Troubling Women Troubling Genre:

Shakespeare's Unruly Characters

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of

the University of Chester for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by Anna Fraser Mackenzie

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Volume 1

Declaration

I declare that the material presented for examination here is my own work and has not been submitted for an award at this or another Higher Education institution.

Parts of this thesis appear in significantly condensed forms in the following publications:

Anna Mackenzie, '"Identity politics": Dramatic genres, Shakespeare's plays and the Butlerian framework', *The Problem of Literary Genres*, 1.107 (2011), 5-24.

Anna Mackenzie, 'Wooing and Weddings: the "Hallmark Shakespeare"?', *Litro Magazine* (2014): http://www.litro.co.uk/2014/04/wooing-and-weddings-the-hallmark-shakespeare/

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~

This thesis is dedicated to two members of my family who are no longer with us and who are truly missed: my wonderful Grampy, John Bowden; and my big cousin Philip Hall.

~

Troubling Women Troubling Genre: Shakespeare's Unruly Characters
By Anna Fraser Mackenzie

Abstract

This thesis brings the performativity of William Shakespeare's plays into focus; in presenting an alternative approach to his works, I show how literary criticism can be reinvigorated. Dramatic works demonstrate that, in their theatrical world, everything is mutable, and capable of evolving and changing, negating stability or reliability. Why, then, should what I term *monogeneric* approaches (forms of analysis that allocate one genre to plays, adopting *a priori* ideas as opposed to recognising processes of dramatic construction) to criticism remain prevalent in Shakespearean scholarship?

Performativity, as defined by Judith Butler, is a concept that focuses on the dynamic constitution of a subject, rather than on the end result alone (whether 'female' for gender, or, for example, 'comedy' for plays). In establishing an analogical relationship between the performativity of gender and the performance of dramatic works, I offer new, interpretive possibilities for dramatic works, moving away from monogeneric methods. Constructing a method of analysis based on performativity allows an approach that recognises and privileges dramatic dynamism and characterisation. The role of female characters is vital in Shakespeare's works: we see defiant, submissive, calculating, principled and overwhelmingly multifaceted performances from these characters who, I argue, influence the courses that plays take.

This thesis joins a conversation that began in 335BCE with Aristotle's *Poetics*. In acknowledging and interrogating previous scholarship on genre in Shakespeare's works, I trace monogeneric themes in analysis from Aristotle, through A.C. Bradley, through to later twentieth- and twenty-first-century critics. I challenge the practice of allocating genre based on plot features, including weddings and deaths; such actions are not conclusively representative of one genre alone. To enable this interrogation, I establish relationships between theories such as Nicolas Bourriaud's work on artistic exchange; Jacques Derrida's hypothesis on participation and belonging; and feminist research by scholars including Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva.

Performance analysis is a vital component of this thesis, alongside textual analysis. In a number of cases, multiple performances of a dramatic work are considered to illustrate the fascinating variety with which the text is translated from page to stage and the impact of different directorial decisions. I use the term 'textual analysis' to include the varying editions of Shakespeare's plays, and to consider that every *Complete Works* publication is not, in fact, complete. The existence of quarto texts makes clear an important process of dramatic evolution, particularly when dramatic works and their allocated genres shift between quarto and Folio versions. Such textual instability highlights the difficulties inherent in applying singular identities to dynamic works.

In locating performativity at the core of dramatic works and emphasising the key role of female characters, this thesis brings performance to the fore and presents an alternative 'lens of interpretation' for readers, watchers, teachers and scholars of Shakespeare.[1]

[1] Susan Snyder 'Introduction' in Susan Snyder (ed.), *All's Well that Ends Well* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p. 41.

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Introduction: 'devotion to Aristotle's checks'[1]

In 1.1 of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Tranio warns his master, Lucentio, against a life fully devoted to academic scholarship and being a 'stoic or stock'; significantly, in terms of this thesis, Tranio also advocates against 'devotion to Aristotle's checks' (glossed in the Arden edition of the play as 'restraints and counsels of moderation' (1.1.32)).[2] Shakespeare's name-checking of Aristotle's treatises on 'restraining' impositions of genre can be read as a vital insight into early modern considerations of generic processes of categorisation, and a foundational point for this thesis. 'Restraints' and 'checks' are certainly negative terms for Aristotle's 'counsels', connoting perhaps a resistance to the restrictive theories presented through Aristotle's work.[3] Tranio touches on a concept that underpins my entire argument in this thesis, that dramatic works should not be wholly subjected, or devoted, to Aristotle's 'checks'.

At the risk of sounding tangential, I want to start by posing this question: What does what Plato would have described as a bed have in common with Shakespearean tragedy? To answer this question, it is vital to bring in Plato. In *The Republic*, the author puts forward a dialogue in discussing imitation:

> The god made only one actual Form which is a bed. Two or more such things were neither created by the god, nor could they ever come into being. […] If [the god] were to make only two beds, a single one would be discovered beyond them whose

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[1] William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. by Brian Morris, *Arden Shakespeare* (London: Thomson, 2003), 1.1.32. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.
[2] William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, 1.1.32.
[3] This knowledge would, of course, be in opposition to the claims made by Ben Jonson that Shakespeare had 'little Latin and less Greek' in 'To the memory of my beloved, the author Mr William Shakespeare: and what he hath left us'.

> Form both of these beds would share, and that would be the actual bed, not these two. […] The god wanted to be the real creator of the bed which exists in reality, not a particular bed, nor a particular bed-maker, he created the one which in its nature is unique.[4]

From Plato's example of the bed (or *kline*) and his discussion on what has become known as the 'Platonic form', it transpires that there is only one (to continue with this image) ideal bed, and anything else purporting to be a bed is inferior by its imitative nature. This theory of the ideal form presents an approach whereby nothing deemed 'imitative' will ever measure up to the unattainable blueprint of perfection.

The ideal bed, furthermore, would have a number of markers to denote its state of divine perfection, perhaps including a type of armrest and a manner of leg. Similarly, and as will be shown throughout this thesis, monogeneric critics remain in pursuit of the 'ideal tragedy', likening every tragedy to an unattainable ideal, where the markers are seized upon as representative of the 'true tragedy'. A.C. Bradley is a prime example of this type of criticism, using phrases such as *Richard III*, *Richard II* and *Anthony and Cleopatra* (among others) are 'tragic histories or historical tragedies [which cannot] be judged by the standard of pure tragedy'.[5] 'Pure tragedy' or the 'ideal bed' will never, in reality, exist; imposing idealist concepts that will never be realised achieves little. This approach is precisely the type of criticism to which this thesis offers an alternative process of analysis.

In this introduction, I map the critical terrain and methodologies that inform my thesis, exploring the insufficiencies of relying wholly on what I

[4] Plato, 'Book X' in *Republic, Volume II: Books 6-10*, ed. and trans. by Christopher Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2013), pp. 390 – 490 (pp. 399, 401).
[5] A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1904), p. 21.

shall shortly come to describe as monogeneric approaches, instead suggesting an alternative approach that privileges the performative nature of dramatic works, and recognises the vital influence of female characters. In a thesis where the central argument is against singular standardisation, it would be hypocritical to argue that my approach should be promoted as a 'standard' line of enquiry; I do endeavour to retain focus on what Nicolas Bourriaud terms the ever-changing 'state of encounter', positing a way in which works can be accepted as volatile entities, coming to life in different productions.[6] My argument certainly does not cast aspersions on those many scholars whose works focus on genre; rather, I suggest that approaches to Shakespearean scholarship that recognise the sometimes inherent mingling or plurality of genres are more appropriate to dramatic analysis.[7] This challenge to monogeneric analysis is intended to address the complexities in assigning just one 'label' ('comedy', for example) to dramatic works.

In this thesis, I use a performative framework for analysing gender, inspired by the American post-structuralist philosopher Judith Butler, to present my approach to analysing Shakespearean drama. This alternative does not depend on monogeneric perspectives and recognises the influence of female characters on plots. In creating an analogical relationship between the performance of drama and the performance of gender, performativity can be recognised as an inherent aspect of Shakespeare's plays, through enabling criticism that privileges the constitutive and dynamic construction of dramatic

[6] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2002), p. 18. My reference to 'plurality' involves recognition of the multiple layers in dramatic works that make them inherently resistant to a singular explication or label.
[7] Shortly, I will discuss works by some critics who adopt more of a single genre theoretical perspective.

works. I demonstrate how the concept of identity politics posited by Butler in *Gender Trouble* is the conceptual hinge between exploring the performance of gender and the performativity of genre.[8] My thesis title, *Troubling Women Troubling Genre* is intended to echo Butler's title *Gender Trouble* (1999), to demonstrate the affinity between Butler's research into gender and my own into genre; the sense of troubling static processes of ontological and epistemological categorisation pervades my argument. In her preface to *Gender Trouble*, Butler states that 'the view that gender is performative [shows] that what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through the gendered stylization of the body'.[9] As I will demonstrate, monogeneric criticism can seek to impose an 'internal essence' on genres of plays, deferring to assumed, *a priori* ideas rather than recognising processes of construction.

Problems and definitions

To locate this thesis's position among other critical works on the subject of gender and genre, and to outline the key problems under consideration in this research, I will highlight approaches to the issue of genre from which I can further define my own critical position. There are four prominent twentieth and twenty-first century critics to whose views on genre I will make regular reference throughout this thesis: Linda Bamber, Andrew Stott, Penny Gay and Lawrence Danson. Of course, there are a number of other critics whose works will be discussed in reference to specific parts of this argument; however, I

[8] It is vital to set out, here, that my discussion of these relationships is presented in an analogical sense: I certainly do not venture that such relationships are identically formed and comprise the same components.
[9] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. xv.

have identified these four writers as particularly engaging in monogeneric criticism, pervading both scholarly texts and introductory works, and texts that focus on gender, or genre or the two combined.

Linda Bamber is one critic who persists in the 'restraining' mode of genre analysis while simultaneously relegating the role of female characters to a place that is 'other' to the eponymous male character, where applicable. Bamber does not overtly link gender and genre in her text; they appear as two separate entities that have been grouped together in one work (entitled *Comic Women, Tragic Men: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare*), but that have little relation to each other. Bamber's subtitle references gender and genre; however, she remains committed to the Aristotelian mode of genre studies, and adopts the phallocentric idea of man as 'self' and woman as 'other' ('The Self is masculine, then, in Shakespearean tragedy, and women are Other').[10] This train of thought invokes the rather stale Bradleyan approach to Shakespearean 'tragedy' where, drawing on Aristotle's work on the dramatic protagonist, the tragic hero was determinedly referred to as the 'centre' of the play. Problematically, Bamber writes that:

> In the comedies that world is manifestly reliable, orderly, a source of pleasure rather than a threat […] The possibility of betrayal in this world is very slight. The women will not betray the men, the comic world will not betray its chosen people, the playwright will not betray our expectations of a happy ending. The world of Shakespearean comedy is fundamentally safe and its women fundamentally good.[11]

Rather than constructing a critically coherent narrative of genre, Bamber makes statements that sit uncomfortably with the details of plays themselves.

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[10] Linda Bamber, *Comic Women, Tragic Women: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare* (Bloomington, IN: Stanford UP, 1982), p. 9.
[11] Bamber, pp. 20, 21.

This idea of 'betrayal' is particularly problematic since it indicates a presupposition, an expectation, even a reliance on the ideology of 'comedy', including temporary confusion but ultimately the restoration of societal order and a satisfying ending. This is a theme to which Bamber returns countless times in her work and is representative of the type of work challenged in this thesis.

Bamber's approaches in her work are questionable in various ways; for example she attempts to seek out the author, identifying Shakespeare's own attitudes towards gender, stating that 'in the comedies Shakespeare seems if not a feminist then at least a man who takes the woman's part'.[12] This is problematic, going against the Barthesian concept of the 'dead' author, and is certainly not a necessary part of exploring gender in Shakespeare's works. Elsewhere in Bamber's analysis, there are certain interpretive points that jar, such as where she states that 'Ophelia sings her sweet mad songs, and from here on she becomes an icon of positive femininity'.[13] This vague statement, raising the question 'what is positive femininity?' particularly in a young women who is left 'distract' and desperate after the death of her father and Hamlet's game-playing, achieves very little.[14] There are also inaccuracies of plot; Bamber removes women from the 'history' plays when she confidently asserts that 'The myth of the history plays involves fathers and sons. It does not involve mothers, daughters, or wives'.[15] Bamber's reference to 'the myth of the history play' demonstrates that she deals in general (and generic) ideas,

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[12] Bamber, p. 2.
[13] Bamber, p. 72.
[14] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in *Complete Works* ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 4.5.2. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.
[15] Bamber, p. 163.

rather than specific analysis of individual plays. In this statement, Bamber glosses over many kinds of female characters in history plays, even the fearsome Elinor in *King John*, the devoted Lady Anne in *Richard III* and the eloquent Kathryn of Aragon in *Henry VIII* (all mothers, daughters or wives). The approach that underscores much of Bamber's work on genre is her sentiment that 'In the comedies we may take a vacation from the serious concerns of the play because everything is sure to work out anyway'.[16]

Penny Gay, Andrew Stott and Lawrence Danson focus more on claiming restrictive forms of genre rather than discussing gender. Penny Gay determines the closing of 'comedies' as a 'feel-good ending', '[meeting] our conventional expectations of a simple happy ending'.[17] Gay implicates the audience's reception of plays when she asks the question 'What, irreducibly, does the audience experience in the two hours' traffic of a Shakespearean comedy?' responding, and echoing Bamber, with 'A sense that they have had the "holiday" of living in another world; of experiencing others' lives and problems with the assurance that most of them will be resolved happily at the play's end'.[18] This is an approach also followed by Andrew Stott, who states that '[Comedies'] taste […] was escapist, interested less in the "recurring disasters of life" and more in stories in which problems "always resolved in the inevitable happy ending which celebrated and cemented family unity"'.[19] This recurring concept of 'comedy' being escapist and always being resolved in 'happy endings' (Stott states elsewhere that 'comedy concludes with a

[16] Bamber, p. 172.
[17] Penny Gay, *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's Comedies* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), pp. 70, 139.
[18] Gay, p. 15.
[19] Andrew Stott, *Comedy* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 42.

standardized happy ending') is a key problem in monogeneric approaches to the genre such as these.[20]

Gay pushes this 'holiday and resolution' idea further, asserting that 'The end, when it finally and satisfyingly comes, will discharge all ignorance and misunderstanding […], will bring together those who deserve to be so, in marriage or family reconciliation'.[21] To state that the end 'when it comes' is 'satisfying', is clearly playing into monogeneric approaches where assumptions of genres are made in a general sense, excluding any permutations or nuances within different works. Gay puts forward her formula for 'romantic comedy', stating that:

> *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* together define what we now think of as the essence of "romantic comedy", a genre still potent today. Place [these plays] in the standard form of comedy, with its guarantee of a happy ending for the young lovers and justice served out to any malign figures, and you have Shakespearean romantic comedy.[22]

Gay's use of the word 'essence' succinctly encapsulates a key reason why I use Butler's theory of gender performativity as a conceptual framework to analyse monogeneric approaches to criticism. There is no 'inner gender' (or 'inner truth', as Butler terms it); neither is there an 'inner genre' in dramatic works and, therefore, no essence.[23] *Twelfth Night* and the problems with its ending (including the problematic 'twin swap') will be discussed in the first chapter of this thesis; for Gay to claim that it is one of three plays that define the 'essence of "romantic comedy"' is extremely reductive. Indeed, Gay's

[20] Stott, p. 114.
[21] Gay, p.15.
[22] Gay, p. 71.
[23] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 136.

description here is verging on being a mathematical formula rather than a coherent approach to dramatic analysis.

It is important to note that, alongside these four academic critics, this view is not just maintained by high-level academic work but also in more introductory texts, for younger readers and watchers of Shakespeare. The dangers of the monogeneric approach are apparent not only across the centuries but also across levels of texts; this means that its impact is wide-ranging, encouraging younger scholars into a mode of analysis that neglects dramatic dynamism and alternative interpretations. This approach, to follow Gay's quotation above, can also present to young readers a formula for interpreting Shakespeare's works which removes so much of the vitality and evolving nature of the works in performance. Pamela Bickley and Jenny Stevens, for example, state that

> *Twelfth Night* seems to conform, obligingly, to every convention of romantic comedy. […] Love is elevated throughout as the ideal state to which everyone aspires, and the play duly concludes with the promise of joint marriage ceremonies. […] Obstacles are overcome and confusion yields to benign resolution. [T]he final effect of the drama [is] joyous.[24]

This quotation comes from a text proclaiming to be a 'guide to text and interpretation'; the impression that Bickley and Stevens give here of *Twelfth Night* is that the play 'obligingly' conforms to 'every convention' of a genre, and all expectations are met. This 'guide' presents a reader with a 'how to' sentiment, dictating what they should expect and what they will find.

Paul Gleed observes that

> In everyday language, we tend to use the word *comedy* to mean "funny", but generically speaking comedy means something

[24] Pamela Bickley and Jenny Stevens, *Essential Shakespeare: The Arden Guide to Text and Interpretation* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 63.

> more like a happy ending. Typically a comedy is the coming together of lovers in marriage or the community in feasting after overcoming obstacles on the path to that reconciliation. A true comedy, then, might be a genuinely and uncomplicated happy ending.[25]

The approaches of Gleed, and Bickley and Stevens are, disconcertingly, as simplistic as the statements made by Danson and Gay, emphasising a wide-spread problem with monogeneric criticism at various levels (both introductory texts for fledgling Shakespearean critics and more rigorous scholarly texts published by university presses). Indeed, Danson states that

> Most of Shakespeare's comedies end in marriage or the promise of marriage, and with the reconciliation of at least some members of the cast of characters who had previously been at odds. For Shakespeare, it seems, a comedy is a play whose plot aims to achieve marriage and social harmony.[26]

Danson's fairly reductive view of 'comedy', in defining it purely by its destination ('marriage and social harmony'), succinctly encapsulates a key problem under consideration in this thesis, that plays have a formula applied to them that results in genres being assigned on the basis of what plays' endings superficially purport to do. This is evident in discussing the problem plays, where Gay states that '*Measure for Measure* does conform to the comic model by ending with marriages'.[27] That this play particularly can be slotted into Gay's formula of 'comedy' is troubling in such a morally dubious and concerning work; the content of the play seems to have been separated from the 'criteria' that genre demands (presented here through the wedding-as-ending plot feature) to enable this allocation of form. Danson partially acknowledges the issues with allotting the problem plays to the 'comedy'

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[25] Paul Gleed, *How to Write About William Shakespeare* (New York: Chelsea House, 2009), p. 66.
[26] Lawrence Danson, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p.3.
[27] Gay, p. 106.

category, but still persists in defining them *as* comedies: '[Problem plays] are plays which put dilemmas into action, unfolding and complicating them but refusing to resolve them. […] They are comedies (for the most part) but only sort-of'.[28] That a problem is clearly identifiable with marking this group of plays out as 'comedies', but critics are still unable *not* to declare them as 'comedies', highlights a further issue with monogeneric approaches. Criticism seems, in some cases, so anxious to define and label plays that it does not appear to matter whether or not the labels are correct. The distinct genre of problem plays was identified by F.S. Boas, in *Shakespeare and his Predecessors* (1896); the best part of a century on, Danson is representative of a group of critics who are unable to progress in genre criticism.

In discussing women in 'tragedies', Bamber asserts that 'Women do not change in Shakespearean tragedy; they do not respond to the events of the play, to the suffering, with new capabilities'.[29] This statement (significantly) reduces the female character to the level of apparently robotic, unresponsive subject: her failure to recognise the influence of dramatic characterisation does not endear itself to the scholar who privileges dramatic dynamism in Shakespeare's works. I take Bamber's theories to indicate her identification of the 'tragedies' as the arena in which the female characters do 'not respond to the events of the play'; she engages, here, with the Aristotelian approach to analysis which privileges the 'tragic hero' through the use of the 'fatal flaw'. The 'tragic hero' is, according to this theory, the only character who needs to respond to events, the only relevant character. Where my argument diverges from this view is to not only focus on the 'tragic hero' himself, but

[28] Danson, p. 13.
[29] Bamber, p. 8.

the people and events that surround him and can prompt him towards certain courses of action. It does not suffice to mark out the eponymous character as the 'centre' of 'tragedy'; I am interested in *how* he has come to be in this position. I analyse how the events forming the shape of a circle (the plot) have narrowed down to affect this character, to instruct him in his course of action, to influence how the plot develops. This development of plot can be driven or partially instigated by female characters, either, for example, antagonising the protagonist, or endeavouring to appear the 'model' daughter: Ophelia inadvertently influences the plot of *Hamlet* through her passivity, whereas Cordelia's refusal to play her father's egotistical game influences the tragic action in *King Lear*. The whole concept of a 'tragic hero' is certainly not moot; the ideology surrounding this character as a focal point in monogeneric analysis can be contested and the other characters' influences recognised in dramatic analysis.

In order to consolidate my theoretical position, I will briefly outline my definitions and uses of those key words and phrases that recur in this thesis. These terms include: 'gender', 'genre', and 'character'; I will also clarify the differences between my discussions of performativity of gender and performativity within plays as these processes are not identical. Genre is, fundamentally, a description of an artistic product (for example, music, plays, novels or films), referencing content and sometimes social function. It is when genre analysis fails to be descriptive and becomes *prescriptive* that monogeneric problems arise. Genre itself does not claim authority over how a work can be interpreted; it is the analysis undertaken by critics who apply generic or monogeneric approaches that is the problem. The dramatic genres

(and their applications) to which I refer in this thesis are primarily ‘comedy’, ‘tragedy’, ‘history’, ‘romance’ and ‘problem plays’ (with the first four being subject to prescriptive analysis, and the final one being more descriptive). The two genres which have been more intensely subjected to monogeneric approaches, are ‘comedy’ and ‘tragedy’; therefore, throughout this thesis, more critical attention is paid to dramatic works under these two labels.

