* in the First Folio had undergone a revision by Thomas Middleton in 1621. Because of the characters' Italian names and the emergence of the Dukes of Ferrara in disguise in several plays around 1603 and 1604, Gary Taylor argues that Shakespeare originally set the play in Ferrara and it is Middleton who relocated it to Vienna.²² John Jowett suggests that, due to 'a striking cluster of grammatical and lexical features' used not by Shakespeare but by Middleton, the first 79 lines [of Act I Scene 2] are a part of the later adaptation. The word 'poverty'²³ refers to 'the economic depression of 1619-24' and it was around 1609 that pirates became 'a regular menace to English shipping'. According to Jowett, Middleton relocated

²¹ Ibid., p. 375.

²² Gary Taylor, 'Shakespeare's Mediterranean *Measure for Measure*', in *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean*, ed. by Tom Clayton, Susan Brock and Vicente Forés (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 2004), pp. 243-269 (pp. 254-255).

²³ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. by N. B. Bawcutt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), I. 2. 82, p. 95. All subsequent quotations from or references to the play will be to this edition and will be referenced parenthetically.

it to Vienna ‘to establish the Thirty Years War as a backdrop’. This scene refers to the war between Bethlen Gábor, ‘King of Hungary’, and the Emperor in the 1620s.²⁴ This war would have been a hot topic for James’s subjects due to the involvement of Frederick V, the husband of King James’s daughter, in the conflict.²⁵ The song at the beginning of Act IV was interpolated by Middleton to facilitate ‘the new act-break’.²⁶ In 1608, four years after the performance of *Measure for Measure* at Whitehall, the King’s Men took over the Blackfriars Theatre from the Children of the Chapel and it was then that they began to practice act division.

According to Terri Bourus and Gary Taylor, ‘Although Middleton’s proposed additions constitute only about 5% of the Folio’s dialogue, they affect the beginning of eleven of the Folio’s 22 speaking roles (50%)’.²⁷ Since the first entrance is the first impression that spectators have of a character, Middleton’s interpolations have a profound influence on characterisation. By giving Mistress Overdone more lines in Act I Scene 2, she becomes more well-informed since it is she who tells the other characters about Claudio’s danger. The song in Act IV, which reveals Mariana’s state of mind, makes it easier for spectators to pity this character. Because of this, she is not merely the Duke’s pawn but a woman who has feeling.

²⁴ John Jowett, ‘*Measure for Measure: A Genetic Text*’, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), pp. 1542-1585 (pp. 1542-1545).

²⁵ In 1620, Frederick’s army was defeated by the armies of the Emperor and, consequently, Frederick and his wife were forced to live in exile.

²⁶ Jowett, ‘*Measure for Measure*’, p. 1570.

²⁷ Terri Bourus and Gary Taylor, ‘*Measure for Measure(s): Performance-Testing the Adaptation Hypothesis*’, *Shakespeare*, 10 (2014), 363-401 (p. 374).

Paul Yachnin argues that early modern playwrights often exploited ‘the possibilities of indeterminacy inherent in drama’s dialectical production of meaning so that their plays could be staged both at court and in the public theatres, and so that the plays would please both the orthodoxy and the heterodox’.²⁸ *Measure for Measure* is certainly characterised by indeterminacy. As Bernice Kliman explains, it ‘has been called a problem play because the multiplicity of choices inherent in the text makes it difficult to grasp Shakespeare’s intended meaning’.²⁹ Thus, as Stuart Hampton-Reeves points out, ‘it is we who have the problem’.³⁰ By *reading* the text, one cannot say for certain whether it is a farcical comedy or a dark play engaging with morality and politics or something in between.

Theatre critics still erroneously suggest the existence of an authorised, original, retrievable meaning of Shakespeare’s ‘work’, an idea which has been established since the eighteenth century. Reviewing John Dove’s production of *Measure for Measure* in July 2004 at the New Globe, for example, Alastair Macaulay expressed his disapproval that the production wrongfully represented Shakespeare as ‘an unoriginal artist with no particular interest in ethics’.³¹ Similarly, Rhoda Koenig expressed her anxiety over Phil Willmott’s 2002 adaptation, *Measure for Measure Malaya*, by entitling her review ‘It’s Pretty, but is it Shakespeare?’. On

²⁸ Paul Yachnin, *Stage-Wrights: Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and the Making of Theatrical Value* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), p. 17.

²⁹ Bernice W. Kliman, ‘Hearing Power in *Measure for Measure*’, in *Who Hears in Shakespeare?*, ed. by Laury Magnus and Walter W. Cannon (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012), pp.145-162 (p. 145).

³⁰ Hampton-Reeves, *Measure for Measure*, p. 1.

³¹ Alastair Macaulay, ‘*Financial Times*’, 7 July 2004, *Theatre Record*, 24 (2004), p. 846.

the surface, it looks as though these critics referred to two different things: the man named Shakespeare and his work, respectively, but in fact, they meant the same thing: their idea(s) of what Shakespeare and his work should be.

The ambiguity and open silences in *Measure for Measure* make it a good example to illustrate Michel Foucault's argument about the function of 'the author' in authorising meanings. In this thesis, I argue that because authority is already a central issue of *Measure for Measure*, there is a striking connection between the authority of 'Shakespeare', his 'work' and how people staged and received productions of the play. Foucault is right to point out that our impression of 'Shakespeare' relies on whether he is 'the author' of the 'work': '[I]f we proved that Shakespeare did not write those sonnets which pass for his, that would constitute a significant change and affect the manner in which the author's name functions'.³² Foucault explains the functions of the author as follows:

[The author] is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction. In fact, if we are accustomed to presenting the author as a genius, as a perpetual surging of invention, it is because, in reality, we make him function in exactly the opposite fashion. [...] The

³² Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. by Josué V. Harari (New York: Methuen, 1979) pp. 141-160 (p. 146).

author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning.³³

Since the cultural authority and the ‘fear’ of ‘the proliferation of meaning’ cause the desire to limit, when an open text like *Measure for Measure* is performed, it is not surprising that people try to regulate it in the name of ‘Shakespeare’. Worthen argues that ‘Shakespeare’ has a strong impact on how critics perceive a Shakespearean production: ‘the value of theatrical representation is measured not by the productive meanings it releases or puts into play, but by the “proximity” it claims to some sense of authorized meaning, to something located in the text or, magically, in “Shakespeare”’.³⁴ The reactions of Macaulay to Dove’s production and Koenig to Willmott’s are good examples of Worthen’s argument.

The impression of how ‘Shakespeare’ should be represented has an influence not only on critics but also on theatre practitioners and spectators. Worthen explains this issue as follows:

Performance – like reading, like interpretation – is always a putting of the play into the shifting framework of ‘something we value’ through the complex and changing systems of theatre practice, which have their own ways of claiming (and deflecting) proximity to the text, and proximity to Shakespeare.³⁵

³³ Ibid., p. 159.

³⁴ Worthen, *Shakespeare*, pp. 37-38.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 23-24.

A good example of this argument is the New Globe whose selling point is its claim of being ‘authentic’ and its use of ‘original practices’ in the simulacrum of Shakespeare’s early modern Globe. In fact, as Worthen maintains, ‘Shakespeare’ is a ‘complex’ word and its meaning changes throughout history. For early modern people, it meant a player of the King’s Men, for the Restoration people, an unrefined playwright, and for David Garrick, the Bard. ‘Shakespeare’ is a concept, socially constructed and reinvented by influential productions, famous actors and prevalent criticisms of the moment. This thesis measures productions and adaptations of *Measure for Measure* against the development of the ever-changing ‘Shakespeare’, his ‘works’ and their influences on how people present and receive Shakespeare in performance. In addition, this thesis argues that national theatres like the Royal Shakespeare Company (the RSC) and the National Theatre play an important part in advertising ‘Shakespeare’ and *Measure for Measure* to the public.

‘The Multiplicity of Choices’ in *Measure for Measure*

In the subsequent chapters, I argue that the productions across history and in different venues shape, and are shaped, by social attitudes towards difficult issues such as authority, morality and gender equality. As primary evidence for the wider argument that performances defy a definitive interpretation and change spectators’ perception, I will first outline some of ‘the multiplicity of choices’ that theatre practitioners have when they stage an ambiguous play like *Measure for Measure*, and how a particular choice affects spectators’ viewpoints. In an interview with

me, Phil Willmott maintained: '[E]very time you read [*Measure for Measure*], it means something different. And I think it will be possible to do the play four different ways, and each of them will be right'.³⁶ One certainly can read the Duke of Vienna in many ways and practitioners' choices of characterization inevitably shape spectators' perception of authority and morality. For example, following Wilson Knight's reading creates the Duke as 'the prophet of an enlightened ethic. He controls the action from start to finish [...] with his almost divine power of fore-knowledge' and 'wisdom'.³⁷ Without his help, Claudio would be beheaded and 'the corrupt deputy [would not be] scaled' (III. 1. 256). Because of his 'mercy' (V. 1. 487), he pardons Barnadine, Claudio, Angelo and, to some extent, Lucio. The Duke can be read as a wise man who devises, as he calls it, a 'well-balanced' plan (IV. 3. 97). After devising the head trick, the Duke tells the Provost: 'Put not yourself into amazement how these things should be; all difficulties are but easy when they are known' (IV. 2. 200-202). He seems to be confident in his plans. The Duke is successful in persuading many characters to follow his plans. He convinces Mariana to play the bed trick and the Provost to delay Claudio's execution. He also successfully persuades Isabella '[t]o speak so indirectly [...] to veil full purpose' in exposing Angelo (IV. 6. 1, 4). Thus, Marcia Riefer argues that, after meeting the Duke, Isabella 'becomes an obedient follower of male guidance'.³⁸ With his 'well-balanced' plan, the Duke manages to take Angelo by surprise and, full of awe, Angelo says:

³⁶ Phil Willmott, Interview, conducted and transcribed by Rachod Nusen (2 July 2013), Union Theatre, London. The transcript of this interview is available in the Appendix.

³⁷ G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearian Tragedy with Three News Essays* (London: Methuen, 1961), p. 74.

³⁸ Marcia Riefer, "'Instruments of Some More Mightier Member': The Constriction of Female Power in *Measure for Measure*", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 35 (1984), 157-169 (p. 162).

I should be guiltier than my guiltiness
 To think I can be undiscernible,
 When I perceive your grace, like power divine,
 Hath looked upon my passes.

(V. 1. 368-371)

By adopting this line of interpretation, one can present the Duke as a figure of 'power divine'. This, in turn, legitimises and reaffirms the authority of the patriarchal establishment and its morality.

On the other hand, some critics see the Duke as a beneficent but inadequate ruler. Lawrence Ross argues that although the Duke 'tr[ies] to be the very model of the good ruler', he 'has not been in control of what arises from the experiment he initiates'.³⁹ Claudio is in danger because, rather than deputizing Escalus who is 'pregnant in / [...] art and practice' (I. 1. 12-13), the Duke selects Angelo who needs 'some more test made of [his] mettle' (I. 1. 48). In spite of the Duke's confidence, the bed trick is abortive since Angelo refuses to keep his promise. The Duke's first attempt to send Angelo Barnadine's head also fails because the latter blatantly refuses to 'die today for any man's persuasion' (IV. 3. 56-57). This surprising refusal suggests that the Duke is not entirely in control of the situation and, in many modern productions, the sequence made some spectators laugh. Events in the last scene do not go exactly according to the Duke's plan. Being in

³⁹ Lawrence Ross, *On Measure for Measure: An Essay in Criticism of Shakespeare's Drama* (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1997), p. 122.

disguise, he tells Isabella to plead to the Duke that she will have ‘revenges to [her] heart’ (IV. 3. 133) but, eventually, instead of taking revenge, Isabella asks the Duke to pardon Angelo. Although Wilson Knight argues that her plea is ‘the test’ which the Duke ‘puts [...] in her way’,⁴⁰ Kamaralli maintains that Isabella’s plea for Angelo demonstrates ‘autonomy of action’ because the first line of her plea is ‘not a short line, it is the second half of a split line, [...] therefore implying a quick picked-up cue’:

DUKE

He dies for Claudio’s death.

ISABELLA (*kneeling*)

Most bounteous sir.

(V. 1. 444)

Kamaralli insists that this ‘autonomy of action [...] interrupt[s] the Duke’s control of the flow of action’.⁴¹ It prevents him from being the ‘[m]ost bounteous’. In performance, Isabella’s lack of response to the Duke’s proposals can make theatregoers laugh and, as with Barnadine’s case, it reminds them that the Duke is an ordinary man who can make a blunder. If a production emphasises these blunders, the Duke will look incompetent. This line of interpretation encourages theatregoers to question authority and strengthens a demand for democracy and gender equality.

⁴⁰ Knight, *The Wheel of Fire*, p. 94.

⁴¹ Anna Kamaralli, ‘Writing about Motive: Isabella, the Duke and Moral Authority’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 58 (2005), 48-59 (p. 58).

In performance, one can also present the Duke as a manipulative and dubious man, or as Lucio puts it, the ‘Duke of dark corners’ (IV. 3. 154-155) who ‘would have dark deeds darkly answered’ (III. 1. 434-435). Barbara Baines argues that the Duke’s plan to enforce chastity is not only a means of restoring his subjects’ integrity but also ‘retrieving or buttressing patriarchal authority’, or in the Duke’s words, the authority of ‘fond fathers’ with ‘threatening twigs of birch’ (I. 3. 23-24).⁴² His approval of severe punishment can be seen in several scenes. During his scene with Friar Thomas, the Duke condemns acts of fornication as ‘evil deeds’ which should meet with ‘the punishment’ (I. 3. 38-39). Thus, he tells the Friar: ‘I have on Angelo imposed the office, / Who may, in the ambush of my name, strike home’ (I. 3. 40-41). His expectation of severe punishment is signified by the word ‘strike’. In a scene with Lucio, the Duke also maintains that lechery ‘is too general a vice, and severity must cure it’ (III. 1. 363). More troubling than this is that he imposes this unpleasant task on Angelo so his reputation will not be tainted. Hence, one can regard him as a politically crafty authority figure who appoints Angelo to enforce the harsh laws so that when he returns, he will appear as a merciful ruler. He may also maliciously expect the ‘well-seeming Angelo’ to fail (III. 1. 224-225). The Duke knows that Angelo has unfairly deserted Mariana ‘pretending in her discoveries of dishonour’ (III. 1. 228-229). It is hardly responsible to leave Vienna in command of the inexperienced, mean, slanderous deputy.

⁴² Barbara J. Baines, ‘Assaying the Power of Chastity in *Measure for Measure*’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 30 (1990), 283-301 (p. 285).

Moreover, the way that the Duke enforces other characters to marry is controversial. As Lucio points out, forcing someone to marry an undesirable partner ‘is pressing to death, whipping, and hanging’ (V. 1. 525-526). According to Lucio, marriage can be death in disguise. This urges one to question whether the Duke’s plan to force a marriage between Mariana and Angelo, who still ‘crave[s] death more willingly than mercy’ (V. 1. 479) is really commendable. This question is also applicable to Isabella who wants to be a nun. Reading the Duke’s proposal as politically motivated, Baines maintains that, ‘[b]y making Isabella his chaste wife, the Duke appropriates the power of her chastity and closes off the one avenue of her resistance to masculine authority’.⁴³

Many of the Duke’s other actions and motives are questionable. It is unclear why the Duke lies to Claudio that Angelo only ‘hath made an assay of [Isabella’s] virtue’ (III. 1. 165-166), to the Provost that Angelo’s ‘life is paralleled / Even with the stroke and line of his great justice’ (IV. 2. 79-80) and to Isabella that Claudio’s ‘head is off’ (IV. 3. 114). At the beginning of Act V, he also pretends not to believe Isabella’s accusation of Angelo. The Duke justifies his lie to Isabella, which seems to be applicable to the other cases, as follows:

But I will keep her ignorant of her good,
To make her heavenly comforts of despair
When it is least expected.

(IV. 3. 106-108)

⁴³ Ibid., p. 298.

He clearly wants to surprise his subjects. This only leads to another puzzling question: for what purpose? Reading it positively, one can say that he believes Isabella will pardon Angelo, thus, it is his way to teach his people the value of life and mercy. However, he tells Isabella that she should take revenge on Angelo, hence, it is also reasonable to read him as a cruel man who loves playing with people's lives. Richard Wilson interprets his action in the last scene as 'the Duke's more modern scheme to manoeuvre the citizens into self-subjection' by making them penitent and afraid of his omnipresent authority.⁴⁴ From this Foucauldian reading, the Duke is engaging in establishing the culture of surveillance in which his subjects feel that they are always watched and, to avoid punishment from the Duke's 'omnipresent authority', impose self-discipline on themselves.

If one reads the Duke negatively, one might also wonder whether there is any truth in Lucio's description of him. Lucio not only calls the Duke an 'old fantastic Duke of dark corners' (IV. 3. 154-155) but also accuses him of being a 'woodman' (IV. 3. 159), a lecherous man. It is baffling why the Duke pardons Barnadine, the murderer, but punishes Lucio, the slanderer. Wilson Knight states that Lucio is punished because the last act represents 'the final judgement' and, according to Matthew 12: 36, 'every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement'.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, Mary Ellen Lamb believes the Duke cannot leave Lucio's slander uncensored because it undermines his image as a man 'whose "complete bosom" could never be pierced by "the dribbling dart of

⁴⁴ Richard Wilson, 'Prince of Darkness: Foucault's Shakespeare', in *Measure for Measure*, ed. by Nigel Wood (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996), pp. 133-178 (p. 158).

⁴⁵ Knight, *The Wheel of Fire*, p. 91.

love” (I. 3. 2-3). Lucio makes him aware of ‘his own potentialities’ that ‘he shares with the rest of humanity, high and low, the urges and problems of sexual being’.⁴⁶ According to Jonathan Dollimore, Lucio’s offence is most unforgivable for the Duke because ‘[u]nawares and carelessly, Lucio strikes at the heart of the ideological legitimation of power’.⁴⁷ If one reads the punishment as the Duke’s way to protect his political power, his image as a disinterested, virtuous ruler is undermined. This is why M. Lindsay Kaplan maintains that the Duke’s punishment of Lucio undermines his authority since it exposes ‘the arbitrariness’ of the state and ‘call[s] into question the ruler’s own use of theatrical power to expose and punish’.⁴⁸ If a production stresses the Duke’s arbitrary judgements and self-interest, playgoers will be more likely to see him as a cruel or unethical ruler. Such a production increases their scepticism towards authority and its morality.

There are multiple ways to read Angelo which determine our responses to the character, the Duke and authority in general. For Alexander Leggatt, Angelo is the Duke’s ‘victim’. He takes the risk and blame for the Duke by undertaking the campaign of cleaning Vienna.⁴⁹ At first, Angelo refuses to accept the Duke’s commission since he has not been tested (I. 1. 48-51) but the Duke insists. As Isabella perceives, ‘[a] due sincerity governed his deeds / Till he did look on’ her (V. 1. 447-448). From these instances, it is possible to read Angelo as a sincere

⁴⁶ Mary Ellen Lamb, ‘Shakespeare’s “Theatrics”’: Ambivalence toward Theater in *Measure for Measure*, *Shakespeare Studies*, 20 (1987), 129-146 (pp. 136-137).

⁴⁷ Jonathan Dollimore, ‘Transgression and Surveillance in *Measure for Measure*’, in *Political Shakespeare: Essays on Cultural Materialism*, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 72-87 (p. 83).

⁴⁸ M. Lindsay Kaplan, *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 108.

⁴⁹ Alexander Leggatt, ‘Substitution in *Measure for Measure*’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39 (1988), 342-359 (p. 346).

man who genuinely believes that severe punishment can restore Vienna's morality. In contrast, Walter Bagehot insists that Angelo is a 'natural hypocrite'.⁵⁰ He lies about Mariana's 'reputation [being] disvalued / In levity' (V. 1. 222-223). Keeping his relationship with Mariana in mind, should we believe him that, before meeting Isabella, 'Never strumpet could [...] [o]nce stir [his] temper' (II. 2. 186,188)? Angelo's desire for Isabella is complex. His soliloquy after the first meeting is full of questions and opposing expressions. He suggests that he not only 'love[s] her' (II. 2. 180) and her 'virtue' (II. 2. 186) but also wants to 'raze' the sacred building he imagined her to be (II. 2. 174). From his expression, one can say that he loves Isabella but does not know how to woo her. Baines, however, reads it as his desire 'to regain his position of male dominance – to transfer, that is, the image of feminine subjugation from himself to Isabella'.⁵¹ Alternatively, one can say that it is a mixture of many urges which Angelo himself does not fully understand. In performance, the age of the actor influences how we interpret Angelo. If the man who plays the deputy is young, it is easier to take the character as sincere but inexperienced. It is hard to tell Angelo's feelings at the end of the play. When it is revealed that Claudio is alive, the Duke says, 'By this Lord Angelo perceives he's safe / Methinks I see a quickening in his eye' (V. 1. 497-498). In performance, one can play this scene to suggest that the Duke exaggerates Angelo's reaction to dramatize his revelation when, actually, the deputy is still heart-broken by public humiliation. If Angelo remains sad or weeps, it emphasises his role as a victim of the Duke's manipulation and raises questions

⁵⁰ Walter Bagehot, 'Angelo a Natural Hypocrite', in *Measure for Measure*, ed. by George Geckle (London: Athlone, 2001), pp. 121-122 (p. 122).

⁵¹ Baines, 'Assaying the Power of Chastity', p. 285.

about the advantages of bestowing absolute power on the Duke or any other leader. Alternatively, if the actor plays ‘quickenings’ as joyful, this requires further interpretation: is Angelo relieved that he did not kill Claudio or that he himself will not be executed? There are many ways to present Angelo and make spectators sympathise with the establishment more or less.

Similarly, how one plays Lucio has a strong impact on spectators’ attitude towards people in power. Lamb’s reading of Lucio well illustrates the multiple and contradictory aspects of this character: ‘while Lucio’s effect on Claudio and Isabella seems to be beneficial, his own perjury [in the last scene] has put his own role-playing in a dark light’.⁵² On the positive side, Lucio not only says that he ‘loved’ Claudio (IV. 3. 154) but acts like a good friend. He brings Claudio’s news to Isabella and, without his encouragement in the first interview (II. 2. 43-47), Isabella would give up begging for her brother’s life. William Dodd argues that Lucio represents ‘a spirit of irreverence and insubordination’ that disrupts the Duke’s ‘plot’.⁵³ However, Lucio’s first interruption in the trial scene (V. 1. 75-78) does not disturb the Duke’s speech but Isabella’s plea and she has some difficulty in getting back to her point. In addition, far from being the ‘spirit of insubordination’, Lucio tries to win the Duke’s favour with a shameful lie. Ignorant that Friar Lodowick is actually the Duke in disguise, Lucio claims, ‘For certain words he spake against your grace / In your retirement, I had swung him soundly’ (V. 1. 130-131). Both his refusal to bail Pompey and his proclamation in

⁵² Lamb, ‘Shakespeare’s “Theatrics”’, p. 142.

⁵³ William Dodd, ‘Power and Performance: *Measure for Measure* in the Public Theatre of 1604-1605’, *Shakespeare Studies*, 24 (1996), 211-240 (p. 235).

public of seeing Isabella and Friar Lodowick alone ‘yesternight [...] at the prison’ (V. 1. 135-136) could be read as a great betrayal. Lamb argues that, due to his habit of being theatrical, ‘Lucio’s face has become his mask, and what lies beneath is only vacancy’.⁵⁴ However, in performance, what lies beneath ‘Lucio’s face’ is not vacancy but an actor, who has to decide what kind of character he will represent from the multiple options available. A crowd-pleasing Lucio can play a vital part in criticising authority and its moral code, while a treacherous Lucio can be used as a warning against immoral aspiration and class mobility.

Since Isabella is the only female protagonist, how the production characterises her and her relationship to the other characters is key to reaffirming the status quo of gender politics or to suggest the need for social change. Nathan Drake, writing in 1817, argues: ‘Piety, spotless purity, tenderness combined with firmness, and an eloquence the most persuasive, unite to render [Isabella] singularly interesting and attractive’. In line with late Georgian family values, Drake admires her self-sacrifice in abandoning ‘the peaceful seclusion of her convent’ to save her brother.⁵⁵ In contrast, Wilson Knight feels that ‘Isabella has no real affection for Claudio’ and she ‘has stifled all human love in the pursuit of sanctity’.⁵⁶ Critics have different opinions towards her motive in refusing Angelo’s offer. In the programme to John Barton’s production, Anne Barton claims that it is due to Isabella’s ‘hysterical fear of sex’.⁵⁷ On the other hand, Kamaralli insists that,

⁵⁴ Lamb, ‘Shakespeare’s “Theatrics”’, p. 138.

⁵⁵ Nathan Drake, ‘Isabella, a “Lovely Example of Female Excellence”’, in *Measure for Measure*, ed. by George Geckle (London: Athlone, 2001), pp. 53-55 (p. 53).

⁵⁶ Knight, *The Wheel of Fire*, p. 92.

⁵⁷ John Barton, Programme, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 1970 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford).

rather than hysteria, '[t]he text supports the inference that Isabella makes independent decisions based on a rational moral code'. To refuse Angelo is not to refuse to have sex but to refuse to encourage 'corruption, bribery and violence'.⁵⁸ Isabella's cooperation in the bed trick is open to discussion. Arthur Quiller-Couch insists that Isabella is 'not by any means such a saint as she looks. [...] [S]he is all for saving her own soul'. By following the Duke's bed trick 'with no qualm of conscience', she becomes 'a bare procuress'.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, it is possible to read her decision more positively. Rosalind Miles believes that her participation in the bed trick suggests that Isabella begins 'to forget her self-pity in pity for another woman's sharp and prolonged suffering'.⁶⁰ She approves of the bed trick since it 'heal[s]' Mariana's anguish (III. 1. 237). We can say that she decides to do it because 'Friar Lodowick' assures her that it is not a 'dishonour' (III. 1. 239). Because of these various interpretations, in performance, it is possible to represent Isabella as a saint, a cold moralist, a prude, a rational woman or multiple combinations of these. The choice that each production makes, in turn, reflects and suggests the role of women in society.

The play's conclusion does not resolve the aforementioned ambiguities. As Philip McGuire claims, the 'open silences' of the six characters at the end, namely, Angelo, Barnardine, Claudio, Juliet, Mariana and Isabella, 'can alter an audience's sense of the moral vision'.⁶¹ When Barnardine and Claudio are pardoned, they

⁵⁸ Kamaralli, 'Writing about Motive', pp. 48, 56.

⁵⁹ Arthur Quiller-Couch, 'Introduction', in *Measure for Measure*, ed. by John Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), vii-xliii (xxx).

⁶⁰ Rosalind Miles, *The Problem of Measure for Measure* (London: Vision, 1976), p. 226.

⁶¹ Philip C. McGuire, *Speechless Dialect: Shakespeare's Open Silences* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 63-64.

remain silent and there is nothing to indicate their reaction. Therefore, the production can use this moment to emphasise the Duke's mercy or his arbitrariness. Similarly, after Claudio is unmuffled, Mariana does not say anything. The actor who plays Mariana can smile to suggest that she is relieved that her husband has not killed anyone and will not die. Alternatively, she can frown to suggest that she feels deceived by the Duke. In the case of Isabella and Claudio, the siblings might not talk to one another because the argument that they have in the prison is too bitter to be easily reconciled; they might be simply too surprised to say anything; or, in performance, they can embrace to suggest their reconciliation. How the production stages their relationship at the end suggests the role of authority of the state on family values. Isabella's silence to the Duke's proposals also poses many questions. Why does she remain silent? What is her reaction to his second proposal? These unresolvable questions ask the director and audience to answer another big question: What is the ultimate goal of women in society?

Because of these ambiguities, Frederick Boas coins a new genre and classifies *Measure for Measure* as a 'problem-play':

At the close our feeling is neither of simple joy nor pain; we are excited, fascinated, perplexed, for the issues raised preclude a completely satisfactory outcome. [...] Dramas so singular in theme and temper cannot be strictly called comedies or tragedies.⁶²

⁶² Frederick S. Boas, *Shakespeare and His Predecessors* (London: 1896), p. 345.

The aforementioned ambiguities and silences defy a definitive interpretation and, in performance, the director can use them to defy generic, theatrical and social conventions as many productions have done throughout the play's stage history. As Anne Ubersfeld maintains, the text always 'has *gaps*' which the production has to fill.⁶³

Filling the 'Gaps' with Space, Actor, Audience and Scenography

I argue that each production of *Measure for Measure* fills the textual gaps with spaces, actors, audiences and scenography that reflect and shape moral, political and gender perceptions at the time of performance. These four elements, well-recorded in the case of modern productions, are the primary areas for analysis in this thesis.

Discussing the importance of space in theatre, Martin Esslin proposes:

The performance space – whether it is the stage of the live theatre or the cinema and television screen – has a vital and truly fundamental aspect: by its very existence it *generates meaning*. It transforms the most ordinary and everyday trivia of existence into carriers of significance.⁶⁴

⁶³ Anne Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, trans. by Frank Collins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 10.

⁶⁴ Martin Esslin, *The Field of Drama: How the Signs of Drama Create Meaning on Stage and Screen* (London: Methuen Drama, 1987), p. 38.

In addition, as Ubersfeld explains, ‘the spatial structures reproduced in the theatre define not so much a concrete world, but rather the image people have of spatial relationships and the conflicts underlying those relationships in the society in which they live’.⁶⁵ Apart from ‘objective, external space’, for Patrice Pavis, in performance, there is also ‘gestural space’: ‘the space created by the presence, stage position, and movements of the performers’.⁶⁶ This thesis argues that ‘objective’ and ‘gestural’ spaces not only reflect but also shape our image of power relations in the socio-cultural context at large, and spaces have a strong influence on the interaction between the audiences and the actors which can empower the spectators or otherwise.

I argue that how the actor presents himself or herself, in what spaces and in what layered personae, directly affects the authority of the character and what he or she stands for. The actor himself or herself is another signifier that generates meanings. According to Esslin, the actor simultaneously presents three signifieds:

An actor appearing on the stage or screen is, in the first place, himself, the ‘real’ person that he is with his physical characteristics, his voice and temperament; he is, secondly, himself, transformed, disguised, by costume, make-up, an assumed voice, a mental attitude derived from the study of and empathy with the fictional character he is playing: this is the ‘stage-figure’ [...], the physical simulacrum of the character; but, thirdly, and

⁶⁵ Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, p. 97.

⁶⁶ Patrice Pavis, *Analyzing Performance: Theater, Dance, and Film*, trans. by David Williams (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 152.

most importantly there is the “fiction” itself, for which he stands, and which ultimately will emerge in the mind of the individual spectator watching the play or film. [...] And that fictional figure, in turn, may [...] also stand for a whole category or class of individuals, may assume general human meaning.⁶⁷

On this issue, Ubersfeld argues that ‘the character portrayed by an actor necessarily resembles someone or something’ and it might signify a role, ‘a coded actor that is limited by a predetermined function’.⁶⁸ We can use her idea to modify Esslin’s model into three new signifieds: the actor as himself, the actor as a fictional character and the actor as ‘a coded’ signified that signifies ‘someone or something’ else.

To analyse how a production presents the multi-dimensional persona of the actor, this thesis uses the concepts of *locus* and *platea* developed by Robert Weimann. The *locus* is ‘a fairly specific imaginary locale or self-contained space in the world of the play’ and the *platea* is ‘an opening in *mise-en-scène* through which the place and time of the stage-as-stage and the cultural occasion itself are made to assist or resist the socially and verbally elevated, spatially and temporally remote representation’.⁶⁹ In performance, the actor can effectively locate her or himself in the *platea* when s/he is close to the audience since it is easier to draw the audience in to see her/his showmanship as an actor. In contrast, when s/he is

⁶⁷ Esslin, *The Field of Drama*, p. 58.

⁶⁸ Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, pp. 80, 67.

⁶⁹ Robert Weimann, *Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare’s Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 181.

entering the *locus*, he or she detaches him/herself from the audience. Being in the *locus*, the actor contains him or herself in ‘the world of the play’ and signifies a fictional character. The third layer of the actor as ‘someone or something’ else can be signified either in the *locus* or in the *platea*. If a performance emphasises his ducal role, the Duke will represent state power, whereas, if a performance emphasises the mode of ‘the stage-as-stage’, the actor might play the Duke as a representative of the stage director, such as in Keith Hack’s production in 1974.

The text of *Measure for Measure* requires the use of both *locus* and *platea*. In the first scene, the Duke locates himself in the *locus*. Since the *locus* empowers authority figures, being in this space, the Duke signifies state power. Thus, he can command anything and anyone. This is the space and role that Angelo assumes when he is a deputy in the Duke’s absence. In performance, these are moments when the actors represent themselves as fictional characters: governors of state. When the Duke is in disguise, he adopts another authoritative persona in the *locus*: a spiritual father, but he also engages in a different mode of performance. Weimann’s argument on disguise convention is useful in explaining this phenomenon:

The disguise convention tends to (dis)close a gap between the representation of character and the practice of role playing. In our text, the gap between them is turned into a site on which the representation (and the

ideology) of gender and status are made to submit to a playfully arranged game involving, through masquerade, substitution, and exchange.⁷⁰

Being in disguise, the Duke, to some extent, suspends the ducal role, locates himself in the *platea* and engages in ‘role playing’. This is the moment when the actor can show his acting skill in assuming a new role. Thus, it emphasises the layer when the actor is himself. This layer is also highlighted when there is a doubling, for example, when the actor assumes another role by changing his or her costumes on the stage. The argument is that the *platea* is a space that can be used to destabilise the status quo and the extensive use of the *platea*, or the lack of it, reflects and suggests the change in terms of authority of the characters.

I argue that the actor as himself or herself influences the dramatic character and, as a result, influences how spectators perceive that character’s authority and morality. As Rutter argues, ‘the body [of the actor] in play bears continuous meaning onstage, and always exceeds the playtext it inhabits’.⁷¹ How the spectators regard the relationships between Isabella and the Duke is strongly influenced by the actors’ ages and physical appearances. Isabella is, as Claudio states, in her ‘youth’ whereas there are several passages which suggest that the Duke is old. Lucio names him ‘the old fantastic Duke’ and the ‘beggar of fifty’ (III. 1. 387). In Shakespeare’s time, when Isabella was played by a boy, that ‘she’ would marry a much older man was part of the theatrical convention. However,

⁷⁰ Robert Weimann, ‘Textual Authority and Performative Agency: The Uses of Disguise in Shakespeare’s Theater’, *New Literary History*, 25 (1994), 789-808 (p. 796).

⁷¹ Rutter, *Enter the Body*, xiii.

for modern spectators to whom a marriage between people from different generations is not a common practice, a significant age difference between the actors who play the Duke and Isabella will make the Duke's proposals sound more inappropriate and their happiness after marriage more questionable. The actors' personalities also have an impact on the character that he or she plays and how spectators interpret the production. When Robert Armin entered, many early modern theatregoers would doubtless have seen him as a clown, regardless of the name of the character that he performed in that play. Phil Willmott and Michael Rudman's casting of actors from racial minorities changed the play into a critique of colonisation and a comment on riots in Brixton, respectively. The size of actors also plays an important role in our perceptions of characters. John Philip Kemble's height would have made his Duke look elegant, the large physique of Gordon Case's Barnadine in Nicholas Hytner's production in 1987 made him look intimidating, while Angelos in Sean Holmes and Roxana Silbert's productions in 2003 and 2011 were small and looked powerless.

This thesis argues that an individual spectator, and his or her community, play an active role in meaning-making which might reaffirm or contradict the director's interpretation of the themes of authority, morality and gender politics in the play. The audience, as individuals and as a community, make every production different. As Esslin maintains:

The 'meaning', or indeed the multitudes of meanings simultaneously perceived, or subliminally received, by the individual spectator of the

dramatic action will always be the product of the interaction between the content of the signs it emits themselves, on the one hand; and the spectator's competence to decode them, on the other, and always, necessarily, in the context of his or her personal situation and the social and historical circumstances in which he or she finds him/herself.⁷²

Hence, it is likely that an upper-class critic and an inexperienced, underprivileged playgoer would read a production differently. In addition to such individual interpretations, an audience experiences the production as a group as, Susan Bennett describes:

[I]t is the tension between the inner frame of the fictional stage world, the audience's moment by moment perception of that in the experience of a social group, and the outer frame of community (cultural construction and horizons of expectations) which determine the nature and satisfaction of the interpretative process.⁷³

A responsive audience community can empower an individual spectator and encourages his or her participation. My thesis proves that the reactions of spectators can shape future productions. For example, hostile reactions towards Hack's Brechtian production led to 'safe' productions at the RSC after the 1970s.

⁷² Esslin, *The Field of Drama*, p. 167.

⁷³ Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 166-167.

A complex question concerning what the audiences actually do in performance has been thoughtfully investigated by Stephen Purcell. In *Shakespeare and Audience in Practice*, Purcell points out that studies on audiences were dominated by semioticians who consider audiences as the ones who “read” the signifiers of the stage’. Purcell argues that this approach is inadequate since playgoers ‘experience the behaviour of the stage not as a computer might, receiving and processing data, but as embodied beings’. Recent studies, including Purcell’s own research, show that people express their responses not only in symbolic ways but also in sensory, visceral ways.⁷⁴ Spectators look at the bodies and faces of actors and might feel thrilled or astonished by the liveness of the performance or the closeness to the actions. These reactions cannot be described in semiotic ways. In addition, as Purcell shows, much recent research done by theatre historians and critics reveals the advantages of ‘investigat[ing] the responses of actual audiences rather than speculat[ing] on their behalf’.⁷⁵ Although it is impossible for this thesis to strictly follow Purcell’s proposals due to the absence of responses of non-professional spectators, Purcell’s book effectively shows the benefits of empirical research on Shakespearean audiences and should influence research in the future. Purcell’s book reminds me not to treat ‘the audience’ as a single entity, and, where possible, to pay attention to not only written reviews but also to spectators’ responses, such as laughing, hissing, facial expressions or gestures, which are recorded in some productions from the 1980s.

⁷⁴ Stephen Purcell, *Shakespeare and Audience in Practice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 36-37.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

As Purcell maintains, to talk about the audience as a united group unduly simplifies things:

[A]ny discussion of ‘the audience’ as a collective risks writing out the various different responses at play within that audience. But at the same time, every audience *does* have a collective identity of sorts: when a large number of people respond en masse by laughing, applauding, or even falling silent simultaneously, they temporarily enact a group identity, however tenuous and unstable it may be.⁷⁶

Being in a theatre, one is, overtly or not, assigned to play the role of audience member along with other theatergoers and, in this way, a sense of togetherness is usually created. From time to time, people react in a way that other members of the audience do or expect them to do. The influence of a group identity on the experience of playgoing and meanings of productions is explored in the first and third chapters in this thesis. Nevertheless, it is certainly not helpful to rely too heavily on an unstable ‘collective identity’. Hence, in this thesis, I hypothesise that there are always various reactions towards any moment in performance. I not only try to consult every account of an individual spectator’s response but also look for elements that might generate other responses, which are different from the documented ones. Furthermore, now, through the internet, a huge number of people can access Shakespearean productions from every corner of the world. Everyone can work as a co-director by editing the production or even record his or

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

her own production and upload it into YouTube. In this digital age, anyone can have her or his own ‘Shakespeare’. Although this thesis does not discuss internet rewritings of *Measure for Measure*, it examines how modern media, such as film and television have influenced performances of *Measure for Measure*.

Besides paying attention to space, actor and audience, this thesis analyses the scenography of each production:

[S]cenography is defined as the manipulation and orchestration of the performance environment. The means by which this is pursued are typically through architectonic structures, light, projected images, sound, costume and performance objects or props. These elements are considered in relation to the performing bodies, the text, the space in which the performance takes place and the placement of the audience.⁷⁷

Following Joslin McKinney and Philip Butterworth, I consider how these elements influence ‘audience reception and engagement’.⁷⁸ I argue that every element of scenography can change spectators’ perceptions of morality, authority and gender politics.

The text of *Measure for Measure* calls for two kinds of architectonic structure; outdoor settings, namely, ‘the world’ (I. 2. 115) are required in the procession of

⁷⁷ Joslin McKinney and Philip Butterworth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

disgrace scene and ‘the consecrated fount / A league below the city’ (IV. 3. 95-96) in the last scene, and indoor settings are needed for the nunnery with a door in Act I Scene 4 and the prison scenes. Outdoor and indoor settings affect interpretations about authority. Desmond Davis’s film stressed the Duke’s authority over his subjects by staging the last scene at the city gate with a huge crowd there to welcome him, suggesting his role as the heart of the community. In contrast, when Jonathan Miller staged the final scene in an office, the Duke’s influence on the whole community was not shown. The harshness of Angelo’s regime depends on how Claudio’s ‘disgrace’ is exposed to ‘the world’: it is emphasised in an outdoor setting and lost if it is relocated indoors. Placing the nunnery indoors signifies its role as sanctuary from the corrupt Vienna.

Theatres themselves reflect and shape the relative authority of those within their walls. In the early modern period, it is likely that the atmosphere of the performance at the Globe would have been more democratic than that at Whitehall Palace which was the *locus* of royal authority. The size of theatre and spatial arrangements are important factors in creating a sense of intimacy, participation and empowerment. It is much easier to achieve intimacy at a small venue like the RSC’s the Other Place than at the National’s Olivier. Playgoers at the outdoor New Globe with a thrust stage is usually more active and has more power to influence the performance than those in a dark auditorium and proscenium stage like the Lyttelton. With an intimate space, it is easier to identify with the character/actor, while in a large theatre, the spectators are more likely to be, as the Duke says, ‘looker-on[s]’ (V. 1. 319). They observe and judge. The

proscenium stage usually empowers the figures of authority while the comic characters are more engaging, more comical and more memorable on the thrust stage.

Lighting in productions of *Measure for Measure* helps create the atmosphere of Vienna, and as a result, telegraphs the condition of the city's order and morality. Many scenes in the text ask for a dim light. The scene between Isabella and Claudio requires darkness since it is in the prison and Isabella tells Lucio that she will visit Claudio 'at night' (I. 4. 88). The moated grange scene also takes place before 'the heavy middle of the night' (I. 4. 33). The change of lighting occurs in Act IV Scene 2 which begins at 'midnight' and ends at 'almost clear dawn' when 'the unfolding star calls up the shepherd' (IV. 2. 61, 206, 199-200). Thus, the lighting effect should change from darkness to brightness. In the early modern period, the change of lighting would have been suggested by lighting and extinguishing candles or torches. Brightness can be applied to signify the role of a character or a place as an agent of goodness. In Davis's television adaptation, the 'clear dawn' signified the end of Angelo's dark regime. On the other hand, a production which is played in a dim or eerie light throughout the show suggests the prevalence of evil in society. A pallid light can be used to suggest the decadence of the city and its morality, while a red light signifies violence or sex, as in the Western convention of the red-light district of a city. Thus, if it is used in a prison scene or a palace scene, it highlights the oppression and corruption of the establishment. If it is used in a brothel scene, it emphasizes the role of the low-life characters as a threat to the state.

Clothing is an effective means to suggest a character's authority and morality. To make Lucio 'fantastic', many productions costumed Lucios in colourful clothes, while Angelos and Isabellas often wore plain or black costumes. For example, in Dove's production, while Colin Hurley's Lucio had a gold long-sleeved shirt and a big, bright, golden hat, Liam Brennan's Angelo dressed as a puritan in black and Sophie Thomson's Isabella wore grey costumes. It is easier to believe that an Isabella will accept a Duke if she is in an evening dress than in a nun's cloak. This suggested the contrast between Lucio's worldly pleasure and the other characters' moral restraint. It is also hard to sympathise with Mistress Overdone if she wears luxurious dress with numberless ornaments and jewels, as Peggy Mount did in 1984. In addition, costumes can convey symbolic meanings. In Hytner's production, at first, Sean Baker's Angelo was in a black suit which signified his status as an upper-class bureaucrat but, after the first interview with Isabella, he was confused by his lust and he threw away his suit. This action signified his loss of authority as a governor of the city. A cloak of justice can be used to emphasise the authority of the wearer while dirty, tattered costumes of the low-life characters can be used to undermine the paternal care of those in authority.

Stage costumes can be used to signify power relations. As Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass suggest, in the early modern period, costumes 'retained or simulated the identity of former wearers' and this identity was 'transmissible'.⁷⁹ Therefore, in this period, the character and the actor's identity was shaped by the

⁷⁹ Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 196.

‘transmissible’ identity invested in the costume which signified his or her status in society. When the Duke of the King’s Men changed his costumes, he literally assumed a new identity and authority. This is manifested in the text when the Duke in disguise tells Escalus, ‘I protest I love the Duke as I love myself’ (V. 1. 342). Being in a friar’s cloak, he becomes an ‘I’ who is no longer the Duke. This highlights not only the Duke’s assumption of both civic and clerical authority but also the instability of identity and authority. The use of ‘early modern’ clothing at the New Globe signifies not only the present performance but also the past, which creates a double consciousness in the responses of audiences. Changes of clothing in doubling can be used to destabilize religious and gender conventions as in 1974, where Hack had an actor change his costumes from those of Mistress Overdone to those of Nun Francisca on the stage. In recent years, a number of productions modernized the costumes, which made it easier for spectators to see a connection between the issues in the play and those in present day society. For example, in Simon McBurney’s production, the prisoners were in orange jumpsuits which undoubtedly reminded many spectators of prisoners at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp, and suggested parallels between Angelo’s war against lechery and the suffering of people under George W. Bush’s war on terrorism.

Like costumes, properties telegraph the status of the character who owns them, thus, they can be used to affirm that character’s authority or to undermine it.

Measure for Measure requires few properties; commissions for Escalus and Angelo in the first scene, a key to the nunnery and those to Angelo’s garden,

warrants for Claudio and Barnadine, Ragozine's head, Angelo's private letter to the Provost, a letter with the Duke's seal which the Duke shows the Provost in Act IV Scene 2, the Duke's letter to Friar Peter, letters that the Duke gives Friar Peter before his return and two seats in the last act. Among these properties, the seats are the easiest to be recognized as carriers of significance in terms of politics. For example, in John Blatchley's production in 1956, the Duke, in the last scene, sat on a throne which was apparently bigger, higher and more elegant than Escalus's chair, signifying his authority and superiority to his subjects. Some props have the potential to be shocking. If, for example, Ragozine's head looks realistic and pitiable, it can undermine the Duke's self-constructed appearance of mercy. A cross signifies the wearer's religious commitment. Swords, spikes, torturing machines highlight the violence of the state. Drinks or cigarettes can be used to signify the adherence to worldly pleasure.

Sounds and sound effects can be used to change spectators' moods and perceptions of power relations. The text requires that, in Act IV Scene 1, the boy sings a song, 'Take, O take those lips away' which, as Mariana maintains, 'displease[s]' her 'mirth' and 'please[s] [her] woe' (IV. 1. 13). In Davis's production, Mariana sang the song very slowly which reflected her anguish, suggesting the cruelty of Angelo. By contrast, Dove's production used pre-show music on early modern instruments to create a cheerful atmosphere for comedy and attuned spectators into an early modern space. This music authorized their performance as 'authentic' and reaffirmed the status of Shakespeare as a national asset. In the Restoration, William Davenant inserted a song into his adaptation to

emphasise the image of Benedick and Beatrice's camps fighting against the puritan Angelo, and an interpolation of *Dido and Aeneas*, an opera written by Henry Purcell, in Charles Gildon's adaptation, not only reflected the situation that Angelo and Isabella experience but also the taste of the middle class for a 'populuxe' product. In Rudman's production, an interpolated song created a carnivalesque atmosphere, suggesting the defiance of the low-life characters against authority, echoing what happened in riots in Brixton. In Act IV Scene 2 the text calls for sounds of the Duke's and the Messenger's knocking. If the sounds of knocking and prison door closing are loud, they can create a sense of oppression, as in Hytner's and McBurney's productions. The last act includes a direction for a flourish, a means to display the Duke's authority. When it is removed, the Duke's status on entry is weakened. Hymns or the sound of a church bell can be used to emphasise religious authority while the groaning of prisoners signifies the cruelty of authority. The way that each production of *Measure for Measure* fills the 'gaps' with sounds and the other elements of scenography, and their influences on spectators' viewpoints will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

The approach of this thesis is trans-historical. It argues that the 'gaps' in *Measure for Measure*, an extraordinarily open text, are filled in every production with various theatrical elements, reflecting and shaping playgoers' attitudes towards complex issues, such as authority, morality, gender power and 'Shakespeare'. While reviews usually concentrate on an individual production and cannot point out connections between productions, this approach enables me to see the

continuities and originalities of how each production filled the ‘gaps’. Although, because of word limit, this thesis cannot discuss every issue and every production in detail, I believe the full comprehensive history that it provides offers a fuller account of the multiple scenographic elements used, and highlights each production’s specific and significant contribution in the context of the play’s developing stage history. While this thesis is organised in broadly a chronological order, each chapter undertakes a particular point of focus.

The first chapter argues that, from the beginning, *Measure for Measure* never provided only one ‘original’ message. In it, I speculatively reconstruct performances of the King’s Men at Whitehall and at the Globe and argue that, because of the variety of playgoers and the text’s indeterminacy, the King’s Men’s *Measure for Measure* helped not only to reaffirm the absolute authority of the monarchy but also to cultivate scepticism towards it. I argue that the playing venues and spectators would have influenced the performances. For the court performance, I discuss the possible configuration of its performance space and how it would have reflected the status quo of politics at that time and the possible different reactions of King James and the Catholic Queen to the production. For the Globe’s performance, I discuss how the theatre encouraged a democratic spirit. In this section, I use Weimann’s *locus* and *platea* in explaining how the authority of the actor who played the Duke might have been challenged in that production.

Chapter 2 argues that, in adapting the text of *Measure for Measure* or transcoding

it into different media, the adaptor establishes himself as an author with a rival authority to that of Shakespeare and, in consequence, the adaptation changes our view of the 'work'. This chapter maintains that the indeterminacy of *Measure for Measure* makes it an ideal text for the adapter to change, altering the written script to engage directly with changing social contexts and further his or her political agendas. Starting with a discussion of adaptation *per se*, the first section explores adaptations in the Restoration and the second section those in the modern period. The first section asserts that during the Restoration, William Davenant set himself as an author and reworked Shakespeare's outdated plays to be royalist propaganda, Gildon changed the text to satisfy middle class spectators and reshaped the authority of Shakespeare over his 'work', while Charles Marowitz's 1975 adaptation was characterized by an anti-authoritarianism which deliberately 'transgressed' Shakespeare and his text. Willmott's twenty-first century production was criticised for such transgression, its postcolonial interpretation was regarded as 'unfaithful' to 'Shakespeare's intentions. However, Marowitz's and Willmott's adaptations also suggested new ways to read the 'work'. The last section of this chapter is on TV and film adaptations of *Measure for Measure*. In it, I discuss not only the influence and the need to transgress the 'work' but also the problems of 'transcoding' and their impact on reception and on future stage and screen productions.

In Chapter 3, I return to and develop the argument of Chapter 1: that performance spaces had a strong impact on spectators' reactions and attitudes towards the genre and issues of authority and morality in the play. The first section argues that

William Poel's 'Elizabethan' revival spaces contributed to the view of *Measure for Measure* as a 'problem play' and that the New Globe played an important part in making John Dove's production a successful, funny comedy. The second section discusses how the playing companies dealt with the problem of having to play in unfamiliar performance spaces when they were on tour. I argue that the performance spaces were a means for the touring companies to show their cultural authority to local spectators or to devolve authority to those local spectators. Thus, the performance spaces had a great impact on how the spectators interpreted the theme of authority in the productions.

Chapter 4 argues that the productions of *Measure for Measure* from the Georgian period to the 1960s tried to solve the play's 'vulgarity' and ambiguous themes of morality, authority and gender politics and, by doing that, they reflected, anticipated and shaped not only 'Shakespeare' but also the norms of their respective periods. I argue that the continuities and differences in stagings of *Measure for Measure* contribute to the growth of 'Shakespeare' as an icon of gentility, authority, a symbol for the nation and for the British Empire.

The final chapter argues that, as publicly-funded theatres, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre have a commitment to speak to the nation and, due to their agendas and policies, the productions of *Measure for Measure* after 1970 at the National successfully engaged with contemporary issues of gender politics, racial equality and state power, while the RSC largely failed to engage with these difficult issues. This chapter asserts that the main agenda of the RSC,

since its establishment, was to speak for Shakespeare. In the early 1970s, as the aftermath of the 1960s counterculture and the rise of feminism, the RSC tried to find a new way to present *Measure for Measure*. However, with the emergence of right-wing sentiments in the 1980s, the RSC abandoned its 'radical' identity and presented 'safe' productions which largely failed to engage with changes in contemporary society. On the other hand, the National was established not to serve Shakespeare but the people. The National's desire to be socially relevant, politically critical and constructive was revealed in Rudman's West Indian production and McBurney's post 9/11 production. Such theatre practitioners throughout history have proved that performance has the power to remake our perceptions of *Measure for Measure* and of our own society.

Chapter 1

Measure for Measure of the King's Men: Two Venues, Various Spectators and Various Receptions

This chapter argues that from the very beginning, *Measure for Measure* never offered just one ‘original’ message. The script’s ambiguity and the instability of its text can be traced to the earliest performances. I attempt to speculatively reconstruct performances of *Measure for Measure* at Whitehall and at the Globe in the Jacobean period. In 1603, one year before the performance at Whitehall, King James ascended to the English throne. According to Curtis Perry, curiosity on the part of courtiers and the wider public on how the new King would govern was very intense: ‘James as author was unavoidable in 1603-4. A number of James’s books – *Basilikon Doron*, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* and *Daemonologie* – were reissued and went through numerous English editions’.⁸⁰ At that time, books about government written by the new King were apparently popular. According to *A Short-Title Catalogue*, there were four editions of James’s *Basilikon Doron* published between 1603 and 1604.⁸¹ Many critics have argued that Shakespeare wrote *Measure for Measure* in response to this curiosity about the new monarchy. There are a number of studies on a connection between King

⁸⁰ Curtis Perry, *The Making of Jacobean Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 24.

⁸¹ A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, ed., *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Aboard*, 3 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), II, pp. 18-19.

James and *Measure for Measure*⁸² and a speculative reconstruction of the King's Men's performance at the Globe by William Dodd.⁸³ However, these studies largely ignore the variety of spectators and the influences that the playing venues would have had on the performances. I argue that, because of its indeterminacy, in the early modern period, *Measure for Measure* helped not only to reaffirm the absolute authority of the monarchy but also to cultivate scepticism towards it. Its indeterminacy enabled it to please a wide range of audiences and encouraged various reactions. I realize that this binary approach cannot reflect the nuanced reactions of every individual theatregoer. Due to lack of evidence, this study necessarily relies on the social identities of spectators, who usually attended performances at the Court and at the Globe, according to contemporary accounts. In addition, I survey contemporary eyewitnesses' accounts and recent studies on early modern theatrical spaces, particularly those by Robert Weimann and Richard Preiss,⁸⁴ to speculate on what impact various theatrical spaces and spectators might have had on the King's Men's performances. My research asserts that these theatrical spaces, as analysed by Preiss, and the interactions between the spectators and the actors, as discussed by Weimann, not only influenced the performances but also reflected and shaped spectators' perceptions of power relations in the outside world.

⁸² David L. Stevenson, 'The Role of James I in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*', *ELH*, 26 (1959), 188-208. See also, Craig A. Bernthal, 'Staging Justice: James I and the Trial Scenes of *Measure for Measure*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 32 (1992), 247-269.

⁸³ William Dodd, 'Power and Performance: *Measure for Measure* in the Public Theatre of 1604-1605', *Shakespeare Studies*, 24 (1996), 211-240.

⁸⁴ Robert Weimann, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)., Richard Preiss, 'Interiority', in *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. by Henry S. Turner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 47-70.

This is a study of what Stephen Greenblatt would call, the ‘*energia*’ of performance and its ‘capacity [...] to produce, shape, and organize collective physical and mental experiences’.⁸⁵ Greenblatt’s *Shakespearean Negotiations* greatly contributes to studies on an interconnection between a literary work and other discourses at its time. In that book, Greenblatt makes a link between *Measure for Measure* and Hugh Latimer’s sermon. The critic argues that both of them represent how authority uses anxiety to manipulate its subjects. According to Greenblatt, *Measure for Measure* represents the Duke’s ‘task as inflicting anxiety for ideological purposes’ but it also ‘calls that task into question’ since ‘at the close of the play, society at large seems singularly unaffected by the renewed exercise in anxiety’.⁸⁶ Greenblatt’s thesis is useful in reminding me that there is not ‘a single, fixed, mode of exchange’ of energy but ‘there are many modes [...] and they are continually renegotiated’.⁸⁷ Jonathan Dollimore’s essay, ‘Transgression and Surveillance in *Measure for Measure*’ is another critical work which is significant to my argument. This essay has been highly influential on subsequent studies of the subversive potential of the play in its Jacobean context and beyond. According to Dollimore, *Measure for Measure* registers that ‘the authoritarian demonizing of deviant behaviour was common in the period’, yet it also dramatizes ‘a much more sophisticated and effective quality of surveillance’ or self-policing and ‘dutiful subjection’.⁸⁸ Moreover, the ‘process whereby

⁸⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 6.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-139.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁸⁸ Jonathan Dollimore, ‘Transgression and Surveillance in *Measure for Measure*’, in *Political Shakespeare: Essays on Cultural Materialism*, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 72-87 (pp. 74, 81).

authority is [...] relegitimizing itself” is itself precarious since the play also ‘gives the marginalised a voice, one which may confront authority directly but which more often speaks of and partially reveals the strategies of power which summon it into visibility’.⁸⁹ Greenblatt and Dollimore’s works show me that, from the start, *Measure for Measure* broadcast conflicting ideologies.

Although, relatively speaking, there are not many contemporary accounts directly concerning how early modern people perceived a performance, they point to a fundamental fact: people responded in a variety of ways. The Prologue in *The Isle of Gulls* (1606) maintains:

Neither quick mirth, inuectiue, nor high state,
 Can content all: such is the boundless hate
 Of a confused Audience: Then we
 That scarcely know the rules of Poesie
 Cannot scape check. Yet this our comfort is,
 The wise will smile to heare th’ impartiall hiss.⁹⁰

Hence, people who saw *Measure for Measure* might have responded to it according to their relationally-constructed sense of identity. Thomas Randolph’s *The Muses Looking-Glasse* (1638) reveals that spectators tended to relate themselves to the characters which had something similar to them:

⁸⁹ Ibid., 84.

⁹⁰ John Day, *The Isle of Gulls* (London: 1606), A3^v.

[I]t is the end we meant
 Your selves unto your selves still to present.
 A souldier shall himselfe in *Hector* see,
 Grave Councillors, *Nestor*, view themselves in thee.
 When *Lucrece* Part shall on our Stage appeare,
 Every chast Ladie sees her shaddow there.⁹¹

This quotation reveals that an early modern spectator saw a performance according to his or her inclinations and statuses. Therefore, in the following sections, I assume that the King would have sympathised with the authority figure like the Duke while noblemen might have sympathised with the Duke or be sceptical towards his ‘mercy’ according to their relationships with the monarchy. Lower class people would have been more sympathetic to the characters lower down the social hierarchy, whose status, nevertheless, is determined in a hierarchical relationship to those above and below them. It is also likely that, during the confrontations between Isabella and Angelo, some female spectators, especially the Catholic Queen, would have sympathised with the former whereas puritan sympathisers might have agreed with Angelo’s arguments. In addition, these sympathies would have been changed at a particular moment according to the actions on the stage and the characters’ positions in the performance spaces.

⁹¹ Thomas Randolph, *Poems and the Muses Looking-Glasse: And Amyntas* (London: 1638), p. 92.

Contemporary accounts and recent studies suggest that the early modern theatregoers saw a character not as a psychological being as modern readers or spectators do. Francis Barker argues that, in the early modern society, ‘discourse invests [the body] with a fundamental (and therefore, in this world, *superficial*) meaning’.⁹² For him, in theatre, people performed and read surfaces:

At the centre of Hamlet, in the interior of his mystery, there is, in short, nothing. [...] It gestures towards a place for subjectivity, but both are anachronistic and belong to a historical order whose outline has so far only been sketched out.⁹³

Although Katherine Maus disagrees with Barker concerning the beginning of subjectivity, she agrees that ‘inwardness as it becomes a concern in the theater is always perforce inwardness displayed’.⁹⁴ For Preiss, in the early modern theatre, ‘interiority – begins not as a psychic property but as a spatial one, as a property of the playing space itself – as the literal sensation of feeling both inside and outside something at once’. In this theatre, ‘characters are not people so much as playhouses, propagating the illusion of depth after depth has run out’.⁹⁵

In other words, a character may allude to his or her ‘inwardness’ or ‘secrets’ but, in performance, the actor always acted out that ‘inwardness’ or openly suggested that there was an ‘inwardness’ which the theatre would not show. Hamlet’s inky

⁹² Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (London: Methuen, 1984), p. 23.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁹⁴ Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 32.

