A nalyses
R ereadings
T heories

Edited by:

Magdalena Cieślak, Agnieszka Rasmus

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PART I

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"Don't Mention the War": Live Aid Concert and UEFA EURO 2020 Finals as Examples of the Separation of Global Mega-events from Political Conflict

Abstract

This research compares two important British live entertainment mega-events held at Wembley Stadium in London, and examines their attempts to distance themselves from the mentioning of political conflict or war. The paper will argue that the Live Aid concert in 1985 and UEFA EURO 2020 final, held in 2021, despite being separated by thirty-six years, share many common features which, in turn, determined their approach to social responsibility. The paper will support this claim by explaining the two events' official social responsibility programs and providing examples of performer activism occurring within a small window left open for independent free speech. It will conclude that despite the prominence allocated to addressing social issues at both events, anti-political conceptualisation prevailed, resulting in the avoidance of all mentioning of political conflict and war. It proposes that it is only through the analysis of activism that it becomes possible to understand the complexity of the political realities surrounding a major live music or sporting event.

Keywords: Live Aid 1985, UEFA EURO 2022, anti-war protests, protest music, athlete activism, mega events, Wembley Stadium, Political Awareness, depoliticisation, social responsibility programs

A New Precedent in Social Responsibility at Entertainment Mega-events

The Live Aid concert at Wembley Stadium in 1985 was the follow-up event to the Band Aid charity single "Do They Know It's Christmas" released in 1984. The concert, which was billed as the "The Greatest Show on Earth," was organised in just ten weeks under the leadership of an inexperienced music event promoter, Bob Geldof, as an emergency response to the catastrophic famine in Ethiopia which had been exacerbated by political conflict and civil war. Great uncertainty remained over whether the event would take place until days before the concert (*Live Aid Against All Odds*). Yet somehow, all went well and the Live Aid concert successfully set new precedents for live entertainment mega-events that would spread around the world.

The Live Aid event had its roots in other past charity benefit concerts such as the UNICEF organised "A Gift of Song" concert in 1979, featuring Abba, the Bee Gees, Rod Stewart, and more. But "A Gift of Song" was only videotaped and broadcast on NBC the following day and now the availability of live satellite broadcasting technology was to open up a whole new range of scope and possibility for a live music mega-event. Harnessing the same technology used to live broadcast the Los Angeles Summer Olympics in 1984, the Live Aid concert was able to bring an urgent message of humanitarian social responsibility to an audience many times bigger than ever before. But, while the Live Aid concert was primarily conceived as a fund-raising event, the platform and delivery system for the message was popular culture and a live entertainment mega-event. To achieve the social goals, Live Aid was to provide a "Global Jukebox" with live performances from the (Western) world's most successful popstars. It is this revolutionary fusion of entertainment mega-event, live satellite broadcast, and social responsibility goals that has gone on to establish the Live Aid concert as the "critical watershed event which defined the period" (Jones 190).

Somehow, from its chaotic start, the Live Aid event always understood its significance as revealed in its tagline "the day music changed the world" (Jones 197). Live Aid would become the event that woke the world up to the possibility of promoting a social responsibility agenda through the platform of a global live entertainment mega-event. As Omaar claims, Band Aid and Live Aid "changed forever how politics, aid and the electronic media … function in response to humanitarian needs" (qtd. in Müller 74). Previously, raising social issues at major entertainment events was only possible through independent acts of activism outside of the organiser's control that voluntarily or involuntarily involved performers. Often, such activism caused either great controversy, like Smith and Carlo's Black Power Salute at the Mexico Summer Olympics in 1978, or great harm, like the terrorist attack at the Munich Summer Olympics in 1972. The model created by Live Aid showed that if a humanitarian social agenda was built successfully into the foundations of a mega-event, and was supported by performers, then it was possible to conduct and execute a highly effective social responsibility awareness campaign. Live Aid had innovated a shift towards consumer led social responsibility programs promoted via entertainment through a "form of activism which is articulated from within the market" (Jones 203). This model would later be adopted by other global events, including many major international sporting competitions.

Highly visible and profitable modern entertainment or cultural mega-events, such as major music concerts or sporting competitions, offer one of the few opportunities for large audiences in western cultures to openly express emotion *en masse* (Berlant qtd. in Davis 212). When you channel these feelings into a social cause and broadcast the images live across the globe, an enormous social impact is possible. On the day of Live Aid, the London-base *Daily Mirror* "Live Aid Souvenir Issue" (15 July 1985) declared "Live Aid rose above governments" (Jones 197) to achieve its social responsibility goals. But not to be overlooked is the fact that this was dependent on the willing collaboration of the top performers who were now presented with an interesting choice: to make a social statement through the official social responsibility program's approved channels or to act independently and use the platform to make individual activist statements.

Separated by thirty-six years, as UEFA EURO 2020 was held in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, EURO 2020 and the Band Aid Live Aid concert in 1985 offer an opportunity to examine and compare two British live entertainment mega-events held at Wembley Stadium in London. Both succeeded in entertaining the world, stirring up English passions to unprecedented levels, and promoting a social responsibility agenda on a global stage. But both also took place during difficult times of political turmoil and conflict providing many motivations and reasons

for performers to feel the need to make activist statements. Together they provide a unique opportunity to investigate music and sport in parallel and assess both mega-events' long-term political significance.

Neutrality as the Outcome of Globalisation and Nationalism in Music and Sport

The role of music and sporting organisations, both non-profit and commercial, is central to the transformation of music and sport in modern times. FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) has more member states than the United Nations and must coordinate them all to participate in a tournament every four years. Similarly, when American-based MTV, or Music Television, went global in 1988, it then formed a worldwide music community that embraced 180 countries as of 2020. Although both FIFA and MTV have always claimed to be apolitical, their potential use to politicians, and the ability to make political statements themselves, cannot be underestimated. However, these organisations, like all global music and sports organisations, have always both chosen a path towards depoliticisation. This is because retaining neutrality appears to be fundamental to ensuring music and sport's overall success.

Back in 1985, the Live Aid concert was to break new ground in this regard. In the section "Plugging into the Global Jukebox" in the book *The Greatest Show on Earth: Live Aid,* Peter Hillmore explains how, when it first started, "Wembley was the obvious choice for the London venue: it's the most famous stadium in Britain, the site of major sporting events" (55). Then things moved up a gear as "Bob Geldof had thought in terms of a telecast to the whole world, a global jukebox for the global village" (56). Soon the company responsible for the transmission of live coverage of the L.A. Summer Olympics had become involved and commandeered 16 satellites to realise the concept of the global jukebox, which meant that the Live Aid concert was to become the world's biggest music concert ever as "1.5 billion people were ready to see the show; or put another way, 85 per cent of the world's television sets" (56).

However, as examples of sporting mega-events had previously shown, when an event grows to such a large scale it loses its "playful character and its professional practice has become both a global media spectacle and a serious and financially significant global business" (Smart qtd. in Sage 7). This process is a part of global sportification which has been defined as "a universal hegemonic shift towards competitive, rationalized, and standardized organization of sporting practices and organizations" (Sage 7), where "the infrastructure of globalization comprises the forces shaping the global political economy" (Sage 24) with the mega-event finally becoming an "integral component of the political economy of globalization" (Sage 8).

But globalisation is only half the story as both music and sport also need neutrality to help them overcome the issue of nationalist separatism. As McLeod explains, while music and sport have an almost unique ability to build interdependent communities that cross geographical and cultural borders, they also serve "as an effective tool in nation building and image consolidation" (158). A difficult dichotomy exists in music and sport between globalisation and nationalism that organisations need to balance. In the International Olympic Charter, it clearly states that "the Olympic Games are competitions between athletes in individual or team events and not between countries" (International Olympic Committee 18). Yet, it later mentions that "any competitor in the Olympic Games must be a national of the country of the NOC which is entering such competitor" (International Olympic Committee 80). Here, both globalisation and nationalism are encouraged equally under a system where "international sport has been transformed from sporting events between individuals or teams to events between nation-states that have unequal resources to produce

elite athletes and teams" (Sage 7). According to Hughson, Inglis, and Free, the result is that "sports seem able to bind the politically minded with the non-politically minded together into an imagined national community, where the nation does not exist beyond sport" (qtd. in Kaufman 225).

As the Live Aid concert transitioned into a major global entertainment mega-event, unavoidably, the same would happen to music, as in the presence of royalty and with British Airways lending them the "supersonic plane, Concorde, for the day, so that some stars could play in both Wembley and Philadelphia" (Hillmore 55), the performers at Live Aid became a showcase for Britishness and Britain's contribution to the global wellbeing.

Peace and Unity or Anti-Political Conceptualisation?

Much scientific literature has been written on the complex relationship between sport and music (individually) with politics. However, even though most scholars agree that there exist deep connections, surprisingly, this has not been the approach adopted by the organisers of the world's largest live music or sporting events that have always chosen to keep political issues firmly out of the picture. Even when an event appears to be overwhelmed by politics, mega-event organisers have adopted positions that forbid any political debate that could affect the event's success. Both Live Aid concert and UEFA EURO 2020 took place during periods of great civil and political unrest, and yet both organisers chose to sidestep these issues in favour of portraying peace and unity through political neutrality in music and sport.

Rock Protest Music, Conflict and War

A broad definition offered for rock protest music is songs with "opposition to a policy, an action against the people in power that is grounded in a sense of injustice" (Weinstein 3), or, in other words, music asking for social and political change. It is from this perspective that many now approach the notion of protest music in the 1960s, reinforced by the popular belief that "the most significant aspect of the sixties was [its] social activism" (Anderson qtd. in Heilbronner 2), and that the Vietnam War era was the golden era of rock music activism. This viewpoint is largely based upon studies of US artists such as mid-1960s folk icons Joan Baez and Bob Dylan, late-1960s psychedelia icons Frank Zappa, The Grateful Dead, and Jimi Hendrix, and early 1970s soul icons Marvin Gaye and Edwin Starr. Such research supports the view that "the rock interpretation of protest songs introduced political sentiment into the mainstream by their method of attack" (Heilbronner 4).

Yet, when the rock protest singer David Crosby was asked about 1960s rock music and political protest, he responded: "Somehow, Sgt. Pepper did not stop the Vietnam War ... I am doing my level best as a saboteur of values, as an agent of change, but when it comes down to blood and gore in the streets, I'm taking off and going fishing" (qtd. in Heilbronner 13). In his article "Rock Protest Songs: So Many and So Few", Weinstein argues that the iconic 1960s protest songs we all know so well now may not have had such a great influence at the time and, even more damagingly, that "despite the foregrounding of protest songs in rock discourse, there are, then, far fewer of them than one is led to believe. They are but a tiny proportion of all rock songs, even using the most generous definitions of rock and protest" (7).

With regards to British protest rock music, a similar story can also be found supporting the claim that "the British '1968' experience was unique – conservative, isolated and politically untouched" as "counterculture dwelt in an 'underground' scene distinct from the mainstream popular

and artistic culture of 'swinging' London" (Anderson 117). Much of the reason for this was that the anti-war messages brought over from US 1960s protest rock were in total contradiction to the new consumer values of Swinging London. As Anderson explains, the British rock protest music, if anything, "formed a tangential association with 'swinging' London, an establishment culture that took in mainstream pop, Bond films and the Playboy Club, as well as couture, design, publishing and government supported high arts" (175). Such a retrospective misconception regarding 1960s British music may have arisen as it is now recognised that "nostalgia is the preferred mode for classic-rock fans" (Weinstein 10) as, at the time of release, "the industry only allowed the general public to be exposed to protest songs when they had become a safe crowd-pleaser, with no risk involved either for the artists' careers or for social order" (Bindas and Houston qtd. in Perone 7). This means that nearly all radio stations, both in the UK and US, purposely kept "off the air anything controversial" (Grassy 8), while television "avoided protest music even more than radio" (Weinstein 6), and the British contemporary music press of that time overlooked protest completely as "the events of '1968' got in the way of proper entertainment" (Moore 154). For anti-war rock protest music to ever crossover, it was required first to become neutral and apolitical in meaning, or, in other words, to stop being protest music.

International Sporting Competitions, Conflict and War

"Sports officials often claim that sport has to be 'un-political'" (Thiel et al. 253) as "we can assume that ISOs [International Sporting Organisations] should find it easier to get involved in international relations if focused on their main area of interest – the 'apolitical' sport" (Kobierecki 3). Nowhere has this belief and policy been more evident than in the modern history of the Olympic Games organised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). In Helen Jefferson Lensky's *The Olympic Games: A Critical Approach*, the author devotes a chapter to the claim that "sport and politics don't mix," which has always been a key philosophy behind the success of the Olympic Games. This conviction is written into the IOC's official Olympic Charter in Rule 50(2), which states: "No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas" (International Olympic Committee 94). However, such rules and regulations failed to stop the so-called Munich Massacre at the Summer Olympics in 1972, where a group of Palestinian militants broke into the Olympic Village and held eleven Israeli athletes, coaches, and officials hostage. Even though the incident resulted in the deaths of eleven Israeli citizens and a West German police officer, the final words at the time belonged to the IOC's President Avery Brundage in his now-infamous statement that "The Games must go on".

This was not a surprise. Evidence of sport and war being separated can be found as far back as the ninth century BC, when the institution of the truce, or *ekécheiria*, meaning laying down of arms, was initiated in Olympia in Ancient Greece. Now known as the "Olympic Truce," this tradition was revived and updated by United Nations Resolution 48/11 of 25 October 1993, and supposedly remains in force today. In international football the same mentality can be summed up in FIFA President Sepp Blatter's comment in 2004 "in advance of a match between Brazil and war-torn Haiti, when he urged the world to 'make goals not war'" (Hough 1287). As Kobierecki explains regarding group draws for international tournaments, the common policy is to ensure that countries at war are not drawn together as the preference is to "disengage from high politics of international conflicts and estrangements" (3) to promote peace and unity.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Michael Jordan in the National Basketball Association and US Olympic Basketball Team personified the socially and politically neutral approach of sport as

exemplified by Jordan's gesture on the medal podium at the Barcelona Summer Olympics in 1992, where he draped an American flag over his shoulder to conceal a Reebok logo in an act whose "symbolism was just as striking as it was [Smith and Carlo's protest] in 1968" (Powell 33). At the time, Jordan's action was met with heavy criticism from US Black activists who interpreted his action as not "with a clenched fist in the air but with a clenched fist full of money" (Powell 34). However, as Harry Edwards, founder of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, counter-argues, "The Jordan Era," now recognised as lasting between 1972 to 2012 and characterised by a lack of political activism, was also the "era where the foundations for power were laid" (Poole) as Jordan would go on to become the first Black owner of an NBA and NASCAR team.

'Feed the World' and RESPECT: Political Awareness at Live Aid Concert and UEFA EURO 2020

Back in 1985, when the seeds for the Live Aid concert were first being sown, Britain had many social and political problems, including race riots, the miners' strike, and the Northern Ireland conflict. But this was nothing compared to Africa, where the legacy of decolonialisation, sometimes further muddled by Cold War interference, had fuelled political conflicts and civil wars resulting in tragedies such as the apartheid system in South Africa and catastrophic famine in Ethiopia.

The Live Aid concert was first and foremost driven by the urgency of the famine relief effort in Ethiopia, with no time to get involved into the politics of the war that lay behind the tragedy. The concert's main organiser, Bob Geldof, was the lead singer of the Irish alternative rock group The Boomtown Rats, whose name exemplified his attitude towards politics – you can live outside of a system you directly benefit from. In a well-known public confrontation with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1985, he chose to refrain from commenting on the ideology behind her new monetary system, instead only mentioning its unfair wealth distribution. Later, when discussing Thatcher, who had refused to directly oppose apartheid "instead pursuing a policy of 'constructive engagement with the country's white minority government'" (Conway-Smith). Geldof explained how he regarded Thatcher as a fellow punk and admired her for wanting to smash everything down (*Maggie Thatcher Was A Punk, Says Bob Geldof*).

Following the massive fundraising success of the initial Band Aid single "Do They Know It's Christmas" in 1984, Geldof recruited an elite board of trustees for the Band Aid Trust, which was to be chaired by Lord Gowrie, then Minister for the Arts, and was to include Lord Harlech, the head of Harlech TV; Michael Grade, the controller of BBC1; Maurice Obserstein, the chairman of the British Phonographic Institute; and Midge Ure (Barker 99). This all seemed to make good sense, as popular music theorist R. Serge Denisoff had realised in 1970, claiming that "despite all of the good reasons for questioning the effectiveness of rock protest songs, they do sometimes function to spur political commitment. This result almost always occurs when they are created and performed in the context of some supportive organizational form such as a social movement" (qtd. in Weinstein 15). However, Geldof's new non-governmental charity organisation, with its social responsibility program now operating under the slogan 'Feed the World', was acquiring friends and making deals that would increasingly bring it into closer contact with those driving the political conflicts related to the war behind the famine. In 1986, Geldof clearly stated: "[A]s in England, where I didn't want to get involved in party politics, so too in Africa" (qtd. in Barker 318). Yet, the Band Aid Trust was already working with political organisations such as "the best-organized imperialist aid agency in the world, the US Agency for International Development (AID)" (Barker 102), who, given Ethiopia's important position in the Cold War, "played a major role in justifying

the aid communities' protracted interventions in the region" (Barker 104). For this, and many more reasons beyond the scope of this article, while there does exist academic literature claiming that the Live Aid concert and its "message of compassion expressed by participants affected changes in U.S. and U.K. governmental policies on foreign aid to famine-struck provinces in the Horn of Africa" (Davis 216), there is a more significant body of literature (see Barker 99; Grant 315; Müller 61) in support of the view that "it did so by shunning overt engagement with the underlying causes of global hunger and poverty" (Jones 191).

For the next three decades that followed the Live Aid concert, the structures put into place by the expanding European Union and its Schengen area, comprising of 26 countries in 2020, can lay claim to have managed to keep its member states away from any major internal war since World War II. However, in 2014, it failed to acknowledge the hostile invasion of Crimea by Russia in Ukraine, and instead sought to maintain good relations with Russia for economic and energy supply related reasons. Then, rather unexpectedly, the British Brexit referendum of 2016 resulted in Britain choosing to leave the EU, and soon further calls for national sovereignty in other European countries emerged that would start to pull the cultural and political unity of the European Union apart.

It was this same fervour to breakaway that would arrive at the headquarters of Union of European Football Associations. In April 2021, just two months before the start of UEFA EURO 2020, the European Super League was formed with backing of six top English clubs alongside the three biggest clubs from both Italy and Spain. The reaction of UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin and the organisation was immediate as sanctions on participating clubs were threatened. In a public statement, Čeferin announced: "Gentlemen, you made a huge mistake. Some will say it is greed, others disdain, arrogance, flippancy or complete ignorance of England's football culture. It does not matter. What does matter is that there is still time to change your mind. Everyone makes mistakes" (qtd. in Dunbar). The Super League collapsed three days later amidst claims from the European Parliament that the breakaway competitions would have undermined EU values and "endanger the stability of the overall sports ecosystem" (Evans).

The organiser of EURO 2020, UEFA (the continental confederation of FIFA for Europe), has always been strongly pro-European Union while also claiming to separate sport from politics and their current president, Aleksander Čeferin, has consistently expressed the goal to promote harmony and equality in Europe. In 2019, during his acceptance speech for re-election, he reinforced this message of unity by saying: "European football remains united, that European football remains respectful, respectable and respected" ("Čeferin Re-Elected for 2nd Term as UEFA President until 2023"). It should therefore come as no surprise that under Čeferin's presidency, from 2016 to date, the leading UEFA social responsibility campaign became known as "RESPECT".

On 11th June 2021, the EURO 2020 finally kicked off to promote peace and unity through sport in Europe with the UEFA social responsibility program RESPECT further developed into 'EqualGame.com', an umbrella scheme designed to cover all social and political issues that may be incurred during the tournament. However, there remained one major issue: the final was to be held at Wembley in London in a country which had finally left EU just three months before. In fact, while no individual country held UEFA EURO 2020, England was to host the most events, including the final, both semi-finals, two last sixteen matches, and three group stage matches. Other games were held in other European countries in 11 other different stadiums. The irony was that UEFA EURO 2020 planned as a sporting mega-event to further unify Europe under common political and social values was now to be hosted in a Brexit Britain that politically was pushing to pull all of that apart.

The Recognition of Political Conflict and War at Live Aid Concert 1985 and UEFA EURO 2020

This next section will look at the activist actions from performers at the Live Aid concert and UEFA EURO 2020 that recognised the existence of political conflict or war. As explained in the previous section, the organisers of both events set up social responsibility programs, "Feed the World" and RESPECT, to act as blanket covers over all social and political issues while remaining neutral over their systematic root causes. However, both events (purposely or unavoidably?) also left open small windows of opportunity for performers (or teams) to express free speech through activism. In the case of the Live Aid concert, there was an opportunity to do so through introductory speeches and song lyrics. At UEFA EURO 2020, such gestures were confined to football shirts, armbands, badges, and taking the knee. These made it possible for performers to reconnect music and sport with politics and reduce the cognitive dissonance between the event and the real world. It is these occurrences of performer activism that now provide invaluable evidence towards attaining a more accurate appraisal of both events' long-term political significance.

"Don't Mention the War" – Live Aid Concert and the Use of Introductions and Song Lyrics

At the Live Aid concert, the civil war in Ethiopia that had exacerbated the famine was directly mentioned, but not by any of the performers at Wembley. Instead, references ware made at "sister" events held simultaneously in other countries. The first crack appeared at 14:22 GMT, when the satellite link connected to 'The Austrian Contribution' live from Vienna on the global telecast. The Austrian Contribution was supplied by Austria für Afrika, who performed their hit single "Warum?" live on stage (Austria for Africa – Why?). Austria für Afrika was an Austrian supergroup modelled on Band Aid's "Do They Know It's Christmas?", but instead of the British hits bitter-sweet lyrics, the Austrian pop stars decided to get straight to the point. The song lyrics to "Warum?" begin with the verse:

> They reign like kings while famine rules the land,
> starvation's used with system they have weapons instead of bread.
> The land is scorched and misery knows no mercy, as usual,
> big brother rubs his hands with glee and sends ammunition.

The chorus then goes on to ask "Why?", and includes a line from an Ethiopian folk song in Amharic that translates into "Ethiopia, once you were a princess, today you are a beggar – let us begin anew once more!" In the next verse, we have the powerful lines "Famine is a useful tool, keeps the masters in power. For he, who has no food to eat, cannot defend himself", further establishing a direct causational link between war and famine in Ethiopia.

The next mentioning of war in Africa appeared two hours later, at 16:27, in Köln in Germany, where the German Band Aid replica supergroup Band Für Afrika were to perform "Nackt im Wind" (Band for Africa – Naked in the Wind). While the German song's lyrics did not mention directly war, Udo Lindenberg's remarkable introductory speech made the context of the song crystal clear. Telecast around the world after Brian Ferry at Wembley, Lindenberg said:

> Although it is great that over 30 to 50 million dollars are being raised for Africa, it is but a small token of repayment for the years of colonial exploitation. The only real help will be the immediate withdrawal of all military and economic interests on the part of Europe, Japan, USA and the East-Block. (*Live Aid (July 13th, 1985): GERMAN CONTRIBUTION / UDO LINDENBERG's SPEECH*)

He continued: "We – from this country which has instigated two terrible wars – appeal to all people …: Stop the wars in the Third World. Stop the crime of military build-up". Then coverage went back to Paul Young at Wembley.

The Wembley Live Aid concert, controlled by Bob Geldof, was never intended to directly confront the issue of war and its role in the famine. To set the tone, Geldof had selected the first live act himself, starting with the appropriately named "Status Quo" and their classic anthem "Rockin' All Over the World." If social awareness had been of a priority, the band could have followed this up with their massive global hit "In the Army Now" but this was never an option. From herein, the goal was to raise money and not get weighed down by controversy. However, not all performers would get onboard and song lyrics still offered a small opportunity to drop in subtle messages according to their own feelings on "musical social responsibility" (Barker 96), even though, as Weinstein correctly identifies, "the point of the song, its message of protest, can be entirely lost" (Weinstein 11).

The first example can be seen in Ultravox's [13:17, 17 minutes] second song "Dancing With Tears In My Eyes." Ultravox's frontman, Midge Ure, together with Geldof, were the two pioneers responsible for the original Band Aid single. However, now Geldof's Live Aid organising abilities had far overshadowed Ure's earlier contribution. The strong anti-war message of Ultravox's nuclear war-themed song was clear to all familiar with the song's dramatic video portraying the last few minutes on Earth before a nuclear apocalypse as "the man on the wireless cries again – It's over, it's over." Ure's selection of the song, while not mentioning African wars, does raise the issue of the Cold War which was deeply connected with the civil war in Ethiopia.

Next, Sade's [14:52, 16 minutes] first song "Why Can't We Live Together" provides an interesting example. Even though the Live Aid concert was for Africa, there were no African bands or musicians performing at Wembley (except Freddy Mercury, see later). Even more remarkable was that Nigerian-born Sade was the only Afro-British performer to headline at Wembley on that day. Sade's set opened with a cover version of Timmy Tomas' beautiful anti-Vietnam war song "Why Can't We Live Together", from 1972. The song lasted 5.35 minutes and its sombre and downbeat tone was a great contrast to most of the other musical contributions. The song clearly states: "No more war, no more war. All we want is some peace in this world" alongside its Black civil rights message of "I said: 'No matter, no matter what color'. You are still my brother". All things considered, Sade's effort was admirable. U2's [17:19, 20 minutes] first track "Sunday Bloody Sunday" is also relevant here. As Bono states at the beginning of the live recorded version of this track: "This is not a rebel song". Still, "Sunday Bloody Sunday" now holds the equivalent status of a peace song against the troubles in Northern Ireland by confronting the horrors of past events. The song was not about Ethiopia or Africa in any way, as U2 addressed their local agendas instead, but at least they did not promote the idea of a world without war or conflict and raised the issue of ongoing civil wars around the world.

Freddie Mercury and Brian May's [21:47, 4 minutes] "Is This the World We Created?" is the most complicated of all the songs at Wembley to judge. Its scheduling, just before the grand finale, put enormous pressure on the two performers to deliver a social message. In a 1984 interview, Queen guitarist Brian May was clear about the band's approach to world social and political issues when he stated: "The band is not political – we play to anybody who wants to come and listen" (Harris). Therefore, while the two performers had unparalleled experience of performing in massive stadiums, including in Argentina under a military junta and in South Africa under apartheid, they had little or no experience in activism. In 1985, at the time of the Live Aid concert, Queen would be on the UN's list of blacklisted artists for breaking the British Musician Unions' cultural boycott

of South Africa. Yet, this issue would be glossed over to permit them to perform. Despite these discrepancies, the song "Is This the World We Created?," which was the shortest, but one of the most famous, songs on *The Works* album released in 1984, was played at every Queen concert from 1984 to 1986 and fit perfectly the social responsibility campaign slogan of "Feed the World" while perhaps hinting at war as a cause. The song asks us : "Just think of all those hungry mouths we have to feed. Take a look at all the suffering we breed … Is this the world we invaded. Against the law?" Freddie Mercury was the second and final African-born artist to headline at Wembley as, unknown to many, he was born Farrokh Bulsara to Parsi-Indian parents in Zanzibar, in 1946. Yet nothing was made of his African roots for whatever reason.

"Don't Mention the War"– UEFA EURO 2020 and the Use of Clothing, Armbands, Badges and Taking the Knee

During the UEFA EURO 2020 tournament there were direct references to Russia's occupation of Crimea and the collapse of the EU's unification over cultural values, but the British government, mired by Brexit, was to consistently remain a persona non-grata throughout. At the tournament final in Wembley, celebrities in the audience, including Tom Cruise and David Beckham, featured prominently in the global live broadcast, while Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who also was in attendance, was kept off screen.

The first political conflict occurred at the UEFA EURO 2020 tournament during Germany's group stage meeting against Hungary at the Allianz Arena on 23 June 2021. From the start of the tournament, Germany had demonstrated a desire to expand UEFA's RESPECT/equalgame.com to include LGBT+ rights, which were currently being rewritten in certain EU member states. This was in alignment with UEFA policy that declared Germany's intentions to be in a "good cause" (Tanner) and in support of their goal to encourage further diversity and inclusion within the game. The main focus of Germany's gesture had been German team captain Manuel Neuer's tradition of wearing a rainbow-coloured captain's armband at every match. In Germany's last sixteen defeat against England at Wembley, England team captain Harry Kane joined Neuer in this gesture (Tanner). But playing against England was never going to cause tension. The difficult match was to be Germany's final group stage match against Hungary in Munich.