The term ‘character’ is one which is sometimes problematised; critics such as L.C. Knights can complicate the use of the term (particularly through their identification of where the performance of character starts and ends) through pursuing analysis that suggests life before and after dramatic works (for example, in Knights’s work *How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?*). When I use the word ‘character’ in this thesis, and particularly in my exploration of how female characters influence how the plays develop, I certainly do not ascribe levels of autonomy to these characters outside the bounds of the dramatic work; these are the dramatis personae, the personnel of the plays. Of course, characters can conform to stereotypes or archetypes and in identifying their ‘individual’ influence in distinct plays, I do not venture to assert that such characters are absolutely unique in their construction or that they do not reference a stereotype. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines ‘character’ as ‘a person portrayed in a work of fiction, a drama, a film, a comic strip, etc.; (also) a part played by an actor on the stage, in a film, etc., a role’.[30] The *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* further notes that ‘distinction has often been made between “flat” and “two-dimensional” characters, which are simple and unchanging, and “round” character which

[30] http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/30639?rskey=phPjsu&result=1#eid [accessed 11 January 2015].

are complex, “dynamic” (i.e.: subject to development), and less predictable’.[31] The usage of the term ‘character’ in this thesis conforms to this definition, particularly through the identification of ‘round’ characters being ‘dynamic [and] less predictable’; ‘dynamic’ is a term used throughout this thesis in reference to the constitution of plays and characters, so its use here is particularly appropriate. Therefore, when I refer to characters, it is within the dramatic formulation of the play itself and not outside the bounds of the work.

The signifier ‘gender’ can have varying definitions; my use of the term recognises that ‘gender’ can be split into distinct facets of identity and expression. ‘Gender’ is not an all-encompassing concept. My approach is based on the premise that gender identity and gender *expression* are two distinct processes; ‘female’ is the gender identity, whereas ‘feminine’ is the gender expression. I agree with Butler’s separation of ‘types’ of gender in addition to sex; she writes that ‘we are in the presence of three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity and gender performance’.[32] ‘Female’ and ‘feminine’ are neither synonymous nor interchangeable. Butler’s *Undoing Gender* emphasises further still the problems in using ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ as denotative terms for gender expression, stating that ‘terms such as “masculine” and “feminine” are notoriously changeable; there are social histories for each term; their meanings change radically. […] the recurrence [of the terms] does not index a sameness’.[33] Of course, many processes of signification are culturally

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[31] Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p. 52.
[32] Butler, p. 187.
[33] Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 9-10.

contingent in this manner; however, I believe that the term ‘female’ retains semantic fixity in referencing a pervading ‘sameness’, as Butler terms it. Gender, whether male or female, is an identity which is performed, regardless of sex and/or genders assigned at birth.

Throughout this thesis, the performativity of gender and performativity of plays are discussed; as such, it is important to set out the differences between the two types of performativity. Gender performativity and performativity in dramatic works are, of course, distinct processes. In Butler’s work on gender performativity, there are four key elements which are particularly relevant to my research: that gender is constructed through the individual’s repetitive performance of gender; that there is no self preceding the gendered self (the ‘ideal gender’, perhaps, to refer back to Plato); that performativity of gender can be an imitation of dominant ‘gendered’ behaviours; and that the performativity of gender can be subversive. In reading genre as a practice that can result in homogenous groupings of plays such as ‘comedies’, inherited systems that presume a ‘doer before the deed’ are still in evidence (resulting in *a priori* processes of analysis, which can lead to monogeneric approaches). This is in evidence in, for example, work on ‘comedies’ where plays, rather than being read in the light of all previous ‘comedies’, should be analysed individually. Plays, perhaps inevitably, have moments which can define them (such as the skull-holding posture in *Hamlet* or the witches in *Macbeth*). Identifying plays by key plot points is not in itself a problem; it can, however, become a problem when plays are judged by general rather than specific plot devices and slotted

into a larger category (such as 'comedy'). 'Comedy' therefore becomes a more abstract term, indeed perhaps an unattainable ideal.

Performativity and processes

Studies of gender and genre collide when considering the process of performativity, particularly in regard to how Butler employs and considers this vital concept. It is time, in twenty-first century criticism, to cast off this 'one-size-fits-all' approach, and appreciate dramatic works for their dynamic, mutating vitality as opposed to searching for the perfect representation of a genre. An audience can never see the same Shakespearean play twice: every production emphasises different aspects of the plot; Pete Postlethwaite's *King Lear* is in no way the same as Derek Jacobi's, or Greg Hicks's, or even Simon Russell Beale's performances.

Danson asks, 'genres exist, but do they always exist in the same way? Or could they be culturally specific categories which change with the changing times, always recognizable yet always shifting with shifting currents of literary and cultural history?'[34] This is a pertinent question, but one which Danson does not pursue in order to compensate for the insufficiencies of monogeneric analysis present in his text. This point is also undercut by Danson's acceptance of a monogeneric approach, where he states that 'And so with all of Shakespeare's works, whether tragedy, comedy, or history: they fulfil the expectations appropriate to their kind, play by the rules of their own game, and demand that we interpret them accordingly'.[35] Such

[34] Danson, p. 4.
[35] Danson, p. 4.

acceptance of plays' 'kind[s]' and 'play[ing] by the rules of their own game' is a prime example of the type of critical attitude my research strives to challenge. The inherently culturally-specific nature of dramatic works directly impacts on and is impacted on by the ever-changing ideals and perceptions of gender. Butler presents a similar theory in *Gender Trouble*: 'the limits of the discursive analysis of gender presuppose and pre-empt the possibilities of imaginable and realizable gender configurations within culture'.[36] This sentiment translates to the study of genre alongside gender in identifying the cultural contingency present in both systems of classification and performance.

Sara Salih notes of Butler's assertion that 'gender proves to be performative' that this has caused confusion. She asks:

> How can there be a performance without a performer, an act without an actor? Actually, Butler is not claiming that gender is a performance, and she distinguishes between performance and performativity (although at times in *Gender Trouble* the two terms seem to slide into one another).[37]

She notes further that 'performance presupposes a preexisting subject, performativity contests the very notion of the subject'.[38] The theatre, of course, is not a performative environment, although it is one for performance. The concept of agency and what could be termed 'the person behind the curtain' responsible for the 'doing' is a significant concept for my research, in presupposing, as Butler writes, a 'preexisting subject'. Nietzsche, in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, stated that 'there is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed – the deed is

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[36] Butler, p. 12.
[37] Sara Salih, *Judith Butler*, *Routledge Critical Thinkers* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 63.
[38] Salih, p. 63.

everything': in my argument, I focus on the deed in the process of the effecting and becoming, negating the supposed 'being', the sense of compulsion, which is, in this case, drama.[39]

In Butler's identification of a 'rigid regulatory frame' that 'congeal[s] [to produce] a natural sort of being', delimited freedom to choose or alter what may be seen as an inevitable outcome of 'choosing' a gendered identity is exposed.[40] Butler claims that 'the task is not *whether* to repeat, but how to repeat'; the repetition is predetermined.[41] Within such a frame, as Salih notes, '"the script" is already determined[:] the subject has a limited number of "costumes" from which to make a constrained choice'; or as Butler puts it, 'there is only a taking up of the tools where they lie, where the very "taking up" is enabled by the tool lying there'.[42]

Butler makes clear her recognition of the limitations of influence, and does not advocate a radical overthrow of the hegemonic 'fact' of gender identities. There is no option for complete reinvention of the ideological 'script' or 'wardrobe' but there is scope for alteration in how the 'tools' are used, how the repetition is enacted.[43] Salih's wardrobe metaphor is particularly effective in illustrating this point. In it, her incorporation of 'ripped clothes and sequins represent [...] attempts to "do" gender in subversive and unexpected ways'.[44] This imagery creatively and visually represents the 'how to' in Butler's discussion of repetition; the clothes from

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[39] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1969), p. 45.
[40] Butler, p. 33.
[41] Butler, p. 148.
[42] Salih, p. 63; Butler, p. 145.
[43] Salih, p. 66.
[44] Salih, p. 66.

the ‘gender wardrobe’ are in existence in Salih’s analogy, but the addition of sequins and augmentation of rips represent a difference in the adoption of the clothing. Salih identifies an accompanying result of ‘mak[ing] do with the “tools”’, where ‘radically modifying them [will] reveal the “unnatural” nature of gender’.[45] The approach to analysing drama through the representation of gender that I offer in this thesis is my own metaphorical use of sequins. I do not argue that genre should be cast off as a form of analysis, but rather that the rips and sequins in this analogical ‘wardrobe’ should be represented through the consideration of plays from a multi-genre perspective.

Julia Kristeva has stated that literature is ‘always in the process of becoming’, with ‘process’ conveying action and movement; it does not exist to be examined in stasis.[46] De Beauvoir noted that ‘Woman is not a fixed reality but a becoming’; as with Kristeva’s statement, the emphasis is again on a dynamic process of becoming.[47] Analysis of genre, such as that crystallised by Aristotle, continued by Bradley and other writers in the Aristotelian mould, is a process of comprehension that does not stop but continues, keeps on ‘becoming’. The dynamism inherent in ‘becoming’ has often been negated by scholars favouring what Megan Becker-Leckrone terms an ‘anaesthetized’ approach to literature, which results in such critics becoming ‘scientists of the dead’: ‘archivists, archaeologists, and necrophiliacs’.[48] Kristeva’s recognition of such ‘process[es] of becoming’

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[45] Salih, p. 66.
[46] Kristeva, p. 3.
[47] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (London: Vintage, 2010), p. 46.
[48] Megan Becker-Leckrone, *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2005), p. 7.

paints a dynamic picture of action and self-definition that affect our perceptions both of literature and of gender.

Butler articulates a particularly relevant theory which can be used for my purposes, here: '[The] antifoundationalist approach to coalitional politics assumes neither that "Identity" is a premise nor that the shape and meaning of a coalitional assemblage can be known prior to its achievement'.[49] Both gender and genre are examples of coalitional practice, where social, geographical, and cultural influences work together in the construction of the *processes* of becoming. This antifoundationalist premise denies theories of origin and derivation; similarly, it challenges the notion of entities travelling towards a marked point or destination, whether that is 'male' or 'female', 'tragedy', 'comedy', or 'history'. I take up this hypothesis, and apply it to the constitutive processes involved in the production of a play.

'Boy[ing] greatness': gender in drama

The 'gender' to which I refer when examining Shakespeare's female characters is in the instituted, multi-faceted *construction* of female characters that audience members encounter. All such characters that audiences and readers meet, whether they are present as a Lady Macbeth, an Ophelia, Desdemona, Viola, Cordelia, or Cleopatra, are identified through their relationships with men: they are daughters, lovers, sisters, wives, or mothers. This is demonstrated in the Folio list of Dramatis Personae: in *King Lear*, Regan is identified beneath Lear as 'his second daughter'; in *Much Ado About*

[49] Butler, p. 62.

Nothing, Beatrice is described as 'niece to Leonato'.[50] Gender itself functions as a means of categorisation, and Shakespeare's female characters further appear to be double-bound: by biology itself, and by the relevant associated restrictive social codes. Men have usually been the focal points in social drama; there are heroes, tragic heroes, villains and kings. Jacques Lacan identified Ophelia in relation to the eponymous character as 'that piece of bait', stating that she is 'linked forever, for centuries, to the figure of Hamlet'.[51] Adherence to, or rebellion against, the various norms of gender constitution (whether behavioural, physical or psychological) play a significant part in the construction of character, which then exercises influence on the plays themselves.

In illustrating my focus on gender expression (which does, necessarily, encompass some elements of gender identity) my approach to the Butlerian theory of 'constitutive acts', and the ways in which this is assimilated this into my argument can be identified more clearly. Butler surmises that:

> If the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity.[52]

Butler explodes the notion of 'inner truth' arising from discourses attempting to stabilise gender distinctions; the case is not that external gender is made possible through an 'inner' cohesion. In considering the necessary distinction between gender identity and gender expression in cisgendered heterosexual

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[50] William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, ed. by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, David Scott Kastan and H.R. Woudhuysen, *Arden Shakespeare* (London: Cengage, 2001), pp. 634, 914.
[51] Jacques Lacan, Jacques-Alain Miller and James Hulbert, 'Desire and Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*', *Yale French Studies*, 55 (1977), 11-52 (pp. 11, 20).
[52] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 136.

practice, the same principles apply in the form of imitation, the taking up of the same 'wardrobe' of gender options and the potential for subversion. 'Femininity' (as opposed to 'female') occupies a specific point on the spectrum of gender expression; it indicates heightened characteristics expressed in a more conscious manner than the perhaps unconscious self-presentation of 'female'. It is clear that societal norms and cultures ascribe certain meanings to these terms, which fluctuate depending on, for example, country or environment.

Butler expands further on the gender identity/expression relationship in a discussion of drag, noting that 'rejection of an expressive model of drag which holds that some interior truth is exteriorized in performance needs, however, to be referred to [a consideration of] how gender *appears* and what gender *signifies*'.[53] It is this process of explicit gender performance (that may either reflect or corrupt the object of imitation) against which Cleopatra protests when being taken to Rome in 5.2 of *Antony and Cleopatra*; she primarily exclaims against 'see[ing] Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness / I'th' posture of a whore'.[54] Through this reference, and Shakespeare's creation of the verb 'to boy', the dramatic practice of boy actors representing women is perhaps being mocked or its process of construction exposed (indeed, noting how gender appears while simultaneously considering what it signifies). Cleopatra seems to recognise this dramatic convention as a means through which her 'greatness' would be corrupted or trivialised to the extent where she may be perceived as a 'whore'.

[53] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (Oxon: Routledge, 1993), p. 179.
[54] William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 5.2. 218-20. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

Shakespeare creates a verb that engages in a specifically gendered, representational dance, and audience members see (albeit an illusion of) a dominant female character exclaiming against the tradition that threatens to subsume her very core as a character. Cleopatra's 'greatness', in this instance, is dependent upon how she employs a sensuous femininity to her advantage. Of course, one cannot escape the irony that these lines produce since, rather than avoiding the entire issue, Shakespeare marks out this theatrical event as part of a constructed drama. The creation of this verb 'to boy' helps to reinforce the performance and performativity aspects of gender expression in Shakespearean drama.

In the argument I propose, it is necessary to outline my position on the boy actor debate which, through reference to Butler's performativity work, actually ceases to be a representational issue. Butler stated that:

> In opposition to theatrical or phenomenological models which take the gendered self to be prior to its acts, I will understand constituting acts not only as constituting the identity of the actor, but as constituting that identity as a compelling illusion, an object of belief.[55]

Rather than complicate, problematise, and even trivialise the female role, the boy-actor actually enters into a phenomenological field where he contributes to the realisation that gender is performative, not essentialist. Pursuing Butler's reference to a 'compelling illusion', Andrew Gurr discusses the facts of the boy actor's role within the societal contexts of its role as an illusion:

> When it was boys pretending to be adults the effect removed the unease the superior classes felt at seeing the stronger forms of stage illusion when adults played adults, since the boys were more obviously play-acting the adult emotions.[56]

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[55] Butler, 'Performative Acts', p. 520.
[56] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), p. 125.

The 'anti-illusionism' to which Gurr refers reinforces the theatrical element of the boy-actor: while Coleridge's 'willing suspension of disbelief' forms an important part of drama.[57] The act of attending a theatrical production involves a transaction on behalf of the audience with the cast which extends not only to the dramatic action, but also to the actors who facilitate that action.

While the male presence on the stage cannot be denied, the female portrayal takes precedence over the biological features of the actor. When constructing a female character for the stage, Shakespeare would have been aware that she would have to be enacted by a man or boy-actors. When Desdemona rebels against the patriarchal authority of Brabantio, it is not to be taken as a boy dressed as a girl performing (or in such an instance feigning) this rebellion. This was simply protocol of the period; as Butler states, gender is constructed, whether this process is spurred on by choice or a pragmatic response to the exclusion of women from the stage.

The illusion of the boy actor is augmented by the transvestism that accompanies and enables the performance of gender. Where this performance differs from drag is in the extent to which the gender is adopted and exaggerated; earlier in this introduction, the distinctions between gender expression and identity were discussed and drag is situated firmly in the exaggerated type of gender expression. Drag is particularly relevant to my argument through providing a fluid arena for imitation that does not presuppose a gendered subject prior to the exterior performance. Butler pushes the comparison further by stating that 'drag is subversive to the extent that it reflects on the imitative structure by which hegemonic gender is itself

[57] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Biographia Literaria', in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, vii (London: Routledge, 1983), p. 6.

produced and disputes heterosexuality's claim on naturalness and originality'. [58] The importance of drag to this argument involves understanding how the gender parody, enacted by drag, exposes the artificiality of determining the existence of an 'original'. In her comprehensive study of cross-dressing, Marjorie Garber traces the lineage of drag through identity and deliberate performance:

> The story of transvestism in western culture is in fact […] bound up with the story of homosexuality and gay identity, from "drag" and "voguing" to fashion and stage design, from the boy actors of the English Renaissance stage to Gertrude Stein and Divine.[59]

In not permitting a distinction between 'artificial' and more identity-based transvestism, Garber implicitly acknowledges the performance of gender expression as equally valid whether constructed for the stage or not. As she notes, 'Robertson Davies in his book *Shakespeare's Boy Actors*, published in 1939, calls the Elizabethan boy apprentices "female impersonators"'.[60] The concept of rhetoric shaping gendered identity recurs: in marking out these actors as 'boy-players', a pre-existing gender is denoted, whereas 'female impersonators' refers to the matter being impersonated, rather than to a subject identified as a point of origin. As Butler succinctly puts it, 'gender is a kind of persistent impersonation that passes as the real'.[61]

Biological facticity, then, ceases to be a singular defining factor in the gendering of a person: by extension of her theory, Butler does not identify the boy-actor's sex as a vital feature when he steps out onto the stage; it is the

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[58] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 85.
[59] Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 4.
[60] Garber, p. 89.
[61] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 101.

subsequent 'constituting acts' that form the dramatis persona's gendered identity. The act of constructing a Shakespearean woman's identity forms this 'compelling illusion'. Butler quotes Parker Tyler to introduce a chapter in *Gender Trouble*: '"Garbo 'got in drag' whenever she took some heavy glamour part […] How resplendent seems the art of acting! It is all impersonation, whether the sex underneath is true or not"'.[62] The performing of the female gender by a man, or boy in this case, can come under the umbrella term of 'cross-dressing', which proves to be of value when examining gender categories. Garber writes that:

> One of the most important aspects of cross-dressing is the way in which it offers a challenge to easy notions of binarity, putting into question the categories of "female" and "male", whether they are considered essential or constructed, biological or cultural.[63]

The boy-actor participates in a performance/performativity cycle that urges us to reconsider how we view gender, through performing 'woman' in a way in which female or feminine characteristics are accentuated, particularly in an arena for performance.

Butler wrote that 'the acts by which gender is constituted bear similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts'.[64] Performance and performativity are entangled inextricably in the dramatic work, where gendered characters are constructed within the artificial and performative environment of the theatre. Butler's reference to the 'acts by which gender is constituted' may also be applied to drama, to investigate the constitutive process inherent in creating a dramatic work. De Beauvoir stated that 'the

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[62] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 163.
[63] Garber, p. 10.
[64] Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre Journal*, 40.4 (1998), 519-31 (p. 521).

body is a not a *thing*, it is a situation'; the play, as well as the body, is a situation of activity, of a continual frenzy of redeveloping, establishing new and evolving identities.[65] The spheres of dramatic genre and gender can be strongly linked by Butler's theory of performativity: she wrote that 'gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceede [sic]; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts'.[66] This statement relates perfectly to *a priori* considerations of genre: it is not a definitive point from which a number of strikingly similar plays appear, each conforming to the Aristotelian or Bradleyan model of genres.

Invoking the concept of 'identity politics', it is such 'stylized repetition[s] of acts' which have helped, problematically, to define dramatic works: 'comedies' have so often repeated elements of earlier 'comedies' that their identities have appeared to be indisputable. De Beauvoir further qualifies her discussion of the body as a 'situation' by stating that 'it is our grasp on the world and the outline for our projects'; this comment indicates that a body is merely the starting point for discussion and exploration.[67] As such, comparing types of bodies and types of plays for better comprehension of specific bodies or plays proves an initially-useful exercise, but one to which analysis should not be confined. Butler, in discussing Monique Wittig's *The Lesbian Body*, observes that the author effectively inaugurates a 'post-genital politics', which banishes *a priori* methods of classification, the process referred to by Butler as 'pregendering'.[68] Butler negates the static

[65] De Beauvoir, p. 46.
[66] Butler, 'Performative Acts', p. 520.
[67] De Beauvoir, p.46.
[68] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p.4.

rigidity of categorisation throughout her work on performativity in gender: she writes that the gendered body 'has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality', rather it is constructed through expressions, speech and movement.[69]

It is puzzling that genre has not extensively been afforded this type of analysis: for a dramatic work, performance is inherent, and performativity comes through the adoption of certain acts and characteristics presented onstage in the pursuit of a gendered identity. Performing such identities within the environment of the theatre increases the dramatic portrayal of the act or sequence of acts resulting in a gendered character. Butler asserted that gender 'has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality'; I argue that, to manipulate Butler's phrase, there is no ontology of genre.[70] Becker-Leckrone noted that when literary critics retain a monogeneric mindset to literary scholarship (including, in my opinion, Penny Gay, and Linda Bamber among others) they remain 'fascinated by the remains of a process'.[71] This is particularly problematic when considering dramatic works.