⁹⁵ Preiss, ‘Interiority’, pp.62, 69.

cloak is an example of how the theatre displayed the character's 'inwardness'. The display of 'inwardness' corresponds to Richard Levin's survey of early modern playgoers' responses in which he maintains that they 'would approach these plays as literal representations of individual characters and actions'.⁹⁶ Levin's survey suggests that Jacobean playgoers would not have seen the Duke as an allegory of Jesus at the moment when he is conceived as 'power divine'. This does not mean that Ubersfeld's suggestion that 'the character portrayed by an actor necessarily resembles someone or something' is invalid. In the Jacobean period, the character also signified 'something' else but the signification was 'perforce [signification] displayed'. Random Cloud argues that 'the identity of dramatic character need not to be an internal affair; it can be relational and interactive – an interaction [...] between one role and another on stage'.⁹⁷ The King's Men's Duke would have represented an authority figure when he interacted with Lucio in the last act. The playgoers' sympathies with the characters would have depended on what social identities the characters signified through their interactions to other characters, their costumes and what kind of space those characters belonged to. It would have been easier for bawds and their customers to sympathise with Mistress Overdone who not only was in the theatre with them but whose words alluded to the real brothels 'outside' the theatre. In the following sections, I discuss the functions of costumes, the interactions between actors and their possible influences on the audiences' interpretations of authority in *Measure for Measure*.

⁹⁶ Richard Levin, 'The Relation of External Evidence to the Allegorical and Thematic Interpretation of Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Studies*, 13 (1980), 1-29 (p. 15).

⁹⁷ Random Cloud, "'The Very Names of the Persons": Editing and the Invention of Dramatic Character', in *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, ed. by David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 88-96 (p. 93).

Although spectators might have read representations literally, their response to a character was not simplistic. Their reactions reflected Esslin's model. Thomas Nashe describes his impression of a stage-play as follows:

How would it haue ioyed braue *Talbot* (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and haue his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least, (at seuerall times) who in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.⁹⁸

As Esslin proposes, Nashe sees this phenomenon in three levels: the actor as a 'Tragedian', the actor as Talbot and Talbot as a representative of a heroic soldier. The audience's response was more complicated by the fact that it is not always possible to distinguish between these dimensions. Richard Corbet, in 1618, narrated the confusion of a man who saw Burbage played Richard III:

Where he mistooke a player for a King.
For when he would have sayd, King Richard dyed,
And call'd – A horse! A horse! – he, Burbidge cry'de.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse His Supplication to the Diuell* (London: 1592), F3.

⁹⁹ Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 242.

For this playgoer, Burbage is not only Burbage but, at the same time, Richard, the character that he personates. This seems to be what Thomas May means when a player acts ‘[a]s had he truly bin the new man he seemd’.¹⁰⁰ At this moment, the line between actor and character is blurred.

To speculate when the actor will appear as himself or as a character, it is useful to apply Weimann’s concepts of *locus* and *platea*. These two modes of presentation are reflected in the account not only of Talbot in performance but also of Thomas Platter who attended a performance of *Julius Caesar* in 1599. He states that he saw ‘two [actors] dressed as men and two as women’ but, on another statement, he calls ‘a maiden’ in that story ‘her’.¹⁰¹ Platter, in the first instance, perceived the actors as actors dressed as women and, in the second one, the actor as the character in the *locus*. I use Weimann’s concepts to speculate how the actor who played the Duke might have presented himself at a particular moment and how he would have interacted with other characters and playgoers, and how these interactions would have enhanced or undermined the authority of the character and what he represented.

Measure for Measure at the Court

According to the Revels Accounts for 1604-1605, on 26 December 1604, ‘St

¹⁰⁰ Thomas May, *The Heire* (London: 1622), B.

¹⁰¹ Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 222.

Stiuens night', 'his Maiesties plaiers' had presented a play called 'Mesur for Mesur' written by 'Shaxberd' at the 'Hall'.¹⁰² For researchers today, this is the only specific information available concerning the performance of *Measure for Measure* in the Jacobean period. Very scant as it is, the Revels Accounts establishes the important elements of any production: the text, company of actors, date of performance and playing venue. It also indirectly suggested who would attend it. At Christmas, all plays, including *Measure for Measure*, were performed in Whitehall and King James probably attended them since, in that year, he 'called for a repeat performance of *The Merchant of Venice* at court'.¹⁰³ The play staged at court thus engaged directly with the new ruler and with those closest to the heart of the Jacobean style of government that he sought to inaugurate.

No evidence about the arrangement of *Measure for Measure*'s stage and auditorium in the Hall has been found, but there were two traditional ways to arrange it when people of significance attended a performance. Contemporary accounts suggest that, in the Elizabethan era, on several occasions, the Queen and the elite were placed on the stage to 'be admired'.¹⁰⁴ In September 1566, when Queen Elizabeth visited the University of Oxford, 'the story or tale of *Palamon and Arcite* was performed with the queen herself present on the stage'.¹⁰⁵ The stage was also arranged in this way for a performance of *The Comedy of Errors*

¹⁰² E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), II, p. 331.

¹⁰³ John H. Astington, *English Court Theatre, 1558-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 181.

¹⁰⁴ John R. Elliott and others, ed., *Records of Early English Drama: Oxford 2* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 979.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 978.

on ‘the Night of Errors’ at the Grey’s Inn in 1594 when there was ‘a disordered Tumult’ because there were too many ‘worshipful Personages upon the Stage’.¹⁰⁶

Unlike in Elizabeth’s time, in Charles I’s, according to John Webb’s plan of the stage and auditorium for *Florimène* at the Hall in December 1635, the state seat was removed from the stage probably to give space for elaborate scenery and placed at the centre of the auditorium, facing the stage.

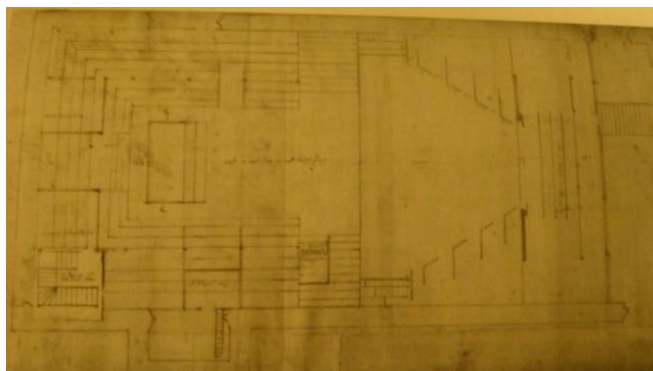


Fig. 1. John Webb’s plan for *Florimène* (1635).¹⁰⁷

However, as in the Elizabethan period, the state seat was still an important spectacle to ‘be admired’. As John Astington explains:

The chief members of the audience – the king, queen, or other leading court figures patronising the occasion – would have been seated in full view, directly facing the front of the playing platform or area. The focus of

¹⁰⁶ Francis Bacon, *Gesta Grayorum* (London: 1688), p. 22.

¹⁰⁷ For the sources of all figures, see the List of Illustrations.

the performance, accordingly, would have been primarily directed to that part of the auditorium.¹⁰⁸

According to Webb's plan, the majority of the spectators are closer to the state than the stage and its presence is more visible. Astington maintains: 'The seating, turned towards the royal seat as much as to the stage, reflected a double spectatorial function'.¹⁰⁹ It is in this sense that Keith Sturges argues: 'For the imported play at court and for court theatricals, the King [...] was not only the chief spectator but a rival performance'.¹¹⁰ As Astington claims, the 'first function' of court performance 'was social, as a common gathering point for people [...] to show common allegiance to the monarch and to uphold national pride'.¹¹¹ The space configuration clearly reflected the status of monarchy as the heart of the country.

Since the King was a focus of any court events, the presence of James might have had an influence on the performance of *Measure for Measure*. This is more likely because of the size of the Hall which, according to Astington, was 90 feet in length and 40 feet in width.¹¹² It was smaller than the Globe which, as records show, was 'built on a circular or polygonal frame almost exactly 100 feet in outside diameter, and with a yard about 70 feet in diameter'.¹¹³ The Hall held only

¹⁰⁸ Astington, *English Court Theatre*, p. 218.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹¹⁰ Keith Sturges, *Jacobean Private Theatre* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), p. 159.

¹¹¹ Astington, *English Court Theatre.*, p. 165.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹¹³ Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 18.

‘400 or so’ spectators.¹¹⁴ In this relatively small space, it would have been easy for a spectator to interact with the actor or other spectators. The influence of royalty on an audience can be seen during a royal visit to Cambridge in March 1632, when students were forbidden to ‘make immodest exclamations’, laugh or clap hands during the performance of a play ‘except his Majesty, the Queen, or others of the best quality here, do apparently begin the same’.¹¹⁵

I argue that the performance of *Measure for Measure* in Whitehall and the spatial arrangement could be used to reaffirm James’s power. One certainly can read the Duke’s action in the last act as a reflection of James’s statement about the duties of a rightful king: ‘To minister Justice and Judgement to the people’.¹¹⁶ In 1603, James, shortly after his arrival to London, took over the Lord Chamberlain’s Men from the dying George Carey and rechristened it the King’s Men. There is no reason to doubt that Shakespeare and his colleagues were more than satisfied and valued their current relation with the court. In this respect, it would not be surprising if Shakespeare wrote *Measure for Measure*, his first Jacobean comedy, to advertise his new patron’s own ideas of patriarchal rule. In the performance of *Measure for Measure* at Whitehall, two rulers were presented at the same time and the real king’s presence would have been an inevitable reminder that another ruler was a fake. In other words, applying Esslin’s model, the presence of the King would have highlighted the status of the actor as himself which, in turn, influenced how playgoers perceived the character. Amid the luxuriously dressed

¹¹⁴ Astington, *English Court Theatre*, p. 163.

¹¹⁵ Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 47.

¹¹⁶ James I of England, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (London: 1642), p. 4.

nobles, the player in his second-hand costume would have looked less prominent and Angelo's claim of his 'power divine' (V. 1. 370) might not have sounded convincing. After all, the actor who played the Duke was actually a servant of the King. In addition, since other courtiers attended the performance 'to show common allegiance to the monarch', it is likely that the character that the King liked would have been admired and the character that he loathed would have been disdained. This might have empowered the Duke since it is likely that James may have preferred this character over the foul-mounted Lucio. James, as N. W. Bawcutt maintains, had a low tolerance to slander of the monarchy and believed it was a treason punishable by death.¹¹⁷ Because of this, while, normally, Lucio's insolence and bawdy accusations can be funny, before James, this might not have been the case. On the other hand, at the end of the play, when the Duke refuses to heed Lucio's complaint about his punishment and states that '[s]landering a prince deserves it' (V. 1. 527), a Hall of courtiers round the King was likely to be full of laughter. Although this is speculation, in the light of the account of the royal visit to Cambridge, it is undeniable that the presence of the King would have determined the mood of a performance.

The decorations in the Hall might have empowered the Duke:

[T]he windows of the hall were relatively high in the wall, and the space below them was hung with tapestries, most usually in a connected narrative series, with both secular and religious subjects. The soft colours

¹¹⁷ N. W. Bawcutt, *Measure for Measure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 4-5.

of tapestries and the rich effects of gold and silver thread and fringe undoubtedly formed part of the effect of temporary theatrical auditoriums at court. In large spaces like the halls at all the major palaces the effect of vertical surfaces hung with luxurious woven cloth and lit by bright candlelight must have been a memorable and impressive sight.¹¹⁸

These spectacles advertised the artistic sophistication and cultural authority of the monarchy. They glorified the traditional establishment. It is possible that this atmosphere would have raised the authority of the Duke, a representative of the establishment, over the low-life characters.

There is a connection between the Duke and James which the playgoers in Whitehall might have recognised. David Stevenson sees several examples of correspondences between the Duke and the ideal ruler in James's *Basilikon Doran*, such as, 'his dislike of the "Aves" of the crowd' and 'his insistence that a ruler should subdue his own appetites before he attempted to subdue them in his subjects'.¹¹⁹ The possibility that some audience members at the Court might have seen a connection between the Duke and their king is made more likely by a striking similarity between the Duke's action in the last scene and that of James in the Bye Plot Conspiracy in 1603. Like the Duke, James dramatically pardoned three conspirators at the last minute before they were beheaded on the scaffold. The whole procedure was carefully staged by James. For the bearer of the

¹¹⁸ Astington, *English Court Theatre*, pp. 48, 51.

¹¹⁹ Stevenson, 'The Role of James I', p. 201.

command to cancel the execution, he selected a Scottish man of ‘no extraordinarie ranke, because the standers by should not obserue any alteration’ and instructed the bearer to reveal it only at the last minute.¹²⁰ This dramatic event naturally became talk of the town. According to an eyewitness, ‘[t]he people that were present, witnessed by infinite applause and shouting the joy and comfort’ and ‘[t]he crie [was] carried out of the Castle Gates into the Towne’.¹²¹

The way that the Duke handles his trial loosely reflected James’s ‘mercy’. Like James, the Duke refuses to tell Isabella that Claudio is saved to ‘[t]o make her heavenly comforts of despair / When it is least expected’ (IV. 3. 107-108). The Duke then assigns other characters their parts in his ‘plot’ (IV. 5. 2). In a sense, the play reconstructed the event in the favour of the King. In fact, the Sheriff was ordered merely to ‘stay the execution’.¹²² At last, Markham was banished from England, Lord Grey was dead ‘in the Tower after a captivity of eleven years’, and Lord Cobham’s estates ‘were wholly confiscated’.¹²³ The Duke, however, pardons Angelo and Claudio freely. This might have been the reason why the play was arranged for St Stephen’s night, the day to praise the mercy of the martyr who pardons people who wrong him. Thus, as Craig Bernthal argues, one can read this play as ‘a celebration of James’s Solomon-like wisdom and mercy’.¹²⁴ As Richard Wilson maintains, the Duke’s surveillance and pardon suggest his modern scheme

¹²⁰ T. M., *The Copie of a Letter Written from Master C.S. neere Salisbury, to Master H.A. at London, Concerning the Proceeding at Winchester* (London, 1603), p. 4.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹²³ George G. Cunningham, *Lives of Eminent and Illustrious Englishmen: From Alfred the Great to the Latest Times*, 8 vols (Glasgow: 1837), II, pp. 364-365.

¹²⁴ Bernthal, ‘Staging Justice’, p. 256.

of controlling his subjects, not by killing them but making them docile.¹²⁵ In the Jacobean context, the Duke's scheme would have created the impression of James supervising his subjects. As Kevin Quarmby notes, the emergence of disguised ruler plays in the early seventeenth century represents 'a collective response by playwright, publisher and playhouse manager [...] to the financial benefits of promoting an easily identifiable commodity'.¹²⁶ Although the disguised Duke, which is not in Shakespeare's sources, might have been the playwright's way to attract playgoers by offering them a familiar commodity, the disguised ruler was also particularly resonant with James. It is worthy to remember that there was a connection between James's family and the story of the disguised king, since a popular folktale had it that his grandfather, James V of Scotland, liked to disguise himself as a commoner.¹²⁷ The tactic of using *Measure for Measure* to advertise the monarchy's mercy and legitimacy would be reapplied in the Restoration.

This does not mean that everyone, including male and female spectators, would have necessarily seen the play in this way or in the same way. According to Levin, contemporary comments on female spectators' responses reflect 'the gender-concern or even gender-loyalty of women spectators'. For him, this 'loyalty' can be seen in 'Waller's excuse that "The fairer Sex" would not accept the pardoning of Amintor in *The Maid's Tragedy* because he "sacrific'd" Aspatia to his ambition' and '[i]t can hardly be a coincidence that in the poem by Stanley

¹²⁵ Richard Wilson, 'Prince of Darkness: Foucault's Shakespeare', in *Measure for Measure*, ed. by Nigel Wood (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996), pp. 133-178 (p. 158).

¹²⁶ Kevin A. Quarmby, *The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), p. 7.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[in] the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio, the four characters to whom every “Lady” in the audience responds are female’. Levin also maintains that ‘there is evidence that women’s identification with female characters becomes even more significant when the play presents a version of the battle of the sexes’ such as in the case of ‘Fletcher’s *Scornful Lady*’ and ‘Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labor’s Lost* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*’.¹²⁸ The ‘gender-loyalty of women spectators’ is also suggested in the Epilogue of Shakespeare and Fletcher’s *Henry VIII*:

All the expected good we’re like to hear
 For this play at this time, is only in
 The merciful construction of good women;
 For such a one we show’d ‘em: if they smile,
 And say ‘twill do, I know, within a while
 All the best men are ours; for ‘tis ill hap,
 If they hold when their ladies bid ‘em clap.¹²⁹

According to Alison Findlay, this epilogue ‘suggests that women would respond warmly to the play because of its positive characterization of “good women”’.¹³⁰ Female ‘gender-loyalty’ in the theatre is also demonstrated in a letter, written in 1567, in which female servants complain against a male writer who criticised their presence in theatre. They maintain that ‘he recited six of us by name, and under

¹²⁸ Richard Levin, ‘Women in the Renaissance Theatre Audience’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 40 (1989), 165-174 (p. 171).

¹²⁹ William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *Henry VIII*, ed. by Jay L. Halio (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 216-217.

¹³⁰ Alison Findlay, *A Feminist Perspective on Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 5.

those six names above six thousand of us'.¹³¹ 'Loretta' who delivers the Prologue of *Swetnam, The Woman-Hater* also allies herself with female spectators by calling 'herself' 'We' and asks them, against male playgoers' derisive 'laugh', to [l]end' their 'kind assistance' to her cause.¹³² For Findlay, these materials show that 'theatregoing seems to form a defensive alliance between women, even between maidservants and mistresses. That collective gendered consciousness holds the seeds of feminist demands for equality'.¹³³

From these accounts, it is possible that while male aristocrats might have identified themselves with the Duke, Queen Anne might have sympathised with Isabella, the novice, on gender and religious grounds. It is very possible that the Queen attended the performance of *Measure for Measure* since, according to a letter to Robert Cecil, Walter Cope says that, during the 1604 Christmas festivals, 'ther ys no new playe [by the King's Men] that the queene hath not seene'.¹³⁴ David Bergeron believes that the Queen 'became a convert to Catholicism while still in Scotland, sometime in the late 1590s'.¹³⁵ Hence, Catholicism might have influenced her emotional response to *Measure for Measure*. As the Queen of a protestant country, Anne had to conceal her personal faith and compromise to external factors, the same situation that Isabella experiences throughout the play.

¹³¹ R. J. Fehrenbach, 'A Letter Sent by Maydens of London (1567)', *English Literary Renaissance*, 14 (1984), 285-304 (p. 297).

¹³² Anon., *Swetnam, The Woman-Hater* (London: 1620).

¹³³ Findlay, *A Feminist Perspective*, p. 8.

¹³⁴ Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, II, p. 332.

¹³⁵ David M. Bergeron, *Royal Family, Royal Lovers: King James of England and Scotland* (London: University of Missouri Press, 1991), p. 72.

The fact that, to follow the Duke's instruction, Isabella has to compromise her integrity is revealed in her discussion with Mariana:

To speak so indirectly I am loath.
 I would say the truth, but to accuse him so,
 That is your part. Yet I am advised to do it,
 He says, to veil full purpose.

(IV. 6. 1-4)

Although she 'loath[es]' telling a lie, she has to because she is 'advised to do it'. One wonders if Isabella's reluctance would have reminded the Queen of her action during the Coronation when she 'consented to receive the crown at the hands of a Protestant Archbishop'.¹³⁶ It is likely that the Queen had also been 'advised to do it'. As Isabella, for Anne, faith, like thoughts, was 'no subject' (V. 1. 454) to anything, including state religion.

Measure for Measure ends with Isabella's 'open silences' which can be read as a challenge to the Duke's plan. Did the 1604 Isabella enjoy the free choice like Isabella-in-the-text and Isabellas in the future do? In the celebratory mood of the Christmas festivities, among powerful noble men, in front of the King, the head of the Anglican patriarchal state, it is hard to imagine that the King's Players would end the comedy presented before the King with a Catholic female commoner

¹³⁶ Samuel R. Gardiner, *History of England from the Accession of James I. to the Outbreak of the Civil War, 1603-1649*, 10 vols (London: Longmans, Green, 1887), 1, p. 116.

refusing to comply to the ruler's wishes. However, it is possible that, before accepting the proposal, she may have hesitated which, in turn, would have allowed some spectators to see a glimpse of the Duke's manipulative nature. Isabella's open silence is another seed which, in the future, would grow and help further 'feminist demands for equality'.

With this ending, the King and other noblemen might have left the Hall with the satisfaction that the patriarchal structure was reaffirmed. On the other hand, because of the Duke's compromising tone, 'What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine' (V. 1. 540), female aristocrats might have taken the marriage between the Duke and Isabella as the reincorporation of female power into the political circle. It might also have suggested to them that, like Mariana who asks Isabella for help, they could negotiate with patriarchal authority through a female insider like the Queen. This was what the Countess of Bedford did. As Anne Clifford maintains, Bedford was the new Queen's favourite and 'was then so great a woman with the Queen as every body much respected her'.¹³⁷ On 6 January 1605, the Queen, Bedford and other ladies performed Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness* at Whitehall.¹³⁸ For Leeds Barroll, 'the masque attests to Anna's continuing and persistent efforts to promote her circle' and 'to establish her presence at court'.¹³⁹ Since it is very likely that the Queen attended the

¹³⁷ Anne Clifford, *The Memoir of 1603 and the Dairy of 1616-1619*, ed. by Katherine O. Acheson (New York: Garland, 1995), p. 16.

¹³⁸ Ben Jonson, 'The Masque of Blackness', in *Court Masques*, ed. by David Lindley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 1-9 (p. 7).

¹³⁹ Leeds Barroll, 'Inventing the Stuart Masque', in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. by David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 121-143 (p. 132).

performance of *Measure for Measure*, it is also likely that her entourage would have attended with her to see it.

Whatever Shakespeare's expectation was, *Measure for Measure* was not James's favourite play. While, in that year, he requested the immediate second performance of *The Merchant of Venice*, there was no such request for *Measure for Measure*. The various reactions of the noble audiences suggest that, from the very beginning, *Measure for Measure* refused to yield to just one interpretation as it does throughout the history of its productions.

Measure for Measure at the Globe

Unlike the Admiral's Men whose repertory was recorded in detail in Henslowe's diary, there is no such evidence for the repertory of the King's Men. The information about their repertory and performances comes from scattered pieces of evidence, such as court accounts, eyewitnesses' accounts and contemporary allusions. As a result, the date of the performance for many of their plays in their own house is unknown and, unfortunately, *Measure for Measure* is one of them. Many critics believe it might have been performed in the public theatre before December 1604 since it was not the custom to perform an untried play before the Court.¹⁴⁰ From allusions in the text to the Treaty of London in 1604 and James's visit to the Exchange in March 1604, Lever believes that '*Measure for Measure*

¹⁴⁰ Bawcutt, *Measure for Measure*, pp. 1-2. See also, Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Playing Company* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 298. Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and their Contemporaries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 231.

was written between May and August 1604' and, because of the closure of the public theatre from 1603 to 9 April 1604 due to the plague, 'the play was probably performed for the first time in the summer months of that year'.¹⁴¹ It might have been revived sometime after 1621.¹⁴²

To reconstruct a performance of *Measure for Measure* at the Globe, it is necessary to consider *Measure* as a commodity that the King's Men presented to attract paying audiences. The company was called to entertain the Court mainly during the Christmas festivities and the number of performances varied from year to year, so it needed to cater to the wider public as well. In *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare applied a strategy of 'indeterminacy' so the play could be read more than one way and please the nobles and the wider social spectrum of spectators, including 'groundlings' at the Globe.

Measure for Measure was a 'populuxe' product, which Paul Yachnin defines as 'something that is both popular and deluxe'.¹⁴³ According to him, Shakespeare's theatre was 'the market in populuxe cultural goods, where consumers could enjoy experiences that were redolent of the lives of their social betters'.¹⁴⁴ The company's connection to the Court 'made them newsworthy. [...] in the eyes of people'.¹⁴⁵ In his first Jacobean comedy, Shakespeare apparently did not write

¹⁴¹ J. W. Lever, *Measure for Measure* (London: Methuen, 1966), xxxv.

¹⁴² John Jowett, 'Measure for Measure: A Genetic Text', in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 1542.

¹⁴³ Paul Yachnin, "'The Perfection of Ten": Populuxe Art and Artisanal Value in *Troilus and Cressida*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 56 (2005), 306-327 (p. 306).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

¹⁴⁵ Anthony Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 190.

about the life of the new King but he may have deliberately exploited the curiosity of the common people about James by dramatizing his ideas and actions. Thus, as in the Court, it is likely that the Duke would have been a focus. Nevertheless, due to its more democratic atmosphere and size, the dynamic of the performance at the Globe would have been different from that at the Hall.

I argue that the theatre was a training ground for a more democratic society and, through *Measure for Measure*, a place which cultivated scepticism about the monarchy's absolute power. In 1624, Chamberlain wrote a letter to Carleton, informing him that 'all sorts of people old and younge, rich and poore, masters and servants, papists and puritans, wise men et. ct., churchmen and statesmen [...] and a world besides' went to see *A Game at Chess* at the Globe.¹⁴⁶ A Spanish Ambassador estimated that there were 'more than 3000 persons' attending this play.¹⁴⁷ There is no doubt that the amount of energy flowing from this huge crowd was very powerful. As Thomas Dekker maintains, unlike in the Court, in a public playhouse authority was distributed to every spectator:

[T]he place is so free in entertainment [...] that your Car-man and Tinker claime as strong a voice in their suffrage, and sit to giue iudgement on the plaies life and death· as well as the prowdest Momus among the tribe of *Critick*.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 245.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas Dekker, *The Gull's Hornbook* (London: 1609), p. 28.

According to Steven Mullaney, the Globe was situated in ‘an ambiguous territory that was at once internal and external to the city, neither contained by civic authority nor fully removed from it’.¹⁴⁹ The Liberties, where the Globe located, were ‘social and civic margins’ and they ‘reserved [...] for divergent points of view – for commentary upon and even contradiction of [...] the body politic’.¹⁵⁰ In this area full of brothels, gaming houses and taverns, the representative of authority did not have any absolute privileges. The real authority at the Globe was spectators who came from various social backgrounds.

With this empowerment, spectators could choose to support or protest against a figure of authority. In the Globe, the Duke, as the representative of authority, would not automatically be the most beloved character. How he was perceived would have depended on his position on the stage and interactions with playgoers. Gurr describes the relation between the space in the Globe, audience and authority of the character as follows:

[T]he flanking door gave most immediate access to the *platea*, the common ground of the street round the stage edge, while the central opening admitted authority. The early audiences routinely expected to accord the doors and their users those distinct significations. [...] From [the *platea*] [clowns] spoke intimately to the audience, literally face to face

¹⁴⁹ Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 21.

¹⁵⁰ Steven Mullaney, ‘Civic Rites, City Sites: The Place of the Stage’, in *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, ed. by David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 17-26 (p. 22).

with the groundlings.¹⁵¹

The Globe encouraged the use of *platea* and presentational mode. Here, spectators surrounded the stage, thus, they always saw other members of the audience. Since the performance at the Globe was played under natural light, Shakespeare constantly asked his audiences to supply the change of time or light with their imagination. In 1604, the prison scene, beginning at ‘midnight’ and ending at ‘almost clear dawn’, would have taken place within less than half an hour in daylight. The change of lighting was probably established by putting out torches or merely by saying that it was no longer dark. If the latter was the case, the ‘unrealistic’ presentations and the view of other playgoers, in turn, would have worked as a reminder that what the audience were seeing was a theatrical event. However, by detaching themselves from the audience and talking among themselves, the actors could also change into a representative mode in a second. In the Globe, the change of modes of presentation was likely to be frequent and it, as Gurr maintains, registered ‘distinct significations’.

If the actor who played the Duke entered the first scene through ‘the central opening’, spectators would have regarded this character as the representative of authority. In the first scene, it is likely that he would have located himself in the *locus* since his lines in this scene constantly requires him to act as the Duke who

¹⁵¹ Andrew Gurr, ‘Why Was the Globe Round?’, in *Who Hears in Shakespeare?*, ed. by Laury Magnus and Walter W. Cannon (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012), pp. 3-16 (p. 12).

gives commands to his subjects. From the first scene to the scene with Friar Thomas, if he wished, the actor who played the Duke could have played him as a powerful man who demanded spectators' respect. This impression might have been emphasised in the last scene which, according to the stage direction, begins with the characters entering 'at several doors'. Hence, it is very likely that the Duke, the head of the state, would have entered it through 'the central opening', probably with a flourish, signifying his authority. Playgoers' sympathy with this character would be more likely if the Duke's role was played by Richard Burbage, the company's star, as many critics believe it was.¹⁵² Van Es notes that, from 1599 to 1608, Shakespeare often wrote plays with major characters that have 'over a quarter of the line total' and they, including the Duke in *Measure for Measure*, are 'always suited to Burbage'.¹⁵³

As many Dukes in the future, such as Roger Allam's and Michael Feast's showed, the Duke is in a more vulnerable situation when he goes in disguise to the prison, a world populated with low-life figures. Being in disguise, the King's Men's actor, to some extent, suspended the ducal role and assumed 'the practice of role playing'. He became, as Weimann explains, 'a highly concentrated site of heteroglossia where one type of speech or discourse was permanently in danger of being contradicted by other cultural and theatrical practices'.¹⁵⁴ It is possible that,

¹⁵² Jonathan Bate, 'Shakespeare's Elizabethan Stages', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Shakespeare on Stage*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Russell Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 10-22 (p.16). See also, Terri Bourus and Gary Taylor, 'Measure for Measure(s): Performance-Testing the Adaptation Hypothesis', *Shakespeare*, 10 (2014), 363-401 (p. 379).

¹⁵³ Bart Van Es, *Shakespeare in Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 237.

¹⁵⁴ Robert Weimann, 'Textual Authority and Performative Agency: The Uses of Disguise in Shakespeare's Theater', *New Literary History*, 25 (1994), 789-808 (p. 806).

in the first prison scene, the actors who played the Duke and the Provost would have used the ‘flank doors’ since the text indicates that they enter this scene at the same time and see each other at ‘Hail to you, Provost – so I think you are’ (II. 3. 1.). If this was the case, it would have signified the Duke’s ‘access to the *platea*’. It is also likely that the Duke would have been away from the centre of the stage so he ‘may be concealed’ (III. 1. 52-53) while eavesdropping Isabella and Claudio, and, in the scene with Pompey, delivered his aside, ‘O heavens, what stuff is here?’ (III. 1. 273) to the audience.

This would have meant that the actor who played the Duke located himself in the space of Pompey, the ‘Clowne’, a part most likely to be played by the company’s fool, Robert Armin.¹⁵⁵ If this was the case, Burbage, whose strength was in ‘real’ acting, would have faced a great challenge against Armin who, as Van Es explains, ‘performed his role of fool both within and outside the world of the playhouse’ which, in effect, often placed him ‘towards the *platea* of the audience in the playhouse’.¹⁵⁶

Dodd believes the Duke’s scene with Pompey emphasises the Duke’s alienation from spectators, especially when his ‘Nay, if the devil have given thee proofs for sin’ (III. 1. 297) prevents Pompey from delivering his joke, the thing that theatregoers enjoyed.¹⁵⁷ Here the Duke imposes his representational authority while staying in the *platea*. According to the text, being informed of Pompey’s

¹⁵⁵ Bourus and Taylor, ‘*Measure for Measure(s)*’, p. 379.

¹⁵⁶ Van Es, *Shakespeare*, pp. 180, 188.

¹⁵⁷ Dodd, ‘Power’, p. 233.

theft, the Duke in disguise condemns him as ‘a wicked bawd’ and asks an officer to ‘[t]ake him to prison’ (III. 1. 286, 298). For ‘statesmen’, this exertion of authority would have been a common practice but, for inhabitants of the Liberties near to the Clink prison, this exchange might have made the actor as the Duke lose the sympathy of some playgoers. Visiting London in 1599, Platter maintains that ‘great swarms of [prostitutes] haunt [...] playhouses’.¹⁵⁸ Considering the possible presence of some ‘bawds’ among the audience and the clownish mood created by the presence of Elbow and the Clown, for some, the Duke’s condemnation may have been out of place and too strong. According to Dodd, spectators in the public theatre might have felt this action as an invasion of *locus* authority on the *platea*.¹⁵⁹

Unlike playing in front of King James, at the public house, some of Lucio’s arguments against the Duke might have sounded convincing. Speaking from the authorised point of view, the Duke-in-disguise explains to Lucio about the need to control lechery:

DUKE It is too general a vice, and severity must cure it.

LUCIO Yes, in good sooth, the vice is of a great kindred, it is well allied; but it is impossible to extirp it quite, friar, till eating and drinking be put down.

(III. 1. 363-366)

¹⁵⁸ Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 222.

¹⁵⁹ Dodd, ‘Power’, p. 228.

As people amongst whom ‘lechery’ is of ‘a great kindred’, it is more likely that the groundlings from Southwark would have agreed with Lucio rather than the Duke. In such circumstances, Lucio would be a threat to the Duke. According to Kaplan, in the early modern period, the ‘fantastic’ was regarded as the one who ‘could reveal the truth as well as create an illusion’. The function of the ‘fantastic’ Lucio is to reveal that the Duke ‘is a fantastic too’ and ‘[a]n examination of the Duke’s actions shows them to be almost identical to Lucio’s’.¹⁶⁰ Hence, while some moralists might have read Lucio’s fate at the end, as Simon Forman did for *The Winter’s Tale*, as a moral lesson to ‘[b]eware of trustinge feined’ men,¹⁶¹ some sceptics might have seen it as the Duke’s plan to eliminate a threat to his absolute power.

Some audience members at the Globe might have also received Barnadine differently from aristocratic counterparts at Court. As Josephine Bennett believes, for the noble spectators in the court, Barnadine might have looked like ‘the lost sheep’¹⁶² who needed the Duke to lead him to the path of salvation. This might have been the feeling of some upper class spectators at the Globe towards Barnadine. Nonetheless, for common people who were concerned for their future under the new King, he might have been something very different. Although he is physically imprisoned, Barnadine, as the Provost puts it, ‘hath evermore had the liberty of prison’ (IV. 2. 147-148). This is why if the officers ‘give him leave to

¹⁶⁰ M. Lindsay Kaplan, *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 96, 99.

¹⁶¹ Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 112.

¹⁶² Josephine Bennett, *Measure for Measure as Royal Entertainment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 28.

escape hence, he would not' (IV. 2. 148-149). He does not have to break out of jail because he is not in one. Through sleep, alcohol, and absolute indifference, his mind is free. This might be the reason the Duke, after pardoning Barnadine, orders Friar Peter to 'advise him' (V. 1. 488). It looks like his last attempt to reform his subject's mind into the one that complies with his authority, the thing that Barnadine rudely declines:

BARNADINE I swear I will not die today for any man's
persuasion.

DUKE But hear you –

BARNADINE Not a word. If you have anything to say to me, come
to my ward, for hence will not I today. *Exit*
(IV. 3. 47-60)

In this scene, Shakespeare offered the spectators a chance to live briefly and imaginatively in a world where a commoner could blatantly refuse the authority of the State. Mullaney believes that 'Barnadine represents the limits of even the Duke's power to control or contain, to induce and subvert the desires of his subjects'.¹⁶³ It is noteworthy that Barnadine's 'ward', as Preiss would argue, suggests another undisclosed 'interiority'. The spectators were inside the prison and outside it at the same time. This mysterious space raised questions. Would the audience have a chance to get inside it? Was it just an imaginary space? Was it behind the façade? Was it an extension of the Clink prison situated not far away?

¹⁶³ Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage*, p. 115.

By stimulating the spectators' curiosity, the King's Men encouraged them to look for Barnadine's 'ward', a place where the Duke could not reach. Through the character of Barnadine and his imaginary 'ward', the King's Men shaped a defiant fantasy.

On the other hand, for some female playgoers, it might have been Isabella who assumed the role of the non-conformist. While Barnadine refuses to obey the judicial system, Isabella has to struggle against the patriarchal society that tries to exploit her. Due to 'gender-loyalty', during the confrontation between Isabella and Angelo, some female spectators probably would have taken the side of the novice, especially ones who were not puritan sympathisers. Nevertheless, at the beginning, Isabella's plea is extremely unconvincing – even to herself:

There is a vice that most I do abhor,
And most desire should meet the blow of justice;
For which I would not plead, but that I must.

(II. 2. 29-31)

Therefore, Provost/Lucio¹⁶⁴ has to urge her to be more passionate: '[g]ive't not o'er so; to him again, entreat him, / Kneel down before him, hang upon his gown' (II. 2. 44-45). If the Jacobean playgoers were really on Isabella's side, they may have been disappointed with her half-hearted plea and the Provost/Lucio would have voiced their objections. He advises her to 'entreat' Angelo with a 'feminine',

¹⁶⁴ Jowett, *Measure for Measure*, p. 1559. Jowett suggests that, in Shakespeare's 'original' version, Lucio's lines in the first interview belong to the Provost.

submissive gesture, rather than using intellectual arguments.

However, Isabella does not conform to the Provost/Luico's expectation and unexpectedly comes up with an argument which totally debunks Angelo's claims:

Could great men thunder
 As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet,
 [...]
 But man, proud man,
 Dressed in a little brief authority,
 Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
 His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
 Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
 As make the angels weep, who, with our spleens
 Would all themselves laugh mortal.

(II. 2. 112-125)

Instead of maintaining social order, Isabella convincingly argues that authoritarianism leads to chaos. It makes heaven 'ne'er be quiet' and 'the angels weep'. She points out that law can be partially exploited because '[t]hat in the captain's but a choleric word, / Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy' (II. 2. 132-133). To this powerful argument, the Provost/Lucio makes an aside to her, 'Art advised o' that?' (II. 2. 134). Angelo is also stunned by her intellectual power. Although puritan sympathisers might have disagreed with Isabella's argument, it

is likely that some female playgoers would have been delighted to see a ‘wench’ (II. 2. 126) defeat a representative of patriarchal authority rhetorically and intellectually. Isabella has successfully proved that woman’s power is not only in ‘entreat[ing]’ or, to use Claudio’s words, in her ‘youth’ and ‘speechless dialect’ (I. 2. 180-181).

Unlike heroines in Shakespeare’s sources, Isabella decides to accept the sentence rather than bribe Angelo:

And ’twere the cheaper way.
 Better it were a brother died at once
 Than that a sister by redeeming him,
 Should die for ever.

(II. 4. 106-109)

For the female theatregoers who were familiar with Shakespeare’s sources, Isabella’s reaction would have given them a new experience. As Kamaralli points out, Isabella ‘has indeed usurped a power usually reserved for men’ by making her decision based on ‘a moral code, rather than personal inclination’.¹⁶⁵ Instead of taking the expected role, Isabella refuses to abandon her principle which, in her belief, will be more dangerous for her and her brother’s souls. Like the maids of London who demanded their right to attend public playhouse,¹⁶⁶ Isabella’s

¹⁶⁵ Anna Kamaralli, ‘Writing about Motive: Isabella, the Duke and Moral Authority’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 58 (2005), 48-59 (p. 49).

¹⁶⁶ Findlay, *A Feminist Perspective*, p. 3.

decision advocates women's rights to choose their own lifestyles.

It is possible that the sympathy of some female playgoers might have expanded to Mistress Overdone as well. Considering the location of the theatre amid the brothels and the possible presence of some prostitutes among the audience, prostitution was an activity that was, as Lucio puts it, 'a great kindred' (III. 1. 364) to playgoers. Although some might have deemed Mistress Overdone a trivial character, her sexual liberty and financial independence could have been attractive to some female spectators. Differently from Nun Francisca or Mariana who takes refuge in a closed space, the bawd is confident enough to stay in the public space, stand her ground against the Gentlemen and talk back. This seems to reflect Lady Anne Halkett's desire to go to the theatre:

And I was the first that proposed and practised itt for 3 or 4 of us going together without any man, and every one paying for themselves by giving the mony to the footman who waited on us, and he gave itt to the play-house, And this I did first upon hearing some gentlemen telling what ladys they had waited on to plays, and how much itt had cost them; upon which I resolved none should say the same of mee.¹⁶⁷

Halkett might have objected to Mistress Overdone's career but they seem to share the desire to be more independent.

¹⁶⁷ Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 202.

The play portrays the bawd quite generously. Being alone on the stage, she reveals her main concern to the audience: 'Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat, what with the gallows and what with poverty, I am custom-shrunk' (I. 2. 80-82).

This speech represents her not as an evil abuser but an ordinary woman who struggles to live. After this speech, Mistress Overdone leaves the stage, presumably heading to her brothel 'inside'. In the Globe, this business would have suggested another 'interiority' and Mistress Overdone's complex emotional and economic reality beyond the stage, reminding the spectators that they were still 'outside'. Paradoxically, it may also have reminded them of real brothels outside the theatre in Southwark, where some of the spectators might have worked or visited. Thus, the supposedly inaccessible 'interiority' may have highlighted a parallel between their own lives and that of Mistress Overdone. According to the proclamation, only the 'houses in the suburbs [...] must be plucked down', while the ones in the city will not be demolished because 'a wise burgher put in for them' (I. 2. 93-94, 99). It would not have been a surprise if theatregoers in the suburbs saw this as a criticism of hypocrisy of law enforcers. Therefore, when the bawd asked them, 'What shall become of me?' (I. 2. 104), some theatregoers might have felt sorry for her. It is the bawd who has 'kept' Lucio's illegitimate child (III. 1. 459). It was the brothel that took charges in keeping children whom the state refused to legitimize. As poor women in the early modern period would have recognised, the boundary between a bawd as a 'benefactor' and a 'malefactor' was thin.

Although *Measure for Measure* was not published during Shakespeare's lifetime, the revival in 1621 by Middleton, almost twenty years after its first performance, testified to its lasting economic value. This might be due to the fact that, in the Jacobean context, this play seemed to celebrate James's mercy and to give a voice to powerless people at the same time. The play's indeterminacy made it enjoyable for an audience from different backgrounds. To survive in the free market, the theatre needs to respond to spectators' demands and social changes. As Middleton did in 1621, in the Restoration and after that, *Measure for Measure* was constantly adapted to suit the new social contexts and this is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 2

Adaptations and the ‘Work’: Textual Changes and Films

An adaptation is different from an interpretation in the sense that while an interpretation creates meanings by reading the words in the text, an adaptation creates meanings by significantly changing the words in the text. In this chapter, I argue that adaptations of *Measure for Measure* change our perceptions of the ‘work’. Adaptations of this play have been only briefly studied and, especially in the case of the Restoration ones, previous criticisms focus largely on textual differences between the adaptations and the ‘work’, neglecting the impact of the adaptations on the ‘work’ and the spectators or the readers. In writing this chapter, I have consulted a number of primary sources, drawn from a range of different chronological periods and media. Some of them, such as an unpublished script of *Measure for Measure Malaya* and my interview with the director, have been studied for the first time. Although the adaptations come from the very different contexts of post-Restoration and twentieth century England, as a group they confirm the argument concerning the power of the adaptations to reinvent the ‘work’.

Margaret Jane Kidnie outlines what people usually mean by ‘Shakespearean adaptation’ as follows: ‘the term seems, relatively unproblematically, to describe Shakespeare on film, in performance, or in translation, to group together new drama that has overt or at least perceptible links to the canon, or to [...] genuine

production'.¹⁶⁸ To put it another way, an adaptation is the production in which the adaptor, although retaining 'links', deliberately alters the 'work'. In the case of *Measure for Measure*, since the text in the First Folio is the closest thing to the original that we have, it is the 'work' and I regard a theatrical production which radically changes the words in the text as an adaptation.

However, it is useful to keep in mind that what modern people deem an adaptation was not necessarily regarded thus when it was produced. As Kidnie maintains:

The criteria that are sufficient to mark out 'the work' - and so to separate it from adaptation, or what is 'not the work' - constantly shift over time [...] in response to textual and theatrical production. Checks and limits on the work's evolving shape are provided informally by communities of users who accept, reject, or more often, debate as genuine a new print edition or a particular theatrical enactment.¹⁶⁹

In this sense, adaptation is what the 'communities of users' at a particular time regard as something different from 'the work'. An adaptation is not only the product of an individual but also the product of a particular society. Randall Martin and Katherine Scheil argue that 'adaptation seeks to situate any re-creative work in relation to changing social contexts and disciplinary boundaries'.¹⁷⁰ An

¹⁶⁸ Margaret Jane Kidnie, *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 2-3.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁷⁰ Randall Martin and Katherine Scheil, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare / Adaptation / Modern Drama: Essays in Honour of Jill L. Levenson*, ed. by Randall Martin and Katherine Scheil (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), pp. 3-21 (p. 4). See also, Daniel Fischlin and Mark

adaptation is an attempt to satisfy the users in changing ‘contexts’ by adapting the source. Due to its openness, *Measure for Measure* is an ideal text for adaptors to reflect changing ‘contexts’ and voice their agendas.

As noted above, I have linked stage and film adaptations studied in this chapter, covering a huge timespan from 1662 to 2006, by highlighting the similarities and differences between them in terms of their interrelations with ‘the work’. I believe that studying them in the same chapter helps clarify and emphasise the importance of adaptation in reshaping our perception of ‘the work’. The first and the second sections of this chapter discuss two adaptations of *Measure for Measure* in the Restoration by William Davenant (1660) and Charles Gildon (1700), and two in the modern period, Charles Marowitz (1975) and Phil Willmott (2002). To adapt a play into a film is to transcode it to a completely different grammar, involving the uses of cameras and screen shots, which gives spectators a radically different experience from that of attending a live stage performance. Because *Measure for Measure* was written to be performed on the stage, I regard films of this play as adaptations.. The last section of Chapter 2 is a discussion on TV and film adaptations of *Measure for Measure*; Desmond Davis’s (1979), David Thacker’s (1994) and Bob Komar’s (2006). This thesis is the first critical work which studies the three films together, thus, it is able to show the trend of film transcoding from the 1970s to the new century and how it has affected the authority of the ‘work’. As H. R. Coursen explains, ‘the act of producing Shakespeare on television

Fortier, *Adaptations of Shakespeare: A Critical Anthology of Plays from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 18.

involves a transition that obviously “changes” Shakespeare’.¹⁷¹ There is no way to evade these changes or, as Michèle Willems puts it, ‘the problem of transcoding from one medium to the other’.¹⁷² The fundamental difference between Shakespearean productions on the stage and on the screen is their different modes of presenting. Willems maintains that ‘television’s proper style is generally described as naturalistic’.¹⁷³ For Anthony Davies, the ‘realism of cinematic space’ compromises Shakespeare’s ‘heightened utterance and increased density of poetic dialogue’.¹⁷⁴ In the last section, apart from exploring the interrelation between the ‘work’ and the adaptations, I examine the problems of ‘transcoding’ the text and their impacts on TV and film productions of *Measure for Measure*.

Restoration Reworkings of the ‘Ancient’ Text

The status of Shakespeare’s ‘works’ had a direct impact on the emergence of adaptations in the Restoration. In 1660, shortly after the return of King Charles II, two London theatres were reopened. Due to the long closure during the Commonwealth, there were few new plays available. Thus, the patentees, Thomas Killigrew and William Davenant, had to revive old plays written before the Civil War for the eager public. Nevertheless, for some critics in the Restoration, these plays, including Shakespeare’s, were outdated. John Dryden maintained that ‘the

¹⁷¹ H. R. Coursen, *Watching Shakespeare on Television* (London: Associated University Presses, 1993), p. 30.

¹⁷² Michèle Willems, ‘Verbal-Visual, Verbal-Pictorial or Textual-Televsual? Reflections on the BBC Shakespeare Series’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 39 (1987), 91-102 (p. 100).

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.93.

¹⁷⁴ Anthony Davies, *Filming Shakespeare’s Plays: The Adaptations of Laurence Olivier; Orson Wells, Peter Brook and Akira Kurosaka* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 2.

tongue in general is so much refined since Shakespeare's time'.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, Sandra Clark asserts that '[i]n the later seventeenth century the language of Shakespeare's plays was considered archaic and incorrect, their plotting and construction clumsy, and their morality defective in its lack of evident poetic justice'.¹⁷⁶ Such critical views provided a hospitable environment for adaptations of the First Folio script.

These were combined with commercial motives. At that time, Shakespeare's plays were evidently less popular than new plays. At Lincoln Inn's Fields, in 1660-1661, a big hit like *The Wits* newly written by Davenant could mount to 8 performances, while the average number of performances of a Shakespeare's play was only 2.¹⁷⁷ In 1661-1662, while Abraham Cowley's *The Cutter of Coleman Street* was performed 6 times, Shakespeare's plays, apart from the three performances of *Hamlet*, were performed only once.¹⁷⁸ The pattern continued in the 1662-1663 season, where Samuel Tuke's *The Adventure of Five Hours* was performed 13 times, whereas *Hamlet* was performed twice and *Twelfth Night* and the King's Company's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* were performed only once.¹⁷⁹ At the beginning of the Restoration, Shakespeare's name could not attract the paying audiences. To make profits under these circumstances, the playing companies were obliged to produce new plays or adapt the old ones.

¹⁷⁵ John Dryden, *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. by Walter Scott, 18 vols (Edinburgh: 1821), vi, p. 239. See also, Nahum Tate, *History of King Lear: A Tragedy* (London: 1729), A2.

¹⁷⁶ Sandra Clark, 'Shakespeare in the Restoration', *Literature Compass*, 2 (2005), 1-13 (p. 3). See also, Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660-1769* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 31.

¹⁷⁷ William Van Lennep, *The London Stage, 1660-1880: Part I 1660-1700* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press), pp. 18-33.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-52.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-67.

Thus, for William Davenant, Shakespeare's plays were not awe-inspiring works but the unprofitable 'ancient' texts which, as stated in his petition to the Lord Chamberlain, he urgently needed to 'reforme' and make 'them fitt for the Company'.¹⁸⁰ Since Davenant thought he was an illegitimate son of Shakespeare,¹⁸¹ he apparently felt that he had full authority to make use of the texts as he wished. Scheil argues that *The Law against Lovers*, Davenant's adaptation of *Measure for Measure* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, is the product of his strategy to present 'two old plays under a new title, packaging them as a new product and passing them off as his own enterprise'.¹⁸² Here adaptation is, as Kidnie would put it, 'a dynamic *process* that evolves over time in response to the needs and sensibilities of its users',¹⁸³ or in this case, 'the needs' of Davenant to make two 'ancient' plays marketable. For a modern reader, this strategy can make him appear one of 'the Bard's least sensitive adapters'.¹⁸⁴ However, for theatre practitioners in the Restoration, Shakespeare is not 'the Bard' so there is no need to be 'sensitive' in terms of being reverential when dealing with his 'work'. Therefore, Davenant drastically adapts *Measure for Measure*, for example, the Duke's first long speech, 'Of government the properties to unfold' (I. 1. 3), is shortened into four lines.¹⁸⁵ He cuts the underworld in *Measure for Measure* and uses the courtship of Benedick and Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* as a new

¹⁸⁰ Lynne Bradley, *Adapting King Lear for the Stage* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), p. 37.

¹⁸¹ John Aubrey, *Brief Lives, Chiefly of Contemporaries, Set down by John Aubrey, between the Years 1669 & 1696*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), I, p. 204.

¹⁸² Katherine W. Scheil, *The Taste of the Town: Shakespeare Comedy and the Early Eighteenth-Century Theater* (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 2003), p. 30.

¹⁸³ Kidnie, *Shakespeare*, p. 2.

¹⁸⁴ A. D. Harvey, 'Virginity and Honour in *Measure for Measure* and Davenant's *The Law against Lovers*', *English Studies*, 2 (1994), 123-132 (p. 125).

¹⁸⁵ William Davenant, *The Dramatic Works of William D'Avenant: With Prefatory Memoir and Notes*, 5 vols (Edinburgh: 1872), v, pp. 109-212, I., 1., 1-4. All the subsequent quotations from or references to Davenant's adaptation will be to this edition and will be referenced parenthetically.

subplot, which, according to Michael Dobson, is the ‘inception [...] of the “gay couple” tradition’.¹⁸⁶ This adaptation was performed on 15 and 18 February 1662 at Lincoln Inn’s Fields and on 17 December 1662¹⁸⁷ ‘before the King’.¹⁸⁸

As a playing company patronised by the Court, the welfare of Davenant’s company partly depended on their ability to satisfy Charles II’s expectations and, at the beginning of his reign, the King, more than anything, needed to re-establish the sovereignty of the monarchy which had been demolished during the Commonwealth. As Paula Backscheider has demonstrated, Charles ‘had to make a symbolic statement about Law, demonstrating if possible that it would be authoritatively and rightfully administered and would combine the divine attributes of justice and mercy with the wisdom of their king’s “great original,” God’.¹⁸⁹

Davenant’s adaptation seemed to deliberately choose *Measure for Measure* as his main plot since it apparently could be appropriated to propagandise Charles’s agendas. Its story is like the Restoration tragicomedies which ‘stage the triumph of legitimate over illegitimate forms of power’.¹⁹⁰ Dobson regards Davenant’s adaptation as ‘a devoutly royalist version of *Measure for Measure*’,¹⁹¹ and Duke

¹⁸⁶ Dobson, *The Making*, p. 36.

¹⁸⁷ Van Lennep, *The London Stage*, pp. 47-48, 59.

¹⁸⁸ John Evelyn, *Diary of John Evelyn*, 2 vols (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1907), i, p. 379.

¹⁸⁹ Paula R. Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 11.

¹⁹⁰ Aparna Dharwadker, ‘Authorship, Metatheatre, and Antitheatre in the Restoration’, *Theatre Research International*, 2 (2002), 125-135 (p. 128).

¹⁹¹ Michael Dobson, ‘Improving on the Original: Actresses and Adaptations’, in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Shakespeare on Stage*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Russell Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University, 2001), pp. 45-68 (p. 50).

Vincentio as a ‘righteous’ Charles II, ‘happily restored to power after the aberrations of Angelo’s Puritan régime’.¹⁹²

To emphasise the ‘royalist’ agenda, Davenant interpolates many speeches to make his Duke more merciful than in the ‘original’ version. In the adaptation, the Duke freely forgives everyone, including Lucio (V. 1. 582-583). Beatrice describes her Duke in the following laudatory terms:

He’s full of clemency ;

A Prince, who, by forgiving, does reclaim,
And tenderly preserve for noble use,
Many whom rigid justice, by exemplar death,
Would make for ever useless to the world.

(V. 1. 291-295)

It would not be a surprise if playgoers in Davenant’s time saw this as an allusion to Charles. Beatrice’s praise reflects Charles’s ‘clemency’ to people who had wronged his family. The image of the merciful king is also stressed in Davenant’s panegyric, in which he praises his king: ‘So great your *Mercy* is’.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Michael Dobson, ‘Adaptations and Revivals’, in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. by Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 40-51 (p. 49).

¹⁹³ William Davenant, *Poem upon his Sacred Majesties most Happy Return to his Dominions* (London: 1660), p. 1.

At the same time, with textual changes, Davenant strengthens a connection between Angelo's regime and Oliver Cromwell's government. Benedick refers to Angelo's deputation as the 'Common-Wealth' (I. 1. 160, V. 1. 19). Being under arrest, Claudio laments that Angelo governs the country like 'the precise' puritan (I. 1. 245). It is very likely that this comparison would have reminded some Restoration spectators of their time under the powerful puritan like Cromwell. Although Angelo is appointed by the Duke, throughout the story, Davenant keeps reminding the playgoers that the puritan-styled government is tyrannical. For Benedick, a royalist who pays his 'Obedience to his Highness' (I. 1. 134), Angelo acts like '[t]he tyrant Turk' (I. 1. 177). Benedick foresees the destruction of their society under Angelo's rule:

He does against the liberty of lovers,
His rule may last till the end of the world ;
For there will be no next generation.

(III. 1. 168-170)

For some spectators, especially the royalists, this prediction might not have sounded exaggerated, since execution of Charles I was merely eleven years ago. '[T]he mutiny in town' (I. 1. 102) may have been used to emphasise the chaotic state under the puritan government, and the image of Benedick and Beatrice's parties joining together to sing and dance before Angelo's house might have suggested a harmonious society which can be achieved when the puritan regime comes to an end. The problem is that, as Beatrice puts it, the deputy is not 'a

proper Prince! he rules / With a rod in's hand instead of a sceptre' (III. 1. 161-162). This expression would have reminded the theatregoers of the cruelty that England suffered when it was not ruled by the monarchy. In the last act, Juliet describes her impression of the Duke's unexpected return as follows: 'From a wild tempest, where we both were lost, / Heaven leads us strangely on a flow'ry coast' (V. 1. 480-481). This speech might have reminded some members of the Restoration audiences of the status of Charles as God's representative who leads 'lost' people to the 'flow'ry' land.

However, I argue that to focus exclusively on the royalist agendas would be misleading because what was influential about this adaptation is how it silences Isabella and the low-life characters. As Slavoj Žižek explains, '*the very "peace", the absence of struggle, is already a form of struggle, the (temporal) victory of one of the sides in the struggle*'.¹⁹⁴ To assure readers and spectators that, under the Duke, everyone will live in 'peace', Davenant suppresses the voices and discontents of powerless characters. In this adaptation, apart from removing low-life characters, Davenant downplays the struggle of Isabella against patriarchal authority. Her 'To whom should I complain? Did I tell this, / Who would believe me?' (II. 4. 172-173) is changed to 'If I tell this who will believe't' (III. 1. 147). Changing the word 'me' to 'it' obscures her disadvantageous status as a powerless woman in patriarchal society. By making Claudio accept his death, Davenant deprives Isabella of the opportunity to argue vehemently with him and to express her 'unfeminine' side, so her threat to patriarchal society is downplayed. Isabella

¹⁹⁴ Slavoj Žižek, 'Introduction: The Spectre of Ideology', in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. by Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 1-33 (p. 23).

even tells her brother: ‘Let your submission your last virtue be’ (III. 1. 519). Her submissiveness is emphasised at the end of the play when she unquestioningly accepts the Duke’s suggestion to her to marry Angelo:

I have so long your council follow’d with
 Success, as I am taught not to suspect
 Much happiness will still attend
 Th’ obedience which does yield
 To your command.

(V. 1. 605-609)

With this speech, Davenant closes the ‘open-silence’ and his Isabella ‘happily’ becomes a would-be mother. Caitlin McHugh is only partly correct in stating that Davenant makes his Isabella ‘more exemplary’ in terms of morality.¹⁹⁵ Isabella is not only exemplary in the sense of being virtuous but also in sense of being submissive to patriarchal authority. It is noteworthy that, differently from the boy Isabella in the Jacobean period, in Davenant’s production, this role was taken by a female actor, probably Mary Saunderson who had a ‘penchant for playing the sweet young girl or good woman’.¹⁹⁶ Saunderson was also noted as ‘a woman of an unblemish’d and sober life’.¹⁹⁷ It is Isabella’s ‘virtue’ and ‘virgin-innocence’ (II. 1. 423, 427), a conventional moral perspective on women, that make her

¹⁹⁵ Caitlin McHugh, ‘Late Seventeenth-Century Alternations to *Measure for Measure*’, *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, 35 (2011), 37-56 (p. 39).

¹⁹⁶ Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim and Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers & Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, 16 vols (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), II, p. 97.

¹⁹⁷ Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber* (Toronto: B. R. S. Fone, 1968), p. 93.

attractive to Angelo and presumably male audiences. Her submissiveness, being willing to ‘yield / To [the Duke’s] command’ (V. 1. 608-609), would have made her more tempting for male spectators, especially the King who had the reputation of preying on actresses, such as, Mary ‘Moll’ who played Viola, Beatrice’s younger sister. Moll later ‘left the stage to become one of Charles II’s mistresses’.¹⁹⁸ The emphasis on Isabella’s compliance with the Duke and the removal of subversive elements would be repeated in many ‘full-text’ productions until the twentieth century.

In this production, Davenant established himself as a legitimate author rather than an illegitimate son of Shakespeare. Since this successful adaptation was the first recorded adaptation of Shakespeare’s play in the Restoration, it set a fashion for reviving and adapting the ‘ancient’ plays. Although an eyewitness deemed Davenant’s adaptation ‘the worst’,¹⁹⁹ Samuel Pepys thought it was ‘a good play and well performed’.²⁰⁰ Two Dutch travellers also considered it as ‘their best play’.²⁰¹ Dobson believes that this production was not successful so it ‘remained in the repertory for less than a year’.²⁰² However, this adaptation was not a ‘Principal’ play of the company.²⁰³ Davenant, thus, might not expect it to be played for long especially since, in his company, most plays remained in the repertory for a very short time. Considering the fact that it was made of two

¹⁹⁸ Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 184.

¹⁹⁹ Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), p. 247.

²⁰⁰ Samuel Pepys, *The Concise Pepys*, ed. by Tom Griffith (Ware: Wordsworth, 1997), p. 131.

²⁰¹ Ethel Seaton, *Literary Relations of England and Scandinavia in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), p. 335.

²⁰² Dobson, *The Making*, pp. 36-37.

²⁰³ John Downes, *Roscarius Anglicanus*, ed., by Montague Summers (London: Fortune, 1928), p. 26.

‘ancient’ plays of an outdated playwright but it managed to go on to the third performance, one suspects that, for Davenant, it was a small success. As an adaptation, this play was influential in that other adaptations, including Charles Gildon’s adaptation in 1700, followed.