The initiation of protest aimed directly at Hungary began when the mayor of Munich sent a written application to UEFA for the Allianz Arena to be lit up with the rainbow colours of the Pride flag stating: "It is important for the state capital Munich to set a visible sign of solidarity with the LGBTI community in Hungary, which is suffering from the current stricter homophobic and transphobic legislation of the Hungarian government" (Fahey). The request was rejected as the Hungarian football authorities responded by pointing out "the rules of UEFA and FIFA do not allow politicization on the pitch and in the stadium either" (Street). However, media headlines had already been made and Neuer's wearing of the rainbow armband throughout the match served as a reminder to all of the politics going on behind the scenes.

But the LGBT+ issue was nothing compared to the potential controversy caused by approving Russian stadiums to host EURO 2020 matches and the possibility of a semi-final or final meeting between Russia and Ukraine after the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014. However, while "UEFA has ensured that the Ukrainian and Russian teams do not play against each other in the group stage or the early knockout stages" (Aleksander and Rajkiewicz), it had not prepared itself for Ukraine's national squad's shirt design to make a political statement: "The new kit includes not only the standard national colours but also an outline of Ukraine's borders,

which include Crimea and the full Eastern border. Moscow has called this a blatant provocation, but UEFA thinks differently and has allowed the Ukrainian team to play in the kits" (Aleksander and Rajkiewicz). In addition, it would also contain "the phrase 'Glory to Ukraine, Glory to our Heroes' – a rallying cry during the 2013–2014 Euromaidan Revolution, which fought for closer ties with the European Union and ultimately led to the ousting of the Moscow-backed President Viktor Yanukovych" (Jamal).

While Ukraine claimed its audacious shirt design was only to help motivate the team, the Russian Football Union reportedly immediately sent a letter to UEFA requesting "we draw attention to the use of political motives on the Ukrainian national team's jersey, which goes against the basic principles of the UEFA kit regulations" (Walker). The controversial imagery was then forbidden with a further possible motivation being UEFA's "renewed partnership with Gazprom, a Russian state-owned oil company", meaning UEFA was now deeply dependent "on Gazprom to host many matches at EURO 2020, with seven being played at the Gazprom stadium in St. Petersburg" (Jamal). Viewed from this perspective, UEFA was conveniently overlooking the war.

After riding out the storm of the Ukraine kit conflict, UEFA's RESPECT/EqualGame.com social responsibility campaign soon settled down to become the blanket-cover for all social protest. There were prominent stadium billboards, expensive TV advertisements, and the RESPECT badge was to be placed on the left arm of all football shirts. However, in the years preceding EURO 2020 since the previous European Cup, another social activist gesture that now also needed to be considered had also entered into sport. Catapulted into prominence in 2016 by the actions of Colin Kaepernick in the National Football League in the United States, by the time EURO 2020 had arrived in 2021 "taking the knee" had become the accepted gesture of social protest in British football to express solidarity with the US Black Lives Matter movement and multiculturalism in Britain. The gesture involves kneeling on one knee instead of standing during the playing of the national anthem or other significant occasion. In the British Premier League, this was now occurring regularly before kickoff, and, considering the prominence that UEFA had given to their RESPECT/EqualGame.com program, to ban taking the knee would have appeared hypocritical.

Official governmental disapproval in Britain towards taking the knee at UEFA EURO 2020 first surfaced in the Facebook posts of Conservative MP Lee Anderson, who insisted that the Black Lives Matter movement was political. Anderson's post read: "For the first time in my life I will not be watching my beloved England team whilst they are supporting a political movement whose core principles aim to undermine our very way of life" (Stubley). However, another interpretation behind underlying reasons behind the British government's objections is also possible. On 31 January 2020, Britain finally left the EU, which meant that British citizens no longer held European passports and British business could no longer engage in free trade with their European neighbours. While England had voted to leave, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland had all voted to remain, and Brexit was triggering movements for independence that could end the United Kingdom.

During UEFA EURO 2020, both home nations representing Britain, England and Wales, chose to take the knee at all matches in a statement perhaps not only of racial unity but also of solidarity between the British home nations. England's manager Gareth Southgate publicly denied there was any connection between politics and taking the knee, stating: "I think we have got a situation where some people seem to think it is a political stand that they don't agree with. That is not the reason the players are doing it. We are supporting each other" (qtd. in Street). England would take the knee at all matches including the final at Wembley Stadium, where their opponents, Italy, would also choose to join them. The match was extremely close, with England eventually defeated 3–2 on penalties, and all three missed England penalties taken by Afro-British players, resulting

in an immediate tidal wave of racial abuse online. It was now that many people in Britain started asking deeper questions. The Brexit referendum had been won using racist campaign techniques targeted against foreign nationals and immigrants ("Vote Leave's Targeted Brexit Ads Released by Facebook"). Top Cabinet minister Priti Patel had publicly stated that she did not support taking the knee or any form of gesture politics (Bowden). Prime Minister Boris Johnson had refused to condemn either his ministers or the England fans booing the England team during taking the knee. The subject of football was transforming a sporting event that could potentially promote the British nations into a political hotcake. The end result was the cancelling of the traditional post-tournament heroes welcoming for the England team at Downing Steet (McGrath), and no official celebration of England's best result in a major football tournament since 1966. Sport and politics had mixed in a country that remained divided by Britain's (un)civil war that was now forbidden to be mentioned.

Conclusion

The acknowledgement of the existence of political conflict and war is rarely welcomed in music or sport by event organisers or governing bodies. This can be clearly illustrated by something as trivial as in the original lyrics for Baddiel and Skinner's now ubiquitous football anthem "Three Lions", composed for England at the UEFA EURO 1996 finals held in England, in which the English Football Association threatened to veto their endorsement of the song unless the original lyric "Terry Butcher at war" was replaced (Double). Put simply, there exists an unwritten rule to not mention any political conflict or war in both music and sport, so we should not be surprised when such supposedly harmless examples occur. It is also interesting to note that in 1986 a follow-up event to the Live Aid concert was organised by the Band Aid Trust called 'Sport Aid', integrating live music with athletic meetings to show the depth of the interconnection existing between the two forms of entertainment.

The desire to keep music and sport separated from politics has always existed in the visions of those who wish to keep their passions pure. However, as Volker Schurmann points out, to claim a neutral position can also be political (Thiel et al. 254). If England had won UEFA EURO 2020 at Wembley, it would have gone on to serve as the best possible publicity for launching a new post-EU Britain across the world with or without mentioning Brexit, just as the Live Aid concert in 1985 had inadvertently supported many of Margaret Thatcher's social and economic reforms. Both the Live Aid concert and UEFA EURO 2020 were organised with social responsibility programs designed to achieve social and political goals while keeping music and sport separate from political conflicts and war. However, these programs would not fully cover all requirements of all performers, some of whom sought to take matters into their own hands through activism. From this perspective, the analysis of activism in addition to official social responsibility programs can provide a far more complex and complete understanding of the political issues surrounding live entertainment mega-events.

Author's note – This article was originally submitted for publication shortly before the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022, which may come to mark the beginning of a new era in political and social responsibility at major international events.

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Religious and Emotional Communities in John Heywood and John Bale's Interludes

Abstract

The paper examines emotional communities in early modern English drama, specifically interludes by John Heywood and John Bale. It explores the connections between emotion and religion, and seeks to uncover whether and how emotionality changes according to the politically acceptable religious doctrine – particularly in the time of Protestant reformation under Henry VIII Tudor – and how these changes are expressed in the early sixteenth century English interludes by a Catholic (Heywood) and a Protestant (Bale) author. This paper considers early modern texts of culture which have not been researched as broadly as the drama of the later English Renaissance period (such as works by William Shakespeare or Christopher Marlowe), and, drawing upon the concept of "emotional communities" introduced by Barbara Rosenwein, additionally offers insights into an ongoing discussion on emotions in history.

Keywords: John Keywood, John Bale, inderludes, emotional communities, religion

As shown by scholars of emotions, such as, for instance, Erin Sullivan,[1] emotions in the early modern period (but other periods as well) – the way they were viewed, understood, and expressed – were influenced and shaped by religion. Barbara H. Rosenwein, a medievalist and one of the most prominent scholars of history of emotions, notes in her works that clergymen often were "experts" on emotionality, such as, for instance, Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, or Timothie Bright (though the last one began his career as a physician). However, a variety recent studies exploring connections between religion and emotion in England in the early modern period focus primarily on the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth century, when religious thought was influenced by the Calvinist reformation movement.[2] This paper intends to complement the study

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[1] In her book *Beyond Melancholy and Selfhood in Renaissance England*, Erin Sullivan studies melancholy in the early modern period and argues that "new Protestant ideas about the nature of devotion and salvation suggested that sadness could in fact be a useful and even transformative experience, helping to humble believers' souls and bring them closer to God." See Sullivan 2016.

[2] Alec Ryrie devotes a chapter to "Calvinist" emotions in his book *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*. He argues that it was precisely because of Calvinism, and the concept of predestination, that early modern English Protestants

on emotionality in Renaissance England by researching drama in the first half of the sixteenth century – a period of religious and political unrest caused by Henry VIII's break with the Roman Catholic Church – and aims to show that emotionality presented on stage changes along with the politically accepted religious doctrine. As primary objects of research, this paper focuses on Tudor interludes[3] by John Heywood and John Bale (a Catholic and a Lutheran Protestant, respectively) and intends to show that early sixteenth-century playwrights use drama as a tool for religious propaganda attempting to unite their audience under their own faith. In order to do so, the paper argues, the dramatists form "emotional communities" between themselves, their characters, and their audience.

In her seminal article "Worrying about Emotions in History," Rosenwein defines emotional communities as:

> precisely the same as social communities … but the researcher looking at them seeks above all to uncover systems of feeling: what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others' emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore. (842)

Her approach originally stood out as an argument against Norbert Elias's "civilising process" which saw the Middle Ages as emotionally untamed and lacking the emotional moderation with which the early modern period would be associated. According to Elias, and other modernists who followed up on his theory, it was only modernity that introduced emotional self-restraint, which Rosenwein disproved by carrying out research on early medieval emotional communities, for example on Pope Gregory I's writings, in which he paid particular attention to his own emotions, especially the "bad" ones, such as unhappiness or fear, and pondered how he could control them better (*Emotional Communities*). However, in more recent discussion on the history of emotions, her approach has been criticized for being too static and theoretical. Andrea Marculescu, for example, notes that emotions in Rosenwein's research "seem to be rather static discursive practices of hegemonic character. Subjects, on the other hand, have a certain mobility in appropriating such practices dependant on their own stakes and goals" (2). Communities and emotional norms which govern them are not pre-established, as Rosenwein's study suggests, "but are impacted by different discursive ruptures, negotiations, and practices" (Marculescu 2–3). As Katie Barclay points out in her overview in the field of history of emotions, "emotional communities" have been criticized for being too descriptive, rather than analytical. To put it in simpler terms, Rosenwein's study implies that emotional communities simply *exist* – which means that they are identified and then described in terms of how they understand and express emotions in a particular historical context – but it does not suggest *why* they exist, or what determines their understanding and expression of emotions (Barclay 55–56).

Hence, by examining theatrical plays, this paper seeks to find a more analytical application of "emotional communities," and intends to expand on Rosenwein's proposition of a relationship between a playwright and his audiences as an example of an emotional community.[4] As Steven

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disciplined their emotions so rigorously, as they treated their emotions as possible "hints" whether they would be saved or not. See Ryrie 2013.

[3] As Sylwia Borowska-Szerszun shows, the precise definition of what exactly a "Tudor interlude" is has been the object of a long-term scholarly debate. This paper uses the term "Tudor interlude" in the same sense that Borowska-Szerszun proposes: an interlude which was written specifically to be received in a "Tudor Hall," where the audience members were not accidental playgoers, but politically interlinked courtiers (see 13–14).

[4] Rosenwein suggests this type of an emotional community, albeit in the case of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. See *Generations of Feelings* 254–255.

Mullaney remarks, theatre is "one the most social of the arts [which] is deeply rooted in the peculiar soil of its own historical moment" (5). Studies on theatre and drama, therefore, have a potential to capture political and social changes in history, not only from the "outside" – as historical evidence to confirm that they did happen – but also from the "inside"; from historical people's own perspectives on them. To quote Sylwia Borowska-Szerszun, theatrical plays "do not exist in a social and cultural vacuum but are an integral part of a wider system, whose ideological and moral precepts are both reflected in the plays and disseminated or challenged by them" (24). Furthermore, studying plays which were produced in a similar timespan, albeit by authors of different denominations, can also indicate how emotionality in England was affected by the Lutheran/Evangelical reformation in the early sixteenth century.

At first, I would like to consider *Witty and Witless* and *A Play of Love* by John Heywood, who remained a devout Catholic even during Edward VI's and Elizabeth I's Protestant reigns. While *Witty and Witless* does not revolve around emotionality *per se*, like *A Play of Love*, emotions are nevertheless brought up in the main characters' disputation whether it is more profitable in life to be witty or witless (or, in present-day vocabulary, a fool or a wise man). James and John's discussion – the first one advocating for the witless, and the latter for the witty – eventually ends up tackling the emotional side of this question, as they argue which party has the most joy and pleasure in life, and which party has to endure the most pain and suffering. James ultimately attempts "thys longe debate [to] forthwythe dysolve"[5] (350) by presenting one pleasure of which "the wyttles are sure evyr, / and … wytty are sewre nevyr" (332–333) – namely, the pleasure of salvation.

> *John:* What plesewre ys that?
> *James:* Plesewre of salvashyon.
> I thynke yowr selfe wyll affyrme affyrmashyon
> That from owrr forfathers syn orygynall
> Babtym sealthe us all aquyttans general,
> And faythe of ynfants whyle they infans abyde
> In faythe of parents for the churche ys supplyde.
> Whereby tyll wytt take roote of dyscernynge,
> And between good and yll geve perfyght warnynge,
> Where ever innosents innosensy despewte,
> For thowghts, woorddes or dedes, God dothe none yll ympewte.
> Wher God gyvythe no dyscernyng God takethe none acownte;
> In whyche case of acownt the sott dothe amownt,
> For no more dysernthe the sott at yeres thre score
> Then thynosent borne wythe in yeres thre before. (335–348)

James's reasoning is as follows: since fools are not entirely competent to fully realize the consequences of their actions, God cannot punish them for misdeeds they do not know they commit. The witless, therefore, can have full certainty and pleasure of salvation, while the witty not only have to actively work for their salvation, but they also have to suffer the emotional discomfort of being uncertain whether they will be saved. What is the most crucial here, however, is that, in the spirit of such Renaissance religious thinkers as Desiderius Erasmus, or Thomas More, Heywood presents emotionality and affectivity as a theological – rather than a physiological or medicinal – discourse.[6]

One may ponder here, of course, whether or not pleasure, pain, or suffering are emotions. From a contemporary perspective on emotionality influenced by such disciplines as psychology

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[5] This and all subsequent citations from Heywood's play are from: Axton and Happe, eds. 1991.
[6] For further discussion on Erasmus's or More's ideas on emotionality, see Essary 2021.

and neurology – perhaps not. Yet in a historical sense, pleasure and suffering often were regarded in an emotional sense. Desiderius Erasmus, for example, enumerates hunger, thirst, drowsiness, weariness, and suffering as emotional states.[7] For More, Heywood's relative and an influence on his thought, pleasure is "every motion and state of the body or mind wherein man hath naturally delectation" (78). Therefore, should pleasure not be considered as an emotion proper, this "delectation" which More writes about is nevertheless an affective sensation which may cause other, positive emotions, such as, for instance, joy.

Thus, Heywood's emotional community is also a religious community. By forming an emotional community with his audience, Heywood can assume the role of a religious preacher and educate the courtiers on religion by discussing emotions to which they can relate. For Heywood, emotions are bound to spirituality, rather than physiology, as was the case in the Galenic system, which was one of the ways of understanding emotions in the Middle Ages and the early modern period. According to Heywood, positive emotions can soothe and the negative ones can afflict one's soul (rather than the heart which was thought to be a centre of emotionality by Martin Luther and John Bale, as will be shown later in this paper) and even determine one's fate in the afterlife. Thus, when the characters speak about pleasure, Heywood makes it the ultimate pleasure – the pleasure of salvation. Or, when the characters speak about fear, Heywood makes it the ultimate fear – the fear of damnation, with which John struggles, in fact. He confesses his fear to Jerome (named after the Bible's translator), who overhears the dispute, joins in, and turns its tide in John's favour.

> *John:* In wurks commandyd who faythe walkthe not
> By Gods justice he hathe damnatyon in lott;
> And what other folks fele I can not tell
> But suche frayle falls fele I in my selfe to dwell
> And by them to lees hevyn I am so adrad. (587–591)

Then Jerome assumes the role not only of an educator and a catechist, as Greg Walker remarks (16), but also of an emotional consoler. He is able to uplift John's fear with insights on theology:

> *Jerome:* But now to remove thys blocke, yowr grett drede,
> We have a lever that removethe drede wythe spede.
> God sofereth but not wylthe ony man to syne,
> Nor God wylthe no synners dethe but he be yn
> Such endless males that hys fynall estate
> In lack of penytens make hym selfe reprobate.
> In tyme of this lyfe at eche penitent call
> Owrr marcyfull maker remytthe synns all
> From the perpetewall torment infernall,
> What ever they be from least to most carnall.
> By whyche goodness of God we are set in hopes chayer,
> Not to brede presumpsyon but to banyshe dyspayre. (609–620)

As seen in the passage above, the method of purging of negative emotions, such as dread, does not lie within medicine, but in faith. Thus, the aim of Heywood's emotional community with his audience is to, first and foremost, produce good Christians – good Catholics in particular – as Heywood repeatedly includes anti-Lutheran messages in his works. As Walker observes, Jerome

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[7] See Essary 2017. Later, in the seventeenth century, Robert Burton also considers pain and suffering as emotions in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Rosenwein *Generations of Feelings,* 261).

is "[t]aking a resolutely orthodox position, [and] argues that, while Christ's sacrifice on the Cross is the basis of salvation for all believers, good works are nonetheless also a necessary part of the salvific economy," which is "an issue that had divided orthodox Catholics and evangelicals through the 1520s" (15–16). The courtiers in the audience who, naturally, would identify with the wise, rather than fools, are reassured that they can be easily released from the fear of "perpetewall torment infernall" (617), from the dread of not doing enough to be saved, or the anxiety that they will never experience the pleasure of salvation. By being good Catholics, the wise courtiers can be free of emotional discomfort in life, but also, as Jerome instructs, they can be sure to be "in hyer [than fools] joyes" in the afterlife.

In Heywood's *A Play of Love*, similarly, the argument over emotions stirs towards religion and is, in fact, eventually resolved with a lesson in theology. The main characters carry a debate on pains and pleasures of being in various types of love, such as unreciprocated love or being unhappily married.[8] Ultimately, however, they conclude that the only passion that matters in human life is the Passion of Christ, and the only love worth seeking and experiencing is the love of the Lord for humankind:

> *Lover Not Loved:* Syns such contencion may hardly acorde
> In such kynde of love as here hath ben ment,
> Let us seke the love of that loving Lorde
> Who to suffer passion for love was content,
> Whereby his lovers that love for love assent
> Shall have in fine above contentacyon
> The felyng pleasure of eternall salvacyon. (1564–1570)[9]

Heywood's emotions, then, transcend flesh and earthly life; negative emotions, if not purged on earth, can be eternally suffered in hell, and the positive ones, if strengthened by faith and committing good deeds, can be eternally felt in heaven. Heywood intends to form an emotional community which perpetuates orthodox Christian values – he ties emotions to spirituality, rather than the bodily sphere, to make the audience actively think and work for their salvation. Heywood's role as not only a playwright, but also as a tutor and a preacher, becomes extremely pronounced, and his attempt at forming an emotional community seems all the stronger, given the fact that he was, possibly, present on stage himself by performing the role of Jerome in *Witty and Witless*, as Greg Walker points out (17–18).

As this paper will show, Heywood's views on emotionality are radically different than those of John Bale (a Lutheran Protestant) whose interludes' primary purpose was to promote Protestant ideas.[10] I would like to now consider John Bale's *King Johan* which was written and first performed in 1534 – the same year in which Heywood's *A Play of Love* was composed. The play revolves around King Johan (John of England – here presented as a precursor of later church reformers) and his struggle against the Roman Catholic Church (led by Pope Innocent III – here named Usurpid Powre – and his minions) and its quest to claim power over England. The country is here personified and presented as a widow who lost her husband, God, to the Papacy. At the beginning of the play, the widow England requests an audience with the King for she is overcome with grief:

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[8] The characters, who are named after the type of love they experience, also embody different emotional states. Lover Not Loved and Loved not Loving are both melancholic; Lover Loved is overly cheerful, while No Lover Nor Loved is proud, boastful, and resembles a Vice figure, reminiscent of medieval morality plays.
[9] Axton and Happe, eds. 1991.
[10] As Jeanne H. McCarthy observes, early Henrician reformers, such as Thomas Cromwell or Archbishop Cranmer, encouraged the production of reformist religious drama which would expose the Papacy's wickedness (257).

Englande: Than I trust yowre grace wyll waye a poore wedowes cause
Ungodly usyd as ye shall know in short clause.
Johan: Yea, that wyll I swer, yf yt be trew and just.
Englande: Lyke as yt beryth trewth so lett yt be dyscust.
Johan: Than, gentyll wydowe, tell me what the mater ys.
Englande: Alas, yowre clargy hath done very sore amys
In mysusyng me ageynst all ryght and justyce;
And for my more greffe therto they other intyce.
…
Johan: Now, Ynglond, to the: go thow forth with thy tale
And showe the cawse why thow lokyst so wan and pale. (22–57)[11]

Bale presents emotions in a more physical, bodily manner than Heywood. The widow England is overcome with grief after the loss of her husband to such a degree that she becomes slender and pale, as if she contracted a disease. While it is not, with all likelihood, a conscious attempt by Bale to draw a difference between his bodily emotions and Heywood's spiritual emotions, the idea of emotions being placed somewhere in the body, and reacting in and on that body, is taken still further, as Bale pays particular attention to the human heart. For example, Nobylyte says that it "petyeth [his] harte" to see the conflict which has arisen between King Johan and the Pope. When Johan exposes the Catholic Church's morally ambiguous practices, such as selling pardons or relics, Clergy replies that Johan "wold have no churche" then (428). The King retaliates by stating that he "wolde have a churche / But of faythfull hartes" (429–430). In other pieces by Bale, for example in *Johan Baptystes Preachynge*, Joannes Baptista (John the Baptist) claims that "[w]yth no sacrifice is God more hyghly pleased / Than with that good hart whereby the poore is eased / For that he accepteth as thought hymselfe it had" (129–131). Turba Vulgaris (The Common Folk) admits that "thys helthsome counsell maketh [his] hart joyfull and glad" (132).[12]

For Bale, the centre of emotionality is the heart which is referred to as if it possessed some particle of personhood; the heart can be pitied, it can be faithful, or it can be joyful. In that sense, Bale's ideas on emotionality and the human heart seem to align with those of Martin Luther who "stressed the importance of affectivity in devotion" (Philippa Maddern, Joanne McEwan, and Anne M. Scott xxii). According to Luther, "the power of emotion [was] experienced not only within his own heart, but stimulated within the hearts of his hearers" (xxii). As Susan C. Karant-Nunn notes, for Luther the "heart" was an entire concept, according to which the heart was not only a physical place in the body, wherein all emotions were felt, but it was also "the essence of each person" (246). As she writes:

> To Luther, the heart is not mere metaphor, however. It describes that tangible, individual, personhood that even as an abstraction is real. … There are bad hearts and good hearts, with Satan and his minions and the Holy Spirit and its angels ever engaged in contest over their possession (247).

In *King Johan*, it is Johan himself (representing the forces of good) and the Papists (standing for the forces of evil) who fight over the influence on people's hearts. But while Johan wants to win people's hearts by performing noble actions, such as reforming the corrupt clergy, the Papists seem to have a very physical, almost visceral, way of affecting people emotionally. For example, Sedicyon – the Vice character and the Pope's primary ringleader – orders Clergye to "grope" people's conscience, or wishes Cyvyle Order to "tyckle" people's hearts, to influence them into

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[11] This and all subsequent citations from Bale's play are from: Happe, ed. 1985.
[12] Happe, ed. 1986, 40.

rebelling against King Johan. The bodily language used here almost evokes the image of rape – the Papal minions conspire on a physical penetration of the human body which happens without the victims' consent.

Hence, Papacy, as Bale shows, is not only morally and doctrinally inferior, but is also emotionally corrupt. The Church of Rome spreads negative emotions and causes their surge in people's hearts; when Sedicyon introduces himself, he says: "As I sayd afore, I am Sedicyon playne: / In every relygyon and munkysh secte I rayne, / Havyng yowr prynces in scorne, hate and dysdayne" (186–188). He admits that he causes negative emotions, such as hatred and disdain, particularly in the ruling classes, such as "prynces." Johan remarks, however, that princes' "hartes the Lord doth move" (1344). In that sense, the Papacy's corruption of princes' hearts and emotions is a direct offence against God.

John Bale's emotional community, then, is supposed to be, first and foremost, Protestant, and, secondly, to be conscious of their emotions. Not necessarily in order to be constantly reminded about attaining salvation, like in Heywood, but in order to protect one's emotionality from Catholics' manipulation. Bale wishes the audience's heart, their emotionality and the essence of their lives, to remain "pure" and free of Rome's toxic influence. Just as King Johan tries to win the hearts of his subjects, so does Bale by forming his emotional community which would condition the audience's hearts to be full of positive emotions. Also, by stating that princes' hearts are moved by God, he wants the ruling class to especially pay attention to their emotionality and make sure it is not affected by the Church of Rome.

King Johan is not only aware of his emotions (to the point, in fact, that Sedicyon mocks the king's affectivity[13]), but he also shows compassion – one of the central and most valued emotions for Christianity. Compassion, as Damien Boquet and Piroska Nagy write, was often associated directly with Christ. Both in terms of the compassion which Christ felt towards others, for example towards the despairing Mary Magdalene, and the compassion which was felt towards Christ upon his agony on the cross (Boquet and Nagy 140–141). Here, Johan shows compassion when he is presented with a choice to either keep fighting the Pope's minions, which will ultimately lead to a bloody rebellion, or to simply give up his power and the crown of England to secure peace. He chooses the latter, even against the widow England's wishes:

> *Cardynall:* Ye are at a poynt wherto ye intende to stande?
> *Sedicyon:* Yea, hardely sir: gyve up the crowne of Englande.
> *Johan:* I have cast in mynde the great displeasures of warre,
> The daungers, the losses, the decayes both nere and farre,
> The burnynge of townes, the throwynge downe of byldynges,
> Destruction of corne and cattel, with other thynges,
> Defylynge of maydes, and shedynge of Christen blood,
> With suche lyke outrages, neyther honest, true nor good.
> These thynges consydered, I am compelled thys houre
> To resigne up here both crowne and regall poure.
> …
> *Englande:* If you love me, sir, for Gods sake do never so.
> *Johan:* O Englande, Englande, shewe now thyselfe a mother;
> Thy people wyll els be slayne here without nomber.
> As God shall judge me I do not thys of cowardnesse,
> But of compassion in thys extreme heavynesse. (1703–1717)

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[13] "Becawse that ye are a man so full of mercye, / Namely to women that wepe with a hevy harte / Whan they in the churche hath let but a lytyll farte" (164–166).

As Marjorje Garber notes, "in early modern English, compassion can mean to suffer with *or* to feel on behalf of the sufferer" (23), so one could say that Johan *feels* with his subjects – he feels the suffering and misery which an open conflict with Rome would bring upon his land. It is also worth noting that compassion is a central concept in Lutheran teachings. As David van der Linden writes, Luther taught that

> by focussing on the agony of Christ, believers missed a crucial point: God's compassion in offering up his only son to atone for the sins of man. Yet Lutheran preachers never eliminated the emotions from their sermons; rather than preach on the agonies of Christ, they stressed God's love, mercy, and comfort (47).

In this case, similarly, the crucial emotion is not Johan's pain of losing the battle and giving up the crown, but the compassion which he shows in saving his subjects from the impending destruction and decay. Thus, even though Johan loses his political power, he still reigns as the emotionally and morally superior one – he does, ultimately, win the contest for the human heart. And since it is the Lord, as Bale writes, who moves princes' hearts, it implies that Johan's compassion is, in fact, God-given. Johan mimics Christ and his Passion in the sense that he shows compassion towards others and inspires others to feel compassion towards him.