Gender and genre: categories, labels and signs

The primary link between literary, and more specifically *dramatic*, genres and gender is that of categorisation, or the seemingly 'natural' approach to differentiation. Butler argues convincingly against the use of binary divisions as a means to define people in gendered terms: to reinforce her argument she

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[69] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 185.
[70] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 185.
[71] Becker-Leckrone, p. 7.

quotes Foucault, stating that '"Nothing in man – not even his body – is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men"'.[72] The decentring of the biological determinants of gender as definitive and valid means of identification inevitably impacts on the way we perceive ourselves and others. Similarly, genre has previously existed as a means of differentiating dramatic works: a 'tragedy' was a 'tragedy' because it was not a 'comedy'. Through watching plays considered or advertised as being 'tragic' or 'comic', audiences learned to predict certain features of plot and stock characters.

In constructing a theoretical framework that explicitly draws on Butler's work on performativity, one particular area of consideration is the role that language plays in the construction of identities (both gendered people and 'genre-d' plays) and the denotative and constitutive functions language performs. Foucault indicates the reductive impact of some terms in *The Order of Things*, stating that:

> Each group can be given a name. With the result that any species, without having to be described, can be designated with the greatest accuracy by means of the names of the different groups in which it is included. Its complete name will cross the entire network of characters that one has established, right up to the largest classifications of all.[73]

Foucault's assertion that all entities can be 'given a [group] name' reflects a concept that is interrogated by Macbeth in 3.1 of the eponymous play, contrasting the group name with the particular attributes of the members of that group. As Macbeth unpicks the identity and the various manifestations of the noun 'dog', so too other denotative terms hide complexities of identity

[72] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 165.
[73] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), p. 141.

within a single word, the group name or the 'bill that writes them all alike'.[74] Upon meeting with his hired murderers, the newly-crowned King of Scotland responds to their assertion that 'we are men, my liege', with the observation that:

> Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,
> As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
> Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are clept
> All by the name of dogs. The valued file
> Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
> The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
> According to the gift which bounteous nature
> Hath in him closed, whereby he does receive
> Particular addition, from the bill
> That writes them all alike. And so of men (3.1.93-103.).

Macbeth recognises the plurality and variety in the single denotative term 'man' as a necessary component of identity. Indeed, to return to Plato, the narrator in the *Republic* states that 'I think we've got into the habit of positing some single individual Form when we're dealing with each of the many groups of things to which we apply the same term'.[75] This theory is evident in Macbeth's questioning of the term 'men'.

Foucault stated that 'the value of language lay in the fact that it was the sign of things'; the word 'sign' does not offer a full explanation or an all-encompassing nature, but the potential for subjects to be recognised through the facilitative and denotative purposes of signs.[76] Foucault presents a term relating to such a cultural code of interpretation in his consideration of 'a discursive formation', which 'presents the principle of articulation between a

[74] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 3.1.102 All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.
[75] Plato, p 393.
[76] Foucault, p. 37.

series of discursive events and other series of events, transformations, mutations, and processes'.[77]

Clearly, signifying processes and rhetorical complexities abound in the demarcation of, and in reference to, both gender and genre. Following on from Butler's and Foucault's observations on identity politics and classification, my analysis of Shakespeare's plays explores the ways in which genders and dramatic works are actively manifested through performance, as opposed to being dictated through plot device. Foucault's work on hermeneutics and semiology discusses various means of classifying natural entities: he observed that Linnaeus maintained 'that all of nature can be accommodated within a taxonomy, [with] others, like Buffon, holding that [nature] is too rich and various to be fitted within so rigid a framework'.[78] The traditional categorisation of drama corresponds with Buffon's opinion: dramatic variety struggles against such a prescriptive generic structure. Foucault asserted that 'the value of language lay in the fact that it was the sign of things', and is thus a valid means to decipher the world's secrets.[79] Through this post-Saussurean approach, Foucault echoes the medieval concept that the natural entities of the world are entangled in a complex web of resemblance, where the decryption of 'signatures' appeared the only means of identifying 'type', and meaning. Foucault moved on to assert that 'classification, as a fundamental and constituent problem of natural history, took up its position historically […] between a theory of the mark and a theory of the organism'.[80] Classification, then, is exposed as a process endeavouring to close the gap

[77] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Oxon: Routledge, 2003), p. 74.
[78] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 126.
[79] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 33.
[80] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 145.

between the ‘signature’ and the ‘thing’. Foucault’s terming of this process as a ‘constituent problem’ hints at the fact that the issue arises when considering the bigger ‘whole’ into which classification fits; furthermore, this can be applied to the performativity aspects of my argument, where individual elements should always be considered in the light of the overall entity.[81]

The affinity between the two ‘regulatory frame[s]’ (gender and genre) extends to a language-based, etymological level: ‘gender’ and ‘genre’ share the same Latin root, ‘genus’, for ‘kind’, ‘sort’, or ‘type’.[82] The etymology of ‘gender’ includes ‘gendre’, which reinforces this affinity further, portraying gender and genre as analogically similar structures. Furthermore, I refer to methods of production (in theatre or filmed performance) and processes of *becoming* or generating and evolving. ‘Generate’, too, is etymologically linked to ‘gender’ and ‘genre’, evolving from the same stem, implicitly demonstrating the performance and development silently contained within these signifiers. Processes of signification and representation through language (‘discursive formation’) are central to my argument. It is the concept of identity and signification politics that so coherently links gender and genre.

Both Butler and Foucault recognise the role of language in categorisation and power structures, and they emphasise the importance of language in its potential for representation and signification, all of which justifies my consideration of discourse in the construction of identities.

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[81] It seems appropriate, at this point, to explain how I refer to genres within this thesis. To depict my recognition of fallibility in laws of the ‘tragic’ and the ‘comic’, I use inverted commas to denote their previously accepted statuses and names, without actively engaging in their classificatory function. This decision represents and acknowledges decades of genre-oriented scholarship while I offer an alternative approach to how genre can be perceived.
[82] See the Oxford English Dictionary:
http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77468?rskey=f2uIev&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid
[accessed 29th January 2015].

Whether 'gender' or 'genre', the use of a title to differentiate certain objects from other objects is perhaps no longer productive: critically-named genres do not always behave in the manner in which critics have assumed they do, and women or men do not always adhere to the strict behavioural 'norms' with which we (as twenty-first-century Westerners) have previously associated their genders. Gender has hitherto been, more or less, a means for differentiation in that, at a purely biological level, some people 'must' be contrasted with other people for purposes of identification. Jacques Derrida notes that 'marks' or 'signatures' of differentiation play an important role in how the signified entity or process is experienced or received; John Drakakis identifies the 'teleological objectives' of these markers, stating that, for example, 'in one genre [of comedy or tragedy] the ending is happy, and in the other the tragic hero usually dies'.[83]

Derrida's essay 'The Law of Genre' (1980) examines the complex relationship of genres to 'texts', and vice versa, engaging in the Foucauldian rhetoric of 'marks' and 'participation' while considering literary identities:

> A text would not *belong* to any genre. Every text *participates* in one or several genres, there is no genreless text, there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging. And not because of an abundant overflowing or a free, anarchic and unclassifiable productivity, but because of the *trait* of participation itself, because of the effect of the code and of the generic mark. In marking itself generically, a text unmarks itself. If remarks of belonging, participate without belonging, then *genre-designations cannot be simply part of the corpus*.[84]

[83] John Drakakis, 'Shakespeare Against Genre', *Northern Renaissance Seminar* (University of Chester: March 2012); Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p.145.

[84] Jacques Derrida and Avital Ronnell, 'The Law of Genre', *Critical Inquiry*, 7.1 (1980), 55-81 (p. 65).

Derrida's distinction between belonging and participation flags up an important element of identity politics. The construction of an identity is a continual process of participation, not a stasis-inducing allocation of labels. Derrida's interrogation of this 'law' of genre takes into account a body of 'rules' and *a priori* distinctions between the 'biological *genre*, or the human *genre*' and what he terms the 'nonnatural laws (for example, an artistic, poetic, or literary genre)'.[85] Such differentiations between 'human' and 'nonnatural' genres invoke questions of identity formation. Furthermore, using the rhetoric of 'naturalness' calls to mind biologically essentialist trains of thought that place significance and identification within such 'naturalistic' paradigms. It is vital to observe that, as Derrida notes, 'participation *never* amounts to belonging'.[86] It may be possible for a text/play-text to *participate* in the genre of 'comedy', or be 'comic', without being classified permanently as '*a* comedy'. The difference between being subjected to noun-status (being labelled a 'comedy') and engaging in 'comedy' in an adjectival sense ('comic') is paramount; a work can feature 'comic' elements while being designated a 'tragedy', and vice versa. Rosalie Colie demonstrates the problems in assigning a play-text to a specific genre, anticipating Derrida's 'participation and belonging' thesis:

> When the mad Lear says 'they cannot touch me for coining; I am the King himself… Nature's above art in that respect,' the two modes, tragic and pastoral, converge to make us realize that commitment to the ethos of one of those modes is threatened at its roots by a demand for commitment to the other.[87]

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[85] Derrida, p. 56.
[86] Derrida, p. 56. My italics.
[87] Rosalie Colie, *Resources of Kind: Genre Theory in the Renaissance* (Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1973), p. 116.

Colie's definition of genres as 'modes' demonstrates flexibility in the teleological processes of signification and, more importantly, signals a move away from monogeneric analysis.

Later in his 'Law of Genre', Derrida asserts that 'as soon as genre announces itself, one must respect a norm, one must not cross a line of demarcation, one must not risk impurity, anomaly or monstrosity' but he goes on to suggest, through his deployment of 'a principle of contamination', a division at the core of the law itself:

> What if there were within the heart of the law itself, a law of impurity, or a principle of contamination? And suppose the condition for the possibility of the law were the *a priori* of a counter-law, an axiom of impossibility that would confound its sense, order and reason?[88]

Derrida's claim of the 'counter-law' involves the realisation that the law of genre is

> affected *straight away* by an essential disruption that [...] I shall let you name or qualify in any way you care to: as international division of the trait, impurity, corruption, contamination, decomposition, [...] generous proliferation or degenerescence.[89]

It is particularly noteworthy to observe here that Derrida labels 'generous proliferation' a form of 'contamination'. In the prologue to *Amphitruo* (185BCE), Plautus referred to *tragicomoedia*, or 'tragicomedy'.[90] As Verna A. Foster observed, this term was initially introduced as a joke, but has since been cited as a notable critical advance.[91] This concept has been seized upon by twentieth- and twenty-first-century genre-theorists so that in the last sixty years, further sub-genres of comedy have emerged in critical works on

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[88] Derrida, p. 57.
[89] Derrida, p. 57.
[90] Plautus, *Amphitruo*, trans and ed. by David M. Christenson (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), p. 6.
[91] See Verna A. Foster, *The Name and Nature of Tragicomedy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

Shakespeare, including ‘black comedies’, ‘romantic comedies’, and ‘social comedies’.

Aristotle, genre and editing

A culture pervades in which such proliferations of genre have yielded the relatively recent labels as noted above. Therefore, considerations of the reasonably stable Classical principles of drama must be contrasted with the dramatic environment in which new terms for types of plays are regularly emerging. The ways in which critics engage with Aristotle’s work on ‘tragedy’ and to a lesser extent, ‘comedy’ provided guidelines to dramatic interpretation which, while still warranting a place in criticism, must be assimilated with new processes of analysis. Adopting Aristotle’s principles from 335BCE is to impose Classical ideals on twenty-first-century thought. For example, Aristotle’s assertion that ‘tragedies’ must contain matters of ‘certain magnitude’ is clearly a culturally-contingent premise; what constituted ‘magnitude’ in Aristotle’s time of writing will inevitably differ from the current definition.[92] Specifically for this thesis, Aristotle separates plot from character, establishing a hierarchy between what I consider to be two equally vital elements of a play’s construction; he states ‘the Plot, then, is the first principle [of ‘tragedy’], and, as it were, the soul of a tragedy: Character holds the second place’.[93] Again, the troubling image of an inner ‘core’ (whether ‘essence’ as in Gay’s terminology or ‘soul’ in Aristotle’s) of drama appears. In contrast, this thesis seeks to demonstrate the power of both character *and*

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[92] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Malcolm Heath (London: Penguin, 1997), p. 8.
[93] Aristotle, p. 9.

plot as components of plays that are equally important to the construction of dramatic works. Making this distinction presupposes that plot is completely separate from characterisation and that characters are not intrinsically involved in the dramatic action.

Northrop Frye identifies the theoretical habit of considering a single play as part of a wider ideological structure fitting into a framework of monogeneric study. He notes that:

> Comedy and romance are so obviously conventionalised that a serious interest in them soon leads to an interest in convention itself. This shifts the center [sic] of attention from individual works of literature to the larger groupings represented by the words comedy and romance themselves.[94]

The homogenising effect of identifying the 'comic' corpus prevents deviation from the standard set of expectations of a genre. Alexander Leggatt, in *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love*, refers to these implicit guidelines:

> While the term "comedy" has to be stretched a little if it is to include Shakespeare's final plays – since, after all, they include suffering and horror of a kind that comedy does not normally admit – we can see that, broadly speaking, they represent a return to comic form. The most important sign of this is their insistence on a total vision of order to which individual characters are subservient – thus reversing the vision of the tragedies.[95]

While Leggatt's investigation of the 'type' of comedy based around marital and romantic relationship is extremely insightful at times, he reverts to the Bradleyan form of genre analysis where a 'vision' of 'genre-d' plays is assumed. Butler writes of what she terms 'specificity' that

> The masculine/feminine binary constitutes not only the exclusive framework in which that specificity can be recognized, but in every other way the "specificity" of the feminine is once again fully [separated] from the constitution

[94] Northrop Frye, *A Natural Perspective: Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance* (New York: Columbia UP, 1965), p. 8.
[95] Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love* (London: Methuen, 1974), p. 259.

> of class, race, ethnicity, and other axes of power relations that both constitute "identity" and make the singular notion of identity a misnomer.[96]

Such consideration of various 'axes of power' reinforces the problematic reduction of a number of identities to a 'singular notion'.

Lawrence Danson noted that problem plays 'define themselves by the significant relationship to and distance from both [tragic and comic] genres', and he goes on to assert that '*Troilus and Cressida* […] could be either a failed comedy or a failed tragedy'.[97] Most genres function in this manner: the 'categories' listed in the First Folio of 'comedies', 'tragedies', and 'histories' are expanded upon in modern editions, where we see the inclusion of 'problem plays', 'romances', and even, in the RSC edition 'plays not in the First Folio'.[98] This is taken further in modern criticism, with critics searching for more genres: Naomi Conn Liebler asserts that within the dramatic species of 'tragedy' a smaller creature, the 'festive tragedy' can be located.[99] The attempted formalising of 'fill-the-gap' genres further attests to this apparent anxiety to classify each and every play: Jennifer Richards and James Knowles document how even the 'late' plays have appeared to take on their own genre, stating that 'the temporary adjectives 'last' or 'final' establish the plays written between 1607 and 1613-14 as a valedictory gesture, a mediated closure of an established body of dramatic writings which somehow exists as an independent imaginative world'.[100]

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[96] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 7.
[97] Danson, p. 6.
[98] William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), contents page.
[99] Naomi Conn Liebler, *Shakespeare's Festive Tragedy* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 1.
[100] Jennifer Richards and James Knowles (eds.), *Shakespeare's Late Plays* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999). p. 4.

In *Shakespeare and the Problem Play*, E.L. Risden provides a comprehensive overview of the potential and deficiencies of this 'mode' of categorisation:

> I suggest that though the term has proven a little squishy and critics have defined it variously, we can still apply it productively: we can say that Shakespeare made his plays difficult to define by genre, thus urging us to read or view them as they are, with all their peculiarities, not simply as representatives of a type popular on the stage in his time or before him.[101]

Risden continues, remarking that the term 'problem play' 'has aroused debate because in some ways it may seem to solve nothing: it leaves us with only a question about a play's genre, not even with a tentative guideline for reading', which is both a disconcerting and tantalising prospect.[102] Risden locates the underlying benefits of this term in relation to wider discussions on 'genre-d' practices:

> The "problem play" idea has sometimes helpfully, sometimes dubiously, informed discussion of Shakespeare's plays, and though, along with much genre criticism, it has gone out of fashion now, it has figured periodically in the scholarship that helps us understand how the plays work technically. […] But I believe it has value in that it suggests our discomfort with labelling a play according to traditional generic conventions.[103]

The suggestion that genre-related terms go 'out of fashion' is an interesting one; 'problem plays' have a capacity to disrupt and disconcert traditional genre boundaries. Genre truly is, to borrow Henry James's term for the nineteenth-century novel, a 'large, loose, baggy monster'; one might even add Risden's identification of 'squishy' into this mix.[104] Such proliferations of

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[101] E.L. Risden, *Shakespeare and the Problem Play: Complex Forms, Crossed Genres and Moral Quandaries* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012), p.4.
[102] Risden, p.1.
[103] Risden, p. 1.
[104] Henry James, *The Tragic Muse* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1890), p. 4.

genre surely arise from a sense of unease in forcing plays into *a priori* and prescriptive pigeon-holes. However, instead of merely increasing the number of 'categories' of dramatic literature, which could be a lengthy and rather unprofitable process, it surely makes more sense to develop alternative ways of examining drama. James's metaphor, furthermore, aids in clarifying my theoretical approach to genre: the hypothetical monster cannot be rendered invisible or unseen, but its 'baggy' state must be acknowledged as an integral part of its constitution.

Polonius, often seen as a bumbling and overly-wordy character, has a rare moment of insight in *Hamlet* when he declares the arriving players at Elsinore to be 'the best actors in the world, either for / tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, / historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical comical, historical-pastoral'[105] Polonius identifies all possible genres here, and there is a simultaneous shift from nouns to adjectives, referencing the expanding nature of genre and emphasising this spiralling criticism that would rather turn inward upon itself than seek alternative, *a posteriori* analytical approaches. This also indicates the humour that might stem (in the early modern period) from Polonius's form of criticism; his commentary almost anticipates Derrida's 'principle of contamination' through 'generous proliferation' of the genre. Derrida locates at the heart of his 'law of genre' (1980) a flaw, a principle, an inherent susceptibility to corruption or contamination, implicitly suggesting that all entities (even classified entities) are fallible, and subject to such impurities or corruption.

[105] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 2.2. 398-400. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

The combinations of genres as presented by Polonius can suggest implicit relationships where one 'type' of play is not to be experienced in isolation, but through its (either known or unknown) relationships with others. Nicolas Bourriaud stated that 'the work of every artist is a bundle of relations with the world, giving rise to other relations'; this can be usefully applied to drama, made particularly evident through Polonius's commentary here.[106] The appeal of the word 'bundle' in this context is through its ambiguous way of operating; it is a bundle, a nicely messy creation from which anything may emerge, indeed even combinations such as 'historical-pastoral' or 'tragical-historical' (2.2.400). Bourriaud states further that 'Artistic activity is a game, whose forms, patterns and functions develop and evolve according to periods and social contests; it is not an immutable essence. It is the critic's task to study this activity in the present'.[107] Here, Bourriaud sets up the terms for the *experiencing* of art, focussing particularly on its mutable existence and its interactive nature (what he declares an 'arena of exchange') with the human state.[108]

Bourriaud asserts that relational art is concerned with 'human interactions in the social sphere', that 'art is a state of encounter'.[109] This statement's brevity marks the impact of this concept; the implications of these six words pervade Bourriaud's focus on contemporary performance art, extending it to art as a general, overarching form. Drama, to trace one of these tributaries from 'art', is always in a process of exchange and transaction, of

[106] Bourriaud, p. 11.
[107] Bourriaud, p. 11.
[108] Bourriaud, p. 18.
[109] Bourriaud, p. 18.

permanently existing as 'a state of encounter'. Take, for example, the prologue to *Henry V*:

> But pardon, gentles all,
> The flat unraisèd spirits that hath dared
> On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
> So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
> The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
> Within this wooden O, the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt? […]
> Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:
> Into a thousand parts divide one man,
> And make imaginary puissance.
> Think when we talk of horses that you see them […]
> For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings.[110]

Here, Shakespeare invokes the reciprocal nature of drama, the process of transaction, the *contract* between players and audience members, where the 'wooden O' depicts the stage (specifically the Globe) and the audience. As will be discussed in the first and fourth chapters of this thesis, the circular shape (communicated through 'O') has specific implications for both the empowerment of female characters and also for the ways in which dramatic works can be analysed. In this case, however, focus should be trained on the exchange that takes place within the 'wooden O': this space encompasses both stage and seats, actors, groundlings and aristocrats. Within a single shape, a circle, multiple entities coexist and participate in a process of *exchange*. The shape of the 'O' is significant and simultaneously rather ironic to the extent that this space (in its theatrical construction) does not signify absence, but may 'attest in little place a million' (PRO. 16).