Gildon’s *Measure for Measure, or, Beauty the Best Advocate, as It is Acted at the Theatre in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, Written Originally by Mr. Shakespeare: And Now Very Much Alter’d, with Additions of Several Entertainments of Musick* was published after a performance in February in 1700.²⁰⁴ Although it is unacknowledged, Gildon paraphrases and copies many of Davenant’s lines. As in Davenant’s version, rather than asking his sister to sacrifice her virginity, Claudio asks Isabella to ‘remember [their] Mother’s Pity’ and take care of Juliet after he is executed (III. 1. 143). Hence, the image of Isabella as a gentle and caring woman is highlighted. As in Davenant’s, Gildon’s adaptation takes place in Turin after ‘the Wars’,²⁰⁵ Balthazar is present and low-life characters are removed.

Gildon’s production is a good example of how the adaptation is influenced by the authority of the ‘work’ and how it, in turn, shapes that authority. The increasing reputation of Shakespeare as an author who explores ‘universal’ ideas had a profound influence on Gildon’s adaptation. According to Gildon, Shakespeare is the ‘Old Perfection’²⁰⁶ and *Measure for Measure* consists of many ‘fine Moral

²⁰⁴ Van Lennep, *The London Stage*, p. 523.

²⁰⁵ Charles Gildon, *Measure for Measure, or, Beauty the Best Advocate* (London: 1700), I., 1., 1. All subsequent quotations from or references to the play will be to this edition and will be referenced parenthetically.

²⁰⁶ Charles Gildon, *The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare*, 7vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999), vii, lxvii.

Reflections' on mercy, abuse of power, life and death.²⁰⁷ To play Shakespeare was to uphold 'Drammatick Poetry, to advance *Virtue* and *Wisdom*'.²⁰⁸ Gildon apparently championed the authority of Shakespeare as the author of the 'universal' ideas and, in turn, used that authority to justify his work on Shakespeare. In the Epilogue of Gildon's *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare's Ghost appears on the stage to claim: 'on yonder *Stage*, the Knave was shewn / Ev'n by my Self, the Picture scarce was known' but, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, the actor acted 'such as I meant him' (9-12). According to the Ghost, a good performance is one in which the text is acted 'such as [Shakespeare] meant'. Thus, unlike Davenant, to retain 'links' to what '[Shakespeare] meant', Gildon restores Shakespeare's title, *Measure for Measure*, and many lines in the main plot, while Benedick and Beatrice are cut. Gildon's adaptation gave birth to the 'author' and his 'work', phenomena that will be explored further in the following section.

Gildon's decision to restore Shakespeare's main plot also restores Isabella's 'open silence'. Imposing her reading on the text, McHugh believes, in the end, the Duke 'does not propose marriage to Isabella', she 'will return to the convent', and '[a]ll the problems are solved'.²⁰⁹ In fact, as in Shakespeare's text, the Duke does ask her to '[g]ive [him] [her] hand' (V. 1. 252) but Isabella does not say anything. There is no stage direction provided to close this 'open silence'. Hence, 'all problems' are far from being completely 'solved'. Receiving no verbal reply, the

²⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 293-297.

²⁰⁸ Charles Gildon, *Phaeton, or the Fatal Divorce* (London: 1698), C2.

²⁰⁹ McHugh, 'Late Seventeenth-Century Alternations', p. 52.

Duke asks her to ‘come sit by’ him (V. 1. 270) and watch ‘[t]he last Musick’. In it, Mars and Peace have a debate which ends with the Chorus’s lines: ‘Since it is decreed that Wars should cease, / Let’s all agree to welcome Peace’ (V. 1. 381-382). Making a guess from the celebratory tone of the ‘Musick’, it is possible that the 1700 Isabella, played by Mrs. Bracegirdle, accepted the proposal. This speculation is made more likely by the fact that, in this version, Isabella merely intends to go to a nunnery because she is ‘left without a Fortune’ (I. 1. 119). Gildon might add this explanation to suggest that she is not really committed to be a nun. Nevertheless, there is no way to tell for certain whether the 1700 Isabella accepted the proposal. If she did not or unwillingly did so, ‘The last Musick’ might have reminded some theatregoers of Angelo’s attempt to use music to ‘disarm [Isabella] of [her] froward Virtue, / And make [her] relish Pleasure’ (II. 1. 129-132). If this was the case, a glimpse of the manipulative Duke would have been brought back after being removed by Davenant. As in the ‘original’ text, the ambiguity of the Duke’s unexpected proposal and Isabella’s silence makes the play open to various interpretations.

However, Gildon’s main concern is not to restore ‘the complete work’. For him, Shakespeare’s ‘work’ is not something untouchable and Shakespeare can be improved by applying ‘the Rules’ of Aristotle which ‘are in the Modern Acception’.²¹⁰ Gildon believes that ‘tis not improbable, that *Shakespear* was ignorant of the Rules of *Aristotle’s Poetics*; and was imperfect in the three Unities of Time, Place, and Action’.²¹¹ To improve the play, in his adaptation, Gildon tries

²¹⁰ Gildon, *The Works*, vii, pp. 292-293.

²¹¹ Charles Gildon, *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays on Several Subjects: Philosophical, Moral,*

to achieve ‘the three Unities’. Without the subplot of Benedick and Beatrice, the action of the play concentrates mainly on Claudio’s plight and Isabella’s attempt to save him. All the scenes in Shakespeare’s Act I are removed. Thus, at the beginning of the show, audiences in 1700 would have witnessed the argument between Escalus and Angelo in which the latter strongly maintains that Claudio’s action ‘deserves the Fate He now shall meet’ (I. 1. 92). This is immediately followed by Isabella’s first plea, to which Angelo replies: ‘I will consider---come again anon’ (I. 1. 232) ‘as the Opera is over’ (I. 1. 236). It is likely that, for the audiences in 1700, the matter would have sounded more pressing than in the other versions. The whole story is enacted within one day. Nevertheless, the effect of the unities is greatly diminished by the interpolation of *Dido and Aeneas*, an opera written by Henry Purcell. For the audiences, it would have been a pause from the main plot. The unity of place is also ignored in preference of the spectacular movable forms of scenery, set up for various settings, such as a large hall, a cave, a prison and a sea.

Why did Gildon interpolate the opera which undermines the unities of time, place and action, ‘the Rules’ which he vows to respect? The answer is: to please ‘communities of users’. *Dido and Aeneas* and its scenography made the production look like the masque which would have appealed to playgoers whom Keith Wrightson defines as the ‘Gentleman-tradesman’.²¹² Since opera was first performed in England in Rutland House, an ‘aristocratic sanctuar[y]’ during

Historical, Critical, Amorous, &c. in Prose and Verse (London: 1694), p. 89.

²¹² Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 305.

Cromwell's regime,²¹³ for non-aristocratic spectators, it is a 'populuxe' product. Since the interpolated opera is arranged for the 'Good Dukes Birth-Day' (II. 1. 125), it gave spectators a chance to imagine themselves being among the noble characters to enjoy a courtly entertainment.

Gildon's *Measure for Measure* advocates bourgeois morality. As Wrightson would put it, it engages with the issue of 'commercial probity' which was a key concept of 'bourgeois self-definition' when 'personal credit and reputation' became the code of bourgeois 'gentlemanly honour' and 'morality'.²¹⁴ Unlike Davenant's adaptation, Gildon's play emphasises the importance of honour which has less to do with being loyal to the throne but being trustworthy to maintain one's 'credit'. To highlight bourgeois 'morality', Gildon makes a number of significant changes concerning Angelo. Unlike in the 'original' text, Angelo is represented as an exploitative man of 'Business' who rises from an obscure origin and falls because of his lack of 'commercial probity'. Throughout the play, Angelo uses business discourses. He tells Isabella that, by giving her virginity to him, he will be 'rich' while she will not be 'poorer' (IV. 1. 60). Although he boasts his 'commercial probity' that he will never 'sell the Laws for a fond Womans Tears' (II. 2. 5), from the start, his 'credit' is questionable. He is 'low in Fortune' (III. 1. 193) so he plans to marry Mariana for her dowry. This is an Angelo who obsesses with 'Business'.

²¹³ Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 49.

²¹⁴ Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, pp. 301-302.

Gildon seems to use Angelo's case to demonstrate the danger of doing business immorally. Angelo values money more highly than honour or love. To stress Angelo's wrongdoing, unlike in Davenant's version in which the deputy merely tests Isabella's virtue, Gildon's Angelo really wants to sleep with Isabella. In a speech paraphrased from Davenant's text, Angelo gives Isabella jewels in exchange for sex:

Be in this World like other People, Wise,
 And take this Treasure as your Beauty's due.
 Wealth draws a Curtain o're the face of shame,
 Restores lost Beauty, and recovers Fame.

(IV. 1. 51-54)

For him, it is '[w]ise' to accumulate '[w]ealth' even by sacrificing one's 'fame'. The deputy grossly maintains that 'all spread their laps for Gold, / Yes the whole Venal Sex is bought and sold' (IV. 1. 93-92). One wonders whether the aristocratic spectators would have taken this as an affirmation of the low moral standard of the men of business. For them, the fact that, in the end, the 'Noble' Claudio from an 'Illustrious Race' (I. 1. 50-51) is saved and repents of his 'Sin to wish for ought / Beyond Possession of so pure a Virtue' (II. 2. 193-194) would have signified the triumph of honour over wealth. Nevertheless, it is possible that the 'Gentleman-tradesman' would not have regarded this as an insult but a warning against failing to comply with 'commercial probity'. After all, Angelo is not punished but given a second chance to forsake his 'misdoing' (V. 1. 157). As Shakespeare did, Gildon

seems to make his play indeterminate in order to please all customers.

The issue of 'bourgeois self-definition' is emphasised by the story of Dido and Aeneas which reflects the situation of Angelo. Like Aeneas who begs Dido to have '[s]ome pity' on him (I. 1. 313), Angelo wishes Isabella to give him love and, like Dido whose heart becomes 'Storms of Care' because of Aeneas (I. 1. 290), Angelo's 'Soul' is 'a mighty Tempest' because of Isabella (I. 1. 255-256). The opera materialises Angelo's dilemma. He is both a suitor and a victim of desire. Thus, in performance, Thomas Betterton who played Angelo was many things at the same time. He was himself, Dido, Aeneas, Angelo and the representative of the *nouveau riche*. The unsettling identities would have reflected the struggle of middle class spectators to find their place in a changing society. Like Angelo, they had power and wealth but no noble ancestry. They were upper-class and lower-class at the same time.

It is not surprising that Gildon's adaptation explored issues which might have been interesting for the bourgeois, given the emerging influence of the middle-class audience recorded in John Dennis's letter:

[T]here are three sorts of People now in our Audiences who have had no education at all, [...] who [...] have risen to a condition of distinction and plenty. I believe that no man will wonder, if these People, who in their original obscurity, could never attain to any higher entertainment than [...]

their old sports.²¹⁵

Dennis maintains that the audiences in the time of Charles II ‘had first of all leisure to attend to [Comedy]. For that was an age of Pleasure, and not of Business’.²¹⁶ When Dennis was writing his letter, it seems that, in the theatre, the influence of the gentry who had ‘all leisure’ and ‘education’ was in decline while the men of ‘Business’ with ‘original obscurity’ became more influential. Consequently, ‘by the end of the seventeenth century, aristocratic tragicomedy is becoming moribund and its form is already being appropriated to bourgeois ideology’.²¹⁷

Whether *Dido and Aeneas* and the bourgeois issues helped produce the success of Gildon’s *Measure for Measure* on the stage one can only guess but, apparently, a success it was. As Judith Milhous maintains, 1700 was ‘the darkest period for the English theatre since the Commonwealth’ when, at the Lincoln’s Inn Fields, ‘the cooperative management lapsed into chaotic dissension’.²¹⁸ Their theatre was ‘cramped and inadequate’.²¹⁹ Nevertheless, against all odds, *Measure for Measure* ‘was acted eight times’.²²⁰ Comparing this to a more well-known play like

²¹⁵ John Dennis, *Critical Works of John Dennis*, ed. by Edward Niles Hooker, 2 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1939), I, p. 293.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

²¹⁷ J. Douglas Canfield, ‘The Ideology of Restoration Tragicomedy’, *ELH*, 51 (1984), 447-464 (pp. 461-462).

²¹⁸ Judith Milhous, *Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln’s Inn Fields, 1695-1708* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), p. 113.

²¹⁹ Robert D. Hume, *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 433.

²²⁰ George L. Geckle, ‘Introduction’, in *Measure for Measure: Shakespeare: The Critical Tradition*, ed. by George L. Geckle (London: Athlone, 2001), pp. 1-30 (p. 3).

William Congreve's *The Way of the World*, which was performed merely five times in the same season,²²¹ Gildon had every reason to be proud of himself. His adaptation was also revived six years later at the Queen's.²²²

Gildon and Davenant's adaptations show us the influence of 'the communities of users' and the authority of 'Shakespeare' on textual adaptations. To make Shakespeare's outdated plays profitable, Davenant merged *Measure* and *Much Ado* into a new play under a new title and made many textual changes to please the King. His adaptation had a great influence on Gildon who adopted many of Davenant's alterations but shifted the play's focus to the issues of the middle-class's 'self-definition' and morality. Davenant and Gildon's suppressions of Isabella's subversiveness and low-life vulgarity would be repeated in theatres throughout the eighteenth century. These theatre practices, in turn, might contribute to perceptions, advocated by critics like William Richardson (1789) and Francis Douce (1807), that Isabella is a character endowed with 'female softness' and *Measure for Measure* is a play about morality.²²³ Furthermore, Gildon's adaptation began the process of authorising a production by claiming its proximity to 'Shakespeare' and 'his work'. In the next section, I examine the interactions between adaptation and Shakespeare's 'work' in the twentieth century, when Shakespeare's identity as 'the Bard' is well established. Such a context makes the

²²¹ Van Lennep, *The London Stage*, pp. 525-526.

²²² Charles Beecher Hogan, *Shakespeare in the Theatre, 1701-1800: A Record of Performances in London, 1701-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 301.

²²³ William Richardson, 'Isabella "Pious, ... Determined, and Eloquent"', in *Measure for Measure: Shakespeare: The Critical Tradition*, ed. by George L. Geckle (London: Athlone, 2001), pp. 34-35 (p. 34), Francis Douce, 'On the Play's Source', in *Measure for Measure: Shakespeare: The Critical Tradition*, ed. by George L. Geckle (London: Athlone, 2001), pp. 42-44 (p. 44).

process of adaptation significantly different from those in this section, as I will go on to argue.

Modern Adaptations: Transgressing the ‘Work’ and ‘Shakespeare’

Critics of modern adaptations of *Measure for Measure* on stage often described differences between the adaptations and the ‘work’ but they rarely discussed the effect of those adaptations on our perception of the ‘work’. In this section, I argue that the importance of Charles Marowitz’s and Phil Willmott’s adaptations do not lie only in their textual changes but also in their suggestions of new ways to read the play. It would be hard to find any theatre practitioner in the twentieth century who was more active than Marowitz in campaigning for the necessity of adapting Shakespeare’s plays. He was not only the author of *Recycling Shakespeare* and *The Marowitz Shakespeare* but also, throughout his life, tirelessly put his adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays on stage. In the case *Measure for Measure*, Marowitz’s adaptation suggests that it is possible to stage an outright anti-authoritarian production of this play. It is noteworthy to remember that, before Marowitz’s production in 1975, to play the Duke as a corrupt man was uncommon. Nevertheless, after 1975, many corrupt or untrustworthy Dukes kept reappearing on the stage.

After the emergence of Bardolatry in the mid-eighteenth century, Shakespeare’s ‘work’ has become one of the ‘classics’ and this status is key to understanding Marowitz’s adaptation, staged on 28 August 1975 at the Open Space which,

according to Alan Sinfield, was his ‘breakthrough’.²²⁴ As Gildon’s list of moral lessons shows, Shakespeare’s ‘work’ was often regarded as something universal, fixed and hallowed. Marowitz wanted to challenge this hallowed status. He maintained that ‘[o]ur generation has a thing against the classics. They represent not only what we have been taught in school, but exist as the artistic embodiments of that paternalistic society we are rebelling against at every turn’.²²⁵ For Marowitz, Shakespeare needed to be recreated:

What we most want now from Shakespeare is not the routine repetition of his words and imagery, but the Shakespearean Experience. And today, ironically, that can come only from dissolving the works into a new compound, and creating that sense of vicissitude, variety, and intellectual vigor with which the author himself confronted the seventeenth century.²²⁶

Although Marowitz proclaims to rebel against ‘the works’, he acknowledges that they are an effective means to recreate ‘the Shakespearean Experience’. Unlike Davenant and Gildon, instead of interpolating new lines, Marowitz adopts the words and plotline of *Measure for Measure* to create his own story. Until the end of the scene between Isabella and Claudio, Marowitz closely follows the main plot of the ‘original’ text. In doing so, he appropriates spectators’ expectation

²²⁴ Alan Sinfield, ‘Making Space: Appropriation and Confrontation in Recent British Plays’, in *The Shakespeare Myth*, ed. by Graham Holderness (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 128-144 (p. 135).

²²⁵ Ruby Cohn, *Modern Shakespearean Offshoots* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 221.

²²⁶ Charles Marowitz, ‘Shakespeare Recycled’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 38 (1987), 467-478 (p. 478).

towards ‘the work’ and then undermines it. As he maintains, ‘it is only when we don’t get what we have been led to expect that we are on the threshold of having an experience’.²²⁷ Marowitz’s *Measure for Measure* is seemingly familiar but evidently not the same. It is familiar because the characters speak Shakespeare’s lines. It is different because the lines are often relocated and/or redistributed. The director avoids making any obvious changes at the beginning. He states that ‘[f]or *Measure* to achieve its effect, it had to stick as closely as possible to Shakespeare’s original storyline, veering away at precisely those points where the moral impact would be greatest’.²²⁸

Even though it is likely that some members of the audience in 1975 knew about Marowitz’s reputation as an adaptor, after sitting through half of the performance without any major changes, some might have been convinced that this was just a compact production without the minor plot which finished within 80 minutes.²²⁹ As Robert Cushman maintained, ‘We seem to be getting a quiet, bare, concentrated version of the original’.²³⁰ Before the scene between Isabella and Claudio, the only difference between the adaptation and the ‘original’ is that, in the former, the Duke and Escalus are apparently less upright. In Marowitz’s version, Escalus is portrayed as an ambitious politician. At the beginning of the play, one finds ‘*Escalus, whose back is to the audience is examining the Duke’s medallion-of-state*’.²³¹ He expects the Duke to make him the deputy and has to

²²⁷ Charles Marowitz, *The Marowitz Shakespeare* (London: Marion Boyars, 1978), p. 25.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²²⁹ Jeremy Kingston, ‘A Smallish Measure of Meat’, *Times*, 29 May 1975, p. 11.

²³⁰ Robert Cushman, ‘Meddle for Measure’, *Observer*, 15 June 1975, p. 28.

²³¹ Charles Marowitz, ‘*Measure for Measure*’, in *Adaptations of Shakespeare: A Critical Anthology of Plays from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp.

conceal 'his disappointment' when the Duke does not do so (190). In this scene, the Duke takes a '*drink from concealed bar in arm of Throne*' (191). His attachment to sensual pleasure is suggested from the very start.

Nevertheless, before 'veering away' from Shakespeare's storyline, the governed characters, and perhaps some spectators, seem to believe that justice could still be found and the Duke was their saviour. Lucio believes if the Duke 'had been at home, [Claudio] had lived' (200). At one point during her 'dream', Isabella imagines the Duke appearing to help her convince the Provost to save Claudio (201). Thus, when the Duke seriously accuses Isabella of slandering Angelo, it would have come as a shock for some deceived spectators. Like the governed characters, they were 'credulous to false prints' (198). Graham Nicholls was greatly impressed by Marowitz's creativity:

That one does not dismiss it out of hand as a shameless over-manipulation of his material can be ascribed to the intellectual agility with which Marowitz puts together his intellectual jigsaw, and because we know that this is *his Measure for Measure* and not Shakespeare's.²³²

However, Marowitz's work was not only a production of an individual but also a product of social contexts in the 1970s. According to his interview with Jan Kott about *Measure for Measure*, Marowitz's concerns are not only with creating a

190-207 (p. 190). All subsequent quotations from or references to the play will be to this edition and will be referenced parenthetically.

²³² Graham Nicholls, *Measure for Measure: The Text and Performance* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 57.

‘new’ experience but also how to make it “‘about” today’.²³³ In June 1974, while shopping, perhaps since he was ‘dressed suspiciously’,²³⁴ Marowitz was arrested and charged as a “‘suspected person with intent to commit an arrestable offence” [...] in spite of the fact that no incriminating evidence had been found on [his] person’.²³⁵ The disturbing event confirmed his belief that the law is ‘favouring one class over another’ and ‘subjecting itself to pressures from public opinion, social mores, the media, the government, the church and innumerable other factors’.²³⁶

Marowitz’s *Measure for Measure* reflects his personal experience and people’s mistrust of politicians which had been mounting since the Watergate scandal, a political connection Marowitz acknowledged:

What concerns me is the traditional morality of *Measure for Measure* tested in a contemporary society where Watergate-styled corruptions are often the rule and not the exception. I wanted the audience to be angry with the Duke, Escalus, and Angelo in a way that Shakespeare’s narrative would never permit.²³⁷

To make his political agenda clear, Marowitz explains that he has to ‘counter’ the ‘irritating ambiguity of Shakespeare’s concept of the law’.²³⁸ As a result, critics

²³³ Jan Kott and Charles Marowitz, ‘The Kott-Marowitz Dialogues: “*Measure for Measure*”’, *New Theatre Quarterly*, 10 (1944), 157-166 (p. 166).

²³⁴ Charles Marowitz, *Recycling Shakespeare* (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 44.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

²³⁷ Marowitz, *The Marowitz Shakespeare*, p. 21.

²³⁸ Marowitz, *Recycling*, p. 51. See also, Fischlin and Fortier, *Adaptations*, p. 57.

believed that Shakespeare's text was 'much subtler' but Marowitz's adaptation was more straightforward in its criticism of the corruption of power.²³⁹

To 'counter' the ambiguity of the Folio's script, Marowitz adapts the text and creates business to highlight how the authority figures abuse their power to protect the interests of people in their network. Though disappointed by Angelo's superior status, when the Provost starts questioning Angelo's integrity, Escalus quickly assures him that the deputy is 'just' without a sense of 'irony' (200). Seeing Isabella and Angelo kissing, the Bishop readily pardons Angelo but 'hurls [Isabella] forward, away from him' and calls her 'Harlot' (202). For spectators, this action would have suggested the Bishop's role as the protector of corrupt power and the strategy of the elites in relocating the blame to the powerless. The most important change that Marowitz makes is to make the Duke 'decide[...] for the sake of maintaining the new draconian order that it is more political to repudiate the girl's allegations and support his culpable deputy'.²⁴⁰ One year before the performance, President Gerald Ford announced his decision to grant Richard Nixon an unconditional pardon for any crimes that he might have committed while in office. The similarity between the action of Ford and the Duke is so obvious that it is unlikely that many spectators would have missed it. As Nicholas De Jongh maintained: the production's 'legal pessimism is compellingly and chillingly for our time'.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Guido Almansi, 'The Thumb-Screwers and the Tongue-Twisters: On Shakespeare Avatars', *Poetics Today*, 3 (1982), 87-100 (p. 100). See also, Kingston, 'A Smallish Measure', p. 11.

²⁴⁰ Marowitz, *Recycling*, p. 48.

²⁴¹ Nicholas De Jongh, 'Measure for Measure at the Open Space', *Guardian*, 29 May 1975, p. 10.

Another issue that Marowitz makes easier to see is the fact that ‘[t]he facade of the law, its elaborate stage-management, its imposing rituals, divert us from its manifest evil’.²⁴² Marowitz supplies new stage directions to stress this theme. Before the Duke ‘*strides*’ on the stage, there is always a sound of trumpet (190, 204). He sits on ‘a red ducal chair’ which ‘stands against an exceedingly large parchment scroll bearing the Duke’s decree against fornication’.²⁴³ Angelo acts as a law protector in ‘*the Duke’s garments of authority, cap and medallion*’ (192). As Escalus puts it, these are the trappings of their ‘mystery’ (207). These images are used to emphasise the awe-inspiring power of the establishment.

Marowitz reveals something ignoble under this ‘facade’ by presenting two conflicting images of the powerful characters: as the representatives of graceful traditions and of vile animals. Since, in the production, Nikolas Simmonds’s Angelo slept with Ciaran Madden’s Isabella behind the ‘parchment scroll’, De Jongh saw it as a suggestion of ‘the law corrupting itself behind the shelter of its own legality’.²⁴⁴ This point is emphasised again at the end, where ‘*[t]he table is now set. The DUKE, now in gay private attire, in stark contrast to his judicial robes, sits at one place, ESCALUS and ANGELO beside him; they too are now dressed casually. Food and drink is brought*’ (206). They are in ‘the kind of attire we associate with frivolous and irresponsible persons’.²⁴⁵ In this scene, they mimick the voices of ‘*the lower classes*’ (206). Angelo adopts Pompey’s lines and makes a joke that he has been not only ‘an unlawful bawd’ but also ‘a lawful

²⁴² Marowitz, *The Marowitz Shakespeare*, p. 21.

²⁴³ Kingston, ‘A Smallish Measure’, p. 11.

²⁴⁴ De Jongh, ‘*Measure for Measure* at the Open Space’, p. 10.

²⁴⁵ Marowitz, *The Marowitz Shakespeare*, p. 21.

hangman' (206). For some playgoers who know Shakespeare's text, the redistribution would have reminded them of the bawd and, in effect, revealed Angelo's duty as 'the bawd' for the Duke. He is the middleman between the Duke and his subjects. The recklessness of authority is also stressed when, just for fun, the Duke starts '*[p]ouring wine over ANGELO's head*' (207). For Marowitz, this scene '*belies all we know of these characters*' (206). With the stark contrast between their public image and what happens behind the scenes, it is unlikely that the playgoers would have missed the director's criticism of the hypocrisy of authority.

Marowitz's adaptation is certainly clear and concentrated. In this sense, Marowitz is successful in reducing the 'irritating ambiguity' of the text. By interpolating business and redistributing lines, *Measure for Measure* becomes an explicitly anti-authoritarian play. Cushman saw this production as an expression of the director's 'dislike of his author (who is certainly part of the establishment)'.²⁴⁶ This adaptation is a product of the director's desire to challenge 'Shakespeare' by finding a way to make Shakespeare's 'work' work better for audiences in 1975. It fuelled people's scepticism towards authority and pointed the way for future directors, showing how this ambiguous play could be used against the establishment. Unlike in the 1970s, today to stage a production designed to make spectators 'angry with the Duke' is conventional.

²⁴⁶ Cushman, 'Meddle', p. 28.

Phil Willmott's *Measure for Measure Malaya* at Riverside Studios in 2002 appropriated Shakespeare's text to explore colonisation and this production adds a new ingredient to my discussion of adaptation because it raises the issue of the relation between Shakespeare's adaptation and the 'work' with reference to race. Willmott, the founder of a London based theatre company, The Steam Industry, obviously believes in the benefits of adapting Shakespeare. From 1992-1994, he adapted *Henry VI* trilogy into *The Wax King*, *Othello* into *Iago* and *Twelfth Night* into *Illyria*. In an interview with me, on the question of adaptation, Willmott states that he believes 'the most important thing is for the audience to understand and it is quite alright to take the obscure, complicated language and just simplify it slightly so the audience can follow it very well'.²⁴⁷ Willmott's script begins with the Duke in '[a] 1930s TROPICAL SUIT' standing alone on the stage. His first lines explain his reasons in leaving the office: 'Our colonies aboard have strict and biting laws. [...] Which for this nineteen years we have let slip'.²⁴⁸ From the start, prioritising the production and its audience over the Folio's text, Willmott adapted the text to make the issue of colonisation clearer.

Many critics disagreed with his approach. Rhoda Koenig called his production an 'awkward distortion' of 'a great play'.²⁴⁹ Sam Marlowe asserted that *Measure for*

²⁴⁷ Phil Willmott, Interview, conducted and transcribed by Rachod Nusen (2 July 2013), Union Theatre, London.

²⁴⁸ Phil Willmott, Unpublished Script, *Measure for Measure Malaya*, Riverside Studios, London, 2002 (Personal Contact), 1.1-23. All subsequent quotations from or references to the play will be to this script and will be referenced parenthetically. Number of the scene and/or the line will be stated.

²⁴⁹ Rhoda Koenig, 'It's Pretty, but is It Shakespeare? *Measure for Measure Malaya*', *Independent*, 11 November 2002, p. 15. See also, Sam Marlowe, 'What's On', 13 September 2002, *Theatre Record*, (22) 2003, p. 1491. Michael Billington, 'Measure for Measure Malaya: Riverside Studios, London', *Guardian*, 8 November 2002, p. 24.

Measure ‘is not about racism or colonialism’ so the ‘production attempts to impose its chosen concept on to Shakespeare’s play without regard for the inherent dramatic sense of the text’.²⁵⁰ Similarly, Ian Johns believed that ‘the play’s heady ethical debate [...] becomes subordinated to Willmott’s anti-colonial theme in a cut text that loses much of the play’s poetry and moral ambiguity’.²⁵¹ It is obvious that, as Kidnie would say, the expectations of two ‘communities of users’, the director and the critics, are different. While Willmott tried to accommodate his spectators, the critics concerned themselves with the delivery of the ‘inherent’ issues or ‘ambiguity’ of Shakespeare’s ‘great play’. Willmott’s interpretation upset critics because it was not compatible with their rigid concept of ‘the work’. It may not be fair to expect an adaptation to preserve Shakespeare’s ‘ambiguity’ or to limit itself to the text’s ‘inherent’ issue.

In fact, Willmott’s text shows that, by casting actors from different races, *Measure for Measure* can be ‘about racism or colonialism’, without making any major changes to the main plot. In interview, the director explains that he relocated the play to Malaya because it ‘was supposedly controlled by a British empire but where it was so far away that the rule had become lax so that would give the Duke context’.²⁵² The connection between colonisation and the ‘inherent’ issue in the ‘original’ text is discernible. Both of them concern government. Willmott maintains that ‘[i]f you didn’t know the play, [the adaptation] made perfect

²⁵⁰ Marlowe, ‘*What’s On*’, 13 September 2002, p. 1491. See also, Koenig, ‘It’s Pretty’, p. 15. Jane Edwards, ‘“*Measure for Measure Malaya*” Riverside Studios’, *Time Out*, 13 November 2002, p. 161.

²⁵¹ Ian Johns, ‘*Measure for Measure Malaya / Presto*’, *Times*, 13 November 2002, p. 21. See also, Billington, ‘*Measure for Measure Malaya*’, p. 24.

²⁵² Willmott, Interview.

sense'.²⁵³ This statement clearly shows the influence of the 'work' on reception. If one does not know about the 'work', one would not have anything to measure this adaptation against and, as a result, it would not be an 'awkward distortion'.

Besides several minor incompatible elements in the script such as the conglomeration of the honest Provost and the boastful Lucio, Willmott's text makes 'perfect sense'.

By making the powerful characters British and the powerless ones native, the injustice of the rulers in Marowitz's version becomes that of the colonists. In the new context, Angelo's war against extramarital sex becomes a measure to control the natives. Although the script does not make any comment on the native Claudio and the white Julietta's interracial affair, one suspects that it may be the reason they are targeted. The anxiety of unauthorised miscegenation is voiced by the British Lucio. He worries that local prostitution may make 'all the world made up of brown and white bastards' (2. 88). As Bawcutt explains, in the 'original' version, 'brown and white bastard' means 'a sweet Spanish wine'.²⁵⁴ However, in the new context, it also means an interracial child, a person who destabilises a dividing line in terms of races between 'white' rulers and colonised Malaysians. In the new context, Isabella's expression, '[t]hat in the captain's but a choleric word, / Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy' (3. 160-161), invites a new interpretation. Here the director seems to make a point that while the offence of the native Claudio is prosecuted, colonial power can protect Angelo. Against Isabella's threat to expose him, the deputy arrogantly declares that '[his] place i' the state, /

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ N. W. Bawcutt, *Measure for Measure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 163.

Will so [Isabella's] accusation overweigh' (5. 149-150).

The characters' new races also reveal the interchangeability of the natives in the colonists' perceptions. Colonists see natives as interchangeable objects rather than individual human beings. For Angelo, the heads of a local pirate and Claudio are the same. Lucio even states that they are the same because of the 'colour' (9. 119). In the new context, the 'colour' not only signifies that Claudio and Ragozine have the same skin colour but also emphasises that they come from the same race. For the deputy, the bodies of the Eurasian Isabella and Mariana have no difference.

With these subtle colonial overtones, *Measure for Measure Malaya* has the potential to offer playgoers a new satisfying experience. However, many critics were disappointed. Michael Billington called it a 'melodrama'.²⁵⁵ Willmott believes that this reaction was due to his 'mistake' in 'cutting the comedies', meaning the comic interchanges.²⁵⁶ In this adaptation, except the Prostitute, all low-life characters are removed. Without them, as Willmott puts it, '[t]he plot was too much concentrated' in the way that one will not find in 'real life'.²⁵⁷ However, when Marowitz cut the low-life characters in 1975, no one deemed the script a melodrama.

Was it the production itself that turned a fairly convincing script into a 'melodrama'? The setting seemed to be a factor in producing the production's

²⁵⁵ Billington, 'Measure for Measure Malaya', p. 24.

²⁵⁶ Willmott, Interview.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

one-dimensionality. Fiona Mountford described it as follows: '[c]eiling fans hang above government offices decorated with white wooden shutters and trailing greenery; a Union Jack droops in the oppressive heat'.²⁵⁸ As Koenig maintained, in general, the setting 'contributes to the flatly realistic air'.²⁵⁹ The actors, according to critics, also failed to make the production powerful. Marlowe stated that since the 'key characters fail to engage, the play suffers emotional heart failure – we do not care whether Isabella yields to Angelo, nor whether Claudio is executed. Which renders the whole enterprise pretty pointless'.²⁶⁰ Lourdes Faberes's Isabella was 'wooden' and 'meek'.²⁶¹ In the script, the Duke is also not very admirable. He typically compares the colonists to 'fathers' (I. 1. 5) and the locals to their 'flock' (I. 1. 27). In the production, Andy de la Tour's Duke was described as 'a decadent High Commissioner [...] with a cynical expression before prowling around disguised in a priest's dog collar'.²⁶² He 'has a great time playing with the nerves and whims of the other characters as a kind of visible *Deus ex Machina*'.²⁶³ For many critics, the Duke's proposal was apparently exploitative.²⁶⁴ According to the director, this was more evident because the actor

²⁵⁸ Fiona Mountford, 'Shakespeare's Melting Morals', *London Evening Standard*, 11 November 2002 <<http://www.standard.co.uk/goingout/theatre/shakespeares-melting-morals-7385444.html>> [accessed 14 July 2013] (para. 1 of 4). See also, Paul B. Cohen, 'Measure for Measure Malaya', *The Stage*, 14 November 2002, p. 14. Kate Bassett, 'From Bard to a Great Deal Worse', *Independent on Sunday*, 10 November 2002, p. 7.

²⁵⁹ Koenig, 'It's Pretty', p. 15.

²⁶⁰ Marlowe, 'What's On', 13 September 2002, p. 1491. See also, Johns, 'Measure for Measure Malaya', p. 21. Bassett, 'Theatre', p. 7.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1491. Billington, 'Measure for Measure Malaya', p. 24. Cohen, 'Measure for Measure Malaya', p. 14. Bassett, 'From Bard', p. 7.

²⁶² Bassett, 'From Bard', p. 7.

²⁶³ Philip Fisher, 'Measure for Measure Malaya', *British Theatre Guide* <<http://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/MMM-rev>> [accessed 14 July 2013] (para. 3 of 3).

²⁶⁴ Johns, 'Measure for Measure Malaya', p. 21, Mountford, 'Shakespeare's Melting Morals', (para. 3 of 4), Edwards, 'Measure for Measure Malaya', p. 161, Billington, 'Measure for Measure Malaya', p. 24.

was not young and ‘not very attractive’.²⁶⁵ Due to poor acting and lack of charisma, the main characters failed to convince playgoers that this adaptation makes sense.

However, many theatregoers seemed to enjoy David Partidge’s Lucio. Willmott maintains that his spectators loved Lucio the most because he was ‘really funny’.²⁶⁶ This was why Philip Fisher called the production ‘a very funny comedy’.²⁶⁷ The critic stated that Partidge’s Lucio ‘dives around the stage causing mayhem much to the amusement of the audience’.²⁶⁸ In this version, apart from his licentiousness, Lucio is admirable and subversive. Since his scene with the Two Gentlemen is cut, Lucio’s first lines are those in the procession of disgrace scene. Therefore, playgoers’ first impression of Lucio would have been that of the helper. His status as the helper is also emphasised by the fact that Willmott redistributes the Provost’s and Escalus’s lines, in which they plead for Claudio, to Lucio. The scenes where Lucio refuses to bail out Pompey and his implication of Isabella and Friar Lodowick’s affair are removed and so he is made more sympathetic. In Willmott’s script, immediately after his return, the Duke orders the Provost to arrest Lucio. Unlike Lucio in the ‘original’ text, even being arrested, *Measure for Measure Malaya*’s Lucio constantly interrupts the Duke:

DUKE VINCENTIO

Know you this woman?

²⁶⁵ Willmott, Interview.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Fisher, ‘*Measure for Measure Malaya*’, (para. 1 of 6).

²⁶⁸ Ibid., ‘*Measure for Measure Malaya*’, (para. 5 of 3).

LUCIO

Carnally, she says.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Sirrah, no more!

(11. 98-100)

It is not surprising that spectators would not have admired the ‘decadent’, ‘not very attractive’ Duke and supported the daring Lucio who presumably voiced their disagreement with the Duke’s machinations. Marowitz’s indignation and his campaign to reinvent *Measure for Measure* into an anti-authoritarian play apparently continue into the twenty-first century.

The four adaptations discussed above demonstrate the openness of the text. Though using the same main plot, by revising and interpolating, the adaptors managed to represent various political agendas which concerned them and people in their times. My study demonstrates the energy that these adaptations released and how it changed the procedure of producing, adapting and receiving *Measure for Measure*. Davenant’s adaptation became Gildon’s model and Gildon’s, in turn, created ‘Shakespeare’ as an authoritative figure assigning meaning to his ‘work’ and, at the same time, reshaped *Measure* into a play about bourgeois morality. Marowitz’s and Willmott’s modern adaptations react against the authority of Shakespeare as the Bard which has become so firmly embedded by the late twentieth century. Marowitz’s reconfiguration of the script created a streamlined

critique of authority that implicitly critiqued the establishment Shakespeare had been appropriated to stand for, while Willmott's adaptation relocated the focus of authority and subversion onto issues of race. The following section brings in new media, those of large and small screen, as a form that involves all those in the production in acts of transcoding a script designed for live performance. This is, I argue, another type of adaptation that adds to our understanding of how practitioners interact with the authority of 'the work'.

***Measure for Measure* on Screen: The Problems of 'Transcoding'**

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, to produce Shakespeare on the screen is to change Shakespeare and his 'work'. Every director must deal with 'the problem of transcoding' the text written for a live performance on stage to a performance captured by cameras. The success or the failure of a screen production depends partly on the director's ability to handle this problem. I take 'transcoding' as a framework to study three adaptations of *Measure for Measure* on screen: Desmond Davis's BBC/Time-Life production (1979), David Thacker's BBC production (1994), and Bob Komar's film (2006).²⁶⁹ Previous studies have done a great job in analysing the problem of transcoding on Davis's and, to a less extent, Thacker's productions.²⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the previous criticisms rarely

²⁶⁹ Desmond Davis, dir., *Measure for Measure* (BBC/Time-Life Production, 1979), David Thacker, dir., *Measure for Measure* (BBC, 1994), Bob Komar, dir., *Measure for Measure* (Press on Features and Lucky Strike, 2006). All subsequent quotations from or references to these productions will be to these editions.

²⁷⁰ Gary F. Waller, 'Decentering the Bard: The BBC-TV Shakespeare and Some Implications for Criticism and Teaching', in *Shakespeare on Television: An Anthology of Essays and Reviews*, ed. by J. C. Bulman and H. R. Coursen (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1988), pp. 18-30. See also, James C. Bulman, 'The BBC Shakespeare and "House Style"', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 35 (1984), 571-581., H. R. Coursen, 'Why *Measure for Measure*?', in *Shakespeare on Television:*

discuss how each screen adaptation affected future productions. In fact, the connection between these adaptations is key to understanding how each film affected the authority of the ‘work’. Furthermore, although Andrea Stevens’s article, the only critical work on Komar’s film, helps highlight the film’s main theme of military abuse, it does not take the problem of ‘transcoding’ into account and, as a result, it fails to figure out the root of this film’s failure in delivering its big theme.²⁷¹

Even in a new medium, the concept of ‘the work’ still plays an important role in Davis’s production, televised on 18 February 1979 as a part of the BBC’s ambitious project to televise all of Shakespeare’s plays. Through this project, Cedric Messina, the project producer, aimed to produce ‘definitive productions [...] in permanent form, accessible to audience throughout the world’.²⁷² In other words, he wanted to create Shakespeare’s ‘work’ in television form. To be the ‘definitive’ work, Davis’s production used an unabridged text because, as Stanley Wells explains, ‘the concept of completeness is felt to entail a degree of permanence’.²⁷³ Furthermore, to create the ‘definitive’ works, Messina ‘instructed his directors to “let the plays speak for themselves” and avoid being ‘experimental’.²⁷⁴ He believed that there was no necessary adjustment in terms of

An Anthology of Essays and Reviews, ed. by J. C. Bulman and H. R. Coursen (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1988), pp. 179-184., Stuart Hampton-Reeves, *Measure for Measure: A Guide to the Text and its Theatrical Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)., Stephen J. Phillips, “‘Adapted for Television’: David Thacker’s *Measure for Measure*”, *Forum of Modern Language Studies*, 35 (1999), 23-33.

²⁷¹ Andrea Stevens, ‘*Measure for Measure* (Review)’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 27 (2009), 261-265.

²⁷² Bulman, ‘The BBC Shakespeare’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 35, p. 572.

²⁷³ Stanley Wells, ‘Television Shakespeare’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 33 (1982), 261-277 (p. 263).

²⁷⁴ Bulman, ‘The BBC Shakespeare’, p. 572.

‘interpretations’.²⁷⁵ In this framework, it is not surprising that Davis decided to start his film with an image of a never-never Vienna (Fig. 2.), dressed his actors in ‘early modern’ costumes and ended the production in a conventional way, meaning with ‘happy’ marriages. All of these stressed the status of his work as a ‘definitive’ classic.

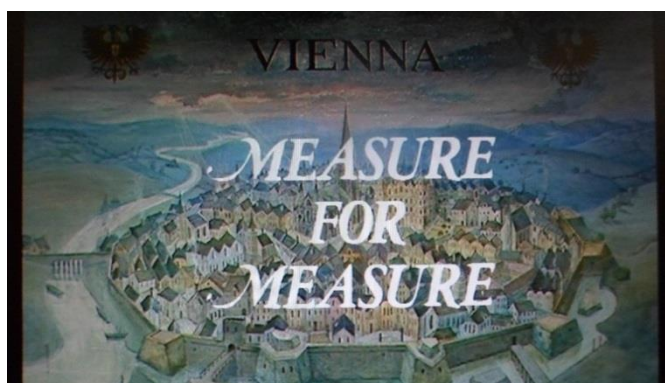


Fig. 2. Introductory image of Vienna in Desmond Davis’s *Measure for Measure* (1979).

This does not mean that Davis made no interpretation of Shakespeare’s ‘work’. In the case of an ambiguous play like *Measure for Measure*, it is impossible to strictly follow Messina’s framework. Davis definitively spoke for the play when he made his Isabella hesitate before accepting the Duke’s proposal.

Apart from venturing an interpretation, Davis also needed to make adjustments to accommodate *Measure for Measure* to ‘the tube’, a media which, according to Gary Waller, has ‘one enormous strength— its intimacy’. For Waller, ‘The primary

²⁷⁵ Anon., ‘Interview: Cedric Messina Discusses the Shakespeare Plays’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 30 (1979), 134-137 (p. 136).

reality of television drama— and here it is somewhat unlike film— is not spectacle, but the intimacy with which it records human emotions'.²⁷⁶ When the camera closes up on a character's face, the audience can easily read his or her feelings. Davis was apparently aware of this strength and he used it with great effect. As Jack Jorgens maintained, Davis's adaptation was 'the hit of the season' and it 'had powerful performances and video images'.²⁷⁷ Viewed through a close shot, the change in Claudio's eyes while delivering 'Has he affections in him' perfectly captured the change of his mind.

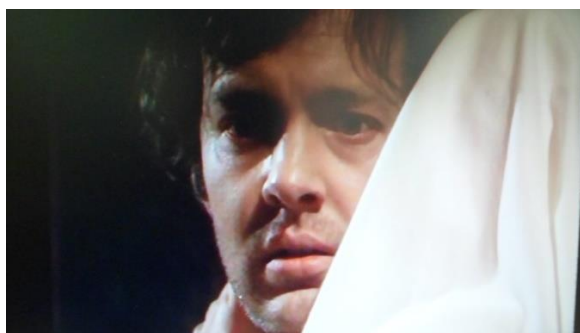


Fig. 3. Christopher Strauli's Claudio at his 'Has he affections in him'.

In the first interview scene, as Waller states, Davis used close-ups which allow us to 'peer, moving unseen like voyeurs, between Angelo and Isabella, conscious of the unperceived closeness of their faces to ours'.²⁷⁸ With a long shot Isabella's plea was not moving. It was overwhelmed by an austere setting. It was the close shot that allowed the viewer to see the tears in her eyes while delivering 'Could great men thunder as Jove himself does' which made it more emotional. Such

²⁷⁶ Waller, 'Decentering', p. 22.

²⁷⁷ Jack Jorgens, *Shakespeare on Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), p. 414.

²⁷⁸ Waller, 'Decentering', p. 23.

closeness is rarely experienced by theatregoers in a theatre with a proscenium stage. The close-ups suggested her gradual domination of the scene.

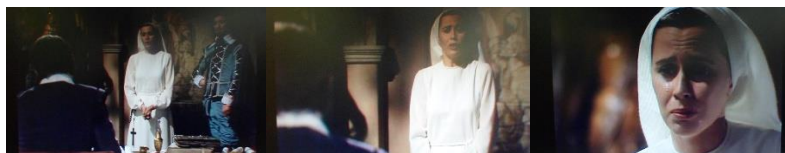


Fig. 4. Kate Nelligan's Isabella during the first interview.

The camera perfectly captured the bewilderment in the face of Pigott-Smith's Angelo at Isabella's 'Go to your bosom' which made him retreat from his office into an interior room. This suggested his abandonment of his duty and resort to his inner desire. Unlike in theatre, the camera could bring the audience into another interior place or, in this case, Angelo's head, stressing the play's psychological overtones.

Davis's camera technique enriched Isabella and Angelo's second meeting: 'To establish that Angelo and Isabella are mirror images of one another, he shot their two interviews with two opposed cameras'.²⁷⁹ In the second meeting, Angelo wore a black robe which contrasted sharply to Isabella's white dress, and, to highlight the concept of 'mirror images', Davis used the reverse shots throughout the meeting.

²⁷⁹ Bulman, 'The BBC Shakespeare', p. 577.



Fig. 5. Shots from the second interview scene.

However, close shots could be double-edged. To capture his actors' feelings, Davis often used the close-ups while they delivered the soliloquies and asides, such as Angelo's 'O cunning enemy' and 'This deed unshapes me quite', and the Duke's 'Now will I write letters to Angelo'. Since the actors did not look at the camera, the viewers were 'physically' close to them but emotionally disconnected.

Spatial restriction is another problematic issue of 'transcoding'. The small screen cannot present many characters in one frame. Thus, as Wells argues, 'scenes in which some characters overlook or overhear others present particular problems on television, that the existence of an extra dimension which in the theatre may seem an enrichment may in television terms seem an untidiness'.²⁸⁰ This problem presented itself in the interruptions of John McEnery's Lucio during the first interview. The confrontation between Isabella and Angelo was engaging but, to include Lucio and his comments, the camera shifted from the debaters to him from time to time and it was distracting. The viewers were forced to look at Lucio whether they wanted to or not.

²⁸⁰ Wells, 'Television Shakespeare', p. 271.

Similarly, spatial restriction of the studio proved to be a problem. To prevent the monastery scene from being too static, Davis made the Duke (Kenneth Colley) and Friar Thomas (Godfrey Jackman) walk around a stage set cloister while having a conversation. Because of the length of the dialogue and the small studio, they needed to walk around it several times to the point that it became fairly ridiculous. Another problematic scene was the procession of disgrace. During this scene, according to Davis, the actors needed to walk around the studio eight times²⁸¹ and, due to the camera's limited frame, the bystanders were left out of the picture. It was not until the end of the scene that the viewers had a chance to see the extras huddled uncomfortably behind the main characters. In this scene, the camera failed to present a wider satisfactory picture of 'the world'.

The absence of the audience is another 'problem of transcoding' Shakespeare to television. It proved to be particularly problematic for the comic characters. Deprived of the audience to address and their reactions, Davis's comic characters were dull. All of Elbow's jokes were dry. He delivered 'the house is a respected house' during a close shot and the audience neither saw the other characters' reactions nor heard laughter.

²⁸¹ Susan Willis, *The BBC Shakespeare Plays: Making the Televised Canon* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 200.



Fig. 6. Ellis Jones's Elbow at his 'the house is a respected house'.

Because of the absence of addressees, Pompey's 'I am as well acquainted here / as I was in our old house of profession' became irrelevant and forgettable. In these scenes, Davis failed to give the viewer the exuberant, witty low-life characters and, consequently, their power to ridicule authority was diminished.



Fig. 7. Frank Middlemass's Pompey at his 'I am as well acquainted here'.

Nevertheless, Davis seemed to realise this drawback so he tried to correct it by adding extras to give a response to other jokes. With the extras, who acted as Mistress Overdone's customers, and their laughter, Pompey's 'A woman' did not fall flat like his other jokes.

To emphasise the Duke's influence over his people, Davis had the crowd react to the Duke's staging of the trial scene. However, the reactions of the studio spectators are different from those of the TV viewers at home. Unlike the TV viewers, the bystanders knew nothing about the Duke's plan. They cheered when Escalus told the Provost to take Friar Lodowick 'to the rack'.



Fig. 8. The crowd cheered Escalus and Lucio to persecute the 'meddling friar'.

Because of gaps between the understandings and reactions of the TV viewers and that of the onstage audiences, as H. R. Coursen maintained, their reactions 'placed [us] at a distance' and 'allowed [us] to judge the Duke's production.'²⁸² In this sense, the TV viewers gained an advantage of judging not only the main event but also the reaction of the crowd. With superior knowledge, the television viewers would have a chance to see how the mentality of the mob could be exploited by someone clever like the Duke. This, in turn, emphasises the manipulative nature of the Duke.

Due to its intimacy, television is very effective in psychologising the character and, thus, the soliloquy which expresses the character's state of mind often works

²⁸² Coursen, 'Why?', p. 183.

well in this medium. Davis made Angelo address his 'Blood, thou art blood' to his image in the mirrors. The reflecting image emphasised the existence of Angelo's lustful self which the precise Angelo despised. This psychological emphasis recreated Shakespeare as a modern writer. However, this technique is not the equivalent of the soliloquy in the theatre. Unlike in the theatre, viewers become voyeurs rather than addressees. They hear Angelo's thoughts but the words do not establish a connection between them and the character. Viewers spied on him with curiosity, not empathy.



Fig. 9. Tim Pigott-Smith's Angelo delivered his soliloquy to the mirror.

Davis also solved the problem of delivering soliloquies by having the actors address their soliloquies to an object or an extra on screen. This technique created a different impression from speaking to spectators in the playhouse. Nelligan's Isabella delivered her 'To whom should I complain' to the Duke's chair. Rather than suggesting that she could not complain to anyone because she feels that there is no authority figure who will listen to her voice, the empty chair in Davis's version suggested that there was someone to whom she could complain and indirectly criticised the Duke's absence. Less effectively, by addressing his

soliloquy, ‘No might nor greatness in mortality’, to a meat seller, the Duke sounded more like a friar offering a religious service to one of his parishioners rather than a governor revealing his political attitude to the community of his subjects.

The scenography of this film was suggestive. The atmospheres of the court, the brothel and the prison were gloomy. They stood for Vienna, ‘a very dark, sinful city where no light got in’.²⁸³ The convent and the monastery, on the other hand, were otherworldly bright. They looked like a sanctuary rather than a force to restore the corrupt society. Between these two extremes was the trial scene which mixed bright and dark visuals, suggesting that the Duke was not a figure of ‘power divine’ but a secular ruler who dramatised his success in restoring a bright world.



Fig. 10. The beginning of the trial scene.

²⁸³ Nicholls, *Measure for Measure*, p. 71.

The platform in the trial scene, which was ‘a reference to the Globe’,²⁸⁴ highlighted the theatrical quality of the scene and called attention to its function as a kind of ‘play within the play’.²⁸⁵ The most theatrical moment was when Colley discarded Friar Lodowick’s cloak, stepped onto the platform and resumed his role as the Duke. Fortunately, Davis ignored Messina’s suggestion for ‘his directors to keep the audience unaware of theatrical conventions, omit as much artifice as possible, and dedicate themselves to the principle that Shakespeare, to be done right, must be done *naturalistically*’.²⁸⁶ The suggestive and theatrical setting made this scene memorable.



Fig. 11. Theatrical stage in the trial scene.

Nevertheless, for Nicholls, ‘finally it was these impressive moments and tasteful designs with which one was left; they were not enough to compensate for the lack of a central interpretation’.²⁸⁷ The major problem of this production seems to be Messina’s attempt to produce Shakespeare’s ‘work’, the complete text, without

²⁸⁴ Willis, *The BBC Shakespeare Plays*, p. 199.

²⁸⁵ Coursen, ‘Why’, p. 183. See also, Nicholls, *Measure for Measure*, p. 72.

²⁸⁶ Bulman, ‘The BBC Shakespeare’, pp. 572-573.

²⁸⁷ Nicholls, *Measure for Measure*, p. 55.

recognising the inevitable task of transcoding the play in television form. In effect, the film did not fully explore the potentials of the new medium to reinvent *Measure for Measure*.

It was in 1994 that the viewer had a chance to see a more decisive adaptation directed by David Thacker. Since it is clear that Thacker did study Davis's film, I argue that Davis's 'straight' production and Messina's reactionary policies encouraged Thacker to take a different approach, to explicitly transgress and transcode Shakespeare's 'work'. Stuart Hampton-Reeves sums up the fundamental difference between Davis's and Thacker's as follows:

Davis brought Shakespeare to television and did what he could to make television accommodate a work originally written for a public theatre. Thacker brought television to Shakespeare and sacrificed key parts of the text to cut Shakespeare to a more modern cloth.²⁸⁸

While Davis was asked to reproduce Shakespeare's 'work' on the screen, Thacker seemed more concerned with making a good television drama. Thus, he overtly adapted and interpreted the text. With the image of the weary Duke watching television, the director established from the very beginning that his production was not faithful to Shakespeare's original intentions. All of his actors appeared in, literally, modern clothing.

²⁸⁸ Hampton-Reeves, *Measure for Measure*, p. 131.

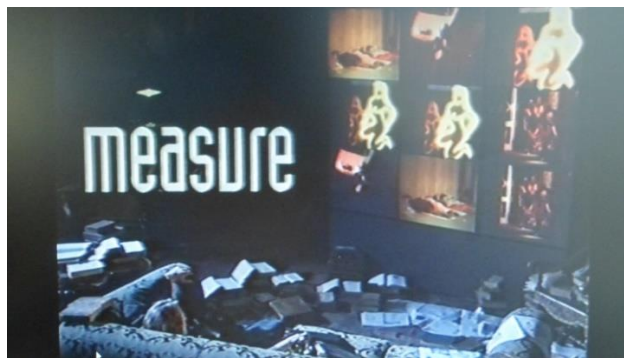


Fig. 12. Scene One in David Thacker's *Measure for Measure* (1994).

Thacker's film, as Marowitz does, openly criticises authoritarianism. For Hampton-Reeves, this was 'a world without consolation'.²⁸⁹ To highlight this point, Thacker interpolated the business of police brutality which one cannot find in the 'original' text. To arrest Claudio, the policemen pressed his head against a table and pulled his hair. He was then tortured in the police station. The prison was gloomy and full of cries. The convicts were pushed around like cattle. The juxtaposition of the images of Isabella's hair dropping on the ground and Claudio thrown on the ground by an officer subtly suggested how inhumanly the prisoners were treated. Nonetheless, I argue that this was still the world where one could find consolation and a sense of surviving warm humanity. The image of Pompey bathing the head of Ragozine, lying on his deathbed in a lonely cell, was very moving. The gentleness that the Provost and Lucio showed to the pregnant Juliet and crying Isabella, respectively, were both touching.

Tom Wilkinson's Duke was more emotionally sensitive than Colley's. This Duke genuinely cared for the people. He was surprised when he knew that Claudio was

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 140.

to be executed and, due to the television's 'intimacy', his eyes revealed that he really sympathised with Juliet. Angelo's corruption also took him by surprise. These experiences changed the weary Duke that the audience found in the first scene. The last scene took place in the Duke's office which was transformed into a studio. In this scene, as Hampton-Reeves describes, the Duke transformed from a passive audience into an active TV director.²⁹⁰ He stated before the cameras, 'And let the public see that your desert speaks loud'. In fact, what the Duke wanted the 'public' to 'see' was his image as the just saviour and merciful punisher. The fact that everyone could see this reality show, including Claudio and the Provost in prison, emphasised the effectiveness of modern media in advertising political agenda and this was the truth that the Duke learned.



Fig. 13. Shots from Thacker's trial scene.

As in Davis's last scene, Thacker's reality show placed the audiences at a distance. It is impossible to tell whether the music which was played when Claudio was unmuffled was part of the Duke's show or Thacker's film. This metatelevision allowed the audiences to remain sceptical to the Duke's show. By ending his adaptation before Isabella had any chance to respond to the Duke's

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 136.

second proposal, the director left it open how she received the Duke's reality show. The 'open silence', in turn, allowed the viewers to judge the Duke's show by themselves and, in a larger picture, to judge Thacker's ability to adapt Shakespeare to a new medium. Thacker was able to raise these issues because he abandoned fidelity to any notion of 'the work' and freely adapted the script to maximise the potential of the new medium of television.

In handling 'the problem of transcoding', Thacker followed the strength of Davis's production and tried to avoid its weaknesses. Lucio's interruptions during the first interview which did not work well in the small scene were removed. The director relocated the procession of disgrace into a police office in which Claudio was ordered to take off his clothes while an officer was inspecting and 'the world' was looking at him. Hence, the sense of Claudio being humiliated was well emphasised. Like Davis, Thacker effectively exploited the camera's 'intimacy'. Thacker's camera captured very well the changing feelings of Juliet Aubrey's Isabella during the trial, from her joy of Claudio's survival, her admiration for the Duke's clever plan to her surprise at his unexpected proposal.

In this production, at some points, the 'intimacy' of television became problematic. As Worthen points out, '[t]elevision's tendency to privatize character imposes stringent limits on the actor, who must seek the means to make the public, expansive, "hectoring" roles of the stage expressive in a medium more conducive to private, underplayed, even tongue-tied parts'.²⁹¹ The facial

²⁹¹ W. B. Worthen, 'The Player's Eye: Shakespeare on Television', *Comparative Drama*, 18 (1984), 193-202 (p. 197).

expressions of Isabella, the wild movements of her hands and her trembling body might have worked on stage but on screen, they made her look ‘as if possessed’ as Hampton-Reeves describes.²⁹²

Thacker, and Bob Komar later, substantially cut the comic scenes, which did not work well in Davis’s production. Thacker and Komar cut Elbow and Froth, and the two Gentlemen’s scene was heavily edited out. In Thacker’s production, the First Gentleman’s ‘Thou art always figuring diseases in me’ was redistributed to Kristin Hewson’s Kate Keepdown. Thus, the outdated joke had become her fight with Lucio which made it more accessible to the modern audiences. Nevertheless, although Thacker’s trial scene was remarkable in many ways, as far as the comic effect was concerned, it did not work well. Without the cheering crowd, Lucio’s interruptions were less amusing and Lucio in Komar’s film was no funnier. All he did was to make a contact with Isabella and threw in several irrelevant jokes to the last scene.

Like Davis, Thacker had difficulty in dealing with soliloquies and asides. For Stephen Phillips, the director ‘fails to find a suitable technique for incorporating asides and soliloquies into his chosen medium’.²⁹³ Angelo whispered his ‘She speaks’ while Isabella was right behind his back so it was illogical and unsatisfactory. However, Thacker did try various techniques to solve the problem and some of them worked. Escalus’s aside, ‘Well, heaven forgive him, and forgive us all’, was directly addressed to Angelo as a criticism. Angelo’s ‘When I would

²⁹² Hampton-Reeves, *Measure for Measure*, p. 138.