This cruel and complex representation of Passion, however, does not carry the same emotional baggage as the Passion spoken about by Heywood. In Heywood's interludes, the Passion of Christ serves as a reminder that the audience may rejoice because, thanks to Christ's sacrifice, they will experience eternal pleasure. Bale's Passion, of both Christ and King Johan, revolves around suffering, distress, and fear, and thus becomes the type of Passion which Patricia A. DeMarco links to the notion of "cultural trauma" (281).[14] Bale focuses on the more traumatic rendition of Passion in order to reflect the cultural trauma to which England had been subjugated due to Rome's oppression. But, because of King Johan's "sacrifice" and his compassion, the trauma may be lifted and turned into triumph.

To summarize, John Bale aims at forming an emotional community with his audience in order to unite them under one faith as Lutheran Protestants, as opposed to John Heywood who creates an emotional community which promotes orthodox Christian values. The two playwrights also present different ideas regarding emotions themselves: Heywood, inspired by other Catholic thinkers, such as Erasmus or More, links emotionality to spirituality in order to teach his audience that they can find the cure – or the "lever," to use Heywood's own terms – for negative emotions in faith, thanks to the Passion of Christ and God's infinite love for humankind. Bale, on the other hand, tears emotions away from the spirit and places them in the human heart: in the anatomical heart, as the part of the body, but also in Martin Luther's conceptual heart which denotes the "essence" of each individual's personhood. This paper, naturally, does not intend to speculate what emotions the playwrights or the audiences felt, or to argue that the actors actually felt the emotions they played out and then the audiences shared them, for that is rather impossible to determine. Instead, my work has examined emotional communities which, in the case of this paper, work as a link between the playwright and his audiences in common understanding of how emotions work, what they mean, what causes their surge, and which ones are appreciated or which ones are condemned. Emotional

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[14] The high and late medieval tradition, DeMarco observes, produced two dominant representations of Christ's Passion: a more peaceful one which was supposed to "stimulate feelings of love, sweetness and joy," and a violent one which centred on Christ's suffering on the cross and "invited readers to imagine and sympathetically feel Jesus's pain and suffering in the most intense way." Readers' exposure to the latter, she claims, was "becoming what we might understand as a 'cultural trauma'" (280–281).

communities can be influenced and shaped by many external factors, such as religion, which this paper shows by juxtaposing early sixteenth-century interludes composed by the playwrights who represent different denominations of Christianity. Moreover, an emotional community between the playwright and his audiences does not prove to be a "static" experience, by which the dramatist merely wishes to establish a common way of understanding and expressing emotions. As shown in the case of Heywood and Bale, emotional communities can offer a dynamic exchange, not only within one emotional community, but also between other emotional communities which may exist simultaneously in a given historical period.

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Symptomizing Crises. Theatres of the Pandemic – *Isolated But Open* and *Inside/Outside*

Abstract

My aim in this article is to look into manifestations of the corona crisis in theatre and performance as well as representations of other conflicts and problems, revealed or intensified by the pandemic. Drawing upon theories on the social influence of the pandemic developed by Snowden, Žižek and Neiman, I examine the potential of the pandemic theatre to critique and change the existing structures and to envision a more caring and considerate society. My analysis focuses on two British theatre projects: *Inside/Outside: Six Short Plays* (2021) and *Isolated But Open: Voices from Across The Shutdown* (2020) and their representations of the conflicted reality of the pandemic, addressing the questions of limitations and restrictions of rights and freedoms, on the one hand, and care and protection, on the other. The plays expose the conflicts between survival and life worth living, inside and outside, and the problems of the new normal and its life-changing potentials.

Keywords: theatre, pandemic, loss, grievability, environment

Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic has caused a major crisis in today's world, affecting almost every sphere of life, and exposing a variety of other crises, conflicts and problems which have existed prior to the pandemic and have been exacerbated by these new circumstances. Theatre and performance were among the areas of culture most affected by the pandemic: live productions have been either suspended or restricted, especially in the number of attending audiences or types of interaction permitted, or transferred to the Internet. However, in its struggle for survival in these new circumstances, theatre also discovered a chance of reaching wider audiences as well as exploring new forms of activity. Theatre of the pandemic from the early stages of the first lockdown welcomed – out of necessity – new media technologies and responded to themes that emerged from the confusion, uncertainty and radical change of everyday reality during the pandemic. Moving online – whether in interactive projects or livestreamed performances or recorded videos made available on the internet – became the rule and sometimes only effective survival strategy, often

supported by governments, charities, artists funds or other organisations. These tendencies have been explored in a number of publications that were published within approximately the same period, some of which based their findings on extensive interviews with – or surveys conducted among – theatre directors, playwrights and performers (e.g. Svich 2021; Jeziński and Lorek--Jezińska 2021 online; Betzler et al. 2021; Spiro et al. 2021) and some focused on the very nature of pandemic theatre, individual projects and emerging tendencies (e.g. Lorek-Jezińska et al. 2022; Aebischer 2022; Fuchs 2022).[1]

One of the first responses to the need of continuing activity online in British theatre during the first lockdown was the online video and publication project launched by Papatango – *Isolated But Open: Voices from Across The Shutdown* (2020). Announced just hours after the beginning of the first lockdown, when "[c]urtains fell across the country. Stages plunged into darkness. The work of months or years disappeared in an instant" (Foxon 3), the programme aimed to help both playwrights and actors to continue their work:

> On 17 March 2020, just twelve hours after the theatres closed, we launched *Isolated But Open: Voices from Across The Shutdown*, to create a new infrastructure that would ensure stories could continue to be told. We committed to produce the world premieres of a series of new monologues, selected from an open call-out. We pledged £2,000 to invest in the ten writers and ten actors who would pen and perform these monologues, guaranteeing them paid work when they needed it most. We promised to share the performances for free online, with captions, so that anyone could enjoy great new stories. (Foxon 3)

A similar aim, but delayed by a year's closure, was realized by the Orange Tree Theatre, which in March 2021 re-opened to stage and live-stream new productions by new and established writers. As Guy Jones notes, "[a]s I write, the Orange Tree Theatre has been closed for a year. It's time to switch the lights back on. *Inside/Outside* will be the first time we have told stories here since March 2020" (vii). What these projects share is their commitment to the continuation of artistic activity, the belief in its importance as well as promotion of new writing that responds to the critical circumstances of the pandemic.

The aim of this article is to examine how selected pieces from both projects, *Inside/Outside: Six Short Plays* (2021) and *Isolated But Open: Voices from Across The Shutdown* (2020), confront the conflicted reality of the pandemic, addressing the questions of limitations and restrictions of rights and freedoms on the one hand, and care and protection on the other. They also problematize how many of the issues that seem to be the result of the pandemic are in fact, as Jones writes, "inequalities we live with [and which] are written into the systems in which we are asked to participate" (ix). In the following section, I will refer to this discussion on the relation between pandemics and the social conflicts preceding and accompanying them, the changing priorities and redefinition of lives and their grievability in the time of crisis, as well as the life-changing potential of the critical situation leading to the creation of the new normal. I will be drawing mostly from the fields of medical humanities, social studies, philosophy and ecocriticism to set the foundations for further discussion of the theatre projects.

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[1] Research conducted by various institutions was also published in a report format, for example, by IDEA Consult, Goethe-Institut, Sylvia Amann and Joost Heinsius (2021. *Research for CULT Committee – Cultural and Creative Sectors in Post-Covid-19 Europe: Crisis Effects and Policy Recommendations*), by Instytut Teatralny im. Zbigniewa Raszewskiego (2020. "Nowe formy istnienia: jak zmieniał się teatr w pandemii" https://www.instytut-teatralny.pl/dzialalnosc/projekty-i-programy/nowe-formy-istnienia-jak-zmienial-sie-teatr-w-pandemii/) or by SDA Bocconi School of Management (2020. *The Impact of COVID-19 on the Performing Arts Sector*).

The Pandemic as Conflict, Crisis and Chance

In his book *Epidemics and Society: From the Black Death to the Present* (2020) originally published in 2019 and republished with a new preface referring to the coronavirus pandemic, Frank Snowden argues that "[e]pidemics afflict societies through the specific vulnerabilities people have created by their relationships with the environment, other species, and each other" (ix) and "spread along fault lines marked by environmental degradation, overpopulation, and poverty" (505). The fault lines, marking the deficiencies or weaknesses of social systems, expose existing conflicts and provoke new ones. The two theatre projects to be discussed further focus on deficiencies related to environmental degradation and various forms of discrimination based on gender, race and age, together with excessive control exerted by the state over individuals.

To all these problems exposed by the conditions of living during the pandemic Slavoj Žižek adds another layer, in which the pandemic itself becomes "a serious existential" conflict of visions (4). In his second book on the coronavirus crisis *Pandemic! 2: Chronicles of a Time Lost* (2021), Žižek argues that "[t]he ongoing pandemic hasn't just brought out social and economic conflicts that were raging beneath the surface all along; it hasn't just confronted us with immense political problems. More and more, it has become a genuine conflict of global visions about society" (3). One of the important aspects connected with this issue is how we understand the concepts of care and protection and their complex impact on freedom and independence. This is further related to controversies around complete lockdown and other restrictions that were imposed at the beginning of the pandemic. As both theatre projects under consideration refer to these conditions of the early months of the pandemic, this discussion is particularly relevant to them, highlighting the collisions between care and control, life and survival. In interrogating reasons behind the violation of restrictions by protesters during the pandemic, Žižek points to important choices being made, concerning primary existential questions. Žižek asks whether these examples imply that "we have to risk our lives (by way of exposing ourselves to possible infection) in order to remain fully human?" and whether

> Giorgio Agamben was right when he rejected state-imposed lockdowns and self-isolation as measures that imply reducing our lives to mere existence – in the sense that, when we follow the lockdown regulations, we demonstrate that we are ready to renounce what makes our lives worth living for the chance of bare survival? (Žižek 28)

In his early reactions to the restrictions imposed by the Italian government, Giorgio Agamben warned about the consequences of the radical reshuffling of priorities when introducing the state of exception. By taking a decision to prioritize what he calls "bare life" (*Homo Sacer*), a life that is politically defined as necessary for survival and limited to the most essential needs, over "what makes our lives worth living" (Žižek 28), according to Agamben, people are ready to "sacrifice practically everything" ("Clarifications"). The following excerpt, which tries to clarify the controversial stance taken by Agamben in early 2020, illustrates the tensions and disorientations of the early stages of the pandemic and problematizes some of the concerns emerging in the pandemic productions to be examined in the next sections:

> It is obvious that Italians are disposed to sacrifice practically everything – the normal conditions of life, social relationships, work, even friendships, affections, and religious and political convictions – to the danger of getting sick. Bare life – and the danger of losing it – is not something that unites people, but blinds and separates them. Other human beings, as in the plague described in Alessandro Manzoni's novel, are now seen solely as possible spreaders of the plague whom one must avoid at all costs and from whom one needs to keep oneself at a distance of at least a meter. The dead – our dead

– do not have a right to a funeral and it is not clear what will happen to the bodies of our loved ones. Our neighbor has been cancelled and it is curious that churches remain silent on the subject. What do human relationships become in a country that habituates itself to live in this way for who knows how long? And what is a society that has no value other than survival? ("Clarifications")

Anxieties related to government control caused by the permanent state of emergency contributed to reflection on what kind of future can be expected in the aftermath of the pandemic ("What is worrisome is not so much or not only the present, but what comes after"; Agamben "Clarifications"). Both the present and the aftermath of the early stages of the pandemic reappear as major themes in the pandemic productions examined in this article, particularly in relation to the future social systems based on surveillance, the reduction of human existence to bare life, as well as to the disruptions of the mourning process caused by sanitary restrictions and lockdown regulations. This aspect, in turn, is closely connected with questions of grievability, affecting the choices and hierarchies in a critical situation and based on the tendency to see some lives as valuable, "worth mourning," and thus grievable, and others – the ungrievable ones – as "those whose loss would leave no trace, or perhaps barely a trace" (Butler *The Force*, 75). The plays in both theatre projects problematize questions of grievability both in reference to the right to live and the need to mourn.

Another significant aspect of the early stages of the pandemic was a tendency to identify in the COVID-19 crisis a potential for change and transformation. This tendency was discussed by Susan Neiman in her article under the telling title "Corona as Chance: Overcoming the Tyranny of Self-Interest" published in *Democracy in Times of Pandemic: Different Futures Imagined* in 2020. Neiman proposed to see the crisis as an opportunity to rethink and change what we believe to be normal, which is, according to her, based on self-interest: "My aim is to remind us that we are living in a conceptual framework that we barely perceive as such. By perceiving it, we can begin to imagine others that will help change the conditions themselves" (154). Neiman thus suggests that, as Maduro and Kahn put it, "the pandemic offers us a chance to reject this attitude [self-interest] and become a more caring society" (139). Such an optimistic vision surfaces in some of the plays to be examined in the following sections of this article, where they either envision a more inclusive post-pandemic society or present an increased awareness that might potentially lead to change. They correspond to (what could be termed) "overcoming" narratives and visions of the post-pandemic future that appeared in the early months of the pandemic, such as the utopia of human spaces reconquered by animals and nature, or wiser and more mature societies rethinking mass overconsumption and overproduction and rescaling their needs. In this version of the crisis the pandemic offers a vision of "imagining otherwise" (Gordon 5) – the concept used by Avery Gordon to refer to the capacity to use alternative means of envisioning reality and grasping the possibility of creating a better version of society. Yet simultaneously, such a possibility also emerges from post-apocalyptic scenarios inspired by the pandemic and exploring the consequences of social practices of exclusion, "stigmatization and scapegoating" (Snowden 5), which will be referred to further in the article with regard to the pandemic-related generational conflicts. Overcoming self-interest and imagining otherwise is also connected to what David Abram calls the Humilocene, the term coined to emphasize both humility towards nature and humiliation caused by the awareness of humans' destructive influence on the environment (Abram et al. 9). The critical distance and in-betweenness of the lockdown redefined our understanding of both local and global environments, forcing us to rethink and reevaluate our place and attitude towards the environment. This aspect is addressed in the section focusing on the condition of solastalgia (Albrecht), a phenomenon presented in the context of the complete lockdown, but also embracing larger environmental concerns.

The pandemic has also been viewed by some as an opportunity for theatre, that is not only relevant and meaningful in addressing the pandemic crisis, but also searching for new audiences and exploring new channels of communication, together with their major asset – accessibility. As Barbara Fuchs rightly notes in her *Theater of Lockdown*, "Gradually, what had at first seemed like a quick fix became instead hugely enabling – not just a life raft but a flotilla of rapidly proliferating possibilities . . . productions multiplied and it became clear that digital theater meant watching anything, anywhere, anytime" (1). In what follows, three aspects of the pandemic theatre will be discussed with reference to the two projects introduced above – *Inside/Outside* and *Isolated But Open*[2]: firstly, visions of the post-pandemic future – addressing the problems of grievability and bare lives and searching for the new normal; secondly, problems of environmental loss and its intensification during the pandemic, represented through the concepts of solastalgia and the Humilocene; and thirdly, the representation of loss and mourning as one of fundamental pandemic experiences. All of these themes revolve around the conflict between freedom and restrictions/lockdown/captivity and comment on the redefinition of the way we come to conceptualize space during and after lockdown (inside versus outside). Some refer to conflicts running across generations, negotiating values and expectations. All of these problems have been exposed or redefined in the time of the pandemic.

Visions of the Future: Grievability, Care and "Corona as Chance"

In this section two plays presenting visions of the post-pandemic future will be examined with reference to the problems addressed by medical humanities introduced above. Both plays combine elements of dystopia and critical utopia either to warn about or dream of possible post-pandemic social scenarios and to a large extent both can be said to symptomize the pre-pandemic social inequalities conceptualized through the notions of bare life, grievability and discrimination. One of the most striking plays in the two collections under consideration is *When the Daffodils* (from the anthology *Inside/Outside: Six Short Plays*), written by Joel Tan, a Singaporean playwright based in London. The play comments on the generational conflict during the pandemic, control and imprisonment, as well as the limits of one's sacrifice and solidarity. *When the Daffodils* poses questions relating to the quality of life and the cost of survival, questions relevant to debates – especially at the beginning of the pandemic – on the right of governments to severely restrict freedom and reduce life to the minimum of survival. The play also asks who deserves to be saved and who can be sacrificed as well as whose vulnerability gets priority and whether the protection of bare life is more important than the protection of the quality of life.

By asking those questions, the play exposes the extent to which social structures during the pandemic are based on what Judith Butler in *Frames of War* and *The Force of Non-Violence* calls "the differential" nature of "grievability of lives" and precarity (*Frames* 25, 34) and their "unequal distribution" (*The Force* 58). In this way, the play touches upon one of the fundamental problems addressed by medical humanities, mentioned in the above section, illustrating to what extent the pandemic situation has reshuffled some of these hierarchies and what are the ethical consequences of this change.

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[2] In my analysis, I will consider both the texts collected in *Isolated But Open* and short films recorded and posted online on the project's webpage. I will point to interactions between word and image out of which some meaningful contradictions emerge. In the case of *Inside/Outside* out of necessity I limit my analysis to the published text only.

One of the important strategies to signal the very process of transformation and instability of social relations and hierarchies in Tan's play is the audience's postponed discovery of the rules governing the system presented in it. We begin with expectations shaped primarily by our pre-pandemic experience, verified or drastically changed by the pandemic, but staying within the rules of verisimilitude and probability. The play presents a meeting of an old woman Meg and social worker Samia, who brings Christmas shopping to her. It seems initially that we are seeing a casual conversation between a lonely woman who needs to talk to someone (and Samia is her only visitor) about Christmas brussels sprouts and being naughty when eating a bar of chocolate. It is only after some time that the reader/viewer gradually discovers that the situation presented in the play is not a day from an old woman's life during the present pandemic but a projected future. As we discover in the course of the play, in order to enable young people to lead normal lives, the old – as the most vulnerable – are kept locked in their flats being taken care of by uniformed workers. Not being allowed to go outside, old people are totally dependent on their carers who try not to get involved with them emotionally.

The structure of this post-pandemic dystopia is revealed towards the end of the play, when we discover that this arrangement is part of the consensus that has been reached at some point in the pandemic. Accordingly, three years after what seems to have been the isolation of young people to protect the old, it now is the turn for the elderly to isolate themselves and accept the care as well as surveillance from the younger generation. Samia describes this arrangement, when trying to negotiate with Meg, who wants her carer to help her escape:

> three years of your life just taken away like that, three years of your prime life, Meg, three years I could've gotten rich, gotten ahead, gotten on . . . three years and I moved from my twenties to my thirties, Meg, three years is a generation, Meg, a whole generation stuck inside like fucking lepers. And now. Well, that was the consensus, you know that. (Tan 40)

The gradual realisation of the rules of this consensus changes the perspective and meaning of the care given to the old lady. The rule "protect the vulnerable" is pushed here to an extreme – where protection and care equal control and detention. In a reversal of the lockdown of all people to protect the elderly – this subsequent and seemingly permanent lockdown of old people gives the young a chance to live. Samia describes the system as the best solution:

> We all agreed, didn't we? All waved goodbye, shut the doors, stopped the clocks, hoped for the best. Do more? … Best outcomes. Best for all. Right? Optimised. On top of things. Firm grip, sure, bit hard in places, tight … tough love, expensive love, might I add. Sure. But it's a relief. A jab in the bum. And don't we need it, after all? After all that? (Tan 41)

The self-regulating system presented in the play is based on control and surveillance; if something disturbs it, the system can be reaffirmed through false testimony. After an attempted breaking of these rules, Meg confirms her positive opinion of the life and care that she receives. This is to compensate for the problem she caused by saying aloud that she wants Samia to take her out from her flat and escape with her, as it turns out that Samia's visits are being recorded and the authorities already know about the incident.

Isolation, loneliness, physical and emotional distancing, touch deprivation – all of these aspects of Meg's life represent the experience of the complete lockdown shared by many people, not only the elderly. However, in important ways the system presented in the play can also be seen as a commentary on the situation of the elderly in old people's homes under ordinary circumstances (before the pandemic), which was only exacerbated by their additional isolation from their families during the pandemic and vulnerability to abandonment and neglect which was occasionally reported in the first stage of the pandemic.

As for the question of grievability and value of lives, Tan's play echoes the paradoxical reversals of status brought by the coronavirus crisis. During the pandemic some groups were made particularly grievable through their vulnerability to illness, repositioning some of the earlier biopolitical hierarchies privileging younger people. In the time of crisis those who can take care of the most vulnerable are empowered, while those whose lives are most grievable are particularly protected because of their precariousness. In the first stages of the pandemic young people were left out from this relation and were in a sense sacrificed or disregarded, particularly where mental health and social wellbeing are concerned. Tan's play comments on this aspect in the discussion of Samia's feeling of guilt and her memory of being bombarded with a sense of responsibility and commitment before the change of the system of care described in the play: "Need I remind you? You were the ones dropping off. It was your sad faces on the posters, on the ads, on the videos, on our minds all the fucking time" (Tan 40). After the change, the young regain freedom (by isolating old people) and gain additional sense of power and control as carers and guards.

Another problem that the play addresses is the conflict between the two visions of life that emerged during the pandemic, mentioned in the previous section with reference to Giorgio Agamben: the reduction of living to bare life and survival to save as many lives as possible no matter what their quality is and the contrary belief that we cannot compromise our freedom and happiness for others and ourselves to survive. In Tan's play, Meg and Samia represent these opposing stances, each having their own reasons to believe they might be right. Meg does not disagree that the young should have a chance to live their "normal" lives, but she can no longer bear her isolation:

> I forgot, for a moment, forgot myself. Forgot. Forgot this is good, after all, and right, and, better than death, and life continues, and life goes on, and this is good, after all, for you especially … maybe next time you could just bring me some daffodils? (Tan 44)

The injustice of the system and unhappiness it causes on both sides – the one caring and the one being cared for – continue as the crisis presented in the play is abated; the characters' caring for each other is paradoxically used to perpetuate its efficient functioning as they adjust to not causing further harm. In a pessimistic post-apocalyptic fashion, the play exposes the dangers of taking inadequate measures in the time of the pandemic to protect people from risk and death and abusing care and protection to take control, presenting a thin line between these two categories.

rise from the wreckage by Benedict Lombe (a Congolese-British writer and theatre-maker) from *Isolated But Open* – ironic and self-reflexive as it is – comments on the chance to rethink and remodel social structures after the crisis and imagine a different possibility for the future than the familiar scenarios. The play thus seems to respond to the optimistic tendency represented by many thinkers at the early stages of the pandemic (Neiman 153) hoping for a possibility to change and improve the world after the crisis and "imagining otherwise," mentioned in the previous section. This apparently optimistic monologue is spoken by a woman (WOMAN) described in the stage directions as "a black womxn in her twenties" (Lombe 26). The video that we watch as an audience is a recording that is to be "sealed in some vault/cloud/digital coffin-type … thingy …" (Lombe 27) for ten years to be then recovered and watched by the protagonist's older self. In the very act of watching the video, the viewer is placed in the position of the protagonist's future self, addressed directly by her, and thus also in the position of a survivor. The video is part of the project the woman decided to embark on to record her daily experiences for several months. In its film version, Lombe's piece is thus an example of what Seda Ilter calls a "postdigital" awareness (Causey) within "mediaturgical plays" (Marranca) (174–175) in the way the media (video and data storage devices) predefine the relation between an actor and image as well as the viewer's place in this arrangement

as both a spectator and the character's double. In the first recording, which we have an opportunity to see, the woman recounts her dream of a catastrophe in which only babies survived:

> So in the dream, we lived in this alternate universe, or whatever, and 90% of the population was on the brink of being wiped out from this unknown natural threat, right? And the 10% who were immune from this were almost entirely … babies.
>
> I *know.*
>
> So, we decided, collectively, that we would put as many babies as we could in cryosleep, where their bodies would be stored at a mad cold temperature to preserve them. (Lombe 27–28)

The survivor society will consist only of these babies and bell hooks and Malala to take care of them and "guide them" ("what a *life*" – she says). The new world that emerges from the catastrophe is a utopian one:

> Just *imagine* the possibilities of a world that allowed everyone to exist in their fullness. Not "later." Or "eventually." Or "for a while." But from the very beginning. From the moment you begin to exist – you *see*, and you *learn*, and are *taught* that everything that you are is … perfectly okay. (Lombe 29)

The catastrophe from which this new world emerges largely resembles the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic:

> But in your world, years from now, I hope we remember *this* moment as the moment our world changed … I hope we remember that when touch was out of reach, when we couldn't predict what lay ahead, and we didn't know how to feel – words, voice – *that* became all we had. And my God, I hope we found a way to use it.
>
> I hope we harnessed its power and turned it into action. (Lombe 29)

In the final vision, the woman addresses her future self, expressing her hope that during those ten years people will have managed to gather enough strength not only to survive, but also thrive and to demand a new normal. Addressing her future self – and simultaneously a survivor of the pandemic – the character shares with us her wish that the crisis can be used as an opportunity to change reality, reject the old normal and set new standards of living for everyone. She also insists, as did some scholars mentioned in the first section of this article, that what used to be seen as normal was always faulty and the present crisis exposes it and gives one courage to demand a change. Similarly to Snowden (505) and Svich (2), who use the metaphor of "fault lines" to refer to the cracks in social systems that were deepened by the pandemic, the protagonist sees the past and present as "broken" but capable of repair:

> I hope we saw a chance to rebuild something we always knew was broken. A chance not just to survive but for us all to *thrive*. I hope we didn't request but demanded a new normal. That we cast our nets wide and gave as many as possible a say in creating it. I hope we sustained it. I hope we achieved a reality where we were brave enough, and generous enough and compassionate enough to set a new standard. I hope we saw a chance to rise from the wreckage. And do better. (Lombe 30)

What Lombe's monologue problematizes is whether we can learn anything from the catastrophe and find enough compassion and courage to include in our vision and negotiations the groups that have always been left out: "those we forgot, for those we silenced, for those we failed for decades, centuries, over and over and over again until we couldn't get away with it any more" (Lombe 30). The monologue also juxtaposes the idea of survival with thriving and doing better, insisting on the power of education and knowledge, specifically the importance of reading the right books (WOMAN lists food and books

as equally important – "Ones that dared to believe that a different way was possible" [Lombe 28]). The naivety of this future project, which the speaker seems to be aware of but simultaneously tries to defend, points to the degree of desperation she experiences in the pandemic but also reflects a type of optimism characteristic of the early stage of lockdown that enabled a different perspective. Placing the viewer in the position of WOMAN's future-self offers an interesting experiment in confronting one's own frame of reference and the future imagined by the character.

Environmental Loss: Solastalgia in the Time of the Pandemic

Similarly to Tan's and Lombe's plays, *Solastalgia*, a monologue from the project *Isolated, But Open*, by British political playwright Anders Lustgarten, looks not only at the problems exposed by the pandemic but also those existent prior to it, in this case those that symptomized a major environmental crisis. The play is an ecocritical commentary on the relation between humans and trees over the millennia. Important meanings are generated in the juxtaposition of the text's message and its video realization with its indirect references to the pandemic and lockdown. Solastalgia is the term coined by Glenn Albrecht in 2003 (Gladwin 42) to refer to a particular kind of feeling associated with one's place of living:

> It is the pain experienced when there is recognition that the place where one resides and that one loves is under immediate assault (physical desolation). It is manifest in an attack on one's sense of place, in the erosion of the sense of belonging (identity) to a particular place and a feeling of distress (psychological desolation) about its transformation. It is an intense desire for the place where one is a resident to be maintained in a state that continues to give comfort or solace. … It is the "lived experience" of the loss of the present as manifest in a feeling of dislocation; of being undermined by forces that destroy the potential for solace to be derived from the present. In short, solastalgia is a form of homesickness one gets when one is still at "home." (Albrecht 48)

The concept of solastalgia is employed most often in the context of a direct experience of natural and artificial transformation of the environment. However, as Albrecht argues, in the contemporary times of information availability and globalization, and the resultant blurring of the concept of directness of experience and the limits of one's home, "the experience of solastalgia is now possible for people who strongly empathize with the idea that the earth is their home and that witnessing events destroying endemic place identity (cultural and biological diversity) at any place on earth are personally distressing to them" (49). What is also significant is that solastalgia, as Albrecht suggests, is a concept that is both present and future orientated – and thus is not defined by the longing for the past that is lost forever, but may refer to collective action for creating a space that will fulfill the need of comfort and solace (49).