As perhaps two of the first editors of Shakespeare's plays, the influence of John Heminge and Henry Condell on his plays is one of the most

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[110] William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), Pro. 8-28. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

important considerations in the study of Shakespearean drama.[111] Editors are given privileged positions from which to influence or *guide* reception and responses. Shakespeare's play-texts are a site of action for editorial intervention, and Heminge and Condell initiated this process. Little is known of the editorial process undertaken by Heminge and Condell. However it is possible to locate their expertise more in theatrical performance than in scholarly endeavour. As two senior actors in the King's Men, these men took leadership of the theatre company after Richard Burbage's death in 1619; they also progressed to own shares in the neighbouring Blackfriar's Theatre. Their close bond with Shakespeare is well-documented, with both men receiving 'XXVIs VIIId A peece to buy them Ringes' in Shakespeare's will.[112] These two actors' control over the reception of the plays is clearly apparent in their preface:

> [we] haue collected & publish'd them; and so to haue publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious imposters, that expos'd them: euen those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes.[113]

Heminge and Condell's approach to editing appears to rest predominantly on the issues that arise from certain forms of transmission, including the creation and publication of potential memorial reconstructions. Therefore, one of their primary purposes in collating the Folio might appear to be in the service of *corrective editing*. Their claim that they 'onley gather his works and give

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[111] I adopt the spelling of Heminge and Condell that accompanies their preface 'To the great variety of readers' in the First Folio, though there are a number of variations in critical works. The Early Modern spelling of 'Henrie' has here been modernised to 'Henry'.
[112] 'Introduction to Heminge and Condell': http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/editors/h-c.htm [accessed 22nd April 2013].
[113] John Heminge and Henry Condell, 'To the great variety of readers', in Charles Hinman (ed.), *The First Folio of Shakespeare: The Norton Facsimile* (London: Norton, 1996), p. 7.

them' is not accurate: '[we] onely gather his works, and giue them you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him. and there we hope, to your diuers capacities, you will finde enough, both to draw, and hold you'.[114]

In a cursory reference to Shakespeare's death (and also, perhaps, a nod to the 1616 publication of Ben Jonson's *Complete Works*, wholly overseen by the author, as documented by David L. Gants), Heminge and Condell observe that:

> It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to haue bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liu'd to haue set forth, and ouerseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine.[115]

Jonson's publication of his *Workes* suggests a number of parallels with Shakespeare's own edition, seven years later. A self-proclaimed 'Classical author', Jonson published his dramatic works throughout his career, including an extremely ornate publication declaring 'The Workes of Benjamin Jonson'. Shakespeare, by contrast, appeared to have shown little, if any, interest in his play-texts being published, which perhaps fuelled the interest and motivations for such memorial reconstructions as the 'bad' quarto of *Hamlet*.[116]

Nicholas Rowe, one of the first editors and biographers of Shakespeare (1674–1718), makes reference in his preface to his scholarly edition of Shakespeare's works (1709) to the insufficiencies of reconciling

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[114] Hinman (ed.), p. 7.

[115] Hinman (ed.), p.7; also David L. Gants, 'The Printing, Proofing and Press-Correction of Jonson's Folio *Workes*', in *Re-Presenting Ben Jonson: Text, History, Performance*, ed. by Martin Butler (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 39-58.

[116] See Joseph Loewenstein, *Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002) for further information on Jonson's authorial decisions, particularly pp. 133–211 for details on the production of the Folio *Workes* (1616).

Shakespeare's works to the Classical patterns so favoured by, for example, Jonson. Rowe observes that

> Shakespear[e] lived under a kind of mere light of nature, and had never been made acquainted with the regularity of those written precepts, so it would be hard to judge him by a law he knew nothing of […] there was no established judge but everyone took the liberty to write according to the dictates of his own fancy.[117]

Furthermore, Rowe identifies an issue with genre that was noticeable even in the early eighteenth century: 'Those which are called histories, and even some of his comedies, are really tragedies, with a run or mixture of comedy amongst them'.[118] R.W. Maslen's *Shakespeare and Comedy* (2005) locates Shakespeare's 'comic' works in the midst of a 'fierce controversy' surrounding the genre between 1576 and 1642. Maslen identifies tensions between the 'comic' and 'tragic' genres through noting that '[Shakespeare's] plays are filled with jokes that go too far, laughter that hurts its victims […] and acts of comic rebellion and revenge that threaten destruction to individuals, families and even states'.[119] Maslen's analysis, however, offers little progression from the Classical ideas of generic assignment of texts. It would appear that the tense relationship between 'tragedy' and 'comedy' has become more a rite of analytical passage, as opposed to meriting sustained consideration.

Genre in Shakespeare is a less stable concept than is evident in the Grecian plays under consideration in Aristotle's *Poetics*. When Q2 *Hamlet* (1604) was published, the full title and genre suggested certain elements of

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[117] Nicholas Rowe, preface to *The Works of Mr William Shakespear[e]*, in Emma Smith (ed.), *Shakespeare's Comedies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 6.
[118] Rowe quoted in Smith, p. 6.
[119] R.W. Maslen, *Shakespeare and Comedy*, *Arden Critical Companions* (London: Thomson, 2005), p. 210.

plot and character: *The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke*. The identification of the play as a 'tragedy' communicates, to a modern audience at least, psychological and/or physical suffering, death, the fatal flaw and chaos. This version in particular, though not uniquely, causes confusion when contrasted with the Q1 edition circulated two years earlier. The label 'bad quarto' applied to the earlier text undermines any authority it might possess, yet it is a useful version in regard to genre in that the title differs from Q2, declaring instead *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke*. While it is not possible to argue that editors 'cared' about the titles of quarto editions, the fact that they were performed by Shakespeare's own theatre company, the King's Men, suggests that they were closer to Shakespeare than the Folio texts that passed through the Heminge-Condell editorial filter.

Close study of quarto and Folio variations (I determine them as different editions owing to their varying editorial practices and base texts) can reveal important details about the use of marriage as a closing device (analysed in my first chapter) and the dynamics of the mother/son relationship (as discussed in my second chapter). Heminge and Condell ignored earlier generic decisions in their preparation of the Folio for publication: many plays' genres and titles differ from their earlier states (if they appeared before the Folio, which only approximately half of them had). This course of action illustrates the malleable nature of genre as a classifying device, and also its vulnerability in projecting an image of unwavering uniformity of tone. Of course, the genre/title relationship is just one layer of genre-allocation (both in terms of its denotative and performance functions), with other considerations including the variable naming of characters and alteration of

dramatic actions also playing vital roles. Characterisation plays an important part in investigating these versions' generic assignment: in Q1, Hamlet's stepfather is named 'King' which continues the more political theme of the play than does the 'Claudius' of Q2. John Drakakis states that the 'history' play 'concern[s] itself with politics […] and tragedy as a matter of ethics'.[120] The naming of Claudius as 'King' in the Dramatis Personae and throughout the text may further reflect Q1's 'historical' status where certain features of the play are more politically skewed. Several examples reinforce this genre choice, including a politically complex ending, where the absence of Fortinbras is a cause of concern for the dying Hamlet. And it is the influence of such dramatic characterisation, I argue, that can be so important in the construction of a play. Names of characters sometimes extend well beyond, though still include, archetypal identification.

The alterations to dramatic genres in Shakespeare's works, then (regardless of the level of deliberate change), can cause confusion regarding the textual 'status' of the plays, throwing into sharp and unflattering relief the earlier quartos consequently dismissed as 'bad'.[121] Heminge and Condell's 'corrective' amendments enter into a long history of editorial practices where genres of plays are changed or removed from the titles of works and the plays themselves. Q1 *Hamlet* relates very closely to Q2 *Hamlet* regardless of how it was transmitted: the question that should be demanded of these texts is not

[120] Drakakis, p. 1.

[121] There is a significant body of work that addresses the topic of 'bad quartos', including Laurie Maguire's *Shakespeare's Suspect Texts* (2007), Robert Burkhart's *Shakespeare's Bad Quartos: Deliberate Abridgements Designed for Performance by a Reduced Cast* (1975), Steven Urkowitz 'Back to Basics: Thinking about the "Hamlet" First Quarto' in *The Hamlet First Published*, ed. by Thomas Clayton (1986). Most recently, Margrethe Jolly has written on *The First Two Quartos of Hamlet*: *A New View of the Origins and Relationship of the Texts* (2014).

how, why, or where they were printed, but what scholars can learn from them, and specifically, in this case, learn about *genre.* There is little definite information about Q1 *Hamlet* (its origins, how it links to other dramatic works of Shakespearean or non-Shakespearean authorship); the focus on this text here is to illustrate how play-texts and their paratexts can fluctuate, making the pursuit of monogeneric analysis less straightforward. It can be argued that such alterations in genres, from early quarto editions to the First Folio, demonstrate a tension between the spheres of performance and publishing that has not yet been reconciled.

The tensions between performance and printing are accentuated through reading Q1 *Hamlet*, not through the experiencing of it as an audience member. Q1 boasts a rich performance history, as documented by Kathleen Irace.[122] The title page of Q1 *Hamlet* reads: 'The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke. By William Shake-speare. As it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where'.[123] As Irace notes, 'if this claim is accurate, Q1 apparently preserves an authorised script of the play as performed by Shakespeare's company, the King's Men, in various locations in England'.[124] George Altman states:

> The fact remains that the "Bad" Quarto is a mirror of an original performance; a sullied mirror, but a mirror and the only one we have. Only the "Bad" Quarto can give us information about *Hamlet* as originally performed, and therefore it deserves serious study by stage directors.[125]

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[122] See Kathleen O. Irace, *The First Quarto of Hamlet* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp. 17-27.
[123] Irace, p. 1.
[124] Irace, p. 1.
[125] George Altman, 'Good Advice from the "Bad" Hamlet Quarto', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 20.4 (1950), 308-18 (p. 308).

Altman's focus on the 'bad' quarto as offering an insight into Renaissance performance is important: in modern research on these texts, investigation should not be predominantly focused on conjectural theories of authenticity and authority, but more on their *use*.[126] The problematic or flawed state of the text is largely accepted: the dramatic relevance of the play-for-performance, however, is far from 'bad' and, as such, merits considerable attention. My integration of such 'bad' quartos as Q1 *Hamlet*, and the play-text of *The Taming of A Shrew* is designed to point out vital performative details; I incorporate these play-texts into my argument in order to depict the dramatic evolution of the works concerned, rather than focusing on issues of authority and authenticity.

In modern editions of the *Complete Works*, editorial licence is relatively unrestrained: Folio readings are amalgamated or augmented with quarto readings and many different approaches are taken regarding preliminary textual matter. Indeed, Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey note of *The Taming of A Shrew* that, 'from the beginning of this century[,] the 'non-Shakespearean' text has been used in theatrical practice to complete the authorised but insufficient 'Shakespearean' play [of *The Taming of the Shrew*]'.[127] The Arden Shakespeare *Complete Works* does not arrange the plays by genre but in alphabetical order.[128] The Royal Shakespeare Company's Folio-based edition of 2007 presents 'comedies', 'tragedies',

[126] See William Shakespeare, *Hamlet: The Texts of 1603 and 1623*, ed. by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, *Arden Shakespeare* (London: Thomson, 2006). The editors' introduction (pp. 1-38) includes detailed work on transmission theories surrounding Q1 *Hamlet*.
[127] William Shakespeare, *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, Called The Taming of a Shrew*, ed. by Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey (Hertfordshire: Harvester, 1992), p. 13.
[128] William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, ed. by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, David Scott Kastan and H.R. Woudhuysen, *Arden Shakespeare* (London: Cengage, 2001), contents page.

‘histories’, and (interestingly) ‘plays not in the First Folio’.[129] Habits of classification vary from edition to edition. The practice of listing the plays in alphabetical order with no genres in individual editions could signal a shift, or a desire to move towards alternative methods of categorising the plays: indeed, the Oxford Shakespeare (2005) provides two options, with the contents first listed chronologically, and then alphabetically.[130] The shortening of titles from, for example, *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (Q1) or *The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke* (Q2) to simply *Hamlet* (Arden edition) removes genre from the equation.

Both the ‘bad’ quartos and the boy-actor, in fact, fit into my engagement with Butler’s ‘constitutive acts’, helping to *expose* two of the processes involved in constructing plays and performing gender on the stage. Shakespeare blurs distinctions between men and women with successful drag scenes time and again where characters, often female ones, are seduced by charming transvestites. Such scenes, as in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, for example, further expose both the required suspension of disbelief in experiencing the theatrical event, and also the entry into the dramatic contract as discussed earlier in relation to Bourriaud’s theories concerning exchange and transaction. The prologue to *Henry V* acutely captures this assumed and implicit contract between audience and cast, where the Prologue instructs that ‘’tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings’ (PRO. ll. 27-8). Shakespeare’s intimations that gender can be assumed effectively in such circumstances challenge notions of essentialism, quietly suggesting a concept

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[129] See William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2008), contents page.
[130] See William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, ed. by John Jowett, William Montgomery, Gary Taylor, and Stanley Wells (Oxford: OUP, 2005), contents page.

of the actor as a sexless entity pre-existing the dramatis persona, where the theatrical construction of 'gender' is adopted through costume, body language, and alterations in voice. Such scenes demonstrate the power of performativity in gender: rather than suggesting that Shakespeare privileged the binary distinctions of gender, it could be argued that he exploited theatrical licence to the extent where the illusions and the realities of gender blurred.

Butler has advanced, considerably, the subject of gender and identity politics, questioning the practice of classifying people by gender; it is now time to look beyond an anxious need to categorise and subsume, and instead to appreciate Shakespearean drama for its dynamism as opposed to controlling it through the determined application of genre. The association of a 'subject', as either a person or drama could be termed, with *a priori* characteristics, is to apply an *assumption* to the subject before it even exists. Shoshana Felman ventured a theory that could help liberate the subject from constraints of knowledge assumed from titles or names alone. She argues against the 'notion of application', advocating instead the 'radically different notion of implication: […] the interpreter's role would here be, not to apply to the text an acquired science, a preconceived knowledge, but to act as a go-between, to generate implications'.[131] This concept of 'implication' appeals on several levels: etymologically, this means to be 'folded within'. Theory, then, does not stand apart from literature or, as Felman states, is not applied to it, but comes from the work itself.[132] To use Felman's theory of implication,

[131] Shoshana Felman (ed.), *Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading - Otherwise* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1982), pp. 8, 9.
[132] Becker-Leckrone, p. 18.

the application of a name to an object or process is not absolute. Saussurean linguistic theory has destabilized the assumption that signifier equals signified, and it is now time to focus critical attention on the object, rather than on the complexities of the signifier alone.

The 'pre-conceived knowledge' to which Felman refers in her theory of implication can be applied as much to genre as gender: as a person can be seen as either complying with, or rejecting, gender-specific behavioural or physical 'norms', so drama dictates a similar audience (or reader) response. The relationship between literature and psychoanalysis, described in Felman's final sentence, illustrates this particular approach to analysing gender and genre, where the latter is dislodged from its position of supremacy through the brief discussion of this relationship. Alsop, Fitzsimons, and Lennon assert in *Theorizing Gender* that:

> The goal of such destabilization [of gender categories] is to make visible the performativity of gender, to render it evident that neither gender nor sex is a natural category – indeed, that the very idea of a 'natural' category is simply an effect of discourse. But the effect of such destabilization is often seen as being the rejection of such categories altogether.[133]

My argument is not intended to reject genre altogether, but to portray genre's insufficiency as a singular means of classification: to 'make visible the performativity' of genre, rather than accept it as a natural category of dramatic criticism. I identify a middle-ground between performance and theory, recognising the delimited 'freedom' of the dramatic work. Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon's decision to 'make visible the performativity of gender' can be

[133] Rachel Alsop, Annette Fitzsimons and Kathleen Lennon, *Theorizing Gender* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 105-106.

implicated within this analogy: the process of performing gender would be exposed, and its movement and evolutions rendered ‘evident’.

This thesis expands the territory explored by Lesley Kordecki and Karla Koskinen in *Re-Visioning Lear’s Daughters*. They note that:

> The prodigious Shakespeare industry is such that the theatrical and scholarly communities overlap on both the stage and journal page; [we] outline a process that benefits from the visible interaction between the two disciplines.[134]

They also observe that, in the study of Shakespeare, the two realms of performance and theory must be permitted to merge, to present a combined perspective that privileges neither one nor the other, but that recognises the vital importance of both spheres of knowledge. In discussing alternative approaches to a monogeneric critical perspective, my argument emphasises the intersection of performance and theory. In traversing both the scholarly and the theatrical worlds, seamless transitioning between the two is imperative. It is vital to not confine study of Shakespeare either to literary academia or to the performing arts alone; collaboration between the two means that performance analysis can enrich theoretical study, and theories of identity processes and *multigenre* approaches can benefit performances of Shakespeare’s works.

‘Play on’: chapters and progression of analysis[135]

As Kordecki and Koskinen note, contributions from both theatrical and literary academic communities have ‘overlapped’ in the past, but a ‘visible

[134] Lesley Kordecki and Karla Koskinen, *Re-visioning Lear’s Daughters: Testing Feminist Criticism and Theory* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2010), p. 1.
[135] William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.1.1.

interaction' should be sought and encouraged for the benefit of Shakespearean criticism.[136] This is the approach pursued in this thesis. In considering the problems arising from monogeneric criticism, the theme of a single approach (whether literary or performance) must also be avoided. As I question finite classificatory processes, and endeavour to present an alternative approach to genre, so I combine textual and performance analysis throughout my research. This thesis is configured in a manner which allows a clear progression of analysis, while also taking care to avoid falling into the critical traps my work identifies. As such, the chapters of this thesis are not divided into dramatic genres, therefore encouraging cross-genre links to be made explicit within the chapters.

Each chapter focuses on plays from a variety of genres, to illustrate that dramatic 'features', such as the 'comic' wedding, for example, are not employed in just one genre. This thesis begins with consideration of the dramatic 'use' of weddings, demonstrating the multi-dimensionality of the assumed stable concept of marital ceremonies as a 'constitutive act'. For example, Dympna Callaghan indicates this 'stable' place held by weddings in 'comedies' where 'in the comic scenario the problems will dissolve in the course of the play so that the end can achieve the happy resolution of the lovers' marriage.[137]

Weddings function both as a 'tool' for defining genres, and also as a foil that challenges other plot features that are inextricably linked with the assignation of dramatic genres. In questioning the 'goal-like' status afforded

[136] Kordecki and Koskinen, p. 1.
[137] Butler, *Gender Trouble,* p. 44; Dympna Callaghan, *Who Was William Shakespeare? An Introduction to the Life and Works* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), p. 229.

to weddings in dramatic works in monogeneric criticism, I discuss the place that weddings occupy both in Renaissance culture and in plays of the period. In my first chapter, I focus on the following plays (traditionally from a variety of genres): *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Winter's Tale*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, All's *Well That Ends Well*, and *Henry VIII*. This chapter engages in performance and textual analysis in order to interrogate how Shakespeare's female characters influence and manipulate the circumstances of dramatic plots through marriage.

Chapter 2 maps the influence of mother/son relationships in *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *King John*, contrasting these instructive relationships with the absence of the mother in *King Lear* and *The Tempest*. In this chapter, I use *Hamlet* as a larger 'case study', and I look at the mother as an active presence in her influence on male characters. The performativity in the mother-figure can be aligned with the unnatural stasis imposed by genres, which anaesthetise the developing and changing potential of dramatic plots. Her performativity as a figure influences, and encourages, the 'constitutive acts' which ultimately contribute to the plays themselves, the characters, and the plot-lines.[138] The performativity in the mother lends itself to my particular usage of a term for the mothers under consideration in Chapter 2: the 'mother-warrior'. I open up 'warrior' to include mothers with many types of power, not restricting this term only to mothers involved in warfare, such as Constance and Tamora. I use this term primarily to depict the inclusion of multiple identities/types of functions in the mother character; many of which influence other characters and dramatic plots. As will be

[138] Butler, p. 9.

discussed in Chapter 2, furthermore, the mother-warrior is not a 'dramatic device' such as those utilised by critics to impose monogeneric status on plays; her influence pervades multiple genres. My use of this term further challenges restrictions of identity associated with 'mother', which might call to mind the purely domestic terrain; Gertrude and Tamora, for example, operate in the wider social/court arena and Elinor commands allegiance and directs her son's actions in battle situations.

The remarkably under-explored area of siblings in Shakespeare's plays comes under consideration in Chapter 3, specifically focusing on *The Tempest*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *King Lear*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Twelfth Night*. In building on Chapter 2's consideration of the mother, this chapter progresses in three distinct sections, exploring: the lack of a sibling; sister/sister relationships; and brother/sister and twin relationships in environments predominantly controlled by fathers alone. Through consideration of selected source-texts and adaptations, I discuss where Shakespeare has removed the mother from his adaptation or version of a play, and the effects of this decision on daughter and/or sister dynamics. In exploring an intragenerational approach to the analysis of siblings (a theoretical framework provided by Naomi Miller and Naomi Yavneh), an analogous relationship can be identified that has direct relevance for my approach to dramatic works. As I discuss cross-genre links throughout my thesis, the focus on intragenerationality in this chapter makes clear the benefits of making connections within (*intra*) a certain group or generation, as opposed to maintaining links between (*inter*) them. In a symbolic sense, some critical works focussing on genre as an immutable structure also

correspond to this 'between/inter' approach, where genres can, in fact, cross-pollenate, rather than being an inaccessible and exclusionary form of analysis. This is a potentially performance-liberating move. However, it is undercut by approaches by, for example, critics such as Lawrence Danson and Bamber which try to retain the two individual generic identities so that 'tragi-comedy' obviously encompasses elements of both 'tragedy' and 'comedy' in their previously 'accepted' states.[139] *Intra*generationality focuses more on what is occurring within the genre itself, for example the 'comedy' as a body of work, or corpus.

Moving onto Chapter 4, Immanuel Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* raises some significant points on the notion of endings and how 'means' and 'ends' influence each other; in this chapter, Kant's theory is applied to selected dramatic works in relation to how plays are structured. Chapter 4 is based on the premise of means and ends, and has two particular foci: the first part addresses death as an ending with respect to female characters, where the corpse operates as an instructive object, influencing actions around it. In the second part of the chapter, an alternative form of analysis is offered, predicated on the premise that Shakespeare's works have often been experienced/analysed in a 'linear fashion' where, in the foundationalist paradigm, 'means' always equate to 'ends'. I posit that Shakespeare's plays are continually moving in a dynamic way, where one play does not simply 'end', but is constantly being reimagined, reinvented, and reinvigorated through individual productions and performances across the world and breaking the dramatic 'frame' through the use and execution of prologues and

[139] I will return shortly to highlight the key problems in critical approaches by these and other scholars.

epilogues. As such, this thesis operates in a similar manner: the perception and reception of Shakespeare's works will never end. As I demonstrate, new theories and new processes will continue to be offered. This chapter considers: *King Lear*; *All's Well That Ends Well*; *As You Like It*; *Pericles*; *Hamlet*; *Much Ado About Nothing*; and *Measure for Measure*.