²⁹³ Phillips, ‘Adapted for Television’, p. 28.

pray and think' and the Duke's 'He who the sword of heaven will bear', speaking aloud without looking at the camera or at a particular addressee, were shortened. Isabella delivered her 'To whom should I complain' after she was thrown on the ground. Her prostrate position suggested her status as an underdog comparing to Angelo's 'place i' the state'.

Giving a comment on the BBC Shakespeare series, John Wilders states that 'the worst fault of the television Shakespeare is that they tended to be cautious and rather too safe and unambitious and lacking in originality'.²⁹⁴ Fortunately, Thacker did not make the same mistake. His production is 'original' because he is not 'cautious' about the text. Thacker proves that it is productive to adapt Shakespeare to fit a new medium, or as Hampton-Reeves would put it, a 'modern cloth'.

However, having actors put on 'modern cloth' does not automatically improve Shakespeare, and ignoring authority of the 'work' does not necessarily bring artistic success. I argue that although Bob Komar recognised the need to violate the 'work', because of poor acting and 'problem of transcoding', his film, released in 2006, failed to deliver its theme concerning the abuse of military force. As the director failed to establish his authority in mastering the new medium, his work lost its critical edge. From the very beginning, Komar showed that, unlike the BBC/Time-Life production, he had no intention to merely reproduce the complete text on screen. Instead of a never-never Vienna, he changed the setting to the

²⁹⁴ Ace G. Pilkington, *Screening Shakespeare from Richard II to Henry V* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), p. 27.

modern British Army.

Komar used the new context to explore problems concerning the British military force in his time. As Andre Stevens believed, it is a criticism of the Army:

It is impossible not to see the film as commenting on Britain's involvement in the Iraq war. Like their American counterparts, in the early 2000s the British army faced a series of scandals when evidence of soldiers' gross misconduct – in particular, the alleged sexual and physical abuse of prisoners- began to circulate in the media.²⁹⁵

A number of adaptations were made to highlight this issue. Komar started the film with the collages of 'soldiers' gross misconduct' (Fig. 14.). Angelo's strict rule was brutal. The bruised, half-naked Claudio was punished by splashing water on to his face while other soldiers stood by, smiling with self-satisfaction. He was then beaten by a prison guard. The soldiers outside Angelo's office also did nothing, though they knew that Angelo was sexually abusing Isabella. It is likely that many viewers would have agreed with Stevens that 'the film suggested [...] the consequences of "don't ask, don't tell"'.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ Stevens, *Measure for Measure*, pp. 261-262.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 263.



Fig. 14. Beginning shots in Bob Komar's *Measure for Measure* (2006).

In Komar's version, the Duke is much less authoritative than either Davenant's merciful Duke or Marowitz's abusive Duke. Simmons Phillips's Duke was a little man who hid himself behind his sunglasses. Unlike in the BBC productions, the Duke's trial scene became his own disaster. In it, as Stevens described, 'we see an increasingly frantic Duke unable to orchestrate people or events as he wishes, including the moment of his own undisguising'. He 'is unmasked when Angelo recognizes the ring he's wearing'.²⁹⁷ In fact, it was Isabella who first saw the ring which he wore when he 'returned'. The camera clearly revealed her open disgust for him. Her disapproval severely undermined the effect of his revelation. She blatantly refused his proposals and left him amid the judging eyes of his subordinates. While Isabella was walking away, the director replayed the music that he used in the beginning. In this film, at the end, the Duke achieved nothing. The film questioned bureaucratic authority and, at the same time, nicely reflected the failure of New Labour.

Nonetheless, this film has many serious flaws which undermine its critical power. The actors often speak so quickly and without any stresses that sometimes their speeches are monotonous and hard to follow. For example, both the Duke's 'We have the strict statutes' and the Provost's reading of Angelo's command are

²⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 265.

unclear. One wonders whether it has something to do with the fact that ‘it was designed for a student audience and heavily cut to keep the narrative pace “punchy”’.²⁹⁸ Ironically, the quick but unclear speeches might have discouraged ‘the student audience’, who the director wished to entertain, to watch through to the end.

Shouting ruined the encounters between Daniel Roberts’s Angelo and Josephine Rogers’s Isabella. The impression of their first meeting was of two people threatening each other. At times, Rogers’s anger undermined her own speeches. One finds it hard to think of mercy when the speaker herself rants.



Fig. 15. Rogers’s Isabella at ‘Could great men thunder’.

Their second interview was also a disappointment. Roberts and Rogers were wooden and, again, their ‘anger’ became a problem. Since they became angry so early when the scene reached its climax they could not become angrier and, as a result, the climax became anti-climactic. Rogers’s ‘Little honour, to be much believed’ was as loud and furious as her other speeches. This was also true to

²⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 261.

Roberts's Angelo. During his attempt to rape her, his 'Who will believe thee, Isabel?' was not significantly different from his other speeches. Therefore, the 'raping' scene was physically violent but verbally forgettable.

Komar, as Davis and Thacker, had trouble in dealing with the absence of the audience. For the soliloquies and asides, Komar applied a number of techniques: removing, shortening, creating an addressee and using a voice-over. However, due to the poor deliveries, they were not satisfactory. Komar often failed to produce satisfactory, 'intimate' scenes, though he used close-ups extensively. The extensive use of close-ups seems to be due to the director's plan to sell the film on DVD:

For those directors making Shakespeare films, movies which are ultimately likely to attain their largest audience over time on the small screen, an even more important change has taken place. Since long shorts on TV have little visual impact, directors typically frame their shots of actors more tightly, so that we now find many more close shots or ultra-close shots on the big screen than in the older days of cinema.²⁹⁹

The fact that Komar's use of close-ups failed was partly because of the poor acting and amateurish mistakes. Rogers's Isabella rarely varied her angry face. Angelo's exaggerating facial expressions, especially in the last scene, made the production on the verge of being melodramatic. A close-up on Claudio during

²⁹⁹ Maurice Hindle, *Studying Shakespeare on Film* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 16.

‘Death is a fearful thing’ lost its power because ‘his facial bruises were represented with oddly lurid pinks and reds’.³⁰⁰



Fig. 16. Simon Brandon's Claudio at 'Death is a fearful thing'.

Because of Komar's failure to solve the problem concerning the camera's limited frame, close shots were the cause of several drawbacks in the trial scene. Due to the anger, the close-ups and the 'intimate' atmosphere, Komar's trial scene became much like The Jeremy Kyle Show in which furious people huddled in a small space and shouted at one another. In effect, the trial became a personal, domestic argument which did not go along with a national issue, the abuse in the Army that Komar wanted to explore.



Fig. 17. Komar's trial scene.

³⁰⁰ Stevens, 'Measure for Measure', p. 262.

When the Duke appeared in disguise, the screen was so crowded. To capture the Duke's reaction to Isabella's 'most bounteous, sir', the camera shot from her back. Therefore, the viewer could not see her facial expressions while delivering this key line.



Fig. 18. Shot at Isabella's 'Most bounteous, sir'.

Komar's modernisation of the text allowed him to explore a contemporary problem but, because of the poor acting and 'the problem of transcoding', it is unlikely that many young audiences would enjoy it.

Through the films discussed in this chapter, one can see a trend of Shakespearean adaptations on screen. Due to 'unambitious', unsatisfactory productions like Davis's film which attempted to reproduce Shakespeare's 'work', now television and film directors seem to recognise the need to 'transgress' the 'work', remove unworkable elements and apply television techniques. This results in a shorter script and a shorter running time. Davis's running time is approximately 150 minutes, Thacker's 120 and Komar's 70. The directors also seemed to be more willing to adapt the text to explore contemporary issues such as the power of modern media and abuse of military force. Like the stage adaptations, these films

suggested a new way to represent *Measure for Measure*. The idea of the Duke watching his subjects through the modern media, used in Thacker's film, would be reapplied in 2004 by Simon McBurney who surrounded his stage with CCTVs to create the image of the 21st century surveillance society. As Kidnie suggests, Shakesperian adaptation is a seemingly 'unproblematic' term, consisting of various kinds of works which can be very different from one another.³⁰¹ This chapter has opened up the seemingly 'unproblematic' grouping of adaptations to highlight the different political and aesthetic agendas behind each. In the Restoration, Davenant adapted Shakespeare's dated plays to advocate the politics of the newly established monarchy, while Gildon used his adaptation to address the issues of bourgeois morality which might have pleased spectators from the middle class who became more influential as paying customers. The modern adaptations of Marowitz and Willmott appropriated the cultural authority of Shakespeare and used it to question politically and racially privileged class. The television adaptation of Davis used the full text in order to present his film as a 'definitive' work, whereas Thacker and Komar deliberately transgressed the text in order to show how modern media could make 'Shakespeare' more accessible for modern audiences. However, there is an aspect that all of these adaptations share. These adaptations are self-evident of the inevitability and the benefits of reinventing any cultural heritage, and the power of adaptations to reinvigorate Shakespeare's play. Gildon, Marowitz and Thacker pointed out the possibility of reading Shakespeare as a morality play, a political play and a play about power of modern media.

³⁰¹ Kidnie, pp. 2-3.

Chapter 3

Performance Spaces of Elizabethan Revival and Touring Productions

In this chapter, I return to and develop the argument in Chapter 1 that performance spaces had a strong impact on spectators' reactions and their attitudes towards the genre and issues of authority and morality in the play. I reconsider these arguments with reference to 'Elizabethan Revivals' and modern touring productions of *Measure for Measure*, dividing the discussion into two sections. I use the term 'performance space' here to refer to 'the divided yet nevertheless unitary space in which the two constitutive groups (performers and spectators) meet and work together to create the performance experience'.³⁰² Unlike in Chapter 1, because I have more evidence, this chapter focuses not only on the physical features of playing venues but also on the arrangements of performance spaces and scenography in each production. Unlike most reviews and studies of these productions, which merely describe what the performance spaces looked like, I demonstrate the profound effects that the spaces had on making meanings in the productions and the relation between the audiences and the actors.

The Elizabethan revival productions in this chapter by William Poel (founder of the Elizabethan Stage Society) and John Dove (contemporary stage director) cover a large historical timespan (1893-2004). The touring productions by Tyrone Guthrie (English director who later helped establish the Stratford Festival of Canada); Jonathan Miller (director and producer of *BBC Television Shakespeare*), Trevor

³⁰² Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 26.

Nunn (former Artistic Director of the RSC) and Jonathan Petherbridge (Artistic Director of London Bubble Theatre Company), were staged across a period of 40 years. Nevertheless all these productions are linked together by the importance that both the directors and the audiences were likely to invest in the spaces. Many spectators presumably attended Poel's productions or visited the New Globe not to see a particular play but to see the 'authentic' performance spaces.

What kind of performance space did the 'Elizabethan Revival' practitioners want to produce? Cary Mazer defines '[t]he Elizabethan Revival movement' as a 'calling for a return to the stagecraft of Shakespeare for the staging of his plays'.³⁰³ However, it is useful to keep in mind that the 'Elizabethan' practitioners adopted various practices. Nugent Monck reconstructed an 'Elizabethan' playhouse in Norwich which has neither luxurious scenery nor thrust whereas, at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada, Tyrone Guthrie used a thrust stage where 'the public [...] encircles the platform'.³⁰⁴ Naturally, these various performance spaces have different impacts on the relationship between stage, audience and actor. In the first section of this chapter, I argue that the performance spaces in Poel's and John Dove's productions in 1893 and 2004 had an impact on spectators' perceptions of the play's genre. In the second section, I argue that, for the touring productions of *Measure for Measure* from 1966 to 2002, performance spaces were a means to negotiate the cultural authority of the companies in relation to local spectators.

³⁰³ Cary M. Mazer, *Shakespeare Refashioned: Elizabethan Plays on Edwardian Stages* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1981), p. 50.

³⁰⁴ Joe Falocco, *Reimagining Shakespeare's Playhouse: Early Modern Staging Conventions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), p. 98.

Poel's Neo-Elizabethan Spaces

Poel, perhaps the most influential pioneer of 'Elizabethanism', devoted his entire adult life to reviving 'original' theatrical practices in opposition to the domination of pictorialism in the staging of plays in the late Victorian era. He was founder of the Elizabethan Stage Society whose manifesto explained:

The Elizabethan Stage Society was founded with the object of reviving the masterpieces of the Elizabethan drama upon the stage for which they were written, so as to represent them [...] with only those stage appliances and accessories which were usually employed during the Elizabethan period.³⁰⁵

For his *Measure for Measure*, Poel created a set to be 'as near a resemblance of the old Fortune Playhouse as was possible'.³⁰⁶ He did not revive the 'Elizabethan' theatrical conventions merely for the sake of historical accuracy. For Poel, the stage conventions of his time did not do justice to Shakespeare's plays:

Shakespeare's dramatic art, which is unique of its kind, cannot to-day be properly understood or appreciated on the stage for the following reason: (1) Because editors print the plays as if they were five-act dramas, which they are not; (2) because, actors, in their stage versions, mutilate the 'fable', and interpolate pictorial effects where none are intended; (3) because, also, actors use a faulty and artificial elocution, unsuited to the

³⁰⁵ William Poel, *Shakespeare in the Theatre* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1913), pp. 203-204.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

poet's verse.³⁰⁷

Henry Irving's *Much Ado About Nothing*, staged at the Lyceum in 1882, is a case in point to understand what Poel wanted to reform. In this production, Irving staged the marriage scene between Claudio and Hero 'in a grand Sicilian chapel'. In performance, the text was 'rearranged' into 'thirteen scenes' and it took fifteen minutes 'to put the cathedral in place'.³⁰⁸

Poel, who saw himself as 'a modernist',³⁰⁹ believed that retrieving the Elizabethan stage and practices was a way to solve the problems of time-consuming changes of sets and textual rearrangements. He intended to do that by advocating the use of non-elaborate setting. A book produced by the Elizabethan Stage Society argues: '[i]n Shakespeare's time the presentation of a play on the open platform stage meant to the Elizabethans an actual event; it was not make-believe but reality,' it was not pictorial; it did not appeal to 'the eye but the ear, and thence to the mind'.³¹⁰ Even though it is impossible to identify the actual writer of this book, this statement reflects Poel's disapproval of 'pictorial effects'. Poel maintained that a Shakespearian play 'was designed for a small and intimate playhouse' and needed 'an intimate performance'.³¹¹ This view probably guided Poel to choose the small Royalty Theatre to mount *Measure for Measure* in

³⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 59-60.

³⁰⁸ Richard Schoch, 'Henry Irving', in *Great Shakespeareans: Macready, Booth, Irving and Terry*, ed. by Richard Schoch (London: Continuum, 2011), pp. 127-172 (pp. 143-144).

³⁰⁹ Robert Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival* (London: William Heinemann, 1954), p. 90.

³¹⁰ Anon., *Notes on Some of William Poel's Stage Productions* (London: A.W. Patching, 1933?). This book is in the National Art Library, London, PN 2598. P645. It has no page number.

³¹¹ J. L. Styan, *The Shakespeare Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 63.

London.³¹² Secondly, to counter the time-consuming changes of settings, Poel advocated the continuity of performance which was ignored by directors in his time. Claris Glick asserts that '[o]f the greatest importance to [Poel's] productions was his theory that [...] Shakespeare's plays [...] should be acted straight through without intervals'.³¹³ Lastly, Poel maintained that we need to 'recover the secret of Elizabethan speech' to 'have a clear idea of how a play by Shakespeare was meant to sound'.³¹⁴ Poel wanted to give his audiences, to borrow Marowitz's phrase, 'the Shakespearean Experience'. He wanted to offer them a 'new' experience that the pictorial production could not give. Whether, in practice, he managed to do that is debatable but his attempt and his theories certainly had a strong impact on his productions, including his staging of *Measure for Measure* in November 1893 at the Royalty Theatre and on 11 April 1908 at the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester.

Poel did not actually give his audiences an 'original' version of *Measure for Measure*. The fact that some Victorians disapproved of this play was shown by '[t]he vicar [who] protested when Poel's *Measure for Measure* was announced [in Stratford]'.³¹⁵ As Robert Speaight asserts, Poel was 'a high-minded Victorian, and he deluded himself that Shakespeare [...] was high-minded in the same way'.³¹⁶ Thus, 'he cut anything bawdy which offended his Victorian sensibility'.³¹⁷ As a result, in his prompt book, the words 'bawd', 'fornication', 'child', 'body' and

³¹² Phyllis Hartnoll and Peter Found, *The Concise Oxford Companion to the Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 266.

³¹³ Claris Glick, 'William Poel: His Theories and Influence', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 15 (1964), 15-25 (p. 21).

³¹⁴ Speaight, *William Poel*, p. 61.

³¹⁵ Brian Gibbons, *Measure for Measure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 60.

³¹⁶ Speaight, *William Poel*, p. 100.

³¹⁷ Styan, *The Shakespeare Revolution*, p. 48.

‘hot house’ are removed.³¹⁸ In addition, Poel obscured the profession of Mistress Overdone by cutting Lucio’s lines about the venereal diseases he has ‘purchased [...] under her roof’ (I. 2. 44). He named Kate Keepdown as ‘Mistress Kate’ and obscured the profession of Pompey by calling him ‘a rascal’ instead of ‘a bawd’ (III. 1. 286). For the spectators who were familiar with Shakespeare’s text, these alterations might have unintentionally reflected the hypocrisy of their society, where, as Lynda Nead maintains, the existence of brothels was common knowledge though obscured by conventions of propriety. Nead asserts that ‘prostitutes were so [i.e. very] visible on the streets’ in London.³¹⁹

Poel did his best to suppress carnal energy on his stage. In drama, even though the bodies of actors needed to be exposed on the stage, their words could be contained. This seems to be the reason Poel erased the word ‘body’ from his script. For example, Angelo’s ‘By yielding up thy body’ (II. 4. 165) becomes ‘By yielding up thy self’; Mariana’s ‘this is the body / That took away the match from Isabel’ (V. 1. 209-210) becomes ‘this is the woman’; Isabella’s reference to Angelo pursuing her ‘chaste body’ (V. 1. 98) becomes her ‘good name’. In effect, the focus has been shifted from the sexually active ‘body’ to an asexual abstraction. This was not a lust-ridden Vienna but a seemingly sexually restrained city. It is clear that Poel tried to make social issues in the play less controversial

³¹⁸ William Poel, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford, 1908 (National Art Library, London) S.688-1982. The prompt book for the performance in 1893 contains no stage directions and the alterations are the same with this prompt book. Thus, any references of removals, alterations and stage directions will be cited from the prompt book in 1908.

³¹⁹ Lynda Nead, ‘Meaning of the Prostitute’, in *The Victorian Studies Readers*, ed. by Kelley Boyd and Rohan McWilliam (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 347-359 (p. 347).

and, perhaps because of this, no critic discussed the thematic issues presented in the production in length.

It was the ‘Elizabethan’ performance space, scenography and ‘original’ practices that really engaged critics’ attention. As one journalist maintained: ‘the audience, interested in the experiment, readily excused faults, and received the performance as a whole with favour’.³²⁰ A leaflet for the 1893 production advertised: the Society ‘proposed to test the Dramatic Effect of Acting an Elizabethan Play under Conditions the Play was written to fulfil’.³²¹ In this production, ‘the interior of the Royalty Theatre, Soho, was converted into as near a resemblance of the old Fortune Playhouse as was possible’.³²² The replica was set behind the proscenium on the original stage, which was ‘Flanked with Groups of Spectators in the Costume of that day’.³²³



Fig. 19. William Poel’s *Measure for Measure*, Royalty Theatre, 1893.

³²⁰ Anon., ‘Royalty Theatre’, *Morning Post*, 13 November 1893, p. 3.

³²¹ Marion O’Connor, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Stage Society* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1987), p. 27.

³²² Poel, *Shakespeare*, p. 205.

³²³ Anon., ‘Multiple Advertisements and Notices’, *Standard*, 7 October 1893, p. 4.

I argue that Poel's 'Elizabethan' space was very influential for future productions and his scenography contributed to the view of *Measure for Measure* as a 'problem play'. The 'Elizabethan' audiences seemed to be Poel's way to make his production 'real', a dramatic event witnessed by 'real' audiences. The bodies of 'Elizabethan' spectators surrounding the actors might also have been designed to establish 'an intimate performance'. It was, as Joe Falocco puts it, 'the quest [...] to redefine the relationship between public and performers'.³²⁴ Nonetheless, for many critics, the experiment was 'unsatisfactory'.³²⁵ For Arthur Harris, the 'Elizabethan' spectators 'served only to draw attention from the action of the play'.³²⁶ Furthermore, as Dennis Kennedy maintains, Poel 'rarely managed to achieve the actor-audience rapport of Shakespeare's time. [...] As with the gallants on stage, what Poel recreated was not Elizabethan intimacy but an illusion of intimacy'.³²⁷ Unlike the gallants in Shakespeare's day, Poel's extras were a part of the representation, hence, rather than functioning as a metatheatrical bridge between actor and audience, they appear to have strengthened the illusion of 'Shakespeare's stage' and, in effect, strengthened the line between the stage and his spectators.

³²⁴ Falocco, *Reimagining*, p. 8.

³²⁵ Anon., 'Royalty Theatre', *Standard*, 10 November 1893, p. 3. See also, Edward M. Moore, 'William Poel', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 23 (1972), 21-36 (p. 26).

³²⁶ Arthur J. Harris, 'William Poel's Elizabethan Stage: The First Experiment', *Theatre Notebook*, 17 (1963), 111-114 (p. 111).

³²⁷ Dennis Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 41-42.

The ‘Elizabethan’ spectators greatly intensified the uncomfortable atmosphere of the production. While the Society offered *Measure for Measure* as a comedy, according to *The Standard*, the supernumeraries looked ‘melancholy’ and ‘stolid’.³²⁸ It made the production ‘cramped and uncomfortable’.³²⁹ I wonder whether it was ‘the archaeological exactitude of its Elizabethan costuming’³³⁰ that generated their lifeless reaction. In these costumes, the extras might have felt responsible for taking the role of the Bard’s original audience, a responsibility which, ironically, prevented them from adopting the festive, holiday spirit of early modern playgoing. Victorian habits of Shakespearean playgoing would have discouraged them from actively engaging with the performance. Their ‘melancholy’ might have also urged some spectators to question whether the trial scene led to a real happy ending, so the extras may have unintentionally contributed to the categorisation of *Measure for Measure* as a ‘problem’ play, coined by Frederick Boas three years after this production.

In this production, Poel managed to contribute an important spatial rearrangement which, according to J. L. Styan, was ‘the biggest step to date in seeking the non-illusory experience’.³³¹ Poel’s use of apron stage ‘built out some 5ft past the proscenium, over the Royalty’s orchestra pit’,³³² a practice repeated in 1908,³³³ was a radical change even though the production did not create a rapport with

³²⁸ Anon., ‘Royalty Theatre’, *Standard*, p. 3.

³²⁹ Kennedy, *Looking*, p. 39.

³³⁰ O’Connor, *William Poel*, p. 32.

³³¹ Styan, *The Shakespeare Revolution*, p. 57.

³³² O’Connor, *William Poel*, p. 29.

³³³ Viv Gardner, ‘No Flirting with Philistinism: Shakespearean Production at Miss Horniman’s Gaiety Theatre’, *New Theatre Quarterly*, 14 (1998), 220-233 (p. 225).

spectators.³³⁴ Edward Moore asserts that ‘[e]ven if the audience still had to look through the keyhole of the proscenium arch, there was a greater intimacy possible between actor and audience’.³³⁵ In this sense, this production anticipated the trend of playing Shakespeare in an intimate space, an approach that many productions from the second half of the twentieth century used to encourage interaction and empower the spectators.

In contrast to a pictorial production like Irving’s *Much Ado*, Poel’s ran continuously with only one interval. Styan states that ‘the permanent stage set [...] revealed the musical structure of the play’ and ‘the original rhythmical continuity of scene upon scene’.³³⁶ Poel’s use of curtains also helped make the performance run smoothly. Richard Foulkes notes that the 1908 production ‘proceeded fluently without interruptions for scene shifting’.³³⁷ According to the prompt book, the curtains close, leaving Isabella in front to deliver ‘To whom should I complain?’, presumably while the stage crew set the prison scene. The Society staged an almost full text but its running time was merely ‘two hours’ and ‘five or ten minutes’.³³⁸ For the audiences in 1893 who were familiar with the time-consuming changes of settings, the continuity of performance would have been a new experience that helped them follow the ‘rhythm’ of the story. In time, this approach became a tradition that theatregoers today can still see at the Swan

³³⁴ C. E. Montague, ‘William Poel’s “Elizabethan” Production’, in *Measure for Measure*, ed. by George L. Geckle (London: Athlone, 2001), pp. 316-318 (p. 317).

³³⁵ Moore, ‘William Poel’, p. 36.

³³⁶ Styan, *The Shakespeare Revolution*, p. 48.

³³⁷ Richard Foulkes, “‘Measure Still for Measure’: Miss Horniman and Mr. Poel at the Gaiety’, *Theatre Quarterly*, 10 (1981), 43-46 (p. 45).

³³⁸ William Archer, ‘Back to Shakespeare?’, in *Eyewitnesses of Shakespeare: First Hand Accounts of Performances 1590-1890*, ed. by Gamini Salgado (London: Sussex University Press, 1975), pp. 218-220 (p. 219).

and the New Globe.

Nevertheless, critics in 1893 were not impressed with the acting. They stated that the production ‘was performed mostly by amateurs’.³³⁹ As Viv Gardner notes, Poel preferred having inexperienced actors whom he could train to exercise ‘the tones’.³⁴⁰ Poel made his actors speak ‘more swiftly’ as the early modern players did.³⁴¹ However, as B. L. Joseph states, ‘[r]hetorical theory insists on natural and lively acting; it insists that emotion must be truthfully felt and naturally expressed’.³⁴² Sadly, in the production at the Royalty Theatre, the inexperienced actors ‘(quite improperly) recited their verses so fast as to be totally unintelligible’ and ‘several of the performers simply improvised at will when their memory failed them, and not one paid any great attention to the metre’.³⁴³ As a result, a reviewer regarded the whole production as ‘a grievous artistic error’ and maintained that the attending audience was ‘sparse’.³⁴⁴

When Poel revived *Measure for Measure* fifteen years later at the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester, the ‘[r]eactions in the Press’ were more favourable, according to Rex Pogson: ‘Even those who disliked the Poel method thought the experiment worth trying’.³⁴⁵ *The Manchester Courier* reported that ‘hundreds were turned away

³³⁹ Anon., ‘Music and Drama’, *Glasgow Herald*, 13 November 1893. See also, Anon., ‘Shakespeare under Shakespearian Conditions’, *Times*, 11 November 1893, p. 4. Harris, ‘William Poel’, p. 111.

³⁴⁰ Gardner, ‘No’, p. 224.

³⁴¹ B. L. Joseph, *Elizabethan Acting* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 71.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁴³ Archer, ‘Back’, pp. 219-220.

³⁴⁴ Anon., ‘Royalty Theatre’, *Standard*, p. 3.

³⁴⁵ Rex Pogson, *Miss Horniman and the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester* (London: Rockliff, 1952), pp. 45-46. See also, Sheila Gooddie, *Annie Horniman: A Pioneer in the Theatre* (London: Methuen, 1990), p. 116. Gardner, ‘No’, p. 221.

from the pit' on the first night, and 'at the close of a brilliant performance, the large audience [...] rose and applauded actors and management to the echo'.³⁴⁶

Several factors made this production more successful than the previous one.

Arthur Harris described Poel's 'early modern' approaches for this production as follows:

[S]till successfully employing his extended platform; and, with the elimination of the distracting details of his first experiment and the skilled acting of Sir Lewis Casson, Sara Allgood, Basil Dean, and B. Iden Payne, he gave a production that deserves a place in the annals of theatrical history.³⁴⁷

The large size of the audience and their eagerness to see Poel's innovations probably helped create a festive, vibrant atmosphere which was lacking in 1893. For the production in Manchester, Poel did not place the 'distracting' 'Elizabethan' spectators on the stage. Thus, 'the illusion of intimacy' was reduced and their 'melancholy' did not spoil the mood of the whole production. Moreover, the actors were more experienced professionals. Sheila Gooddie stated that Sara Allgood's 'beauty and passion made her Isabella a great success'.³⁴⁸ After Manchester, this production travelled to Stratford-upon-Avon. Here critics also 'gave very favourable notices' of it.³⁴⁹ W. B. Yeats saw the 'performance [...] and

³⁴⁶ Gardner, 'No', p. 223.

³⁴⁷ Harris, 'William Poel', p. 114.

³⁴⁸ Gooddie, *Annie Horniman*, p. 118.

³⁴⁹ Pogson, *Miss Horniman*, p. 47. See also, Gooddie, *Annie Horniman*, p. 118.

had been impressed by the high standard of acting'.³⁵⁰ Even Barry Jackson, who aimed to modernise Shakespeare, was impressed with its 'directness, simplicity and verve', and the absence of 'long intervals'.³⁵¹

Poel's 'Elizabethan' space in 1893 created an uncomfortable atmosphere which fit for the 'problem play'. It also reoriented the playgoers into recognising the importance of continuity and intimacy in creating a festive atmosphere for the comedy. He did not only encourage using the 'Elizabethan' practices but also the reconstruction of an 'Elizabethan' playhouse. According to Speaight, '[i]n 1900 [Poel] proposed to present a petition to the [London County Council], asking for the grant of a site on which a replica of the old Globe Playhouse should be erected'.³⁵² This project did not materialise and the audience had to wait until 1997 before the first replica of Shakespeare's Globe was established in London.

Measure for Measure at the 'Authentic' New Globe

The New Globe has been controversial since Sam Wanamaker, its founder, announced his plan to construct 'as faithful a copy as scholarship and theatre historians could get it of Shakespeare's original theatre' on 'the original location'.³⁵³ Andrew Gurr, an advisor of the project, maintains that '[t]he principle

³⁵⁰ Gooddie, *Annie Horniman* p. 128.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

³⁵² Speaight, *William Poel*, p. 210.

³⁵³ Andrew Gurr, 'Shakespeare's Globe: A History of Reconstructions and Some Reasons for Trying', in *Shakespeare's Globe Rebuilt*, ed. by J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 27-47 (pp. 33, 46).

that ruled all his choices [...] was “authenticity”³⁵⁴ Wanamaker believed the ‘authentic’ theatre ‘will absorb the spirit of the original theatre’.³⁵⁵ Nevertheless, many critics remain sceptical about the possibility of it being historically accurate. Falocco believes ‘[n]o matter how hard it tries, [...] the New Globe will never be truly “authentic”’.³⁵⁶ If ‘the spirit of the original theatre’ was created by Shakespeare’s colleagues and early modern playgoers, all of that is irrecoverably buried in the past. Considering this fact, the New Globe’s goal seems unachievable.

However, whether it revives an ‘original’ spirit or not, the New Globe achieves the effects Poel wanted. Mark Rylance, the first Artistic Director, maintains that, in the New Globe, ‘[t]he lack of intervals and time-consuming scenery changes evoked respect for the rhythms of the drama’.³⁵⁷ He also asserts that, in it, sound is very important.³⁵⁸ As for Poel, the New Globe reconstructs the theatre not only to revive the past but also to revise the present. Gurr believes that the ‘original theatre’ would create a ‘new and disturbing Shakespeare’.³⁵⁹ Paradoxically, the New Globe promises to give a ‘new’ experience by being ‘old’.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

³⁵⁵ Graham Holderness, ‘Sam Wanamaker’, in *The Shakespeare Myth*, ed. by Graham Holderness (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 16-23 (p. 23).

³⁵⁶ Falocco, *Reimagining*, pp. 148-149. See also, Catherine Silverstone, ‘Shakespeare Live: Reproducing Shakespeare at the “New” Globe Theatre’, *Textual Practice*, 19 (2005), 31-50 (p. 42).

³⁵⁷ Mark Rylance, ‘Playing the Globe: Artistic Policy and Practice’, in *Shakespeare’s Globe Rebuilt*, ed. by J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 169-176 (p. 172).

³⁵⁸ Mark Rylance, ‘Rehearsal Notes 1, 20 April 2004’ < <http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/education/discovery-space/adopt-an-actor/archive/vincentio-played-by-mark-rylance/rehearsal-notes-1> > [accessed 27 October 2013] (para. 9 of 18).

³⁵⁹ Gurr, ‘Shakespeare’s Globe’, p. 32.

Regarding its target audience, the New Globe is not conservative. As Rylance states, ‘a great many of [the audience] were taking a chance on their first Shakespeare play, because of the building’.³⁶⁰ The Globe Theatre Audience Survey in 2006 ‘indicate[d] that 43 per cent of those attending the Theatre are first-time visitors’.³⁶¹ This was the intention of Wanamaker who believed that ‘[t]he Globe will make the theatre (not only Shakespeare) once again popular, public and accessible’.³⁶² What the New Globe aims to offer is not merely an ‘authentic’ Shakespeare but also a ‘popular’ and ‘disturbing’ Shakespeare.

I argue that Wanamaker’s aims and the performance space in this theatre greatly contributed to making John Dove’s *Measure for Measure* in 2004, a successful, funny comedy.³⁶³ In opposition to the now familiar assumption that *Measure for Measure* is a problem play, Rylance, who played the Duke, saw it as ‘definitely a comedy’.³⁶⁴ He believes that the Duke takes the role of ‘the emotional support charity [...] to the young people’.³⁶⁵ Similarly, for Dove, the Duke has learned ‘[t]o commit to people, to commit to the spirit of humanity and not the letter of the law’ and, in the end, every character ‘is able to overcome [a] particular

³⁶⁰ Mark Rylance, ‘Research, Materials, Craft: Principles of Performance at Shakespeare’s Globe’, in *Shakespeare’s Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 103-114 (p. 113).

³⁶¹ Christie Carson, ‘Democratising the Audience?’, in *Shakespeare’s Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 115-126 (pp. 122-123).

³⁶² Holderness, ‘Sam Wanamaker’, p. 21.

³⁶³ John Dove, Performance Recording, *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare’s Globe, London, 2004 (Shakespeare’s Globe Library and Archives). Any references to the performance are based on this recording.

³⁶⁴ Mark Rylance, ‘Rehearsal Notes 2, 11 May 2004’ <<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/education/discovery-space/adopt-an-actor/archive/vincentio-played-by-mark-rylance/rehearsal-notes-2>> [accessed 27 October 2013] (para. 16 of 19).

³⁶⁵ John Dove, Programme, *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare’s Globe, London, 2004 (Shakespeare’s Globe Library and Archives, London).

weakness'.³⁶⁶ Thus, in this production, the Duke was portrayed as a well-meaning ruler and the ending was, to some extent, beneficial to everyone. To solve Isabella's 'open silence', at the end, in the spirit of the comedy, the Duke asked Sophie Thomson's Isabella to dance with him and she agreed. Siân Williams, a choreographer at the New Globe, states that '[t]he jig at the close of the play [...] is a "dance of love", expressive of the union between the key characters' and the 'explosive romp' and its 'festive celebration' suggest that 'a sense of balance is restored to the community'.³⁶⁷ During the dance, Isabella embraced Claudio and the Duke shook hands with Angelo. Thus, the production ended in a state of reconciliation and harmony. This seems to be the reason Dobson defined it as 'the most harmless and cheerful rendering of this play [he] can well imagine'.³⁶⁸

Many reviewers criticised this interpretation. Mountford stated that the 'tight, complex problem of a play, all shifting morals and public privation concealing private passion, is not ideally suited to the vagaries of an alfresco production'.³⁶⁹

One may or may not agree with Mountford according to what one expects from Shakespeare's 'work'. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that this production was successful in giving the reviewers, if not a 'new' version of *Measure for Measure*, at least a 'disturbing' sense of losing the 'old' Shakespeare.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Michael Dobson, 'Shakespeare Performances in England', *Shakespeare Survey*, 58 (2005), 268-297 (p. 277).

³⁶⁹ Fiona Mountford, 'Measure for Measure, Shakespeare's Globe', *Evening Standard*, 1 July 2004, p. 33. See also, Alastair Macaulay, 'Financial Times', 7 July 2004, *Theatre Record*, 24 (2004), p. 846. Maxwell Cooter, 'Measure for Measure (Globe)', *What's on Stage*, 1 July 2004 <http://www.whatsonstage.com/west-end-theatre/reviews/07-2004/measure-for-measure-globe_25006.html> [accessed 25 October 2013] (para. 7 of 7).

The New Globe's performance space was an indispensable factor in creating the sense of festivity and lively community in Dove's production. To understand this, it is helpful to use Benedict Anderson's definition of a nation: 'It is an imagined political community – and imaged as both inherently limited and sovereign [...] it is imagined as a community, because [...] the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship'.³⁷⁰ In many ways, the New Globe is a nation in miniature. Its territory is 'limited' in the new 'Wooden O'. Preiss's argument about the feeling of being an insider fostered by '[t]he shape of the [early modern] playhouse and the experience of entering it' is applicable to the experiences of spectators at the New Globe. The new 'Wooden O', as Preiss would put it, fostered the spectators' 'illusion' that they were witnessing 'an inner life' of Shakespeare's theatre.³⁷¹ The comradeship in this 'imagined community' is created not by the spectators' nationality but shared privilege and mission: to witness the 'original' show together. In Dove's production, when the Duke 'returned' to Vienna, he went downstage and shook hands with the groundlings. In this moment, the audiences became a part of the acting as they became his subjects. In effect, they were part of the Duke's 'nation'.

As Anderson explains, the 'imagined community' is the place of 'sovereignty' and, in the case of the New Globe, every spectator democratically shares it.

Falocco explains this issue very neatly:

³⁷⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006), pp. 6-7.

³⁷¹ Richard Preiss, 'Interiority', in *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. by Henry S. Turner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 47-70 (p.60).

Part of the Globe's success is due to the power and responsibility it grants its audience. The proximity and visibility of playgoers connects them to the performers in a way not possible in traditional venues; and the absence of lighting effects and elaborate sets means that no production can proceed without the consent and participation of the public.³⁷²

In other words, the New Globe 'offer[s] a means of control to both actors and audience in a shared space'.³⁷³ Tim Carroll vividly describes how, at this theatre, '[t]he audience can be the character's best friend in the bar listening to a dirty joke, or it can be the stern grandfather passing judgement on the character's behaviour'.³⁷⁴ Spectators in Dove's production acted like juries on the trials of the characters, though in a more unrestrained manner. For the performance that I saw, many theatregoers often applauded the Duke but hissed at Angelo.

In the New Globe, characters' authority is defined by their positions in the performance space. In his rehearsal note, Alex Hassell, who played Claudio, explains about the spots on the Globe's stage and their differing focus of empowerment:

There's 'the King's spot' [...] just underneath the sign of the zodiac in the heavens. [...] This is the most powerful place to stand because [...] you're

³⁷² Falocco, *Reimagining*, pp. 139-140.

³⁷³ Pauline Kiernan, *Staging Shakespeare at the New Globe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 6.

³⁷⁴ Tim Carroll, 'Practising Behaviour to His Own Shadow', in *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 37-44 (p. 40).

surrounded by stage and very much become part of the circle of the globe.
[...]. If I come further downstage, nearer the audience, then I'm in a more
vulnerable position.³⁷⁵

While the spot at the centre of the stage was powerful, according to Pauline Kiernan, 'the corners of the stage, on the extreme edges outside the pillars were "hot" spots. [...] Here, the actor is in touch with the audience in direct and tangible ways'.³⁷⁶

To apply Weimann's concepts, the centre of the New Globe stage is the *locus* representing the 'self-contained space' whereas the corner is the *platea* presenting the space for the actor and the audience to interact. The *locus* is the authority spot while the *platea* is the people spot. The *locus* is traditionally powerful but if an actor at the *platea* gains playgoers' support, he or she will be able challenge the authority of the *locus*.



Fig. 20. *Platea* (red) and *Locus* (purple) on the New Globe stage.

³⁷⁵ Alex Hassell, 'Rehearsal Notes 4, 11 May 2004' <<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/education/discovery-space/adopt-an-actor/archive/claudio-played-by-alex-hassell/rehearsal-notes-4>> [accessed 28 October 2013] (para. 8 of 14).

³⁷⁶ Kiernan, *Staging*, p. 63.

This was the case in the first interview between Brennan's Angelo and Thomson's Isabella. In it, Isabella, who began in the *platea*, could overpower Angelo and drive him out of the *locus*. At first, Isabella stood in the corner of the stage while Angelo sat at a table under the 'heavens'. Being in these positions, playgoers probably found it easier to identify with Isabella who was closer to them both socially and spatially, than with the deputy. Isabella represented the common citizen of this 'community' whereas Angelo represented the authority which governed it from the stage. Thus, when her 'He which is the top of judgement' drove Angelo from his authoritarian position to the corner of the stage, this signified her success in undermining the *locus*. Under God, Angelo was merely another ordinary subject.

It was at the corner that Angelo delivered his 'She speaks' and, in the second meeting, his 'Plainly conceive I love you'. These were moments when his *locus* authority was subverted and he was 'vulnerable'. Being on this spot facilitated his contact with the audience and made it easier for playgoers to sympathise with him. Thus, Angelo was more pardonable which, in turn, strengthened Dove's intention to end this comedy happily. The existence of a *platea* is not exclusive to the New Globe but operates on any stage with a similar playful atmosphere and the effects could be practised in any intimate theatre.

What makes the New Globe unique is its claim of 'authenticity' which alters playgoers' sense of community. In other theatres, one is part of an 'imagined

community' while, in the New Globe, one imagines an 'authentic community' which actually existed in the past. This element offered a 'new' experience for the spectators of Dove's production. According to Rylance, the spectators always favour original practices since they give 'an unusual experience'.³⁷⁷ The process of 'surrogation' developed by Joseph Roach is useful in explaining this 'unusual experience'. In *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*, Roach states that '[i]n the life of a community, the process of surrogation [...] continues as actual or perceived vacancies occur in the network of relations that constitutes the social fabric'.³⁷⁸ The reconstructed Globe promises to fill the gap created by the disappearance of the early modern Globe. It offers itself as a means through which the audience can temporarily be in the past. The unique feature is that, being there, spectators are themselves, while standing in for an audience from the past at the same time. For the spectators who attended Dove's production, the sense of being substitutes might have been particularly pertinent, given that the play they were witnessing was full of substitutions. Observing a rehearsal in the New Globe, William Caldwell maintains that he 'had a sense, not of being watched, but of watching *with* or on behalf of some vague, absent audience, one that was ambiguously identified for [him] with both "contemporary" and "early modern" spectators'.³⁷⁹ This double consciousness can also occur with the actor. Hassell states that he had become 'a Shakespearean man [...] by putting on the [authentic]

³⁷⁷ Rylance, 'Research', p. 104.

³⁷⁸ Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 2.

³⁷⁹ William Casey Caldwell, 'The Comic Structure of the Globe: History, Direct Address, and the Representation of Laughter in a Reconstructed Playhouse', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 31 (2013), 375-403 (p.383).

clothes'.³⁸⁰ In this condition, when Claudio delivered his 'why dost thou show me thus to the world' while looking around the New Globe, the playgoers might have felt as if they were in a version of Shakespeare's 'world'.

In addition to an 'authentic' theatre and costumes, Dove used music to create Shakespeare's 'world'. According to David Lindley, in Shakespeare's time, '[m]usic, above all, was the art which put the human spirits in contact with the world-spirit'.³⁸¹ In this sense, as Claire van Kampen explains, 'music in the present Globe has [...] to be part of a consensus of "creating an Elizabethan world" for its audience'.³⁸² Dove started his show with an early modern band in early modern costumes and instruments, playing the music which early modern audiences used to listen to. In effect, some spectators would have been seduced into thinking they were experiencing what had happened four hundred years ago.

The double consciousness not only creates 'the unusual experience' but also urges the spectators to react in ways their modern consciousness does not normally allow. Rylance draws attention to '[t]he wild spirit [that] the building seemed to inspire in the audience'.³⁸³ For example, in Dove's production, Paul Taylor reported that 'Brennan's insufficiently intense Angelo was hissed for his dastardly sexual blackmail of Isabella. At the National, it would be impossible to do the

³⁸⁰ Alex Hassell, 'Rehearsal Notes 5, 14 May 2004' <<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/education/discovery-space/adopt-an-actor/archive/claudio-played-by-alex-hassell/rehearsal-notes-5>> [accessed 28 October 2013] (para. 8 of 11).

³⁸¹ David Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), pp. 32-33.

³⁸² Claire Van Kampen, 'Music and Aural Texture at Shakespeare's Globe', in *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 79-89 (p. 80).

³⁸³ Rylance, 'Research', p. 106.

same to Paul Rhys because his transfixingly complex perversion takes the breath away'.³⁸⁴ One suspects that it was not merely the different acting style that urged spectators to act in this 'unusual' way. It is hard to image the twenty-first-century spectators in the dark auditorium suddenly hiss a character because of his or her immoral behaviour, except in a pantomime. At this moment, theatregoers at the New Globe seemed to act as they thought the 'absent' audience in 'the imagined community' might have done.

The New Globe and the double consciousness played an important role in making Dove's production funny. As Henri Bergson explains, we laugh at 'what is alien to our living personality'.³⁸⁵ Since being in the 'authentic' Globe among the 'early modern' characters is 'alien' to our experience and 'surrogating' spectators in the past is 'alien' to our modern personality, spectators laugh readily. Caldwell describes his laughter in this way:

I laughed at the sight of a fellow audience member, his reactions made funnier by his body in its modern clothes being set off against the image of the Globe's architecture, but as I laughed I also had a sense of laughing 'on behalf' of a spectator from the past, in a sense anticipating how this picture would have looked to *them* from my position in *their* yard.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁴ Paul Taylor, 'More Pantomime than Perversion; *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare's Globe, London', *Independent*, 8 July 2004, p. 9.

³⁸⁵ Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans. by Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (London: Macmillan, 1911), p. 33.

³⁸⁶ Caldwell, 'The Comic Structure', p. 384.

The strange juxtaposition between the ‘early modern’ theatre and the modern dress playgoers causes laughter.

In order to successfully exploit this comical element, it is necessary to create a performance space which facilitates an active interaction between spectators and actors. The Globe succeeds in creating this space and it exploits the potential intimacy of the space to the full by using direct address:

In the Globe, our role as surrogate is pointed out as comic by direct address because of the denouement or reveal it enacts of a sort of historical cross-dressing we are engaged in, when the image of ‘us’ in our modern clothes is pinned against the image of the interior of the Globe.³⁸⁷

It is noteworthy to bear in mind that this ‘image’ is more observable in the outdoor theatre. Thus, it is likely that direct address tends to be more effective in the reconstructed Globe than in dark auditoriums.

In *Measure for Measure*, direct address urged a lot of laughs. The theatre was full of laughter when the Duke delivered his ‘If any woman wronged by this lewd fellow’ while pointing at the audience. At that moment, the playgoers became ‘any woman’. The spectators were amused not only by the chance to be ‘any woman’ in the ‘imagined community’ but also by the idea that the twenty-first century people could be ‘wronged’ by an early modern character. In other words, a direct

³⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 395.

address helps highlight spectators' double consciousness of both the twenty-first-century actor and early modern character, and their awareness of themselves as both modern subjects and as representatives of the absent, early modern spectators. It is the juxtaposition and amalgamation of those two alien identities that creates additional amusement.

At the New Globe, laughter expresses playgoers' power. Many critics and, to some extent, actors in Dove's production found it 'unusual' that spectators laughed a lot. Robert Tanitch stated that this production 'appreciates that the core Globe audience wants a traditional and light-hearted production with lots of bawdy laughs'.³⁸⁸ Although his assumption that the New Globe spectators only appreciate a 'light-hearted production' is debatable, Tanitch is right to point out that they are eager to be entertained and to laugh. Thomson, who played Isabella, noted that spectators 'were very attentive and laughed much more than [she] expected' and that 'the whole cast was surprised at some of the bits they laughed at and other bits which they didn't find funny'.³⁸⁹ Since Macaulay considers *Measure for Measure* as an 'extraordinarily troubling dark comedy', he was greatly upset by these unexpected laughs:

³⁸⁸ Robert Tanitch, 'Rylance Gets Laughs at the Globe', *Morning Star*, 8 July 2004, p. 9. See also, Liz Hoggard, 'How to Nab a Nun, *Measure for Measure*', *Observer*, 4 July 2004, p. 12.

³⁸⁹ Sophie Thomson, 'Production Notes 1, 6 July 2004' <<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/education/discovery-space/adopt-an-actor/archive/isabella-played-by-sophie-thompson/production-notes-1>> [accessed 28 October 2013] (para. 4 of 10). See also, Alex Hassell, 'Production Notes 1, 6 July 2004' <<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/education/discovery-space/adopt-an-actor/archive/claudio-played-by-alex-hassell/production-notes-1>> [accessed 28 October 2013] (para. 3 of 12).

As usual, the Globe audience clutches at anything it can find to laugh at. The standees guffawed when Angelo tried to rape Isabella and the people seated near me thought that all the Duke's efforts to save prisoners from capital punishment were screamingly funny.³⁹⁰

Tatspaugh felt that '[t]he comic reading compromised any attempt to address the issues seriously'.³⁹¹ These critics seemed to assume that laughing was the opposite of being thoughtful and serious.

In fact, when one thinks 'seriously' about laughing, one discovers that it is anything but simplistic. Bergson states that '[o]ur laughter is always the laughter of a group'.³⁹² Looking from this perspective, it is not surprising that, whereas the tourists 'guffawed', the critics might have remained grim-faced, because while the other spectators were there to enjoy themselves, the critics were working 'seriously'. In other words, the professional theatre critics were not a part of the tourist group whose laughter they found alien and annoying. It is also possible that critics were upset because of the 'horizontal comradeship' of this space. In it, their 'academic' hegemony is largely ignored by 'first-time visitors'. If the mission of the New Globe's 'imagined community' of actors and spectators is to present and enjoy Shakespeare, how to do that is the most politically important decision and laughing is a way to take a vote. In Rylance's words, playogers' laughter reflects

³⁹⁰ Macaulay, 'Financial Times', 7 July 2004, p. 846.

³⁹¹ Patricia Tatspaugh, 'Shakespeare Onstage in England, 2004-2005', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 56 (2005), 448-478 (p. 474). See also, Sam Marlowe, 'Measure for Measure, Shakespeare's Globe', *Times*, 2 July 2004, p. 23.

³⁹² Bergson, *Laughter*, p. 6.

the desire to ‘bring [Shakespeare] down’.³⁹³ He asserts that the New Globe has introduced ‘the physical into the theatre, dropping it down into a physical, visceral level, which is very offensive to some critics and theatre people’.³⁹⁴ Bergson believes that ‘[a]ny incident is comic that calls our attention to the physical in a person, when it is the moral side that is concerned’.³⁹⁵ Since it is funny when something usually connected with an abstract idea becomes physical, spectators find it funny when the Bard, the ‘greatest poetic artist’ of all time, is presented in terms which are physical, familiar and earthbound. The biggest laugh of Dove’s production happened when the Duke hit Claudio’s head with a Bible to prevent him from approaching Isabella. The sudden change from a poetic debate to a ‘physical’ act and the misapplication of the Holy Book and Shakespeare’s text were unexpected and comical.

Subversive laughter also informed the scene with Friar Thomas, as the spectators laughed heartily when the Duke was thrust into a laundry basket. This reaction exemplified the multi-layered nature of comedy in the New Globe. For some, the moment undoubtedly recalled a joke in Shakespeare’s *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. For many, the surprise of seeing a human being in a non-human space, and of having a figure of ‘power divine’ confined in a physical, domestic environment of dirty linen provoked laughter. At this moment, Rylance’s Duke was not a character from high art but a Falstaff-like, earthbound man. The spectators also laughed when the Duke stepped on a thorn and needed to limp

³⁹³ Rylance, ‘Research’, p. 113.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

³⁹⁵ Bergson, *Laughter*, pp. 50-51.

around the stage. For Robert Hewison, this ‘self-indulgent business’ turned a serious play into ‘a feeble farce’.³⁹⁶ It is true that Dove’s determination to interpolate comic business might have made the play less ‘serious’ but it also helped remind the viewer of the ‘physical’ aspect of the character and, in turn, demystified the ‘power divine’. Demystification of Shakespeare is definitely a political act and one should think twice before dismissing it as merely something frivolous.

It is reasonable to state that Dove’s ‘original practices’ production continued what Poel initiated: the continuity of acting and the absence of elaborate sceneries, but it outdid Poel’s production in creating a performance space in which spectators and actors could actively interact. By encouraging double consciousness through direct addresses and ‘original practices’, the spectators were immensely entertained. This was a daring attempt to redeem *Measure for Measure*’s reputation as a comedy which everyone could enjoy. There is no doubt that Poel and Dove thought hard about how to use their performance spaces and the possible influences of the spaces on their productions. In the next section, I continue the exploration of the influence of performance space but this time I focus my study on the touring productions of *Measure for Measure* and how directors dealt with the challenge of having to perform in unfamiliar spaces.

³⁹⁶ Robert Hewison, ‘*Sunday Times*’, 11 July 2004, *Theatre Record*, 24 (2004), p. 847.

Modern Touring Productions: Arranging Unfamiliar Spaces

In this section, I argue that the directors of touring productions use performance spaces as a means to exert their companies' cultural authority or to devolve authority to those local spectators. This section discusses three large-scale and one small-scale touring productions of *Measure for Measure* in the twentieth century and beyond, namely, Tyrone Guthrie's for the Bristol Old Vic (1966-1967), Jonathan Miller's for the National Theatre (1973-1974), Trevor Nunn's for the Royal Shakespeare Company (1991-1992) and Jonathan Petherbridge's for the National Theatre (2002). These productions are studied together for the first time and, by doing that, I am able to point out the differences that each type of performance space had on spectators' interpretations of the issue of authority in the play.

Since all the productions discussed in this section were by theatre companies which had permanent houses, a question arises: why did they go on tour? Modern touring productions aim to fulfil two goals: to increase cultural awareness of the audience and to publicise the company. As in Shakespeare's time, touring was a means to make cultural products available for people who lived far from a big theatre or hesitate to attend it. The Report of Enquiry in 1986 maintains that '[t]ouring is often the only way certain areas of the country can experience large-scale live theatre productions'.³⁹⁷ This is why Martyn Sergent, a tour manager of the RSC, regards it as 'an educational process for [the audience] and for [the

³⁹⁷ Kenneth Cork, *Theatre is for All: Report of the Enquiry into Professional Theatre in England, 1986* (Arts Council, 1986), p. 22.

company]’.³⁹⁸ It is an opportunity for the playing company and the spectators to experience an unfamiliar culture. Apart from this, according to Philip Kotler and Joanne Scheff, ‘[a] tour enables the organization [...] to establish a regional, national, or international reputation and raise the organization’s public profile’.³⁹⁹ In the case of a publicly-funded company, as Colin Chambers explains, touring is a way to secure ‘[p]ublic legitimacy’.⁴⁰⁰ It is a statement of its commitment to the people whose taxes subsidise the company’s work. To advertise its cultural authority, a large playing company tends to offer a large-scale touring production when this can be budgeted for.

Tyrone Guthrie’s *Measure for Measure*, which was a part of the Bristol Old Vic’s celebration of its 200th anniversary, clearly was the company’s showcase of their cultural authority. The play was performed at the Theatre Royal in Bristol from 2 March 1966 for four weeks, before travelling abroad. According to *The Times*, ‘[t]he tour, which will last for 20 weeks, will open in Boston on January 16, and will include visits to New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington as well as a journey to Canada’.⁴⁰¹ This was the Bristol Old Vic’s first visit to America. After that, they visited Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁸ Steven Adler, *Rough Magic: Making Theatre at the Royal Shakespeare Company* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001), p. 117.

³⁹⁹ Philip Kotler and Joanne Scheff, *Standing Room Only: Strategies for Marketing the Performing Arts* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1997), p. 251.

⁴⁰⁰ Colin Chambers, *Inside the Royal Shakespeare Company* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.174.

⁴⁰¹ Anon., ‘Three Shakespeare Plays’, *Times*, 22 October 1966, p. 6.

⁴⁰² Anon., ‘Bristol Old Vic to Visit Holland’, *Times*, 2 January 1967, p. 16.

Under such conditions, the Bristol Old Vic's main concern was evidently to raise their international profile. Consequently, the company seemed determined to make their productions as grand as possible. The touring repertory consisted of three productions, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Measure for Measure* with the large cast of thirty two actors and, for *Measure for Measure*, a 'crowd' on the stage in the trial scene.⁴⁰³ Guthrie tried to impress the spectators with the 'costumes [...] designed after early seventeenth-century models'.⁴⁰⁴ One wonders whether Guthrie used these 'early modern' costumes as a means to advertise the 'authenticity' of his English company to spectators in the ex-colony.

Guthrie probably felt that, to present a grand production, he needed a large set. According to the programme, 'the Bristol Old Vic is installing a specially designed revolving stage in the theatres across the countries'. This set is '[e]ighteen feet in diameter' and it is 'topped with a turret'.⁴⁰⁵ I argue that the turret was Guthrie's means to display the authority of his 'authentic' production. The set also stressed the authority of the Duke who, according to Guthrie, was 'a figure of Almighty God, a stern and crafty father'.⁴⁰⁶ In this production, the turret represented both Guthrie and the Duke's authority. Henri Lefebvre's theorisation of 'verticality' helps shed some light on the importance of the turret:

⁴⁰³ Tyrone Guthrie, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Touring Production, 1966-1967 (Theatre Collection, Bristol) BOV/PS/000048. The subsequent quotations or references to the prompt book are referred to this material.

⁴⁰⁴ Mildred C. Kuner, 'The New York Shakespeare Festival, 1967', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 18 (1967), 411-415 (p. 411).

⁴⁰⁵ Tyrone Guthrie, Programme, *Measure for Measure*, Touring Production, 1966-1977 (Theatre Collection, Bristol) PR/004037/3.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

The arrogant verticality [of] state buildings introduces [...] a phallographic element into the visual real; the purposes of this display, of this need to impress, is to convey an impression of authority to each spectator.

Verticality and great height have ever been the spatial expression of potentially violent power.⁴⁰⁷

Thus, the turret displayed the authority of the Bristol Old Vic and stood for the ‘phallographic’ authority of the Duke in the Vienna hierarchy at the same time. According to the prompt book, from the beginning, the Duke’s highest status in this hierarchical society is established by his position on the set. In his first entrance, the Duke ‘steps to [a] landing’ which leads to the tower and addresses to Escalus who is below him. In addition, he delivers his soliloquies, ‘No might nor greatness in mortality’ and ‘He who the sword of heaven will bear’ from the rostrum. Hence, in the theatre, his position would have been higher than the audiences in the stalls and, in effect, rather than being confidants, such spectators were turned into his subjects or his disciples. The didactic tone of these soliloquies might have reminded some spectators of the Sermon on the Mount, ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect’ (Matthew 5:48).

However, as Foucault states, ‘Where there is power there is resistance’.⁴⁰⁸ While the Duke often stands on the landing, the comic characters repeatedly challenge

⁴⁰⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 98.

⁴⁰⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1978), p. 95.

the vertical structure of the stage. The production photographs portray Pompey, Mistress Overdone and the whores sitting or reclining on the landing.



Fig. 21. Mistress Overdone and her colleagues on the landing,
Tyrone Guthrie's *Measure for Measure*, 1966.

The low-life characters' horizontal postures suggest their defiance to authority. They contrast sharply with the picture of John Franklyn Robbins's Duke-in-disguise standing on the landing and raising his hand vertically to the sky in the trial scene.



Fig. 22. Guthrie's trial scene.

Lucio and two Gentlemen also challenge the vertical structure by entering the scene from UR and, instead of stepping down the stairs, they jump from the rostrum to the floor. Nevertheless, the comic characters are too powerless to change society. In performance, they were overpowered by the large set and, in New York, ‘got lost on [City Center’s] big stage’.⁴⁰⁹

The size of this theatre also caused the problem ‘over the projection of voice’:

[The] company took half the evening to orient itself on City Center’s vast stage at the opening Monday. [...]. The cast stumbled [...] over the projection of voice and personality in the large auditorium. [...] At intermission, someone must have told them that the delicacy of their Theatre Royal style wasn’t working in City Center. At any event, the second half communicated better.⁴¹⁰

This account clearly illustrates the influence of performance space on acting and receiving. The size of the performance space forced the actors to change their delivery style. It is likely that, unlike at the New Globe, the ‘big stage’ and Guthrie’s grand set made it difficult for playgoers and the actor to directly interact. For the New York theatregoers, the turret was distant and, at the end, it was still intact. This might have reminded them of the stability of social hierarchy ruled by the ‘stern and crafty father’.