The title of Lustgarten's monologue refers firstly, to a number of environmental issues metaphorically represented through the conflict between trees and humans, and secondly, to the drastic change that occurred in people's sense of place in the times of the pandemic. The latter concern again, like in *Wild Swim* to be analysed in the next section, is not mentioned directly in the text but is signalled by the disjuncture between the narrated story and images presented in the video. What we can see on the screen is a man, sitting in front of the window with a part of the street visible behind him, featuring a couple of trees and bushes as well as cars and other buildings. What he recounts is the history of the domination of trees and their gradual destruction, seen as a temporary crisis caused by human beings and to be followed by the trees' revival. Already the first sentence: "The trees were here before the town. The trees will be here after the town" suggests the power relations between nature and humankind, with the trees being gods and human beings usurpers:

> These trees are gods. They transcend us. They were ancient when the Romans got here. Ancient before people got here. Theirs is a calculus in which we do not figure. They give the lie to our delusions of grandeur, our self-absorption, our mad belief that we are all there is. (Lustgarten 33–34)

Such a perspective echoes the implications of the Humilocene, by acknowledging human humility towards nature but also humiliation resulting from the awareness of people's destructive nature caused by anthropocentrism (Abram et al. 9). As the story develops, the people decide to "kill the gods" by using them in the process of industrialization. The trees, struggling for survival, paradoxically prepare their own death by contributing to the formation of coal:

> But the trees fight on, still raising up and crashing down and sinking under and growing again, and in so doing they sow the seeds of their own demise. For as they sink down over the millennia, they and the ferns and the detritus and the birds become the biotic material that turns into coal . . . The trees become the fuel for their own destruction. (Lustgarten 34)

The monologue ends with a comment on our failure to notice the presence and importance of trees before: "And yet, somehow, we never really notice them. Until now" (Lustgarten 34). The phrase "Until now" may refer both to the recent increase in environmental awareness or to the change of perspective brought about by the pandemic – the redefinition of our sense of place and home and how it is located within a wider pandemic environment. The experience of the complete lockdown in the spring of 2020 in particular exposed the importance of contact with nature and a sense of spatial deprivation resulting from self-isolation. Solastalgia thus refers both to the discomfort caused by global environmental changes (deforestation) and to the temporary loss of contact with a comforting aspect of our environment/home, here embodied by the trees.

The play's video exposes the contrast between the domesticity of the lockdown and a sense of isolation from the environment it evokes. It also presents a commentary on the present state of the "divine" trees, surrounded by the city, smaller in size and leafless. In short sequences, the camera pans over the images of a small patch of woods, which contrast with the grandeur mentioned in the text. The effect is a feeling of guilt for having contributed to the destruction of trees and wonder at their "divine" ability to persist. Similarly to *Wild Swim* and *Guidesky and I*, to be examined in the next section, Lustgarten's *Solastalgia* comments on the radical redefinition of our experience of and connection with the environment during the pandemic. The real trees, grotesque as they are in comparison with the ones described in the monologue, are still capable of bringing solace and comfort and define a sense of place, especially during the lockdown, when our needs are reduced to the minimum of survival.

Loss and Mourning During the Pandemic

A sense of loss and interrupted mourning creates a subtext for several monologues in *Isolated But Open* and plays from *Inside/Outside*. Although deaths to which the plays refer are not revealed to be caused by COVID-19, the mourning process is interrupted or disturbed by the limitations and restrictions imposed during the pandemic. The pandemic itself remains a form of subtext, changing the meaning of the text and refracting the original stories. This section examines two plays which symptomize the personal and collective experience of bereavement and having no resources to adequately respond to that loss because of the sanitary restrictions and isolation, particularly during the complete lockdown. The first text refers to the pandemic mainly through the disjunction between the text and the film, whereas the second more directly addresses both the mourning and its circumstances.

The monologue *Wild Swim* by Martha Watson Allpress (a writer and actor from the East Midlands living in London), who contributed to the *Isolated But Open* project[3], is spoken by Lauren who has recently lost her mother. The "wild swim" refers to the hobby her late mother followed in recent years – swimming in a natural lake together with her friends. On the wake day the daughter is invited by her mother's friend to join her on a wild swim and despite being in a "don't touch me or talk to me" mood, she offhandedly accepts. Yet instead she goes to the lake alone to swim and find – metaphorically – her dead mother in the water, reuniting mentally with her. This is what we hear when we listen to the monologue only, without watching the video. When swimming, Lauren says:

> I love it, and then with no thought at all I leave it. I push off into this abyss desperate to explore the reeds and the winter of the water. My extremities are so finally in tune with the rest of me; they are saving my life with each stroke. I dunk my head under and for the first time in six months I can't hear any noise. It's magic. I search for her. I want to find the exact spot my mum fell in love with it. I will find that spot. I will swim next to my mum, or she'll swim next to me. I'll just know she's there. (Allpress 66)

Swimming is an act of imaginary reunion with the mother in water; it seems that by performing this act Lauren confronts her loss, lets the object of loss go and in a way completes the mourning process. However, when confronted with the video, it becomes apparent that some aspects of the pandemic reality interfere with her mourning. The video shows the character trying to find a place where she could go swimming outdoors but to no avail. Because of sanitary restrictions, swimming in the lake is forbidden. On seeing the sign saying "Due to the current government guidelines concerning COVID-19, use of the lake is prohibited until further notice," Lauren takes a dog for a walk on the river bank (to have an excuse to walk in the empty city), becoming aware of the impossibility of realizing her wish. Finally, she enters the bathroom of what probably is her mother's house, changes into a swimsuit, swim cap and goggles, and plunges into the icy water in the bathtub (adding ice cubes to the water to make it closer in temperature to the lake water).

The trivial domesticity of what was supposed to be a wild swim exposes a general sense of futility of action and helplessness felt in the early phases of the pandemic, affecting also the experience of grief connected with loss. The pandemic has drastically reversed the spatial sense of outside and inside, blocking the completion of mourning and the healing process. Yet paradoxically, it has simultaneously imposed some form of critical awareness of the symbolic nature of the act of mourning: as it turns out, wild swimming can be performed in a bathtub by the power of imagination and by internalization – rather than exteriorization – of grief. Despite the circumstances, in the final epiphany, the character discovers that she will not regain her mother, but can go on living without her:

> Nothing's going to be the same after this. I can't float forever. I know that. And I'm still not going to have a mum when we get out of this water. I know that. But I'll have had this.
> I'm going to push and swim and love and cry and grieve and swim and feel and smile and spit and swim and tire and want and miss and swim and shout and swim and stroke and breathe and shiver and believe and swim and daydream and finish and swim and swim and swim. (Allpress 66)

In the process resembling in its first stage a "hallucinatory wishful psychosis" in which the character "turn[s] away from reality" trying to cling to the loved object (Freud 20) and in its second a transformation of the lost object into creative energy through positive introjection, Lauren

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[3] The play is included in the collection as one of the texts submitted for the competition and is not described as having been written before the project was launched. However, Martha Watson Allpress authored a different play with a similar motif of wild swimming, *Wild Mum*, featuring two characters (male and female) struggling with the loss of their mother before the coronavirus pandemic (http://www.www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com/wild-mum).

passes from pathological melancholia to mourning that eventually can lead to healing. The split between the intensity and sublimity of Lauren's emotions and the triviality of a bath taken at home symbolically represent not only the reduction of the significant processes in people's lives during the pandemic, but also the resilience that enables them to adjust to these circumstances, by scaling down their need for authentic experience and accepting what appears to be its grotesque substitute.

In *Guidesky and I* (2021) by Deborah Bruce from the collection of *Inside/Outside*, mourning is also partly filtered through the grotesque, which points to the radical redefinition of everyday life during the pandemic. Similarly to Lauren from *Wild Swim*, the main character of *Guidesky and I*, Diana, has lost her mother and since her death she has lived alone, moving between her flat and her mother's house to take care of her mother's cat. In contrast to *Wild Swim*, *Guidesky and I* clearly specifies its lockdown and pandemic context through direct references to restrictions and isolation, while foregrounding types of social interaction prevailing in this time, such as online shopping and home delivery, as well as e-mail communication (registering a complaint). The major part of the play consists of e-mails, written to a seller called Guidesky, demanding a refund for a cat cave which she ordered for her mother's cat. Diana puts a lot of energy into corresponding with Guidesky; her anger escalates, reaching absurd levels when she announces that she will find and kill the man if she does not get the money back. At some point Diana begins to doubt whether she received any answers from the man and starts to suspect that she just imagined him. She seems disoriented and "socially awkward" (Bruce 23) having spent more than a hundred days alone. At the end of the play the Guidesky man arrives with the cat cave she ordered, but his behaviour and a different passage of time seem to confirm Diana's suspicion (thirty years pass between the man's exit and almost immediate re-entry).

Guidesky and I comments on loneliness and isolation, which the character tries to desperately break by engaging in the (imaginary) argument. Similarly to *Wild Swim*, during the pandemic, the character has no resources that she can fall back on to confront the feeling of loss. Diana notices how the lockdown reduces life to the bare existence and suffers from social isolation, but instead of trying to change this, she yields to the state of being suspended between life and death. She is afraid to fully confront her loss, redirecting her anger and frustration onto the imagined man. She invests all her energy in meaningless communication to fill in the empty space in her life and keep some form of social contact. It is only in one moment that she opens her mind to a memory of a rope swing in the garden, the image of which leads her to a pivotal statement directly referring to her loss:

> Is the rope still on the tree, I wonder? […]
> It'll be slimy with moss. Frayed to a thread probably. Or just not there at all.
> Weathered into absence.
> –
> Loss is a deep pool you can't just dip your toe into. (Bruce 22)

At this moment Diana recognizes and verbalizes the reason behind her inability to move forward. Similarly to *Wild Swim*, Bruce's play presents the grotesque – almost comedic – contrast between the gravity of loss and the triviality or clumsiness of the character's misdirected actions. What is also common to both plays is the characters' metafictional and self-reflective awareness – with Lauren looking directly into the camera and Diana making eye contact with the audience (described in stage directions as "self-conscious under our gaze" [Bruce 25]). The effect of both – the grotesque and the self-referential – achieves a type of understanding with an audience, and points to the common experience of the pandemic. It also in a way naturalizes some of the characters' "awkward" reactions as ways of dealing with personal and collective senses of loss during the pandemic crisis.

Conclusion

The pandemic has caused a major crisis in the theatre world, overcoming which has involved an extensive reformulation of contact and live action and their transformation into other – mediated – forms. It has also changed the focus, perspective and positioning of both artists and audiences, altering the scope of themes that could be seen as urgent or valid in these new circumstances. Most of the monologues and plays discussed in this article were launched at the early stages of the pandemic – during or just after the first lockdown. What is interesting about some of them is that they do not address the present pandemic directly, sometimes failing even to mention it at all, but the commentary on the change brought by the pandemic emerges from the disjuncture between the spoken narrative and the images presented in the videos or from silences or omissions that we can notice in their stories. The pandemic is thus a kind of subtext changing the meaning of narrated events presented in the monologues, preventing their completion or development, restricting options and reducing scale, thereby symptomizing the problems that make "normal" life impossible.

The projects addressing the pandemic more directly focus on the radical transformation of the meaning and use of everyday spaces, objects or relations to others in the period of lockdown, domesticating some of the crisis and estranging what used to be a familiar and safe element of people's environment. In both projects *Isolated But Open* and *Inside/Outside*, some larger problems of the pre-pandemic world emerge, such as environmental degradation (*Solastalgia*), racism and discrimination (*rise from the wreckage*), agism (*When the Daffodils*), and control and surveillance (*When the Daffodils*, *Wild Swim*, *Guidesky and I*). They also gain a new visibility during the pandemic and are exposed in the context of the increased sense of loss and powerlessness. In the plays focusing on the experience of losing a close relative, the pandemic restrictions and rules of isolation make it impossible for the characters to fully live through, express and share their mourning. Their struggle with loss exposes the needs that go beyond mere survival and represents the disorientation felt by people during the early months of the pandemic, related to the feeling of having lost a large portion of daily existence and experiences that go beyond it. The pandemic has also inspired visions of a better world and the emergence of the new normal, which in Lombe's play means a radical transformation of the whole system to cater for the needs of everyone – for the new imagined society not just surviving but using the crisis as an opportunity for improvement.

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Them and Us – Pintér Béla's *Blood-Red, Off-White, Dark Green* and András Urbán's *Sacra Hungarica* in Context

Abstract

The paper wishes to document a recent trend visible in the Hungarian independent theatre scene – a turn towards social, political issues, as well as a growing sensitivity towards the visible tensions in Hungarian political discourse. It does so through the analysis and the contextualization of two recent Hungarian independent theatrical productions. Studio K's 2019 *Sacra Hungarica* is an in-your-face attempt to portray the current distortion of the language and the abuse language is used for, while Béla Pintér's *Blood Red, Off-White, Dark Green*, a clever *Oedipus Rex* paraphrase that depicts marginalization, racism, and nationalism in a pointedly non-pc allegory.
The essay introduces the status of independent theatre vis-à-vis politics after 1989 and will delineate the changes the conservative governments brought into the alternative scene. Then, through an in-depth analysis of the above-mentioned two productions, it discusses the various means of theatricality they use to comment on contemporary Hungary.

Keywords: Hungary, independent theatre, p.c., politics, satire, roma, Béla Pintér, András Urbán

On the 13th of April 2214 Leonárdó Köteles Lábán, the governor-president of Hungary enumerates the Roma heroes of the Hungarian past: "You only have to look at those engravings, those daguerreotypes, and those photos to clearly see that Gábor Bethlen was a Vlach gypsy, Lajos Kossuth was Boyash, Sándor Petőfi was Serbuya Lovari, and yes, the greatest Hungarian, Viktor Orbán was Romungro." His chief of police cries in protest: "No! Viktor Orbán was not a gypsy!" (Pintér).[1] This repartee that is rewarded by roars of laughter and rounds of clapping every night, is also quoted by almost all reviews on Béla Pintér's 2020 play, *Blood-Red, Off-White, Dark Green*, as a symbolically succinct summary of a tongue-in-cheek commentary on the divisive political communications that dominate Hungarian politics. The ironic yet pointed political satire that Pintér delivers in this play is symptomatic of the recent trend visible in the Hungarian independent theatre scene – a turn towards social, political issues, as well as a growing sensitivity towards the visible tensions in Hungarian political discourse.

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[1] All translations from the Hungarian are mine.

It is no secret that Hungary today is a deeply divided country where emotions run high if people try to discuss social-political issues. In anonymous comments on the internet, or in nationally publicized media coverages, personal attacks, racist and sexist remarks have become the new normal. The cultural field, unfortunately, is no exception to this rule. Luckily, theatre is there to reflect on these changes. This essay looks at two fringe productions that wish to show the anomalies of today's Hungary. Studio K's 2019 *Sacra Hungarica* is an in-your-face attempt to portray the current distortion of the language and the abuse language is used for, while Béla Pintér's *Blood Red, Off-White, Dark Green*, a clever *Oedipus Rex* paraphrase, depicts marginalization, racism, and nationalism in a pointedly non-pc allegory.

The paper will introduce the status of independent theatre vis-à-vis politics after 1989 and will delineate the changes the conservative governments brought into the alternative scene. Then, through an in-depth analysis of the above-mentioned two productions, it wishes to discuss the various means through which contemporary independent theatres portray the current political atmosphere of the country.

Theatre and Politics – Before and After 1989

When the Berlin Wall came down, and Hungary was also released from the grips of state Socialism, a long-awaited and seemingly inevitable change followed – theatres also shook themselves free from the shackles of politics. Leaving behind the long-standing categories of supported, tolerated, and banned of the Kádár-regime that dictated what could have been performed when, and in what mode[2], as well as breaking free from the previously almost doctrinaire performative mode of doublespeak – a seemingly liberating, yet in end-effect shackling mode of communication – theatres started to focus on the aesthetic, as opposed to the political. Postdramatic ideas and experimental theatricality that were previously relegated to the amateur movement,[3] or were banned altogether, resurfaced and were embraced by a new generation of directors appearing on the Hungarian stages (by Sándor Zsótér, János Mohácsi, László Bagossy or Árpád Schilling, among others).

Following theatre historian Árpád Kékesi Kun's categories (85–105) we can delineate four major trends that dominated the Hungarian theatre world in the 1990s: "radical reinterpretations" that drastically rewrote dramatic texts and radically changed the outcomes of dramatic situations;

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[2] Uniquely amongst most Central European countries, Hungary did not have a central censorship office. Instead of direct censorship, the Kádár regime developed a multi-level system, in which it expected the members on all levels to self-censor themselves. Through this regulatory system of many layers, and anticipating the self-censoring cooperation of its citizens, the authorities very rarely had to resort to the method of direct control. Contrary to the binary system of banned or supported materials of the Stalinist regime, the new regulations relied on the tripartite value scale of banned, tolerated and supported, the second being a non-prescribed, only vaguely defined, category of works of art which, though not openly socialist, were at least partly acceptable for the regime. This group changed incessantly: what was banned one day could easily be performed the next. No official guidelines were put down for what passed as tolerable, since the regime wished to keep everyone on their toes, guessing. There were certain general taboos that had to be avoided (anything that would offend the Soviet Union or any friendly socialist countries, any criticism of the Party leadership, any obscenity or vulgarity, or open description of sexual acts), but everything beyond these was up to the temporary judgment of the officials. See further: Veronika Schandl, "Writing Between the Lines: Reviewing Shakespeare Productions in Socialist Hungary", *Shakespeare and Tyranny.* Ed. Keith Gregor. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, pp. 165–181.

[3] See: Veronika Schandl, *Shakespeare's Plays on the Stages of Late Kádárist Hungary – Shakespeare Behind the Iron Curtain.* Lewinston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008.

"imagist theatricality", where productions centered around the compositions of striking images; "neo-avant-garde visuality" that suspended dramatic linearity and forcibly disassembled plots; and finally a later also influential tendency that propagated a disharmonious ideal of beauty, and reflected upon the nature of theatricality. Productions in a more experimental vein appeared both in mainstream theatres as well as in alternative venues, both in Budapest and in the countryside.

One has to mark, however, that the overall institutional framework of Hungarian theatre remained unchanged after 1989. Although operating in a market-based society, most Hungarian theatres still relied on government subsidy for most of their operational costs. National theatres in Budapest and in larger Hungarian countryside towns got funded by the government, while municipal theatres were partly funded by municipal councils, too. This subsidy system, established under state Socialism is still in operation. It is only independent theatres that receive no regular normative funding from the government, their independence therefore mostly denotes their financial status. Called "amateurs" before the regime change, independent companies used to operate in the grey zone between "tolerated" and "banned" – although constantly monitored by the authorities, they managed to introduce neo-avantgarde tendencies to Hungary, broadened the repertory and produced shows that were stretching the boundaries of centrally accepted artistic and political norms. Often acquiring international fame, in Hungary these companies were still treated as marginal, and when their artists were granted official status in state-funded theatres, it was mostly with the wish to silence their non-conformist ideas.[4]

After 1989, these fringe companies were re-labeled as "alternative," a category that mostly reflected on the different aesthetics these theatres operated with. Partly building upon the traditions of the avantgarde groups of the 1960s and 1970s (Orfeo/Studio K, Universitas, Arvisura, Monteverdi Wrestling Circle, etc.), and influenced by Western theatrical trends of the new millennium, especially German theatre, these "alternative" companies introduced such artists to the Hungarian theatre-world as Viktor Bodó, Kornél Mundruczó, Béla Pintér, and Árpád Schilling, whose names also ring familiar for a wider European public. Theatre companies like Bodó's Sputnik Shipping Company (Szputnyik Hajózási Társulat), Mundruczó's Proton Theatre (Proton Színház), Pintér's Béla Pintér and Company (Pintér Béla és Társulata) and Schilling's Chalk Circle Theatre (Krétakör Színház) attracted new generations of theatregoers with their productions. As Andrea Tompa has summarized, "The independents have influenced and changed the picture immensely, not only because of a growing artistic crossover, but also because the independents' new aesthetics, methods of working, and overall spiritual presence have made an impact" ("Hungarian and Independent" 15). These methods included improvisations, active engagement with the text and an emphatic break with psychological realism, a trend that has been the most influential theatrical form of expression on the main stages of Hungary since the 1970s.

Finally, and most importantly for our present discussion, it was the "alternative" scene that brought politics back to the Hungarian theatrical idiom. Krétakör's *BLACKland* reinterpreted the traditions of political cabarets, while Béla Pintér's works reflected on the social issues of alcoholism, the state of the Hungarian healthcare system, the role of religious sects in rural Hungary, as well as on ideas of nationalism.

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[4] Whereas Neo avant-garde tendencies were often tolerated, performance artists and productions were banned and silenced, since, as theater historian Magdolna Jákfalvi pointedly remarks, those in power "considered the theatrical idiom that opened several layers of interpretation, as a possible (but controllable) source of danger, whereas direct speech [appearing, for example, in performances or avant-garde productions] as imminent danger" (Jákfalvi 69).

Us and Them

The rhetoric of current Hungarian political discourse is one based on dichotomy and conflict.[5] With its insistence on a single-focus national identity, government politicians continuously posit themselves against groups, individuals, and ideas – such as Liberalism, gay and transgender people, or George Soros, to name but a few of the Orbán-regime's latest culprits. Relying on an idea of civic nationalism that is driven by a desire to assimilate everyone under the banner of a nation, this narrative fails to endorse the rights or give a voice to diverse cultural groups within the society. Furthermore, the continuous emphasis on the "us" versus "them" narrative results in creating widening rifts within the Hungarian society. Recent research into these divisive tendencies (Pap-Patkós, Patkós-Boda, Kovách) reveals that they impact not only social but also economic changes in Hungary, and actively contribute to negative development. They also prove that conflict-based diction creates further conflicts and enhances antagonism.

These divisive rhetorical strategies in the past ten or so years have infiltrated the cultural sphere, too. While the appointment of theatre managers and the distribution of cultural funding was always a political matter in Hungary (also under the liberal-socialist governments of the 1990s), the Orbán-regime now openly talks about a culture-war, unremittingly challenging not only ideological but also aesthetic values of theatricality. The populist rhetoric of the Orbán-government relies on the frequent use of the theatrical in their everyday propaganda – giant billboards announce the successes of the government, massive state-funded "spontaneous" marches express the "will" of "the people", and lavish celebrations re-tell the important events of Hungarian history. In turn, theatres are also used to advertising the single-vision national narrative the regime propagates: rock operas, horse musicals and ballad-like apotheoses depict events from the Hungarian conquest, from medieval history to the 1956 revolution. These shows often rely on rock-popified versions of Hungarian folklore, use folk music and folk dances only to conjure up an image of a strong, patriarchal Hungary.[6] The aesthetic of these productions embraces over-the-top kitsch[7], straightforward narratives that glorify a homogenous nation, and they shun irony, the appearance of multifocal views as well as a postdramatic questioning of teleological narratives. One could therefore argue that a production's adherence to aesthetic experimentation in itself is a subversive move, especially when, as in the case of the two shows this essay engages with, they deconstruct theatrical tools mainstream propaganda also operates with (such as folklore, national myths or hate-speech).

In the following I will focus on two productions that reflect on the divisive stereotypes that split Hungary today, and on the different modes of theatricality they use to discuss these issues. While the two productions differ in several ways, what links them is that they both reverse the 'us' vs. 'them' rhetoric and play with the consequences of this reversal. Furthermore, both use sketchy non-PC stereotypes to depict certain groups of Hungarian society, thus they both challenge certain social and political taboos violating the rules of political correctness their mostly liberal audiences would expect them to follow. In doing so they both follow the traditions of the political cabaret, a genre developed in Germany in the 1930s. The shows at hand do not strictly follow the episodic

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[5] This, however, did not start with the Orbán-regime, the previous, Socialist, Gyurcsány-government also used the "them" and "us" rhetoric when advocating against Hungarians in neighbouring countries becoming Hungarian citizens. The divisive rhetoric of their campaign left a long-lasting mark in Hungarians within and outside the border.

[6] See the controversies of the recent film *The Battle of Pressburg* (dir. Tamás Baltavári)

[7] See the 20 August celebration in 2021, in which, among other items, a giant chrome plated Turul bird was being dragged by half-naked men in tribal tattoos.

modality of the cabaret, yet in their tone they seem to have been influenced by it. What gives the non-pc edge to the productions is their cabaretic use of the language, since "the cabaret does not speak the language its audience does but uses this language as a tool for an ironic game. A game that temporarily places the normal usage of language in parenthesis, so that it could make fun of it" (Szilágyi-Gál). This game allows the cabaret to reflect the reality of its audience in a distorted, yet revealing mirror, while also opening up the range of topics, even to include non-politically correct issues, too.

Béla Pintér's Theatre and *Blood-Red, Off-White, Dark Green*

Béla Pintér and Company (PBEST) is the most successful Hungarian independent theatre ensemble today. In 2023 they will celebrate their 25th anniversary. Béla Pintér writes and directs all their plays, with his long-term dramaturge, Éva Enyedi helping to finalize the texts. Although now an established published author with two volumes of plays topping the sales charts, and receiving professional accolades, Pintér is neither a trained actor, nor a trained writer. He comes from the amateur theatre movement, where he was a folk dancer and an actor in Arvisura Company, and in Gábor Goda's Dance Theatre. Some of his plays (notably *Peasant Opera*) have been produced by other companies as well, yet he mostly writes with his own actors in mind, therefore most of his plays are solely performed by PBEST. In recent years he has been invited to write and direct in Hungary's most acknowledged theatre, Katona József *The Champion* (2016), a spin-off based on works by Puccini and *Tamás Ascher in Háromszék* (2017), a Pintér original, and the actors from the Katona ensemble also joined him in a PBEST production, entitled *The Glimmer in Mom's Eyes* (2019).

Pintér's style has changed throughout the past almost 25 years, but there are elements that connect his plays, characteristics that denote his theatre. Ever since his first production in 1998, *Common Bondage*, a loose improvisational piece depicting a surreal countryside wedding feast, folk music and authentic folk dance have been major elements in Pintér's productions. In his work, folk music is used both to express authentic emotions or as the voice of a common cultural background, as a juxtaposition to classical music, as a tacky, sappy element accompanying urban life, or a means to escape from it. Pintér's training as a folk dancer guarantees that his use of folklore is not cliché-like – he uses folk music as a tool to convey meaning, never as a remnant of a great Hungarian past the mainstream political propaganda rhetoric reminisces about. The way he mixes folk motives with Baroque opera, American country music and elements of popular culture for instance in his 2002 *Peasant Opera* removes all nostalgic sugar-coating from folklore, revealing and at the same time ironically playing with its innate cathartic narrativity.

Folklore, however, is just one of the many cultural layers and commodities Pintér works with. He is known to switch registers from high-brow literacy to profanity even within sentences, balancing notions of the tragic, the comic, and the satirical in his plays. Whether he draws on well-known myths, fairy tales or historical events, Pintér's plays always tap into contemporary social and political issues, be it the Hungarian health system (*Hospital-Bakony,* 1999), alcoholism (*Drink and Die,* 2001), domestic abuse (*The Queen of the Cookies*, 2004; *Children of the Demon*, 2008), the emergence of the far-right (*Muck*, 2010), or social righteousness (*Brilliant Second-Rate*, 2010; *Till Heartbreak,* 2017). Holding up a distorted mirror that reflects our image in a multifaceted way, Pintér, who aims more to show and less to teach, (Magyar Hang) also revisits historical events that are formative for the Hungarian self-definition and are often applied in the national refashioning endeavors of the current conservative government, too. However, whereas official narratives use these events to support the overall narrative of the epic fight Hungary has been waging against the

rest of the world, be it the Austrians, the Soviet or the enemies within, Pintér actively deconstructs any attempt to view these with a singular focus, or in a teleological, celebratory national narrative.

In *Kaisers TV, Ungarn* (2011) he revisits the 1848 Hungarian Revolution, sketching up a parallel universe in which the Hungarians won against the Austrians. Mixing historical persiflage with mass-media broadcasts of the imagined Imperial Habsburg TV station, while giving audiences the satisfaction of an imaginary victory, the play also demasks the heroes of the age, Sándor Petőfi and Lajos Kossuth as self-centered and vain, and cultural memory as faulty. *Our Secrets* (2013) problematizes the simple dichotomy of "them and us" in the context of the Socialist Kádár-regime. It also engages with the dire consequences that in Hungary the files of secret service agents are still not openly accessible. Lastly in *Marshal Fifty-Six* (2021), an angry Shakespeare/political cabaret inspired satire on the corruption of the current government, Pintér questions the historical memory and cultural representation of the 1956 revolution and its heroes. These plays show a tendency in Pintér's *oeuvre* to challenge the official concepts of history the Orbán-regime wishes to offer the people of the country, and one could say that his 2020 *Blood-Red, Off-White, Dark Green* also falls into this track. The title, an off-color rendering of the Hungarian tricolor signals that the play will be about a re-toned version of the Hungarian here and now. The subtitle promises an adaptation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. As for its genre, the play is a dystopia, a political satire and at times, a cabaret sketch.