In highlighting the complexities of imposing endings on *dramatic* works, Chapter 4 makes manifest a number of the underlying themes within this thesis as a whole, particularly in its rebuttal of imposed endings. As such, this forms a particularly appropriate 'end' to the ideas under consideration in this thesis which, as I then discuss in my conclusion, present a starting point from which to consider a variety of dramatic works. Shakespeare's works in performance are sometimes referred to as a 'cycle'; for example, Vicky Frost's 2012 feature on *The Hollow Crown* films refers to 'a cycle of Shakespeare's history plays'.[140] As such, the 'end' of this thesis demonstrates how 'the wheel is come full circle', with 'is' conveying an ongoing process, one which resists linear forms of analysis. Shakespeare as a cultural and dramatic phenomenon will never just 'end'; the conclusion of my thesis recognises this, and I endeavour to relate my final remarks to the beginning of this thesis, implementing a circular structure intimating eternity and constant reinvention. To return, briefly, to Nicolas Bourriaud's thesis on relational art, he continues his musings on Serge Daney's assertion that 'all form is a face looking at me', by declaring that art 'summon[s] me to dialogue with it':

> Form is a dynamic that is included both, or turn by turn, in time and space. Form can only come about from a meeting between

[140] http://www.theguardian.com/media/2012/may/01/bbc-shakespeare-history-films-mendes [accessed 11 January 2015].

> two levels of reality. For homogeneity does not produce images: it produces the visual, otherwise put, "looped information".[141]

Through my work on cyclicity and circularity, I demonstrate that this pattern of analysis, as opposed to a linear path, is much more suited to dramatic criticism and, as critics, it is our job to widen this circle, to broaden its path of 'looped information'. Shakespeare's breaking of the frame of drama through varied use of prologues and epilogues, induction scenes and metatheatre, works to destabilise the idea of 'beginning' and 'end' in foundationalist terms.

The concept of 'origin' and 'destination' is one that pervades this thesis; a search for a beginning ('good' quartos, for example) and an end (whether that comes in the form of a death or a wedding) is something that can be located in many monogeneric approaches. The first chapter of this thesis begins with consideration of the plot device of weddings in Shakespeare's works, as a feature that has been used for definition of genre (referred to by a number of critics in terms such as 'resolution' and 'happy ending') and also as a foil that complicates other previously-accepted critical plot features. Lawrence Danson observes that

> Most of Shakespeare's comedies end in marriage or the promise of marriage, and with the reconciliation of at least some members of the cast of characters who had previously been at odds. For Shakespeare, it seems, a comedy is a play whose plot aims to achieve marriage and social harmony.[142]

Here, Danson creates a homogenous group of the 'comedies', not distinguishing or even identifying between individual works. As noted in this introduction, this grouping extends to the types of characters 'expected'

[141] Bourriaud, p. 24.
[142] Danson, p.3.

within plays; Linda Bamber problematically inserts female characters in the 'comedies' into this generic mould and set of expectations. She writes

> For the feminine in Shakespearean comedy begins as a shrew but develops into a comic heroine. […] The shrew is defeated by the superior strength, physical and social, of a man, or by women who support the status quo. She provokes a battle of the sexes, and the outcome of this battle, from Shakespeare's point of view, is inevitable. The comic heroine, on the other hand, does not fight the system but merely surfaces, again and again, when and where the social system is temporarily subverted. The comic heroine does not actively resist the social and political hegemony of the men.[143]

This quotation raises a number of significant issues which I will explore in my first chapter, on weddings and 'comedies'. Bamber's reduction of, for example, Katherina in *The Taming of Shrew*, to being a generic shrew then part of another homogenous group of characters 'the comic heroine' (which she repeats three times in this short extract) denies the nuances and power of such characters.

Elsewhere, characters and the generic allocation of the play are dislocated and what can be regarded by some critics as an inherent association is broken. Marion Wynne-Davies notes, in 'Rubbing at Whitewash: Intolerance in *The Merchant of Venice*', that

> While being a comedy, in that a final resolution is achieved, [*The Merchant of Venice*] questions the reconciliation of the dichotomies and prejudices that have been raised in the first four acts. […] But given the way in which the play undercuts a timeless spiritual allegory […] the neat resolutions of Belmont need to be reexamined.[144]

Wynne-Davies's acknowledgement of the generic category of the play does not subsume discussion of the entire play; in stating that 'the neat resolutions

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[143] Bamber, p. 30.
[144] Marion Wynne-Davies, 'Rubbing at Whitewash: Intolerance in *The Merchant of Venice*' in Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (eds.), *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, The Comedies* (London: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 358 – 75 (pp. 369-70).

of Belmont need to be reexamined', she suggests discomfort at the rapid tying up of loose ends evident in the play, and how these have been perceived as contributing to a 'comic' work. Furthermore, where Wynne-Davies explores the discomfort inherent in the treatment of Shylock, particularly in reference to 'racial and religious intolerance pervert[ing] the course of justice' and the concept of the 'idealized ending', the first chapter of this thesis addresses discomfort and problematic 'comic' endings through the treatment of female characters.[145]

William James (a late nineteenth-/early twentieth-century American philosopher, and brother of Henry James) noted of critical ways of thinking that 'theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas in which we can rest'; James's point emphasises the facilitative nature of theories, perhaps as opposed to an all-encompassing approach or as the answer to a puzzle or 'enigma'.[146] This introduction began with a quotation from *The Taming of The Shrew*, where Tranio advises Lucentio against 'devot[ing] to Aristotle's checks' (1.1.32). This thesis focuses on female characters' influences and performativity, in order to challenge such 'counsels of moderation' and monogeneric forms of analysis.

[145] Wynne-Davies, p. 370.
[146] William James, *Pragmatism and Other Writings*, ed. by Giles Gunn (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 28.

Chapter One: Wooing, weddings and genre

In 2.3 of *Twelfth Night*, Feste the clown informs Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Sir Toby Belch through song that 'journeys end in lovers meeting'.[1] Following Sir Andrew's approval of 'excellent good, i'faith', the clown continues, demanding: 'What is love? 'Tis not hereafter, / Present mirth hath present laughter: / What's to come is still unsure' (2.3.45, 47-49). This example of the Carpe Diem mentality urges lovers to embrace their current situation, where 'present mirth' produces 'present laughter'. The emphasis on the 'present', through iambic stresses, parallel phrasing, and repetition, depicts a transient state, where all may quickly alter: the dismissal of the future in ''tis not hereafter' calls into question the finality of how 'journeys end'. This elevation of the clown's thoughts on love is emphasised still further in that Sir Andrew and Sir Toby speak in prose throughout, whereas Feste's speech appears in indented blank verse. The meeting of lovers appears to function, as the clown notes, as a 'conclusion' to a journey.

This chapter addresses the critically-identified importance of a wedding as a constitutive act of 'comedy', locating fallibility in its potential to 'conclude' dramatic works in a supposedly appropriate manner. Anthony Lewis states that 'Shakespearean comedy depends [...] on engineer[ing] the marriage that signals the happy ending'; this approach explicitly demonstrates the equation of 'happy ending' with marriage.[2] In dramatic works, a wedding can apparently function in two ways: as a defining feature for genre, and also

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[1] William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night,* in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 2.3.43. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

[2] Anthony J. Lewis, *The Love Story in Shakespearean Comedy* (Kentucky: Kentucky UP, 1992) p. 171.

as a foil that challenges other plot features that are inextricably linked with the assignation of dramatic genres. The tension between the apparent finality of where 'journeys end' in Feste's contemplations, and the uncertainty of 'What's to come', invites consideration of the Renaissance marriage in seventeenth-century culture and dramatic works. Further, this can prompt interrogation of the goal-like status afforded to marriage, considering whether there is an inherent instability in the wedding-as-ending that problematises its place in monogeneric criticism.

This chapter focuses specifically on four recurring themes and subsections: 'lenses of interpretation', 'rings, things, and nothings', '"limber vows" and "callat[s] of boundless tongue"', and '"A fruitless crown": family and female power'. These subsections will relate these four themes to the overarching argument, demonstrating how female characters (through marriage) influence, and in some cases partially *instigate*, dramatic plots. The subsections locate, at the heart of their analysis, the complex sentiment expressed in Feste's song: 'What is love? 'Tis not hereafter' (2.3.49). In this exploration of the role of the wedding, I consider the following plays: *The Taming of the Shrew*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Measure for Measure, King Lear*; *The Merchant of Venice*; *All's Well That Ends Well*; *The Winter's Tale*; *Henry V*; *Henry VIII*; and *Macbeth*.

In many situations, where the Shakespearean wedding is identified as a defining feature of genre, I argue that it is sometimes more of a restrictive device to subdue apparently 'rebellious' or simply autonomous women, including Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Bamber states, seemingly in support of the subduing of female characters, that:

> The shrew is defeated by the superior strength, physical and social, of a man, or by women who support the status quo. She provokes a battle of the sexes, and the outcome of this battle, from Shakespeare's point of view, is inevitable.[3]

In relating the 'shrew' explicitly to 'comedy', Bamber sets up an expectation that female characters in 'comic' works will perform just so. Elsewhere, seemingly non-troublesome women too, for example Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, whose intelligence and good nature defy categorisation as rebellious or troublesome, are also subjected to such suppression. The place of marriage in Shakespearean 'comedy' has been seized upon by modern genre-theorists: this use of marriage results in terminology such as 'comic resolution', 'ritualistic resolution', and 'comic closure'.[4] The pervading presence of 'resolution', in these discussions of the 'comic' marriage scenario, is steeped in theoretical considerations of the genre: marriages in 'comedies', where marriage appears at the ends of plays, is in and of itself regarded as a resolution; a harmonising device intended to give to the play a sense of finality and to restore social order. Lawrence Danson states that 'comic resolution serves to secure the social order at women's expense': the efficacy of this ritual of marriage resides in the fact that complex moral and social issues lurk under its superficially conventional guise.[5]

The problem lies in the 'resolution', as both Stott and Danson term such an ending, where marriage *can* (superficially) intimate closure and be a 'happy ever after'.[6] For many of Shakespeare's female characters, though,

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[3] Linda Bamber, *Comic Women, Tragic Women: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare* (Bloomington, IN: Stanford UP, 1982), p. 30.
[4] Lawrence Danson, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p. 135; Andrew Stott, *Comedy* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 123; Lisa Hopkins, 'Marriage as Comic Closure', in *Shakespeare's Comedies*, ed. by Emma Smith (London: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 36-53 (36).
[5] Danson, p. 135.
[6] Stott, p. 123.

this putative 'resolution' is far from a genuine resolution and similarly far from 'happy'. When a union contradicts the personality or morality of a certain character in whom we, as audience members, have been so emotionally invested for the 'two hours' traffic of our stage', it is reasonable for audience members to question the match.[7] Did Isabella truly resist the advances of Angelo and the damning of her character merely to be married off to the Duke? Did Paulina accept her single state after the death of her soul mate Antigonus, just to be paired up hurriedly with Camillo? These are just two contradictions of characters' personalities that make their unions questionable. From audience members' perspective, anxieties upon leaving the theatre transcend merely the act and scene structure of the play; the pervading cultural 'normalcy' of marriage demands that we have some form of emotional response.

The direct employment of marriage as a generic device in Shakespeare's works appears to fall into one of two functions: it is either a Butlerian 'constitutive act', or an enabling dramatic feature, in that it can promote the identification of other 'generic features'. For example, the father-daughter reunion in the 'romances' would not have been possible were it not for an earlier marriage.[8] Elsewhere, marriage is used indirectly as a generic catalyst, influencing those plot features that are located as driving forces in a particular genre, for example the Aristotelian fatal flaw in 'tragedies'. To

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[7] William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, in *Complete Works* ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), prologue, l. 12. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

[8] As we see in *The Winter's Tale*, for example, Leontes's suspicions of Hermione's infidelity result in him casting away Perdita as his legitimate daughter. Only upon realising his errors in accusing Hermione of adultery does Leontes understand Perdita's true relationship to him, and thus the reunion takes place.

continue with this example, although a staple of Shakespearean criticism, the notion that a human being possesses an innate psychical flaw, which, when exacerbated by trauma, will cause his or her downfall, remains somewhat improbable. Bradley states of the flaw that

> In the circumstances where we see the hero placed, his tragic trait, which is also his greatness, is fatal to him. […] This is always so with Shakespeare. As we have seen, the idea of the tragic hero as a being destroyed simply and solely by external forces is quite alien to him; and not less so is the idea of the hero as contributing to his destruction only by acts in which we see no flaw. But the fatal imperfection or error, which is never absent, is of different kinds and degrees.[9]

To modern minds, this 'trait' is unlikely to be the solitary catalyst for such incredible degenerations, particularly when opposed by the vague 'error' of 'different kinds and degrees'. The eponymous male in 'tragedies' spends considerable quantities of on-stage time with his wife, or a daughter for whom he wishes to construct a marital union: it is unlikely that (even in dramatic works) such women would *not* have an influence upon the man, be it deliberate or accidental. Bamber follows the Bradleyan model of the tragic hero as the centre of the plays, stating that 'the Self is masculine, then, in Shakespearean tragedy, and women are Other', actively relegating female characters' roles to the sidelines of the drama.[10]

Bradley contentiously states that 'it is only in the love-tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, that the [tragic] heroine is as much the centre of the action as the hero'.[11] Angela Pitt pursues this idea: 'Cleopatra and Juliet are the only women […] who hold the centre of the stage in "tragedy". Others are there for a brief moment, or else play crucial

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[9] A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 37
[10] Bamber, p. 9.
[11] Bradley, p. 24-25.

supporting roles'.[12] Both presence and absence in marriage can influence associated generic acts: Macbeth's fate is arguably more influenced by the speech and actions of his wife, than by elements in his psyche *alone*; and Cordelia's complex absent-presence, combined with her proposed marriage to either France or Burgundy, partly instigates the tragic consequences of *King Lear*. Stott addresses the constitutive function of dramatic marriage, observing that 'comedies end happily, often concluding with a communal celebration such as marriage'; engaging with the enabling role of marriage, Lagretta Tallent Lenker asserts that romances are 'father-daughter plays'.[13] Marriage as a more facilitative device features in dramatic works including the 'romances' and the 'history' plays. The father-daughter reunion (identified by Lenker as a defining device of 'romances') prompts this critic to re-define a group of plays as 'father-daughter plays'.

Of course, in modern considerations of the Renaissance wedding, one must be careful not to impose twenty-first-century ideals onto the early modern ceremony. As Marianne Novy cautions, '[Shakespeare's] plays are theatrical transformations of the social tensions that give them some of their subject matter and their appeal to a divided audience, *not* examples of Elizabethan social history'.[14] Ann Jennalie Cook observed that 'Shakespeare's plays profit by a comparison with the social reality they reflect, regardless of whether that reflection is accurate or distorted'.[15] It is

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[12] Angela Pitt, *Shakespeare's Women* (Newton Abbott: David and Charles, 1981), pp. 49-50.
[13] Stott, p. 1; Lagretta Tallent Lenker, *Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare and Shaw* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001), p. 2.
[14] Marianne Novy, *Love's Argument: Gender Relations in Shakespeare* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1984), p. 6. My italics.
[15] Ann Jennalie Cook, 'Wooing and Wedding: Shakespeare's Dramatic Distortion of the Customs of His Time', in *Shakespeare's Art From a Comparative Perspective*, ed. by Wendell M. Aycock (Lubbock: Texas Tech P, 1982), pp. 83-100 (83).

apparent, then, that either generating tensions between the play-text and Renaissance context or utter adherence to contemporary conventions is significant in refracting key issues of the period or in exaggerating matters to produce drama.

'Lenses of interpretation'[16]

The ways in which twenty-first century readers and watchers of Shakespeare must process the matter they see before them (as discussed by Novy and Cook above) can be read as an implicit and personal filter; one which encourages contemporary viewers to experience the works carefully in relation to modern life and culture. In *Framing Shakespeare on Film*, Kathy M. Howlett presents the idea of the cinematic frame of Shakespeare's works, relating it to such an ideological or sub-frame which can come from the audience members' life experiences. She contextualises her research, stating:

> When I speak of "influence" I mean two intertwined aspects of cinematic framing, the one made representable by the creative imagination of the other. I am interested in a director's aesthetic awareness, not as a painstakingly constructed theory of art or as a psychoanalytic inquiry into the mind of the artist, but as a guide to understanding how a director frames questions of identification and definition in the Shakespeare film.[17]

She continues, asserting that, for example,

> Akira Kurosawa's *Ran* [is] a recontextualisation of Shakespeare's *King Lear* [set] within the Jidai Geki genre, which glorifies the ancient samurai and his masculine code. *Ran* reveals how gender conflict and confusion can 'break' the frame that defines masculine identity.[18]

[16] Susan Snyder 'Introduction' in Susan Snyder (ed.), *All's Well that Ends Well* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p. 41.
[17] Kathy M. Howlett, *Framing Shakespeare on Film* (Athens, NY: Ohio UP, 2000), p. 3.
[18] Howlett, p. 15.

These frames appear, to Howlett at least, to be symbolic of an ideological code which is elevated to the status of a 'frame', where it automatically colours, and guides, audience members' individual interpretations of the matter on the screen. The 'masculine code' can, in productions, be left as a complete cinematic frame, or else be 'broken', to be replaced by an alternative 'lens of interpretation'.[19] The frame, in this instance, surpasses the generic, imposing ideals of dramatic structure, adopting a more conceptual, flexible approach rather than a stringently structural one. Howlett's first quotation foregrounds the role that the director's 'aesthetic awareness' can have on the final filmic product in representing 'questions of identification and definition'. Such instability of identity prior to framing (and, indeed, the 'power of gender conflict' to break these frames) can be related to the more structural frame of dramatic genre. In this case, the influence of the female Dramatis Personae can question or sometimes break the generic frame. This section of the current chapter explores the concept of genre-as-frame, and how images of the Shakespearean wedding (both in the play-text and performance) use the concepts of physical and ideological frames to question the potency and apparent infallibility of nuptials in genre study.

The idea of the generic device functioning as a frame is echoed in Rosalie Colie's assertion that genres themselves can be described as '"frames" or "fixes" on the world'.[20] Susan Snyder employs this concept in her introduction to the Oxford Shakespeare edition of *All's Well That Ends Well*, deeming genres 'lenses of interpretation'.[21] Performance analysis

[19] Snyder, p. 41.
[20] Rosalie Colie, *Resources of Kind: Genre Theory in the Renaissance* (Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1973), p. 113.
[21] Snyder, p. 41.

interrogates this relatively common use of frames in Shakespearean drama: in performances for film or television, the audience is guided towards a certain part of the action.

In televised or filmed productions, a triple frame is in operation: first, the physical camera lens through which transmission occurs; then the director's 'lens of interpretation' in altering the play-text for television or film; and then the dramatic frame provided by the plot itself. The audience is thrice distanced from the drama. The potential of television and film productions to exploit this use of frames has been identified by Diana Henderson. She observes that, in productions of *The Taming of the Shrew*, 'modern filmmakers reveal the potential of their medium to provide an alternative "frame" to the script's use of Sly'.[22] However, the replacing of the play text's use of framing with the lens or frame of the camera somewhat trivialises, or at least shifts from the general focus, the idea that such frames are woven into the plots of Shakespeare's plays.

Perhaps it is anxiety about the power of the common wedding-as-ending technique that necessitates the function of a wedding as a framing device in several of Shakespeare's 'comedies'. In *Measure for Measure*, an absence of marriage features at the beginning of the play, instigating the action through the lack of marriage between Juliet and Claudio, concluding with the proposed weddings between Isabella and Duke Vincentio and Angelo and Mariana. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* opens with discussion of the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta, and ends with betrothal for the two

[22] Diana Henderson, 'A Shrew for the Times', in *Shakespeare: The Movie II: Popularizing the plays of film, TV, video, and DVD*, ed. by Richard Burt and Lynda E. Boose (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 120-49 (p. 149).

young couples: Hermia and Lysander, and Demetrius and Helena. This practice of 'book-ending' dramatic plots with marriage indicates a restraining force, or a manner of control, inherent in the Renaissance nuptials. The theme of control is used by dramatic critics such as Alexander Leggatt and Andrew Stott, to reinforce their theories of weddings-as-endings. The generic device of a wedding supposedly retains such power that it can conclude dramatic plots. The microcosmic/macrocosmic relationship is much in evidence in 'comedies'. As 'tragedies' may be identified by their employment of the 'restoration to social order' theme to end plays (Janette Dillon notes that that tragedies' 'closure depends on a restoration of political order following the central death or deaths of individuals'), so 'comedies' engage with a similar technique, moving from disarray to the assumed 'normality' which is apparently epitomised by a wedding.[23]

The 'book-ending' technique in 'comedies' is much in evidence in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Here, the tale of the manipulation of Christopher Sly (told, uniquely in Shakespeare's works, in the form of an induction scene) precedes what a modern audience generally think of as 'the plot', and a wedding provides the 'comic closure'.[24] The differences between the quarto and the Folio texts, if we attribute both *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (1623) to Shakespeare, are enlightening in terms of genre study. There are compelling cases for identifying Shakespeare as author of the 1594 text, (as tentatively as we may assign Shakespeare's name to any

[23] Janette Dillon, *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), p. 1.
[24] William Shakespeare, *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, Called The Taming of a Shrew*, ed. by Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey (Hertfordshire: Harvester, 1992), p. 14; Danson, p. 135.

early modern dramatic work), as well as regarding *The Taming of a Shrew* as an early draft of the play we recognise today. Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey consider the validity of the earlier play:

> Such objections [against the 1594 quarto, such as inconsistency of dramatic structure, and contradiction in character] depend on anachronistic conceptions of theatrical time and space, and quickly recede in importance when the play is presented (as it is in this edition) without the act and scene divisions subsequently added by editorial interference.[25]

The 1594 text, as it stood without 'editorial interference', read, and was performed, quite coherently. Ann Thompson, in her edition of the play, remarks of the quarto text that 'the combination of the three plots is a remarkably sophisticated example of dramatic structure for the early 1590s and the detailed execution of parts of the play is also very impressive'.[26] An 'impressive', and 'detailed execution' of the three plots resists allegations both of the 1594 text being inferior to the one published in the First Folio, and the designation of the earlier text as a memorial reconstruction. Indeed, the quarto edition has often been used to supplement the more 'Shakespearean' Folio text. As Holderness and Loughrey note, the quarto text:

> contains […] a complete theatrical "framing" device in the form of the Lord's practical joke on Christopher Slie, where the 'Shakespearean' texts drops Sly and the framing device early in the play – and from the beginning of this century the 'non-Shakespearean' text has been used in theatrical practice to complete the authorised but insufficient 'Shakespearean' play.[27]

The 1594 play-text advertises *A Pleasant, Conceited Historie*; in the Folio text, the play was simply *The Taming of the Shrew*, and is categorised

[25] Holderness and Loughrey (eds), pp. 14-15.
[26] William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. by Ann Thompson, New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), p. 174.
[27] Holderness and Loughrey (eds), p. 13.

as a ‘comedy’. The notion of the wedding in ‘comedies’ functioning as a ‘constitutive act’ symbolic of the restoration of social order, can be further investigated by contrasting the quarto and Folio versions of the text. In *The Taming of a Shrew* as a ‘history’, the ‘induction’ scene featuring Sly opens the play and is, significantly, returned to at its end; in the ‘comedy’, Folio play-text, the induction is used only in the beginning. The quarto version’s use of the plot featuring Sly to end the play lends an air of artificiality to ‘the plot’ with Katherina, Petruchio, et al.; the lack of a complete ‘frame’ results in the nuptial ceremony in F becoming less artificial, and not a feature of a domestic ‘comonty’ performed exclusively for Sly (IND.140). As such, the use of the term ‘induction scene’ for the scenario featuring Sly at the beginning of the work requires an alternative definition when it functions in the manner we see in the quarto.[28] It does not merely induct, but *frame*.