⁴⁰⁹ Norman Nadel, ‘’Tis a Good “Measure”’, *World Journal Tribune*, 15 Feb 1967, PR/004037/3/.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

Despite the director's intention, the space and the indeterminacy of the text allowed theatregoers to read Robbins's Duke negatively. The monolithic set suggested the Duke's unyielding authoritarianism and the company's colonial arrogance in showing off their financial power and cultural capital as producers of the Bard. The social context may also have promoted subversive readings. This tour began in January 1967 when public protests against America's involvement in the Vietnam War led to '[a] remarkable change in sentiment', while, '[i]n early 1965', only one 'hundred people gathered on the Boston Common to voice their indignation', in 1969, the number rose to '100,000' and '[p]erhaps 2 million people across the nation gathered' in 'antiwar meeting[s]'.⁴¹¹ In this 'sentiment', a 'stern and crafty' authority figure like the Duke would have been perceived as suspicious by many.

In 1973, Jonathan Miller brought another large-scale production of *Measure for Measure* on tour. Although it had a smaller cast than that of Guthrie, fifteen was presumably big enough to maintain the National Theatre's cultural authority. Its opening night was on 15 October 1973 at the Harlow Playhouse in Harlow before travelling to venues nationally, including the Nuffield Theatre Studio, Lancaster University, the Windsor Hall in Blackburn and the Old Vic.⁴¹² The production was a part of the National Theatre's Mobile Productions which presented 'a series of productions flexible enough to be staged at' various places.⁴¹³

⁴¹¹ Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1980), p 477.

⁴¹² Jonathan Miller, Typescript Programme Notes, *Measure for Measure*, Touring Production, 1973-1974 (National Theatre Archive, London) RNT/PP/1/1/279.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

The most influential feature of the production was its set. According to the typescript programme, ‘THIS SET HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE VARYING STAGE WIDTH’.⁴¹⁴ Its size could be reduced by removing flats, doors and/or pillars.⁴¹⁵ The characters were in modern business-like costumes and all the scenes took place in the Duke’s office, filled with office furniture and a prison gate on one side. The following items can be found in the properties list: table, chairs, hat stand, framed photograph, bin, and office supplies.⁴¹⁶ Thus, the atmosphere of the production was non-illusional and domestic. This realistic office was a means with which to familiarise Shakespeare for audiences in the suburbs across the country.

The indoor set helped emphasise the impressions of Angelo and Isabella as individuals who kept something secretly ‘inside’. As Billington maintained, the set ‘instantly evokes an arid, inward-looking bureaucracy. And one is quickly reminded this is the only Shakespearean play in which none of the main characters has a normal sex life’.⁴¹⁷ The office set compromised the Dukes’ authority. The ‘arid’, familiar office made it easier for Barge’s Isabella to refuse the Duke’s proposal. Unlike Robbins’s Duke who could stage himself on the rostrum like Jesus on the Mount, MacNaughtan’s Duke stayed on the same

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ See also, Irving Wardle, ‘*Measure for Measure*’, *Times*, 24 November 1973, p. 11.

⁴¹⁶ Jonathan Miller, Bible, *Measure for Measure*, Touring Production, 1973-1974 (National Theatre Archive, London) RNT/SM/1/75.

⁴¹⁷ Michael Billington, ‘Miller’s *Measure*’, *Guardian*, 12 November 1973, RNT/PR/4/1/72.

ground with other characters in the office. He was an ordinary man whom an ordinary woman could turn down if she so wished.

Eric Shorter complained that ‘the emotional theatricality of the writing’ was ‘suppressed for the sake of [...] naturalism’.⁴¹⁸ In the same way, a critic in *The Observer* stated that the set ‘is yet too detailed to be accepted as neutral territory; outdoor scenes look very odd there and the final dispensation of justice “without the city gate” is so cramped as to be meaningless’.⁴¹⁹ The Duke’s office created the space in which the characters were contained and from which they would not be able to actively interact with spectators. As Benedict Nightingale insisted: ‘The quirky topography and unsettled chronology combine with the increasingly pronounced improbabilities of the plot to make the spectator feel more and more disorientated’.⁴²⁰ The ‘quirky’ nature of this production was emphasised by the fact that the outdoor scenes were out of place with the office set. Although the decision to use a set with flexible size was apt for travelling and its ‘inward-looking’ feature well emphasised Angelo and Isabella’s states of mind, its ‘self-contained’ space was counterproductive. Unlike at the New Globe, Miller’s performance space failed to facilitate an interaction between the spectators and the actors.

⁴¹⁸ Eric Shorter, ‘Shakespeare’s “Measure” is Miller’s’, *Daily Telegraph*, 24 November 1973, Press Reviews (National Theatre Archive, London) RNT/PR/4/1/72. The newspaper cuttings in this collection contain no page number and/or date.

⁴¹⁹ Anon., *Observer*, 20 January 1974, Press Reviews (National Theatre Archive, London) RNT/PR/4/1/72.

⁴²⁰ Benedict Nightingale, ‘Vienna and Its Discontents’, *New Statesman*, 30 November 1973, p. 832.

Trevor Nunn's *Measure for Measure* opened on 5 September 1991 at the Other Place in Stratford, alongside *The Blue Angel*, a stage adaptation of Heinrich Mann's novel. They were then 'scheduled to visit some 16 towns and villages'.⁴²¹ In Cornwall, Jo Beddoes, the tour organiser, said: 'We are here because we want to promote ourselves in the region'.⁴²² To display the company's cultural authority, Nunn made a number of choices to assure spectators that these travelling productions were of the best quality. Firstly, he had a cast size equivalent to a non-touring production. According to a memorandum on 3 June 1991, '[t]he cast size is 16 and there will be 6 musicians'.⁴²³ Secondly, since Nunn rarely cut the text,⁴²⁴ the running time was over three hours. Spectators were apparently offered an 'authentic' version of the play. Thirdly, the company applied an intricate scenography. Nunn relocated *Measure for Measure* to Freud's Vienna in which the Duke took the role of 'the observer-physic'.⁴²⁵ At the beginning, the characters waltzed to Johann Strauss's 'The Emperor Waltz'. The waltz not only suggested the play's location but also encouraged the impression of something sophisticated and classic.

⁴²¹ Benedict Nightingale, 'Nunn Shall Sleep, But not Yet', *Times*, 27 August 1991.

⁴²² Simon Tait, 'RSC Aids Arts Centre', *Times*, 13 January 1992.

⁴²³ Trevor Nunn, Memorandum, *Measure for Measure*, Touring Production, 1991-1992 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/OP/2/2/1.

⁴²⁴ Trevor Nunn, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Touring Production, 1991-1992 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/SM/1/1991/MEA1.

⁴²⁵ Robert Smallwood, 'Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1991', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 43 (1992), 341-356 (p. 355).



Fig. 23. Nunn's trial scene on the cobbled street beside the prison with no wall,
Measure for Measure, 1991.

Unlike Miller and Guthrie, Nunn attempted to create an intimate performance space and it helped emphasise his psychological reading of the play. In this production, as Nightingale maintained, 'what mainly interests [Nunn] is demonstrating how well [...] Shakespeare [...] respond[s] to being performed in spaces where actor and audience can reach out and touch'.⁴²⁶ For this reason, Nunn opened his production at the Other Place, a theatre which allowed 'directors to put the plays under the microscope of intimacy'. *Measure for Measure* 'is amongst Shakespeare's most psychologically detailed and naturalistically written experiments',⁴²⁷ Nunn maintained, adding 'I don't any longer feel comfortable in big spaces, I haven't any faith in them'.⁴²⁸ Consequently, Macaulay, who attended a performance at the Young Vic, asserted that this production was at its best in creating 'tension and intimacy. The audience, seated close on three sides, follows excitedly the moment-by-moment development of the big scenes'.⁴²⁹ It is

⁴²⁶ Nightingale, 'Nunn'.

⁴²⁷ Trevor Nunn, Programme, *Measure for Measure*, Touring Production, 1991-1992 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/OP/2/2/1.

⁴²⁸ Nightingale, 'Nunn'.

⁴²⁹ Alastair Macaulay, 'Financial Times', 12 March 1992, *Theatre Record*, 12 (1992), p. 297.

reasonable to assume that Nunn exploited intimate performance spaces in the ‘16 towns and villages’ that the company visited.

As Nightingale maintained, the intimate space in this production transformed the spectators into ‘invited voyeurs’.⁴³⁰ In the second interview with Isabella, according to the prompt book, Angelo lies down on a sofa which looks like Freud’s couch, while delivering his soliloquy, ‘When I would pray and think’. Nunn thus constructed playgoers as the ‘invited voyeurs’ in the place of Angelo’s psychiatrists. During this speech, Haig’s Angelo kissed ‘his own arm’ presumably in practice for the possible sexual encounter⁴³¹ and bit ‘the flesh of his own arm’.⁴³² This business not only revealed his sexual inexperience but also the protestation of his super ego against his ‘dirty’ mind.

The relationship between Skinner’s Isabella and Madoc’s Duke was psychologically complicated. Michael Convey regarded the Duke’s proposal as ‘an immodest’ action.⁴³³ Robert Smallwood described this final moment as follows:

Patiently the Duke waited and (as he had clearly diagnosed) up came her hand, slowly joining his; in spite of the long delay, however, she had obviously not been able to think of anything to say. They made a most curious couple, this slender, youthful little girl, so quiet and still, so tired

⁴³⁰ Benedict Nightingale, ‘New Clothes for a Scruffy Old Friend’, *Times*, 30 July 1991.

⁴³¹ Smallwood, ‘Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1991’, p. 355.

⁴³² Paul Taylor, ‘Problem Solved’, *Independent*, 20 September 1991, p. 15.

⁴³³ Michael Coveney, ‘Euripides and You Buy a New Pair’, *Observer*, 22 September 1991, p. 56.

now after all the turbulent suffering and danger she had passed, and the middle-aged, tubby, grizzled physician, her only remaining friend [...]. Were they really about to go to bed together, one felt a little vulgar for wondering, or does she see in this moment the possibility of that trusting paternal relationship that her past must somehow have denied or distorted? If, of course, one's imagination placed her thoughts in this latter area and his in the former, then this was a very bitter moment indeed.⁴³⁴

At the opening performance, Madoc was 56 years old whereas Skinner was 26. Keeping this in mind, one finds it easy to agree with Smallwood that what Isabella looked for from the Duke was a 'trusting paternal relationship' and this might have reminded some spectators of Freud who maintained that '[e]very analyst has come across certain women who cling with especial intensity and tenacity to the bond with their father and to the wish in which it culminates of having a child by him'.⁴³⁵ Smallwood's curiosity was encouraged by the production's intimate space, which, as Chambers maintains, facilitated 'a strong identification'.⁴³⁶ It made spectators feel connected to the actors physically as well as psychologically and, in effect, it was easier to investigate the characters' psychological states of mind. Miller's and Nunn's productions used the performance spaces to make a strong case for how a psychological reading could enrich *Measure for Measure*.

⁴³⁴ Smallwood, 'Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1991', p. 356.

⁴³⁵ Sigmund Freud, *The Freud Reader*, ed. by Peter Gay (London: Vintage, 1995), p. 673.

⁴³⁶ Chambers, *Inside the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 69.

Jonathan Petherbridge's 2002 *Measure for Measure* also successfully used an intimate performance space, though in a different manner from Nunn's.

Petherbridge's was 'the National Theatre's schools production',⁴³⁷ a co-operation between the NT Education and the London Bubble Theatre. On 16 April 2002, Charles Spencer reported that it had 'already visited 40 schools, from Plymouth to the Shetland Islands, and, after a brief stop at the Cottesloe, it is touring community venues until May 18'.⁴³⁸ It was a small-scale production with a cast of only eight actors, and a lot of doubling. For example, Charles Abomeli played Angelo and Abhorson while Suzan McLean's Isabella doubled as Mistress Overdone. This practice highlighted the non-illusional nature of performance.

Unlike Guthrie, Petherbridge did not aim to display his company's cultural authority, but to convince young spectators of the importance of Shakespeare in contemporary culture by actively involving them as makers of meaning. As a project of NT Education, Petherbridge emphasised the 'educational process' of his production. According to the Workpack, the director wanted his audience to realise the relevance and intimacy of Shakespeare's play:

Jonathan Petherbridge made the setting for the NT production non-specific. He did not want the audience to dismiss the play's arguments about morality and the State with 'That might happen there, but it is okay because it's not like that here'. The indeterminate setting is combined with an 'up close and personal' promenade-style production. The director

⁴³⁷ Rachel Halliburton, 'Evening Standard', 9 April 2002, *Theatre Record*, 22 (2002), p. 414.

⁴³⁸ Charles Spencer, 'Shakespeare, the New King of Cool', *Daily Telegraph*, 16 April 2002, p. 16.

wanted the audience to be close enough to the action to feel part of it, and as a result to feel implicit in the decisions taken.⁴³⁹

The director cut the text to establish ‘an intense and gripping atmosphere’.⁴⁴⁰ As a result, the performance on 10 April 2002 at the Cottesloe Theatre lasted less than two hours.⁴⁴¹

I argue that the intimate, bare space in Petherbridge’s production invited the spectators to participate, empowered them and, consequently, changed their perceptions of ‘Shakespeare’. This production offered a different kind of intimacy from that of Nunn. To encourage interaction, the company asked the playgoers to sit around them and then the actors arranged pre-show activities which continued during the show. For example, as a warm-up activity, ‘Escalus’ asked the spectators to imagine the city of Vienna and to guess what were in Pompey’s pockets. This activity prepared playgoers to use their imaginations to supply the bare stage. The actors invited playgoers to vote on to whom Isabella should complain. The director apparently tried to be responsive to a young audience’s habit of having two-way communication via the Internet. Hence, while Nunn’s spectators were ‘invited voyeurs’, Petherbridge’s were invited participants.

⁴³⁹ Rebecca Gould, *NT Education Workpack: Measure for Measure*, 2002
<http://d1wf8hd6ovssje.cloudfront.net/documents/measure_for_measure.pdf> [accessed 22 December 2013], p. 3.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁴¹ Jonathan Petherbridge, Performance Recording, *Measure for Measure*, Cottesloe Theatre, London, 10 April 2002 (National Theatre Archive, London) RNT/SO/2/2/135. All subsequent references to the performance will be referred to this recording.

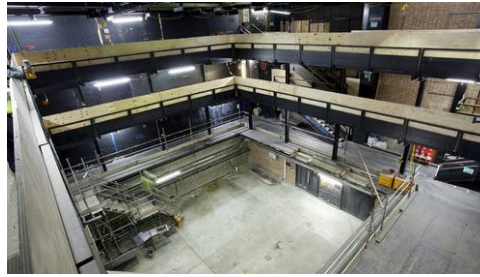


Fig. 24. Bare space at the Cottesloe Theatre.

Before the show, the playgoers were divided into four groups: the law makers on ‘upstage’, the law breakers on the left, the law enforcers on ‘downstage’ and the outsiders on the right. Then the actors invited a volunteer from each group to imagine what he or she would do in response to a crime. To much of the spectators’ amusement and, presumably, the actors’ expectation, the chosen law maker and the law enforcer rushed to the crime scene, while the law breaker ran away and the outsider just turned his or her back. The purpose of this activity, as one of the actors declared, was to demonstrate that people reacted to law depending on their roles in society, their attitude and their relationships to the law. Changes of spatial position worked well in signifying the changing status of the spectators during the show. In the first meeting, spectators were asked to be on one side. The actors then played around the Duke’s table or the *locus*, which was relatively distant from the spectators. In the second meeting, they were invited to surround the actors, observing the corruption of authority from within the scene.

I argue that the divided spaces and spatial reconfigurations destabilised power relations in the play and encouraged playgoers to read the Duke negatively despite the director’s intentions. McLean’s Isabella, Portway’s Mariana and the prisoners

were placed on the 'outsider' area in the nunnery, the moated grange and the prison scene, respectively. Thus, the status of women and prisoners as outsiders was spatially suggested. By contrast, in the first scene, Nicholas's Duke was seated behind a table at the area of the law maker at the end of a red carpet. The Duke's position and the carpet created a sense of ceremony and, thus, signified his status as an authority figure.

In the last scene, the performance space was arranged as in the first scene and again it signified a change of authority. When the Duke entered in disguise, he was outside the carpet area and the authority figures questioned him from the area around the table. Seeing Friar Lodowick, Lucio moved from the area of the outsider and joined 'the law makers'. However, when the Duke was unmasked, Lucio retreated from the carpet area and the Duke went to the table and delivered his 'Measure still for Measure' speech. The implication was that he returned to his role as the head 'law maker'.

Petherbridge interpreted the Duke's role in positive terms:

In the last scene we see a resurgence of anger when he condemns Angelo to death. [...] It is at this point that Mariana, aided by Isabella, reminds the Duke of his nurturing and merciful side. [...] He, and hopefully the state, move towards a balance. It is no accident that Shakespeare has the most powerful male, propose to the most powerful female.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴² Gould, *NT Education Workpack*, p. 4.

According to this account, the ending was a happy resolution. However, the text's openness and the Duke's position in the performance space prevented one from reading it as the Duke's complete triumph. Due to Isabella's 'open silence', some members of the audience began laughing, and the Duke's authority was severely undermined. Being embarrassed by Isabella, the Duke went to Lucio and shook his collar. This action served as a diversion of his embarrassment. While the Duke had left the place of authority, Isabella went to the table. When the Duke, standing outside the red carpet area, made the second proposal, Isabella just stared at him, undermining the victorious return of the 'merciful' Duke intended by the director. For me, the spectators' applause at the end looked like a celebration of the collapse of a manipulative, patriarchal society. This is a good example of how the space and the indeterminacy of a text makes it possible for spectators to create a meaning different from that intended by the director.

Petherbridge's decision to play this production in an intimate, bare space, which allowed interaction, undoubtedly helped young audiences enjoy the show and see Shakespeare in a new way:

'I thought Shakespeare was just a bunch of words I didn't understand. I realise now I was wrong,' declared one Swansea pupil after seeing the show. Another, from Gillingham, Dorset, breathlessly declared that he

now believed Shakespeare and the theatre were ‘super-cool, much cooler than the cinema or TV’.⁴⁴³

Similarly, Koenig maintained that the students ‘were all silent and caught up in the action’.⁴⁴⁴ Since this was a ‘schools production’, if the students were entertained, it is fair to say that this production was successful. Through participating and judging the actions, the students felt empowered and, in effect, they felt more comfortable to approach Shakespeare. From the early modern period, touring has been a way to reach new audiences and, in this sense, Petherbridge’s production fulfilled its goal.

As in Poel and Dove’s neo-Elizabethan productions, the performance spaces in the touring productions greatly changed the dynamics of the performances and how the spectators interpreted the theme of authority. Guthrie displayed the cultural authority of his English company to foreign spectators by using ‘authentic’ costumes and a grand set. In effect, the action was distanced from the audiences and the Duke became a ‘stern’ and distant father. Miller and Nunn’s productions exerted the cultural authority of their national theatres by using large casts and elaborate sets. Miller’s mundane office set undermined the impression of the Duke as a figure of ‘power divine’. Nunn staged his touring productions with intimate spaces which made the audiences the ‘invited’ observers of the action. Unlike the other productions, Petherbridge’s small-scale production did

⁴⁴³ Spencer, ‘Shakespeare’, p. 16.

⁴⁴⁴ Rhoda Koenig, ‘*Independent*’, 13 April 2002, *Theatre Record*, 22 (2002), p. 415. See also, Spencer, ‘Shakespeare’, p. 16.

not try to exert its cultural authority but to educate young audiences. The production's bare space allowed the spectators to participate in the action and encouraged subversive reading against that of the director. As a result, students felt that Shakespeare was fun and approachable. In all of these productions, the performance spaces were clearly fundamental in reshaping the spectators' perception of 'Shakespeare'. Through the 'authentic' spaces, Poel and Dove tried to create spaces which actors could effectively use the *platea*, traditionally dominated by clowns, to address spectators. Their use of apron stage created intimate spaces and, in effect, Dove successfully presented *Measure for Measure* as a funny comedy to tourists at the New Globe. Miller created an indoor office as his set to suggest the sexual desire that Isabella and Angelo tried to conceal from the world. This set presented 'Shakespeare' as a modern writer of psychological drama. In his touring production, Guthrie used a large, tall set to impress the 'natives' of North America and further his company's agenda as an exporter of the 'authentic' 'Shakespeare'. Nunn and Petherbridge had their spectators surround the performance spaces which, in effect, created a 'Shakespeare' who was more approachable than that in Miller's production. Since Petherbridge's was a schools-focused production, it was carefully designed to encourage participation. The director facilitated students' participation by using an intimate, bare performance space. This arrangement radically changed how spectators interacted. In this space, Petherbridge's young spectators could move around or get close to the actions. Their mobility produced a sense of freedom which, in turn, created a friendly 'Shakespeare' who was, as a student maintained, 'super-cool'.⁴⁴⁵ The

⁴⁴⁵ Spencer, 'Shakespeare', p. 16.

power of performance to change our perceptions of 'Shakespeare' will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

‘Shakespeare(s)’ and Society: *Measure for Measure* from 1720 to 1962

This chapter argues that the productions of *Measure for Measure* from the Georgian period to the 1960s tried to solve the play’s ambiguous treatment of morality, authority, gender politics and ‘vulgarity’, and, in so doing, they reflected, anticipated and shaped not only ‘Shakespeare’ but also the public perceptions of the aforementioned issues. Some of the productions, such as Samuel Phelps’s and William Bridges-Adams’s, have previously been ignored by scholars and I show that they played a vital role in developing the ‘Shakespeare’ we have come to know today. Although there are a number of studies on Shakespearean performance in these eras, most of them focus on a particular period.⁴⁴⁶ The large temporal span of this chapter allows me to pinpoint the originality of each production and its influence on those following, and the striking differences produced by changing social contexts. In this chapter, I argue that the continuities and differences in stagings of *Measure for Measure* contribute to the growth of ‘Shakespeare’ as an icon of gentility, authority, and a symbol for the nation and the British Empire, a process which had begun in the eighteenth century and was later officially reaffirmed with the formation of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

⁴⁴⁶ For example, Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660-1769* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), Jean Moody, ‘Romantic Shakespeare’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 37-57., Russell Jackson, *Victorian Theatre: A New Mermaid Background Book* (London: A&C Black, 1989), p. 10., Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first analyses Georgian productions with a focus on performances at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1720, at Covent Garden in 1771 and at Drury Lane in 1783. The second section discusses John Philip Kemble's productions during the Romantic Age. The third section focuses on Samuel Phelps's productions at Sadler's Wells in the Victorian period. The last section discusses productions at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, later known as the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, between 1931 and 1962 and the production of Margaret Webster at the Old Vic in 1957.

Georgian Productions and a Gentlemanly 'Shakespeare'

In the Georgian era, the status of Shakespeare was significantly promoted. While, in 1660, his plays were 'ancient' and unpopular, in the eighteenth century, they were an important part of the repertoires of many theatres in London. According to Charles Hogan, 3,226 out of 18,663 dramatic productions in the first half of this century were of Shakespeare's plays.⁴⁴⁷ There were attempts to transform the man from Stratford into a gentleman. A marble statue of him was erected on 29 January 1741 in Westminster Abbey with a Latin inscription which can be translated as: 'William Shakespeare [erected] 124 years after [his] death by public esteem'.⁴⁴⁸ Shakespeare's connection to monarchy was emphasised by busts of Elizabeth I, Henry V and Richard III on the pedestal of the statue. In 1759, J. G., typical of the attitudes of his age, described the statue as follows: 'The statue in

⁴⁴⁷ Charles Beecher Hogan, *Shakespeare in the Theatre, 1701-1800: A Record of Performances in London, 1701-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 459.

⁴⁴⁸ Anon., 'William Shakespeare', <<http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/william-shakespeare>> [accessed 11 July 2015] (para. 4 of 14).

that honorary monument is really in a noble attitude [...]; the face is venerable, and well expresses that intenseness of serious thought'.⁴⁴⁹



Fig. 25. Statue of Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey.

Alexander Pope was very active in refashioning Shakespeare. He was among those who campaigned for the erection of Shakespeare's statue in Westminster Abbey.⁴⁵⁰ In 1723, he published his edition of Shakespeare's plays with a frontispiece showing an engraving of the Janssen monument in Holy Trinity Church. This illustration represented Shakespeare as a gentleman. The quill and paper in his hands portrayed him as a man of letters who worked hard while his family's coat of arms stressed his gentility. The image of Shakespeare as an educated gentleman who became the master of his profession because he thought and worked hard, connected with the ideas of the Enlightenment and self-improvement that, as Michel Delon maintains, prevailed in the eighteenth century'.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁹ Sylvanus Urban, *The Gentlemen's Magazine* (London: 1759), p. 257.

⁴⁵⁰ S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 63.

⁴⁵¹ Michel Delon, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 451. See also, Peter Borsay, 'The Culture of Improvement', in *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Paul

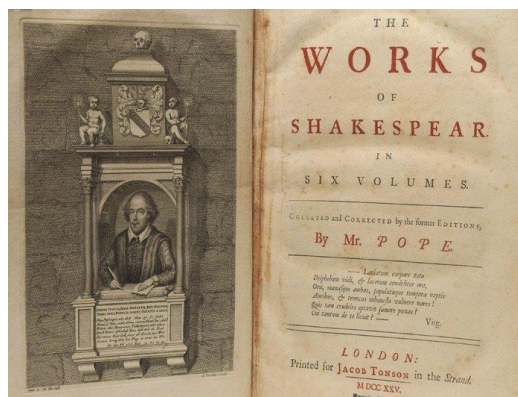


Fig. 26. Illustration of Shakespeare's statue in Alexander Pope's edition.

In Pope's edition, Shakespeare is portrayed as a poet advertising the increasing authority of his written words. As Britain was at war throughout this century, especially against the French, Shakespeare was used to kindle a nationalist spirit. According to Dobson, in the eighteenth century: 'To reject adapted versions of Shakespeare [was] to participate in the victorious reassertion of "the British spirit"' .⁴⁵² Jean Marsden, the author of *The Re-Imagined Text*, an influential book on eighteenth-century adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, maintains that this change was in line with a new theory which valorized Shakespeare's words as the source of his genius, his poetic power and 'sublimity'. Thus, '[e]ven a quibble or anachronism must be retained' .⁴⁵³ As a result, restorations of Shakespeare's 'original' texts appeared on stage. However, Shakespeare's words were heavily cut in the case of *Measure for Measure*'s acting editions. Furthermore, the eighteenth century saw the boom of afterpieces which became the main

Langford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 183-210 (p. 183).

⁴⁵² Dobson, *The Making*, p. 199.

⁴⁵³ Jean I. Marsden, *The Re-Imagined Text: Shakespeare, Adaptation, & Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), p. 117.

attraction[s]', offering ordinary theatregoers a composite entertainment like 'the elitist court masque of the previous century'.⁴⁵⁴ For the production of *Measure for Measure* in 1720, these were a more important selling point than Shakespeare, whose name was not mentioned and whose play occupied a relatively small portion of the advertising space. The theatre apparently prioritised the prosperity of its business over the authority of the 'original' text and the author.

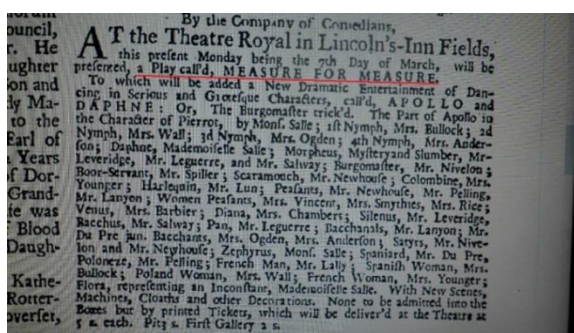


Fig. 27. Advertisement of 7 March 1726 on Lincoln Inn's Fields's *Measure for Measure* (underlined) and an afterpiece.

In this section, I argue that the Georgian productions and their acting editions reflected the rise of the middle class and, by downplaying the text's ambiguity and 'vulgarity', they shaped the image of the 'gentlemanly' Shakespeare. However, the subversive overtones in the play proved to be irrepressible while the removal of the comic characters made it become a play with few comic elements. These contributed to the unpopularity of *Measure for Measure* in this period and beyond.

⁴⁵⁴ Simon Trussler, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of British Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 156-157.

The productions of *Measure for Measure* in the Georgian era have been largely ignored by critics and the most extensive study by Edward Rocklin focuses exclusively on textual emendations at the end of the play.⁴⁵⁵ In fact, the Georgian theatres significantly altered not only the endings but the whole text to emphasise the image of a gentrified ‘Shakespeare’, and to validate what Dobson calls ‘the sense of self-worth of the middle class’.⁴⁵⁶ In the acting edition altered ‘as it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Lincolns-Inn-Fields’ in 1720, unlike excisions made later in the Victorian era, vulgarity rather than sexuality was the main target of censorship.⁴⁵⁷ While Lucio’s direct reference to ‘fresh Whore’ and ‘powder’d Bawd’ (45) is not cut, images, such as ‘Tilth and Husbandry’ (14) and ‘Urine’ (46), are excised. The mock trial scene is also removed and, at Lincoln Inn’s Fields, the low-life characters would have been less important because their lines had been severely cut. The ‘intrusion’ of the low-life characters into Shakespeare’s play clearly worried middle class people who, as Marsden maintains, ‘relied on literature and literary culture as a sign of status’.⁴⁵⁸ These changes were an attempt to distinguish the identity of the middle class from that of the lower class.

⁴⁵⁵ Edward L. Rocklin, ‘Measured Endings: How Productions from 1720 to 1929 Close Shakespeare’s Open Silences in *Measure for Measure*’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 53 (2000), 213-232.

⁴⁵⁶ Dobson, *The Making*, p. 151.

⁴⁵⁷ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure: A Comedy as It is Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Lincolns-Inn-Fields*, ed. by J. Tonson (London: 1722), pp. 29, 45. All subsequent quotations from or references to the production at Lincoln Inn’s Fields will be to this edition and will be referenced parenthetically.

⁴⁵⁸ Marsden, *The Re-Imagined Text*, p. 6.

Lucio is altered to stress the importance of 'credit'. Since his scene with the two Gentlemen is removed, Lucio's habit of spending time at a brothel is not mentioned, thus, his licentiousness is not revealed. His confession of his habit to 'play with all virgins' is also removed (14). Similar to Gildon's Angelo, Lucio's major flaw is his lack of 'credit' which is tainted both when he falsely claims to be 'an inward' of the royal circle (47) and when he unwittingly reveals his false statement concerning his affair with Kate Keepdown. In this sense, the judgment that he receives at the end might not have been regarded as a punishment of his wantonness, but his transgression of 'probity' and 'credit'. With the fall of the South Sea Company's shares in that year, 'credit' was likely to be an issue which some spectators had in mind. By downplaying 'vulgar' elements, the production at Lincoln's Inn Fields shifted the play's focus to highlight the importance of 'credit' and morality for men of business.

As the King's Theatre was prospering under royal patronage, Lincoln's Inn Fields apparently wanted to keep on the right side of the establishment. This was the time when Walpole 'was instrumental in establishing [...] the leading role of the Prime Minister. But he also became increasingly identified with corruption'.⁴⁵⁹ It is easy to see how a production could use Angelo's corruption to criticise Walpole. However, considering how the text was edited, Lincoln's Inn Fields's priority was not to criticise the establishment. Many speeches which directly censure Angelo's administration are cut, such as Lucio's 'this / ungenitur'd Agent will unpeople the Province' (48) and Isabella's 'O but, Man! proud man! / Drest

⁴⁵⁹ Richard W. Bevis, *English Drama: Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 1660-1789* (London: Longman, 1988), p. 112.

in a little brief Authority' (27). In fact, what is more apparent is the attempt of the theatre to please George I which is revealed in the lines interpolated into the Duke's proposal to Isabella:

Thy virtuous Goodness, which alone has Charms
 To make thee worthy of a Monarch's Arms;
 A Monarch who his Peoples Hearts wou'd try,
 And shrewdly turn'd a Priest to turn a Spy:
 For Empire then he quits the lower Plain;
 Resumes the Scepter, and gives Laws again:
 On sure Foundations learns to fix Decrees,
 Like the Supreme, by judging what he sees.

(84)

As Rocklin notes, the word 'Monarch' invited 'spectators to equate the Duke with England's own ruler'.⁴⁶⁰ The interpolation specifies that the 'Monarch' 'quits the lower Plain' 'For Empire' alluding to George I's move from Hanover in the south-west of the North German Plain to rule Britain and its growing Empire. This interpolation presents the Duke and the Monarch in line with the spirit of Enlightenment which promoted reason as an aid to human development through the exploration, understanding and shaping his environment 'facilitated by a reliance on empirical method'⁴⁶¹ or, as the interpolation puts it, 'by judging what he sees'. At this point, by addressing the 'Monarch' in the third person, James

⁴⁶⁰ Rocklin, 'Measured Endings', p. 222.

⁴⁶¹ Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth-Century Britain: 1688-1783* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 146.

Quin, who played the Duke in 1720, might have detached himself from the role and delivered the speech as a subject who was praising his King. In this production, the theatre's priority was to avoid direct satiric criticism of Walpole and concentrate instead on advertising the theatre's own virtue in promoting middle class morality and in supporting the head of the 'Empire'.

However, due to the play's indeterminacy, it is not likely that every playgoer would have shared the theatre's agenda. The similarity between Angelo and Walpole was so obvious that, as Rocklin suggests, many spectators 'might have made a connection between [them]'.⁴⁶² Furthermore, one can take the Duke as either the 'the Supreme' agent or the 'fantastical' man and it is likely that Quin would have made the second interpretation possible. In 1714, the Richs renovated and 'gave the theatre a handsome auditorium seating more than 1,400 spectators [...] and a stage [...] larger than that at Drury Lane'.⁴⁶³ In effect, as Styan explains, '[t]he greater scale of performance called for massive movement and a "ranting" voice'.⁴⁶⁴ This might be a reason that, during his time at Lincoln's Inn Fields, Quin 'earned the nickname of "Bellow" Quin'.⁴⁶⁵ He was remembered mainly for his role as the 'admirable' Falstaff.⁴⁶⁶ Several critics believe that Quin usually 'tailored characters to his own personality'.⁴⁶⁷ Thus, for the production in

⁴⁶² Rocklin, 'Measured Endings', p. 219.

⁴⁶³ Phyllis Hartnoll and Peter Found, *The Concise Oxford Companion to the Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 276.

⁴⁶⁴ J. L. Styan, *The English Stage: A History of Drama and Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 280.

⁴⁶⁵ Michael Dobson, 'Improving on the Original: Actresses and Adaptations', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Shakespeare on Stage*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Russell Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 45-68 (p. 62).

⁴⁶⁶ Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (London: 1883), p. 221.

⁴⁶⁷ Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim and Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers & Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-*

1720, it is possible that Quin ‘tailored’ the Duke into his Falstaffian style and, in this sense, the Duke would not have been an ideal ruler for the Age of the Enlightenment, which valued reason and order.

Perhaps because of the play’s irrepressible subversive overtones, this production was unsuccessful. Its average turnover was merely 30 pounds per night, higher than only 5 out of 31 Shakespeare’s productions performed at Lincoln’s Inn Fields.⁴⁶⁸ The play went against the tastes of a public who, Marsden argues, preferred order and moral simplification over ambiguity,⁴⁶⁹ a problem which would continue troubling future productions of *Measure for Measure*.

The production of *Measure for Measure* at Covent Garden in the 1770s repeated many practices of the previous production. Despite the rise of Bardolatry in the second half of the eighteenth century, materialised in David Garrick’s Shakespeare Jubilee (1769), Shakespeare’s name still did not appear as publicity for Covent Garden’s production. In the advertisement on 13 May 1771, half the advertising space was dedicated to information about *Harlequin Dr. Faustus*.⁴⁷⁰ Moreover, at Covent Garden, as in Lincoln Inn’s Fields, the actors might have had to rely on a ‘ranting voice’ since the theatre’s large size ‘introduced new problems for the actor to be seen and heard’.⁴⁷¹ In the 1771 production, Robert Bensley, who was nicknamed ‘Roaring Bob’, played the Duke and ‘John Bernard allied

1800, 16 vols (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), xii, p. 228.

⁴⁶⁸ Hogan, *Shakespeare in the Theatre, 1701-1750*, pp. 20-21.

⁴⁶⁹ Marsden, *The Re-Imagined Text*, p. 24.

⁴⁷⁰ Anon., *Public Advertiser*, 13 May 1771.

⁴⁷¹ Styan, *The English Stage*, p. 275. It had a capacity of ‘nearly 3,000’.

[him] with the style of Quin'.⁴⁷² In this production, eighteenth century spectators probably had another chance to see a 'Roaring' Duke.

The most significant difference between the two productions is that the Covent Garden edition includes the notes of Francis Gentleman, an experienced playgoer. My analysis extends Rocklin's work on this edition's ending by looking at the whole text. Gentleman's notes on the cuts and the script offer a detailed insight into how *Measure for Measure* was made fit for 'gentle' people in 1770. This edition was published as 'performed at the Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden, revised by Mr. Younger, prompter of that theatre'.⁴⁷³ According to Gentleman, the scene between Lucio and the two Gentlemen was 'unworthy' and 'properly rejected' (7). Claudio's case is 'indecent' (21) and the mock trial is an 'absolute ribaldry, full of nothingness and indecencies; the annihilation of them does credit to our author and the stage' (15). Barnadine is also condemned as 'a character of that cast we deem unworthy both of the stage and closet' (50). These statements demonstrate that 'the annihilation' of 'ribaldry' was an attempt to preserve the credit of the gentle Shakespeare and the theatre's 'credit' in the eyes of middle class people. As Gentleman maintained, 'Shakespeare has most judiciously, on every occasion, shown the insignificancy of vehement popular applause' (7). It is

⁴⁷² Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim and Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers & Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, 16 vols (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), II, p. 41.

⁴⁷³ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure as Performed at the Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden*, in *Bell's Edition of Shakespeare's Plays*, ed. by Younger (London, 1774). All subsequent quotations from or references to the production at Covent Garden will be to this edition and will be referenced by their page number in parenthesis.

clear that, for Gentleman, Shakespeare was for the refined and, ironically, could only be appreciated by gentlemen like himself.

This production contributed in establishing the reputation of *Measure for Measure* as a ‘problem play’. By excising many comic characters and their ‘indecentcies’, the play had become a comedy with few comedic elements. As a result, Gentleman states that ‘upon the whole of this play, for we cannot stile it either Tragedy or Comedy, [...] it must always be heavy to the majority of an audience’ (71). There is already a strong connection between middle class morality and gentleness, excision, and the coinage of ‘the problem play’, which was developed later in the late Victorian age.

Mrs. Mary Yates, who played Isabella in 1771, probably intensified spectators’ feeling of unease towards the production’s treatments of gentility and gender. Gentleman says that ‘Isabella should be graceful and amiable’ (12) and her pleas to Angelo should sound ‘delicate, pathetic, and forceable’ (18). Nevertheless, many critics ‘noted the haughty quality’ of Mrs. Yates.⁴⁷⁴ William Hawkins, for instance, maintains that she ‘in the [...] haughty and passionate parts of tragedy [...] surpasses all her female co-temporaries [...] but where tender passions, stifled [...] pangs, or soft feelings are to be expressed, Mrs. Yates is quite at a loss’.⁴⁷⁵ According to this statement, it seems that Yates’s Isabella would have been a forceful figure in the second meeting with Angelo, which Gentleman

⁴⁷⁴ Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim and Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers & Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, 16 vols (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), xvi, p. 334.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

described as a ‘powerfully’ engaged scene (27). Her forceful stance at lines like ‘Take my defiance: / Die, perish’ (31) is suggested in the image reproduced below. However, her plea, ‘Most bounteous Sir’ (69), might not have sounded ‘tender’ and, consequently, the moral lesson of forgiveness and mercy may not have been convincing to spectators.



Fig. 28. The ‘haughty’ Yates as Isabella.

In terms of political implication, the Covent Garden edition is more explicit than the 1720 edition, suggesting the increasing anxiety of the middle class towards aristocratic politics. In it, Gentleman clearly expresses that ‘[i]t is one of the greatest errors sovereignty can commit, to place unlimited confidence in ministers unproved. [...] [U]nder this commendable idea, Shakespeare conceived *Measure for Measure*’ (3). The lesson to ‘royal and princely characters’ not to ‘trust a *seemingly* virtuous statesman’ is emphasised again at the end of the edition (72).

These statements reflected the politics after George III's coronation when 'a conservative party of government had [...] begun to emerge' who 'defended the royal prerogative'.⁴⁷⁶ For the conservatives, the show would have been an advertisement for the monarchical 'prerogative'. This was a sensitive subject since a few years before the performance, as Jeremy Black maintains, there was a 'widespread popular opposition to the government, [...] fears of royal tyranny [,] aristocratic oligarchy, and [...] a measure of radicalism, owing something to economic problems, that led in 1768 to a series of riots in London'.⁴⁷⁷ The riots erupted when John Wilkes, a radical politician, was put in prison for criticising the King. As a result, '[h]undreds of supporters gathered to chant "Wilkes and Liberty!"' around the prison where he was held.⁴⁷⁸ This struggle took place not only on the street but also at Drury Lane. During the time of conflicts, Hugh Kelly used his magazine, the *Public Ledger*, to support the King and friends of Wilkes took revenge on Kelly, by ruining the performance of his sentimental, romantic comedy in 1770.⁴⁷⁹ Therefore, for some spectators, what happened under Angelo's regime and his condemnation of Claudio for 'too much liberty' (8) probably reflected anxiety about the monarchical 'prerogative' and the 'errors' that it could make.

Nevertheless, textual interpolations reflected a royalist agenda at a time when, according to Hannah Smith, a specialist in British politics in the eighteenth century, George III 'enthusiastically endorsed' the image of the 'Patriot King'

⁴⁷⁶ H. T. Dickinson, 'George III and Parliament', *Parliament History*, 30 (2011), 395-413 (p. 397).

⁴⁷⁷ Black, *Eighteenth-Century Britain*, pp. 251-252.

⁴⁷⁸ John Murrin and others, *Liberty, Equality, Power* (Belmont: Thomson, 2007), p. 140.

⁴⁷⁹ Ashley Thorndike, *English Comedy* (New York: Cooper Square, 1965), p. 448.

who, as ‘the head of a united people’, ‘reformed the nation’s politics from the squalor of party strife’ and ‘whose private life was exemplary’.⁴⁸⁰ In the final scene the Duke announces:

Shade not, sweet saint, those graces with a veil,
 Nor in a Nunnery hide thee; say thou’re mine;
 Thy Duke, thy Friar, tempts thee from thy vows.
 Let thy clear spirit shine in publick life;
 No cloister’d sister, but thy Prince’s Wife.

(72)

For Gentleman, these ‘five distinguished lines [...] afford a better finishing’ (71). Since, in this edition, the first proposal is removed, the ‘finishing’ is ‘better’ in the sense that it is less ambiguous and awkward. The Duke explains that he wants Isabella’s ‘clear spirit’ to guide ‘publick life’ which suggests that personal faith is not as significant as the benefits of the state. Hence, this interpolation endorses the image of the ‘Patriot’ ruler who, for the sake of the public, weds a virtuous wife. The image of a harmonious society ruled by a virtuous ruler, in turn, discredits ‘party strife’ as a threat to the nation’s unity. To support the monarchy, Gentleman maintains that ‘delegated authority [is] generally more liable to abuse, than the power which gives it’ (72).

⁴⁸⁰ Hannah Smith, *Georgian Monarchy: Politics and Culture: 1714-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 20.

Because of the ambiguity of the Duke's motive and the political conflicts in society, it is unlikely that every spectator at Covent Garden would have agreed with Gentleman's interpretation. In any case, as in 1720, Covent Garden's production was a disappointment. Its average receipt was 147 pounds which was higher than only 3 out of 14 Covent Garden's Shakespearian productions in 1771.⁴⁸¹ Covent Garden evidently failed to stage a satisfactory production of this ambiguous play. It neither pleased the establishment because of its subversive overtones, nor Wilkes's supporters because of its royalist ending. Moreover, Yates did not seem to be an ideal actor to deliver its moral lessons on mercy.

However, these unsuccessful productions were historically important since they forced subsequent theatre producers to find new ways of presenting the play to make it commercially successful. Such an attempt was brought about by Sarah Siddons's reinterpretation of *Isabella*. Despite the failures of previous productions, Drury Lane chose to mount *Measure for Measure* again on 3 November 1783⁴⁸² relying on Siddons's skills to solve the 'problem' of *Isabella*'s unconventional conduct in the eyes of Georgian spectators. Siddons's *Isabella* was a heroine whose virtue and moral code was not a threat to traditional family values in the eighteenth century. In the 1783 edition 'marked with the variations in the manager's book at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane', *Isabella*'s key line in explaining her moral stand, 'More than our brother is our chastity', is removed.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸¹ Hogan, *Shakespeare in the Theatre, 1751-1800*, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁴⁸³ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure: A Comedy Written by William Shakespeare Marked with the Variations in the Manager's Book at the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane* (London, 1784), p. 36. All subsequent quotations from or references to the production at Drury Lane will be to this edition and will be referenced parenthetically.

As *The Times* maintained, Siddons ‘is in truth, throughout the character, [...] “a thing ensky’d and sainted”’.⁴⁸⁴ Because of her image as ‘a thing ensky’d’, it is likely that her allusion to God’s mercy (23) would have been more convincing than that of Mrs. Yates. This interpretation seemed to influence critics like Nathan Drake who, five years after Siddons’s last appearance as Isabella, maintained that Isabella is a symbol of ‘spotless purity’.⁴⁸⁵ Siddons’s performance of Isabella was shaped by a contemporary aesthetic theory advocated by Lord Kames that to create a convincing character, the author must annihilate him/herself and ‘become another person’.⁴⁸⁶ Her performance, in turn, changed how to play a Shakespearian character. However, her role as Isabella has been overlooked. Instead Siddons is praised for her intensity and ‘capacity to enter into the life of’ Lady Macbeth, which marked a trend towards performing a Shakespearian character as an emotional, psychological human.⁴⁸⁷ In fact, Isabella was Siddons’s first successful Shakespearian role and, as the novice nun, she had already established her talent in ‘impersonation’ which ‘commanded undivided applause’.⁴⁸⁸ As Boaden asserted, ‘[t]he Isabel of Mrs. Siddons was a model of cloistered purity, and energy, and grace’ and, in the first interview, ‘her figure seemed to distend with the golden truths she delivered’.⁴⁸⁹ Although, due to the play’s ambiguity, her reading of Isabella as ‘a thing ensky’d’ has been largely

⁴⁸⁴ Anon., ‘Theatre’, *Times*, 1 January 1794.

⁴⁸⁵ Nathan Drake, ‘Isabella, a “Lovely Example of Female Excellence”’, in *Measure for Measure*, ed. by George Geckle (London: Athlone, 2001), pp. 53-55 (p. 53).

⁴⁸⁶ Marsden, *The Re-Imagined Text*, p. 113.

⁴⁸⁷ Bernice W. Kliman, *Macbeth* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 29.

⁴⁸⁸ Thomas Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons* (London: 1834), pp. 198, 200.

⁴⁸⁹ James Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs Siddons* (London: Longman, 1825), pp. 138, 255.

discarded, her acting style is an approach that many mainstream theatres still practice.



Fig. 29. Sarah Siddons's 'sainted' Isabella in a white dress.

Although, during the second half of the eighteenth century, *Measure for Measure* was only the 19th most frequently performed Shakespearean play,⁴⁹⁰ perhaps because of the new characterization and Siddons's talents, it was a success at Drury Lane in 1783. The production's average receipt was 251 pounds, higher than 25 out of 29 Shakespearian productions performed there that year.⁴⁹¹

Nevertheless, the 1783 show also continued a number of practices of earlier Georgian productions. Its acting edition shows the influence of Gentleman's criticisms. The scene between the Duke and the Clown which, Gentleman condemned as 'a low intrusion upon attention' (39), is shortened and, as in the

⁴⁹⁰ Hogan, *Shakespeare in the Theatre, 1751-1800*, p. 718.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

Covent Garden's acting edition, the two short scenes before the last act are cut (59). Drury Lane did not include the author's name on publicity, and the production was again advertised alongside 'a pantomime entertainment called *The Triumph of Mirth, or, Harlequin's Wedding*'.⁴⁹² In the late eighteenth century theatre, Shakespeare was still regarded as one part of a whole evening's entertainment. The 1783 show was performed after 'Robert Adam lengthened the building by over 70 per cent – the auditorium by about 60 per cent, the stage by almost 100 per cent'.⁴⁹³ These alterations, however commercially confident, inevitably reduced the sense of intimacy between actors and spectators in the auditorium.

The fact that three productions of *Measure for Measure* in the Georgian period all had interpolated endings indicates a need typical of the Enlightenment to close down the play's ambiguity and 'open silences' in the name of order, in direct contrast to the contemporary valorization for Shakespeare's words so that '[e]ven a quibble or anachronism must be retained'.⁴⁹⁴ These productions illustrated an increasingly decisive attempt to 'purify' or censor Shakespeare on stage and demonstrated how the theatre prioritized performance over text, especially in the inclusion of additional entertainments and the expansion of auditoria. These productions were part of the quest for making the 'nationalistic', 'gentle' and 'spectacular' Shakespeare who would continue to influence theatres in the Romantic era.

⁴⁹² Anon., *Public Advertiser*, 5 November 1783.

⁴⁹³ Bevis, *English Drama*, p. 195.

⁴⁹⁴ Marsden, *The Re-Imagined Text*, p. 117.

Kemble's *Measure for Measure*: 'Shakespeare' Turned Right

In 1794 and 1803, productions of *Measure for Measure*, starring Sarah Siddons and John Philip Kemble, Siddons's brother, were performed at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, respectively. Kemble's prompt book suggests that his productions were filled with pro-establishment agendas. Jean Moody asserts that '[i]n Kemble's hands, [...] *Measure for Measure* [became] a drama about the paternalist care of rulers for their subjects'.⁴⁹⁵ According to the prompt book, previously neglected by critics, many subversive elements in the text are restrained. Although Kemble restored the mock trial scene, these 'benefactors' are under arrest by two tipstaves, suggesting that they are under control.⁴⁹⁶ Pompey's criticisms to the authority's injustice and ineffectiveness, 'Twas never merry world' (III. 1. 274) and 'If you head and hang all that offend' (II. 1. 227), are cut. Kemble also refused Barnadine an opportunity to directly challenge authority. The prompt book suggests the actor who plays Barnadine addresses his 'I will not die to-day for any man's persuasion' to Pompey rather than to the Duke (54). In effect, as Moody maintains, 'the satirical Pompey [...] becomes a clown, and Barnadine [...] is transformed into a harmless comic Yorkshireman'.⁴⁹⁷ In this version, the two Gentlemen become Leopold and Frederick, the law-abiding officers who wait for the Duke in the first scene. In the scene with Lucio, they do

⁴⁹⁵ Moody, 'Romantic Shakespeare', p. 44.

⁴⁹⁶ Shakespeare William, *Shakespeare's Measure for Measure, A Comedy, Revised by J. P. Kemble*, in *John Philip Kemble Promptbooks*, ed. by Charles H. Shattuck, 11 vols (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974), vi, p. 21. All subsequent quotations from or references to Kemble's production will be to this prompt book and will be referenced parenthetically.

⁴⁹⁷ Moody, 'Romantic Shakespeare', p. 48.

not make any bawdy jokes. By these alternations, Kemble's productions would have downplayed the ineffectiveness of the aristocratic administration suggested in the First Folio.

Kemble's portrayal of the Duke advocated a positive image of the ruling class. According to *The Times*, '[t]he gravity of the character suits well with [his] natural dignity and nice discrimination',⁴⁹⁸ particularly praising Kemble's 'Be absolute for death'.⁴⁹⁹ The 'dignity' and authority of the Duke would have been emphasised by the fact that Kemble was 'a tall, stately' man.⁵⁰⁰ The Duke's magnificence was highlighted by the scenography in the last scene. According to Bawcutt, Kemble made 'the opening of Act 5 highly ceremonious: the Duke enters to the sound of drums and trumpets',⁵⁰¹ thus reminding audiences of the 'ceremonious' greatness of the divine-right ruler. At this moment, the Duke stands centre stage, with Angelo and Escalus on his right and 12 soldiers, 2 standard bearers, Leopold, Frederick, 8 gentlemen, 2 court officials and the Provost behind him (52), suggesting his role as the heart of the society.

As many editors in the last century did, Kemble interpolated lines at the end of the play to solve the potential subversiveness of Isabella's 'open silences':

For thee, sweet saint – if, for a brother sav'd,
From that most holy shrine thou wert devote to,

⁴⁹⁸ Anon., 'Theatre', *Times*, 1 January 1794.

⁴⁹⁹ Anon., 'Theatres', *Times*, 22 November 1803, p. 3.

⁵⁰⁰ Moody, 'Romantic Shakespeare', p. 41.

⁵⁰¹ N. W. Bawcutt, *Measure for Measure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 31.

Thou deign to spare some portion of thy love,
 Thy duke, thy friar, tempts thee from thy vow:
 In its right orb let thy true spirit shine,
 Blessing both prince, and people : – thus we'll reign,
 Rich in possession of their hearts, and, warn'd
 By the abuse of delegated trust,
 Engrave this royal maxim on the mind,
 To rule ourselves, before we rule mankind.

(68)

With this interpolation, Kemble would have been able not only to give his spectators a happy ending of the union between the 'sweet saint' and the dignified Duke but also to advocate the legitimation of aristocracy which 'rule[s] mankind' with the 'royal maxim'. Undoubtedly, Kemble's 'Shakespeare' was a stout royalist.

The political implication in Kemble's productions was clearly shaped by the impact of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. During this time, as historian Christopher Harvie maintains, 'war [...] polarized politics into "revolutionary" and "royalist"', and '[t]he establishment became really alarmed by' the wide circulation of the idea of 'democratic reform'.⁵⁰² This political struggle extended to a struggle to own, as *The Times* observed, 'Our immortal

⁵⁰² Christopher Harvie, 'Revolution and the Rule of Law', in *The Oxford History of Britain*, ed. by Kenneth O. Morgan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 470-517 (pp. 490, 485-486).

Bard'.⁵⁰³ As Moody argues, '[a]t the heart of this period is a battle for the political and moral possession of Shakespeare'.⁵⁰⁴ For Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Shakespeare 'should be styled a philosophical aristocrat, delighting in those hereditary institutions'.⁵⁰⁵ On the other hand, William Hazlitt believed that 'Shakespeare's mind [...] had no one peculiar bias. [...] His genius shone equally on [...] the monarch and the beggar'.⁵⁰⁶ The struggle was between the idea of an 'aristocratic' and a 'democratic' Shakespeare.

Kemble's political commitment was closer to Coleridge's. He believed that 'the Stage has been indebted for [...] the protection and support of all good governments'.⁵⁰⁷ His support for the elites was strengthened by a healthy relationship between the monarchy and his company, which had a strong impact on Kemble's *Measure for Measure*. An advertisement revealed that '[t]his play was revived under the idea that Their Majesties were to honour Drury-Lane Theatre with a visit, the piece being a favourite with the King'.⁵⁰⁸ Another newspaper maintained this was a command performance.⁵⁰⁹ Considering the execution of Louis XVI in 1793, one suspects that the King's 'command' might have had something to do not only with his personal preference but also the political agenda of this play. James Boaden noticed that the play 'contained much

⁵⁰³ Anon., 'Theatres', *Times*, 22 November 1803, p. 3.

⁵⁰⁴ Moody, 'Romantic Shakespeare', p. 37.

⁵⁰⁵ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Henry Nelson Coleridge, 4 vols (London, 1836), II, p. 101.

⁵⁰⁶ William Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Poets* (London, 1841), p. 88.

⁵⁰⁷ John Philip Kemble, *Macbeth and King Richard The Third* (London, 1817), p. 171.

⁵⁰⁸ Anon., 'Impromptu', *True Briton*, 24 December 1794.

⁵⁰⁹ Anon., *Oracles and Public Advertiser*, 31 December 1794.

that was complimentary to the public and private virtues of the present sovereign'.⁵¹⁰

However, I argue that the fact that Kemble and his Georgian predecessors needed to keep justifying the monarchy's authority was in itself a testimony that a change in terms of power relations was inevitable, and it is possible that Kemble's productions betrayed this anxiety. Without a doubt, Kemble and Siddons were impressive as the Duke and Isabella and their productions were well received.

According to *True Briton*, on 11 January 1797, it 'attracted [...] a [...] well filled House'.⁵¹¹ *The Times* also maintained that its cast was 'so perfect'.⁵¹²

Nonetheless, since they kept performing this play until Siddons's retirement in 1812, audiences commented on the waning of their physical and creative powers, as Highfill, Burnim and Langhans note.⁵¹³ By the time of what was probably their last performance on 26 June 1812,⁵¹⁴ Kemble was 54 years old and Siddons nearly 56. According to Linda Kelly, because of her rheumatism, 'when Siddons knelt to the Duke' in the final scene, 'it took two attendants to raise her to her feet again'.⁵¹⁵ Joseph Jekyll describes Siddons in her age as 'a majestic ruin'.⁵¹⁶ It is possible that, instead of assuring the endurance of the establishment, later

⁵¹⁰ Boaden, *Memoirs*, p. 256.

⁵¹¹ Anon., 'The Theatre', *True Briton*, 12 January 1797. See also, Anon., 'The Theatre', *True Briton*, 29 October 1798., Anon., 'Covent-Garden Theatre', *Morning Post*, 31 October 1811.

⁵¹² Anon., 'Theatre', *Times*, 1 January 1794.

⁵¹³ Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim and Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers & Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, 16 vols (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), VIII, p. 356. See also, XIV, p. 28.

⁵¹⁴ Anon., *Morning Post*, 22 June 1812, p. 1.

⁵¹⁵ Linda Kelly, *The Kemble Era: John Philip Kemble, Sarah Siddons and the London Stage* (London: Bodley Head, 1980), p. 169.

⁵¹⁶ Highfill, Burnim and Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary*, XIV, p. 32.

performances staging the ‘ruin’ of the ‘stately’ Kemble and the ‘sainted’ Siddons, demonstrated decadence, reminding spectators that nothing lasts forever, including the power of the monarchy. With the rise of Napoleon, democratic ideology and the decline of George III, regardless of the theatre’s intention, some audiences might have found the idea of bestowing absolute power on one man questionable. This interpretation would have been facilitated by the play’s ambiguity, the Duke’s arbitrary mercy and the fact that, according to Stephen Lee, ‘the misuse of royal prerogative [...] remained a central feature of Whig politics throughout this period’.⁵¹⁷

Unlike advertisements in the early eighteenth century, many of those for Kemble’s productions identified the author of the play. On 13 January 1795, *The Morning Post and Fashionable World* announced: ‘This present evening their Majesties Servants will act for the 3rd time, Shakespeare’s Comedy of Measure for Measure. [...] N. B. A new edition of *Measure for Measure* to be had in the Theatre’.⁵¹⁸ Kemble seemed to indirectly suggest that, by consulting the ‘new edition’, one would appreciate the performance more. At this point, the authority of the author and his text in legitimizing the performance seemed to be established.

Kemble’s productions had at least two kinds of impact on productions in the future. Firstly, Siddons’s *Isabella* would become a gauge by which spectators used

⁵¹⁷ Stephen M. Lee, ‘Parliament, Parties and Elections (1760-1815)’, in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. by H. T. Dickinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 69-80 (p. 74).

⁵¹⁸ Anon., ‘Theatre Royal, Drury-Lane’, *Morning Post and Fashionable World*, 13 January 1795.

to measure the successes of Victorian actresses who played this role. Secondly, Kemble's acting edition would be used by Samuel Phelps for his productions at Sadler's Wells which to further the process of 'purifying' the Bard, cut more 'bawdy' elements. As Paul Langford asserts, 'what is taken to be so distinctive about the Victorians can be traced back to eighteenth-century developments, [...] [f]or example, their faith in reform, their belief in self-improvement and social improvement'.⁵¹⁹ These sentiments would continue to influence the productions of *Measure for Measure* in the Victorian period.

Phelps's *Measure for Measure*: 'Shakespeare' for the Victorians

In 1846, Samuel Phelps staged his first production of *Measure for Measure* at Sadler's Wells, a theatre in Islington which he took over in 1844. Why did he mount this unpopular play in just the third year of his management and, according to Bawcutt, revived it from time to time until 1857?⁵²⁰ Firstly, it was probably due to his desire to 'expand the traditional repertory [...] with neglected works of known playwrights'.⁵²¹ According to *The Times*, in the mid-nineteenth century, *Measure for Measure* 'has long ceased to be a regular acting play'. The review summarises that in 1824:

⁵¹⁹ Paul Langford, 'Epilogue', in *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Paul Langford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 245-248 (p. 245).

⁵²⁰ Bawcutt, *Measure for Measure*, p. 32.

⁵²¹ Shirley S. Allen, *Samuel Phelps and Sadler's Wells Theatre* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), p. 91.

[T]he drama was produced at Drury-lane for the sake of Mrs. Bunn. As it was only acted twice at the time of that revival, we may conclude its success was not very great. Prior to that time it was produced at Covent-garden during the engagement of Miss O'Neil, who played Isabella for the first time on the 8th of February, 1816. The piece was then acted five nights.⁵²²

Before Phelps's production in 1846, *Measure for Measure* probably had not been performed in London for 20 years.