We are taken into the future to 2214, when the Roma/gypsy are the majority in Hungary, since a malignant virus in the past has decimated the white population of the country. When we enter the events, Hungary, once again, is in the grips of a virus, is in lockdown, hoping to get the antidote against the deadly illness from the Russian Confederation. This they promise, in return for an investigation into the past murder of the Russian president's daughter. From then on, the play transforms into an *Oedipus* paraphrase in which we witness how Leonárdó Köteles Lábán, the governor-president of Hungary realizes that his current wife, the mother of his four children and in fact the murderer of his first wife, is also his own daughter with whom he has been living in an incestuous relationship. The ending, however, offers no tragedy: the governor manages to cover up the truth, fool the Russians and get the medicine. We are left with a gloriously glaring president on TV announcing the promised arrival of the drugs and the nearby end of the pandemic, with his wife at his side in dark sunglasses to cover the marks of the beatings that brought her to reason.

This is the story in a nutshell, but the more powerful aspects of the show are the topical allusions, the political satire of the Orbán-regime, in which the glitzy world of these future Hungarian gypsies, wearing over-the-top costumes and giant led-lit folklore carnival masks, echoes the nationalistic pride as well as the petty and grotesque reality of today's Hungarian politics. Each character on stage has a contemporary parallel in the Orbán cabinet, and one feels that the Oedipus story of personal trauma is rendered weightless by the continuous political echoes of the play. Similarly to his earlier play, *Kaisers TV, Ungarn,* Pintér gives the upper-hand to the underdog by reversing the current demographic status of the country. However, while *Kaisers TV, Ungarn* invited identification from the audience with the victorious Hungarians, making the Roma take Hungary is an open provocation.

Roma are the largest minorities in Hungary, who, besides music have virtually no cultural representation in the country.[8] In the right-wing rhetoric of the government they take the role of

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[8] All Roma theatre operates on the fringes of the Hungarian theatre scene. There is an international Roma heroes festival that invites productions from all over Europe (http://www.independenttheater.hu/roma-hosok-fesztival/) and there are three companies that work with Roma actors (Balogh Rodrigó's Company, Karaván Theatre and Cinka Panna Company).

criminals, and integrational programs are as underfinanced as independent theatre projects that wish to give a voice to the Roma. They are the silent, or more accurately, the silenced Other within Hungarian society, and their tongue-in-cheek, decidedly non-PC representation on stage works to confront the mostly liberal audience with their own racist stereotypes too. The Roma-Hungarian dichotomy is, unfortunately, not an antagonism, the consequences of which are still to be debated. In 2009 Roma villagers in Olaszliszka beat a Hungarian teacher to death, then, in retaliation, three extremist right-wing men burnt down the house of a Roma family in Tatárszentgyörgy, killing a young Roma father and his son. Pintér's play is not a straightforward depiction of this – it is a provocation in a stylized, doubly removed way, through the dystopian future world and Sophocles' plot, midway between a political cabaret and soap opera-like melodrama. Yet, it does tap into the questions of "them" vs. "us".

Pintér methodically works through all of the racist, religious, and sexual stereotypes we are surrounded by every day, bluntly disregarding all controls of political correctness, since our mirror images, the future (Roma) Hungarians, treat minorities in the similarly disparaging way we do today: all of them are sexist, homophobic, anti-Semitic, and racist. They glorify their own grandeur, regard the rest of the world as fools, lie to the general public, blatantly rewrite history and solve uneasy situations with violence. Here I would like to return to the dialogue about Viktor Orbán being a gypsy quoted at the beginning of the essay, since that succinctly demonstrates how the layers of meaning work within Pintér's play. To quote Sándor Bazsányi one could argue that:

> Here the important thing is not that in a theatre play they call the fictitious version of the current prime minister of Hungary a gypsy. What is important is whether we treat the word gypsy as a curse word. How do we use it? How do we look at gypsies, fellow gypsy citizens? Since when we are outraged or overly happy that Viktor Orbán is called a gypsy in a satirical dystopia, then we are racists. If we do not wish to be racists, then we should not be irritated or overjoyed by this delicate little detail. Pintér and his company set a perfect little trap for the viewers. It is a task to test a man, an excellent exercise in self-knowledge and in cultural identity.

Using this double-edged sword of identities as its basic tool, the play creates a general uneasiness in the audience – while making sure they roar with laughter – since the reflections of our dystopic future selves are uncanny. It is not only the ruling classes of today's Hungary that are ridiculed – although they are the butt of the jokes most of the time – but the usually unwritten codes of our conduct are also put under the microscope, since the play works with stereotypes, and they work because viewers give similar responses to them. The tiny old rabbi who bargains with the regime to gain tiny advancements, the voracious priests who hoard titles and earthly wealth, or the Dutch gay man who looks for Hungarian hunks in Budapest are cliches that are considered laughable not only by the future gypsy Hungarians, but their – mostly middle-class and educated (Nagy) – audiences, too.

On the other hand, our future dystopian descendants behave as we do: they are belligerent, hostile, and divisive – only their targets change. Leonárdó's fellow Hungarians primarily rage against the whites, who in the past have changed the national anthem and the tricolor, blown up the Parliament, sold out their countries to oligarchs and destroyed the Earth with their carelessness. Of course, lesser targets, like the "self-centered, conceited Catholic liberal priests", the "rotten gays" and the "bloody Russians" also get their fair share. The story of the suppressed gypsies who must make Hungary great again, fighting on all fronts with cunning and common wisdom is one that strongly resonates with Viktor Orbán's master-narrative. It is a narrative that seems to work, since "Daddy" Leonárdó, "the King", succeeds, against all odds, and at the end of the play his regime is cemented more than ever before. Yet, the Oedipus subplot adds an uneasy twist to his success: we know that they are cursed and doomed to fail in the future. They are, we are.

The visuality of the production[9] that combines surreal masks and costumes with the realistic setting of the UP Cultural Center, the actual space of the performance, parallels the dystopian distancing the play employs. In recent years, theatre critics in Hungary (Török, Dézsi, Gabnai-Herczog) have grown more and more dissatisfied with the continuous conduct of doublespeak and reading-between-the lines that still is the mainstream political commentary most Hungarian theatre productions use. Shakespeare is a prime culprit there –productions would more frequently turn to his classic plays, such as *Richard III*[10], *Hamlet*[11], or *Macbeth*[12] to smuggle political criticism into their productions, than to a contemporary work. Besides Shakespeare, dystopias are also immensely popular today. 2020 alone brought about five premieres of dystopias in Hungary that all aimed at commenting on the contemporary state of affairs.[13] When critics wish to name the one theatre-maker in the country whose goal is "a theatre that wishes to enter into the political discourse" (Dézsi) it is only Béla Pintér whom they name. Here I would like to argue that although Pintér does address political issues, his mode of theatricality is still closer to the symbolic, the doubly referenced, that Hungarians are familiar with. The form of the doublespeaking traditions of state Socialism, as well as of political cabarets also followed. This becomes evident especially if we contrast Pintér's play with more radical forms of political theatre, as our next example will demonstrate.

András Urbán's *Sacra Hungarica* in Studio K

András Urbán is the enfant terrible of Hungarian language Serbian theatre, the manager of the Kosztolányi Dezső Theatre in Subotica, and an artist well-known for his politically charged productions that use vehemently different means of theatricality to comment on the divisiveness of Hungarian society than Béla Pintér. His theatre has been likened to the in-yer face theatre of the 1990s, and recently has been labeled "engaged theatre" in which only those political and social issues appear that the auteurs feel a personal engagement with. In his past productions Urbán has discussed questions of local, national as well as European identity (in *Neoplanta*, 2014, *Hungarian*, 2016 and *What is Europe?*, 2016 respectively), examined psychological distortions (*Urbi et orbi,* 2008), as well as the recent migrant crisis (*In the Name of the Father*, 2020). Urbán, with dramaturge Kata Gyarmati creates his playtexts based on literary works, improvisations, and interpolations. He has radically re-interpreted several Hungarian and European theatrical classics, among others Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (2010), the most famous Hungarian play, József Katona's *Bánk bán* (2015), and Hungarian operettas in a subversive mashup gala performance entitled *The Wanton Lady's Knights* (2021).

Urbán has been a frequent visitor to Hungarian theatre festivals (Thealter, POSZT), and has an avid group of followers in Hungary, too, yet Studio K's 2019 *Sacra Hungarica* was his first direction in Hungary. His theatre is radically different from everything else that appears on Hungarian stages. The recurring elements of his directions, such as a confessional tone, physical brutality combined with postdramatic and physical modes of theatricality make his directions radical,

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[9] Costume: Mari Benedek; Mask: Lilla Gergely-Farnos; Graphic design: Dániel Bárány; Scenery: Gábor Tamás.

[10] D: Andrei Şerban, Radnóti Miklós Theatre, 2018.

[11] D: Enikő Eszenyi, Vígszínház, 2017.

[12] D: Rémusz Szikszai, Jászai Mari Theatre, Tatabánya, 2019; D: Ildikó Gáspár, Örkény Theatre, 2019.

[13] Dezső Kosztolányi: *Nero,* d: Máté Hegymegi, Studio K; Matei Vişniec: *Richard III Banned,* d: Rémusz Szikszai, Szkéné Theatre; Lev Birinsky: *Turmoil 2045*, d: Csaba Polgár, Örkény Theatre; George Orwell: *1984,* d: Ádám Horgas, Szeged National Theatre. See: Almási, Zsolt. "Textuality, Heritage, and Identity in Hungary: Contexts for the Interpretation of Szikszai's Insertion in *Macbeth.*" *Theatralia* 24 (2021): 222–238.

shocking, and unsettling. His 'no filters' productions also engage themselves with questions about theatricality, often tearing down the dividing lines between actors and audiences with pointedly physical means. These elements appear in *Sacra Hungarica,* too.

Studio K, the theatre Urbán joined for this coproduction is one of the oldest independent venues of the country. In 1971 the avantgarde Orfeo Group established the theatre, which albeit in different buildings, has been in operation ever since. Its founding artistic director, Tamás Fodor is one of the most defining figures of the Hungarian independent scene. Studio K is not only an experimental theatre company, but also one that is active in its local community too, putting on children and educational productions with discussion forums. They also addressed the migrant crisis in 2015 (*Our Borders*), in a documentary show that aimed at providing a still image of Hungary at a given moment. Urbán's *Sacra Hungarica* does something similar.

Based on the improvisations of the actors, Urbán, with the help of dramaturge, Kata Gyarmati, the director of Studio K, created a text that becomes a catalogue, an in-yer face rendition of polarized hate speech. The brave new world that other, dystopian Hungarian productions imagine is here, in the present. As the theatre program details, the production is about the political awakening of an independent theatre company, who, having realized their previously faulty ways (and knowing that this is the only means to receive public funding to run their theatre) turn their back on liberalism and come to embrace the Christian-Conservative worldview of the Orbán government. They are the fully enlightened few, our future *now*.

As opposed to the flamboyant visuality of the PBEST play, this production starts with very little on stage: seven actors sitting on a row of chairs, facing the audience. Actress Melitta Pallagi utters the first lines: "I did believe in Soros. We were misled. I believed that we should create an independent theatre… I was hypnotized… We have to admit that we are the victims of a scoundrel" (Sacra). The others soon join in, revealing to us the eye-opening moments when they realized their Hungarianness, be it a harmonious summer afternoon, or drinking Hungarian beer. They also provide us with the new guidelines for life – selecting people they associate with and ideas they adhere to, ultimately realizing that "liberalism is the illness of puberty" one must grow out of. "I also worn torn jeans, but eventually you do dress up properly," quips actor Lajos Spilák to illustrate the parallels (Sacra). After these realizations they start reciting racial, sexual, religious and nationalist slurs that read like an unmediated Facebook comment thread under a political topic. Initial giggles follow from the audience, yet after a while no one can escape, the insults hit everyone, the categories of "them and us" become redundant, since, for example, you are either from the countryside, and as such, are a bumpkin who takes the jobs of Budapest people, or you are from Budapest, and are an arrogant ass who knows nothing of real life outside the capital. Everyone gets their fair share.

The initial reversal of "us and them" which in this case confronts the imagined liberal theatregoers with conservative Orbán-supporters, drawing up the ultimate divisive line of current Hungary, is just the starting point. It opens a can of worms, that is a can of animosity, where nobody can go safe, since the lens of hatred is continuously turned, finding newer and newer targets. BMW drivers who violate the Japanese-Hungarian blood treaty by not sticking to their Suzukis; minorities from the Carpathian basin who come to take our jobs; women who go to work instead of giving birth to children; gays who infringe on the order of God; Blacks, Portuguese, Italians, Germans, Dutch, Peruvians, Chinese, Jews, Austrians, Slovakians, Ukranians, Romanians, Serbians, Croatians and Slovenians, the Roma, migrants and finally, Hungarians are all called upon. Hungarians, it finally turns out, are in fact the worst: they betray you, are only interested in fattening food, are uncultured and uncultivated, they always look for loopholes, are cheap and shameful. The confessions finally

turn towards questions of culture and the actors declare their hate for "liberal-Jewish-migrant-fondling" (Sacra) theatres they have been associated with. Instead, they want pure artists to make pure Hungarian art, since "to be a Hungarian is not a question of genetics, but of intellectual choices" (Sacra). True Hungarian artists should be straight, white Christians who could transform theatre into sacred art, they claim. To demonstrate this tenet, the production turns to prayer and singing, inviting first the Lord to bless their work, then migrants to join a hunt in which they would be the hunted.

The actors smear their bodies with canned meat balls ("Listen, you migrant, I am a Hungarian and I eat pork" (Sacra)) and start an orgy to the tunes of operetta classics. Operetta is another cultural artifact that features in the Orbánist refashioning of the Hungarian national myth, as the one Hungarian theatrical product that achieved European fame in the early twentieth century. However, the genre is also connected to a glorification of the right-wing Horthy-regime of the 1930s, so its unfiltered glorification is problematic. Urbán uses the happy go lucky tunes to contrast them with the increasingly aggressive stage action. The audience cannot but be involved, since in the closeness of the studio space parts of the food get on their clothes and hair, the stench of meatballs gets into their nostrils, and it is a smell of violence they carry home with themselves. This way they are, we are, all physically and mentally violated. The outcome suggests that we are in this together.

Sacra Hungarica toys with performance art, it presents us with unmediated actor bodies on stage, offering a confessional narrative of trauma and healing. The actors are addressed by their real Christian names, and several personal details from their lives also entered the playtext. Yet, similarly to a political cabaret or a stand-up comedy, this fake honesty is only there to lure us into letting our guards down and admitting the fakeness of our well-crafted (liberal) axioms. Although the confessional, documentary nature of the production turns surreal by the end, once again echoing the political cabarets of the 1930s, Urbán's direction works with an unfiltered, unmediated directness that is rare on Hungarian stages, and is unparalleled among the Hungarian productions that use a carefully crafted web of doublespeak.

Conclusion

Ever since the postdramatic turn, there have been growing voices of criticism within performance studies that regret the change that turns postmodern theatre from a primarily public space into an aesthetic space:

> Once the doors are closed and the lights are down, theatre becomes an intimate private space where collective response is certainly felt and registered but is subsumed to the dominance of artistic production onstage. As a public sphere it becomes practically defunct, bar the occasional scandal, as the semiotic dynamics at work on the art-stage transform everything into a sign of a sign. (Balme 27)

This essay, through two prominent examples wished to show that contemporary independent Hungarian productions do register the need for a politically engaged theatre. More than thirty years after the change of the regime, however, political theatre is, as Paola Botham succinctly summarized:

> in a curious position vis-à-vis theatre scholarship. On the one hand, there are strong signs of a renewed interest in this kind of practice, after the many post-Cold War dismissals proved too hasty. On the other, habitual expectations about what a political play or performance is and what it can do have been relentlessly questioned. (117)

The two productions the paper discussed aimed at simultaneously subverting and at the same time provoking the current political forces, while they wished to show the political hypocrisy of the individuals too. To what effect is yet to be known. However, their political voice is strong and is to be noted.

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PART II
A/R/T in Practice

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Introduction

On behalf of the editors of the journal, I am pleased to acknowledge that it seems to attract a greater variety of proposals than initially anticipated. We have therefore decided to extend the scope of the journal to answer the need for other forms of engagement with scholarship and cultural artefacts. Starting with the present volume, we are happy to announce a new section devoted to the publication of reviews, interviews, creative pieces and papers on the methodology of teaching literary and cultural texts, "A/R/T in Practice".

The present section boasts an assortment of exciting entrances that vary both in length and focus. Starting with a critical essay by Rowland Cotterill on "Shakespearean Doubling: Issues of Action, Theme and Stage Presence", the readers get an opportunity to acquaint themselves with Cotterill's response to Brett Gamboa's *Shakespeare's Double Plays: Dramatic Economy on the Early Modern Stage* (2018) and his suggestion that "the great majority of Shakespeare's plays not only can be performed, but were intended for performance, by just twelve actors". Cotterill analyses such possibilities from the perspective of someone who has not only studied Shakespeare's works at length, seen many of them staged but also directed numerous student productions, which makes for an engaging account of Shakespearean doublings with their possibilities, limitations and meanings.

Next, we have two different and yet related pieces not only because they are both written by John Crust but also because each brings us closer to the work of the German documentary filmmaker Tanja Cummings. Crust reviews her film from 2015 first in "Tanja Cummings' *Line 41*: A Reflection", whose title derives from, as he reminds us, "the tram that travelled through the ghetto, connecting one part of the city to another" during the Nazi occupation of Poland. His second piece is based on interviews he conducted with the filmmaker about her other project "*Café Zelig*: A Seniors' Hangout and a Whole Lot of History", released in 2020. In many ways, Crust shows that her second work is a continuation of her earlier interest in the untold stories of Holocaust survivors, though this time we move from Lodz to Munich, which has become home to many Jews who still regularly meet in Café Zelig.

What follows is an intriguing short story by Borys Fynkelshteyn, "O Venice!", which, as the forward by Dmytro Drozdovskyi explains, proposes that the titular protagonist of *The Merchant of Venice* had his prototype in a real-life character who may have met William Shakespeare. The most surprising aspect of this piece is Fynkelshteyn's suggestion, based on the research he conducted in

Venice, that "the eponymous merchant of Shakespeare's play was based on a very old relative of Fynkelshteyn's", which gives the perusal of the story an unexpected twist.

Piotr Spyra's entry "Teaching Psychomachia in *The Castle of Perseverance*" closes the present section of the "A/R/T in Practice" with a very detailed analysis of the text, offering a theoretical background before then moving on to the discussion of possible topics and questions that may be raised in the classroom. Spyra suggests focusing on the play's staging, its allegorical figures, the stage movement of Mankind as well as "an awareness of the difference in the linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed the by Good Angel and the Bad Angel" to allow students to gain a fuller understanding of the complexities of the play which had a great impact on later drama.

We are happy to see that the new part of the journal makes for exciting, informative and useful reading and is a welcome addition to the journal. In closing, we wish to thank all the contributors for their exciting work and would like to extend our invitation for future proposals to continue building this stimulating new platform which combines an academic perspective with that of theatre, film and teaching practitioners.

On behalf of the editors in chief,
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Shakespearean Doubling: Issues of Action, Theme and Stage Presence

This paper is prompted most immediately by the recent, fascinating and voluminous book by Brett Gamboa, *Shakespeare's Double Plays: Dramatic Economy on the Early Modern Stage* (2018). Gamboa, through detailed arguments in the field of theatrical history and dramatic aesthetics, claims that the great majority of Shakespeare's plays not only can be performed, but were intended for performance, by just twelve actors, these actors being professionals and including young men performing roles of female characters. Gamboa's arguments are supplemented by charts setting out, on this basis, possible or probable allocations of roles to each actor; for some plays, he claims, fewer than twelve actors are sufficient (*Hamlet*, for example, requiring only nine). He suggests that such multiple and regular doubling, while serving (as others have suggested) to emphasize thematic motifs staged by regular groupings of individual characters, or by the recurrence of a single dramatic function through more characters than one, also offers, in itself, a major source of enjoyment for audiences and for performers – for audiences, an enhancement of the pleasures afforded by performers' doubling skills and by their own access to thematic parallelism; for actors, a parading of the virtuosity involved in complex acts of self-presentation. Gamboa writes:

> Throughout his career Shakespeare experimented with intensifying the energies inherent in live theatre by adding dimensions to the actor-character, and by imperilling his theatrical illusion by advertising their artifice. Doubling enabled him to achieve both ends simultaneously.… Doubling admits the fiction of the fiction while implicitly arguing for the primal 'reality' of the character being cancelled. (11)

Granting that his claims cannot be definitively established, Gamboa appeals, beyond these general and rather metaphysical principles of theatrical form, to specific traits of Shakespearean drama, "Regardless of intent or original practice, Shakespeare engineered plays particularly suited to small companies whose need to play multiple roles would inevitably enhance other paradoxes, contradictions, and replications found throughout the plays" (19). In what follows I shall develop responses to Gamboa's claims, and to issues of doubling in general, in several ways. After a number of introductory remarks, I shall consider the undoubted necessity, in Shakespeare's time and within the productions of his company, for regular and substantial doubling of roles. Next I shall discuss

a few studies of the topic prior to Gamboa's book, and shall present, in brief, Gamboa's arguments, his stipulations, and his claims. After a presentation of my experience of doubling as an audience member, I attempt to negotiate some agreements and disagreements, vis-à-vis Gamboa's work, at the level of general factors of Shakespearean dramaturgy. Finally I raise and discuss a few of my experiences of doubling as a director of student productions of four Shakespearean plays.

Introductory Remarks

My responses, then, are partly shaped by the place of Gamboa's work within the history of recent discussion of the general topic of Shakespearean "doubling" (the term is intelligible but far from exact). Gamboa's suggestions supervene upon the comparable, though differently orientated, study by T.J. King, published in 1992, of Shakespearean actors, roles and castings. They also engage with a number of particular and general proposals about possible or desirable doublings, whether in original or contemporary stagings, within the secondary literature of the past forty or fifty years; perhaps the greatest number of such proposals is to be found in the charts for possible doublings regularly offered at the back of the ongoing third series of Arden editions.

It is worth reflecting at a general level on the resources available for debates about Shakespearean doubling, and on the extent to which these do or do not permit any degree of certainty, or even any sense of agreed hypotheses, in this field. On the one hand, no early text of any of Shakespeare's plays carries any indication whatever of doubling between roles. On the other hand, as I shall spell out later in a little more detail, doubling was certainly a normal and indispensable feature of performances of these plays by the companies with which Shakespeare was himself involved, and it has been a common, though not universal, feature of performances, whatever their style, in subsequent generations. The need for doubling, in performances, is likely to be reduced in relation to the numbers of actors available within a production or an acting company: fewer actors means more doublings. Some doublings are precluded, one might think, by the simultaneous onstage presence of roles, which therefore require different actors (though, as I shall indicate, even this criterion has occasionally been breached). Other doublings, it has often been claimed, were unavailable to Shakespeare's and to other early acting companies because they would have involved an actor's alternation between a female role (such roles being, it is argued, performed only by boys) and the role of an adult male; Gamboa's book seeks, among other things, to overthrow this claim.

Some doublings, feasible in terms of these familiar criteria, would also have been desirable, it has sometimes been claimed, on grounds of aesthetics – whether in theme (two roles, perhaps, of similar types) or action (comparable narrative functions). These latter issues rely inevitably on matters of critical interpretation as well as physical possibility. Critical interpretation, within the general debate, has been regularly supplemented, or inspired, by the personal experience of critics. Such experience may be, and has perhaps usually been, that of membership of an audience.

Sometimes the experiences of directors, and of actors, in matters of doubling have been broached within critical discussion – sometimes but, I shall suggest, not frequently enough; such experiences merit serious and sustained reflection, and they will form the concluding section of this paper, where I shall present arguments based on my own experiences not only as an audience member but as a director of Shakespearean productions. The actors in these productions were students, and I related to them not as their tutor but simply as their director for each production (across a period of sixteen years – thus very few performers took part in more than one show); neither they nor I received any payment in connection with rehearsal or performances, and to this extent conditions were significantly different from those obtaining in any professional production. Yet a number of

issues around doubling, of which I became conscious from the outset of each rehearsal period, seem to me to be salient also for professional options, and for academic interpretation, in this area.

Central to such issues is what I refer to, in my title, as "stage presence"; I have in mind here the sheer fact of an actor, or actors, remaining visible and "present" (and no doubt, given appropriate ability, notably and memorably present) on stage, whether or not speaking. If an actor is not speaking, she or he is silent; she or he is, very probably, within the terms of a role, observing, and – once an audience becomes aware of it – visibly and significantly observing and hearing the speeches and actions of other actors. In this way actors successfully simulate the processes of individual and interpersonal interpretation, both emotional and conceptual, operative within and between the characters they embody. Thereby they give indispensable cues for an audience to follow them, and often to precede them, in developing an ongoing grasp of what, in a play and in the events it stages, comes to matter – of what, in fact, comes to happen. How does this line of reflection come to bear on issues of doubling? In several ways. Multiple doubling of smaller roles, in the repetitive patterns sometimes advocated by critics, can generate, or reinforce, a sense of a principal role beset by mechanically recurrent groups of enemies, or critics, or mockers, or (even) allies – with an effect (among many others) of reducing the focus of interpretation to a single major role. Conversely, an avoidance of doubling (or a play whose staging of roles makes doubling a negligible issue) can result in a sense of multiple agency, sometimes (in the world of the play) fruitfully cooperative, sometimes excitingly contingent and seemingly random. At another extreme, plays whose narrative and whose dramatic style requires constant doubling, without any obvious suggestion of recurrent groupings of roles, allow, given certain doubling options, the emergence of a sense of gradual process, at both individual and group levels, within the field of relationships and collective options. Moreover, advocates of doubling have often suggested, and Gamboa often suggests, that silent on-stage roles, in a particular scene or scenes, might be eliminated – that is, their actors might remain off-stage – with the effect, or even the purpose, of enabling doublings not otherwise possible; here I shall suggest, by contrast, that the silent presence of a role, and its actor, can contribute importantly, even decisively, to a proper understanding of the narrative and the emotional import of a play.

Doubling as a Necessity

Nobody doubts that Shakespeare's own theatre companies relied on the doubling of roles. If one considers merely the numbers of speaking roles in the plays, the limits are marked by *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, with sixteen, and *Richard III*, with sixty-four. These are early plays, and subsequent conditions of company organisation may not be applicable to their original conception and staging. In Shakespeare's mid-career *2 Henry IV* contains fifty speaking roles, *Twelfth Night* only twenty, *Othello* twenty-four. Among later plays, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* involve over fifty speaking roles, *The Tempest* just twenty. Such an extremely wide range may in itself put in question any theory positing a single (small) number of available and professionally qualified actors as the dramatic vehicle for each and every mature play. Gamboa excludes from consideration four early and two late plays – the three *Henry VI* dramas and *Titus Andronicus, Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* – on the grounds, it seems, of different arrangements for company organisation likely to have been operative at these periods; he might have also mentioned, given these particular omissions, the likelihood that these plays were jointly authored – yet the same could be said of *Timon of Athens*, while *Two Gentlemen* is surely early enough to reflect, also, different company and casting conditions.

The Swiss traveller Thomas Platter, who saw *Julius Caesar* at the Globe in 1599, mentioned its "15 personen"; since that play has fifty-one spoken roles, Platter is likely to have been referring to the number of actors on stage (as, in the scene of Caesar's assassination, they all are) (De Grazia and Wells 106). Some specific cases of doubling in early seventeenth-century plays are on record; this is not the case for any Shakespearean play, but the complexity of his story-lines (often involving "double plots") and the large number of small roles, in every play – roles appearing in only one or two scenes – makes doubling an undoubted prerequisite for any conception of original and early professional performances. Different issues in turn are raised under theatrical and cultural conditions where a large pool of competent and experienced performers is available and money is no object. Sometimes, and in some places, this has been the case in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (as it was occasionally in Britain in the nineteenth century); in these more recent times, also, many companies (though far from all) have been able to count upon a large and competent crew of supporting "backstage" staff – an issue which should not be neglected; more actors require more offstage resources, while a tightly-reduced cast needs tighter backstage organisation and stage managers with a good head for logistics (it's not clear to me, from Gamboa's suggestions, that his twelve-actor group would have the time and energy necessary for such responsibilities). Be this as it may, almost all the professional Shakespeare productions I have seen over the past sixty years have opted for some degree of doubling.