The complete framework in the quarto edition provides a ‘continuous, metadramatic perspective on the inner play’, which emphasises the ‘taming’ as performance, rather than providing a moral and psychological comment.[29] The regular interpolations from Slie, commenting on that which he is viewing, constantly remind the audience of his presence. The Propeller Theatre Company’s 2013 production emphasised Slie’s presence and interaction with the metadrama through seating him on a bean-bag on the stage and very overtly engineering his character to take on the role of Petruchio. Indeed in the play-text, the Lord (or Simon, as he presents himself to Slie) has to drag the protesting Slie from the stage, proclaiming against hauling Valeria to

[28] Holderness and Loughrey (eds), p. 14.
[29] Holderness and Loughrey (eds), p. 18.

prison: 'I say wele have no sending to prison'.[30] To this the Lord tersely replies, 'My Lord this is but the play, theyre but in jest'.[31] Slie and his followers have been called the 'surrogate audience', emphasising the truly metatheatrical nature of the play-within-the-play.[32] The Messenger in F, acquainting Sly with the doctor's suggestion for hearing a play, echoes this framing concept: 'Therefore they thought it good you hear a play / And frame your mind to mirth and merriment / Which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life' (IND. 2. 134-36). The use of 'frame' and 'bar' suggests an element of control: 'frame', in this sense, means to adjust, to take on a new perspective. We can apply the Messenger's statement that to hear a play 'bars a thousand harms' to the concept of *The Taming of the Shrew*'s plot. This consequently reframes the fraught relationship of Katherina and Petruchio as artifice, a metadrama in the play as presented to Christopher Sly. Indeed, the Propeller production strove to emphasise the metatheatrical elements, adopting the practice of referring to the plot as *The Waking Man's Dream* in 'Sly becom[ing] Petruchio, so that Petruchio's career is Sly's wish-fulfilment about marriage and dominating women'.[33] Propeller additionally provided a short final scene where Petruchio reverts to Sly and converses with the Page from the induction scene (who had played Katherina), who informs him 'your wife will curse you for dreaming here tonight'. Sly responds with the assertion that 'I know now how to tame a shrew [and will] tame [my wife]

[30] William Shakespeare, *A Pleasant Conceited Historie*, p. 80.
[31] William Shakespeare, *A Pleasant Conceited Historie*, pp. 80-1.
[32] Holdernes and Loughrey (eds), p. 31.
[33] Edward Hall and Roger Warren (eds), *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Propeller Shakespeare* (London: Oberon, 2013), p.11.

too if she anger me'.[34] Most interestingly, and in direct contrast with the final lines of the F edition (from Lucentio ''Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tamed so'), the final line in the Propeller version is from the Page/Katherina character, demanding mockingly: 'Are you drunken still? This was but a play!' (5.1.201; p. 94).

As the Page observes, the distinction between 'comonty' and 'history' is only slight: he informs Sly that 'comedy' 'is a kind of history' (IND. 140). As such, the framing device is rendered an important theatrical concept, in that it evidently influences the allocation of genre, as we can see from comparing the 'history' play-text (complete with frame) and the 'comedy' play-text without the corresponding final scene. Henderson observes that 'modern filmmakers both reveal the potential of their medium to provide an alternative "frame" to the script's use of Sly and call attention to the text's troubled relationship to Katherina as shrew-heroine'.[35] The approximate date of composition of the quarto edition, 1591-92, suggests that *The Taming of a Shrew* may have been one of Shakespeare's first attempts at 'comedy': this use of marriage as a suitable subject for metatheatre is, as noted above, echoed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, composed between 1594 and 1596. What Henderson observes as the replacing of one frame by another results in the play ending with Katherina and Petruchio. Furthermore, the drama is founded on the concept that Petruchio has successfully (laudably, even, in the minds of some audience members) 'tam'd a curst shrew' (5.2.189). While it could be argued that the audience can function as Sly, reclaiming the voyeuristic

[34] William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. by Edward Hall and Roger Warren, *Propeller Shakespeare* (London: Oberon, 2013), scene 14 (p. 94). All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.
[35] Henderson, p. 149.

position present in Q, this makes no difference to the potency of the metatheatre, which is elevated to the status of 'play' through these editorial and directorial decisions.[36] The refusal of the F text of *The Taming of the Shrew* to resolve the induction scene, and the brief appearance in 1.1 featuring Sly, result in the metatheatre behaving in an alternative way to the manner in which Shakespeare successfully used it in Q.

The intimated restriction through marriage in the play-texts is explicitly translated into clearer frames through performance. The cinematic frame as discussed by Howlett and the 'ideological frame' proposed by Henderson collide in Franco Zeffirelli's film production of *The Taming of the Shrew* (1967), with Zeffirelli using frames within frames. In 3.2, where, in Shakespeare's play-text, Gremio gives his account of the wedding, Zeffirelli visually represents the build-up to the ceremony, with Katherina running through the church doors towards the altar. Similarly, in 5.2, when Katherina enters the feast room, dragging Hortensio's new wife and Bianca along with her, she steps through a highly decorated door.

[36] Puck's offer of friendship, to conclude *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where he promises to 'restores amends' (5.1.424), swiftly follows the conclusion of the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, thus marking a distinction between the play itself and the metadrama featuring the mechanicals. This hyperconsciousness of the artificiality of drama permeates two levels: the mechanicals end their portrayal of 'tragical mirth' (5.1.57). I further address the use of prologues and epilogues in my fourth chapter, in relation to dramatic frames and endings.

Figure 1: ***The Taming of the Shrew*, dir. Franco Zeffirelli (Los Angeles, CA: Columbia, 1967), 5.2.**

Both doors are thresholds; the latter is a threshold through which neither of the other two newlywed wives had been inclined to step. The purpose of these thresholds could be to intimate restriction; they are liminal, designated points where one enters a certain territory, of wifehood. This social enclosing of women, by this ceremony, marks marriage as an emotionally restrictive space, particularly when contrasted with the single Katherina's daring exploits in the same production, fleeing from Petruchio along the rooftops. However, what comes in must go out, and it is this social, physical, and psychical restraint against which Katherina struggles. Her fleeing from the feast room mocks both the assumed finality of Petruchio/Burton's 'Kiss me, Kate', Petruchio's smug grin at his 'taming' of Katherina and the apparently submissive, loving embrace shared by the turbulent couple. The frames within frames, then, function as a matryoshka structure of restriction when Zeffirelli portrays marriage in *The Taming of the Shrew*. This motif is employed in several other

productions of Shakespeare's plays where a betrothal or a wedding is woven into the plot.

The concept of the 'wifehood threshold' can be usefully extended to the moon/sun quarrel in 4.5 of *The Taming of the Shrew*: as Juliet noted of her own window in 3.5 of *Romeo and Juliet*, a door has two purposes, 'to let day in, and let life out'.[37] The metaphorical potential of the sun and the moon can be allied with this idea of incoming daylight. It is a common concept that the sun has positive associations; the moon, in contrast can depict a waning, and a diminishing of the day among its multiple associations. Indeed, this more negative association with the moon is intimated when Oberon declares 'Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania' in 2.1. of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2.1.60). When Petruchio introduces the petty quarrel fruitlessly debating the moon's presence, Katherina and Petruchio's relationship alternates between being symbolically considered the end of one life, and the start of another; moving from anticipation (signified by the sun) to a sense of finality or closure (represented by the moon). Katherina identifies the inconstancy of both signifiers: 'Then, God be blest, it is the blessed sun. / But sun it is not, when you say it is not, / And the moon changes even as your mind'.[38] And so, caught in a limbo between anticipation and closure, Katherina is trapped; her earlier self-belief and confidence in her expressed opinions diminish.

There is clearly a distinction between knowing and saying: Petruchio argues 'I *say* it is the moon that shines so bright', to which Katherina retorts

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[37] William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 3.5.41. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

[38] William Shakespeare, *The Taming of The Shrew*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 4.5.18-20. All further references will be to this edition, and will be contained in the body of the text.

‘I *know* it is the sun that shines so bright’ (4.5.4-5). Taking from Katherina her freedom of speech, Petruchio bars from her the one (albeit limited, by this point) means by which she may assert herself. Prior to their marriage, the words most associated with Katherina are ‘chide’ and ‘tongue’ (1.2.87, 92); she is ‘renown’d in Padua for her scolding tongue’ (1.2.92). Tranio asked of Lucentio, ‘mark’d you not how her sister / Began to scold and raise up such a storm / That mortal ears might hardly endure the din?’ (1.1.170-72). Petruchio introduces this quarrel to demonstrate to Katherina how to lie, how (to borrow from *Lear*) she might ‘speak and purpose not’.[39] This concept of likening marriage to the relationship between the waning moon and the incoming sun is also employed in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1595-96), a play which echoes several elements of *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594). Theseus declares to his betrothed: ‘Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour / Draws on apace; four happy days bring in / Another moon’.[40] Although this statement conceivably relates to the time remaining between the present and their ‘nuptial hour[s]’, it also intimates that the present moon disappears with their unmarried states, bringing in a new, married, era. As Rosalind states in *As You Like It*, ‘Men are April when they / woo, December when they wed: maids are May when they are maids, but the sky / changes when they are wives’.[41]

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[39] As Cordelia expresses lying, ‘to speak and purpose not’: William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.1.229. All further references will be to this edition, and will be contained within the body of the text.

[40] William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.1.1-3. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

[41] William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 4.1.103-5. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

This engagement with the physical homologies for emotional restriction (where restriction through marriage is represented through tangible means) appears in other productions. For example, in the 2005 BBC *Shakespeare Retold* production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, when Rufus Sewell's twenty-first-century Petruchio makes his decision to marry Katherine, he is trapped with her in an office lift. The space ratio in this scenario vastly favours Petruchio; while Katherine's nose is pressed almost against the lift doors, Petruchio feels free to move around at his will. As Katherine puts it: 'we got trapped in a lift and he proposed to me'.[42]

Figure 2: *Shakespeare Retold: The Taming of the Shrew*, dir. David Richards (London: BBC, 2005), 2.1.

This 'trapping' physicalises the emotional restriction present in this union. In the same production, Shirley Henderson's Katherine reacts with absolute venom when Petruchio shortens her name, declaring 'Kate, Kate, my sort of Kate. Kate, Kate, Kate'.[43] In Shakespeare's play-text this indignation is

[42] *The Taming of The Shrew: Shakespeare Retold*, dir. David Richards (London: BBC, 2006).
[43] Richards (dir.).

conveyed when Petruchio calls Katherina ‘Kate’: she contradicts him, and reclaims her name, declaring ‘Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing; / They call me Katherine that do talk of me’ (2.1.184-85). The shortening of Katherina’s name throughout the process of wooing is a form of restraint in itself. This non-consensual name-shortening may be prophetic of the restricted and reduced identity Katherina may take on through marriage; our ‘heroine’, as she may be termed, objects to this identity in both play-text and productions. Such physical or even syllabic liminal spaces, represented by the doors, windows, and name-shortening in both the text and performances of *The Taming of the Shrew*, reflect the emotional restraint presented by marriage: film, television, and theatrical directors pick up on Shakespeare’s textual clues and transform them into more tangible examples of this repression.

Turning to *The Merchant of Venice*, the caskets, the rings, and the picture of Portia are all included in the play-text itself, giving directors very specific clues regarding certain props and their importance to the plot. Marriage transcends class in *The Merchant of Venice* (unlike in *The Taming of the Shrew*) which strictly addresses marriage within the prosperous classes in the Renaissance: Gratiano and Nerissa’s, and Lorenzo and Jessica’s, unions open up the ceremony to a much wider audience, to those of smaller fortunes and of socially marginalised groups in Shakespeare’s version of early modern Italy, such as Jews and serving ladies.[44] The irony of this ‘opening up’ is that the higher classes, to which Portia certainly belongs, are more evidently

[44] Baptista Minola’s mercantile affluence results in his family being a part of the prosperous members of society, without necessarily being fully integrated into the middle or upper classes.

affected by the wedding-as-restriction scenario. The blatant objectification of Portia is quite explicit: Leggatt observes that ‘Bassanio’s comparison of Portia’s hair to the golden fleece is, one might say, not metaphorical enough to be romantic; his concern for the gold *as gold* is all too real’.[45] Portia’s figurative ‘liberation’ from the caskets is somewhat undercut by the fact that she had no choice in her future. Portia simply moves sideways from one form of restriction to another: hypothetically, is it better to be enclosed in a marriage, than to be ‘curb’d by the will of a dead / father’?[46]

The transference of fortune to the wooer, specifically in the dowry culture of Renaissance England, is explicitly demonstrated through Jessica throwing her father’s casket of jewels to Lorenzo: ‘Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains’ (2.6.33). Portia’s commentaries to Nerissa on her suitors (although redundant in the progression of the plot, fill in the back story of Portia’s situation) and bring forth the image of a wasp caught in a spider’s web, to use the imagery applied to Katharina in *Shrew* (Petruchio states ‘Come, come, you wasp; i’faith, you are too angry’ (2.1.210)). Struggling and stinging fail to liberate the creature, but merely exacerbate its anger and frustration. Portia’s barbed comments, included only to demonstrate her ready intelligence, function in a similar manner. The image of the door as representative of figurative restriction, already noted in the discussion of *Shrew*, is also apparent in *The Merchant of Venice*. On being notified of the Prince of Morocco’s approach, Portia observes that ‘Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer, another / knocks at the door’ (1.2.131-32). This image

[45] Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare’s Comedy of Love* (London: Routledge, 1974), p. 125.
[46] William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.2.24-25. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.

increases Portia's sense of enclosure: not only is she metonymically encased within a casket, but that casket is shut inside the house. Shakespeare's depiction of emotional restraint, alongside clues within the play-text and realisation through production, brings to the foreground the recurring theme of frames and enclosures. This can, in turn, be indicative of the restrictive potential of marriage and, analogically, the static framing of a play-text by critical interpretations pursuing a monogeneric reading. Penny Gay follows this analysis, stating that 'comedy exists as a narrative form or structure. This form is based on the expectation that the delightful temporary disorder of the tale will be resolved with reincorporation into normal society. […] Comedies, as a genre, end with weddings'.[47]

Rings, things, and nothings

In 3.2 of *Hamlet*, Ophelia and the Danish prince engage in word-play that reveals a Renaissance means of distinguishing men and women:

> Hamlet: Do you think I meant country matters?
> Ophelia: I think nothing, my lord.
> Hamlet: That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.
> Ophelia: What is, my lord?
> Hamlet: Nothing.[48]

David Tennant's portrayal of Hamlet, in 2009, loads this conversation with sexual innuendo: his pronunciation of 'country' is, more phonetically, 'cunt-ry'. The seemingly empty signifier, 'nothing', used by Hamlet (which ironically becomes loaded with intimations of female genitalia across Shakespeare's canon) resonates with psychoanalytic theories on lack. Luce

[47] Penny Gay, *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's Comedies* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), pp. 4-5.
[48] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 3.2.97-101.

Irigaray states that 'female sexuality has always been conceptualized on the basis of masculine parameters'; in this sense it is the dyadic opposition between 'something' (arguably the elusive phallus) and 'nothing' (using Hamlet's example).[49] Cordelia's resounding 'nothing' in *King Lear* (which partly sparks the play's consequent actions) links in with this concept of 'lack' and also female speech, which will be returned to later in the chapter.

In a similar sense, 'ring' is used throughout the Shakespearean canon to indicate both female sexuality and marital restriction. The staging of the nuptial ceremonies is predominantly omitted from the Shakespearean play-text; the consequences of the giving and the receiving of rings, however, are investigated on several occasions. Shakespeare regularly grants more dramatic space to the object signifying marriage, than to the wedding itself. This is an interesting shift of perspective, in that the aftermath and physical consequences (such as the ring) of marriage hold more dramatic weight than the actual ceremony. This subsection will explore the influence which both expressions and props such as 'ring', 'thing', and 'nothing' have over dramatic plots (spanning several genres) and how they draw attention to the problems in assigning generic categories in relation to a wedding as a constitutive, or an enabling, act.

Where, as we saw in Zeffirelli's production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, restriction is symbolised physically by a door, the restriction possesses a much smaller diameter in *The Merchant of Venice*: a ring. The physical implications of the ring's shape have been much debated in critical works on Renaissance drama, most usefully by Alison Findlay: the general consensus

[49] Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1985), p. 23.

that it is linked inextricably with the female genitals still holds strong.[50] Criticism locates sexuality in this object, giving prominence to physical connotations, likening the ring's shape to the 'hole' of the vulva, and its ability to be penetrated; as Irigaray writes, it is 'a body open to penetration […] in this "Hole" that constitutes its sex'.[51] Irigaray continues, asserting that:

> [Woman's] sexual organ represents *the horror of nothing to see*. A defect in this systematic of representation and desire. A "hole" in its scoptophilic lens. It is already evident in Greek statuary that this nothing-to-see has to be excluded, rejected, from such a scene of representation. Woman's genitals are simply absent, masked, sewn back up inside their "crack".[52]

The constitutive 'hole' of the vagina, and the similarly conspicuous hole of the ring, explicitly reconcile female sexuality and the shape, and connotations, of the ring. This representational quandary binds female genitalia up in this image of 'nothing'. Irigaray's *This Sex Which Is Not One* identifies a difference between the singular 'thing' and the more plural nature of female genitalia. Women have two labia – 'within herself she is already two – but not divisible into one(s) – that caress each other' – which contrast with the singularity of 'thing', but make women's 'rings', or however we may like to term them, no less potent, but simply different. The marital ring, similarly, is, in itself, one and everything: the conspicuous 'hole' in its centre pulls 'nothingness' into its identity, making it imperative to its constitution. One hole, one band, serve as both one *and* many. The wedding ring as signifier for the restriction of female sexuality and autonomy, then, is appropriate.

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[50] See Alison Findlay, *A Feminist Perspective on Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).
[51] Irigaray, p. 24.
[52] Irigaray, p. 26.

The ring exists, as Findlay has observed, as a tangible reminder of female sexuality.[53] It functions almost as a bartering device: if a ring is placed on a woman's finger, in the appropriate situation, then she makes her symbolic ring (her sexuality) available to the man responsible. It is a continuous circle of trading physical objects for sexual gratification: this is made explicit in Portia's statement 'Let not that doctor e'er come near my house […] I will become as liberal as you, / I'll not deny him any thing I have' (5.1. 223-7). Portia invokes the silent contract between the ring-giver and the ring-receiver by declaring herself available to whichever man wears her ring. Additionally, iambic stress is placed on 'thing', further exemplifying Portia's engagement with masculine terminology. The ring functions as a key, facilitating sexual relations between husband and wife. There are, of course, varying uses of the ring in already established marriages: Shylock's mourning for the loss of Leah's ring provides an intriguing morsel of information about his relationship with his wife. Shylock invests Leah's ring with her memory; this is a part of Leah that he permanently can keep with him. She is *only* remembered through this object; indeed, Leah has no presence in the play, but her ring is the final shot in Michael Radford's film production of *The Merchant of Venice*.[54]

[53] See Findlay, pp. 87-127.
[54] Radford's depiction of Leah's ring in the final scene shows Jessica wistfully holding the ring, indicating that she did not entirely betray her father after all, in that she did not sell the ring.