Secondly, *Measure for Measure* is the most appropriate of Shakespeare's plays to advocate moral reform. Hence, it is a mistake to ignore his *Measure for Measure* since it best reflected Phelps's reform mission and its limits in the Victorian context. Phelps took over Sadler's Wells with a 'vision' to establish 'a popular theatre with Shakespeare and the poetic drama'.⁵²³ In a statement that inaugurated the new management, Phelps expressed his desire to make his theatre 'a place for justly representing the works of our great dramatic poets' and to 'exalt the entertainments, and with them the tastes of their audiences'.⁵²⁴ For him, it was an opportunity to present his 'impressions of the great masters [...] to generations of men and women who had never seen these wonderful works acted, to many who had never even read them'.⁵²⁵ Moving from the West End to a theatre known for its aquatic melodramas in the less fashionable Islington, Phelps seemed to believe

⁵²² Anon., 'Sadler's-Wells Theatre', *Times*, 5 November 1846, p. 5.

⁵²³ John Coleman, *Memoirs of Samuel Phelps* (London: Remington, 1886), p. 200.

⁵²⁴ Allen, *Samuel Phelps*, pp. 82-83.

⁵²⁵ Coleman, *Memoirs*, p. 207.

that many of his spectators were not familiar with Shakespeare's plays. Russell Jackson is undoubtedly correct when he regards Phelps as one of the 'humanitarian reformers of culture'.⁵²⁶ Phelps's perception of Shakespeare's greatness was in line with many of his contemporaries. For Thomas Beddoes, Shakespeare was nothing less than 'a god'.⁵²⁷ Similarly, for Matthew Arnold, his 'gifts' are 'divine' as '[t]he Bible'.⁵²⁸ As Richard Schoch argues, to read, to watch or to act 'Shakespeare' was to pursue a cultural ideal because, in this era, 'Shakespeare' was 'the personification of every social and cultural enterprise which merited the proud name "Victorian"'.⁵²⁹ In this sense, Phelps played an important role in advancing the role of Shakespeare as an educator. His vision evidently inspired Charles Flower to establish a theatre for Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon.⁵³⁰

Phelps's *Measure for Measure* was a case in point to understanding his role as a reformer of culture. The similarity between Phelps's role as an actor-manager and that of the Duke is striking. In 1846, Phelps played the Duke. For *The Theatrical Journal*, his Duke 'was judicious and careful',⁵³¹ and for *The Times*, Phelps played the Duke 'with the best taste and judgment'.⁵³² The 'judicious' Duke

⁵²⁶ Russell Jackson, *Victorian Theatre: A New Mermaid Background Book* (London: A&C Black, 1989), p. 10.

⁵²⁷ Thomas Lovell Beddoes, *The Poetical Works of Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, 2 vols (London: 1890), i, p. 31.

⁵²⁸ Matthew Arnold, *Mixed Essays* (New York: Macmillan, 1879), pp. 267, 245.

⁵²⁹ Richard W. Schoch, 'Pictorial Shakespeare', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 58-75 (p. 74).

⁵³⁰ M. C. Day and J. C. Trewin, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1932), vii.

⁵³¹ Anon., 'Sadler's Wells', *Theatrical Journal*, 7 (1846), 364-365 (p. 364).

⁵³² Anon., 'Sadler's-Wells Theatre', 5 November 1846, p. 5.

reflected Phelps's role as the stage manager 'with the best taste' who tried to correct 'the tastes' of his spectators. One wonders whether, in performance, there was a moment when the boundary between Phelps as the Duke and Phelps as the stage manager was blurred. When he said that he did not like 'assemblies / Where youth and cost witless bravery keeps' (I. 2. 9-10), it could have been not only a criticism to the Duke's subjects but also Phelps's warning to his spectators against 'witless bravery' in the gallery. When the Duke devises the bed trick and the head trick, and assigns other characters to various roles in the last scene to create a 'well-balanced' plot (IV. 3. 97), it might have reminded spectators and other members of the company of Phelps's role as a puppet master who directed other actors and set the scene to create a harmonious performance.

A harmonious performance in which all elements of scenography and acting were united was an outstanding feature of Phelps's productions which, in turn, reflected an ideal image of Victorian society very prevalent in the period. *The Times* maintained that, for the 1846 production, '[e]ven in the minor characters it was worth while to observe the care with which the play had been studied. There was no slippery, shuffling work, but every one spoke as if he thoroughly understood what he was saying' and '[t]he jokes of Pompey the clown, and the impertinences of Lucio, the "fantastic," came out with remarkably good effect'.⁵³³ According to *The Theatrical Journal*, 'Mr. Younge, as the illiterate constable, was very amusing'.⁵³⁴ Similarly, for the production in 1849, *The Theatrical Journal* asserted that 'the whole strength of the company are [sic] brought forward very

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Anon., 'Sadler's Wells', p. 364.

efficiently'.⁵³⁵ The harmonious performance was in line with what Harvie identifies as the social and political climate in the mid-nineteenth century. By this time, Harvie argues, '[e]conomic and social theory moved towards the idea of "incorporation"' and, rather than revolution, '[t]he intellectuals accepted the notion of political and social evolution'. They advocated 'individualist morality'.⁵³⁶ Shakespeare was, thus, in this case, incorporated as a means to advance 'social evolution'. Furthermore, given the spectators' responses, it is reasonable to assume that Phelps was successful in introducing his actors and his spectators to the 'neglected' *Measure for Measure*.

Phelps's success advocated the role of Shakespeare in shaping a Victorian ideal of communal unity widely promoted by political and economic leaders of the time. To some extent, his method reflected what Ubersfeld calls 'the image people have of spatial relationships' which *The Leeds Mercury* described when the Queen came to Leeds to open their Town Hall:

[The British empire with] the variety of races, colours, languages, religions, institutions, and laws [...] has consolidated under one imperial head. [...] Under her shield, life is sacred, property is secure, the husbandman sows and reaps, the capitalist invests his money safely, and the labourer goes forth to his work and to his labour till the evening.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁵ Anon., 'Metropolitan Theatres', *Theatrical Journal*, 10 (1849), 302-303 (p. 302).

⁵³⁶ Harvie, 'Revolution', pp. 514-516.

⁵³⁷ Anon., 'The Queen in Leeds', *Leeds Mercury*, 7 September 1858.

Looking back to the eighteenth century's valorization of Shakespeare as a national icon, Thomas Carlyle proposed the role of Shakespeare in establishing national unity:

And now, what is it that can keep all these together into virtually one Nation, so that they do not fall-out and fight, but live in peace, in brotherlike intercourse, helping one another? [...] We can fancy [King Shakespeare] as radiant aloft over all the Nations of Englishmen. [...] English men and women [...] will say to one another 'Yes, this Shakespeare is ours; we produced him, we speak and think by him; we are of one blood and kind with him'.⁵³⁸

Sadler's Wells was a microcosm of the Empire. At this theatre, Phelps was the 'head' and, '[u]nder [his] shield', everyone worked diligently for the sake of Shakespeare, another 'sacred' idol. The actors who played minor characters 'studied' the play and attempted to do their best because Shakespeare was 'ours' and it was their duty to produce him for their countrymen.

To promote family values and 'individualist morality', Phelps avoided moral 'indecencies' in the play by altering the text and, in the process, he reinvented *Measure for Measure*. To maintain the image of Shakespeare as a cultural ideal, Phelps used Kemble's acting edition and heavily bowdlerized the play's sexual contents. A representative example of his cuts is Lucio's 'Carnally' (V. 1. 214)

⁵³⁸ Thomas Carlyle, *The Works of Thomas Carlyle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 113-114.

since Phelps cut every implication of carnal activity.⁵³⁹ The pregnant Juliet is completely removed. The explanation of her absence can be found in Mrs. Panton's self-help book which advises pregnant women to make 'an enforced retirement from public life'.⁵⁴⁰ This advice was probably due to a belief advocated by Victorian doctors such as William Acton that, to conceive, women must experience orgasm during sexual intercourse.⁵⁴¹ Hence, for many Victorians, being pregnant meant taking pleasure in sex which conflicted with the image of woman as 'the angel in the house'. Like the conduct-book writer Panton, who adopts a euphemism, 'arrival of No. 1', for childbirth,⁵⁴² Phelps avoided using the word 'child' in his prompt book. Mistress Overdone's 'for getting / Madam Julietta with child' (I. 2. 70-71) becomes 'for making Madam Julietta a mother'. Thus, the implication of Juliet's sexual intercourse to get a 'child' is downplayed while her maternal role is stressed. This emphasis was a part of what historian Ira Nadel identifies as Victorian ideologies of the time, namely, promoting domestic values and the role of women as mothers, which were symbolized with the image of Queen Victoria. Nadel notes that the Queen's portraits during 'the years of her marriage, 1840-1861', represent her as 'Queen and Mother'. Only 'few of the portraits of this period remain only of Victoria'.⁵⁴³ Phelps ended his production with the interpolation that he 'borrowed' from Kemble, stressing the image of a harmonious society ruled by a 'judicious' Duke and a sainted Isabella. His moral

⁵³⁹ Samuel Phelps, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Sadler's Wells, London (Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC) PROMPT Meas. 3. For this thesis, I use a microfilm of this prompt book available at Lancaster University Library, [4/977].

⁵⁴⁰ J. E. Panton, *From Kitchen to Garret* (London: 1890), p.180.

⁵⁴¹ William Acton, *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs* (London: Churchill, 1862), p. 101.

⁵⁴² Panton, *From Kitchen*, p.180.

⁵⁴³ Ira Nadel, 'Portraits of the Queen', *Victorian Poetry*, 25 (1987), 169-191 (pp. 175, 178).

lesson to spectators seemed to be that virtue creates a peaceful society while lust destabilizes it.

However, I argue that Phelps's prompt book, completely neglected by critics, betrays the hypocrisy of Victorian reformers who turned a blind eye on the root of the problems of those below them. Phelps's alterations obscure Lucio's extramarital sex with Kate Keepdown. His unwitting confession to the Duke that he has unlawfully got her 'with child' (IV. 4. 165-166) and his claim that she is 'a whore' (V. 1. 517-518) are removed. The scene between Escalus and Mistress Overdone in which she tells him of her role in taking care of Lucio's illegitimate child is cut. These cuts obscure the function of prostitutes in taking care of illegitimate children and, in a larger sense, underprivileged people. Writing to *The Times*, a prostitute, who called herself 'Another Unfortunate', maintained that 'nearly all of the real undisguised prostitutes in London' came from her 'class' and this job was their way to support families when 'starvation wages' failed them.⁵⁴⁴ Phelps's cut reflects the hypocrisy of 'humanitarian reformers' who wanted to develop the poor's quality of life but were reluctant to acknowledge the causes of prostitution. In this context, Angelo was likely to be deemed an example of a member of the elite.

Phelps's production also betrayed the hidden tensions between classes, lying beneath an ideal image of social unity. As Jackson maintains, Sadler's Wells 'attracted [...] a mixture of middle- and working-class' audience.⁵⁴⁵ Phelps's

⁵⁴⁴ Anon., 'The Great Social Evil', *Times*, 24 February 1858, p. 12.

⁵⁴⁵ Russell Jackson, 'Shakespeare in London', in *Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by

theatre attracted a different kind of audience from that in the previous eras. They were petit bourgeois, the products of the Industrial Revolution and, presumably, attending a Shakespearean play in a gentlemanly manner seemed to be their way to achieve ‘upward mobility’.⁵⁴⁶ However, the arrangement of the auditorium at Sadler’s Wells reaffirmed social barriers by physically demarcating playgoers by price of seat. According to a police report on visits to the theatres, including the Sadler’s Wells, in 1845, the ‘Boxes in each of the Houses appeared occupied by persons of a superior class to those in the Galleries, from what I could judge from their dress and demeanour’.⁵⁴⁷ The physical demarcation, in turn, reminded the lower class spectators of their own inferiority to those in the boxes, in spite of the appearance of inclusivity offered by the theatre’s location and tradition as a place of popular entertainment.



AllPosters

Fig. 30. Interior of Sadler’s Wells.

Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 148-168 (p. 157).

⁵⁴⁶ Trussler, *The Cambridge Illustrated History*, p. 244.

⁵⁴⁷ Donald Roy and Victor Emeljanow, ed., ‘The Police Report on Visits to the Theatres, 1845’, in *Theatre in Europe: A Documentary History: Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 156.

Although, in theory, many playgoers of ‘a superior class’ might have agreed with Isabella that ‘More than our brother is our chastity’ (II. 4. 186) and extramarital sex is ‘a vice [that] should meet the blow of justice’ (II. 2. 29-30), it is possible that many of the working-class spectators at Sadler’s Wells might have had different opinions. Before Phelps’s time, William Wordsworth visited Sadler’s Wells, which he regarded as a ‘light place’. In that occasion, he saw not only a prostitute with ‘[f]alse tints’ but also ‘dissolute men / And shameless women, treated and caressed’.⁵⁴⁸ Similarly, the police report recorded: ‘There were a few Prostitutes in each of the Galleries, but the rest of the audience was composed of grown up persons, apparently labourers and mechanics’.⁵⁴⁹

In 1846, Laura Addison played Isabella as a ‘sweet’ person, a characterization that deliberately downplayed ‘the popular association between actresses and prostitutes [which] endured throughout the nineteenth century’.⁵⁵⁰ Rather than sympathising with the gentle Isabella, however, it is more likely that many of the ‘prostitutes’ and their dependents and clients would have agreed with ‘Another Unfortunate’ who asserted that virtue was only a means of ‘Mr. Philanthropist’ to control people in her class.⁵⁵¹ For some working class spectators, Isabella’s belief must have sounded naïve since, as ‘Another Unfortunate’ maintained, in reality, it was ‘the un-Christian system [...] of society’ which ‘has itself driven [poor people] by direst straits’ that encouraged that ‘vice’.⁵⁵²

⁵⁴⁸ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (London: D. Appleton, 1850), pp. 185-186.

⁵⁴⁹ Roy and Emeljanow, ed., ‘The Police Report’, p. 156.

⁵⁵⁰ Tracy Davis, ‘Actresses and Prostitutes in Victorian London’, *Theatre Research International*, 13 (1988), 221-234 (p. 221).

⁵⁵¹ Anon., ‘The Great Social Evil’, p. 12.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Measure for Measure was revived at Sadler's Wells in 1850 to highlight Catholic hypocrisy at the time of the so-called 'the Popish Aggression', a point not noticed by more general studies of Phelps and Victorian Shakespeare. In this revival, some spectators might have read Henry Marston's Duke negatively. On 29 September, one month before the performance, Pope Pius IX issued a papal bull which, in effect, reestablished the diocesan hierarchy in England, entitled Nicholas Wiseman the Archbishop of Westminster and sent him to London. This news 'was faced with a nation-wide attack'.⁵⁵³ The appropriation of the name of Westminster, 'the very seat of the Court and the Parliament of England', deeply upset *The Times*'s editor who denounced it as 'the grossest acts of folly and impertinence' of Rome.⁵⁵⁴ Six days later, *The Times* warned English people that the Pope means to 'divide with the crown the allegiance of our fellow-countrymen' and 'a more ostentatious and ambitious display of the pretensions of the Papal Court is actually at hand'.⁵⁵⁵ It is possible that Phelps decided to revive *Measure for Measure* on 21 October to make a profit from the controversy. The connection between the Duke and the Popish Aggression was made more likely by the fact that, before going to England, Wiseman visited Vienna, where, on 14 October 1850, he saw his name in *The Times*'s 'leading article'.⁵⁵⁶ Hence, it is possible that some Protestant theatregoers might have found it hard to take the Duke who came 'from the See / In special business from his Holiness' as a

⁵⁵³ E. E. Reynolds, *Three Cardinals: Newman, Wiseman, Manning* (London: Burns & Oates, 1958), p. 88.

⁵⁵⁴ Anon., 'London, Monday, October 14, 1850', *Times*, 14 October 1850, p. 4.

⁵⁵⁵ Anon., 'London, Saturday, October 19, 1850', *Times*, 19 October 1850, p. 4.

⁵⁵⁶ Brian Fothergill, *Nicholas Wiseman* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), p. 158.

virtuous hero. The interpolated ending expressing the Duke's desire to 'rule mankind' with 'true spirit', which in Kemble's time would have emphasised his virtue, might have been interpreted as 'Popish Aggression' in 1850. Perhaps it was for this reason that Phelps did not play the Duke in 1850 whereas, in 1846, he 'was afraid to intrust the Duke to' George Bennett, another actor in his company.⁵⁵⁷

In response to the Popish Aggression, Phelps's 1850 revival challenged the Duke's religious authority by staging a forceful Isabella, strongly influenced by Siddons's earlier success. Addison's 'sweet' Isabella of 1846 had upset a critic of *The Times* who expected her to have the 'stern dignity' that Siddons possessed:

Isabella was very sweetly played by Miss Laura Addison, - too sweetly, for she lacked the stern dignity which is necessary to give its full importance of the part. It was a nice, delicate conception, but her voice was too soft, her manner too gentle, to represent that awfulness of virtue which belongs to Isabella.⁵⁵⁸

In contrast, in 1850, Miss Glyn played Isabella as a 'stately maiden'.⁵⁵⁹ She, according to Allen, 'had the tragic force which Laura Addison [...] never achieved, and she used the classic style of the Kembles with poses reminiscent of

⁵⁵⁷ W. May Phelps and John Forbes-Robertson, *The Life and Life-Work of Samuel Phelps* (London: 1886), p. 89.

⁵⁵⁸ Anon., 'Sadler's-Wells Theatre', 5 November 1846, p. 5.

⁵⁵⁹ Anon., 'Sadler's Wells Theatre', *Times*, 21 October 1850, p. 2.

Mrs. Siddons'.⁵⁶⁰ If, in 1850, the Duke reminded spectators of Wiseman, they would have been relieved to have an Isabella who had the 'force' to stand up to him.

Phelps's productions reaffirmed traditional family values and the image of social harmony but, at the same time, it exposed the hypocrisy of the upper class and, in the case of the production in 1850, challenged religious authority. There is no doubt that the need of Sadler's Wells for catering to a wider range of audiences helped shape a more democratic 'Shakespeare'. Nevertheless, did Phelps's excellent productions succeed in popularizing the 'neglected' *Measure for Measure*? Up to a point, his first production did. According to *The Theatrical Journal*, on the night of its performance, 'the theatre was very full'.⁵⁶¹ Similarly, *The Times* asserted that it 'achieved a very fair success'.⁵⁶² It was perhaps the production of *Measure for Measure* in the Victorian period that had the largest number of performances. Nonetheless, estimating from Janice Norwood's list, this production, which ran for at least 13 performances, only met the average number of performances of Sadler's Wells's productions in that season.⁵⁶³ The 1856 production was performed only twice.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶⁰ Allen, *Samuel Phelps*, p. 119.

⁵⁶¹ Anon., 'Sadler's Wells', p. 364.

⁵⁶² Anon., 'Sadler's-Wells Theatre', 5 November 1846, p. 5.

⁵⁶³ Janice Norwood, 'A Reference Guide to Performances of Shakespeare's Plays in Nineteenth-Century London', in *Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 348-416 (p. 404).

⁵⁶⁴ Bawcutt, *Measure for Measure*, p. 32.

It seems that, as the Victorian period proceeded, *Measure for Measure* became more and more unpopular. As in the previous century, its subversive themes of abusive authority, sex and moral ambiguity may have proved too disturbing for Victorian producers and audiences. According to Norwood's list, in this period, there was only one production of it every 20 years, with an average run of only 5 performances per production.⁵⁶⁵ In 1876, *The Morning Post*'s critic gave two reasons for the decline of *Measure for Measure*'s popularity on the stage. Firstly, it was due to '[t]he absence of [...] an actress able to play the heroine to perfection' as Siddons did. The second reason was its problematic contents:

That the play is no longer popular upon the boards is also explained by the facts that the poetic beauties in which it so richly abounds can hardly be separated in representation from the alloy which the incidents cast upon them. The story, though of absorbing interest, is not altogether pleasant to modern ears.⁵⁶⁶

As Shakespeare was 'a god', many Victorians did not want to be reminded that he also created 'the alloy' and, if one decided to present his 'not altogether pleasant' play, one needed to downplay its 'unpleasant' side as Phelps and Poel did.

Therefore, what Victorian spectators of Phelps and Poel's productions experienced was another version of the play, a sexually restrained, softened *Measure for Measure*, or at least, that was the producers' intention. The sacred Bard despised the brainchild of the man from Stratford whose own family history

⁵⁶⁵ Norwood, 'A Reference Guide', pp. 351-415.

⁵⁶⁶ Anon., 'Haymarket Theatre', *Morning Post*, 3 April 1876.

included cases of sexual scandal.⁵⁶⁷ One needs to wait until the twentieth century to find productions which embraced the play's subversive overtones.

***Measure for Measure* (1931-1962): Changes in a Changing World**

In this section, I argue that productions of *Measure for Measure* in England from 1931 to 1962 contributed to establish the reputation of *Measure for Measure* as a dark comedy with a critical view towards authority and gender conventions.

Although the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre (later the Royal Shakespeare Company) was not the only company that performed the play, this section focuses on its productions and that of Margaret Webster at the Old Vic in 1957, firstly to highlight the institutionalization of Shakespeare as a national resource, and secondly for the very practical reason of the accessibility of primary sources.

Previous reviews usually focused on performances and characterizations of one production. As a result, they failed to see the similarities and originalities of each production. This is the first archival research which studies these productions together and, in doing so, allows me to see the specific contributions of each production in terms of interpretations and scenography which affected future productions and society beyond.

The first production of *Measure for Measure* at the SMT in 1884 by Charles Bernard continued Phelps's aim of popularizing 'the art' of Shakespeare as a

⁵⁶⁷ Michael Wood, *In Search of Shakespeare* (London: BBC Books, 2003), p. 372. Susanna, Shakespeare's eldest daughter, was 'accused of adultery' and Shakespeare's son-in-law, Thomas Quiney, was 'summoned to appear in his local church court on a charge of moral delinquency'.

national asset, and thus reflected the vision of Charles Flower, the founder of the Shakespeare Memorial Association.⁵⁶⁸ As Frank Benson put it:

Perhaps it was chiefly from Phelps's lantern that Charles Flower lit his own. His work seems to be the embodiment of Phelps's utterance: 'If we allow Shakespearean Drama to disappear from our stage, the life of our people will infallibly tend to become less noble'.⁵⁶⁹

For the SMT, to perform the plays of the Bard was to do the nation a service.

It might have been the desire to prevent any of Shakespeare's plays from disappearing that, despite its decline in popularity since the Victorian era, Bernard decided to play *Measure for Measure* in 1884. Although the whole season 'passed quietly',⁵⁷⁰ the production was moderately successful, and Miss Alleyn was commended for a performance in which she 'played Isabella exquisitely'.⁵⁷¹ This production was revived the next year. The small size of the original theatre, containing only '700 people', its 'intimacy and good acoustics' undoubtedly helped.⁵⁷²

On 23 April 1923, under William Bridges-Adams's management, *Measure for Measure* was again revived. In Stratford, 23 April was understandably an

⁵⁶⁸ Micheline Steinberg, *Flashback: A Pictorial History 1879-1979, One Hundred Years of Stratford-upon-Avon and the Royal Shakespeare Company* (Stratford-upon-Avon: RSC, 1985), p. 8.

⁵⁶⁹ Day and Trewin, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, vii.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁵⁷² Ruth Ellis, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre* (London: Winchester, 1948), p. 9.

important date. It was not only the anniversary of Shakespeare's birthday but also the date when, in 1879, the theatre was opened.⁵⁷³ In 1923, *Measure for Measure* was honoured to be performed on that important day as 'the birthday play'. Even though the Festival was 'featureless',⁵⁷⁴ this production was well received.

According to *The Times*, the production was successful because of 'Mr. Cellier, a quiet, quickly speaking Angelo'. In effect, '*Measure for Measure*, which some have thought a strange choice for the birthday play, yet sent the audience home well content'.⁵⁷⁵ Ben Iden Payne mounted another production of this play in 1940 during the Second World War, as a critic suggested, to advertise the importance of mercy and sympathy with fellowmen. Baliol Holloway's Lucio and Clare Harris's *Mistress Overdone* were 'humorous' and 'earn[ed] the right to exist'.⁵⁷⁶ Payne seemed to present the low-life characters in a sympathetic way which reflected a sense of tolerance and unity, brought about by the inevitable mixing of people of different classes during the war. Unfortunately, few materials, not even the prompt books, for the productions in 1884, 1923 and 1940 have survived.

The earliest *Measure for Measure* prompt book available at the Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive in Stratford-upon-Avon is that of Bridges-Adams in 1931 at a picture house on Greenhill Street, which the company used as their temporary theatre after the original theatre burned down. This production was totally ignored by critics though it is an illustrative example of the conventional staging of *Measure for Measure* which future directors challenged. Unlike the

⁵⁷³ Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 17.

⁵⁷⁴ Day and Trewin, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, p. 174.

⁵⁷⁵ Anon., 'The Shakespeare Festival', *Times*, 25 April 1923, p. 12.

⁵⁷⁶ Anon., 'The Stratford Festival', *Times*, 24 April 1940, p. 4.

Victorian productions, Bridges-Adams staged a relatively ‘full’ text. In this, he engaged with a change of ‘Shakespeare’. According to Gary Taylor, ‘since Shakespeare had become in twentieth-century biography merely a set of texts, anyone who disintegrated them was disintegrating Shakespeare’.⁵⁷⁷ From now on, the low-life characters would rarely be removed and their presence naturally was a challenge to authority.

Nevertheless, Bridges-Adams’ production refrained from criticising the establishment. In the prompt book, the Duke’s ‘Sith ’twas my fault to give the people scope’ and ‘Who may in the ambush of my name strike home’ are cut.⁵⁷⁸ His lie to the Provost that Angelo’s ‘life is parallel’d’; his explanation to Isabella why he does not save Claudio and his pardon of Barnadine are removed. According to Ruth Ellis, Randle Ayrton’s ‘authority invested the “fantastic Duke” with the mystic’s conception of the part as a more-than-human being symbolizing the “Power Divine”’.⁵⁷⁹ In the prompt book, the connection between the Duke and a supernatural agent is strengthened by the sound of the ‘church bell’ which greets his return in the last scene.

Bridges-Adams’s ‘Shakespeare’ deliberately refused to get involved with contemporary social issues. During this time the world was facing a great economic crisis. In England, five months before the first performance, 2,643,127

⁵⁷⁷ Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present* (London: Hogarth, 1989), p. 282.

⁵⁷⁸ William Bridges-Adams, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Memorial Temporary Theatre, Stratford, 1931 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/SM/1/1931/MEA1. The subsequent references to or quotations from the prompt book will be referred to this material.

⁵⁷⁹ Ellis, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, p. 66.

people were unemployed, ‘the highest recorded since the unemployment insurance statistics began in 1921’.⁵⁸⁰ With the memory of the General Strike in 1926 which, according to Steve Nicholson, was the closest to ‘outright class war’ that Britain experienced in the twentieth century,⁵⁸¹ 1931 was indeed a time of insecurity. Bridges-Adams’s production reflected Sally Beaman’s remark that, in the 1930s, ‘the work at Stratford continued serenely unaffected by the turmoil of the outside world’.⁵⁸²

This production was part of the trend of theatres in the 1930s which, according to Tony Howard, favored ‘the escapist spirit’.⁵⁸³ The large pillar in the prison scene reflected this spirit since it hid the cells from spectators’ view and, in effect, the harsh life in Vienna was obscured. The visual domination of the pillar materialized phallic authority and, according to the prompt book, it is before this pillar that Isabella listens to the Duke’s bed trick and kneels to thank him for his ‘comfort’.

⁵⁸⁰ Anon., ‘2,643,127 Huge Increase in Unemployment’, *Manchester Guardian*, 7 January 1931.

⁵⁸¹ Steve Nicholson, ‘A Critical Year in Perspective: 1926’, in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, ed. by Baz Kershaw, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), III, pp. 127-142 (p. 127).

⁵⁸² Beaman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 160.

⁵⁸³ Tony Howard, ‘Blood on the Bright Young Things: Shakespeare in the 1930s’, in *British Theatre between the Wars, 1918-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 135-161 (p. 140).

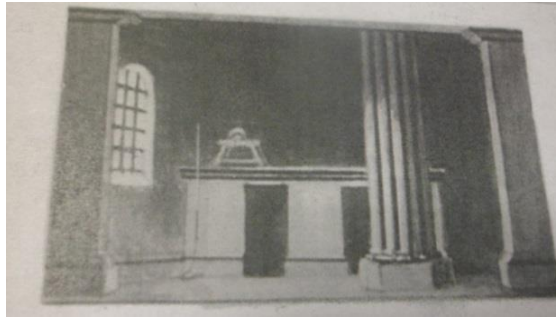


Fig. 31. Painting of William Bridges-Adams's set of *Measure for Measure* in 1931 at the Memorial Temporary Theatre.

In the trial scene, phallic authority was stressed by the curtain hanging in a vertical line from the floor to the ceiling behind the Duke's throne. This scenography assured spectators of the existence of patriarchal order and trustworthy guidance. Here 'Shakespeare' was indirectly used to support the establishment, a position that the RSC would later adopt when it became an establishment itself.



Fig. 32. Bridges-Adams's trial scene.

As Ralph Berry noted: the reading of the Duke as an agent of goodness and *Measure for Measure* as an allegorical play was repeated in productions at the

SMT until the 1960s.⁵⁸⁴ This reading was influenced by Wilson Knight who maintained that '[t]he play must be read [...] as a parable, like the parables of Jesus' and it ends with 'the universal and level forgiveness'.⁵⁸⁵ The directors usually removed lines which undermine the image of the Duke as a merciful man. In Antony Quayle's prompt book in 1956, the Duke 'To hopeful execution do I leave you' and 'Nor need you, on mine honour, have to do / With any scruple' are removed.⁵⁸⁶ The directors also created business to emphasise the theme of universal forgiveness. In John Blatchley's prompt book in 1962, in the last scene, even the headstrong Barnadine kneels to the Duke. This business is a variation on the treatment of the puzzling, arbitrary pardon which the other productions avoid by cutting. From these examples, it is clear that Worthen is right to maintain that '[a]ll productions betray the text'. Even to represent a conventional reading, the directors inevitably needed to go beyond the text.

It is misleading to believe that theatregoers would have always seen the Dukes as the faultless figures of 'Power Divine'. *Measure for Measure* always allows different interpretations. The spectators' reactions towards the Dukes between 1931 and 1962 are a strong instance of how this play provokes and registers

⁵⁸⁴ Ralph Berry, *Changing Styles in Shakespeare* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 40.

⁵⁸⁵ G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearian Tragedy with Three News Essays* (London: Mathuen, 1961), p. 96.

⁵⁸⁶ Anthony Quayle, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford, 1956 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/SM/1/1956/MEA1. See also, Frank McMullan, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford, 1946 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/SM/1/1946/MEA1., Margaret Webster, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Old Vic, London, 1957 (Theatre Collection, Bristol) OVPB/36., John Blatchley, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 1962 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/SM/1/1962/MEA1. The consequent references or quotations from these productions' prompt books will be referred to these materials.

changing attitudes to authority. As the century went on, critical reviews of productions started questioning the Duke's authority. This trend was discernible even in Frank McMullan's 'bright' production in 1946. Despite McMullan's intention to materialize Wilson Knight's idea of the Duke as Jesus Christ, Wilson Knight did not approve of David King-Wood's Duke. He states that the Duke supposes to have 'depth of psychological insight' but, in McMullan's production, King-Wood's Duke was 'a dandy' and 'the play was thrown out of joint'.⁵⁸⁷ *The Times* called King-Wood's Duke 'Prince Charming'.⁵⁸⁸

Critics had various opinions towards Antony Nicholls's Duke in 1956. For Rosemary Ann Sisson, he possessed 'some quality of Christ'.⁵⁸⁹ Jane Williamson, on the other hand, stated that although he had 'great dignity and grace', he was 'a man, not a figure of Providence'.⁵⁹⁰ More negatively, a critic from *Theatre World*, saw him as 'an arrogant egoist taking his right to play with human lives. [...] [H]is cross is too fanciful to be the emblem of anything but his own vanity. [...] All ideas of the forgiving father are banished'.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁷ G. Wilson Knight, *Shakespearean Production with Especial Reference to the Tragedies* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 257.

⁵⁸⁸ Anon., 'Shakespeare Festival', *Times*, 26 August 1946, p. 6.

⁵⁸⁹ Penny Gay, *As She Likes It: Shakespeare's Unruly Women* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 126.

⁵⁹⁰ Jane Williamson, 'The Duke and Isabella on the Modern Stage', in *The Triple Bond: Plays, Mainly Shakespearean, in Performance*, ed. by Joseph G. Price (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), pp. 149-169 (p. 156).

⁵⁹¹ Gay, *As She Likes It*, p. 125.



Fig. 33. Anthony Nicholls's Duke in Anthony Quayle's *Measure for Measure*, 1956, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.

When Nicholls assumed this role again in Margaret Webster's production in 1957 at the Old Vic, a critic of *The Times* felt that he 'speaks many of his lines in such a way as to convey a touch of absurdity in the absentee ruler playing providence with a gusto that is essentially childish'.⁵⁹² In Quayle's prompt book, the Duke thumps the cross on the ground 'in anger' when he knows that Angelo does not keep his promise. This suggests not only his lack of foreknowledge but also his inability to control his temper and his plan. The critics' scepticism towards Nicholls's Duke and his cross well reflected the crisis of belief and uncertainty after the Second World War.

In the same way, several critics read Tom Fleming's Duke in John Blatchley's production negatively. A reviewer called him a 'puppeteer'.⁵⁹³ For another, he was an 'opportunist' who was 'not very likeable or very profound'.⁵⁹⁴ T. C.

⁵⁹² Anon., 'Measure for Measure at the Old Vic', *Times*, 20 November 1957, p. 3.

⁵⁹³ N. K. W., "'Measure for Measure' Has Promise', *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 11 April 1962, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 55, p. 75.

⁵⁹⁴ Anon., 'Absorbing Game of Hide and Seek', *Times*, 11 April 1962, p. 8.

Worsley complained that Fleming ‘wandered about dropping [‘Be absolute for death’] all over the stage without feeling’.⁵⁹⁵ Since Fleming presented the Duke as someone who did not take his big speech seriously, intentionally or not, he invited theatregoers to see the Duke as a ‘seemer’ who preached what he did not believe. Marius Goring played Angelo as ‘a sincere puritan’.⁵⁹⁶ After the first interview, desperate to get rid of a desire unknown to him, he scourged himself. According to the prompt book, in the first scene, Angelo does not take the commission so the Duke has to put it in his hand. In this way, Angelo can excuse himself of being power-hungry while the Duke looks more manipulative.



Fig. 34. Marius Goring’s repentant, ‘pathetic’ Angelo knelt to Tom Fleming’s ‘stern’ Duke in the last scene in John Blatchley’s *Measure for Measure*, 1962, Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

For *The Times*’s critic, Goring’s Angelo was ‘a pathetic figure’, thus, ‘it [was] monstrous of a hearty type like the Duke to ensnare and humiliate’ him. It was in this sense that J. C. Trewin maintained that Fleming’s Duke ‘was sterner than

⁵⁹⁵ T. C. Worsley, ‘*Measure for Measure*’, *Financial Times*, 12 April 1962, p. 24.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

many'.⁵⁹⁷ Regarding the aforementioned negative attitudes to the Dukes, it was just a matter of time before a director would come up with a Duke who was a complete opposite of a divine deputy. Berry believes the changing trend closely reflected the feelings of people towards those in power:

It is a truism that the general esteem in which authority is held – political, social, institutional – has been declining in the West for some time now, certainly over the last half-generation. The idea of the all-wise, omniscient, Providential ruler may have reached its terminus in the reigns of Churchill and de Gaulle, Adenauer and Eisenhower.⁵⁹⁸

As demonstrated by the defeat of Churchill in the 1945 General Election, people seemed to be determined to leave the old world behind. Consequently, the accepted idea of the Duke as ‘the all-wise, omniscient, Providential ruler’ was challenged.

The scenography of these productions reflected and influenced the public’s changing viewpoints towards authority and gender politics. I argue that, ultimately, it was not the directors’ interpretation of the Duke nor words in the text, but their scenography which had a lasting influence on our perception of *Measure for Measure*. As the social contexts changed, the scenography of the productions also underwent a massive change. In 1946, to playgoers in Stratford,

⁵⁹⁷ J. C. Trewin, ‘The Old Vic and Stratford-upon-Avon’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 13 (1962), 505-519 (p. 513).

⁵⁹⁸ Berry, *Changing Styles*, p. 41.

McMullan presented ‘a bright, simple, comfortably comic’ *Measure for Measure*,⁵⁹⁹ set under a ‘bright Viennese sunshine’.⁶⁰⁰ The street scene between Lucio and the two Gentlemen was in front of a painting of Vienna which looked like a city in a fairy tale. As in Bridges-Adams’s production, the tall pillar and the spears signified phallic authority.



Fig. 35. Act I Scene 2 in front of a painted city,
Frank McMullan’s *Measure for Measure*, 1946,
Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.

According to the production’s photographs, in the final scene, there were flags hanging from the proscenium which gave a sense of festival. Claudio’s prison had a very large window and a wooden wall which looked thin. It did not look intimidating. There was also a false proscenium with stars and sky in every scene and artificial trees which looked like Christmas trees in many scenes.⁶⁰¹ These images would have emphasised the sense of hope, life and salvation, which went

⁵⁹⁹ Gay, *As She Likes It*, p. 121.

⁶⁰⁰ Anon., ‘Shakespeare Festival’, 26 August 1946, p. 6.

⁶⁰¹ Frank McMullan, , Ordinary Files Photographs, *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford, 1946 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/PR/3/1/1946/MEA1.

along with McMullan's reading of *Measure for Measure* as a parable of the New Testament. His scenography also went along with the official celebratory mood of a Victorious Great Britain. Two months before the performance, the London Victory Celebrations were arranged. There was a military parade in the morning and, at night, 'fireworks constantly illuminated the packed Embankment and such perfect grandstands as Waterloo Bridge, and flood-lit buildings helped point a delightful contrast with the six years of black-out'.⁶⁰² As T. O. Lloyd puts it, for people in 1945, this was the time for 'a brave new world'.⁶⁰³

In 1950, Peter Brook, later a cofounder of the RSC,⁶⁰⁴ mounted a production of *Measure for Measure* at the SMT in a completely opposite fashion from that of McMullan's 'bright' world. Following the policy of Quayle, the Artistic Director at that time, whose policy was to utilize 'the best star actors, exquisite and sumptuous costumes, highly elaborate, superbly designed sets',⁶⁰⁵ Brook's production offered playgoers a big star, John Gielgud, who played Angelo, and added 'superbly designed sets' which were, arguably, its most influential aspect. Brook's scenography, probably for the first time, embraced the dark side of the play. In *The Empty Space*, Brook explains his concept:

[*Measure for Measure*] shows these two elements, Holy and Rough, almost schematically, side by side. [...] The darkness of this world is

⁶⁰² Anon., 'Britain's Tribute to War Victors', *Times*, 10 June 1946, p. 4.

⁶⁰³ T. O. Lloyd, *Empire, Welfare State, Europe: English History 1906-1992* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 284.

⁶⁰⁴ From the 1960s, through his *The Theatre of Cruelty* season and Kottian *King Lear*, Peter Brook brought a radical spirit to the RSC. His book, *The Empty Space*, is influential to theatre studies.

⁶⁰⁵ Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 189.

absolutely necessary to the meaning of the play: Isabella's plea for grace has far more meaning in this Dostoevskian setting than it would in lyrical comedy's never-never land.⁶⁰⁶

Since, in *As She Likes It*, feminist critic Penny Gay focuses her analysis exclusively on the characterizations of Isabella, she misses a connection between Brook's revolutionary scenography and that of McMullan. As Brook directed *Love's Labour's Lost* at the SMT in 1946, it is likely that he saw McMullan's production. I argue that the setting of 'never-never land' that he criticised was McMullan's. In his production, Brook created a 'Rough' world through the low-life characters and a 'Holy' world through Harry Andrews's Duke. The image of Andrews's Duke holding a big cross amid miserable prisoners made him look unmistakably like Jesus. Like the Allies, he was a force for good, with a mission to liberate miserable people.



Fig. 36. Harry Andrews's Duke among prisoners
in Peter Brook's *Measure for Measure*, 1950, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.

⁶⁰⁶ Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968), p. 88.

An illustrative moment of the coexistence of both spiritual and physical dimensions occurs, according to the prompt book, when the Duke delivers ‘He who the sword of heaven will bear’ while the ‘prisoners groan’, ‘move’ and ‘murmur’.⁶⁰⁷ In this way, Brook’s spectators were invited to see that just because there is a ‘heaven’ this does not mean that there is no misery and, in fact, heaven is more desirable because of ‘[t]he darkness’.

Darkness was everywhere in Brook’s production. The prompt book calls for torches for the first scene, creating a gloomy opening atmosphere. The gloom spilled over into the comic scene Act I Scene 2. Here spectators could see a big skeleton on the centre flat which forced them to contemplate mortality.

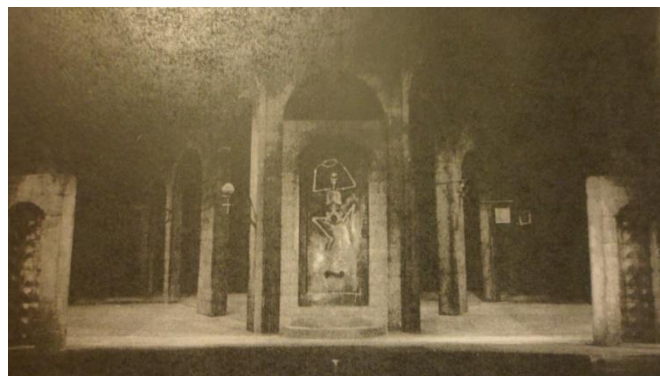


Fig. 37. Peter Brook’s *Measure for Measure*, 1950, Act I Scene 2.

⁶⁰⁷ Peter Brook, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford, 1950 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/SM/1/1950/MEA1. The consequent references or quotations from this production’s prompt book will be referred to this material.

Death and suffering were also emphasised in the prison scene which was full of torture machines.



Fig. 38. Moated grange and prison in Peter Brook's *Measure for Measure*.

The fact that every scene used the same permanent frame suggested that death and misery were an essential part of life in this Vienna.

In addition to the objective space, the 'gestural space' was used to signify a 'Rough' world. According to the prompt book, in Act I Scene 2, the street is full of extras representing peasants, beggars, whores and lepers. These characters often move during this scene. In the same way, before Pompey's 'I am as well acquainted here', there are the sounds of moaning and clanking of chains offstage before a procession of prisoners appears. For playgoers, these movements would have created a 'gestural space' which suggested the prevalence of misery.

According to the production records, this production's costumes are often in dark shades and, especially for lower class characters, dirty. Isabella and Angelo are in 'black wool cloak[s]'. Pompey and the low-life characters sport 'dirty, tattered' clothes.⁶⁰⁸ These dark, 'tattered' and 'dirty' images seemed to reflect the mindset of many people during the Cold War when massive destruction and death by an atomic bomb could happen any minute. As John Baylis and Kristan Stoddart, experts in international politics, maintain, in the 1950s, 'the nuclear testing programmes of the United States, the Soviet Union, and Britain in particular caused growing anxiety about nuclear war breaking out'.⁶⁰⁹

Brook was original in his treatment of the low-life characters. While Phelps and Poel hid them, Brook made them visible, proclaiming their existence and stressing their roughness. For Brook, a 'dirty' world is not necessarily a negative thing:

[I]t is most of all dirt that gives the roughness its edge; filth and vulgarity are natural, obscenity is joyous: with these the spectacle takes on its socially liberating role, for by nature the popular theatre is anti-authoritarian, anti-traditional, anti-pomp, anti-pretence.⁶¹⁰

Brook used the low-life characters in *Measure for Measure* to represent this filthy, 'joyous' and 'anti-authoritarian' spirit. While the courtiers and the well-dressed

⁶⁰⁸ Peter Brook, Production Records, *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford, 1950 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/SM/2/1950/4.

⁶⁰⁹ John Baylis and Kristan Stoddart, *The British Nuclear Experience: The Role of Beliefs, Culture and Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 71.

⁶¹⁰ Brook, *The Empty Space*, p. 68.

crowd in McMullan's prompt book clearly respect the Duke and side with him by laughing at Lucio in the last scene, the crowd in Brook's prompt book 'yells' when the guards try to break Claudio from Lucio during the procession of disgrace. In the last scene, seeing the guards arrest Isabella, the crowd moves so that the guards need to drive them off with their pikes. It is clear that they are on the opposite side of authority and their actions are autonomous. These characters have their own world and Mistress Overdone, played by Rosalind Atkinson, and Pompey, played by George Rose, are at its centre. Hearing Mistress Overdone's complaint about her fate, Rose's Pompey and the low-lives on the street crowded in to console her. Photographs show that they also gathered around Pompey to hear the news about Claudio.



Fig. 39. George Rose's Pompey and the low-life characters
in Peter Brook's *Measure for Measure*.

In this moment, Rose located himself in the *platea* and played the king of a world. With the business generated by Pompey, Mistress Overdone and the crowd of low-life figures, Brook managed to liberate a 'Rough' world and let it exist 'side by side' with the one dominated by the Duke.

Brook's scenography permanently changed how *Measure for Measure* was staged and received. From now on, to categorize *Measure for Measure* as a dark comedy and to stage a 'dark' Vienna was a valid and authorized choice. Brook's influence could be seen in many subsequent productions. As Brook did, Quayle and Webster staged torture machines to remind playgoers of suffering and death. Because of Brook, Mistress Overdone's whores became a regular part of scenography. In Quayle's prompt book, they also have a chance to voice their feelings. 'You cutthroat, filthy bumps' and 'You mouldy rascals' are their responses to the two Gentlemen's teasing. A 'vulgar' Shakespeare had returned to Stratford and a subversive identity had emerged at the SMT, an identity which would become a driving force behind many of their 'anti-authoritarian' productions in the future.

Unlike the level, flat space of Brook's production, multi-levelled sets were used in later productions. In Quayle's production, the set represented the hierarchy in society. According to the prompt book, in the mock trial scene, Angelo sits on the Duke's throne and Escalus sits on a smaller chair on the rostrum while Justice is on a stool below. For Webster's production, according to Milly Barranger, '[w]ith designer Barry Kay [Webster] agreed upon a unit set to demonstrate the cosmic frame of heaven, earth, and hell'.⁶¹¹

⁶¹¹ Milly S. Barranger, *Margaret Webster: A Life in the Theater* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), p. 267.

G. R. Proudfoot stated that, at the beginning, ‘[t]he Duke was above (some nine feet above stage level), his benign authority pictured in the radiating sunbeams’ and ‘[t]he ending [...] gave unequivocal evidence of a desire to vindicate the Duke and Isabella within a Christian scheme of things’.⁶¹²



Fig. 40. Barry Kay’s ‘cosmic frame’

in Margaret Webster’s *Measure for Measure*, 1957, Old Vic.

Rather than making the ‘Rough’ and the ‘Holy’ exist ‘side by side’, Webster divided her playing space into three levels and, in comparison to Quayle’s set, it looked more symmetrical and fixed. According to Webster’s prompt book, in the opening scene, the Duke is on the rostrum, Escalus and other officers are on the stair to the rostrum, whereas Lucio and the two Gentlemen are on the ‘earth’, directly below the Duke. It is also ‘on top rostr’ that the Duke delivers ‘He who the sword of heaven will bear’. In this way, Nicholls’s Duke was linked to the ‘heavens’.

⁶¹² G. R. Proudfoot, ‘Unfolding and Cutting: *Measure for Measure* at the Old Vic in 1957-58’, in *Shakespeare Performed: Essays in Honor of R. A. Foakes*, ed. by Grace Ioppolo (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2000), pp. 164-179 (p. 177).

Ironically, the hierarchical frame might have contributed in making the critic of *The Times* question the Duke's virtue. In a democratic world, the image of him being above Lucio and his friends could be read as a suggestion of his manipulative tendencies. The torture machines might also have made some spectators doubt the mercy of authority. The fact that, shortly before the ending, Derek Godfrey's Lucio was taken to 'hell' would probably have reminded some spectators that, in the end, not everyone could be happy.

Similarly, in Blatchley's production, the set signified the manipulative nature of Fleming's Duke. This production was performed on a stone floor with a wooden platform, surrounded with a high, stone wall.⁶¹³ It looked 'bleak'.⁶¹⁴ *The Times's* critic stated that, on this set, the 'characters find their activities permanently bounded by this wall [...] as beasts in a zoo find their own activities bounded by the bars of a cage'.⁶¹⁵ As Webster's 'cosmic frame', the platform maintained the hierarchical order of Vienna. According to the production photographs, in the first scene and the last scene, the Duke was often on the platform. In contrast, characters without power like Elbow, Froth, Pompey, Lucio and Isabella are usually below it. Hence, like Brook's Vienna, Blatchley's was apparently not a 'bright' world. It was grim, oppressive and hierarchical.

⁶¹³ John Blatchley, Ordinary Files Photographs, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 1962 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/PR/3/1/1962/MEA1. The subsequent photographs or references to them will be referred to this collection.

⁶¹⁴ Kenneth Tynan, 'Underdogs and Overdogs', *Observer*, 15 April 1962, p. 27.

⁶¹⁵ Anon., 'Absorbing Game', p. 8.



Fig. 41. Tom Fleming's 'stern' Duke sentenced Marius Goring's Angelo from the raised platform.

Quayle's set best reflected the evolving antiauthoritarian feelings of many people in the 1950s and the 1960s. In this production, as in other productions, the playing space was arranged into several levels which represented a hierarchical society. However, both the ground and rostrum were not in exact rectangular shapes. The cross at the centre did not stand straight.



Fig. 42. Antony Quayle's *Measure for Measure*, 1956, designed by Tanya Moiseiwitsch.

These uneven spaces created a sense of flexibility and discontinuity of authority. John Russell Brown felt that in the 'sewer-like set [...], the under-world of Vienna

was brought to lively, crowded, and raucous life'.⁶¹⁶ In this space, there was always room for underprivileged characters to take refuge. In the procession of disgrace scene, Diana Churchill's *Mistress Overdone* and Patrick Wymark's *Pompey* did not leave the stage but retired to an upstage stair, then, according to the prompt book, they reminded the public of their presence by laughing at Lucio's 'If I could speak so wisely'.

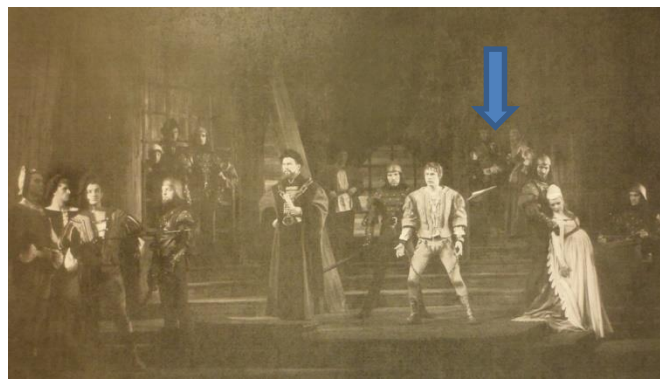


Fig. 43. Diana Churchill's *Mistress Overdone* and Patrick Wymark's *Pompey* in the procession of disgrace.

Moiseiwitsch's numerous doors also signified the difficulty that the authority figures faced in containing their subjects. As Berry notes, in the middle of the twentieth century, authority figures, whether well-meaning or not, were constantly challenged.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁶ John Russell Brown, 'Shakespeare Festivals in Britain, 1956', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 7 (1956), 407-410 (p. 408).

⁶¹⁷ Berry, *Changing Styles*, p. 41.

As the twentieth century went on, Isabellas also became noticeably bolder, as Gay rightly notes.⁶¹⁸ My archival research builds on Gay's point to reveal some of the causes of this change by showing that scenography and business played an important role in reflecting and shaping the growing confidence of feminism. Before the Second World War, in Bridges-Adams's prompt book, Isabella is made less self-determined. Her bold lines, 'More than our brother is our chastity' and 'Thoughts are no subjects' are removed. Bridges-Adams compromised her 'unfeminine', urgent threat that she 'will to [Angelo] and pluck out his eyes' by having her kneel down at this moment. Similarly, in 1946, Ruth Lodge played Isabella as a 'romantic' girl who was 'fitted to be the bride of the Prince Charming'.⁶¹⁹ That she was suitable for marriage certainly subdued the potential controversy regarding the Duke's unexpected proposal.

By contrast, after 1946, Isabellas reflected the increased autonomy of women when, according to Sheila Rowbotham, because of 'shortages of labour', '[b]y 1948 there were actually 350,000 more insured women workers than there had been in 1939'.⁶²⁰ A hint of Isabella becoming a threat to the Duke's authority came in 1950 when Barbara Jefford's Isabella begged for Angelo's life. Brook describes this business as follows:

I asked Isabella, before kneeling for Angelo's life, to pause each night until she felt the audience could take it no longer – and this used to lead to

⁶¹⁸ Gay, *As She Likes It*, p. 128.

⁶¹⁹ Anon., 'Shakespeare Festival', 26 August 1946, p. 6.

⁶²⁰ Sheila Rowbotham, *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States in the Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 244.

a two-minute stopping of the play. The device became a voodoo pole – a silence in which all the invisible elements of the evening came together, a silence in which the abstract notion of mercy became concrete for that moment to those present.⁶²¹

With this business, Isabella became the highlight of the performance. Her long hesitation made spectators realise her importance in directing the course of the action. In later productions, Isabellas would use this moment to challenge the authority of the Dukes. This does not mean that Jefford's Isabella was totally out of the Duke's control. In the prompt book, Brook cuts the Duke's promise to Isabella to have 'revenge to [her] heart'. It is likely that he made this cut not only to make the Duke look more merciful but also to make it possible to read Isabella's plea as part of the Duke's plan. Isabella's dependence on the Duke is also shown, when, according to the prompt book, after learning of Claudio's death, she 'weeps at the Duke's breast'. *The Manchester Guardian's* critic admired this Isabella's 'feminine' virtues, beauty and tenderness: 'She has a most beautiful voice, and in the opening encounters with Angelo her tenderness matched that of Mr. Gielgud'.⁶²²

A major change came in 1956 when Margaret Johnston played Isabella as a strong-minded woman. Derek Granger saw Johnston's Isabella as a person of 'principle' who refused 'the proposed violation' because, rather than 'her own

⁶²¹ Brook, *The Empty Space*, p. 89.

⁶²² G. P., 'The Stratford Festival: *Measure for Measure*', *Manchester Guardian*, 11 March 1950, p. 5.

honour', it was against 'her religious faith'.⁶²³ Similarly, Cecil Wilson maintained that Johnston's Isabella was 'a performance of spirited, almost militant, saintliness'.⁶²⁴ This 'almost militant' character troubled a critic from *The Stage* who asserted that 'morality is not the most enduring quality one looks for in a woman: one feels one would like her better with a little frailty, a little warmth or even "irregular" emotion'.⁶²⁵ The *Stratford Herald's* critic also complained about the loss of Isabella's 'shining, wordless tenderness'.⁶²⁶

The space in Quayle's production might have emphasised Johnston's 'militant' character. As every stair led to the rostrum, it became the centre of this fictional world, or in other words, the space of authority that one struggled to occupy. The battle over this space is discernible during the confrontation between Isabella and Angelo. According to the prompt book, at the beginning of the first interview, Angelo sits on the throne on the rostrum and Isabella is at ground level. She then climbs to his level at 'Must he needs die'. For spectators, this would have been a clear sign of her challenge to Angelo's authority. After this, Isabella goes 'DS' and delivers her 'Merciful heaven'. This business offered an opportunity to make contact with spectators and gain their support. Then she goes up to Angelo again at 'We cannot weigh our brother with ourself' and makes Angelo leave the throne at 'She speaks'. Since the throne represents patriarchal authority, Angelo's retreat suggests that Isabella is its threat. Hence, it is unsurprising that male critics

⁶²³ Derek Granger, 'Measure for Measure', *Financial Times*, 15 August 1956, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 46, p. 34.

⁶²⁴ Cecil Wilson, 'A Glowing Picture of Virtue's Triumph', *Daily Mail*, 15 August 1956, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 46, p. 34.

⁶²⁵ Gay, *As She Likes It*, p. 126.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

wanted to see her ‘frailty’. Gay convincingly points out that critics’ failure to see that ‘Isabella is not written as a “shining, wordless” part’ was due to their ‘assumption about what constituted an image of female heroism’.⁶²⁷

Social context in the 1950s clearly played a part in creating an Isabella who was not afraid to challenge authority. This was at a time when, according to Peter Clarke, ‘[t]he consumer society, which had seemed to nourish mere relief and complacency in the mid-1950s, in turn fed its own restless dissatisfactions’.⁶²⁸

Three months before the first performance of Quayle’s production, John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* was premiered at the Royal Court Theatre. As Kenneth Tynan saw it, this production presented ‘post-war youth’ with its ‘drift towards anarchy, the instinctive leftishness, the automatic rejection of “official” attitudes’.⁶²⁹ In this context, the Duke as a figure of ‘Power Divine’ and a ‘romantic’ Isabella who is ready to be ‘the bride of the Prince Charming’ were no longer the most satisfying representations. By challenging critics’ ‘assumptions’, Johnston’s Isabella anticipated the trend of playing this character. In the late twentieth century and beyond, one was more likely to see a headstrong, vocal Isabella than a weak, ‘wordless’ one.

However, none of the Isabellas mentioned above declined the Dukes’ proposals and the productions ended ‘happily’. To suggest a happy ending, the directors filled ‘open silences’ with business. To resolve Claudio’s silence, in prompt books

⁶²⁷ Ibid., p. 127.

⁶²⁸ Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-2000* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 272.

⁶²⁹ Kenneth Tynan, ‘The Voice of the Young’, *Observer*, 13 May 1956, p. 11.

in 1931, 1950, 1956 and 1962, Isabella runs to him and, in 1950 and 1962, they embrace. In Brook's prompt book, Angelo sobs at Isabella's 'Let him not die' and, after being spared, he kneels and holds Mariana's hands. For Ted Wendt, this 'emotional sob [...] symbolically marked the completion of the morality: evil repentant, virtue triumphant'.⁶³⁰ Similarly, in Quayle's prompt book, Angelo takes Mariana's hand at the end, and thus, signifies that he willingly accepts Mariana as his wife. In 1962, Angelo turns to Mariana when he is pardoned. In the case of Isabella and the Duke, all directors, except Blatchley, avoided Isabella's silence by cutting the Duke's first proposal and created business to suggest her acceptance of the second one. In 1931, although the prompt book does not record her response to the Duke's proposal, it indicates that the curtain is drawn amid the sound of trumpets and cheers, suggesting that Isabella has accepted his proposal. In 1946, according to the prompt book, after the proposal, the Duke takes Isabella to the forestage and they leave the stage together, a pattern that the other productions follow. At the end, wrongdoers were pardoned, family united and the two main characters 'happily' married. Nevertheless, by now, more and more women worked outside the home and a further negotiation in terms of equality in workplaces and society was inevitable.⁶³¹ As times passed, the Duke's character became more questionable, the scenography darker and Isabella more 'militant'; it was just a matter of time before this 'happy' ending would be challenged, as was the case with many productions in the second half of the twentieth century.

⁶³⁰ Ted Alan Wendt, *A Study of Peter Brook's Interpretation of Shakespeare's Plays, 1945-1975* (London: University Microfilms International, 1979), p. 77.

⁶³¹ Rowbotham, *A Century of Women*, p. 244.

This chapter demonstrates that, from the Georgian period to the twentieth century, ‘Shakespeare’ and *Measure for Measure* were reinvented to further many social agendas. In the Georgian era, productions gentrified him and the play to please middle class spectators who became increasingly influential in economic and cultural terms, including as paying customers of the theatres. In the Romantic period, Kemble used *Measure for Measure* to advocate an imperialist and royalist agenda. During the reign of Queen Victoria, by contrast, Phelps’s more democratic agenda was to deliver Shakespeare to the people of Islington but he nevertheless used *Measure for Measure* to advertise the family values promoted by the dominant ideology and embodied by the Queen. Nevertheless, due to the play’s ambiguity, a different more subversive reading was always possible, as has been shown in the discussion of the context provided by Walpole in the Georgian period, the exposure of moral hypocrisy in Victorian England by Phelps’s productions at Sadler’s Wells with its Islington spectators, and an additional issue of contention created by the Popish Aggression crisis in 1850. The distinctive challenges to contemporary views of morality and politics which *Measure for Measure* inevitably brought to the fore was responsible for its decline in popularity. Its fate was changed with the establishment of the SMT. Through the SMT and later the publicly-funded RSC, Shakespeare was institutionalized and officially nationalized. Due to financial power and cultural authority, this big institution managed to canonize the ‘neglected’ *Measure for Measure*. It staged Brook’s influential production which firmly established the reputation of *Measure for Measure* as a dark comedy. The company also performed the play frequently – so much so that, as Trewin maintained in 1962, this ‘neglected’ play is ‘now our

familiar⁶³² and, as Liz Gilbey argued, at the end of the twentieth century, *Measure for Measure* ‘has become one of the most challenging and widely produced plays of the canon’.⁶³³ From 1879 to 1978, the RSC staged 14 productions of *Measure for Measure*.⁶³⁴ It was the highest number of productions among the problem plays (*Troilus and Cressida* 11 productions and *All’s Well That Ends Well* 7 productions),⁶³⁵ and it was only slightly lower than a popular play like *Henry IV Part 1* (15 productions).⁶³⁶ This was an advantage of having a national theatre, capable of producing a large number of productions every year. However, a big institution like the SMT, later the RSC, tended to resist radical change even when such a change was urgently needed. The rise and fall of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the fortunes of its rival, the National Theatre inevitably affected productions of *Measure for Measure* in these national theatres, as will be explored in the next chapter.