With amateur productions, different constraints apply. Sometimes few competent actors are available and doubling becomes desirable, even necessary. Sometimes there are good reasons for involving as many performers as possible; even here, financial limitations are likely to operate. It would be good if the increasing interest in such amateur and student Shakespeare productions were to focus on this issue.

Professional companies, obviously, have large financial interests at stake in Shakespearean performances, even where these (as in many European countries) receive state subsidy. Gamboa lays much emphasis on the economic advantages available for a company, of Shakespeare's time, maintaining the limit of twelve actors – the fewer they were the larger the profits available to each individual. Ellen Summers disagrees, claiming that the company was successful enough to have no financially compelling reason for multiple doubling – which, in her view, was maintained essentially because it was an old performing tradition (65). There seems room here for a more chronologically nuanced approach than any scholar has offered; but the evidence is likely to be recalcitrant, or simply absent.

In this whole area, one might usefully seek responses from actors, from audiences, and from directors who have enacted, watched and planned doublings. Such responses might touch upon sensitive points, since they involve decisions about, and the impact of, options which are not normally transparent to all the interested parties – above all, the perceptions by actors and directors of each other's abilities. Nonetheless, this approach would surely be worthwhile. Yet, to my knowledge, it has not been adopted to any salient degree in academic studies (Gamboa does usefully refer to some of his experiences as a director.)

The critical debate about doubling – it has in fact been relatively sporadic, for understandable reasons – has focussed, in material terms, upon questions about the size of Shakespeare's company; how many full-time members or "sharers", how many non-full-time members ("hired men", "apprentices"), how many "boys" and (importantly) of what ages and with what expectation of subsequent absorption into full company membership. Other material issues have also, rightly, been considered; how rapidly, upon what different types of stage, could an actor, leaving the stage, change costume (and/or make-up) and assume a different role (and, I would add, with what degree of help from off-stage non-actors)? Different issues in turn are raised in the area of what one might call performative psychology; how

capacious was the memory of an actor, how limitless his physical stamina? More elusively: how far does an actor gain, how far does an actor confer upon audiences, positive enjoyment by doubling – and whose enjoyment (or otherwise) counts most? And then, at a more structural level – here discussion becomes less "material" and more "thematic" – how might a playwright who was also a man of the theatre use doubling to imply or reinforce certain themes, certain patterns of action, certain piquancies of staged encounter? In turn – and here material and thematic considerations may be allied – can doubling between minor roles confer extra interest on "bit-parts"? among other possible advantages, in this area, for a company, one point should not be neglected; actors tend (in all ages) to read and study, first and perhaps only, their own scenes. Doubling, which gives an actor more scenes, offers greater chances for actors to grasp what, in a play overall, is actually going on.

Earlier Studies of Doubling

One very readable and provocative study of doubling, by Stephen Booth, argued forty years ago that the practice reflected Shakespeare's sense of "the unsettling but enriching effects to be had had from making an audience's two incompatible consciousnesses indivisible" (104).

Booth's preferred options were for doubling between roles in cases involving early deaths – Duncan doubling with Macduff, Julius Caesar with Octavius Caesar, Gaunt with Northumberland, Mamillius with Perdita. Each of these possibilities would, along with sheer feasibility and possible convenience, convey meaning – revenge, sustained alliance (Northumberland taking up Gaunt's animus against King Richard), or restoration (a son lost but a daughter, against all the odds, surviving). Booth also desiderated more complex possibilities; Mercutio with Paris and Prince Escalus (all related, though an audience is likely to discover this, if at all, only retrospectively); Camillo with Antigonus (both marry Paulina); or, Archidamus-Antigonus-Autolycus (alliteration? – it's often suggested that Autolycus might double with – no less than – Leontes); Antony and Dolabella (the issues here are interesting, but there are problems at the material level of timing); and, perhaps the critical favourite here, Posthumus and Cloten.

Another favourite with critics, Cordelia and Lear's Fool, has been often advocated, sometimes by critics with no special interest in doubling as such; it has also been opposed – partly on the grounds that Robert Armin (if he played the Fool, as in other plays of the period he did) would have been a weird Cordelia, and, conversely, would have refused to relinquish to a "boy-actor", playing Cordelia, his tailor-made Fool's role. Ralph Berry, among other sharp points in this area, remarks that "One cannot erect a multi-storey edifice [of critical interpretation] on the bald fact that two characters never meet on stage" (17).

Similarly, Berry sees the Posthumus-Cloten doubling idea as "at best heavy and didactic" (18) (I have seen it done, and it wasn't; but the production deployed just five actors for a textually complete performance of *Cymbeline*, not a circumstance likely to have been seen or envisaged by either Booth or Berry.) Of the much-cited doublings, in Peter Brook's 1970 RSC *Midsummer Night's Dream* production and subsequently, of Theseus with Oberon and Hippolyta with Titania, Berry observes that "What emerges … is a sense of the emotional tensions between the lead actors, in both roles: pre-marital, post-marital" (20). That is (I take it) the tensions are comparable – which doubling may emphasise – but distinct – which doubling may blur. In this same spirit Berry writes, "Doubling exploits likeness. What of unlikeness, that obstinate particularity which … is true of all Shakespearean roles?" (22). The thought seems congenial; yet "unlikeness" certainly, in Shakespeare's dramatic practice, did and does coexist with considerable amounts of doubling of one kind and another.

Amongst other specific critical suggestions, contributions by Alan Armstrong and, again, Ellen Summers deserve comment here. Armstrong notes a possible metatheatrical reference, in *Richard II,* to characters who have recently died (Bushy and Green) addressed to a newly-present character (Scrope), and suggests, quite plausibly in my view, both that doubling is involved here, and that such cross-reference, by or concerning one character, to another, may generally mark cases of doubling (similarly, in his view, the dead Mowbray, or Norfolk, referred to, as dead, first by the Bishop of Carlisle, may have doubled roles with Carlisle) (152). The two cases are interestingly different, involving, respectively, small and medium-sized roles; and certainly the role of Mowbray requires a strong actor whose abilities could be used effectively after he leaves the play at the end of Act 1. Summers, for her part, notes the recurrent appearances, in *Henry V,* of groups of three characters – three English traitors, three royal English brothers at Agincourt, three English soldiers whom the King meets by night, and three "regional" Captains, Fluellen, Jamy and MacMorris (74). Doubling here, I would agree, seems likely; its effects would bear reflection. Does King Henry effectively work to unify such "threesomes" into a coherent "band of brothers"? Do they, rather, serve to highlight in Henry a dominant and even overbearing monopoly of effective agency? One would like to know more about doubling options amongst the play's French roles, and between them and the English.

Gamboa's Proposals

Gamboa's own study, far more voluminous than anything I have cited, considers all these issues, material and psychological, theatrically collective and authorially distinctive. In his seven main chapters he offers detailed discussion of doublings that are possible, probable or desirable in five plays; three comedies, *Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night* and *The Winter's Tale,* and two tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello.* He offers, as I have said, doublings for twenty-seven other plays in an Appendix. As controlling principles for doubling he suggests two: "characters doubled by a single actor cannot meet onstage", and "a performance will indicate changes of person by changes of costume". He emphasises that "Though I expect that Shakespeare's historical company regularly put on plays with nine to twelve actors speaking all or most of the lines, I cannot prove it" (19).

Gamboa's modesty about proof is, as can be seen by now, par for the course, given a general lack of hard evidence. The challenges of his work are vested in the small number of actors for which he argues, in the small number of principles (positive or negative) on the basis of which he relies, and in the theatrical practices (above all concerning the ages and uses of "boy-actors") which, given independent supporting arguments, he sees as consistent with his other claims. It is worth stressing what Gamboa (unlike some others) does not claim; he sets no lower time-limits for offstage costume changes; he does not seek to avoid any doublings, whatever the size of the roles they may involve, which may be, in his terms, practically possible; and he sets no limits on the memory of Shakespeare's actors, nor on their stamina (one notes his claim that a performance of a "complete text" of *Hamlet* needs no more than nine actors).

Above all, he refuses to distinguish, within his 12-actor hypothesis, between the powers, and the doubling availabilities, of adult male actors and what it has been customary to regard as boys or apprentices habitually performing (as has usually though not always been understood) all and only female roles. He also overrides distinctions, traditional amongst theatre historians, between "sharers", "hired men" and "apprentices". For him one should conceive of Shakespeare's company as including a number of "young adult male actors", aged between about thirteen and about twenty-five, capable of playing, in any one play, both female and young male roles. This would enable a number of doublings not always considered feasible: Ophelia with Osric; Maria with Sebastian; in

Cymbeline, the Queen with Iachimo. Such proposals resonate to some extent with recent advocacy of "gender-blind" casting, and they may divide responses along similar lines. I should perhaps say, while claiming no expertise in early English theatre history, that Gamboa's proposals in this area seem to me fascinating and even plausible, whatever their bearing on doubling issues.

I have already indicated some of the positive advantages which Gamboa claims for a widespread and thorough-going practice of role-doubling in Shakespeare's plays. He sees it as both in keeping with and offering enhancement for a "fundamental paradox" that actors are and are not the roles that they play. For him it allows "thematic patterning and resonance" "through the unifying agency of a single actor" – for example, one playing both Polonius and the First Gravedigger (this doubling was once more popular than it is nowadays, and the "Gravedigger" role may have been assigned to an actor regularly playing Fools or clowns). Doubling allows "heroes to re-emerge as villains, men to become women, and fools to become wise" (4). Would the Polonius – Gravedigger doubling be a case here? If so, which way round? – For myself I doubt whether the "hero-villain" option applies, either way, to many of the plays; men becoming women, and vice versa, on the other hand, is commonplace within single roles, and its effect might be enhanced, or might be undermined, by more widespread adoption across roles – again, one would like evidence from performers and audiences here.

Doublings Observed

I'll move on, therefore, to present a few of my own experiences as an audience member, before closing with discussion of my experiences and reflections, around doubling, as a Shakespearean director. In 1973 I attended a late revival of Peter Brook's *Dream*; I can vouch for the accuracy of Stephen Booth's perception that the doublings of Theseus-Oberon and Hippolyta-Titania worked not only feasibly but superbly. Booth dwells on the moment – and it is no more than a moment, indeed in clock time much less – in Act 4 scene 1 when the exit of the fairy couple is followed, after a mere horn-call, by an entrance for the Athenian royal pair; as Booth says, the actors carried this off with exuberant and smiling self-confidence. Any change of costume could only be of the most minimal (head-gear?). In a sense this case supports Gamboa's view that doubling hypotheses need allocate no particular length of time to changes of costume; on the other hand it perhaps qualifies a little his actual requirement for costume change between different roles sustained by a single actor, for the "new" identities of Theseus and Hippolyta were, in my viewing, established not by costume but by inescapable performative bravura – one knew that something wonderful had been carried off and then one realised what that wonderful thing was.

A few years later the John Barton RSC production of Richard II, most famous (in this area) not for doubling but for alternation of roles – Richard and Bolingbroke were played, alternatingly in different shows, by Richard Pasco and Ian Richardson – offered, also, a notable small role-large role doubling; the Bolingbroke actor (whichever) played, also, the Groom who, in Act 5 scene 5, visits the imprisoned King. I continue with the account given by Stanley Wells:

> The groom threw back his hood and revealed himself as Bolingbroke in disguise …. The director seemed intent on suggesting a recognition on Bolingbroke's part that both he and Richard have been the playthings of fortune … their shared experience of the hollowness of the kingly crown draws them together more powerfully than their former rivalry sets them apart …. It was a theatrically impressive moment … I confess all the same that I found it strained … in the theatre we could not help identifying the actor as Bolingbroke. The confrontation seemed to demand an explanation that was not provided by the dialogue. (79–80)

This case puts some pressure on Gamboa's insistence that doubling be accompanied and to some extent indicated by costume-change. How would Gamboa handle the distinction between a Feste, or a Duke Vincentio, in a friar's disguise, and a doubling, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, between, say, Antonio or Conrad and Friar Francis? Wells rightly stresses the audience's awareness of the Groom as, simply, Bolingbroke; that is, we did not suppose ourselves to be watching a case of doubling. In Gamboa's casting chart for the play the role of the Groom is doubled with that of Queen Isabel – a comparable case, perhaps, of ambiguous comfort offered to the King. Wells's perception of "shared experience" and convergent relationship between former and present Kings may place, in fact, too much emphasis on comfort, as against irony or mockery. At all events, the effect of the moment, which was very powerful, could not be separated from the "linkage" between the two leading roles of the play already established, in this production, by the alternation of actors. Gamboa does not consider possibilities, in Shakespeare's company, for such alternation – it has been practised several times in more recent theatrical history, most famously between Gielgud and Olivier, in a single production, as Romeo and Mercutio at the London New Theatre in 1935. Alternation, at least for actors, arguably offers many of the advantages claimed by Gamboa and others for doubling.

In 1979 I saw a touring production of *Cymbeline* staged by the company Shared Experience (one notes Wells's use of the phrase, just quoted). Only five actors enacted a complete text. The doublings were as follows: Cymbeline-Iachimo; Imogen-Cornelius; Posthumus-Cloten-Belarius (a multiple role of well over one thousand lines); Queen-Philario-Cadwal-Philharmonus; Pisanio-Polydore-Lucius. Other roles were played by "all". Moreover, while a clear playing area (three-sided) was marked out, all actors, when not enacting their several roles, remained visible, on benches placed to the sides, as watchers of the stage action which was also being watched by the rest of us in the audience. The result was, for me, an immensely fruitful sense of each role as absorbing, in some measure, the play's events in their narrative sequence and through the relationships in which that sequence consists – in some measure but never adequately, for their receptive and reflective powers necessarily alternated with their commitment, while in their onstage roles, to agency and to its inevitable attendant levels of relative blindness to the agencies of others. In a play with a narrative as complex as that of *Cymbeline*, this effect was, for me, thought-provoking and revealing.

At a more performative level, while the specific doublings allowed an avoidance, to a remarkable extent, throughout most of the play, of "encounters" between roles played by a single actor, such encounters were, predictably, endemic during the play's remarkable final scene of multiple mutual revelation. Here, then, Cymbeline (the actor John Dicks) addressed, in anger and scorn, (the actor John Dicks as) Iachimo; and Posthumus the King's son-in-law shared the body of the actor Raad Rawi with Belarius, secret guardian of the Kings' two sons. The effects were not in the least confusing; for the roles had been established, long since, in their several identities for an audience by linguistic style, bodily gesture, and above all by narrative coherence. No costume changes were needed, and very few were deployed. All this, certainly, might not work so well in other Shakespearean plays.

Problems and Possibilities – Towards a Critique of Gamboa

As an audience member, I was conscious that the *Cymbeline* production placed immense strain on its five actors' powers of memory. No doubt this is just something that actors do; but one wonders how a slightly larger group of actors, on Gamboa's hypotheses, would cope, if asked to sustain, not only doubled roles in a single play, but such doublings across perhaps ten plays (in the kind of repertory system the Shakespearean company probably sought to maintain) all

at once. There will surely have been illnesses; there seem to have been no regular understudies. Not every actor will have been a competent singer or instrumentalist, and the incidence of roles requiring such skills is a constraint upon doubling which Gamboa does not negotiate in any detail. Moreover, twelve actors represent a small group on the basis of which to stage armies (as in most English and Roman Histories) or citizen bodies (as in *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*). For these and other reasons – to cut to the chase – I would myself see Gamboa's fascinating study as offering grounds, on the one hand, for a newly flexible approach to Shakespearean doublings, especially those involving gender-difference; while, on the other hand, underestimating the value, for many distinguishable purposes, in the staging of these plays, of a company larger than twelve performers.

Here I will briefly place some stress on a specific principle used by Gamboa, Booth and others: that involving "early deaths". I have already noted Booth's suggestions here, and considered their possible effects. But in *King John* three deaths, each before or soon after midway – Austria, Eleanor and Constance – seem to allow no specially significant subsequent doublings; the same seems to me to be true for the death of Cornwall in *King Lear.* In *Richard III* the role of Edward IV can usefully double with that of Richmond – but the actor will still be offstage for most of the play. In *King John* such "late-arriving" major characters as Pandulph and Hubert allow no significant doubling with earlier departing roles (the debate about whether "Hubert" is in fact also the "Citizen of Angers" rather underlines this point).

My reason for stressing such cases is this: there are important dramatic advantages in a character's perceived absence from the stage. This is the obverse of my earlier point concerning the importance of an actor's extended stage presence. Actors, no doubt, need breaks, especially in leading roles (and it's often noted that tragic Fourth Acts tend to provide such breaks for their protagonists). But audiences also need breaks, if not from actors, then from their roles. I think it's very helpful for Posthumus not to be seen for two whole Acts – and this effect is surely enhanced if the actor of the role, also, is not seen; similarly, I would judge, with Leontes. Even with smaller roles such a notion has some force; in *Antony and Cleopatra* the roles of Pompey and Lepidus, important for the first half of the play, thereafter vanish from the stage and will certainly be doubled – but, I suggest, not at once; the absence of the characters, as political forces, needs to be carefully registered by an audience, since it is the force driving Antony and Caesar into seemingly inescapable mutual confrontation. Similarly, "late arrivals" add more novelty in tone and energy if they have indeed not been seen before – one thinks of Holofernes and Nathaniel, and in *1 Henry IV* of Glendower and Mortimer, or Douglas and Vernon (though perhaps not of all four of them).

A larger point, in connection with the use of "early deaths" as a criterion for hypotheses about doubling, is this: some of Shakespeare's plays seem to have accepted, with regard to their narrative ordering, some constraints from "real history", or of what was presented as such by Shakespeare's sources. Such constraints, whether or not they enable doubling, clearly involve considerations of a quite different nature. Gamboa, who doesn't pursue such considerations, offers, in my view, few new persuasive suggestions concerning English or Roman History plays (five of which are, by his self-imposed remit, excluded). Two cases suggest some of the factors at issue here. Julius Caesar must die at or near the mid-point of the play bearing his name, since Shakespeare's play is concerned as much, or more, with the impact of his death as with the motives of his killers. Coriolanus, by contrast, must survive all his battles, and so must all his enemies and his tormentors (who include his supporters). Hence, in the earlier play, many doublings are possible – given the play's bipartite structure – while none is, in isolation, necessary; in the later play, I would say, no doubling between any significant role is even possible, and the effect of the continuing presence of all characters is crucial and determinative for the play's effect.

By contrast with these two plays, one finds, in the co-authored *Titus Andronicus* and *1 Henry VI,* historical fantasies, in which the playwrights could and did arrange for multiple deaths with great freedom; still, while these plays certainly require much doubling, no particular options suggest themselves with any clarity or theatrical advantage – nor do the plays' plots avoid a suggestion of randomness and inconsequence. Two different cases again appear in *Macbeth* and *Antony and Cleopatra.* Here Duncan's early death allows a "significant" doubling of the role, while such a doubling of Antony's role, enabled if not enforced by the extent of stage time (a quarter of the play) remaining after his death, nonetheless, in my view, lacks merit; in any case arguments, around these plays, in the area of doubling need to acknowledge the priority, in terms of dramatic structure and effect, of quite different factors. Most plays based on the subject-matter of *Antony and Cleopatra* employ smaller casts and start, in historical terms, much later; as Shakespeare's choice here has vast effects on his presentation of theme and character, so it would be limiting to consider it chiefly in terms of the options for doubling which it offers. Similarly, in *Macbeth,* a Duncan surviving and reigning up to the midpoint of a hypothetical play would have effects, upon the presentation of Macbeth and of Scottish society, far outreaching the issue of doublings which might be, by such a different dramatic option, enabled or precluded.

The case of *Hamlet,* where the storyline had been often and variously dramatised before what we have as Shakespeare's treatment, is also illuminating, particularly in view of Gamboa's suggestion that as few as nine actors can manage the play (in any textual version). Certainly the play is full of pairs (as *Henry V* is full of trios) which can double with each other – Barnardo and Francisco, Voltemand and Cornelius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two Gravediggers, Osric and the Lord. It also offers, among its larger roles, doubling options of some possible significance – Ghost with Player King (or Claudius?), Polonius with First Gravedigger, Rosencrantz (say) with Fortinbras. Only Hamlet, Gertrude and Horatio cannot double. Suppose all or most of these options were adopted; my sense is that the play would then be likely to communicate a sense of haunting, of oppression both political and emotional, and ultimately of determinism. It would become, in fact, more like *Macbeth* – and more like its acknowledged modern successors, *Waiting for Godot* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*; more like such plays than it in fact is.

In my view there are dangers in attempts to assimilate, to such minor modern masterpieces as these, the precursor which it is their enterprise and wager to transform and rewrite. Still, such conceptions of Shakespeare's play may attract some more than others, or anyone at some times more than other times. Schools of thematic, of imagistic, and of structural criticism have tended to acclimatise us to the habit of construing sequences of dramatic events in terms of repeated topics, recurrent metaphors, and energies balanced around irresoluble ambiguities. Such construals may, by their nature, do less than justice to the commitment of Shakespearean drama to the presentation of events, of causal connections, of surprising transformations, and of one-sided but irreversible outcomes. *Hamlet*, more explicitly than most plays, invites attention to "purposes mistook/Fallen on the inventors' heads".

Now certainly, and by contrast, Macbeth, in his tragedy, ratifies a different experience, of temporal sequence as reduced to empty "tomorrows". Antony, for his part, approaches suicide with the sense that, Cleopatra once (supposedly) dead, "All length is torture" and that "all labour/ Mars what it does". Shakespearean drama is amply capable of envisaging a condition in which causal logic and temporal sequence are obscured, abandoned or annihilated. Indeed the act, and the prevailing cultural circumstances, of theatrical performance can themselves seem to embody just such a condition. So much happens – people die – given enough doubling no death need be final – in the end everyone stays alive (and they all take a curtain-call); was anything ever done? These

are major issues, in fact daunting issues, for critical interpretation. It seems to me unwise for them to be arbitrated, whether in intention or in practice, through hypotheses in a field as uncertain as that of Shakespearean doubling.

Doubling – a Director's Reflections

It was in connection with my production of *Macbeth* that I came to feel the force of such a possible theatrical condition – the condition of "nothing happening"; to feel it and, at least in subsequent productions, to resist it. I had opted, for *Macbeth,* to stage Charles Marowitz's version; this contains not only three Witches but three Macbeths, and its Lady Macbeth is in league with the Witches to the point where she operates as one of them. The relatively independent identities of the remaining roles – Duncan and Banquo, Macduff and Malcolm – did not banish, in my production, a sense of immense over-determination; the three Macbeths argued each other to a standstill while the forces of darkness drove events towards a repetitive and nihilistic sense of evil. This, of course, is a sense often communicated to some extent by productions of Shakespeare's full text with few or no doublings. It was a sense that, in choosing *King Lear* for a second Shakespearean production, I hoped to avoid.

Insofar as I succeeded, the outcome was, I take it, due to the nature of the play far more than to any features of my own production. As far as doubling issues are concerned, *King Lear* offers, I believe, little of interest. Gamboa's chart, while accepting the Cordelia-Fool option, doubles only two named characters, Burgundy-Edmund and France-Edgar. (I think the reverse option might be less morally deterministic.) The point – at least one of the points – about this overwhelming tragedy is that a lot happens. For many critics, too much happens – over-complicated double-plotting, loose ends of causality, and certainly plenty of purposes mistook. At the end some things will never be the same. The play begins with three feisty young women very much alive and ends with three exhausted men on an otherwise bare stage looking, or trying not to look, at their corpses and at the corpse of their father. Nobody intended this. Doubling seems counter-productive, thematically supererogatory, and, in terms of performative virtuosity, emptily ostentatious and self-serving.

For *Antony and Cleopatra* I was able to find just sixteen student actors willing and competent (and much more) to take part. The leading roles, it's often been noted, are both glamorous and in many ways, for actors, invidious; and doublings, completely necessary, are possible in an almost endless variety of ways. Few professional productions that I have seen have used more than twenty actors; but, for casting this play, the difference between twenty and sixteen is huge. In any case, given the number of extremely brief roles, it was important to keep everyone interested, and aware of the storyline, throughout the six-week rehearsal period. I began with an awareness that certain roles could not, or should not, be doubled; certainly Antony and Cleopatra, Caesar and Enobarbus, but also Agrippa and Maecenas, Charmian and Iras (Gamboa's chart doubles all the roles in the play.) I also opted for doublings of Lepidus with Eros and of Octavia with Dolabella (thus a female with a male role). I should note that the cast included seven male and nine female actors.

One principle guiding me was this: the play is obsessed, even more obviously than *Henry V*, with groups of three characters – three leads (the titular lovers and Caesar), Cleopatra and two attendant women, Caesar and two aides. Antony by contrast has many followers – and loses almost all of them. An audience needs to see these things; to see triads, to see sudden solitude. Another principle was this: four roles, relatively or absolutely short in terms of spoken lines, require, on the other hand, extended times of presence on stage. Maecenas and Iras, above all, are silent (only slightly less so are Charmian and Agrippa) for long scenes, and are set on stage for short scenes in which they say little or nothing.

Why, then, are they there? In order (I would say) to register, and to be seen to register, the rhetoric, the manoeuvres, and the ultimate purposes of their "principals", Caesar and Cleopatra.

My point is not that Maecenas or Iras "undercuts" or effectively queries the policy of Caesar or the mood-swings of Cleopatra. Rather, by their presence they draw an audience's attention to these things – policy and mood – for what they are; they expose them to reflection. Such reflection may in turn become critical, whether for them or for others. It may also become supportive; this is clearly the case with Iras, whose loyalty to Cleopatra reaches the point of sacrifice. Such largely-silent characters, if undoubled, can and do also carry the weight of an important feature of the play's narrative – which I might call "contagion", negative and positive; Antony gains and then loses friends, Cleopatra commands hearts, Caesar sways wills. Thus, while Antony's followers mostly become Caesar's subjects (an effect well noted, in connection with doubling of roles, by Summers), some characters become prominent by, as it were, going the other way. Eros, from mere interlocution with Enobarbus, emerges as Antony's closest friend – himself contagious in that his suicide triggers Antony's attempt. Dolabella, most notably, is led, from his initial tone with Cleopatra of casual flirtation, into positive alliance with her purposes, and treachery to those of Caesar. My chosen doublings, which claimed no visible merits beyond mechanical possibility, might allow a sense that "Lepidus", rather brutally dismissed by Caesar, could appropriately re-emerge, as "Eros", in lasting closeness to Antony; and that Octavia, Caesar's sister and diplomatic tool, might, as "Dolabella", become a tool turning in his hand.

Troilus and Cressida, among my four Shakespeare productions, involves, for casting and doubling, very different issues from *Antony and Cleopatra.* On Gamboa's estimate the play deploys thirty speaking roles; my production, again with students, took place at the end of a summer term – that's to say, after the end of examinations – and the auditions produced thirty castable actors (Again at least half were female, and many of these, in my production, played Trojans.) But, for Shakespeare's company, using far fewer than thirty actors and possibly fewer than fifteen, the play will have caused unusual problems – I would say, problems unique in the whole oeuvre. Act 4 scene 5 – that is (since enumerations of scenes differ in different editions) the single long scene, as I take it to be, running from Ajax's armed appearance for single combat up until the general clearing of the stage after Greek and Trojan leaders encounter each other in conversation – this scene most clearly focuses these problems.