Figure 3: ***The Merchant of Venice*** **dir. Michael Radford (Beverly Hills, CA: MGM, 2004), 5.1**

In Shakespeare's works, 'ring' and 'nothing' have been predominantly used to indicate female sexuality and genitalia; conversely, 'thing' is strongly associated with men and their genitals as is seen in *Hamlet*, particularly. 'Ring' can be seen as an expansion, and an improvement on 'nothing': something is there, though it is not known as a 'thing'. 'Ring' enters into a self-substantiating motif where women's 'nothing' has been defined and partially explicated. While 'ring' is certainly not plural, it is a noticeable improvement on the phallogocentric, abstract 'nothing': 'ring' declares the existence of female genitalia in a way that does not trivialise, nor recognise the implied focus in relation to male genitalia. The marital ring, however, is a more complex object. The restrictive space that accompanies some Shakespearean marriages more often than not is used to enclose female characters. The symbolic ring, as emblem of female empowerment, is physicalised into the marital ring; the use of the physical ring enters into this motif of restriction while still remaining a positively female token. As we see

in *All's Well That Ends Well* and *The Merchant of Venice*, female characters' rings play a significant part in the construction of the drama: Portia twice encloses Bassanio's finger with the ring, and Helena's ring on Bertram's finger is the key to ascertaining the truth behind all the lies and deceptions in the French court. Female characters give away their rings, as symbols of trust and affection, for them to be denied and quickly passed on. This struggle against one-way restriction (where the male characters repeatedly trap female characters into unhappy marriages, emotionally restrain them, and syllabically limit them) is rendered impotent by the male characters' lack of regard for their union, and its symbol of validation: the ring.

When we consider the shape of the object that holds so much intricate meaning, we can locate significance in the fashion of a band surrounding an, albeit minimal, but identifiable space. To return to Feste's prescriptions on love, the 'present' time is here surpassed; when Shakespeare portrays marriage by focusing on the symbolic ring, the focus is more on the consequences. This problematises the concept of marriage as a finite conclusion, and a restoration of social order: consequences are linked with the place that the ring holds in Shakespeare's plays. The constituent elements of New Comedy reduce, inevitably to catastrophe, the one climactic moment. The structural elements of the 'comedy' can, figuratively, form the band of a ring, and the final element, catastrophe, occupies the centre (the 'nothing' in the ring).[55] The likening of generic components to the shape of a ring (a

[55] The likening of the climactic moment, in Shakespearean drama, to the catastrophe element in New Comedy is reinforced when Edmund notices Edgar's approach in *King Lear*: 'Pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy' (1.2.134). This is the moment that Edmund to chooses to instigate the chain of events which will lead to Edgar's banishment.

wedding ring) makes explicit both the constitution of 'comedies', and can analogically align catastrophe with marriage.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia herself states, 'By heaven I will ne'er come in your bed / Until I see the ring' (5.1.190-191). This is further emphasised in her condemnation of Bassanio giving away his wedding ring. She manipulates Bassanio's earlier syntax, declaring: 'If you had known the virtue of the ring, / Or half her worthiness that gave the ring, / Or your own honour to contain the ring, / You would not then have parted with the ring' (5.1.199-202). This imagery is so bound up in chastity and virtue that one cannot miss the link between the wedding ring and sexuality; while Portia is mocking Bassanio's attempts at persuasion, in his repetition of 'the ring', she uses such imagery to make this betrayal span more than a merely physical dimension. The use of 'ring' to conclude both Bassanio's and Portia's lines signifies and reinforces the restrictive potential of the ring in a linguistic and metaphorical contest. As Nerissa dismisses Gratiano's description of this token as 'paltry' (5.1.147), she declares that the 'posy or the value' (5.1.151) was not the sole significance: the oath sworn by Gratiano, that he 'should wear it till [his] hour of death' (5.1.153) transcends that concept of mere worth or physicality. The ring, for Portia at least, represents all that should accompany marriage: love, obedience, and sharing. She states: 'This house, these servants, and this same myself / Are yours, - my lord's! – I give them with this ring, / Which when you part from, lose, or give away, / Let it presage the ruin of your love' (3.2.170-73).

The physical act of enclosing, or even trapping, one's finger inside this ring intimates the restrictive power of marriage: this motif of restriction

has pervaded Portia's life, with the power of the dead patriarch (her father) governing her eventual fate and happiness. This scenario barely troubles Portia who, as we see, spent the majority of her adult life figuratively trapped in a casket. Bassanio is evidently aware of this restriction, and despite his protestations to the contrary, gives away Portia's ring (entrusted to her husband on the terms that she equates his love with the keeping of the ring) that has the ability and the potency to restrict him. Fortunately for Bassanio, the event of disclosing this betrayal is somewhat trivialised by the revelation of Portia's success as the lawyer, and the sparing of Antonio's life. Portia, however, has the task of enclosing Bassanio's finger for the second time, perhaps doubting whether he will again remove the ring.

Once the leaden casket has been opened, Bassanio discovers 'fair Portia's counterfeit' (3.2.115), silent in painted likeness. Michael Radford's 2004 film production of *The Merchant of Venice* makes a point of framing Portia's picture:

Figure 4: *The Merchant of Venice*, dir. Michael Radford (Beverly Hills, CA: MGM, 2004), 3.2

This symbolic incarceration anticipates the marriage-as-control scenario, as the suitor to find this picture will marry Portia. The bronze frame is in the shape of an oval, prefiguring not only the device of the ring that we come across later in the play but also the vaginal symbolism of the shape of the ring, and the crude punning at the close of the play. When Gratiano states ‘well, while I live, I’ll fear no other thing / So sore, as keeping safe Nerissa’s ring’ (5.1.306-7), he makes explicit the sexual and physical interconnections within the shape of a circle or oval. Figuratively, Portia’s virginity can be read as encircling her representation (and reputation), in the tangible oval frame, but it is additionally guarded by such perimeters, here emphasised through the physical circumference of the frame. Marriage, in a constitutive sense, is multivalent in the ‘comedies’: it transcends physicality to infiltrate both metaphorical and interpretive spaces. Textual clues and explicit props repeatedly return to this concept of marriage as restriction, significantly working against dominant critical assumptions that marriage constitutes a ‘happy ending’, that can time and again restore social order. This play is one representation of the ‘comic’ works which defy monogeneric analysis, such as this posited by Andrew Stott: ‘Marriage also serves as the conclusion towards which traditional comic narrative inevitably moves, a cultural symbol of the harmonious symmetry and the resolution of troubles’.[56]

The power of the ring as proof of marriage and facilitator of emotional/social restraint is, as we have seen, invoked in *The Merchant of Venice*, and *All’s Well That Ends Well*; it also enables the bed trick in the latter play. As the Countess of Rossillion mistakenly observes of Diana, when

[56] Andrew Stott, p. 72.

she appears in the French court: 'This is [Bertram's] wife: / That ring's a thousand proofs' (5.3.198-199). In both of these plays, sex is depicted as occupying an essential place in a successful marriage: the elaborate construction of the play's virginal female characters (Diana and Helena) therefore, is juxtaposed with the role of sex. The power of marriage as a restorative balm to soothe social anxieties and promote unity is, in *All's Well That Ends Well*, cut through with darker, moral issues, and used in a manner to create a new genre (the 'problem plays') relying solely upon the inadequacies of marriage-as-ending. Shakespeare repeatedly infuses *All's Well That Ends Well* with the image, as the title itself suggests, of the ending as a goal, a point where all confusions and previous animosities are eradicated. As Helena states 'Whate'er the course, the end is the renown'.[57] She later points out that 'All's well that ends well yet, / Though time seem so adverse and means unfit' (5.1.25-26). Helena invokes the imagery of bartering, previously identified in *The Merchant of Venice*, where a ring is supposed to facilitate sexual relations between husband and wife. As the King recalls: 'She call'd the saints to surety / That she would never put [the ring] from her finger / Unless she gave it to yourself in bed' (5.3.108-110). Again, the ring transcends its physical appearance: the shape of the ring as symbolic of female sexuality is, however, complicated by the vaginal analogical relationship presented by Diana. She explicitly states: 'Mine honour's such a ring; / My chastity's the jewel of our house' (4.2.45-6). She employs the same mimicking tone as Portia, when she uses Bertram's exact pattern of speech,

[57] William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 4.4.36. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.

inserting ‘honour’ and ‘chastity’ to create an abstraction of Bertram’s family’s ring, her virginity.

Following Helena’s demand that ‘Then shalt thou give me with thy kingly hand / What husband in thy power I will command’ (2.1.192-3), the King of France gives her leave to choose a husband from the noblemen at court. The image of the King’s hand as possessing such power is significant, when hands and rings are considered in *All’s Well That Ends Well*. Unable to accept the King’s command to marry Helena, Bertram escapes to the wars in Florence to avoid his new wife. Bertram’s conditions for his marriage to Helena primarily hinge upon a ring. He writes to Helena:

> When thou canst get the ring upon my finger, which never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body that I am father to, then call me husband. But in such a “then” I write a “never”. (3.2.46-8)

The ring’s importance not only to marriage, but also to procreation, is made most explicit. The ring is both the enabler and proof of marriage. The entire argument in 5.3 addresses the significance of the ring on Bertram’s and Helena’s fingers: the King observes to Bertram ‘She hath that ring of yours’ (5.3.209), instigating a succession of misunderstandings and confusion spanning 87 lines. Furthermore, Bertram’s identification of a hidden meaning (in that ‘then’ would mean ‘never’) hints at a coded system of signification surrounding the ring.

When Helena informs the court ‘’Tis but the shadow of a wife you see; / The name and not the thing’ (5.3.306-7), the final syllable rhymes with ‘ring’ which is repeated twice over the next five lines. As such, it is intimated that Helena (without the ring) is ‘not the thing’, or the embodiment of a wife; and, by association, with the ring she is made complete. Helena is an

intriguing, alternative figure to female characters presented in other works by Shakespeare. She directly seeks to be initiated into this phallocentric, restrictive world. When she refers to herself as 'not the thing' (3.2.123), she indirectly invokes Hamlet's observation that 'nothing' is 'a fair thought to lie between maids' legs' (3.2.121). By extension, Helena feels that she is, or has, 'no-thing' prior to reconciliation with Bertram; if she becomes or acquires a 'thing', then the situation is seemingly resolved (as a means to her pursuit of Bertram). This contrasting belief indicates that she feels incomplete without marriage; regardless of how and why she unites with Bertram, or whether, indeed, the union is likely to be happy.

To pursue the significance of the ring further, the rhyme of 'ring' with 'thing' brings together the two metaphors for male and female sexuality: the figurative meanings of these signifiers contend for male or female dominance. Helena's medical prowess, instrumental in curing the King's illness, enabled her to marry above her social status. Bertram fights against this, indignantly declaring 'A poor physician's daughter my wife! Disdain / Rather corrupt me ever!' (2.3.116-7). Helena's ring, given to her by the King himself, facilitates such a betrothal. Helena's identification of the hollowness of signifiers, when she states 'the name and not the thing', is reinforced with this image of a shadow: just as a shadow is superficial and depthless, a marriage without love remains insubstantial and shallow. As Helena observes, Bertram is 'doubly won' (5.3.313): as Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice* accepts the ring, Portia's token of marriage, twice, Bertram in *All's Well That Ends Well* has

been won by Helena by the two self-proclaimed conditions that ultimately define their marriage.[58]

The subtle images of the marital ring and 'nothing' collide in *King Lear*. The 'Love Trial' is situated in the midst of Lear's attempts to marry off his youngest daughter, with the two older daughters already married. Cordelia's marriage would grant Lear the means to absolve all monarchical responsibilities; her betrothal may have been the driving force for such a contest. Lear states that France and Burgundy, the 'great rivals in our youngest daughter's love', are, in this moment, 'here […] to be answered' (1.1.37-9). The very public situation of this attempted betrothal can be explained by Lear's evident favouring of his youngest daughter: he could have wished to celebrate the presumed proposal. The land dowries were dealt with prior to Lear's interviews with France and Burgundy to entice the better suitor with a wealthy dowry.

As viewers witness in Trevor Nunn's film adaptation (2008), the King of France shakes his head ruefully at the Duke of Burgundy being first addressed to express his intentions; Burgundy looks pleased at his invitation to go first. Lear's folly in holding the 'Love Trial' introduces the two key themes of the play: 'nothing' and female speech.[59] Emily Bartels observes that Cordelia signifies 'a physically embodied nothing, which becomes "the very ground of being" in the play': 'nothing' and 'being' collide to offer a self-determining means of *being*.[60] Bartels continues, explicating the process

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[58] David Crystal and Ben Crystal, *Shakespeare's Words* (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 138.
[59] While a later subsection of this chapter addresses female speech in relation to genre, the volubility of 'nothing' better suits this section.
[60] Emily C. Bartels, 'Breaking the illusion of being: Shakespeare and the performance of self', *Theatre Journal*, 46:2 (1994), 171-85 (p. 172).

for such self-determination: ‘The problem is not merely one of gender (though, of course, Cordelia’s nothing is different from Lear’s) and that difference may be what precipitates the play’s crisis’.[61] Cordelia transforms ‘nothing’ into something.

Ironically, Lear’s intention that ‘future strife / May be prevented’ (1.1.43-4) by the ‘Love Trial’ proves misjudged. Inadvertently, he invites strife by commanding his daughters publicly to present that one abstraction that may not be quantified: love. Cordelia identifies this impossibility: ‘What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent’ (1.1.62). The speaking of ‘love’ moves against its true nature: love is to be shown, not to be spoken. It is this difficulty, faced by Cordelia, which perhaps inspires a change of direction in plot. The ‘Love Trial’ is a turning point for Lear. Given that the action begins in *medias res*, the audience has no way of knowing Lear’s past behaviour in order to contrast this moment of pride-driven folly with earlier examples. Lear commands Cordelia to quantify her love for him:

> Lear: What can you say to draw
> A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.
> Cordelia: Nothing, my lord.
> Lear: Nothing?
> Cordelia: Nothing.
> Lear How, nothing will come of nothing: speak again.
> Cordelia Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
> My heart into my mouth. I love your majesty
> According to my bond, no more nor less. (1.1.85-93)

This traumatic event draws attention to the significance of ‘nothing’ in *King Lear*: ‘nothing’ instigates the tragic downfall. While the King interprets

[61] Bartels, p. 172.

‘nothing’ as Cordelia’s affection for him, it is her answer to his interrogation ‘what can you say?’ (1.1.85). In other parts of *King Lear*, ‘nothing’ is made tangible, with empty space (that is, the essence of nothing) being repeatedly contained within solid parameters. For example, in Trevor Nunn’s production of 2008, Ian McKellen’s Lear reinforces his disgust at Cordelia’s ‘nothing’ by holding up his crown to his face declaring that she shall have no dowry.

Figure 5: *King Lear*, dir. Trevor Nunn (London: Channel 4, 2008), 1.1.

The Fool’s discourse on ‘nothing’ in 1.4. also corresponds with this imagery: after Lear instructs the Fool that ‘nothing can be made out of nothing’, the Fool launches into a metaphor featuring eggs for Lear’s crown, ‘Why, after I have cut the egg i’the middle and eat / up the meat, the two crowns of the egg’ (1.4.130, 151-2). Elsewhere the Fool, pointing to Lear, observes: ‘That’s a shelled peascod’ (1.4.149). This concept of ‘nothing’ being contained within visible perimeters ironically contradicts its appearance as *nothing*, and it becomes, instead, something. Similarly as ‘ring’ is an expansion of ‘nothing’, in terms of reference to female genitalia and sexuality, the ‘nothing’ within perimeters indicates substance.

This concept of hollowed-out shells, physically nothing, and Cordelia's speech of 'nothing' references complexities within female power, speech and the hidden depths of the apparent nothing. Edmund's lie to Gloucester, after having made 'terrible dispatch' of the forged letter from Edgar into his pocket, attempts to make abstract the tangible letter. Gloucester states: 'The quality of nothing / hath not such need to hide itself' (1.2.33, 34-5). Cordelia refuses to hide her lack of voluble flattery ironically actually *saying* 'nothing', rather than remaining silent. Kent tells Lear, in the height of his passion in 1.1., that: 'Nor are those empty-hearted, whose low sounds / Reverb no hollowness' (1.1.154-5). To return to the discussion of 'nothing' earlier, the perceived physical parameters of the presumed 'nothing' indicate considerably more depth than might have been previously assumed. The marital ring is a perfect example of the contained 'nothing'. And 'nothing's' expansion into a ring indicates a progression of previously limited and trivialised female empowerment. Shakespeare's repeated encircling of an 'empty' space (whether peascod, egg, or, indeed, speech) suggests that there is more to apparent 'nothing' than meets the eye. This idea of an un-seeable but important space is a concept to which I return in Chapter 4 in discussing the instructive space of the grave in relation to Ophelia's influence in *Hamlet*. The restrictive potential of rings and encircling devices is made more abstractly manifest in language and the role that it plays in the matrimonial repression of women, to which I will turn next.

‘Limber vows’ and ‘callat[s] of boundless tongue[s]’[62]

In *Henry V*, Katherine confides to her maid Alice that ‘*O seigneur Dieu! Ce sont les mots de son mauvais, corruptible, gros, et impudique, et non pour les dames d’honneur d’user*’.[63] The translation of this sentiment (provided in the gloss to the RSC edition of the *Complete Works* by Bate and Rasmussen) reveals Katherine’s opinion that ‘O lord God! These are words with a wicked sound, corrupting, coarse and lewd, and not for ladies of honour to use’.[64] The corruptive potential of words is mainly identified in a phonetic sense, in that Katherine focuses on the sound, as opposed to the meaning, of the words. In the same scene, there are a number of bawdy mistakes in pronunciation that result in the French princess inadvertently referring to the ‘nick’ (Bate and Rasmussen gloss this as English slang for ‘vagina’); ‘foot’ which conjures up the French *foutre* for ‘fuck’; and ‘coun’ (homophonically linked with the French *con* for ‘cunt’) for ‘gown’.[65] In learning even the simplest words in English, such as ‘hand’ and ‘chin’, Katherine conveys disgust at the sound of the English language; this can be attributed to her reasons for learning the language, as she tells Alice ‘*il faut que j’apprenne à parler*’ (3.4.3).

Emma Thompson’s Katherine, in Kenneth Branagh’s 1989 film production, exudes an air of resignation hinting at her possible distaste for

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[62] William Shakespeare, *The Winter’s Tale*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.2.57; 2.3. 111-12. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.
[63] William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 3.4.40-1. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.
[64] Bate and Rasmussen (eds.), *Complete Works*, p. 1060.
[65] Bate and Rasmussen (eds.), *Complete Works*, p. 1060.

needing to learn English: she gazes, gravely, into the distance behind the camera, pausing before asking Alice to teach her some English words.[66]

Figure 6: *Henry V*, dir. Kenneth Branagh (London: BBC, 1989), 3.4.

At first this appeared to be a light-hearted scene; Thompson's Katherine blows kisses at her birds. Her laughing with Alice, however, quickly switches to a look of despair and resignation upon opening her door and exchanging a loaded look with her father. Mélanie Thiérry's Katherine in *The Hollow Crown*'s *Henry V* (2012) adopts a business-like persona in her request of Alice, conveying little emotion; in contrast with Thompson's representation, Thiérry's Katherine appears to have (albeit not happily) accepted her impending transfer from her father to Henry as a given, and acts accordingly.

Although functioning as a point of amusement for groundlings, such use of bawdy and sexual language here highlights the power of words, relating to the aims for this chapter in discussing the influential potential of female speech and its impact on generic-oriented analysis. In *King Lear*,

[66] *Henry V*, dir. Kenneth Branagh (BBC, 1989).

conversely, Cordelia's spoken 'nothing' instigates courtly disorder, and the tragic action that follows. Katherine's identification of the need to learn English in *Henry V* enables her to engage in conversation with her soon-to-be husband King Henry, and her unusual silence at key points of the play highlights her unease with certain actions, such as marriage. Female speech (permitted through marriage or in the process of constructing marriages) recurs as a prevalent theme in Shakespeare's works across a significant number of plays, including those considered 'comedies', 'tragedies', and 'histories'.

In *Henry VIII* or *All is True*, female speech is implicitly identified as a problematic means for influence. Katherine of Aragon's ability to make connections (and more importantly to verbalise them) between Wolsey's schemes and Buckingham's execution results in King Henry cutting her speech off by demanding 'Let him on' (1.2.176), requesting instead the Surveyor's narrative of the events. Katherine's tone conveys a very matter-of-fact attitude: she rather bluntly asserts that 'You were the Duke's surveyor, and lost your office / On the complaint o'th' tenants' (1.2.172-73). She adds 'Yes, heartily beseech you' (1.2.176) to the end of her rather imperious condemnation of the Surveyor's recounting of events; this almost interjected geniality could intimate Katherine's speedy recognition that her tone may have come across as too forthright. *Henry VIII* will be returned to later in this chapter and the influence that Katherine's speech has on the play will be discussed.

Somewhat paradoxically, Shakespeare's omission of marital ceremonies also plays into the theme of present or notably *absent* speech: this

time, however, the lack of vows problematises the use of weddings as successfully defining or enabling features of genre. Directors deal with this ambiguity of marriage in varying ways: as we saw in Zeffirelli's production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, the absence of a physically-represented wedding can be interpreted as a point of concern, which modern directors perhaps feel the need to make explicit through inserting scenes that present the ceremony to the audience. As noted earlier in the chapter, the wedding ceremony (intimated in Shakespeare's works by marital rings) is skipped over in the play-text itself. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Katherina and Petruchio's wedding is relayed by Gremio; in Zeffirelli's 1967 film production, however, Petruchio stops Katherina's mouth with a kiss as she is in the process of saying 'I do not', in front of the eager wedding congregation, resulting in her indignant and significantly *incomplete* 'I do--' being heard by all.[67] This expansion of the play-text can represent an anxiety regarding the lack of closure apparent in the written work: this mouth-stopping is not portrayed by Shakespeare. We can take Zeffirelli's insertion in one of two ways: either, the recitation of marital vows provides an apparently much-needed, first-hand confirmation of the marriage, or else it intensifies the unsatisfactory match, by further evincing Katherina's resistance, blocking her verbal (and primary) means of rejection. Bamber comments quite scathingly on Katherina's resistance, asserting that:

> [In *The Taming of the Shrew*], the rebellion of the feminine is sullen and pointless. […] Kate's challenge is entirely negative: she resists the arrangements of society but does not call to mind what is beyond society itself. [Kate's] antagonism to her father's choice is not based on her own sexual preference or with sexual antipathy to her father's choice. It does not

[67] *The Taming of the Shrew*, dir. Franco Zeffirelli (1967).