⁶³² Trewin, ‘The Old Vic and Stratford-upon-Avon’, p. 513.

⁶³³ Liz Gilbey, ‘A Measure for Our Times’, *Play International*, May 1998, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 197, p. 9.

⁶³⁴ Michael Mullin and Karen Morris Muriello, *Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon: A Catalogue Index to Productions of the Shakespeare Memorial / Royal Shakespeare Theatre, 1879-1978*, 2 vols (Connecticut: Greenwood, 1980), 1, pp. 270-277.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 506-513, 21-43.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 138-145.

Chapter 5

National Theatres: Speaking for ‘Shakespeare’

My final chapter argues that, as publicly-funded theatres, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre have a commitment to speak to the nation and, due to their agendas and policies, the productions of *Measure for Measure* after 1970 at the National successfully engaged with contemporary issues of gender politics, racial equality and state power, while the RSC failed to engage with these difficult issues. The impact of these theatres’ policies and their agendas to maintain their status as national theatres is an aspect that is often overlooked when assessing their productions. This chapter consists of two sections. The first section surveys the productions mounted between 1970 and 1998 while the second section explores productions in the early twenty-first century.

The productions of *Measure for Measure* by the two national theatres in this period reflected ‘the end of consensus’ in Britain, a phrase that Arthur Marwick uses to describe ‘a political and social phenomenon’ in the 1980s.⁶³⁷ These productions shared few similarities in terms of their interpretations and their presentation of characters and scenography. While it is possible to see a trend and development of characterisations and scenography of the productions in the first half of the twentieth century, that is not the case thereafter. Michael Boyd – the Artistic Director of the RSC (2002-2012), described the situation of the RSC during this time as follows: ‘I suppose that whole “there’s no such thing as a

⁶³⁷ Arthur Marwick, *Culture in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 135.

society” attitude can tie in with “there’s no such thing as an ensemble, there are only individual artists’ careers” and I think that the RSC began to believe that’.⁶³⁸ Rather than works of the same company, the productions of *Measure for Measure* by the RSC were separate works of different sets by workers who shared no artistic vision.

The fact that the RSC bears the name of the author while the National does not contributes to their different agendas towards ‘Shakespeare’. Boyd maintained: it has been ‘our job to connect people with Shakespeare’.⁶³⁹ Their duty was to speak for ‘Shakespeare’ to a national audience. On the other hand, the National Theatre Act in 1949, which led, after a long delay, to the establishment of the National was initiated by ‘a tempting vision of a national “art” service, along the lines of a health service’.⁶⁴⁰ Unlike the RSC, at the National, Shakespeare was only part of their repertory. In Laurence Olivier’s time, ‘his company had mounted some seventy productions’ and ‘only nine Shakespeare plays [were] in its list’.⁶⁴¹ Similarly, ‘[u]nder Peter Hall’s regime classics made up just over a third of the total’.⁶⁴² Richard Eyre, who was the Artistic Director of the National in 1988, resisted the idea of augmenting “Royal” to the company’s name very strongly (though ultimately without success) because he ‘wanted it to be *extraordinary* – a theatre for the nation’.⁶⁴³ While the RSC had the duty to serve ‘Shakespeare’ and

⁶³⁸ Stuart Hampton-Reeves, ‘New Artistic Directions: An Interview with Michael Boyd’, *Shakespeare*, 1 (2005), 91-98 (p. 95).

⁶³⁹ Roxana Silbert, Programme, *Measure for Measure*, Swan Theatre, Stratford, 2011 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford).

⁶⁴⁰ John Elsom and Nicholas Tomalin, *The History of the National Theatre* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978), p. 90.

⁶⁴¹ Peter Lewis, *The National: A Dream Made Concrete* (London: Methuen, 1990), pp. 76-77.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 229.

⁶⁴³ Simon Callow, *The National: The Theatre and its Works, 1963-1997* (London: Nick Hern,

people who were interested in him, the National's priority was to serve the people. Thus, it might not be a coincidence that, in the case of the productions of *Measure for Measure*, the National was, arguably, more perceptive to the public's concerns.

***Measure for Measure* at the RSC and the National from the 1970s**

In the first section of my argument, I demonstrate how the change in the RSC's agenda resulted in a shift from radical to reactionary productions, best exemplified by the words of Adrian Noble, who became the Artistic Director in 1991. Noble defined himself as a traditional 'classicist' and manifested: 'We did have a subversive, left-wing image. The flag we now fly is quite reactionary, the need for a strongly articulated classical tradition right in the midst of our culture'.⁶⁴⁴ The earlier, subversive and left-wing image was visible in the first two productions of *Measure for Measure* during Trevor Nunn's regime at the RSC. Nunn became the Artistic Director in 1968 with an intention to continue Peter Hall's policy of being 'relevant'. He proclaimed: 'I want an avowed and committed popular theatre. I want a socially concerned theatre. A politically aware theatre'.⁶⁴⁵ In other words, he wanted a Shakespeare who was responsive to the nation's social and political atmospheres. I argue that the productions of John Barton in 1970 and Keith Hack in 1974 not only engaged with contemporary issues such as gender equality and

1997), p. 85.

⁶⁴⁴ David Lister, 'Actors "Not Being Taught Lessons of Shakespeare"', *Independent*, 4 February 1993, p. 5.

⁶⁴⁵ Peter Holland, *English Shakespeares: Shakespeare on the English Stage in the 1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 10.

morality but also suggested ‘new’ ways to read the play and the aforementioned issues. It is noteworthy to remember that Barton probably was the first director who emphasised the open silences of Isabella after the Duke proposes, while Hack’s production probably was the first one to stage the Duke as an apparent villain. The study of the full history of *Measure for Measure*’s productions at the RSC enables me to see the impacts of these ‘radical’ productions on the fate of the company.

Barton’s production, which premiered at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre on 1 April 1970, was apparently a ‘socially concerned’ and ‘politically aware’ production. In it, Sebastian Shaw played the Duke as an ineffective, old man.⁶⁴⁶ In an interview, Shaw said he intended ‘to wipe away memories of all other productions and start from scratch’.⁶⁴⁷ At that time, Shaw was sixty five years old. For an actor of that age, to want to make Shakespeare ‘new’ by playing him as old and tired, showed an admirable and adventurous spirit, something the RSC lacked after the 1970s. The result of Shaw’s attempt was that, as Williamson explained, ‘[t]he royal prince of the 1950s and the Godlike Duke of the 1960s had given way to a genial bumbler’.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁶ John Barton, Programme, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 1970 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford).

⁶⁴⁷ John Barber, ‘Curtain Up at Stratford’, *Daily Telegraph*, 1 April 1970, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 78, p. 132.

⁶⁴⁸ Jane Williamson, ‘The Duke and Isabella on the Modern Stage’, in *The Triple Bond: Plays, Mainly Shakespearean, in Performance*, ed. by Joseph G. Price (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), pp. 149-169 (p. 169).



Fig. 44. Sebastian Shaw's old Duke and Estelle Kohler's Isabella.

In the performance, Shaw's Duke was constantly challenged. According to the prompt book, Juliet cuts his 'Tis meet so, daughter' short by getting up abruptly at 'I do repent me as it is an evil'.⁶⁴⁹ Nicholls noticed that, at his 'when thou art old and rich', 'Shaw's Duke was a pathetic figure, a lonely, aging man whose routine recital of life's pains was suddenly charged with personal relevance when he came to the sorrows of old age'.⁶⁵⁰



Fig. 45. Sebastian Shaw (Duke Vincentio) and Mary Rutherford (Juliet).

⁶⁴⁹ John Barton, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 1970 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/SM/1/1970/MEA1. The subsequent references to or quotations from the prompt book will be referred to this material.

⁶⁵⁰ Graham Nicholls, *Measure for Measure: The Text and Performance* (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 88-89.

The greatest challenge to patriarchal authority came when Estelle Kohler's Isabella, probably for the first time in recorded theatre history, did not accept the Duke's proposals. Barton filled Isabella's 'open silence' by adopting Anne Barton's suggestion that her silence is possibly 'one of dismay'.⁶⁵¹ In the prompt book, after the Duke's first proposal, instead of responding to him, Isabella 'breaks DR.C. with Claudio'. She did not accept his second proposal either. Gay maintained that, in addition to his 'treatment of the Duke', Barton's ending was 'revolutionary': 'Kohler stood alone, looking out at the audience, as the other characters departed. Barton's intention was to be faithful to the ambiguity of Shakespeare's text in providing an "open-ended" final image'.⁶⁵²

Barton's production clearly reflected and advanced the demand for equality and freedom advocated by youth culture and feminist movements in the 1960s and 1970s, a period characterized by Bob Dylan's song, 'The Times They are a-Changing' which remained in the UK Singles Chart for 11 weeks in 1963. The 1960s and 1970s also saw the rise of feminism in Britain. According to Elizabeth Meehan, while in 1964, there were 15 active feminist groups, in 1983, there were three hundred.⁶⁵³ Less than two months before Barton's production, the first Women's Liberation Conference held in Oxford demanded that 'women be free to choose what kind of sexual relationship they wanted and whether or not to

⁶⁵¹ Barton, Programme, *Measure for Measure*.

⁶⁵² Penny Gay, *As She Likes It: Shakespeare's Unruly Women* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 129.

⁶⁵³ Elizabeth Meehan, 'British Feminism from the 1960s to the 1980s', in *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Harold L. Smith (Hants: Edward Elgar, 1990), pp. 189-204 (p. 192).

become mothers'.⁶⁵⁴ Irving Wardle was right when he argued that, in 1970, 'it will no longer do to present the Duke simply as a divine presence',⁶⁵⁵ an unquestionable patriarchal figure.

The reactions of critics in 1970 towards the production's ending were different from that of feminist theatre historian Penny Gay who wrote her review in the 1990s when a number of Isabellas had already rejected their Dukes. In 1970, Isabella's unresponsive reaction was new and a critic in *The Nottingham Evening Post* stated that 'Mr. Barton shows signs of lack of faith in the play, notably at its close, when he does not allow Isabella to accept the Duke's surprising proposal of marriage'.⁶⁵⁶ This criticism indirectly reveals that being 'faithful' to the text changes over time. Barton was clearly ahead of his critic in foreseeing that this was the time when a change was needed. As Hampton-Reeves maintains, this production 'mark[ed] a tipping point where Isabella's dilemma became the "problem"'.⁶⁵⁷ From now on, one would not automatically assume that a single, female character like Isabella would always be eager to accept a marriage proposal.

To my surprise, critics seemed to be more interested in Shaw's presentation of the Duke as an inept man than the 'revolutionary' ending. For example, Wardle spent two paragraphs on Shaw's Duke, but only one sentence to register that his

⁶⁵⁴ Barbara Caine, *English Feminism, 1780-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 256.

⁶⁵⁵ Irving Wardle, 'Stratford Integrity', *Times*, 2 April 1970, p. 12.

⁶⁵⁶ W. T., 'Laughs, but Shakespeare was Serious', *Nottingham Evening Post*, 2 April 1970, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 78, p. 135.

⁶⁵⁷ Stuart Hampton-Reeves, *Measure for Measure: A Guide to the Text and its Theatrical Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 115.

proposal was an abuse of ‘power for basely personal ends’ and it met with a ‘dismayed response’.⁶⁵⁸ Critics seemed to look at the play from a patriarchal point of view in which men were the centre of the world. Looking at it that way, they concluded that Isabella failed to comply with the Duke’s request because she was ‘unusual’. This reading was encouraged by Anne Barton’s interpretation of Isabella in the Programme which proved to be highly influential. In it, she suggested that ‘Isabella’s purity conceals a hysterical fear of sex’.⁶⁵⁹ Barton apparently adopted his wife’s idea in the production. Robert Speaight maintained that, in this production, ‘Angelo and Isabella are both the victims of sexual nausea’.⁶⁶⁰ In their first meeting, Barton created business to suggest this point:

When she knelt to Angelo at their first meeting it seemed as though she was to embrace him before the gesture turned into a pleading one. [...] Uncertain as to the nature of her feelings, she seemed to find a masochistic comfort in each rejection, which prompted her to heights of rage against the injustice of society and the presumption of mankind.⁶⁶¹

The self-contradiction of Barton’s production was that it allowed Isabella to ignore the Duke, but it also suggested that her decision was the result of her sexual disorder. An Isabella whose refusal to have undesirable sex that was due to her political conviction, moral discipline or reasonable resentment was still to come. To fulfil Nunn’s agenda of having ‘a socially concerned theatre’, directors

⁶⁵⁸ Wardle, ‘Stratford Integrity’, p. 12.

⁶⁵⁹ Barton, Programme, *Measure for Measure*.

⁶⁶⁰ Robert Speaight, ‘Shakespeare in Britain’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 21 (1970), 439-449 (p. 444).

⁶⁶¹ Nicholls, *Measure for Measure*, p. 77.

needed to construct new ways to stage *Measure for Measure* in a society where gender politics were changing.

The attempt of the RSC to find a new style to represent Shakespeare was apparent in Keith Hack's production which opened on 4 September 1974, and actively engaged with the scepticism of left-wing ideologies towards the establishment. According to Peacock '[d]uring the 1970s, British political theatre [...] rejected the realistic well-made play of the mainstream theatre as an inappropriate discourse. This discourse was seen to focus on personal psychology and individualism and to naturalize capitalist values into transparency'.⁶⁶² Hack was apparently one of the theatre practitioners who tried to subvert the discourse of the mainstream theatre. According to Peter Thomson, his 'work at the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre has had a Brechtian reference and a consistent determination to change society'.⁶⁶³ His attempt to intervene the RSC's acting style has, however, received scant attention so far. In fact, I argue, Hack's failed intervention was historically important. It directly contributed to the RSC's abandonment of their radical identity.

In 1974, to show the RSC an alternative way to do Shakespeare, Hack presented his *Measure for Measure* in a Brechtian style, using his scenography as a means to create the effect of defamiliarisation. The action was set on a stage which

⁶⁶² D. Keith Peacock, *Thatcher's Theatre: British Theatre and Drama in the Eighties* (Connecticut: London, 1999), p. 7.

⁶⁶³ Peter Thomson, 'The Smallest Season: The Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford in 1974', *Shakespeare Survey*, 28 (1975), 137-148 (p. 146).

looked like a messy studio with theatrical devices such as lights, scaffolds and clothes visible, reminding playgoers that they were witnessing a theatrical event.

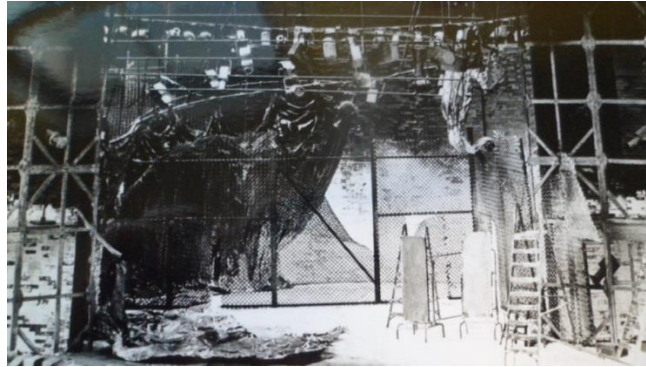


Fig. 46. Set of Keith Hack's *Measure for Measure*,
Royal Shakespeare Theatre, 1974, designed by Maria Bjornson.

Instead of using costumes to create a 'realistic' impression, Hack used them to encourage spectators to see the actors as actors. Hack accomplished this impression by having his actors wear costumes which lacked coherence in terms of style and historical period (Fig. 47). In this production, Hack extensively used the *platea* to stress that his actors were acting. According to Thomson, 'the play began with its actors strolling onto the stage out of characters to await the cue'.⁶⁶⁴ The presentational mode was also emphasised when Bowen doubled his role as the nun by changing his geisha's costume into the nun's costume on the stage. These metatheatrical elements invited theatregoers to distance themselves from the action and think.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 147.



Fig. 47. (Left to Right) Dan Meaden's *Mistress Overdone* as a geisha,
James Booth's *Pompey* in a nineteenth-century waiter's dress
and James Aubrey's *Froth* in an early modern doublet and modern spectacles.

Hack seemed determined to deconstruct the concept of the divine-right Duke once and for all. Edward Bond, in the Programme note, condemns the Duke as 'a public fraud' and claims that '[i]t's not just the ending of the play that's a charade, the whole political set-up is'.⁶⁶⁵ Bond's reading was materialized by Barrie Ingham who played the Duke as an egoistic stage director whom no one could trust. This Duke wore 'a splendid robe-of-office'⁶⁶⁶ while his colleagues wore shabby costumes. According to Philip McGuire, during his 'I love the people / But do not like to stage me to their eyes', 'Hack's Duke turned smiling and bowed slightly to the theater audience [...] by his gestures inverting the literal meaning of his words. What he said he did not like was what, in fact, he deeply relished'.⁶⁶⁷ In the prompt book, at the line 'At our more leisure shall I render you', the Duke looked at a mirror.⁶⁶⁸ This was a Duke who knew how to exploit his public image.

⁶⁶⁵ Keith Hack, Programme, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 1974 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford).

⁶⁶⁶ Thomson, 'The Smallest Season', p. 147.

⁶⁶⁷ Philip C. McGuire, *Speechless Dialect: Shakespeare's Open Silences* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 88.

⁶⁶⁸ Keith Hack, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 1974

In a production photograph, during his ‘Be absolute for death’, Ingham smiled and wielded a skull adorned with a lily.⁶⁶⁹ At this moment, it was uncertain whether it was the double-dealing Duke or the actor Ingram as a parody of Prince Hamlet, who displayed his showmanship in delivering ‘Be absolute for death’. This multi-dimensional persona stressed the Duke’s hypocrisy. Since the lily is a Marian symbol of purity, this business revealed the Duke’s desire to exploit Isabella’s virginity. His exploitative nature was powerfully stressed in the end:

As he spoke [‘what is yours is mine’], the Duke embraced Isabella, enfolding her stiff, resisting body within the vast golden robes of his office. Earlier in the scene, after the Duke had abandoned his disguise as a friar, those robes had been stripped from Angelo. Now, those same robes of state helped to establish that in embracing Isabella and taking her for himself, the Duke was succeeding where Angelo had failed.⁶⁷⁰

Hack thus succeeded in deconstructing the concept of the divine-right Duke. After this, although there were a number of well-meaning Dukes at the RSC, none of them was divine. Looking from a left-wing point of view, as Barton’s did, Hack’s production was another bold attempt to challenge the establishment.

(Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/SM/1/1974/MEA1. The subsequent references to or quotations from the prompt book will be referred to this material.

⁶⁶⁹ Keith Hack, Ordinary Files Photographs, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 1974 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/PR/3/1/1974/MEA1. The subsequent photographs or references to them will be referred to this collection.

⁶⁷⁰ McGuire, *Speechless Dialect*, p. 86.

However, Hack's radical production met with 'a chorus of violent critical disapproval'.⁶⁷¹ In that year, at the International Shakespeare Conference, a lecturer and his chairman condemned Hack as 'an ignorant and unintelligent exhibitionist'.⁶⁷² For B. A. Young, 'Mr. Hack's trouble is that he doesn't trust Shakespeare', and that the production became a 'music-hall slapstick' and 'cartoon'.⁶⁷³ These criticisms were in line with the changing political atmosphere at that time. As Bill Osgerby maintained, 'the late sixties and early seventies saw political comment and media coverage become appreciably more hostile towards counter-cultural movements, a critique that was paralleled by an increasingly repressive official treatment of social elements deemed either "permissive" or "subversive"'.⁶⁷⁴ In the end, 'Shakespeare' triumphed over Hack who was never invited to direct for the RSC again. The message was clear: a Brechtian Shakespeare was unwelcome at this national theatre. Hack's case was an early sign of the end of the radical RSC. The negative responses towards this production discouraged experimentation and, unsurprisingly, later productions at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre were comparatively conservative, abandoning Hall's principles of a 'radical identity' with 'beliefs and ideals left of centre'.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷¹ Brian Gibbons, *Measure for Measure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 69.

⁶⁷² Richard David, *Shakespeare in the Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 9.

⁶⁷³ B. A. Young, 'Measure for Measure', *Financial Times*, 5 September 1974, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 89, p. 30.

⁶⁷⁴ Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 99.

⁶⁷⁵ Alan Sinfield, 'Royal Shakespeare: Theatre and the Making of Ideology', in *Political Shakespeare: Essays on Cultural Materialism*, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 182-205 (p. 183).

In 1978, Barry Kyle, an Assistant Director at the RSC at that time, staged a 'straight'⁶⁷⁶ *Measure for Measure* with an attempt to re-establish a virtuous Duke. For R. B. Marriott, Michael Pennington's Duke was a 'true philosopher' who was 'mature', 'caring', 'calm' and 'judicial'.⁶⁷⁷ The image of the 'judicial' Duke was created through the scenography. He delivered his 'He who the sword of heaven will bear' before Lady Justice. Kyle ended this production with a conventionally happy ending. At the Duke's first proposal, Paola Dionisotti's Isabella 'unhesitatingly leaped into the arms of the Duke'.⁶⁷⁸ Nonetheless, in interview, Dionisotti stated that, in that last scene, she felt 'devastated' and weary.⁶⁷⁹ Paradoxically, Kyle's return to the traditional 'happy' ending betrayed the fact that, in the 1970s, this ending no longer made everyone happy. Kyle's optimistic production hardly reflected what was happening in the outside world. During James Callaghan's office (1976-1979), the unemployment rate rose above 1 million. It was the highest rate since the Second World War,⁶⁸⁰ and, at the end of 1978, strikes known as 'the Winter of Discontent' emerged throughout the country.

⁶⁷⁶ P. B., 'Shakespeare Straight', *Worcester Journal*, 6 July 1978, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 101-102, p. 45.

⁶⁷⁷ R. B. Marriott, 'Measure for Measure at Stratford-upon-Avon', *Stage and Television Today*, 6 July 1978, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 101-102, p. 45.

⁶⁷⁸ Ralph Berry, *Changing Styles in Shakespeare* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 46.

⁶⁷⁹ Carol Rutter, *Clamorous Voices: Shakespeare's Women Today* (London: Woman's, 1988), p. 39.

⁶⁸⁰ T. O. Lloyd, *Empire, Welfare State, Europe: English History 1906-1992* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 469.



Fig. 48. The Duke (Michael Pennington) and Lady Justice
in Barry Kyle's *Measure for Measure*, 1978.

Nevertheless, Kyle's conventional presentation apparently satisfied critics. As Trewin maintained, because of 'the horrors of the 1974 revival', Kyle's production was a relief.⁶⁸¹ In the long term, this complacency would stifle the RSC's adventurous spirit. The company seemed to believe that, by putting his play on the stage, they already served Shakespeare and an escapist Shakespeare best pleased everyone, an assumption that, regarding Dionisotti's feeling, would prove to be misleading.

To highlight the RSC's escapism and the effect of the institutions' agendas on productions, it is pertinent to set it in comparison with the National Theatre. The theatre on the South Bank was established to provide a service to the nation and, to fulfil their duty, they needed to engage with hot issues in society. This was the duty that Michael Rudman's *Measure for Measure* admirably fulfilled when it was performed at the Lyttelton in April 1981. In this production, Rudman, the

⁶⁸¹ J. C. Trewin, 'Shakespeare in Britain', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 30 (1979), 151-158 (p. 154).

Director of the Lyttelton Theatre at that time, relocated the action to an unspecified West Indian island and most of the cast were West Indian actors living in the UK. Rudman explained his reason as follows:

Then I thought: *Measure for Measure* on a mythical Caribbean Island. A mixture of Haiti and Trinidad. Mainly West Indian, because there are a lot of very good West Indian actors. Mythical because I don't want too many specific political parallels.⁶⁸²

Accordingly, critics did not see any parallels between his production and specific events in the West Indies.

Nonetheless, Rudman's production did reflect what was happening in England regarding riots in non-white communities. Two weeks before the production's opening night, to prevent crimes by using the stop and search powers, 112 plain-clothes officers were sent to Brixton, an area with a large number of West Indian residents. As a result, '943 people were stopped (over half of them black and two-thirds of them under 21) and 118 arrested'.⁶⁸³ This incited people in Brixton and there were riots. This was followed by a riot in Liverpool triggered by tension between the police and the black community. Some believed 'the riots were the result of the unemployment'.⁶⁸⁴ Rudman's casting provided jobs for West Indian

⁶⁸² Michael Rudman, Programme, *Measure for Measure*, Lyttelton, London, 1981 (National Theatre Archive, London) RNT/PP/1/2/52. The subsequent references to or quotations from the Programme will be referred to this material.

⁶⁸³ David Waddington, *Contemporary Issues in Public Disorder: A Comparative and Historical Approach* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 86.

⁶⁸⁴ Lloyd, *Empire*, p. 487.

actors and, in this sense, his production served a nation which was increasingly multiracial.

In Rudman's production, many of the scenes, including the scene between the Duke, Pompey and Lucio, took place in a market square which Robert Cushman termed as a 'red-light district'.⁶⁸⁵ This open street was filled with vendors, whores and a tourist who was welcomed to the party. Through this 'red-light district', Rudman offered an image of a community which was very energetic. It managed to keep authority in the margins, an idea which West Indian people presumably welcomed. As Cushman asserted, this production had 'enormous carnival vitality'.⁶⁸⁶ The crowd acted in the spirit of 'Carnival' in its defiance of fixed 'authority'.⁶⁸⁷ This spirit was expressed in an interpolated song sung by Lucio. In it, Lucio, played by Peter Straker, denounces Angelo as a 'crazed' man who '[r]egards mature virility as something of a crime / And punishes fertility with this degrading pantomime'.⁶⁸⁸ In the prompt book, during the scene between the Duke in disguise and Lucio in the market place, a whore kisses the Duke. Like Lucio, the crowd refused to respect 'authority'.

In the last scene, the spirit of 'Carnival' was carried out in the form of street dancing (Fig. 50). Its 'main effect', according to Wardle, was 'to drive the

⁶⁸⁵ Robert Cushman, 'In Black and White', *Observer*, 19 April 1981, p. 34.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁶⁸⁷ Michael D. Bristol, *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (New York: Methuen, 1985), p. 212.

⁶⁸⁸ Michael Rudman, Prompt Book, *Measure for Measure*, Lyttelton, London, 1981 (National Theatre Archive, London) RNT/SM/1/184. The subsequent references to or quotations from the prompt book will be referred to this material.

principals off the stage floor'.⁶⁸⁹ The marginal position of the Duke at the climax of the play revealed that, in this production, he was not treated as the centre of the world. Moreover, 'the closing revels [...] drowned the Duke's final speech'.⁶⁹⁰ Unlike many previous productions, Stephen Kalipha's Duke was spatially and visually marginalized. The authority figures were confined by the crowd.



Fig. 49. Dancing in the trial scene, Michael Rudman's *Measure for Measure*, Lyttelton, 1981.

Since the crowd apparently enjoyed their life, the Duke's plan to 'save' this community was clearly unnecessary. As Michael Billington asserted, 'the eruption of street-carnival [...] reminds us this is a society high on surfeit'.⁶⁹¹ The image of 'surfeit' was stressed by numerous goods that people at the market square could enjoy, and the marriage between the Duke and Isabella assured the continuity of community. With a high unemployment rate in non-white communities, the

⁶⁸⁹ Irving Wardle, 'Promising Start Slides to Unfair Exposure', *Times*, 15 April 1981, p. 13.

⁶⁹⁰ Roger Warren, 'Interpretations of Shakespearian Comedy, 1981', *Shakespeare Survey*, 35 (1982), 141-152 (p. 151).

⁶⁹¹ Michael Billington, 'Public on Parade', *Guardian*, 14 April 1981, p. 11.

carnival, ‘surfeit’ and ‘fertility’ might have been used to revitalize the spirit of the actors and playgoers. With an unyielding spirit and a national theatre that truly served the people, life would go on.

Rudman’s interpretation and relocation was condemned by Benedict Nightingale as ‘a pretty violent act of apostasy, an unabashed return to the amiable lunacies of the late Sixties and early Seventies’. He believed the National should play Shakespeare ‘straight’. The critic was also upset that this production ‘transforms what should be at least partly a parable of Christian mercy in action [...] into a study of the corruptions of an immature nation struggling to evolve a workable criminal code. The permanent becomes local, topical, transitory’.⁶⁹² Nightingale wanted the production to serve ‘Shakespeare’ by respecting his text and representing its ‘permanent’ theme. Regarding various interpretations, made of this ambiguous play, I do not think we can say that Christian mercy is a ‘permanent’ theme of *Measure for Measure*. In this troubled time in which a wave of riots had just exploded, was it not more pertinent to explore something ‘topical’?

In fact, it was Rudman’s ‘topical’ experiment which maximised his production’s power to create a fairer society for non-white people. Rudman, assuming that his relocation was good reason to hire black actors, used Shakespeare to serve the people. For Jack Tinker, this production suggested that ‘social harmony lies in a respect for authority, and justice must be seen to be done’. He also urged ‘[t]hose

⁶⁹² Benedict Nightingale, ‘*New Statesman*’, *London Theatre Record*, 1 (1981), p. 177.

who believe that all you need to bring about law and order is a firm hand [...] to see' it.⁶⁹³ This production went against Thatcherites by arguing that authoritarianism was itself the root of chaos. Through Rudman's production, the West Indian actors had a chance to play at the National Theatre alongside white actors and show the public how a riot could be viewed as not only a threat, but also a symptom of people refusing to acknowledge an authority which was alien to them. In this sense, the National managed to speak for people who suffered from the government's 'firm hand'. Furthermore, as Sheridan Morley maintained, this production was 'an important step in the direction of integrated classical theatre'.⁶⁹⁴ Although, as Cushman noted, many West Indian actors had 'trouble with the verse',⁶⁹⁵ black actors in the future, such as Josette Simon who played Isabella in 1987, would prove that they could easily overcome this problem when more opportunities to perform were open to them. Rudman clearly helped pave the way for integrated casting and a more integrated society. As Graham Ley maintains, in England, '[t]he principle of integrated casting [would become] thoroughly established' later in this decade.⁶⁹⁶

The next production of *Measure for Measure*, directed by Adrian Noble, at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre was performed in October 1983, four months after the victory of Margaret Thatcher in the General Election.⁶⁹⁷ One year before the

⁶⁹³ Jack Tinker, 'Daily Mail', *London Theatre Record*, 1 (1981), p. 179.

⁶⁹⁴ Sheridan Morley, 'Punch', *London Theatre Record*, 1 (1981), p. 174.

⁶⁹⁵ Cushman, 'In Black and White', p. 34.

⁶⁹⁶ Graham Ley, 'Asian Theatre', in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary British Culture*, ed. by Peter Childs and Mike Storry (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 35-37 (p. 35).

⁶⁹⁷ Adrian Noble, Performance Recording, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 1983 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/TS/2/2/1983/MEA1. My comments are based on this recording.

performance, Thatcher expressed her opinion about morality in Britain, a view which closely paralleled that of the Duke:

Over these past two decades you and I have watched all these standards steadily and deliberately vilified, ridiculed, and scorned. For years there was no riposte, no reply. The time for counter-attack is long overdue. We are reaping what was sown in the Sixties. The fashionable theories and permissive claptrap sets the scene for a society in which the old virtues of discipline and self-restraint were denigrated.⁶⁹⁸

It is easy to imagine how one could stage a *Measure for Measure* to question the Prime Minister's call for 'discipline'. In spite of Noble's belief that '*Measure for Measure* deals with central political issues, for the state and for individuals',⁶⁹⁹ he decided not to do so. This might have been a result of the government's increasing pressure on subsidized theatres. In 1980, '[o]ffended by [*The Romans in Britain*]'s deliberate brutality, Sir Horace Cutler quickly threatened censorship through withdrawal of [the National Theatre's] funding'.⁷⁰⁰ Consequently, as Drew Milne noted, since '[t]he Thatcher administration of the 1980s', the RSC has 'failed to develop a critical role within the culture'.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁸ Adam Raphael, 'Thatcher: Success is around the Corner', *Guardian*, 28 March 1982, p. 1.

⁶⁹⁹ Ralph Berry, *On Directing Shakespeare* (London: Penguin, 1989), p. 168.

⁷⁰⁰ Dominic Shellard, *British Theatre since the War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 201.

⁷⁰¹ Drew Milne, 'Drama in the Culture Industry: British Theatre After 1945', in *British Culture of the Post-War: An Introduction*, ed. by Alastair Davies and Alan Sinfield (Oxon: Routledge, 2000), pp. 169-191 (p. 187).

This was the case for Noble's production which, unlike Rudman's, was neither critical nor relevant and, except for Juliet Stevenson's Isabella, offered little innovation. Noble relocated his production to the Age of Enlightenment which one critic disapproved of since 'the darkling piece has little to do with the Enlightenment'.⁷⁰² This seemed to be the point of relocating: to downplay unpleasant elements in the play. Noble's scenography was largely dominated by yellow light and wooden furniture which created a sense of cosiness. This cosy atmosphere well reflected the feeling of complacency which governed the RSC's productions of *Measure for Measure* since the late 1970s. In addition, there was nothing remarkable about how Noble handled the 'open silences' at the end. Barnadine was grateful for the pardon. Claudio and Isabella were reunited. Mariana and Angelo, and the Duke and Isabella were happily married. A connection between taking risk and reinventing the play seemed to elude Noble.



Fig. 50. Set of Adrian Noble's *Measure for Measure*,
Royal Shakespeare Theatre, 1983, designed by Bob Crowley.

⁷⁰² Robert Cushman, 'In Vienna and Venice', *Observer*, 9 October 1983, p. 34.

This production was evidently right wing-orientated in spirit. As Nicholas Shrimpton maintained, it ‘remained [...] distinctly in favour of the assertion of moral and spiritual authority’.⁷⁰³ Without a sense of irony, Daniel Massey, who played the Duke, asserted that, in the end, the Duke ‘learns the efficacy of harshness’.⁷⁰⁴ For Massey: ‘What [...] Angelo does perceive is a celebration, if you like, of the majesty of autocratic power, and that was the next best thing to God’.⁷⁰⁵ This production did not seem to realise that ‘harshness’ could be double-edged as the riots in Brixton confirmed.

The displacement of blame in order to justify the ‘counter-attack’ against transgression, which Jonathan Dollimore’s essay convincingly demonstrates,⁷⁰⁶ was carried through in Noble’s portrayal of lowlife characters. Shrimpton maintained that this production created a ‘hostile attitude to the play’s lowlife. [...] [T]he pimps and punters were played to frighten rather than to charm us’.⁷⁰⁷ Instead of a woman struggling to live, with her numberless ornaments, Peggy Mount’s *Mistress Overdone* looked greedy.

⁷⁰³ Nicholas Shrimpton, ‘Shakespeare Performances in Stratford-upon-Avon and London, 1983-4’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 38 (1985), 201-214 (p. 204).

⁷⁰⁴ Russell Jackson and Robert Smallwood, ed., *Players of Shakespeare 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 24-25.

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁷⁰⁶ Jonathan Dollimore, ‘Transgression and Surveillance in *Measure for Measure*’, in *Political Shakespeare: Essays on Cultural Materialism*, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 72-87 (p. 73).

⁷⁰⁷ Shrimpton, ‘Shakespeare Performances’, p. 204.



Fig. 51. Peggy Mount's Mistress Overdone.

She was a 'permissive' person that needed to be restrained by Thatcher's 'old virtues of discipline'. In case anyone missed that Massey's Duke possessed those 'old virtues', when Massey delivered 'He who the sword of heaven will bear', there was sound of a hymn.

Thatcher, the Iron Lady, influenced not only the RSC's identity but also how a female character like Isabella was presented and received. Although her image as a strong woman was positive to the image of women in general, her conviction in 'the importance of observing a strict code of law' and Paul's gospel, 'If a man will not work he shall not eat'⁷⁰⁸ sounded authoritarian and heartless.

Stevenson's Isabella reflected a positive side of the Prime Minister but ignored the negative one. This Isabella was strong and politically shrewd. Gay felt that her

⁷⁰⁸ Margaret Thatcher, 'Speech to General Assembly of the Church of Scotland', 21 May 1988 <<http://www.margareththatcher.org/document/107246>> [accessed 2 February 2015] (para. 14-16 of 37).

‘Isabella was the embodiment of late twentieth-century feminism come of age and accepted into mainstream thinking; her performance enables audiences to see that a woman’s claim for control of her own body is reasonable and normal’.⁷⁰⁹

Stevenson’s interpretation of the role added a political aspect into Isabella’s actions:

[‘More than our brother is our chastity’] is not about chastity, it’s about anarchy. [...] [B]y saying ‘yes’ to Angelo, Isabella would be committing herself to chaos. [...] It is more than personal choice: it has political resonances too.⁷¹⁰

Neither a sexually repressed creature nor a saint, Stevenson’s Isabella was a political being, committing both to her spiritual and social well-being. At ‘O, it is excellent / To have a giant’s strength’, she sat at Angelo’s desk and started judging him. Nevertheless, unlike Thatcher, Stevenson’s Isabella was compassionate and caring. Seeing Claudio was alive, Isabella slowly stretched her hand to touch him, and then they kneeled down and embraced. There was no doubt that she really loved her brother. In this production, Isabella also established a ‘sisterly solidarity’ with Mariana. Thus, although she was ‘anguished’, Isabella pleaded for Angelo.⁷¹¹

⁷⁰⁹ Gay, *As She Likes It*, p. 139.

⁶⁹³ Rutter, *Clamorous Voices*, p. 51.

⁷¹¹ Shrimpton, ‘Shakespeare Performances’, p. 204.

However, a single success could not justify the whole production. Roger Warren's perception of 'the production's loss of any sense of direction'⁷¹² reflected the RSC's unclear vision about their role as a national theatre, whose duty it was to reinvent Shakespeare for the nation. This production fitted comfortably in the scope of a received 'Shakespeare' and perhaps, because of this, it was not influential. It was hard to believe that this production, with its cosy setting and right-wing orientation, was the product of the same company that produced Brook's *The Theatre of Cruelty* and Barton's *Measure for Measure*.

It was left to Nicholas Hytner, a newcomer to the RSC, to show how to make Shakespeare relevant and, in effect, speak for the nation. Hytner staged his *Measure for Measure* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in November 1987 in a modern setting.⁷¹³ Through his scenography and the openness of the text, Hytner managed to reveal an image of Britain in the 1980s as "two nations" a society divided not only geographically but also between the "haves" and the "have-nots".⁷¹⁴ According to Roger Allam who played the Duke, '[i]n initial discussions [...] [Hytner] spoke about the two separate worlds of the play, the government/court versus the street, and of how these worlds seemed irreconcilable'.⁷¹⁵ The civil scenes were 'dominated by a gigantic gilt safe, symbolising that money rules'.⁷¹⁶ In the 1980s, money definitely ruled. The

⁷¹² Roger Warren, 'Shakespeare in England, 1983', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 34 (1983), 451-460 (p. 457).

⁷¹³ Nicholas Hytner, Performance Recording, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 1987 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/TS/2/2/1987/MEA1. My comments are based on this recording.

⁷¹⁴ Peacock, *Thatcher's Theatre*, p. 22.

⁷¹⁵ Russell Jackson and Robert Smallwood, ed., *Players of Shakespeare 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 22.

⁷¹⁶ Giles Gordon, 'This Duke Knows What He's Doing', *Standard*, 12 November 1987, in *Theatre*

government, rather than decreasing unemployment, aimed for increasing GDP and accumulating income by selling national assets in privatisations (British Gas 11 months before the performance and British Airways 8 months).



Fig. 52. Set of Nicholas Hytner's *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, 1987, designed by Mark Thomson.

The production's scenography for civil and prison scenes reflected and exaggerated Thatcher's call for law and order. The guards' costumes looked like those of the SS guards and George Raistrick's Elbow was a parody of Hitler. Thomson's panopticon prison represented an absolute control over the subject, where 'clanging doors and echoing footsteps usher us into a monolithic bureaucracy'.⁷¹⁷ These scenes were either played with little light or in light which highlighted the dark colour of the setting, making it crystal clear that the situation in Vienna was 'dark' and its politics oppressive.

Records (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 136, p. 47.

⁷¹⁷ Michael Billington, 'Sick Society Riven', *Guardian*, 13 November 1987, p. 18.



Fig. 53. Thomson's panopticon prison.

In this production, the world of the 'have-nots' was represented through the low-life characters. Despite the state's 'harshness', these characters were not passive victims. They had their own world, suggested by costumes: 'Dressed in colorful, anachronistic clothing such as baseball caps and Doctor Martens, to mirror the chaos of their lives, [the low-lives] contrast sharply with the dark-suited upper class, and seem to have a great deal more fun'.⁷¹⁸ Even in prison, the low-life characters were still fearless and able to enjoy themselves with cigarettes and drugs. In front of the Duke in the last scene, instead of kneeling, Gordon Case's Barnadine walked up to the Duke threateningly and the Duke's pardon looked like his way to avoid confrontation. Allam maintained that 'with Gordon Case's massive physique as Barnadine, it was believed that he *could* resist'.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁸ Anon., 'A Good Measure of Acting', *Leamington Spa Courier*, 13 November 1987, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 136, p. 50.

⁷¹⁹ Jackson and Smallwood, ed., *Players of Shakespeare* 3, p. 33.



Fig. 54. Phil Daniels's Pompey in fanciful dress and the officers in uniforms.



Fig. 55. Phil Daniels's Pompey and his friends in prison.

I argue that the real power of this production was in its warning of the danger of Thatcherism's two separate worlds. The fates of the three main characters clearly demonstrated how these oppressive worlds could alienate people. Sean Baker's Angelo, at first, fitted well to the 'dark-suited upper class'. Nonetheless, in the first interview, after Isabella left, Angelo was perplexed by his desire, the very thing that the state wanted to suppress. He was an exemplum of the man who internalised state oppression to the point that his self-restraint became his identity. The image of him knocking the chairs in the court and throwing away his suit

signified not only the collapse of his authority but also the loss of identity. He was no longer ‘one of us’.



Fig. 56. Sean Baker's Angelo amid a heap of overturned chairs.

Allam, after reading the ambiguous text, came up with the idea of playing the Duke as another isolated figure who ‘seemed to be in the midst of a deep personal crisis about the value of life itself’.⁷²⁰ In the first scene, while the other characters wore black suits, the isolated Duke wore a white shirt and black vest. His hand trembled when he signed a paper. The responsibility of the office and its failure to control the subjects put the Duke on the verge of a nervous breakdown. For this Duke, his ‘Be absolute for death’ was ‘an embodiment of utter despair’.⁷²¹ He was a laughing stock when he failed to outwit Lucio and persuade Barnadine. The last scene did not go as the Duke expected. When Josette Simon's Isabella pleaded for Angelo's life, the Duke looked perplexed since, as Allam asserted, ‘Isabella's plea was an astonishing unlooked-for event’.⁷²² For his proposal, Isabella remained silent.

⁷²⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

⁷²¹ Ibid., p. 22.

⁷²² Ibid., p. 38.

At this moment, the entrance of a crowd of people in black suits who checked the Duke's hand amid ominous music used in the first scene drove home the real danger of Hytner's police state. Though, according to Allam, the crowd was supposed to represent common people who were eager to get in touch with an authority figure, many spectators 'misunderstood' it as a 'threatening' gesture.⁷²³ For me, they looked like secret agents. This 'misreading' happened because of the sense of alienation, secrecy and monolithic power that prevailed throughout the performance. The Duke and Angelo might be failures but the police state was as strong as ever. As political theorist Giorgio Agamben insists, with the sovereignty over life bestowed on the modern state, 'we are all virtually *homines sacri*', beings 'that may be killed but not sacrificed'.⁷²⁴ It was clear that, if it wished, the state could kill Angelo and find a replacement with no problem. The 'threatening' crowd that looked like secret agents might have reminded some of the police which, in Thatcher's time, became more powerful. They received 'a swift expansion of recruitment' and pay raise since they were 'a favoured class'.⁷²⁵ While walking to the backdrop of an 'idyllic pastoral never-never land beyond',⁷²⁶ Isabella turned back and saw the Duke and the 'threatening' crowd. That the light was out before she disappeared refused the playgoers a complete conclusion. It was left open as to why she turned back. Did she feel sympathetic to the Duke and want to rescue him from the oppressive world? Did she look back to make sure

⁷²³ Ibid., p. 40.

⁷²⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 114-115.

⁷²⁵ Hugo Young, *One of Us* (London: Pan, 1993), p. 238.

⁷²⁶ Jackson and Smallwood, ed., *Players of Shakespeare 3*, p. 40.

that they were not following her? Nonetheless, one thing was certain. Under this oppressive and lonely world, it was very hard to live in peace.

The strength of Hytner's production is the way he materialized 'the image people have of spatial relationships and the conflicts underlying those relationships in the society'.⁷²⁷ In effect, the play spoke for and to the people. Hytner's success proved that to make Shakespeare relevant was an effective way to speak for him. The influences of this production could be seen on productions in the future, for example, the fascist overtone in Boyd's production in 1998 and the clanging of doors in McBurney's production in 2004.

The next production of the RSC did not seem to learn anything from that success. It, in turn, reflected Boyd's complaint of artistic individualism at the RSC. While Hytner had materialised 'the two separate worlds', it was hard to tell what was the main concept of Steven Pimlott's vague production, first performed on 13 October 1994 at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.⁷²⁸ As the throne, the electric chair and the image of Matthew 7:1, 'Judge not, that you be not judged', on the prison floor suggested, this production was full of conflicting signs. Similarly, it was hard to figure out what the courtroom which looked like the RSC's old rehearsal room meant. To read it positively, it suggested that the Duke's plans were theatrical but

⁷²⁷ Anne Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, trans. by Frank Collins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 97.

⁷²⁸ Steven Pimlott, Performance Recording, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 1994 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/TS/2/2/1994/MEA1. My comments are based on this recording.

I felt that, unintentionally, its ambiguity reflected the unclear vision on the part of the RSC.

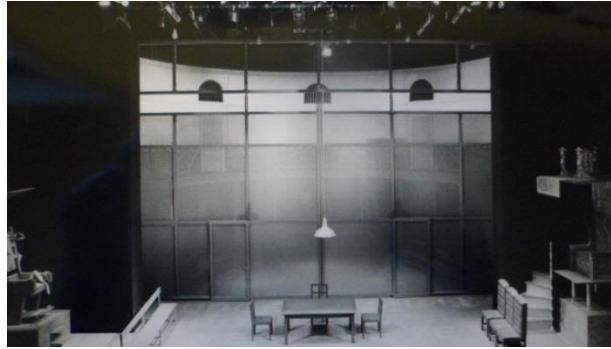


Fig. 57. Act I Scene 2 in Steven Pimlott's *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, 1994, designed by Ashley Martin-Davies.



Fig. 58. The curved courtroom.

In addition, although Nicholas De Jong thought Alex Jennings's Angelo resembled an 'old-style Conservative MP',⁷²⁹ this production did not pursue the connection between the character and the exposure of corruption in the private lives and expense claims of MPs, which was a hot topic at that time.⁷³⁰ Jennings's

⁷²⁹ Nicholas De Jongh, 'Skin-Deep Decadence', *Evening Standard*, 21 October 1994, p. 49.

⁷³⁰ Nicholas Wood, 'Jail Sleazy MPs, Says Ashdown', *Times*, 20 October, 1994, p. 12.

Angelo was not a hypocrite, a vice with which a sleaze was usually condemned. He was an innocent man whose sexual desire was most unknown to him. His youthfulness made his innocence more convincing. Unlike many actors, Jennings delivered ‘Why do thou put these sayings upon me?’ as a sincere expression. He simply did not understand Isabella’s point. He also jumped when Isabella touched him. This characterisation was a lost opportunity to make a relevant political point. As a result, De Jong felt that Pimlott’s production was not radical enough.⁷³¹

To a large extent, the scenography and interpretation of Pimlott’s production reflected the trend of the RSC under Noble’s direction. According to Billington, in Noble’s time, ‘one looked in vain for either the turbulent energy of the Nunn-Hands era or any hint of the radicalism that had informed the company’s work in the past. [...] [T]he RSC became a safe classical company’.⁷³² By abandoning the radicalism of the past, Noble left the RSC with a vacuum rather than forming a new distinctive identity as the national flagship of Shakespearean production. The result was, as Pimlott’s production showed, a failure to speak clearly to and for the nation.

Nevertheless, the RSC’s last production of *Measure for Measure* in the twentieth century, directed by Michael Boyd in May 1998, revealed that not everyone was convinced by Noble’s ‘reactionary’ agenda. As Britain just had a new

⁷³¹ De Jongh, ‘Skin-Deep Decadence’, p. 49.

⁷³² Michael Billington, *State of the Nation: British Theatre since 1945* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), pp. 341-342.

government, ‘New Labour’, Boyd’s production betrayed the need for change and, by doing that, it changed spectators’ perception of the religious issues in the play and anticipated the future of the country under New Labour. To have Robert Glenister’s Duke in despair and try to drink his sorrow away was by now a familiar representation but to have him record his lines in the first scene in a phonograph and deputise Angelo through it revealed an experimental spirit.⁷³³ Although Paul Taylor deemed the business ‘forced and gimmicky’,⁷³⁴ reading it positively, it was a nice introduction to a country where people were alienated from one another and an inhumane clampdown on ‘immoral’ subjects was about to begin.



Fig. 59. Jimmy Chisholm’s Pompey poured water over prisoners’ heads in Michael Boyd’s *Measure for Measure*, 1998.

In fact, Boyd not only ventured onto new territory with the ‘gimmickry’ in the opening but also, according to Michael Billington, managed to offer a new angle

⁷³³ Michael Boyd, Performance Recording, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 1998 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/TS/2/2/1998/MEA1. My comments are based on this recording.

⁷³⁴ Paul Taylor, ‘Measures that Don’t Add Up’, *Independent*, 2 May 1998, p. 15.

on the relation between morality and political power, showing that ‘[m]oral crusades [...] often disguise a political authoritarianism’.⁷³⁵ Throughout the production, one felt that the Duke and Angelo were struggling to be the most virtuous man in order to claim absolute power. Taylor noticed that ‘Angelo smirks when he finds an empty bottle of liquor by the Duke’s chair: it’s too obvious that he is filling the place of a man he has ceased to respect’.⁷³⁶ For theatre historian Russell Jackson, Angelo’s political ambition was apparent:

[W]hen the Duke gave his instructions to the Provost in 4.2, they both had to kneel downstage as if in prayer to escape the scrutiny of a uniformed guard from Angelo’s cadre [...] and the final scene began with Angelo’s soldiers lining up across the back of the stage, ready to effect what would amount to a coup.⁷³⁷

Boyd located his production ‘in the Balkans at the turn of the century’.⁷³⁸ In Serbia, this was the time of the May Coup in which military officers initiated a coup d’état by assassinating the King and the Queen. Thus, the relocation suggested a potentially violent means that Angelo might have tried to grab power. It was in this sense that, according to Smallwood, Angelo’s applause when the Duke returned was ‘fake’.⁷³⁹

⁷³⁵ Michael Billington, ‘A Very British Coup’, *Guardian*, 2 May 1998, p. 13.

⁷³⁶ Taylor, ‘Measure’, p. 15.

⁷³⁷ Russell Jackson, ‘Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1996-1998; or the Search for a Policy’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 50 (1999), 185-205 (pp. 201, 199).

⁷³⁸ Liz Gilbey, ‘A Measure for Our Times’, *Play International*, May 1998, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 197, p. 9.

⁷³⁹ Robert Smallwood, ‘Shakespeare Performances in England, 1998’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 52 (1999), 229-253 (p. 243).

Glenister played the Duke as ‘an avenger in exile, a man on a mission to cleanse a world fallen into levity and lechery’.⁷⁴⁰ His mission was as Angelo’s and, in the end, he came to the conclusion that he should be the one to execute it. The Duke obviously enjoyed planning and devising tricks against Angelo. His ‘And perform an old contracting’ sounded vengeful. His direct address to the audience, ‘No might nor greatness in mortality’, looked like his way to convince them that he possessed ‘[t]he whitest virtue’ and, in effect, it was he, not Angelo, who should rule. The connection between morality and authority was revealed by the way that the Duke justified his coup as a sacred mission. In the moated grange scene, after Isabella and Mariana left, the light was dimmed to reveal an image of Angelo’s face on the backdrop and a quotation from Revelation 13:11: ‘Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon’. Before the last scene, to slay the ‘dragon’, spectators saw silent characters being given guns. When the Duke was unhooded, people on the stair took out guns and pointed them at Angelo’s soldiers. In a second, the Duke successfully reclaimed his absolute authority. I wonder whether Boyd got the inspiration of the coup from the General Election in 1997. Responding to his victory which ended the long reign of the Conservatives, Tony Blair proclaimed: ‘A new dawn has broken, has it not?’⁷⁴¹ After a long lack of support from the Conservative governments, it would not be surprising if the RSC would regard a Labour government as ‘[a] new dawn’.

⁷⁴⁰ Carole Woddis, ‘*Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon’, *Herald*, 5 May 1998, p. 14.

⁷⁴¹ Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-2000* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 417.



Fig. 60. The Duke in disguise among Angelo's soldiers before the coup.

Nonetheless, the production suggested that this coup was merely a replacement of an authoritarian regime by another authoritarian regime. The image of the Duke standing before a light which projected his gigantic shadow on the backdrop reappeared in many scenes including during his 'He who the sword of heaven will bear', suggesting the hidden dark side of the Duke. This Duke was ruthless in the last scene. He pointed a gun at Angelo's head to make him repent. He was also rough on Adrian Schiller's Lucio. Seeing that the Duke pardoned Barnadine when he kneeled, Lucio did the same but the Duke made him stand by pulling his hair. It never crossed my mind that this Duke was merciful.



Fig. 61. The 'duke of dark corners' and Penny Layden's terrified Juliet before the light.

The Duke's treatment of Isabella was loathsome. Pretending to be blind, he often touched her and, at one point, he embraced her in front of a light projecting his haunting shadow. In the last scene, when everyone left the stage, the Duke turned to kiss Isabella. Critic Susannah Clap described this ending business as follows:

At first recoiling in distaste, she later allows herself to be kissed and, having done so, puts her fingers on her lips in surprise. As she smooths her hand over her stomach with the beginning of pleasure, long windows of light open down the stairway, warming the white with orange.⁷⁴²

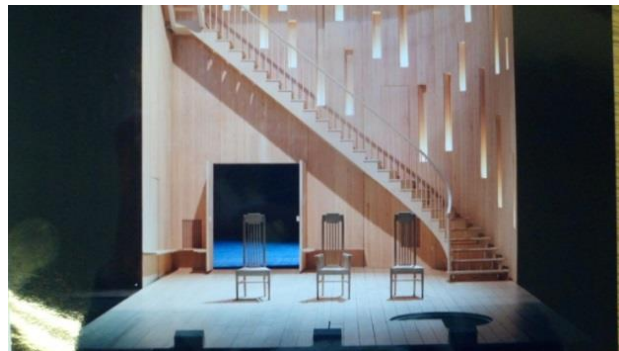


Fig. 62. The set of Act V.

Then, the Duke walked to the door and Isabella followed him. For Kim Greengrass, the production had 'an unexpectedly moving and optimistic ending'.⁷⁴³ The orange light certainly made the place warmer but that the Duke took Isabella's hand and led her into darkness undermined an 'optimistic' reading.

⁷⁴² Susannah Clapp, 'The Week in Reviews', *Observer*, 3 May 1998, p. 13.

⁷⁴³ Kim Greengrass, 'Post Reviews', *Birmingham Post*, 5 May 1998, p. 15.

It was questionable whether this manipulative, ruthless ‘avenger’ could be a decent husband and a tolerant ruler. This production responded to the political change in Britain and also managed to suggest the future. Intentionally or not, the production’s scepticism towards the Duke’s coup foreshadowed the disappointment that many people would feel towards New Labour. In addition, the image of the Duke as a fundamentalist ‘avenger’ foresaw the problem of religious extremism that people in the new century would face.

For Billington, Boyd’s insightful interpretation, experimentation and haunting scenography provided a fresh energy which the RSC desperately needed.

[T]he most stimulating Stratford work in recent seasons has had a non-reverent, neo-Expressionist visual strangeness. [...] I would now add Michael Boyd’s highly impressive *Measure For Measure* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. It is a production that makes us see a familiar play with fresh and disturbing eyes.⁷⁴⁴

Charles Spencer of *The Daily Telegraph* had a very different opinion. Seeing this production filled with gimmicks, Spencer posted a bigger question, “Is the R.S.C. bored with Shakespeare?”⁷⁴⁵ Alan Riding also felt that the RSC was in crisis: ““Shakespeare fatigue” has become a trendy topic for debate. Translated, it means

⁷⁴⁴ Billington, ‘A Very British Coup’, p. 13.

⁷⁴⁵ Alan Riding, ‘The Royal Shakespeare: Renewing Itself under Fire’, *New York Times*, 17 May 1998, p. 1.

that people are tired of seeing the same dozen or so plays presented in conventional ways'.⁷⁴⁶

In the long run, Noble's 'reactionary' and 'safe' Shakespeare did not seem to respond satisfactorily to theatregoers' needs. According to Billington, '[t]he problem with Stratford Shakespeare in recent seasons has too often been the feeling that productions exist only because of the mechanical demands of the system: the factory has to be kept ticking over'.⁷⁴⁷ For the RSC and the National, the struggle to find an effective way to speak for Shakespeare would continue into the new century.

Measure for Measure: New Artistic Directors and New Policies in the New Millennium

In the final section, I argue that the productions of *Measure for Measure* mounted in the twenty-first century, three at the RSC and one at the National Theatre were influenced by new problems: international terrorism and global economic crisis. Secondly, I argue that, in 2003, the two national theatres' new Artistic Directors, Boyd at the RSC and Hytner at the National, brought new policies and agendas which influenced productions of *Measure for Measure*. My argument is that, under Boyd, the RSC tried to redress 'the end of consensus' by going back to Hall's policy of long-term contracts in order to establish an ensemble, which was,

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

⁷⁴⁷ Billington, 'A Very British Coup', p. 13.

as Boyd maintained, his ‘founding principle’.⁷⁴⁸ To reclaim its status as the centre of Shakespeare performance and to reach out to the audiences, the RSC launched a big project called the Complete Works Festival in 2006-2007, lowered ticket prices for a young audience and created a more intimate theatre with a thrust stage. Nevertheless, the post 9/11 world was clearly an unsafe place and, in the case of *Measure for Measure*, the RSC’s ‘safe’ productions neither responded to that threat nor showed any sign of an ‘ensemble’. On the other hand, Hytner made it clear that he wanted the National’s productions to be socially relevant and politically sceptical. Working to this agenda at the Olivier, in 2004 when the human rights violations in Iraq became international news, Simon McBurney directed a *Measure for Measure* which perfectly materialised the oppression of the modern state.

In May 2003, Sean Holmes mounted the first twenty-first-century production of *Measure for Measure* which was distinguished by its extensive use of direct address, a style not characteristic of previous performances at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.⁷⁴⁹ It was, however, a popular device frequently used at the New Globe. I argue that the direct addresses in Holmes’s production, from a platform extending beyond the proscenium arch, reflected the RSC’s attempt to compete with the New Globe’s popularity and, in this production, it greatly benefited the comic characters. According to Robert Hewison, they ‘were

⁷⁴⁸ Roxana Silbert, Performance Recording, *Measure for Measure*, Swan Theatre, Stratford, 2011 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/TS/2/2/2011/MEA2. My comments are based on this recording.

⁷⁴⁹ Sean Holmes, Performance Recording, *Measure for Measure*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, 2003 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/TS/2/2/2003/MEA1. My comments are based on this recording.

outstanding in a company that, in this production at least, does not yet feel like an ensemble'.⁷⁵⁰ Gordon Parsons maintained that John Lloyd Fillingham's Lucio and Simon Trinder's Pompey 'win the audience's sympathies as they challenge the values of the main characters'.⁷⁵¹

This bond was built through their direct addresses. When Fillingham's Lucio spoke his 'If the Duke with the other dukes' directly to playgoers, he invited them to be his confidants. Many playgoers laughed when Trinder's Pompey looked around the auditorium during his 'Groping for trouts in a peculiar river' as if to find out whether there was another man who loved '[g]roping' among them.



Fig. 63. Ishia Bennison's *Mistress Overdone* during her 'Thus what with the war' on the extended platform in Sean Holmes's *Measure for Measure*, 2003.