Seven Greeks enter (with "a trumpeter"); next Diomedes arrives in the Greek camp, with Cressida; as they leave, five Trojans arrive (the Folio text names only four, but omits Troilus, who speaks later in the scene); soon Diomedes returns. This seems to amount to at least fourteen actors. Can Cressida double? Surely not – but technically she can do so, just about, with the small role of Helenus. Are all the Greeks needed on stage? Certainly; this is one of the play's decisive moments, with Achilles and Patroclus leaving their tent behind and joining, at least numerically, the core group of five "loyal" Greek "leaders" (which includes both the young Diomedes and the mainly silent Menelaus) to confront a sizeable party of Trojans. Are all the Trojans needed? Helenus says nothing, which might support the idea (surely a weird idea) of the role's doubling with that of Cressida; and Paris says nothing. But, without Paris and without Helenus, the Trojans, reduced to Hector and Troilus (Aeneas being active as an umpire of the duel), are seriously deficient in numerical terms as they confront the Greeks. Would this matter? Yes; the play has moved, from the staging of four small and largely distinct groups – Trojan lovers, Greek leaders, Greek absentees, and the Trojan royal family – towards this scene, where all these groups encounter, in formal duel, in free conversation, and eventually in verbal violence. This, if anything, is what happens in *Troilus and Cressida* – or rather, it is the beginning of many things that now and hereafter begin to happen at great speed.

Moreover, Act 4 scene 5, full of leading named and speaking characters, still lacks two of the play's major roles, Pandarus and Thersites. Each of them can double – just about (significant here might be the relative silence of the role of Menelaus, though, as in *Antony and Cleopatra*, his stage presence as observer seems valuable, since after all the war is all about him and his former wife). Is it helpful, to the play, if either Pandarus or Thersites double? Gamboa assigns Thersites a doubling with Cassandra; this would leave the actor offstage for seven scenes, while still requiring a quick costume change after Cassandra's second scene. He doubles Pandarus with Menelaus; this option would be much easier for the actor if there were an interval in performance after Act 3 scene 2. In modern productions this is often the case, but its various advantages fail to demonstrate that it would have been the case, or even conceivable, in Shakespearean productions.

An important rider here is this; Gamboa's doubling chart takes Patroclus offstage early in Act 4 scene 5 (he suggests that the actor leaves along with Cressida and, presumably, Diomedes – the timing of Cressida's exit has in itself been seen as controversial on both textual and theatrical grounds). To me it seems vital, on the other hand, for a sense of what, in the action of the play, is at stake for Patroclus and for Achilles and for their relationship, that Patroclus should be present on stage until the end of the scene; so that he may see, and consider, and remain movingly silent in the face of, Achilles' homoerotic love-hatred, as it is eventually and explosively aroused towards and against Hector. Once again; silent presence is crucial, and doublings serving mere convenience, or even hypotheses of financial convenience and limitation, should not unthinkingly be given the preference against it.

Thus, finally, in my view, doubling is, among many factors determining or stimulating Shakespearean dramaturgy, one factor, with its own advantages, its own limitations, and its own claims, in the assessment of that dramaturgy, for consideration along with many other factors. I have tried to foreground, on the basis of my experience as audience and as director, the factor of what I have called silent stage presence. Concern for the visibility of such presence would, in my view, lead to an acceptance of the value, for a hypothetical reconstruction of Shakespeare's options, of a group somewhat larger than twelve in number. (For *Troilus and Cressida,* leaving aside issues of individual performing skills, I would have been happy to work with the sixteen actors available to me for *Antony and Cleopatra.*) Such a larger group would, also, accommodate the important effects noted by me and by other critics and observers; individual uniqueness, cumulative action involving increasing numbers of participants, and, with both of these, the phenomenon, within a political and personal situation – the kind of situation central to all Shakespeare's historical dramas – of, at both individual and group levels. a gradual change of allegiance.

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Tanja Cummings' *Line 41*: A Reflection

Bałuty would certainly have a good chance in a competition for the ugliest and most dangerous district of Łódź, begins a newspaper review of a new book, *Zła dzielnica* (Bad neighborhood), by Tomasz Włodkowski. I smiled. I started to read the book, which was a good time to revisit German filmmaker Tanja Cummings' film, *Line 41*, about the Łódź (or Litzmannstadt) Ghetto.

Bałuty is the old ghetto area. I lived there for more than five years. I also happen to be Jewish. The Jewish ghosts sought me out, making themselves known, as I gained a foothold in my new home, Łódź, often deemed the runt of big-city Poland. Late-night screams – "*Kurwa!*" – and drunken singing and breaking glass were part of the atmosphere. Yet we loved Bałuty. This was part of our youth. For many of us, a sometimes unpredictable group of foreign misfits, this was our first venture into teaching, landing at the steps of the University of Łódź. Most of the international instructors were housed in what was called the roughest part of town, gray buildings dotting the landscape, bruised and battered, yet framed in bucolic splendor. Thickets of green had a way of cradling decrepit structures. And I heard the whispers – ghetto, ghetto, Jewish ghetto.

Włodkowski starts his tale, recalling the release of the taste and smell of red Oranżada, an old Polish soft drink enjoyed during the Communist era. He writes the flavors, sweet, sometimes sour, fought a fierce struggle with each other to come to an agreement and turn into a memory that continues to this day. It's a poignant metaphor that touches on my years in Bałuty. Such struggles resonate through Cummings' *Line 41*. The tragedy and distinct beauty of the old ghetto area is not easy to articulate, but Cummings does it with precision and skill. Her film is a must-see for anyone interested in the Łódź Ghetto, and in trying to understand this dark chapter in humanity.

"My God, how could they do this?" exclaims Jens-Jürgen Ventzki in the film, as he walks through an old Gestapo prison site where Polish inmates were locked up, and the facility was set on fire, just before the Red Army entered Łódź. Ventzki's father, Werner, was a Hitler career man, and the Nazi mayor of the city during the German occupation. "This is incomprehensible," the son says, when he is shown the so-called Gypsy Camp, which was a separate part of the Łódź Ghetto. In January, 1942, those who did not succumb to the horrific conditions of the Gypsy Camp were transported to the Chełmno (or Kulmhof) death camp, the first Nazi extermination site. Tens of thousands of Jewish people were murdered at Chełmno, along with some 5,000 Roma and Sinti

from the Gypsy Camp. "How could normal people live in this parallel world? With these disparate worlds that existed simultaneously?" Ventzki notes the German people of Litzmannstadt, as Łódź was formally called in the war years, generally enjoyed their Sunday strolls and visits to the zoo while the Nazi screws were tightened in the Łódź Ghetto. Ventzki sums up the hard truth about his father, who was also a loving and dedicated parent, which makes it all the more difficult to take in. "It was his intention, his will. And his will was done." The Nazi ideology was pushed with vigor and pride under the elder Ventzki's leadership. Without question, it's an enormous weight for a son to bear. To his credit, the son is upfront and open about his father.

"One is shattered to realize that one's own father lied without restraint…," Ventzki continues. "But morally, this is a tremendous blow. To hear all the things he denied. He claimed to have never been in the ghetto. Which is a lie. He knew and supported everything."

Line 41, released in 2015, takes its name from the tram that travelled through the ghetto, connecting one part of the city to another. "I came to Łódź to try to understand what happened here," Cummings narrates. "But the tram remains a mystery," she adds, as an old tram rumbles into the night. "It embodies a curse of indifference to me. Mechanical. Thoughtlessness. Nothing holds it back. People watch, look away and allow crimes to happen…" Ventzki sits with Cummings, sharing the research on his father, trying to understand as well.

"Look, this is how the buildings looked like during the ghetto times," declares Natan Grossmann, an eighty-something Jewish ghetto survivor, as he walks down a street in Bałuty. "Nothing has changed here." A rough edge outlines Bałuty, but it's also a jewel for a photographer's eye, and Cummings' film captures the character of this district, a raw and genuine find, yet beloved and defended by its residents. As Grossmann located his former ghetto residence and workplace, he shares his story. His father died – or was killed – in police custody; his older brother disappeared. Then his mother died September 16, 1942. "Then I was all alone." He was fifteen. As with Ventzki, Grossmann has his struggles. "Later on I realised that I am to blame for her death," he tells Cummings, in the Ventzki home, in Austria. "I ate her food. When I came home I told her: 'Mama, I am hungry.'" The two men meet. They console each other; they become friends.

"I was robbed of a few slices of bread….," the film quotes an unknown youth in the ghetto. The young person's diary was found in Auschwitz. "In our situation it is not absurd to liken the disappearance of bread with desperation. As both could be deadly to us… The most obvious sign of our psychic degradation is: People react to the loss of a bit of bread and the death of their own father with the same amount of grief." The youth dreamed of being able to tell humanity what had happened in the ghetto. "But will I be able to?" Cummings' *Line 41* ensures the young diarist's voice is heard.

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Café Zelig: A Seniors' Hangout and a Whole Lot of History

When German filmmaker Tanja Cummings learned about a place Natan Grossmann frequented for a cup of coffee and a bit of socialising, it was only a matter of time before a new documentary film idea began to click into gear. Grossmann, the adorable and sometimes mischievous Łódź Ghetto survivor in Cummings' film *Line 41*, is a regular at Café Zelig, a weekly gathering spot of Holocaust survivors in Munich, many of whom originally came from Poland. Thus, the film *Café Zelig* came into being. Cummings hadn't intended to make another Holocaust film. She simply listened and followed a trail of conversations. An incredible community opened up before her eyes.

The film project, no doubt, came with challenges. "Coming into a room with a lot of Holocaust survivors, I knew each of them had a story," Cummings said in an interview. She added, "Of course, it was difficult to approach each of them without knowing already some details." It took a few months to get to know the men and women, who were well into their eighties and nineties, and then to decide who might open up more with their life stories. "For some, one had the feeling it would be better not to ask them any questions…. I proceeded over the months how to be sensitive about each of them."

A touchy issue is the whys and wherefores these Jewish people ended up living in what was the epicenter of Hitler's Nazi machine, Munich. Each story, Cummings learned, is a fascinating narrative riding the currents of fate, and where one might land. "Very often it was just by coincidence," she explained, "or because they just ended up there for certain reasons, which weren't really of their decision. This has to do with the post-war era, what happened to those survivors."

After the Second World War, an American zone was in the German state of Bavaria, which includes Munich. "Many had to move through Germany because they had the DP camps there," Cummings said. The Jewish refugees, many of whom had lost their entire families during the war, often had plans to move on to the United States or Canada, or to what soon would become Israel, but plans did not always go as intended. Some people were simply too ill to move on.

Take the story of Natan Grossmann, for instance. First, he returned to Łódź to try to learn something about the fate of his older brother; he decided to go to Israel, or what was then the British Mandate for Palestine, a journey that took him through a displaced persons camp in Bavaria, then

to Italy, and a ship that sailed to his final destination. "Over the years, he became sick," Cummings said, "and it was difficult to find medical help in Israel. And the doctors told him the only people that can help you are the Germans." Grossmann suffered from the effects of serious frostbite, as did many German soldiers fighting in harsh winter conditions in the Soviet Union during the war. German physicians had the medical know-how to deal with such ailments. "So this is the reason why Natan came to Germany. It was just a coincidence, and because he met Ute, his wife now, and he had to decide, either I marry this German woman or I go to Israel, but both things were not possible."

Among many Holocaust survivors, there were hostilities directed toward Germans, and Grossmann faced criticism, especially in those early post-war years, well into the 1960s. "Some of his old friends from the kibbutz," Cummings noted, "they couldn't understand why he stayed in Germany, the land of the perpetrators, and then marrying a German woman. For some, it was really difficult to understand… They would criticise him for this, which hurt him, I think, it hurt him... he didn't understand it."

There is a powerful scene in *Café Zelig* when one Holocaust survivor, Salo Wolf, who endured the nightmare of one Nazi camp after another, simply cannot bear to listen to a fellow survivor, Henry Rotmensch, give a talk about the Buchenwald death camp. Wolf stands up and leaves. He tries to be respectful, but he simply doesn't see the point of hearing about it yet again. He was imprisoned at this ghetto and that camp, he recounts in the film. What more is there to discuss? Obviously, there are different opinions – sometimes clashing opinions – when it comes to remembering. Wolf, curiously, also ended up in Munich because of love.

"The story with Salo is that after the war, he emigrated to the United States, to I think New York, and he built up a factory there, and he was quite successful," Cummings said. After the war – "I think in the fifties," she noted – Wolf, originally from Bielsko-Biała, Poland, made a trip to Munich "just for bureaucratic reasons… to pick some important documents up." He intended to be in Munich a few days or so. "Then he met a young lady who was from Vienna originally, Jewish Austrian lady, who had survived with her parents in Shanghai, and … he decided, I must marry this girl." The new plan was to marry her and return to his business in the U.S. Her parents, however, weren't overly eager to go along with that. "They told him, 'You know, we survived the war, and for us, it's impossible for you to take away our daughter to the United States. We only give you permission to marry her if you stay in Munich.'" Another "specific story," as Cummings called it, "and very serious."

In one case, the filmmaker recalled, she was bluntly asked – told – please don't ask about *that*. As part of her research for *Line 41*, Cummings met with a Holocaust survivor originally from Poland. Prior to the scheduled interview, the man's wife and son "specifically asked me, 'Please, do not ask any question regarding why did you decide to live in Germany, in Munich.' So this was something I was to leave out, a question like: How did you end up in Germany? why? how's this possible? – one having survived the Łódź Ghetto – how is it possible to decide to move to the land of the perpetrators? and stay there, and raise a family there, which he did. His wife is actually from Israel, so he didn't meet her in Germany…, but he specifically, from Munich, travelled to Israel, to find a wife."

Complicating this further, Cummings said, is the haunting question surrounding one's German colleagues. "It must have been troubling to be amongst them and always having in mind that maybe their father, or this colleague himself, was a soldier in the war, and who knows what this guy had done in the East, or his family. So, of course, this question is always, was always, or still is, troubling to the children of those Holocaust survivors." Growing up "with this burden," Cummings

went on, has left many children and grandchildren asking themselves: Why are we in Germany? "And, actually, there's quite a number of, now, grandchildren of Holocaust survivors who go to school in Germany, and decide to leave. They finish high school and they leave Germany because, for them, it's much more difficult to stay."

One day, in preparation for *Line 41*, Cummings arranged a meeting between Andrea Löw, a renowned German scholar on the Łódź Ghetto, and two ghetto survivors living in Munich, Grossmann and another man. "This was a tough meeting somehow," Cummings said, and, for both her and Löw, "was really strange to us." These two survivors from Poland, Cummings explained, talked with "such a passionate and sometimes almost violent way, and… so vividly describing scenes, and it was clear to them they had a, at that moment, had a very deep, like a deep-rooted bad feeling about Polish people," adding "one was really, almost shocked." When the conversation turned to "the German perpetrators," the two men "were somehow soft about the Germans," she said, "portraying the Germans as the not-so-bad guys, but the worst people were the Polish people."

"This outburst of hatred one could also say" made it even more confusing because, as Cummings pointed out, Grossmann can be very gracious and warm-hearted towards Poles. In *Café Zelig*, Grossmann is firm in his praise for Poles: "The Poles were the only people in Eastern Europe… It's important what I'm saying!... In World War II, the Poles and the Czechs were the only people in Eastern Europe who fought against these beasts" – the German occupiers.

In a conversation after that meeting with Löw, the other man's son suspected that in the pre-war days the two Holocaust survivors "must have experienced anti-Semitic outbursts," Cummings said, "scenes probably ingrained into their minds when they were small children," and not everyone was good-hearted during the occupation. Decades of living in Germany might have also impacted observations. "Another interesting explanation…, Okay, they have to be somehow soft towards Germans in order for them to explain why they are actually living in Germany." One thing was, and is, clear. "It's complicated," she affirmed.

In *Café Zelig*, we meet Benjamin Rosendahl, the son of Theresia Rosendahl, who, as a baby, was hidden in a convent in Sosnowiec, Poland. "He's actually an example of a young man, finishing high school in Bavaria, in Munich, and then leaving," Cummings said. "He lives in Israel now. So, for him, you also see it, you have the feeling this story of his mother and grandparents, it's very present with them every day." There is a scene when he walks through the crowds at Marienplatz, the old town square in Munich. One can discern there is unease. The ghosts of the past are never far off.

It is this understanding Cummings hopes viewers take from her new film. Under the surface, a struggle, perhaps a war, may be raging. "For the victims and survivors of the Holocaust, or the Shoah, it's still very present in everything they do, and this is something that I learned," the filmmaker said. She felt this when she met Salo Wolf in his home. "Each time we met, he told this story about how he got separated from his brother, and I had the feeling he thinks about this each and every day." Wolf was the only one in his family to survive the war. "If you are in his living room, in his living room he has a few photos of his family, his brothers, some of them can be seen in the film, and on each wall of his living room he places these very important photographs. So wherever he looks he sees, every day he sees the faces of his brothers. So it's very present with him, every day, which is somehow horrible to think of, to imagine how this must be, to be pained by the scene of this separation. It's something someone cannot imagine, but this is what someone learns, or what I learned. This is what I mean with this presence of what is past. It becomes very clear when meeting these people."

Cummings, who lives in Berlin, made some special friends among the Café Zelig crowd, something of a seniors' club operated by the Jewish community in Munich. And, just as she knew, many of these eighty- and ninety-something-year-old people wouldn't be around much longer. Henry Rotmensch, the survivor who opens the film as he listens to a nostalgic Yiddish tune on an old cassette player in his home, died November 16, 2021. "I will go to Munich tomorrow very early in the morning," she wrote to me in an e-mail, "as Henry Rotmensch, a dear friend and protagonists of CAFE ZELIG (also my film) died last night... I will go to Munich to attend his funeral tomorrow at noon... in sad spirits…"

Café Zelig, released in 2020, has been making the rounds at special screenings and film festivals. More information about the film can be found at: https://daszelig-film.de/.

Borys Fynkelshteyn

O VENICE! By Borys Fynkelshteyn

"O Venice!" Foreword

The Ukrainian author Borys Fynkelshteyn has written a short story that proposes that a key character in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* could have had a real prototype who had a possible meeting with Shakespeare or used Shakespeare's name in his plays and histories (taking into account the anti-Stratfordian theories in the Shakespearean discourse). The most outstanding feature of this story is the suggestion that the eponymous merchant of Shakespeare's play was based on a very old relative of Fynkelshteyn's. To try and prove this, Fynkelshteyn spent months in the Venice library researching documents from the time the play was written. In fact, such an outlook makes this author's strategy close to the discourse of new historicism as in this paradigm one document can completely change the traditional view on the story and its context.

The magnitude of Shakespeare's plays lies not simply in their rich poetic language and phrasal genius but also in the fact that they addressed the fundamental issues of human existence and from the very beginning contained many secrets and gave rise to countless versions, hypotheses and assumptions. Love and hate, courage and cowardice, loyalty and betrayal, stinginess and wastefulness, honesty and deceit, as well as other shades of good and evil – all these eternal issues worried people, regardless of time, era, and other historical and cultural circumstances of human existence.

The readers' of this short story are invited to consider Fynkelshteyn's original interpretation. Although the author does not attempt to look for analogues in world literature, the plot of *The Merchant of Venice* is clearly visible through the outline of the narrative. True, there is an assumption that the original version of the play was based on an Italian novel of an earlier period, rooted in the 14th century. After all, all this is only speculation. You are about to read now only one possible version re-imagined by the author according to archival documents he unearthed in old Venetian libraries.

The author claims that his version is based on real facts, more than 400 years old. Besides, it cannot be denied that most of the "eternal" Shakespearean themes were repeated many times in every generation. The writer builds a narrative on facts but has every right to comprehend them in his own way, from the point of view of his contemporary reader. In this regard, the author's belonging to an ancient Sephardic family and some features of his biography made it possible to present the plot in a completely new light, and this will certainly enrich our understanding of the essence of Shakespeare's work in the context of Jewish issues (of the Sephardic version).

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O VENICE! By Borys Fynkelshteyn

Translated by Michael Pursglove

> *O Venice! Town of romance,*
> *For joy in the world you live!*
> *Love for the young you enhance,*
> *To all lovers you happiness give!*
>
> From the 1976 TV musical film
> *Truffaldino from Bergamo*

Author's Preface

The story "O Venice!" is, at least in part, based on historical facts known to the author. The rest is based on personal experience, starting from the proposition that the behaviour of unscrupulous borrowers does not much depend on time but more on the personal qualities of the person, such as honesty, probity, scrupulousness and duty. Please do not seek the well-known analogues in world literature, insofar as every prose writer, poet, playwright, as well as graphic artists and composers, have full rights to create their own world in art. And this world is completely real not only for him but also for You, my dear readers. And, perhaps, it is generally real…

Yours,
Borys Fynkelshteyn
January 2022

1

In the early morning of 15 July 1616 Shlomo was sitting in an armchair in the doorway of his Amsterdam house. It was Friday – lots of time before the Sabbath: a whole summer's day.

Shlomo was old in years – about eighty. He was frail in health and rarely got out of his chair, and so a dedicated servant saw to his needs, bringing him drinks, made sure the sun did not shine in his face, conveyed oral messages from the large household which inhabited the vast building. And from staff already at work in the office situated in the annex. Despite his age he forgot nothing and continued to run the house and businesses, gradually involving his grandsons, great-grandsons and nephews in this. Moreover, the whole family were long-lived.

A hundred and twenty-four years earlier his great-grandfather, Baruch Halevi, was forced to leave Spain for Provence, and then for Venice, which gave rise to a new European branch of the

family and also to a widely dispersed network of international trade. Baruch lived to be ninety-two, and at the age of fifty-four, already in exile, he had a son, also called Baruch, the future father of Shlomo. Shlomo was a third son. According to ancient tradition only eldest sons took the name Baruch. But now it was Shlomo who had become the eldest in the family.

It had pleased Fate to let him outlive his whole generation.

Shlomo worked in trade, headed a banking house and was a major shareholder in the Dutch East India Company, founded in 1602, which traded with the countries of South Asia and South-East Asia. Together with a group of likeminded people, among whom there were not only Jews, for two years he had been working on the creation of a West Indian Company which would trade with the countries of the American continent and Africa. The young republic of seven united provinces, which had only become independent in 1581, presented such opportunities. The Jewish community of Amsterdam traditionally supported the ruling House of Orange and took an active part in social, financial and political life. Religious tolerance and cooperation on the part of different faiths had a beneficial effect on the economy of the country, in which industrial and economic development overcame the constraints of mediaeval practice. It is not surprising that Shlomo's thoughts on that fine summer morning centred on business affairs.

However, unexpected movement on the road attracted the attention of the venerable old man.

A carriage and two drove up to his house and halted before the gates. The coachman let down the footstep and a very elderly man with a long grey beard got down with difficulty, leaning on the arm of a young man and made his way to Shlomo. When he got closer Shlomo recognised him as his old friend Tevye from Venice.

Shlomo had once lived and worked there, but twenty years previously had been forced to leave and go first to Dalmatia and then to Amsterdam. They had been friends for forty years, but for the last twenty had merely exchanged business letters which were passed on by trading agents. Tevye had come together with his heir, his eldest grandson, in order to discuss questions of capital investment in a future trading company. A servant placed another armchair and set up a canvas baldachin above them to protect them from a sun which was beginning to scorch; he brought cold drinks and the old men began to talk. Having exchanged the latest news, they turned to past events and Shlomo found himself unexpectedly talkative.

2

July in Venice is the hottest time of the year, but 1596 was unusually hot.

Twenty years ago Shlomo was still strong; he lived and worked in the Jewish area of Venice, Cannareggio (known locally as Ghetto Nuovo – New Ghetto), but all his colleagues and clients treated him as an elder statesman. He was formidably serious and thorough.

Shlomo conducted his trade and financial affairs through a banking house in which he and several substantial members of the Jewish community had invested in conditions of total financial accountability.

The Most Serene Republic of Venice protected the rights of merchants and bankers, and his affairs went well. But in 1595, the 88th Venetian Doge, Pasquale Cicogna died; Shlomo had had an excellent business relationship with him. Pasquale had ruled the Republic since 1585 and enjoyed great authority among the people. He was a skillful and bold politician. The main thing was that he was assiduous in maintaining the law and protecting trade routes and privileges.

The next Doge, the 89th, Marino Trimani, was elected with great difficulty after seventy ballots and had already been in power for almost a year. He was heavily dependent on the Senate

and his executive organ – the Committee of Ten. As it turned out, such arrangements did not mean business was properly run.

This story began on a splendid July morning, when a young man called Angelo, a scion of an impoverished aristocratic family, turned to Shlomo and requested 3,000 ducats credit for one month in order to pursue a trading business. As security he offered an ancient palazzo on the Grand Canal. This was usual in business; all the papers concerning the security were in order; only the character of the borrower gave rise for concern – he was famous for his drinking bouts and dissolute behaviour. Angelo came to the meeting accompanied by his friends Bartolomeo and Luigi, who had similar reputations in society to Angelo, and by Roger, a young English aristocrat who was studying at Padua University, and who had a keen interest in the details of Venetian legislation and trading rules.

Shlomo made inquiries. Angelo was indeed in trade; three of his ships were at sea and were due to arrive with their cargoes in the near future. Admittedly, one piquant detail became clear: all three were gay but, when all was said and done, that was their personal affair and did not bear directly on the loan.

Shlomo decided that risk was inseparable from banking, and Angelo was granted credit. As became clear later, Shlomo gravely underestimated this trio of tricksters.

They had a second plan, within which was a third; none of them meant an honourable conduct of their affairs.

3

Throughout history there was no better way of ruining relationships than borrowing money.

As has been the case from time immemorial, the borrower takes another's money on credit for a fixed time, but has to hand over his assets forever. At least, so it seemed to him. The group of educated young men, linked by sexual ties and joint debauchery, having overspent considerably, decided to solve their financial problems in unorthodox ways.

This was the plan: 1) Bartolomeo would assume the role of a carefree man and marry a rich heiress from the mainland of the Venetian Republic and would use her dowry to extinguish the numerous debts owed by the dissolute young men to other notable Venetian families. 2) Angelo would get the money needed for this enterprise on credit from a Jewish banking house, he being the only one of them who had material assets to offer as security, but without any intention of paying off the debt or handing over the pledged property. 3) To this end they intended to deploy in the court an ancient and long-unused law on the impossibility of alienating the homes of Venetian nobility at the behest of a single proprietor, even a legal proprietor. It was understood that to do this, the agreement of all adult members of the family was needed. 4) Luigi was entrusted with seducing Deborah, the unmarried sixteen-year-old daughter of Shlomo, his only heir, and with using her inheritance to help out his bosom friends. This part of the plan began to be implemented through a suborned servant even before the application for credit, taking advantage of the young girl's inexperience in worldly matters. 5) Shlomo himself was to be killed, using hired killers and the money lent by him.

Deborah believed Luigi's passionate talk and ran away with him, disguised as a boy and taking with her the family valuables of her late mother.

The suborned servant, fearful of revenge, came into service with Angelo but then decided to add to his earnings by selling all he knew to Shlomo. This was set out in court, although it did not change the court's decision. Bartolomeo successfully married a rich heiress and their subsequent fate is not known. But as for the murder of Shlomo, a problem arose.

4

The moon had risen and the stars had begun to shine in the velvet-black Italian sky when Shlomo left his office and set off home. Despite the warm summer, the canals exuded damp and cold, so he put on a dark cloak – a cape with a hood.

The street was unlit and deserted; he almost merged with the dark soot-smeared walls. At a crossroads two figures emerged from the darkness…

"Are you the Jew Shlomo?" one of them stepped forward and asked.

Shlomo put his back to the wall and with his left hand undid his cloak button at his chest. His questioner swore obscenely, executed a quick movement, and a naked blade flashed in the pale moonlight.

Then he attacked.

Shlomo quickly furled the cloak, wrapped it round his left arm and with it parried the sword thrust. With his right hand he drew a stiletto from behind his back and, taking a step forward, drove it into the stomach of his assailant. Then he swiftly pulled it out and retreated to the wall.

His attacker pitched forward onto his head; the sword fell from his unclenched hand and clattered onto the paved road.

Shlomo picked it up, threw off his cloak, transferred the stiletto to his left hand and stood in readiness.

In his time his father had insisted he take lessons from a well-known fencing master. On business trips all sorts of things happened and he had a certain amount of experience. Now it paid off.

Not expecting such resistance from an elderly Jew, the second assailant turned and ran, disappearing into the darkness, while Shlomo picked up his cloak and went on his way, taking the sword with him. At home he examined it and discovered a monogram – W – on the hilt. From that moment he only went out in the evenings when accompanied by an armed servant.

At home he had also discovered the disappearance of Deborah and the family valuables. Full of doubt, he had a sleepless night.

In the morning things had become somewhat clearer, but this afforded him no peace. He could demand the return of his daughter and the punishment of her seducer, but in these circumstances he could not prevent her desire to adopt Christianity and to be joined with her lover according to the rituals of the Church.

After two days the credit deadline passed. The money had not been returned and, moreover, it was rumoured that Angelo's ships had foundered as a result of a violent storm.