Paul Higgins's Duke also made a lot of direct addresses to the audience. He spoke his 'Who knows that Lodowick?' directly to the audience and, at his 'To buy you

⁷⁵⁰ Robert Hewison, 'Measure for Measure', *Sunday Times*, 11 May 2003, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 221, p. 94.

⁷⁵¹ Gordon Parsons, 'Power, Sex and Corruption', *Morning Star*, 8 May 2003, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 221, p. 89.

a better husband', he gestured to the auditorium. Nevertheless, due to spectators' connection to the low-life characters and scandals concerning the government's plagiaristic dossier,⁷⁵² people did not seem to be in the mood to be fooled by an authority figure, and as such Higgins's Duke was received with scepticism by the other characters and the spectators. To ridicule the Duke's 'happy' ending, as Hampton-Reeves maintained, Holmes 'looked to absurdist tragicomedies as a model for thinking about his *Measure for Measure*'.⁷⁵³ The director used the 'open silences' to stress the absurdity of the Duke's actions. Throughout the last scene, Angelo and Mariana made no contract and barely looked at one another. Hence, when the Duke made Mariana and Angelo hold hands, some theatregoers laughed at its absurdity. As Hampton-Reeves put it, 'Angelo was a reluctant husband who found the charade excruciating'.⁷⁵⁴ Fielding's Isabella ignored the Duke's first proposal and, for the second proposal, she remained silent for a long time. The performance ended with Isabella leading the Duke off the stage to have a private talk, while the subjects looked at them, still very confused by the absurdity of what had just happened.

Probably because of the catastrophic failure of the Bretchian *Measure for Measure* in 1974, Holmes decided not to stage an outright Beckettian *Measure for Measure*. The director mixed 'absurdist' elements with realistic elements and relocated the play to 'Third Man post-World War Two' Vienna.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵² Michael White, Ewan MacAskill and Richard Norton-Taylor, 'Threat of War: Downing St Admits Blunder on Iraq Dossier', *Guardian*, 8 February 2003, p. 6.

⁷⁵³ Hampton-Reeves, *Measure for Measure*, p. 120.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁷⁵⁵ Pete Wood, '*Measure for Measure* (RSC)', *What's On Stage*, 7 May 2003, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 221, p. 88.



Fig. 64. Sean Holmes's *The Third Man* and its secretive, corrupt Vienna.

For Jackson, 'the analogies suggested by Holmes's choice of setting didn't hold up. The film's Vienna has a sense of determined gaiety and schmaltzy charm that might have suited the play but eluded Holmes altogether'.⁷⁵⁶ Similarly, Michael Dobson felt that the production 'relied solely on a half-thought-out concept which in the event did less than nothing for the play'.⁷⁵⁷ In fact, it relied on *two* 'half-thought-out concept(s)', namely, a realistic *Third Man* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, suggested by a dry tree in the moated grange scene. Holmes's 'half-thought-out' concepts obscured one another. After the first scene, we gradually lost sight of *The Third Man*'s Vienna. There was no sight of a gay brothel or an office full of office supplies which would have well suited Daniel Evans who played Angelo as 'a ferrety, buttoned-up minor functionary'⁷⁵⁸ who, due to his short and thin physique, was never able to overpower Fielding's hot-tempered Isabella. In the brothel scene, there were only ordinary tables under a cloudy sky

⁷⁵⁶ Russell Jackson, 'Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon: Summer and Winter 2003-2004', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 55 (2004), 177-199 (p. 178).

⁷⁵⁷ Michael Dobson, 'Shakespeare Performances in England, 2003', *Shakespeare Survey*, 57 (2004), 258-289 (p. 269).

⁷⁵⁸ Hewison, 'Measure for Measure', p. 94.

and, in the case of Angelo's office, an office table and a wooden door without a wall amidst dim lighting. Then, in the prison scene, a guillotine was set for Barnadine and Ragozine. This deliberate anachronism was probably used to emphasise the play's 'absurdist' narrative which degraded men into replaceable objects. Nevertheless, when Ragozine was actually guillotined on the stage, Higgins's Duke turned his head away in agony. Ragozine's life and body were still valued. The business cancelled Holmes's 'half-thought-out' absurdist concept. The production's attempts to more actively interact with the audience suggested the RSC's awareness of the necessity to reach out to people but the fact that Holmes shied away from staging an outright Beckettian production suggested that, under Boyd's direction, the RSC was still 'a safe classical company'.⁷⁵⁹ If Holmes had staged a full absurdist production, he might have been able to reinvent the play and reflect what was happening in Iraq as the war became senseless.

In 2006, the RSC launched two big projects to reach out to people. Boyd and the Board apparently saw these projects as 'the scheme [...] in re-establishing the reputation of the RSC'.⁷⁶⁰ In this season, they launched the Complete Works Festival and opened the Courtyard, a temporary theatre with a thrust stage, in preparation for the closure of the company's main house which would be transformed into a thrust stage. The RSC could do this because of an increase in

⁷⁵⁹ Billington, *State of the Nation*, pp. 341-342.

⁷⁶⁰ David Ward, *Transformation: Shakespeare's New Theatre* (Stratford: RSC Enterprises, 2011), p. 38.

arts funding under New Labour.⁷⁶¹ In the 2005-2006 annual report, Christopher Bland, the RSC's Chairman, proudly maintained: 'There are few theatre companies in the world with the courage to stage Shakespeare's complete works at the same time as planning a major transformation of its theatres. I'm proud that the RSC has that courage'.⁷⁶² I wonder whether their 'courage' to stage all of Shakespeare's plays was more strategically and commercially motivated than simply expressing an adventurous spirit. It looked like a means to show the public that, by launching these big projects and hosting visiting playing companies from around the world, the RSC was the true centre of Shakespeare performance, a status challenged by the New Globe. When the transformed theatre was officially reopened in 2011, Bland strategically asserted that it was 'one of the finest stages for Shakespeare's plays anywhere in the world'.⁷⁶³

As part of the RSC's the Complete Works Festival, in September 2006, the Theatre Royal Bath's *Measure for Measure*, directed by Peter Hall, was invited to perform at the Courtyard Theatre.⁷⁶⁴ The RSC built this temporary theatre not only to host productions in the Complete Works Festival but also to experiment playing on a thrust stage. According to RSC-veteran Tim Pigott-Smith, the Courtyard was 'the modern answer' to the age when the audience had the habit of

⁷⁶¹ Chris Hastings, 'The RSC Moves on from Plays to a Playstation', *Sunday Telegraph*, 30 March 2003, p. 23. In 2003, the RSC received a grant of 12 million pounds from the Arts Council, almost 50% larger than the grant in 1999.

⁷⁶² Royal Shakespeare Company, *Annual Report and Accounts, 2005-2006* <<http://www.rsc.org.uk/about-us/our-work/annual-review.aspx?from=au-mdd>> [accessed 19 February 2015].

⁷⁶³ Ward, *Transformation*, v.

⁷⁶⁴ Peter Hall, Performance Recording, *Measure for Measure*, Courtyard Theatre, Stratford, 2006 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/TS/2/2/2006/MEA1. My comments are based on this recording.

‘looking at actors on film and television screens’ which ‘creates a very strong shift away from that distanced world of the secretive proscenium arch, towards a form of staging that is revealing and immediate’:

The thrust stage is a public space, which allows you to be intimate. It reflects the drama and the society. And the experience for the actor is completely different. [...] [Y]ou can draw an audience in more easily: you share the space with the audience. They are closer, so you can share things readily with them.⁷⁶⁵

As at the New Globe, the fact that actors and spectators could see the faces of other spectators encouraged a sense of community. During the intermission of Hall’s production, some spectators waved to their friends sitting across the stage.



Fig. 65. The Courtyard Theatre.

⁷⁶⁵ Royal Shakespeare Company, *Annual Report and Accounts, 2005-2006* [accessed 19 February 2015].

Hall's production confirmed the strength of playing in an intimate space. Michael Mears's Lucio greatly benefited from this intimacy and successfully 'dr[e]w [the] audience in'. As John Murphy maintained: 'Mears almost stole the show with his comedic effete Lucio'.⁷⁶⁶ In the scene with Pompey, being in the *platea*, Mears moved around the bawd, quickly delivering his witty taunts and making wild gestures. The impression was that Mears was inviting the audience to see and admire his showmanship. The playgoers apparently enjoyed his scene with the Duke. At his 'he would mouth with a beggar', Mears's Lucio turned his head to the auditorium and making a kissing sound, to the effect that the sound of the playgoers' laughter still lingered on after he had left the stage.

However, due to its conventional interpretation, this production did not seem to have anything urgent to say to theatregoers. In terms of scenography, Hall's production offered little innovation. The actors dressed in early modern costumes which looked like the ones used in Kyle's production, and the high prison walls reminded me of Hytner's production. As Billington saw it, Hall did not seem to be interested in turning the play into 'a topical, Blair-age satire'.⁷⁶⁷ There was nothing fundamentally wrong in refraining from satirising the Prime Minister but, unlike the influential productions of Brook and Hytner, Hall neither emphasised the relevance of the play nor materialised the image that people had of their world. Since Hall had originally insisted on the importance of being 'relevant', that his

⁷⁶⁶ John Murphy, 'Measure for Measure – Courtyard Theatre, Stratford', *Evesham Journal*, 21 September 2006, in *Theatre Records* (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford), 237, p. 97.

⁷⁶⁷ Michael Billington, 'Caged Fury in Hall's Vision of Puritan Hell', *Guardian*, 14 July 2006, p. 34.

new production offered neither relevance nor radicalism revealed that, in this century, the RSC and its veterans felt that to resume its old ‘radical identity’ was not the right direction.

Before leaving the RSC in 2012, Boyd announced: ‘I am glad to be leaving [...] at a time when the company is prolific and successful’.⁷⁶⁸ In many ways, this statement was accurate. Thanks to the commercial success of *Matilda*, in 2011, the company’s accounts were balanced.⁷⁶⁹ The cheap ticket policies helped encourage young people to go to the theatre with a prospect of them becoming returning customers. In 2012, 39,114 school tickets, 13,450 five-pound tickets for 16-25 year olds and 25,616 family tickets were sold.⁷⁷⁰

Unfortunately, the last production of *Measure for Measure* by the RSC in this thesis, though full of unconventional business, was far from being a breakthrough. It was directed by Roxana Silbert in November 2011 at the Swan.⁷⁷¹ Despite Boyd’s manifesto, according to Simon Trowbridge, at the RSC, ‘2011 and 2012 saw a return to fragmentation’.⁷⁷² The cast in Silbert’s production certainly did not qualify as an ensemble. Most of them worked together for the first time and, for many of them, only for this production. As many productions at the RSC, it was

⁷⁶⁸ Royal Shakespeare Company, *Annual Report and Accounts, 2011-2012* <<http://www.rsc.org.uk/search.aspx?q=annual%20report%20rsc>> [accessed 24 January 2015].

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁷¹ Roxana Silbert, Performance Recording, *Measure for Measure*, Swan Theatre, Stratford, 2011 (Shakespeare Library Centre and Archive, Stratford) RSC/TS/2/2/2011/MEA2. My comments are based on this recording.

⁷⁷² Simon Trowbridge, *The Rise and Fall of the Royal Shakespeare Company* (Oxford: EdAC, 2013), p. 157.

hard to say why they needed to stage this play at this particular time and what urgent message the production intended to convey to its audiences.

2010 and 2011 were, in many ways, troubled times. In 2010, many students protested against an increase in tuition fees for higher education. August 2011 saw riots erupt in many cities in England, triggered by the death of Mark Duggan, a black man, who was shot to death by the police. In October, Occupy London started their campaign against homelessness. The feeling of discontent was worsened by the rise of unemployment. In December, public sector workers launched a strike against a new pension scheme. Silbert's production did not engage with any of these problems. To a large extent, it was an escapist work.

The production's escapist spirit was reinforced by its venue, the Swan, which, for Colin Chambers, has an impression of 'a "never never land"⁷⁷³:

The demeanour of the space and the radiance of the interior – light brick walls, light stone and, overwhelmingly, light wood – were welcoming, informal and liberal, a comforting escape from the concrete harshness of the Barbican and an antidote to its cold modernity. The Swan makes a statement and imposes itself on whatever production it houses as much as on the audience. The immediacy of the auditorium is more engaging than the distance between audience and stage in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and less threatening than the intimacy of The Other Place – a "human"

⁷⁷³ Colin Chambers, *Inside the Royal Shakespeare Company* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 90.

proportion that makes it satisfying to so many people. The design of the theatre places the actor and performance at its heart. No one is more than 30 ft away from the action.⁷⁷⁴

This ‘comforting’ space proved to be problematic for productions aiming to explore disturbing issues. According to Chambers, ‘[v]arious approaches have been used to counter the “feel good” inclinations of the space and not all productions succumb’.⁷⁷⁵



Fig. 66. The Swan Theatre.

Perhaps, because of the ‘comforting’ atmosphere, Silbert’s production downplayed serious issues in the text. This upset Spencer who thought Raymond Coulthard failed to explore the ‘darker’ side of the Duke.⁷⁷⁶ Spencer’s comment revealed how our perception of the Duke had been changed by previous productions such as Hack’s and Boyd’s. It was not only that the Duke was no

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 89.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 90-91.

⁷⁷⁶ Charles Spencer, ‘Unhappy Mix of Sex Toys and Silliness’, *Daily Telegraph*, 28 November 2011, p. 32.

longer deemed a figure of ‘power divine’ but failing to suggest his dark nature could also upset some playgoers. However, what this production tried to do was to present the play’s playful side. Coulthard’s Duke was Silbert’s device to answer the text’s puzzling questions: why does the Duke leave his office, hide himself in friar’s clothes, create tricks and toy with people’s lives? The answer was, for this production, because the Duke was a frivolous man who was more interested in doing magic tricks than running the country. At the beginning of the performance, with music characteristic of that used in a magic show, Coulthard walked through a curtain backdrop. Standing at the centre of the stage, he changed the light on the stage by raising his hands as if casting a spell. The backdrop and the light perhaps reminded some spectators of *Penn & Teller: Fool Us*, a magic show that broadcast its first episode five months before the press night of Silbert’s production. Thus, the first impression of the Duke was that of a conjuror, an image that Coulthard kept reminding spectators of throughout the performance. On many occasions, Coulthard’s Duke amazed his subjects by producing commissions and letters out of the thin air.

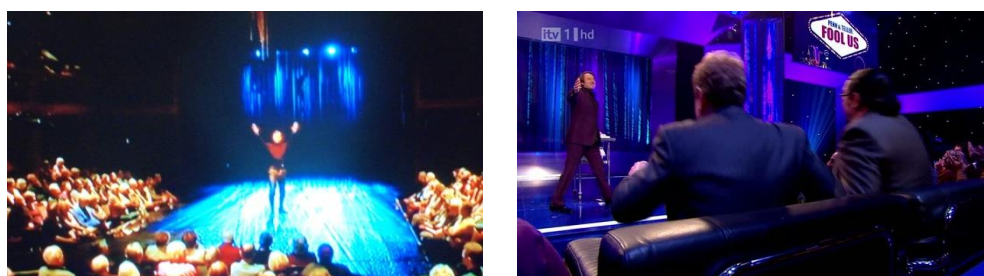


Fig. 67. (Left) Raymond Coulthard’s Duke performing a trick in the first scene in Roxanna Silbert’s *Measure for Measure*, 2011,
(Right) *Penn & Teller: Fool Us* on ITV.

Coulthard effectively exploited the Swan's intimacy to stage his showmanship, draw in playgoers and confide in them his ideas. As Taylor maintained: this 'smilingly smug conjuror [...] is in arch complicity with the audience as he shows off his magic tricks'.⁷⁷⁷ Many of the audience laughed when, at 'I love the people', the Duke looked around the auditorium and gave them a smile. Entering the stage in disguise for the first time, he gave them another smile and proudly made a gesture at his new costume. At 'O, what may man within him hide', he looked at the audience to check whether they were listening and convinced by his argument. At these points, Libby Purves asserted, the playgoers felt 'included'.⁷⁷⁸ The fact that the Duke was often in the *platea* made the performance lively. Since he constantly shared his ideas, spectators did not feel that he was hiding anything and, in effect, they did not see him as a threat. Rather, they were complicit with his tricks.

Joseph Kloska's *Pompey* used the theatre's intimacy equally successfully. He spoke 'I am as well acquainted here', from the *platea*, improvising lines to engage members of the audience. He indicated 'here's young Master Rash' to a male spectator, changed 'Master Caper' to 'Mistress Caper' to address a female spectator and asked another 'How do you sleep at night, Madam?'. He shook hands with another member of the audience, naming two playgoers 'Master Deepvow' and 'young Drop-heir' and calling them 'a rascal' and 'bastard' respectively.

⁷⁷⁷ Paul Taylor, 'Measure for Measure, Swan Theatre', *Independent*, 29 November 2011, p. 46.

⁷⁷⁸ Libby Purves, 'Pimping the Bard with Lashings of S&M', *Times*, 25 November 2011, p. 12.

To localise the line, Kloska changed the number of Mistress Overdone's old customers from 'forty more' to 'four hundreds more' and gestured towards the whole auditorium at 'all great doers in our trade'. Throughout this speech, the spectators laughed continuously and, as Purves put it, they were 'forcibly identified by Pompey the pimp as familiar clients'.⁷⁷⁹ This seemed to be a self-criticism of the RSC that became, as Mistress Overdone's trade, merely a place to do business. The spectators' positive reactions showed that the RSC had made a wise decision in creating intimate spaces which made the performance alive and immediate. It was, as Falocco would put it, a means to 'preserve a relevant place for live performance in the cinematic age'.⁷⁸⁰

By downplaying the dark elements and stressing the comic effects, did Silbert manage to drive the happy ending home? Up to a point, she did. The Duke's first proposal took Isabella by surprise and she did not accept. Nevertheless, at the second proposal, the Duke knelt to her and touched his heart at 'What's mine is yours'. He sounded sincere. After looking up, presumably to ask heaven to bless her, Isabella accepted the proposal. She gently touched the Duke's cheek and he kissed her hand. Then to conclude, the whole cast danced in a blue and red light used in the brothel scene. Some of them embraced while some stroked their partners' bottoms. The afterpiece ended with an energetic stomp. The ending message seemed to be that of Lucio, 'A little more lenity to lechery would do no harm' since it energised the community.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

⁷⁸⁰ Joe Falocco, *Reimagining Shakespeare's Playhouse: Early Modern Staging Conventions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), p. 1.

For several critics, the ending looked unconvincing. Spencer was upset that ‘the director treats the scene as if it were a conventional happy ending when it so clearly isn’t’.⁷⁸¹ This dissatisfaction showed that at least some spectators felt tricked by the RSC. As the Duke who conjured the ‘happy’ ending, the production shied away from the ‘dark’ issues in the play and the problems in the outside world. The critics’ dissatisfaction indicated that there had been a radical change in terms of spectators’ expectation of the ending of *Measure for Measure*, initiated by Barton’s production. In 1970, when Barton made his Isabella remain unresponsive to the Duke’s proposal, he was accused of lacking faith in ‘Shakespeare’. In 2011, when Silbert let her Isabella happily accept the Duke’s hand, the director was accused of being too ‘conventional’. The criticisms towards Silbert’s production revealed that, at the beginning of this century, rather than Wilson Knights’ parable, *Measure for Measure* was largely regarded as a dark comedy. At the beginning of the new century, the RSC’s productions, arguably, still failed to produce this dark comedy which effectively expressed the current concerns of people during this troubling time.

It was through a co-production between Simon McBurney’s Complicité and the National, performed at the Olivier in June 2004, that a *Measure for Measure* for our post-9/11, surveillance society materialised.⁷⁸² Since this production perfectly reflected an image of twenty-first-century society, I decided to discuss

⁷⁸¹ Spencer, ‘Unhappy Mix’, p. 32. See also, Jane Edwards, ‘Also Showing’, *Sunday Times*, 4 December 2011, p. 16.

⁷⁸² Simon McBurney, Performance Recording, *Measure for Measure*, Olivier, London, 2004 (National Theatre Archive, London) RNT/SO/2/196. My comments are based on this recording.

McBurney's production at the end of the thesis, though it was staged before Silbert's production.

Its success was partly facilitated by the National's agenda. Unlike Boyd, Hytner determined to make the National socially relevant and politically critical:

At the National, we wanted to provoke a continuing investigation of what makes us tick, as a nation and as individuals. [...] The Arts Council gave us a raise. It all risked going horribly wrong. Few things distress us more than the embrace of the establishment. It is our job to be relentlessly sceptical of authority.⁷⁸³

Hytner also insisted: 'We weren't interested in playing the target game'.⁷⁸⁴ What he had in mind seemed to be the fate of theatres in the 1980s when the Arts Council forced subsidised theatres 'to reconstitute their management or lose their grants' and, as Peacock maintains, this reorganisation 'diverted the energy of artistic directors from the creative processes'.⁷⁸⁵ It was clear that Hytner wanted nothing of that. For him, the National should be distant from authority but close to society. While the RSC's stagings of *Measure for Measure* were produced to maintain its status as the centre of Shakespeare performance, McBurney's *Measure for Measure* had an urgent message for its audiences. In the 2004 annual

⁷⁸³ Royal National Theatre, *National Theatre: Annual Report and Financial Statements, 2003/04* <<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/discover-more/welcome-to-the-national-theatre/about-the-national-theatre/annual-reports>> [accessed 24 January 2015], p. 5.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷⁸⁵ Peacock, *Thatcher's Theatre*, pp. 49-50.

report, Hytner insisted: ‘Shakespeare and Euripides seemed to be writing in direct reaction to current events. In Simon McBurney’s hands, *Measure for Measure* was a case study of misused power’.⁷⁸⁶ The theme of ‘misused power’ in ‘current events’ was openly conveyed when, at Lucio’s ‘Thou conclud’st like the sanctimonious pirate’, an image of George W. Bush was projected on the screens. For academic reviewer P. A. Skantze, ‘[w]hile Lucio continued to play on the discussion of the commandment the pirate conveniently “razed”, the one about stealing, one couldn’t help but think of the other one Bush razed as he went to sea claiming to have the backing of God, the one about killing’.⁷⁸⁷ According to Skantze, the powerless characters in this production were in a state of ‘waiting’. They lacked ‘volition’.⁷⁸⁸

I argue that, by adopting Agamben’s theory of ‘bare life’, we can further Skantze’s argument to pinpoint the real power of this production. By stating that the characters were waiting for something suggested that they were aware that their lives were in danger and there was a safe zone where these characters could retire, which clearly was not the point. In fact, McBurney’s production showed playogers that, in a technologically advanced society, figures of authority could secretly spy on and invade their subjects. There was no place to hide and, in this state, the subjects were always beings of ‘bare life’. McBurney’s Vienna was a development of Hytner’s image of an authoritarian regime signified by the sound

⁷⁸⁶ Royal National Theatre, *National Theatre: Annual Report and Financial Statements, 2004/05* <<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/discover-more/welcome-to-the-national-theatre/about-the-national-theatre/annual-reports>> [accessed 24 January 2015], p. 3.

⁷⁸⁷ P. A. Skantze, ‘Uneasy Coalitions: Culpability, Orange Jumpsuits and *Measure for Measure*’, *Shakespeare*, 3 (2007), 63-71 (p. 66).

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

of prison doors closing. While Hytner created the image of ‘the two separate worlds’, in McBurney’s production, Vienna became a surveillance society. People spied on people and CCTVs were everywhere.

Under this condition, everyone was under an incessant scrutiny. It was through CCTVs that David Troughton’s Duke observed Juliet and the quarrel between Isabella and Claudio. These monitors, as Nightingale suggested, ‘reinforce the production’s emphasis on power and control’. They helped the Duke in ‘spying, snooping, manoeuvring and manipulating’ his subjects and, in effect, he wielded ‘an authority so massive and unselfquestioning that it would have left that great Habsburg emperor, Franz Joseph, looking like a shrimp’.⁷⁸⁹ This Duke was more powerful since he could easily invade his subjects’ privacy without their awareness. Furthermore, thanks to the telephone, in a second, this Duke could immediately share his plans with his conspirators, as he did with the Friar. Lucy Powell’s complaint about the ‘frenzy’ of ‘MTV-style scene changes’ and lack of ‘moments of quiet beauty or contemplation’⁷⁹⁰ indirectly confirms my point. In McBurney’s Vienna, there was no private space where one could safely and quietly contemplate.

⁷⁸⁹ Benedict Nightingale, ‘Gentlemen and Power Players’, *Times*, 28 May 2004, p. 27.

⁷⁹⁰ Lucy Powell, ‘*Measure for Measure*’, *Time Out*, 22 February 2006, p. 126.



Fig. 68. Surveillance society in Simon McBurney's *Measure for Measure*, 2006.

In effect, the production raised the question of sovereignty over life. If we had no privacy and were constantly under a monitor, did we still have the power to control our own lives? McBurney's production reflected the task of the modern state which, according to Foucault, is to administer life.⁷⁹¹ In this sense, Angelo's campaign was an attempt of the state to regulate people's sexual life which, in effect, deprived them of sovereignty. In 2006, when the production was revived at the Lyttelton, McBurney created stage business putting Angelo upstage to see Mistress Overdone's customer enjoying a blow-job.⁷⁹² This was an act that Angelo wanted to eradicate. Sex should be productive and enacted by registered couples. Angelo's campaign brought another question. If the state claimed absolute authority over their private lives, did the citizens of Vienna still have any rights to protect themselves?

⁷⁹¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1978), p. 139.

⁷⁹² Simon McBurney, Performance Recording, *Measure for Measure*, Lyttelton, London, 2006 (National Theatre Archive, London) RNT/AE/1/1/1. My comments on the revival in 2006 are based on this recording.

In 2004, this question was very relevant. As Martin Pugh claims, New Labour was a thinly disguised authoritarian government. After 9/11, it ‘enact[ed] a mass of legislation on terrorism’ which ‘carried [Britain] halfway down the road to a police state. [...] Not since the rule of Lord Liverpool, [...] had there been so comprehensive an attack on civil liberties’.⁷⁹³ Two months before the performance of McBurney’s production, Blair was under attack on what was called ‘Britain’s Guantanamo Bay’ in London where 14 foreign terrorist suspects were detained without trial. This was also the time when ‘five British detainees at Camp Delta, the American detention centre in Cuba, were told that they would be returned to Britain within weeks’. Responding to the controversy, a Home Office spokeswoman ‘said that the current arrangements were “not ideal, but these are just very, very difficult circumstances”’.⁷⁹⁴ The implication was that if the state saw fit, it could take away their citizens’ basic rights. This is what happened to prisoners in Iraq who were denied basic rights. One month before the show, photographs were leaked ‘in which a prisoner appears to be battered with rifle butts, threatened with execution and urinated on by his captors’.⁷⁹⁵ To use Agamben’s term, they were figures of ‘bare life’, beings ‘that may be killed but not sacrificed’.

McBurney’s production perfectly materialised this nightmare of being a figure of ‘bare life’. According to Skantze, ‘McBurney’s definition of *Measure for*

⁷⁹³ Martin Pugh, *Speak for Britain!: A New History of the Labour Party* (London: Bodley Head, 2010), p. 409.

⁷⁹⁴ Ben Russell, ‘Blair Facing Backlash over Britain’s Guantanamo Bay’, *Independent*, 21 February 2004, p. 1.

⁷⁹⁵ Julian Borger, Luke Harding and Matthew Taylor, ‘British Troops in Torture Scandal’, *Guardian*, 1 May 2004, p. 1.

Measure [...] as “chaotic” [...] echoes the sentiment of bewilderment, the loss of identity as a citizen with a voice to persuade’.⁷⁹⁶ To put it another way by using Agamben’s theory of ‘bare life’, Claudio and other prisoners in orange jump suits were put in the ‘zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exclusion and inclusion’.⁷⁹⁷ As prisoners in detention camps, these characters were punished by a law which no longer acknowledged their rights within the law. It might not be accidental that this production was full of half-naked people. In the brothel scene, a customer took his pants off and Pompey was in a jacket with no shirt. In 2006, in the procession of disgrace scene, Claudio wore nothing but shorts. These images gave an impression of beings that were about to be forced out of the code of civilisation. In this state, Kostas Philippoglou’s Elbow could kick and stamp on Pompey whenever he felt like it.

Naomi Frederick’s Isabella and Paul Rhys’s Angelo were also illustrative examples of ‘bare life’. Frederick played Isabella as a scared creature trapped in an exploitative world. At the beginning of the first interview, when Angelo dismissed her case, Isabella was about to leave but Lucio blocked her way, unbuttoned her shirt and forced her back to Angelo. In front of Angelo who claimed himself to be the law, Isabella had absolutely nothing to protect her. She was a sex object put there to be exploited. In the second interview, Angelo put her hand into his trousers and, in 2006, took off her shirt and bra.

⁷⁹⁶ Skantze, ‘Uneasy Coalitions’, p. 70.

⁷⁹⁷ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p. 181.



Fig. 69. Naomi Frederick's Isabella in the second interview, 2006.

The fate of Rhys's Angelo was also terrifying. At first, he seemed to be very secure in the world of power but, like Baker's Angelo in Hytner's production, his luck ran out when, by wanting to have sex outside legalised marriage, he became a threat to society's biopolitics. His erection frightened him because it reminded him that he also had an uncontrollable desire and the state would not hesitate to get rid of him. At 'Blood, thou art blood', Angelo cut himself with a razor but he did not kill himself. Suicide was a ritual and, as a figure of 'bare life', Angelo could be killed but not sacrificed. His status as 'bare life' was reinforced in the last scene. Knowing that Friar Lodowick was the Duke in disguise, Angelo shrank into a foetal position. In front of the Duke, he was not a full sovereign subject but an insignificant being that could be killed without committing murder. When Angelo was sentenced, the Provost put a gun against Angelo's head. As Hampton-Reeves saw it, '[t]he Duke was not playing a game; his threat to kill Angelo [was] real and vicious'.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁸ Hampton-Reeves, *Measure for Measure*, p. 128.

Similarly, Isabella's status as 'bare life' was reinforced at the end when the Duke proposed. According to Patricia Tatzpaugh, before this, the production 'gave no hint of his attraction to Isabella', hence, the 'proposal came as a shock. "Dear Isabel, / I have a motion much imports your good" was firm, and anger colored "what is yours is mine"'.⁷⁹⁹ This was a proposal that, under his sovereignty, a subject could not refuse. Nevertheless, McBurney saved the most shocking business to the very last moment. After his second proposal, the Duke walked upstage and, as Skantze described, 'a panel rose to reveal a bed and its bloodstained linens'.⁸⁰⁰ Foreseeing her horrific fate, Isabella gaped and turned to spectators. At this second, there was a loud sound of a prison door closing, followed by a blackout. McBurney seemed to agree with Foucault: 'death is power's limit, the moment that escapes it'.⁸⁰¹ There was no way to run away from this Duke. He could get anything he wanted, whether it was a woman's virginity or her life. As Charles Spencer maintained: 'both Rhys and Naomi Frederick are in mesmerising form'.⁸⁰² Their performances and the whole production were 'mesmerising' in the sense that they exposed us to an inconvenient truth that many of us were too scared to recognise. Whether under the regime of the Duke, Blair or Bush, if those in authority wanted and the 'circumstances' served, they could take away everything from us, as they were doing to prisoners in detention camps.

⁷⁹⁹ Patricia Tatzpaugh, 'Shakespeare Onstage in England, 2004-2005', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 56 (2005), 448-478 (p. 472).

⁸⁰⁰ Skantze, 'Uneasy Coalitions', p. 70.

⁸⁰¹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 138.

⁸⁰² Charles Spencer, 'Measuring Up for Today', *Daily Telegraph*, 28 May 2004, p. 22.

This production was undoubtedly, as Spencer maintained, ‘powerfully disturbing’.⁸⁰³ Nonetheless, because of its extensive use of CCTVs and rapid changes of sound and light, John Gross felt that ‘the play is one devised by Simon McBurney rather than Shakespeare’.⁸⁰⁴ Similarly, Jane Edwards asserted that ‘[a]t times there’s [...] not enough trust in Shakespeare’s words’.⁸⁰⁵ In fact, McBurney highly valued ‘Shakespeare’s words’. In an interview, he maintained: ‘it is marvellous, endless, enormously rewarding to engage with the text. Shakespeare resists ultimate definition’.⁸⁰⁶ I suspected that these critics felt like Robert Brustein who complained: ‘Let us mourn the day when theatre first discovered video’.⁸⁰⁷ Integrating TV screens into a Shakespeare performance suggested an attempt to reinvent Shakespeare. Thus, it challenged people who deemed Shakespeare as a classicist and regarded theatre as a place to faithfully reproduce Shakespeare’s ‘original’ intentions.

The power of this politically powerful production in 2006 reinvigorated the 1960s spirit of Shakespeare as ‘our contemporary’. After a great reception in 2004, this production enjoyed a successful world tour. The host company in Bangalore asserted: ‘It was very memorable and powerful that not a day has gone by without a conversation regarding the production’.⁸⁰⁸ As a result, when it was revived in

⁸⁰³ Ibid., p. 22. See also, Nightingale, ‘Gentlemen’, p. 27. Paul Taylor, ‘A Triumph of Sleaze and CCTV’, *Independent*, 31 May 2004, p. 16.

⁸⁰⁴ John Gross, ‘Turn Down the Volume’, *Sunday Telegraph*, 30 May 2004, p. 7.

⁸⁰⁵ Jane Edwards, ‘*Measure for Measure*: National Theatre, Olivier’, *Time Out*, 2 June 2004, p. 139.

⁸⁰⁶ Anon., ‘Magic Man: Simon McBurney is a Theatrical Legend who Needs to be Constantly’, *Independent*, 23 May 2004, pp. 14-15.

⁸⁰⁷ Robert Brustein, ‘More Masterpieces’, *PAJ: A Journal of Performance Art*, 30 (2008), 1-7 (p. 4).

⁸⁰⁸ Simon McBurney, Programme, *Measure for Measure*, Lyttelton, London, 2006 (National Theatre Archive, London) RNT/PP/1/2/266a.

2006, no complaint of the production lacking of trust in ‘Shakespeare’ was raised. On the contrary, many critics insisted that it was true to ‘Shakespeare’s intent’.⁸⁰⁹

In the early twenty-first century, the RSC’s enthusiasm for connecting people to Shakespeare was manifested in their ‘intimate’, new theatres. Physical engagement with spectators via direct address made the performances of *Measure for Measure* more immediate and lively, especially those of the comic characters. However, the company still struggled to engage audiences politically and culturally, to find ways to make *Measure for Measure* speak to people in a world where security was threatened by terrorism and, at the same time, in the name of national security, modern states claimed the right to deprive their citizens of liberty and privacy. As far as I know, Boyd never expressed his interest in making the company politically critical. In contrast, responding to Hytner’s agenda of having a politically relevant theatre, McBurney powerfully represented the aforementioned problems. He modernised ‘Shakespeare’. His production showed playgoers that *Measure for Measure* was not an ‘ancient’ play, advocating the ruler’s mercy. It voiced their concerns about state control and, presumably, changed their perceptions of the real threat of the modern state. Moreover, McBurney’s production heralded the integration of modern devices such as TV screens into Shakespearian performance. How to present this ambiguous play,

⁸⁰⁹ John Thaxter, ‘*Measure for Measure*’, *British Theatre Guide*, 20 February 2006 <<http://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/compliciteMforM-rev>> [accessed 24 February 2015] (para. 5 of 12). See also, Charles Spencer, ‘Disconcerting. Vile. Superb’, *Telegraph*, 17 February 2006, p. 34. Laura Barnett, ‘Troubled Times’, *Morning Star*, 23 February 2006. Quentin Letts, ‘Power Play is a Dazzling Success’, *Daily Mail*, 17 February 2006, p. 53.

written more than five hundred years ago, in a world where technology is such an indispensable part of life is an issue that directors in the future will have to face.

Conclusion

While doing this research, and producing a comprehensive, full-length study of *Measure for Measure* on the English stage and screen, an image has become gradually clearer in my mind: *Measure for Measure* is an arena where many parties enter and negotiate without end. Some of them are easy to spot, for example, directors, designers, actors, critics and scenography. Some of them are more elusive, for example, ‘Shakespeare’, social contexts and institutional policies. A production is the result of that negotiation at a particular time. Some parties, such as the national theatres, are strong enough to stay in the arena for a long time and influence the outcomes of many productions. Some of them, such as Hack’s Brechtian ‘Shakespeare’ and Poel’s way of delivering, are less strong. They are in this arena for a brief period then leave with little trace.

As a researcher of the history of *Measure for Measure* on stage and screen, I am also in this arena and I certainly have my own agenda: to prove that *Measure for Measure*, as McBurney maintains, ‘resists ultimate definition’.⁸¹⁰ However, to prove this point is not the end in itself, but a basic hypothesis that reminds me to be open-minded. This thesis has created the first full English performance history of *Measure for Measure* and has argued that the contributions of every concerned party are significant in reshaping our perceptions of the play and issues such as authority, morality and gender politics. Chapter 1 and 3 have demonstrated the interaction between the performances, spaces and spectators, and how these

⁸¹⁰ Anon., ‘Magic Man: Simon McBurney is a Theatrical Legend who Needs to be Constantly’, *Independent*, 23 May 2004, pp. 14-15.

interactions shaped and reshaped *Measure for Measure* as a royalist play, a politically sceptical play, a problem play, a comedy and a psychological play. All of the spaces discussed in Chapters 1 and 3 were a decisive factor in shaping playgoers' experiences. Nevertheless, from the Edwardian period to the early twenty-first century, spaces played another important role. They were deliberately transformed into a commodity. In the case of Poel's and the New Globe, according to the sources footnoted below,⁸¹¹ many playgoers came not to see a particular play but to see the 'authentic' spaces. Moreover, from Poel's time, I have noticed a trend in creating a more interactive performance space. A space in which playgoers and actors can interact becomes a key element in emphasizing the different experience that theatergoing can offer from that of watching television series or films. It highlights a unique characteristic of live performance and, consequently, shows its competitive edge over the other popular entertainments.

Chapter 2 focused on the stage adaptations in the Restoration and the modern period, and film adaptations. This chapter illuminated the differences between them. The stage adaptors in this chapter needed to deal with the authority of the First Folio script and how to appropriate it to create new dramatic scripts, whereas the film adaptors had to deal with the problem of transcoding the First Folio script into new media. In spite of these differences I showed how adaptations of the text: streamlining its script, combining parts of it with other Shakespearean and non-

⁸¹¹ Anon., 'Royalty Theatre', *Morning Post*, 13 November 1893, p. 3, Mark Rylance, 'Research, Materials, Craft: Principles of Performance at Shakespeare's Globe', in *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 103-114 (p. 113).

Shakespearean dramatic text, transplanting it to a new racial and cultural context or to the new medium of the screen, all facilitated ways to read a clear political or moral message. I showed how adaptation could make *Measure for Measure* speak as a royalist propaganda, a morality play, an anti-authoritarian play, or even a play about colonialism and the power of modern media.

Chapters 4 and 5 concentrated not only on theatrical elements such as performance spaces, actors and scenography but also on external factors, namely social contexts and institutional agendas. These chapters have developed Barbara Hodgdon's ideas about theatre's socially transformative power: in 'reproducing or reconstituting the play's social meanings as theatrical meanings, performances rework these elements in terms of variable processes of theatrical production and consumption'.⁸¹² The productions in these chapters have reproduced or reconstituted the play's social meanings as theatrical meanings and they had the potential to address spectators' social situations. In the case of the RSC's more traditional productions, they may confirm theatrical and social complacency but in productions like the Kembles', Brook's, Rudman's and McBurney's, my study has shown that these productions reflected and reshaped society. The rise of democracy and the Kembles' anti-democratic productions betrayed the decline of monarchical absolute power, while the scenographies, underprivileged characters and non-white actors in Brook's and Rudman's reflected the necessity of national theatres to keep reinventing themselves according to and for society. Through these chapters, I have come to the conclusion that since drama is a collaborative

⁸¹² Barbara Hodgdon, *The End Crowns All: Closure and Contradiction in Shakespeare's History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 14.

art, external facts, such as social and geographical contexts, and institutional agendas, have a decisive influence on the outcome of any production. These chapters have shown how external factors shaped and reshaped *Measure for Measure* until it can be read both as a dark comedy and a pro-feminist play that we have come to know today.

This thesis supports W. B. Worthen's argument that stage performance exerts its own authority which 'enlarges on the text, forces it to speak in languages not determined [...] by the words on the page'.⁸¹³ The 39 productions in this thesis have demonstrated the indeterminacy of the text because of their very different interpretation which, in turn, disproved the notion of the stable 'work'. These productions created new meanings for the play which, in effect, undermined the idea that authorized meanings are only in the text. In 1931, Ayrton played the Duke as 'a more-than-human being' who symbolized the 'Power Divine' while, in 1974, Ingham played the Duke as a thinly disguised evil, sexual predator. Directors' interpretations have redefined the play's atmosphere and genre. In 2004, Dove ended his production with a 'dance of love' to facilitate his scheme of staging *Measure for Measure* as a funny comedy. In the same year, McBurney emphasised his staging of *Measure for Measure* as a troubling, political play with the images of a blood-stained bed and Isabella's frightened facial expression at the end. How one fills the silences in the last act immensely influences spectators' lasting impression of the play.

⁸¹³ W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 153.

The production always has its own agendas which it fulfils by exerting its authority over the text. Throughout history, the words in the text were constantly revised to suit the producers' interests and the spectators' tastes. Textual changes re-made *Measure for Measure*. In 1700, Gildon adapted Davenant's and the First Folio's texts to highlight middle class morality, a practice which many directors from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century furthered by removing 'vulgar' characters and sexual elements from the text. Because of these 'adaptors', *Measure for Measure* became a problem play, a serious play which ends with marriages but has few comic elements. The emphasis on morality might have laid a basic idea for Wilson Knight's interpretation of *Measure for Measure* as a parable of the New Testament, a reading which influenced the productions of Bridges-Adams in 1931 and McMullan in 1946. Modern media also 'forces [the text] to speak' a new meaning. In his 1994 TV adaptation, Thacker not only cut the text but also interpolated images, such as TV monitors and a studio, to deliver his message, the power of modern media. Moreover, film adaptors of *Measure for Measure* appropriated the strength of the screen in an intimate scene to emphasise the psychological and emotional aspects of the characters.

Performance space is another crucial factor which 'force[s] [*Measure for Measure*] to speak in languages not determined [...] by the words on the page'.⁸¹⁴ It is a frame which determines what kind of performance and interpretation are effective in it. The darkened Olivier and its large auditorium strengthened the dark atmosphere and the feeling of isolation in McBurney's production. In contrast,

⁸¹⁴ Ibid., p. 153.

because of the visibility of other spectators, outdoor theatres like the early modern Globe and the New Globe encouraged the sense of community and festivity. In this exuberant atmosphere, the King's Men's *Measure for Measure* at the Globe would have helped cultivate anti-authoritarian spirit. The performance space also determines the interaction between playgoers and the actors. Poel's Neo-Elizabethan production did not achieve the desired sense of intimacy because it was performed behind a proscenium arch, distant from playgoers. To counter this problem, in the recent years, the RSC built new theatres with 'intimate' performance spaces. In 1991, Nunn staged his production in the 'intimate' Other Place which invited the spectators to assume the role of psychiatrists who observed the characters' states of mind. The 'intimate' theatres like the Courtyard and the Swan greatly benefited the comic characters in Hall's and Silbert's productions. In these productions, the comic characters comfortably located themselves in the *platea*. They made direct contact to the audiences which, in turn, made their performances more engaging, more comic and more memorable. Consequently, in the case of Hall's production, many playgoers clearly enjoyed the performance of Mears's Lucio more than that of the Duke. Performance space is an effective means for touring productions to express their cultural authority. Guthrie's production showcased his company by staging a large set which distanced the audiences from the performance space. In contrast, Petherbridge staged his production in a bare space which empowered spectators. In this space, they could move, participate in the action and, at one point, act as judges.

My study has proved Worthen's ideas of authority of performance by showing how performance creates its own authority over the script and how performance influences spectators. A production can create meaning through many elements, such as non-verbal elements, elements of scenography, casting and adaptation. This thesis argues that the play's own issues of authority and morality have made it especially challenging to the political status quo and moral sensibilities of each age, and have allowed theatre practitioners to use performance to critique or reinforce structures of authority. At the early modern Globe, the use of *platea* shaped spectators' scepticism towards the absolute authority of the monarchy and questioned puritans' attitudes on the immorality of sex. In the Georgian period and the Romantic era, through Kemble's height and adapting, producers used *Measure for Measure* to support the monarchy but the play's subversive overtones betrayed anxiety towards monarchical authority. In the Victorian period, through the teamwork of players at Sadlers's Wells and adapting, Phelps staged this play to advertise family values and social unity but it also exposed the moral hypocrisy of the elite, and the Popish Aggression crisis encouraged the playgoers to question the Duke's integrity. After the Second World War, as people became more sceptical towards those in power, none of the Dukes were posed as perfect rulers. For example, Hack used a gigantic golden robe to suggest the Duke's greed and Boyd used the big shadow of his actor to suggest the dark side of the Duke. In the case of Marowitz's and McBurney's productions after the Watergate Scandal and the Iraq War, respectively, *Measure for Measure* became a play which exposed the exploitative nature of authority. Marowitz suggested the exploitative nature of the Duke by the image of him throwing a wild party and pouring wine on

Angelo's head just for fun, and McBurney suggested the Duke's wickedness through the production's dark atmosphere and the Duke's blood-stained bed.

This thesis argues that *Measure for Measure* played a significant role in shaping the authority of 'Shakespeare'. The text's openness ensures Shakespeare's cultural value because it allows directors to create a 'Shakespeare' who is responsive to the outside world. This 'Shakespeare' could be a gentleman in the Georgian period, a royalist during the Napoleonic Wars, an educator in the Victorian era or a critic of Bush/Blair's regimes. The fact that, throughout history, the text was often adapted, edited and/or interpolated suggests, as Foucault would put it, the 'fear' of 'the proliferation of meaning'. Through *Measure for Measure*, people saw, to paraphrase Marx, spectres of 'Shakespeare' which haunted them. People in the eighteenth century were haunted by a 'Shakespeare' who enjoyed vulgarity and professional critics at the New Globe were frightened by a 'Shakespeare' who threw cheap jokes to make tourists laugh. In the nutshell, the productions of *Measure for Measure* materialised people's feelings towards 'Shakespeare': their anxiety of losing him as a powerful piece of cultural capital and their realisations of the need to reinvent him.

Theoretical frameworks provided by theatre critics like Steven Purcell, W. B. Worthen and Robert Shaunessey, have proved to be very significant to my thesis. Nevertheless, there are aspects that this thesis differs or develops from the arguments of these critics. While this research has adopted Purcell's arguments of

the plurality of spectators,⁸¹⁵ it puts an emphasis on a different aspect, namely, how productions are designed to exert a significant influence on spectators' viewpoints and comment critically on the current social and cultural contexts in which they are produced. Petherbridge's 'schools production' convinced students that Shakespeare was 'super-cool' while Barton and Rudman's productions paved the way for a more equal society in terms of gender and race, respectively. Some productions also anticipated the political future and pointed the way to changes in religious authority. At the end of the twentieth century, Boyd's production reminded the audiences of a strong connection between morality and authoritarianism. It warned spectators the danger of religious extremism and state authoritarianism from which people in our time are still suffering.

The broad chronological study of *Measure for Measure* has allowed me to go beyond Worthen's arguments and those of Shaughnessy. My thesis has shown that performance also passes its authority or productive energy to another production, an issue that Worthen's theoretical work and Shaughnessy's study of unrelated productions of different plays have not explored. It is clearly more productive to regard performance not only as a means to create meanings for an individual production, or as a way to destroy a unified 'Shakespeare', as Shaughnessy suggests, but also as a productive force. Shakespeare's first Jacobean comedy, performed at the Court, was adapted by Davenant to advertise royalist morality. Davenant's adaptation, in turn, was used by Gildon to explore bourgeois morality. At the same time, these productions tried to suppress subversive elements in the

⁸¹⁵ Stephen Purcell, *Shakespeare and Audience in Practice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 13.

play. The practice of emphasising the issue of morality and suppressing subversive elements was, more or less, repeated until the early twentieth century. This trend was changed by the production of Brook in 1950. As a reaction against McMullan's 'bright' production in 1946, Brook's scenography materialised the 'dark' side of the play and introduced Mistress Overdone's whores as a stage presence that is not indicated by the text. The practice of representing the dark, sexual side of the play was constantly repeated in many productions after Brook's. Similarly, Barton's 'revolutionary' ending in 1970 changed the way directors approached Isabella's 'open silence'. To some extent, because of Brook and Barton's productions, in the twenty-first century, to regard *Measure for Measure* as a dark comedy is an authorised choice. The two productions also make people recognise the importance of the play's 'open-silences' and indeterminacy.

Measure for Measure has also reinvented me. When I started doing this research, I asked myself: what does Shakespeare tell us through this play? Now that question seems irrelevant. My research shows that people, throughout history, made their own meanings from engaging with this text, by contributing to direction, performance and scenography in productions and by watching it on the stage or screen. Their ideas were so various, that it was neither possible to tell which one had the most validity nor to find any figure who could claim the sole authority over the meanings of the text and production. Personally, I enjoyed watching the video recordings of Hytner's and McBurney's productions because I thought they powerfully materialized the image that many people have of their societies. As a man whose country is under a military junta, I know how it feels

like to be an example of 'bare life'. It is amazing how the productions of an early modern play could reflect what is happening in my country, a country whose existence was unknown to Shakespeare. Nevertheless, in the long run, a production's individual success or failure is not important in itself. All of them were engaged in an ongoing process of reinventing this play. If one day, my students tell me that they would like to play *Measure for Measure*, my first question to them would be: why is this play important for us? The answer to this question is the key to revitalise the play and the spirit that keeps every culture alive.

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Appendix

Table of Studied Productions

Chapter 1 *Measure for Measure* of the King's Men: Two Venues, Various Spectators and Various Receptions

Part 1 *Measure for Measure* at the Court

Date	Director	Company's Name / Venue
26 December 1604	-	The King's Men / Whitehall

Part 2 *Measure for Measure* at the Globe

Date	Director	Company's Name / Venue
1604?, 1621?	-	The King's Men / the Globe

Chapter 2 Adaptations and the 'Work': Textual Changes and Films

Part 1 Restoration Reworkings the 'Ancient' Text

Date	Director	Company's Name / Venue
15 February 1662	-	The Duke's Company, Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre
February 1700	-	Lincoln's Inn Fields

		Theatre
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Part 2 Modern Adaptations: Transgressing the ‘Work’ and ‘Shakespeare’

Date	Director	Company’s Name / Venue
28 August 1975	Charles Marowitz	Open Space Theatre (London)
September 2002	Phil Willmott	Riverside Studios (London)

Part 3 *Measure for Measure* on the Screen: The Problems of ‘Transcoding’

Date	Director	Company’s Name / Venue
1979	Desmond Davis	BBC/Time-Life
1994	David Thacker	BBC
2006	Bob Komar	Press on Features/ Lucky Strike

Chapter 3 Performance Spaces of Elizabethan Revival and Touring

Productions

Part 1 Poel’s Neo-Elizabethan Spaces

Date	Director	Company’s Name / Venue
9 November 1893	William Poel	Royalty Theatre (London)

1908	William Poel	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and the Gaiety (Manchester)
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Part 2 *Measure for Measure* at the ‘Authentic’ New Globe

Date	Director	Company’s Name / Venue
30 June 2004	John Dove	Shakespeare’s Globe

Part 3 Modern Touring Productions: Arranging Unfamiliar Spaces

Date	Director	Company’s Name / Venue
1966-1967	Tyrone Guthrie	Bristol Old Vic
1973-1974	Jonathan Miller	National Theatre
1991-1992	Trevor Nunn	The RSC
2002	Jonathan Petherbridge	National Theatre/London Bubble Theatre

Chapter 4 ‘Shakespeare(s)’ and Society: *Measure for Measure* from 1720 to 1962

Part 1 Georgian Productions and a Gentlemanly ‘Shakespeare’

Date	Director	Company’s Name / Venue
1720	-	Lincoln’s Inn Fields

1771	-	Convent Garden
1783	-	Drury Lane

Part 2 Kemble's *Measure for Measure*: 'Shakespeare' Turned Right

Date	Director	Company's Name / Venue
1803	John Philip Kemble	Covent Garden

Part 3 Phelps's *Measure for Measure*: 'Shakespeare' for the Victorians

Date	Director	Company's Name / Venue
1846	Samuel Phelps	Sadler's Wells

Part 4 *Measure for Measure* (1931-1962): Changes in a Changing World

Date	Director	Company's Name / Venue
16 April 1931	William Bridges-Adams	Memorial Temporary Theatre
23 August 1946	Frank McMullan	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
9 March 1950	Peter Brook	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
14 August 1956	Anthony Quayle	Shakespeare Memorial

		Theatre
19 November 1957	Margaret Webster	Old Vic
10 April 1962	John Blatchley	Royal Shakespeare Theatre

Chapter 5 National Theatres: Speaking for ‘Shakespeare’

Part 1 *Measure for Measure* at the RSC and the National from the 1970s

Date	Director	Company’s Name / Venue
1 April 1970	John Barton	Royal Shakespeare Theatre
4 September 1974	Keith Hack	Royal Shakespeare Theatre
27 June 1978	Barry Kyle	Royal Shakespeare Theatre
April 1981	Michael Rudman	Lyttelton
4 October 1983	Adrian Noble	Royal Shakespeare Theatre
11 November 1987	Nicholas Hytner	Royal Shakespeare Theatre
20 October 1994	Steven Pimlott	Royal Shakespeare Theatre
30 April 1998	Michael Boyd	Royal Shakespeare Theatre

Part 2 *Measure for Measure*: New Artistic Directors and New Policies in the

New Millennium

Date	Director	Company’s Name / Venue
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2 May 2003	Sean Holmes	Royal Shakespeare Company
17 May 2004, 16 March 2006	Simon McBurney	Complicité/the National Olivier (2004) Lyttelton (2006)
13 September 2006	Peter Hall	Theatre Royal Bath / Courtyard Theatre
23 November 2011	Roxana Silbert	Swan Theatre

Interview Script, conducted and transcribed by Rachod Nusen (2 July 2013) at the Union Theatre, London.

Nusen: Thank you very much Mr. Willmott to give me a chance to interview you.

Willmott: My pleasure.

Nusen: I have read your script, *Measure for Measure Malaya*, and it is very interesting.

Willmott: Oh, good.

Nusen: So I have a lot of questions concerning that production. But, first of all, within ten years, you have made two productions of *Measure for Measure*. So I assume that you like it.

Willmott: Yes, I love it.

Nusen: What is there in *Measure for Measure* that interests you?

Willmott: Because every time you read it, it means something different. And I think it will be possible to do the play four different ways, and each of them will be right. So it is soaked with the fluid and it means different things at different points in history. And the characters are so fantastic and what motivates the characters. For instance, if you take Isabella, you can play her at least five

different ways and each way would work. The one ten years ago, the Isabella was very submissive and this Isabella is very fighty. So they are very different but they both work.

Nusen: In an interview, you had said that your productions of ‘rarely performed, disputed or downright dodgy Shakespeare plays have always proved popular’. What in *Measure for Measure* that makes it have a potential to interest your audience?

Willmott: I worry about that. It is not selling as well as when we do a very obscure one. But we will see. Maybe it will pick up. Certainly because *Measure for Measure* is done a bit more often, it hasn’t excited people as much as when we do an obscure one.

Nusen: Reviewers regard *Measure for Measure Malaya* as an adaptation. What do you think makes them have reached to that conclusion?

Willmott: I think it is quite short. I cut all the comedies from it. So it was much shorter. And there was a small cast. I conglomerated several of the parts. So it really did feel quite different. If you didn’t know the play, it made perfect sense. But if you knew the play, it would feel slightly odd.

Nusen: How would you see your task of ‘adapting’ Shakespeare?

Willmott: There is a very interesting article you should read by Nicholas Hytner in *The Guardian* and he is talking his production *Othello*. And he says the most important thing is for the audience to understand and it is quite all right to take the obscure, complicated language and just simplify it slightly so the audience can follow it very well.

Nusen: What made the relocation and the adaptation more pertinent to the 2002

production than the original one?

Willmott: Ten years ago?

Nusen: Yes.

Willmott: The man who played Angelo his father had been an English officer in Burma and I was trying to find a setting where was supposedly controlled by a British empire but where it was so far away that the rule had become lax so that would give the Duke contexts. In the one ten years ago he had heard there was problems in Burma and he had put Angelo in charge and he had gone to see how the British law be instigated in Burma.

Nusen: But that was Burma, not Malaya. Why did you choose Malaya for the setting?

Willmott: Oh, sorry, Malaya, sorry.

Nusen: So it was Malaya. What made Malaya in the 1930s pertinent to your adaptation?

Willmott: Because the English was supposedly ruling there but it was falling apart politically because the British was losing their control of it.

Nusen: You had said that, in *Measure for Measure Malaya*, you ‘imposed a very specific agenda’? Could you explain more about that agenda?

Willmott: It was basically looking at the British Empire and how we used to rule other cultures and impose our law upon them and how that could never be successful.

Nusen: So it was about colonisation?

Willmott: Colonisation, exactly.

Nusen: What is in the text that relates to that agenda, to colonisation?

Willmott: Because the starting point of the play is there is a kingdom or a land where there used to be strict law but the rules are no longer enforceable and so it seems that would be a good start that was something in recent British memory that people could relate to.

Nusen: Some critics think that the production diminished the ambiguity of the text. Do you have any comments on this issue?

Willmott: I think they were right that is why I want to come back to it.

Nusen: Some critics call this production 'a funny comedy'. Some call it 'a melodrama'. What do you think was the impression that the audience in general had of the production?

Willmott: It was funny. There was a really funny guy played Lucio whose name I cannot remember. And I think the melodrama bit really gripped people in the way that watching soap opera grips people. You know the story of will she or won't sleep with Angelo really hook the audience and engage the audience but because I made a mistake of cutting the comedies, there was nothing else to balance it, so it was just a melodrama.

Nusen: Reviewers seemed to think of the Duke as a sinister person, Isabella a meek and submissive woman, and Angelo a lustful officer. Do these descriptions do the justice to the characters?

Willmott: It did work for the characters but this production they are completely different. So the Duke is a very sympathetic character, Angelo, I think, is more sympathetic and Isabella is much more fighty.

Nusen: What character did the audience seem to love most in your adaptation, *Measure for Measure Malaya*?

Willmott: Lucio.

Nusen: For critics, it seems that the Duke had a plan to possess Isabella. What do you think made them have that impression?

Willmott: In the last scene, he does ask her to marry him. In the production ten years ago, the Duke was older and not very attractive. In this production, the Duke is younger and handsome. So that is a bit different.

Nusen: What was the effect of cutting the low-life characters?

Willmott: It made it too much like a melodrama. The plot was too concentrated. It made the plot seem arguably a little bit ridiculous.

Nusen: According to the script, the setting is in and around a prison house where the jungle wilderness is 'encroaching'. Could you describe more how your stage designer presented 'the encroaching jungle wilderness'?

Willmott: There were load and load of vines hanging from the ceiling. You had to sometime fight your way through the vines to get to a particular stage area, so, it was very lush and very green, and lot of some kind of haze like you get in the jungle.

Nusen: During the scene in which Angelo is seducing Isabella, 'we [also] see but cannot hear [Lucio] fetch Claudio to sit with the Duke in the outer office'. What effect did these two groupings have on one another?

Willmott: I can't remember. I don't remember that.

Nusen: Before going to Angelo's office, Mariana cried. Were they tears of happiness or sadness?

Willmott: I think it was because she was crying about Claudio and she was in despair and she was crying about the responsibility that had been put on her.

Nusen: In your adaptation, Angelo and Mariana seem to have sex on the stage.

Where did they have sex? In the jungle or in the office?

Willmott: I think in the office.

Nusen: During the bed-trick scene, there was ‘the thunder storm’. What does the storm signify?

Willmott: Often in Shakespeare when something bad happens there is unnatural weather and because we were in the jungle and because the heat was so oppressive I thought it would be good if the storm broke [...] the sexuality of the act. So that was what the storm about.

Nusen: Ragozine’s head was presented on the stage. What did it look like?

Willmott: Realistic and horrible.

Nusen: Are Escalus, Friar Peter, Banardine and the officers in the last scene British?

Willmott: Yes, I think they were.

Nusen: At the beginning of act 5, Lucio sees the Duke and then tries to escape.

Does he do that because he realizes that the Duke is actually the friar?

Willmott: Yes.

Nusen: Could you describe the scene in which Isabella begged for Angelo’s life?

Did she do that by herself or by the Duke’s suggestions? Did she do it with a hesitation or automatically?

Willmott: I don’t think the Duke tells her to do that. I think she does it because of the humanity she discovers during the play.

Nusen: Did she do it immediately?

Willmott: Yes. I think so. Mariana asked her to do it and I think it was a response

to that.

Nusen: What was the reaction of Isabella to the Duke's proposals at the end of the play?

Willmott: She was appalled and very shocked.

Nusen: Thank very much.