Shlomo immediately applied to the court for the reinstatement of losses relating to the pledge. Angelo and his friends hired a lawyer and began to blackmail the Doge, the president of the court. "To give away my home to a Jew is the same as cutting out a pound of my flesh, together with my heart," Angelo told the court.

The court was adjourned to the following day, but that evening an emissary of the Doge brought Shlomo to a meeting with him.

"Shlomo," said Marino Trimani, "of course, this is skulduggery, but the judgment will go against you. I won't be able to do anything for you. If it does not, they will cause civil disturbances and that will have implications for your co-religionists. Go away for a time, until this business is forgotten. Then you can come back."

"No," replied Shlomo, "I will not come back. But once the Republic has ceased to uphold the law in financial matters, you will have to forget about credit you expected from the Jews for expanding the Arsenal. In such circumstances no one will give you money."

When he got home, he found Deborah weeping and standing by the door. Luigi had robbed her and thrown her out. She had nowhere to go.

Shlomo opened the door and let her into the house. He said nothing more to her about this matter. The next day they left for Dalmatia. Shlomo bought a house and re-established his old trading links. For some time they lived peacefully. Six months later they were visited by Fernando, a great nephew from a Marrano family, newly Christianized, a stately, handsome young man of twenty-five.

He had already served as a soldier in the colonies and was now looking to civilian life to further his activities. Fernando had liked Deborah since childhood. Luigi had not touched her – he had no interest in women and merely robbed them; however, at his insistence, Deborah had become a Christian. She told Fernando everything, but this did not faze him, and after two months he asked Shlomo for her hand, saying that his heart belonged to her.

Shlomo made no objection and they were betrothed.

At table Shlomo once told Fernando about the unsuccessful attempt on his life. And gave him the monogrammed sword. The wedding was fixed for six months later. Meanwhile, Fernando went away with an old and trusted family servant, saying they had important trading business and would soon be back.

5

Darkness was falling when two horsemen approached a tavern in Domini di Terrafirma, the continental part of Northern Italy, controlled by the Venetian Republic.

It was the end of November and fairly cold. This tavern was known along the coast as a wild place: gambling, love for sale, dubious deals, thieves and bandits. Care was needed there.

The older horseman stayed with the horses, holding them by the bridle; the younger one went in. Inside it was noisy, dirty and cheerful. There was a big gambling game going on at a separate table. The newcomer joined the gamblers and placed a bet. The dice were being thrown by a well-dressed young man in a short cloak, with a sword slung by his side. He threw the dice from a silver goblet and again won. Unexpectedly the new player grabbed the dice from the table, weighed them in his hand and, in a loud voice which drowned out the general noise, shouted: "The dice are rigged. The swine."

Then he turned round and gave the banker a resounding slap in the face. The banker reached for his weapon.

"Into the street! Into the street!" yelled the landlord from behind the bar and the whole crowd of gamblers, along with curious onlookers, spilled out and formed a circle.

There was a clatter of steel and the opponents drew their swords from their scabbards.

The offended party made the first attack. He was relying on the cuirass which he wore under his cloak and was therefore unconcerned by the first blow.

The new arrival disarmed his opponent, sank forward onto one knee and, with a twist of the wrist, thrust his sword through the lower slit in the cuirass. It went in easily, practically the whole length of it, until it reached his opponent's neck.

This was a manoeuvre practised by Spanish infantry against heavily armed cuirassiers during a running battle. His opponent died almost instantly. An unspoken question was written on his frozen features. The young man bent down, quietly whispered something into his ear and then spat on the cooling body. Then he got up, leaving the sword still embedded in the body, quickly pushed his way through the stunned crowd, leapt onto his horse and only the rattle of the two horses' hooves on the frozen ground resounded in the icy air.

6

As they spoke, the sun rose almost to its zenith.

It was getting hot and the old men went into the house and continued their conversation over dinner.

"So then, Shlomo, Luigi was killed in a duel with Fernando. But do you know anything of the fate of the other participants in these events of twenty years ago?" asked Tevye.

"I only know Fernando and Deborah's side," Shlomo replied. "They married, and have lived happily, in love and harmony, ever since. They already have six children; Fernando is our company representative for the Dalmatian shore. My eldest grandson is eighteen; he's here and will, I hope, replace me in time. By the way, when Fernando returned, he told me everything. I would not have approved had I known in advance."

"Why's that?" Tevye asked. "Don't they say: an eye for an eye? And abuse of a defenceless girl should be punished twice over."

"That is so," replied Shlomo. "But you must understand that, with age, you can only get back what you've given. I didn't give life to that bastard, and I can't take it away. An unpopular thought in these cruel times of ours, but forgive me…"

"How so?" replied Tevye. "The Lord has settled accounts for you with the other participants in this skulduggery. Six months later the ship, with Angelo on board, was attacked, seized and scuttled by Algerian pirates. Angelo was enslaved and, by all accounts, made to row a pirate galley. Sometime later a ransom demand was received. The sum demanded was very high. In order to pay it, his relatives had to sell the very palazzo that was part of the pledge, because no one gave them any credit. The money was paid, but Angelo did not return. He died in captivity of unknown causes. So, how was it you put it? Whoever gave, took back."

It was a totally different story with the young English aristocrat. In that same autumn of 1596, in the immediate wake of events, he wrote a play in which he described, in extremely distorted form, these events. Incidentally, he put himself in the play as one of the characters. At the beginning of 1597 Roger returned to England, and in 1598 the play was put on in a popular London theatre.

He wrote a great deal, being an extremely talented man, but all of it under a pseudonym, which echoed his college nickname: Shake spear. He took part in the rebellion of the Earl of Essex, was exiled, then pardoned, after the death of Queen Elizabeth, by the new king, James I. He died in 1612 at the age of thirty-five, apparently from the "French disease," syphilis, and his twenty-six-year-old wife took her own life a week after his death.

"Yes," replied Shlomo. "I'd heard this from our trading partners Once they gave me a letter from this aristocrat, in which he expressed regret for the mistakes of his youth."

"So 'Judge not, lest ye be judged'. People are all different." And they went to dinner. Then came the Sabbath and their souls found consolation in their memories.

Author's Afterword

Dear readers,

You have read my version of events which took place more than four hundred years ago. It is no better, and no worse, than any other version, because it is based on individual facts and a good deal of speculation, as is often the case with historical events after a prolonged lapse of time. All the heroes of my story genuinely existed.

We are all part of the human community, everyone, from Adam and Eve, but for many of my literary heroes I am a direct descendant, having inherited some of their genetic characteristics, and I therefore have a better understanding of their motives, the sources of their emotions and their behaviour. You may be interested in the subsequent fate of my heroes, their families and their relatives.

I am relating what I have succeeded in establishing, more or less accurately: the Dutch branch of the Halevi clan flourished, went into business and participated in social and religious life for many years. It was almost entirely wiped out by the Holocaust. In the eighteenth century part of the family migrated to Austria where, by decree of Emperor Joseph II, they were obliged to adopt a German surname. Then they moved to Germany, then Poland, then the Russian Empire, settling in Ukraine.

The author is a scion of that branch of the Halevi clan. The Christian Dalmatian branch lived peacefully until the Turkish attack on Dalmatia in 1645, and then moved to the city-state of Dubrovnik, where they intermarried with local merchant families. Their descendants, apparently, still live in the Republic of Croatia.

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Teaching Psychomachia in *The Castle of Perseverance*

The Castle of Perseverance is a foundational text in the history of English drama. The earliest English morality play to survive in its entirety, it is emblematic for its use of the motif of psychomachia, that is, the battle for the human soul. The critics' focus on the conflict of good and evil forces in the play originally stems from their search for analogies and continuities between the poem *Psychomachia*, written by the Late Antique Latin poet Prudentius in the early years of the fifth century, and the dramatic tradition of medieval moralities. Critical interest in the link between medieval drama and Prudentius's poem can be traced back to the German scholar Wilhelm Creizenach and his *Geschichte des neueren Dramas*, published in successive volumes from the year 1893 onwards (Schell 235). In English literary criticism the connection between *Psychomachia* and medieval moralities was noted as early as in 1910 by E.N.S. Thompson in his monograph "The English Moral Play," which rests its argument on an analysis of *The Castle* as a model of psychomachia (Kantrowitz 69). The motif of psychomachia, so prominent in *The Castle of Perseverance*, is not chronologically limited to the medieval period, and its influence can clearly be seen in Renaissance English literature, both drama and poetry. For this reason, alongside its completeness, complexity and theatrical scale, *The Castle* deserves to be included in the syllabi of academic courses in the history of English literature. The following article offers a new translation from the original Middle English of a key scene of verbal psychomachia in the play, which can serve as a basis for an in-class discussion and close reading of the playtext. Beginning with a theoretical introduction to problems implicit in the notion of psychomachia as such, it provides a comprehensive analysis of the verbal battle for the soul of Mankind and offers suggestions for further discussion of later texts influenced by the medieval dramatic tradition. Presenting the play to the students in the manner outlined below will ensure such learning outcomes as (i) an understanding of the theological significance of the play's mode of staging, (ii) a comprehension of the two modes of psychomachia employed in the play and of the ambiguity of the allegorical figures participating in it, (iii) an appreciation of the role of references to Mankind's movement in the play and (iv) an awareness of the difference in the linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed the by Good Angel and the Bad Angel in their attempt to win the soul of the human figure.

The Castle of Perseverance survives in a single manuscript known as the Macro manuscript, now housed in the Folger library in Washington, DC. Although MS V.a.354, as it is known, contains the text of two other morality plays, *Mankind* and *Wisdom*, it should not be considered as a single unit, since it consists of separate manuscripts bound together (King 243). Two leaves are missing from the text of *The Castle*, leaving out about a hundred lines from the otherwise complete text (Klausner 5); the surviving text is 3649 lines long. The manuscript of *The Castle* is believed to date back to 1440 (King 243); however, topical references to contemporary fashion suggest that the play originated in the first quarter of the fifteenth century (Klausner 5). *The Castle of Perseverance* presents "the whole ontology of man" (Klausner 1), from birth to death and beyond to the scene of final judgment. As James Keller notes, "[m]orality plays are commonly based upon any of three metaphors: the representation of life as a pilgrimage, the pattern of fall and repentance, or the battle between the forces of good and evil (psychomachia)" (159); *The Castle of Perseverance* makes use of all three. Representing human life allegorically, it pitches virtues and vices, and a good and bad angel, against each other to struggle for the soul of the figure of Humanum Genus (Mankind). Their verbal and physical skirmishes are punctuated time and again by numerous references to movement made by Mankind and the actor's actual movement on-stage, with the play representing "theatrically as a physical journey" the pilgrimage of human life "from birth to death" (King 244) with all its shifts of moral alignment.

The play is unique among medieval English moralities in containing a diagram illustrating its mode of staging. The stage was circular, with four main scaffolds constructed at compass points – that of God (in the East), Devil (North), World (West) and Flesh (South). Mankind finds himself in the midst of all this, most likely born from a centrally located bed above which rises the eponymous castle, where he will later find shelter and face the siege of the vices. The layout of the scaffolds immediately suggests that the challenge facing Mankind consists in making a choice between prioritising the bliss of eternal life in the otherworld to the point of dismissing the allure of earthly existence or orienting himself onto earthly pleasures in the physical world he is born into. The arrangements of the scaffolds also stops short of positing the Devil as an enemy of God; while the conflict between virtues and vices may be seen as part of the universal struggle between good and evil forces that exist in the world, the layout of the stage grants Mankind agency, making it clear that the Devil is God's subordinate. With the Devil seated at the right hand of God, the whole setting is reminiscent of the arrangement between God and Satan in the biblical Book of Job. Rather than being a pawn in an eternal conflict between two opposed forces, Mankind is to make his own choices in this moral landscape – choices that the Devil can only influence from the sidelines, and which God is free to interpret however he pleases, in his infinite mercy granting Mankind salvation in the end despite his repentance coming in the last possible moment. The task ahead of Mankind is difficult, with three directions leading him towards temptation and only one signifying a life of righteousness. There is also a fifth scaffold, that of Greed, located between God and the Devil, "perhaps implying that money in itself is morally neutral and can be used either for good (almsgiving) or ill (overindulgence in the things of the world)" (Klausner 4). Interestingly, the orientation of the scaffolds suggests that the play may have been staged outside churches. With the altars of medieval churches facing east and their entrances looking westwards, the space of the stage may function as a continuation, or analogue, of the sacred architectural space with all its symbolic significance.

The Castle of Perseverance is a mixture of serious didacticism and comedy aimed to entertain the masses. It relies on low humour, including scatological elements, both verbal, as in the speeches of the vices, and performance-wise, as in the stage direction advocating that special care be taken

to ensure the actor playing the devil Belial should have pipes filled with burning gunpowder in his hands, his ears and his arse ("he that schal pley Belial loke that he have gunnepowdyr brennynge in pypys in hys handys and in his erys and in hys ars whenne he gothe to batayl" – Klausner 9). Designed to be entertaining, the play is nonetheless structured to convey a didactic message. It allocates the seven deadly sins into three distinct groups, aligning the sings of the flesh with none other than Flesh himself (Sloth, Gluttony and Lechery), grouping the three spiritual sins under the banner of the Devil (Pride, Wrath and Envy) and singling out Greed as the servant of the World and perhaps the greatest challenge to the spiritual well-being of Mankind. One must acknowledge the hermeneutic tension between two possible interpretations of Mankind's struggle against these vices and what they represent. On the one hand, they stand for inner drives and impulses of the human being; on the other hand, they embody forces of evil believed to operate among men.

While the mode of staging the play seems to underline Mankind's free will in making his way through the temporal space of human life, the psychological reading of the virtues and vices, as well as of the two angels, is a point of contention among scholars. It should be noted that *The Castle*'s indebtedness to the tradition of psychomachia manifests itself above all in the scene of the siege of the castle, with the vices being ultimately repelled from encroaching upon the latter's battlements by a shower of roses from the virtues – a fitting symbol of Christ's sacrifice and the shower of blood that redeems humankind. Thus, as in Prudentius's poem, "the conflict between good and evil takes the form of a pitched battle" (Diller 36). The verbal psychomachia at the beginning of the play shows a different understanding of Mankind's role in all this; while in the verbal exchanges between Humanum Genus and the two angels Mankind makes his own choices, in the scene of the siege he is only a witness to the confrontation of good and evil forces. This constitutes the greatest difference between the two scenes of psychomachia – one predominantly physical and the other verbal – and provides for a lot of ambiguity in the understanding of the nature of the allegorical characters that Mankind interacts with and the extent of his free will. Summarising the genre, Arthur Kirsch notes that the morality play, "though by definition a homiletic presentation of the moral struggle between personified virtues and vices for the soul of man, is also at the same time an intrapsychic drama, a depiction in concrete images of an action *within* the soul of the play's protagonist" (Kirsch 94). Max Harris presents an alternative view, arguing that "the dramatic scope extends beyond the ongoing struggle between good and bad impulses in every man to embrace a conflict on the same scale as that of the Corpus Christi plays: the war between Christ and Devil over the fate of mankind" (Harris 56–57). Harris reads the vices as devils, Satan's minions, noting a lack of symmetry in having the virtues represent the gifts of the Holy Spirit rather than angels (Harris 57). He stresses that "[i]t is Christ, and not man alone, who battles with vices. And it is Satan and his minions, not man alone, who resist" (Harris 62). G. A. Lester warns, however, that "to envisage man's soul as merely the prize of war is to deny man the power to influence his own fate," and, since *The Castle* strongly implies that "man has the free will to choose the right way or to reject it, the *Psychomachia*'s importance should not be overstressed" (Lester xvi). It is also worthwhile to note Helen Cooper's suggestion that in the Middle Ages and the early sixteenth century the allegorical characters stand for powers independent of men whereas a certain change is to be observed later, with Renaissance drama presenting them already as "impulses within the original soul" (Cooper 86). With different critics contending for one option or the other, perhaps it would be instructive to follow Harris in his ultimate conclusion:

> The insistence of the texts that the vices are to be seen as devils, in an age that believed in Satan and his subordinates as real beings, raises questions about the modern psychological interpretation of the plays. The solution … is that we are not in fact faced with a mutually exclusive choice between

"human frailty" and "diabolical evil"; the vices represent both human sin and supernatural demons in the service of Satan. (Harris 56)

That the vices … are, in one respect, "human manifestations of sin" none would dispute. But to deduce that they are therefore "not abstract evil powers" is to deny the mediaeval imagination, despite its known propensity for allegory and typology, the possibility of signifying two things with a single symbol. (Harris 60)

To adopt this view is to acknowledge *The Castle*'s allegorical mode, at the same granting the possibility that the various figures urging Mankind to follow them may represent actual supernatural beings and not just physical embodiments of inner drives or impulses. Natalie Crohn Schmitt reminds readers of the play that "[t]he distinction between passions and thought on the one hand and the material world on the other is not medieval" (25). This duality of meaning is something that modern readers have to bear in mind when they approach the play.

The action of the play takes place in an allegorical space of a generic nature, with the space of the stage representing not just the physical but also the moral extremities of the universe. Time is here as universal as space, and the linearity of Mankind's pilgrimage through life gives way, through the allegorisation, to the cyclical nature of his experience, common to every human being throughout the ages. The play opens with introductory speeches by the three generals of the vices – World, Devil and Flesh – which leave the audience with the impression of a "timeless, impersonal conflict, and timeless force" (Schell 241). This is when Mankind begins to speak. Edgar Schell notes that "with the entrance of Mankind we are thrust very quickly into time" (241). This is a good starting point for a close reading of the psychomachia scene that is to follow (lines 275–419):

MANKIND:
In the fashion of our first father
This night I was of my mother born.
From my mother I go, I walk;
Fully feeble and faint I stand before you.
I am naked of limb and loin,
The way Mankind is shaped and fashioned.
I do not know whither to go or to dwell
To help myself at midday or morn.
For shame I stand stupefied.
I was born this night in bloody condition,
And naked I am, as you may see.
Oh, Lord God in Trinity!
How feeble is Mankind!

Why I was brought into this world
I do not know; but to woe and weeping
I have been born, and have nothing at all
That might help me in anything I do.
I stand perplexed, full of anxiety.
Bare and poor is my clothing:
My head is covered only by the baptismal garb
That I received at my christening.
Certainly, I have no more.
From dust I came, I know right well,
And as dust I face this season;
It is great pity of Mankind!
Lord God, I beg for your grace!

Two angels have been assigned to me.
This one teaches me to be good;
On my right side you may see him;
He came from Christ, who died on the rood.
Another is also ordained to be here
That is my foe wherever I go.
He is busy in whatever way he can
To draw me towards the mad devils
That throng in hell.
Every man that is alive has two of these
To rule over him and his wits.
When man does evil one would absolve him,
While the other draws him to wickedness.

But since these two angels have fallen to me,
Lord Jesus, I ask a boon of you
That I may follow, wherever I go,
The angel that came from the heavenly throne.
Now, Lord Jesus in the heavenly hall,
Hear when I make my moan!
Attentive Christ, to you I call!
As a grisly ghost I groan and complain,
And I am, I know well, full of anxiety.
Oh, Lord Jesus, whither may I go?
A chrisom I have and nothing more.
Alas! Men may be wondrously woeful
When they are first brought forth.

GOOD ANGEL:
Indeed, in truth, it is evident
That man may sing of dire woe,
For each creature can fend for itself,
Except man, as it comes into the world.
Nevertheless, turn yourself away from harm
And serve Jesus, the heavenly king,
And you shall, by green groves,
Fare well in all things.
That Lord that lent you your life –
Have him always in your mind,
Him that died on the rood for mankind,
And serve him till the end of your life,
And certainly you shall not lack anything.

BAD ANGEL:
Peace angel, your words are not wise.
You give him wrong counsel.
He shall draw himself to the service of the World
To dwell with emperors, kings and knights
So that none in the land shall be like him.
Come with me, you that stand as still as stone!
You and I to the World should go,
And then you will see shortly
How soon you will become rich.

GOOD ANGEL:
Oh, peace, angel! You speak folly!
Why should he covet worldly goods
Since Christ and his followers
All stood in poverty here on earth?
Worldly weal everywhere
Fails and fades as water in a stream;
But the kingdom of heaven is tried and trustworthy.
There sits Christ, bright as blood,
Without any distress.
To the World he did not long
But forsook it completely.
Example I find in the Holy Writ,
Which will bear me witness.

Divitias et paupertates ne dederis mihi, Domine!

BAD ANGEL:
Yeah, right! Oh, Man, do not believe him,
But come with me wherever I go!
When you taste a morsel of what the World has to offer,
You will find it sweet and agreeable.
A fair Lady shall be given to you,
That will remedy your sorrow in her chambers;
With riches you shall be showered,
With fine silk to furnish your seats.
I counsel you, let prayer beads be!
When you are full of health
And cheer at food at hand,
Why should you follow God's service?
Come and follow me instead!

MANKIND:
Whom to follow I do not know!
I stand bewildered.
I wish I were fabulously rich
And yet I wish I could also save my soul.
As wind in water I waver.
You would like me to go to the World,
And he wishes that I forsook this path.
Now, so God help me and the holy book,
I do not know which one I shall have!

BAD ANGEL:
Come on, Man! What's your worry?
Go to the World, I'm telling you, quickly;
For there you will be able to fare very well
If that is indeed your wish.
No lord shall be like you.
Think of the World
And fix you attention hard on it;
With gold and silver and rich revenues
You will soon be rich!

MANKIND:
Now, since you have promised me all this
I will go with you and give it a try.
I will not stop until indeed
With the World I go and play,
Certainly, a little while.
In this World is all my trust
To live in indulgence and pleasure:
When we have joined together in a kiss
I trust we shall not part.

GOOD ANGEL:
A! No, Man, for Christ's blood,
Come back by any path you choose!
The World is wicked and full of madness,
And you will live but for a while,
So what do you covet and hope to achieve?
Man, think on your final day
When you will be covered with clay!
And if you think on that moment,
Certainly, you will not sin.

Homo, memento finis, et in aeternum non peccabis.

BAD ANGEL:
Yes, why not ponder on your soul in due time,
But now come forth, Man, and do not take heed of him!
Come on, and restrain it for now;
Your flesh will grow and feed
on the lovely food of life.
With the World you need not fear anything
Until you reach the age of sixty winters.
When your nose begins to get cold,
Then will be the time to turn to goodness.

    The following section of the article lists questions that the instructor may ask of students to help them in their close reading and offers brief answers that raise all the key points the students would be expected to mention. Questions concerning the lines spoken by Mankind may include: (i) What is the vision of human life that emerges from Mankind's initial speech?; (ii) What emotions are conveyed by the words of Mankind?; (iii) What is Mankind's relationship with God?; (iv) What natural inclinations does Mankind have? Does he tend towards good or evil?; (v) Find all references to movement in the lines spoken by Mankind – what is their significance? Questions dealing with the two angels may involve issues such as: (i) Which angel is a better tempter and why? (ii) What are the differences between the ways in which the two angels try to persuade Mankind to follow them?; (iii) Imagine you want to adapt the scene to film by showing the images the two angels respectively talk about. What would be the difference between these images?; (iv) What kinds of imagery dominate in the lines spoken by the two angels?; (v) Who do the two angels address when they speak?; (vi) Which angel is more likely to succeed?; (vii) How do the two angels make use of the idea of time in their final lines cited above?; (viii) If one of the two angels makes a better impression on Mankind, what does this say about the human predicament? From the perspective of Christian morality, is this a convincing vision of the moral dilemmas facing every individual?

The vision of human life as presented by Mankind is bleak and portrays him as vulnerable and confused as to what action to take. He stands "stupefied," "perplexed" and "full of anxiety." There is no clear sense of direction for him, and he stands motionless, asking which direction to take and unable to make up his mind. In the third line of his speech he makes it clear that he has no other option but to "go," to "walk," and this implies a necessity of choice as to which direction to take, which communicates the necessity of a moral choice in human life. However, Mankind seems unable to accomplish anything on his own, and stresses his own nakedness and helplessness, prompted by the anguish he experiences to utter a desperate "moan," a plea for help. Significantly, this plea is one of a number of instances in which he addresses God. Mankind is aware of his Creator and asks Him for mercy and guidance. In particular, he singles out Christ, which testifies to the power of the special relationship between the Son of God and Man. This relationship is solidified right at the start of Mankind's journey through life by the sacrament of baptism, which leaves him with a chrisom, a baptismal garb, which is the only thing that offers him any protection against the challenges and dangers of the life that awaits him. Significantly, it is Christ that Mankind asks for direction in the final line of his opening speech. This signifies a natural openness to the Word of God, as Mankind's realisation that he faces two angels that want to draw him in opposite directions leads him to ask directly for help in making the right choice.

The two angels' rhetorical strategies are completely different, and the bad angel easily comes across as a better tempter. Above all, the things he offers can provide immediate gratification in the earthly life, whereas the good angel appeals to Mankind's concerns about his ultimate fate and his future existence in the afterlife, whose lure is far less pronounced in Mankind's perception than the riches and bodily pleasures promised by the bad angel. It would appear that the bad angel understands the hierarchy of human needs, while the good angel fails to address the basic physiological needs of the naked and confused Mankind and raises issues that the latter is in no condition to consider in depth given his overall suffering. In fact, the good angel even resorts to threats, implying a sorry end for Mankind if he does not "think on [his] final day." At the same time, he positions himself as a source of authority, creating a sense of distance between himself and Mankind, and inspiring feelings of guilt and remorse in the human character. It is likely that the Latin lines were not meant to be spoken by the good angel (Klausner 6), but if they were this would have certainly reinforced a sense of detachment between the good angel and Mankind, which clearly emerges from the dynamics of the interactions between all three characters. Significantly, the good angel first addresses the bad angel to correct him, whereas the latter refuses to engage in a theological debate with his adversary, ignores him, and immediately addresses Mankind in a most direct fashion. The imagery used by the two angels is also strikingly disparate. Images summoned up by the words of the bad angel are pleasant and easy to imagine and long for, which stands in direct contrast to the only two concrete images that the good angel makes use of, that is, the poverty of Christ's followers and the vision of Christ enthroned in heaven. It is either the image of Christian poverty or a very vague picture of the afterlife that his words convey, and this can in no way compete with the opulence of the luxurious vision of his evil counterpart not only because it is less appealing but also because it is simply difficult to picture in the first place and lacks the ability to spark Mankind's powers of imagination. It does not come as a surprise that the first round of the battle for the human soul is won by the bad angel, especially since his language, full of concrete images and lacking the abstraction of the good angel's discourse, matches Mankind's style of linguistic expression.

The bad angel seems to accept the good angel's point about time and acknowledges that a time will indeed come when Mankind may need to repent and surrender himself to the will of

God, but he argues that other needs must be satisfied first, which makes perfect sense from the perspective of human psychology even if it defies Christian morality. It would thus seem that the natural, biological drives within Mankind are in conflict with his spiritual development. This is exactly what the staging of the play represents by positioning Mankind between God and the coalition of World and Flesh – it is a battle between body and soul. The choice has to be made between this life and the distant vision of life in heaven, and the immediacy of what the World and Flesh have to offer gives the bad angel an advantage over his adversary. The temptation of World and Flesh is actually so strong that one may easily forget about the third member of the evil coalition, the Devil himself, just as Mankind may fail to see anything wrong in satisfying his bodily needs. *The Castle of Perseverance* thus offers a comprehensive explication of the hardships inherent in following the path of a good Christian.

The motif of psychomachia survived well into Renaissance drama, and an understanding of how it works in *The Castle* may be of help in appreciating the structure of plays such as Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and William Shakespeare's *Othello*. Marlowe uses the theatrical machinery of medieval moralities by introducing the characters of the good and bad angel and the seven deadly sins, whereas Shakespeare modernises it by positioning the character of Othello between the pernicious snares of the evil Iago and the civilising and restraining effects of Desdemona's love for the Moor. It should be noted, however, that both Marlowe and Shakespeare introduce a similar twist to the relationship between the tempted one and his two angels. In *Doctor Faustus* the good and bad angel have their doubles in the characters of the Old Man and Mephistophilis, and at one point Faustus orders the latter to torment the body of the Old Man and thus to neutralise his effect on the Doctor's soul. In *Othello*, the Moor actually kills his good angel himself by murdering the innocent Desdemona under the spell of Iago's accusations. It would appear that Renaissance drama allows for more variations in the relationship between the tempted one and the two tempters. An appreciation of the original, medieval mode of employing psychomachia, such as *The Castle of Perseverance* offers, and the dynamics of the interaction between the three characters that it involves, allows readers to trace the later developments of the motif and understand the nature of its transformation.

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