> resonate with anything larger than itself. Petruchio, on the other hand, represents not only his own desires but the arrangements of society itself. He does so by his cheerful insistence on society's archetypal institution, married cohabitation, which Kate resists.[68]

That Bamber persists in naming Katherina 'Kate' reaffirms her own position as a critic who regards man as 'Self' and woman as 'Other', disconcertingly stating that 'Kate represents the Other very feebly while Petruchio is splendid and triumphant as a representative of the social Self'.[69] My inclusion of this type of analysis serves to reaffirm the problems in monogeneric approaches, which spawn such approaches and overwhelmingly descriptive narrative.

Loreen Giese gives a comprehensive account of the processes involved in a Renaissance marriage proposal including the relationship as it lead to the proposal and the marital contract itself. As she observes, the Renaissance middle-class process of wooing was a multi-faceted and complicated task: understandings were constituted through a variety of behaviours, including non-official verbal contracts, hand-holding, and the presenting of gifts or tokens. Giese quotes from a hearing at the London Consistory Court in 1590, where Edmund Billwyn denies any marital intentions to Margaret Luke, substantiating his denials, stating that:

> He did never contracte anie matrimonie with her […] neither hath he had anie comunication or talke with her … of or for marriage […] neither hath he at anie tyme given unto … Margarett Luke anie guifte or token in respecte of anie contracte.[70]

The modern process of merely staging a proposal evidently did not suffice in the Renaissance. There appeared to be an anxiety concerning previous

[68] Bamber, p. 33.
[69] Bamber, p. 33.
[70] Giese, p. 1.

behaviour alongside a verbal proposal. The proposal alone did not constitute a 'full' contract of marriage, as the audience is perhaps expected to believe in Shakespeare's works; the ceremony hinged on the verbal act of pronouncing 'I do' in an appropriate environment. Giese later notes that:

> a valid marriage in "matrimonial enforcement suits" in the London Consistory Court depositions could include: a verbal contract without solemnization, a verbal contract with solemnization, a verbal contract witnessed by a clergyman away from church, a ceremony from the Book of Common Prayer conducted by a clergyman in church, and a ceremony from the Book of Common Prayer conducted by a clergyman away from church.[71]

The 'verbal contract' is, evidently, a non-negotiable facet of the Renaissance marriage. Such 'limber vows' (1.2.57) and the absence of marital vows do, as I shall demonstrate, impact upon the potency of nuptials as a notable, generic feature and one which can be invoked to categorise plays.

J. L. Austin wrote that 'When I say, before the registrar or altar, &c., "I do", I am not reporting on a marriage: I am indulging in it'.[72] The marital vow, however, does not exist in Shakespeare's works. Nowhere in his canon does the audience observe a marriage ceremony conducted in the Renaissance fashion of exchanging one vow of fidelity and obedience for another.[73] To return to Derrida's thesis on the relationship between belonging and participating in a genre (as discussed in the introduction to this thesis) Austin's theories on speech acts and performatives occupy a fascinating space between participation and all-subsuming belonging. Derrida writes that 'Every text *participates* in one or several genres, there is no genreless text,

[71] Giese, p. 2.
[72] J.L.Austin, *How to Do Things With Words* (Oxford: OUP, 1962), p.10.
[73] In referring to Shakespeare's 'canon', his 'canon' refers to the printed play-texts, not to any manner of production of these printed plays-for-performance.

there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging'.[74] To consider Austin's rhetoric in the above quotation, there appears a distinct difference between these two phrases: 'reporting on a marriage' and 'indulging in it'.[75] Distance is conveyed through reporting alone, whereas the indulging connotes full (and perhaps inextricable) immersion. I venture that participation in a genre by a play equates to the reporting element of Austin's theory, whereas belonging would indicate full surrender to a specific mode of drama. Furthermore, to return to the speech acts under consideration here, Austin muses 'what are we to call a sentence or an utterance of this type? I propose to call it a *performative sentence* or a performative utterance, or, for short, "a performative"'.[76] In using 'performative' as a noun, as opposed to my earlier usage mainly in the sense of 'performativity', Austin demonstrates an alternative means of exerting power and constructing identity.

The 'type' of speech to which Austin refers as 'a performative' indicates the 'operative' function of certain types of utterances, or those sentiments which, when spoken, do not merely recite a circumstance, but *effect* them. Austin continues in his consideration of performatives by providing the following example, under the sub-heading 'Can saying make it so?': '"To marry is to say a few words" or "Betting is simply saying something"'.[77] In these instances, two specific 'types' of performatives are given; one of the examples Austin presents earlier of engaging in the speech

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[74] Jacques Derrida and Avital Ronnell, 'The Law of Genre', *Critical Inquiry*, 7.1 (1980), 55-81 (p. 65).
[75] Austin, p. 10.
[76] Austin, p. 10.
[77] Austin, p. 11.

act of saying ‘I do’, and of betting. In turn, this leads in to the discussion of the role of speech acts in the context of weddings and genres in Shakespeare’s works. In *All’s Well That Ends Well*, Diana instructs Bertram that:

> ’Tis not the many oaths that makes the truth,
> But the plaine single vow, that is vow’d true. […]
> If I should swear by Jove’s great attributes,
> I loved you dearly, would you believe my oaths
> When I did love you ill? (4.2.27-33)

The manipulation of truth by ‘many oaths’ demonstrates the innate performativity of these utterances that, inevitably, do shape the truth; as John Kerrigan observes, ‘the play unfolds in what is virtually a space of interruption, where oaths and vows contribute to the sense of events suspended, hung up between declaration and act’.[78] In Austin’s terms, ‘indicating that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action’, these formations of words approach the territory delineated by Austin as ‘*explicit* performatives’, identified through ‘some highly significant and unambiguous expression such as “I bet”, “I promise”, “I bequeath”’.[79] Such performatives shape reality. They mould the future. Even more than that, they *pause* reality while they work. In Shakespeare’s plays, there is a rich array of oath-making and vow swearing, and, even further, of oath-breaking and vow-*denying*.[80] Diana’s treatise on oaths made in ‘lov[ing] dearly’, could refer to marital vows, particularly when this passage is dramatically contextualised. As noted earlier, the verbal proposals of marriage and not the acts (weddings and vows) seem to be held as sufficient in Shakespeare’s works.

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[78] John Kerrigan, ‘Shakespeare’s Oaths and Vows’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 167 (2009), 61-89 (p. 81).
[79] Austin, p. 23.
[80] See Kerrigan, ‘Shakespeare’s Oaths and Vows’ for more.

The absence of female speech is as influential as the performative utterances I have just discussed. Cordelia's 'nothing', as I have shown, draws critical attention in its verbal plenitude and simultaneous 'nothingness'. Maureen Mahoney, in 'The Problem of Silence in Feminist Psychology', explores the multi-faceted nature of silence: she paraphrases anthropologist Susan Gal, stating that 'in certain contexts, such as a job interview, confession, or psychotherapy, the silent party is the one with power'.[81] In equating silence with power, the two characters of Cordelia and Katherine are two key examples, in that while they both evidently have capacit*y* for speech, these two characters decide not to speak. Cordelia has spoken and will speak again with eloquence, and Katherine has sought to equip herself with the tools of speech in order to converse with the English Henry. Their silence is a choice, as opposed to the presumed effects of Renaissance suppression alone.

In *Henry V*, Katherine's (albeit broken) English mutates into silence through the course of 5.2. During the convening of the English and French nobles to discuss terms of the treaty, Henry begins to understand the extent of the language barrier between himself and Katherine: the French Princess responds to Henry's statement of ownership with 'I cannot tell vat is dat' (5.2.154). Whether or not Katherine is truly unable to understand Henry's sentiments due to their differences in language, the effect of this rather ungracious retort manifests itself as incomprehension of her impending commodification through marriage, rather than a lack of understanding of rhetoric. Kenneth Branagh's Henry is noticeably taken aback when Katherine admits she 'does not speak your England' (5.2.104); again, the theme of

[81] Maureen A. Mahoney, 'The Problem of Silence in Feminist Psychology', *Feminist Studies* 22.3 (1996), 603-25 (p. 604).

dominant discourse reappears as Henry expects the language of masculine, royal power to transcend class, and even country. Mahoney asserts that 'Feminist literary critics have recognized that textual silences reveal not only cultural suppression but also, alternatively, women's deployment of silence as a form of resistance to the dominant discourse'.[82] Katherine's inability or refusal to engage in the same speech patterns as Henry indicates such a resistance to the dominant discourse of masculine, kingly power.

Henry's impatience with Katherine's incomprehension of the English language grows throughout this scene: in Branagh's adaptation, he brushes past her with a grimace, pushing her backwards by the arm into a half curtsey. Here, one can identify a corollary between lack of sufficient speech and physical action: Emma Thompson's Katherine does not answer in the manner which Branagh's Henry would prefer, and so he forces her into a subservient physical position. As discussed earlier, contracted speech (occupying an area between full volubility and silence) is particularly relevant in constituting and altering female characters' identities. As Petruchio marks his victory over Katherina through calling her 'Kate' (a term of ownership against which she initially revolts) a similar situation can be identified in *Henry V*. Approaching the end of 5.2., Henry declares 'O, Kate, nice customs curtsy to great kings. / Dear Kate, you and I cannot be confined within the weak list of a country's fashion' (5.2.219-20). In eight lines, Henry directly refers to Katherine as 'Kate' no fewer than four times. This contracting of Katherine's name is significant, particularly as this happens in both *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Henry V* before any weddings take place: this may anticipate the reduced role

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[82] Mahoney, p. 604.

a woman in either Katherina or Katherine's situation would take in such a marriage. Furthermore, the contraction of Katherina/Katherine to 'Kate' turns a three or four syllable name into just one, therefore cutting time for the name to be spoken which hints at the repression of female eloquence. Thompson's Katherine in Branagh's production visibly recoils at Henry's on-going repetition of 'Kate' in a similar fashion to Elizabeth Taylor's vehement contesting of Richard Burton's Petruchio referring to her as 'Kate'.

A more significant level of silencing is undertaken in some film adaptations, where female characters are simply removed. Of course, the omission of smaller characters' parts is sometimes necessary in productions; however, this is not consistent across genders. Queen Isabel is omitted from both Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V* (1989) and the *Hollow Crown's Henry V* (2012), yet male characters with fewer lines remain. Isabel has 24 lines in Act 5 of the play but is taken out; the Duke of York, however, is kept in both productions, speaking only two lines. It is certainly ironic that a character who states that 'Haply a woman's voice may do some good' is so silenced and, indeed, the removal of the Royal comment on the betrothal from Isabel (5.2.93). A female character's eloquent speech is, in this case, identified as an expression of power not suitable for the close of the play (I will discuss this further shortly in reference to Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*).

In twenty-first century Western culture, it may be far too easy for scholars to locate contemporary suppression and gender inequality within a female character's silence.[83] As Mahoney points out, the multi-faceted and

[83] Christina Luckyj, in *A Moving Rhetoricke: Gender and Silence in Early Modern England* deems lack of speech 'a sign of traditional feminine submission'; also see Adam Jaworski (ed.), *Silence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* for more detailed analysis on the interactional form of silence.

inherently dichotomic nature of silence (where it may indicate either suppression or resistance) makes it a complex phenomenon. Adam Jaworski introduces a 'type' of silence most relevant for this research:

> interactional silences […] used by participants to manipulate their own and others' conversational status within a group; how the decision to say or not to say something, when to speak and when to refrain from speaking can have an elevating or denigrating effect on the speaker and the listeners with respect to their respective positions of power, domination and control.[84]

As we see in *King Lear*, Cordelia's 'nothing' articulates a refusal to enter into the 'dominant discourse' of profuse, superficial flattery preferred by her father and her sisters: as Goneril ironically states, this is indeed a love that 'makes breath poor and speech unable' (1.1.51).[85] Cordelia's pleas, following the lavish responses from her elder sisters, are an appeal to reason; her father's reason, which is forced into submission by his wild passion. She draws a distinction between romantic and familial love: 'Why have my sisters husbands, if they say / They love you all?' (1.1.99-100). Cordelia defines her disobedient refusal by speaking in terms of 'honesty', or 'plainness', marking differences between her political and personal subject status. As explored in the earlier subsection 'rings, things, and nothings', 'Nothing' occupies an intriguing space somewhere between female power and female submission: Cordelia's refusal to participate in this egotistical contest invokes Renaissance ideals of silent women while simultaneously demonstrating her

[84] Jaworski (ed.), p. 6.

[85] This refusal to conform to dominant discourse can be recognised in *Othello*, where Iago avoids execution but swears that 'from this time forth I never will speak word' (5.2.342). Iago's power throughout *Othello* was predominantly predicated on his speech, he used words as weapons; as one of the few characters party to the majority of information surrounding the events at the close of the play, his self-sworn silence proves a matter of concern for Venice's ruling parties.

own form of autonomy which impacts notably on her father's decision-making abilities.

The 'nothing' that Cordelia utters can be read as occupying a space between speech and silence; it technically is speech, but also connotes a refusal to engage with the current discourse. This relates to the 'betweenness' of dramatic works. Returning to Derrida's thesis on participation and belonging, dramatic works can identified as neither fully belonging to nor fully participating in a certain genre (in Derrida's terms), but they feature elements that can be performed in infinite ways. Interpretation is key, but so is recognition of this element of between-ness that affords dramatic works the (albeit delimited) freedom they enjoy in performance.

A ring, as an encircled 'free space', can be read as representative of dramatic works. In the case of the 'historic' and 'tragic', for example, plays such as *King Lear* and *Macbeth* occupy a space between these two genres. Just as *Hamlet* (also originally classified as a 'history') ends with the stage scattered with corpses with no hope for the Danish line's survival, so too does *King Lear* occupy a space between 'history' and 'tragedy', where critical works can argue for each genre. This also echoes the generic uncertainty conveyed through *Henry VIII*/*All is True*. Lily B. Campbell outlines the remarkable similarities in plot in the 'tragic' and 'historic' works, where she states that 'Macbeth kills his king and usurps a throne, and his tale is classified as a tragedy by Shakespeare's editors: Bolingbroke usurps a throne, his king is killed, and the story is classed as a history'.[86] She continues, noting that 'neither the source material, the characters, nor the divine vengeance

[86] Lily B. Campbell, *Shakespeare's History: Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy* (London: Routledge, 1964), repr. 2013, p. 307.

which the plays record can, therefore, be held to account for the difference between tragedy and history'.[87] Campbell appears uncertain over how these two plays, for example, are separately designated a 'history' and a 'tragedy'; she cites the 'division of morals into public and private' as a possible justification behind this distinction.[88]

Returning to 'tragedy', Lear's irate surrendering of his claim over his youngest daughter translates thoughts and speech into action, as Bradley observes: 'the tragic world is a world of action, and action is the translation of thought into reality […] in pursuance of their ideas. But what they achieve is now what they intended; it is terribly unlike it'.[89] *King Lear* is a particularly relevant work in which to identify the influence of performative utterances. 'Nothing', as already explored, is an innately female word, at least in the Renaissance period, caught up in expressions of sexuality and power. The connotations of this word demonstrate the side of Cordelia incapable of deceit, lacking 'such a tongue / That I am glad I have not', as she states: 'since what I well intend, / I'll do't before I speak' (1.1.27-8, 233). Here, Cordelia asserts that action should precede the swearing of an intention, dismissing her sisters' falsifications as evidences of an already-present and enacted love. In response, Lear extends 'swearing' to a further level (to which Kent later states 'Thou swear'st thy gods in vain' (1.1.159)):

> Thy truth then be thy dower,
> For by the sacred radiance of the sun,
> The mysteries of Hecate and the night,
> By operation of all the orbs,
> From whom we do exist and cease to be,
> Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
> Propinquity and property of blood,

[87] Campell, p. 307.
[88] Campbell, p. 307.
[89] Bradley, p. 42.

> And as a stranger to my heart and me
> Hold thee from this for ever. (1.1.109-15)

Lear removes 'daughter' as Cordelia's title, replacing her, as an audience member sees explicitly in the RSC production of 2010, with 'sons'. She is a person defined by other means, rather than part of a group ('Lear's daughters') through her paternal relationship. Greg Hicks's Lear, in the RSC production directed by David Farr, removes Cordelia's crown, offering it to his 'beloved sons', Albany and Cornwall, stating: 'which to confirm, / This coronet part between you' (1.1.138-139). Through this action, Lear abolishes a daughter, explicitly, in this production, replacing her with sons; this is sharply contrasted with Ian McKellen's portrayal of Lear, where he brandishes his own crown, which is later picked up by Goneril.

The matter of Cordelia's betrothal, perhaps a predominant reason for the entire orchestration of the 'Love Trial', immediately follows her release from her father's patriarchal control, with Burgundy refusing her on the grounds of her having no dowry. Cordelia responds: 'Peace be with Burgundy. / Since that respect and fortune are his love, / I shall not be his wife' (1.1.249-251). This somewhat unnecessary response (in that Lear had already shattered any possibility of Burgundy and Cordelia being married) functions only to provoke her father even more. This statement has been delivered in a number of ways: Victoria Hamilton's Cordelia (in Richard Eyre's 1998 film production) couples an abrupt rejection with the removal of her hand from Burgundy's; Romola Garai's Cordelia (in Trevor Nunn's film production *King Lear* of 2008) snatches her hands from Burgundy's, pointedly turning her back on the Duke, and on Lear. Furthermore, Cordelia depicting her allegiance to a foreign power, the King of France, is another blow to her father.

Dynastic marriages sought to align countries with each other to lend aid in times of war; while Lear himself had initially introduced this union between France and England, the marriage is now out of his control. This lack of control over his daughter and, by extension, a level of influence in France, could cause Lear concern. As *King Lear* is one of only a handful of Shakespeare's plays set in England, this fear may be reminiscent of anxieties in the Renaissance period itself: the concern over foreign domination had been a national issue since the advances of Philip of Spain for the hand of Elizabeth I, and the consequent attack by the Spanish Armada.

The apparent line between the genres of 'history' and 'tragedy' is blurred further still when one considers a thematic strand that links *Henry V* and *King Lear*. In *King Lear*, an audience member witnesses the orchestration of international allegiances and the attempted transfer of daughter-as-property; this set of circumstances is also portrayed in *Henry V*. This similarity is again indicative of the problems associated with attempted distinctions between these two genres, when plays can fluctuate between them. Furthermore, female speech again transpires to be a key theme in this act of monarchical fathers bequeathing their daughters for the sake of an Anglo-French alliance. In contrast to *King Lear*, the actions and speech of the daughter are inverted in *Henry V*: as opposed to Cordelia's forthright speech, Katherine is rendered uncharacteristically silent following blatant objectification in 5.2, where she is referred to as 'capital' (5.2.97) and an 'article' (5.2.98) in Henry's demands. *King Lear* echoes *Henry V* in some respects here, where the language of commodification is not quite so blatant, but is implied. Bamber observes that '[Henry] does want to win Katherine of

France, but he also knows that he has already won her – at Agincourt'.[90] She continues, problematically stating that '"Strain" and "effort" are precisely what this scene is free of. Henry's power and desire is wholly unopposed by Katherine, who is a negligible presence in the scene. Henry has all the good lines. […] Katherine's opposition is nonexistent'.[91] Bamber makes a mistake in equating silence or lack of aggressive opposition with compliance; she pushes this further into Katherine reacting positively where Bamber uses her as an example of the feminine 'Other', being 'cheerfully courted, as Katherine is in *Henry V*'.[92]

Westmorland informs Henry that 'The King hath granted every article: / His daughter first, and in the sequel all, / According to their firm proposed natures' (5.2.324-26). Katherine is, essentially, a commodity invested to ensure future peaceful and beneficial relations between England and France. Her father, the King of France makes this explicit:

> Take her, fair son, and from her blood raise up
> Issue to me, that the contending kingdoms
> Of France and England, whose very shores look pale
> With envy of each other's happiness,
> May cease their hatred, and this dear conjunction
> Plant neighbourhood and Christian-like accord
> In their sweet bosoms, that never war advance
> His bleeding sword 'twixt England and fair France. (5.2.176-81)

The imagery of penetration is particularly explicit, connoted by the rhetoric of bleeding and the image of the sword between two nations. The suggestive imagery, too, references the procreation of Henry and Katherine, and their issue straddling the kingdoms of France and England, capable of peace-bringing and alliance-forming. The rhyming couplet appears to 'conclude',

[90] Bamber, p. 145.
[91] Bamber, p. 146.
[92] Bamber, p. 21.

succinctly, the business of betrothal, as Henry responds to this transference of daughterly property by publicly kissing her. Katherine remains on stage for ninety lines, silent, while her father discusses with her betrothed husband the orchestration of her 'transference'. In both Branagh's and *The Hollow Crown*'s productions, this section is significantly cut; the removal of much of this conversation results in the trivialising of this concerning situation, leaving Katherine with no potential to react. The Duke of Burgundy explicitly refers to the means by which Katherine, 'a maid yet rosed over with the / virgin crimson of modesty', may become sexually active: 'For maids / well summered and warm kept […] will endure handling, which before / would not abide looking on' (5.2.291-92, 302-06). The irony here is that Katherine expended so much effort on learning the English word for 'hand', which is swiftly transposed into a physical sense to provide sexual gratification to an English King who has, essentially, bought her through bribes and threats. The virgins of Harfleur become embodied in this one Princess who, even after the battle has ceased, will yet, possibly unwillingly, lose her virginity to an Englishman. The themes of commodification, sexual gratification and the production of a legitimate heir become flexible dramatic devices, rather than generic markers alone.

The issue of female speech in the act of bequeathing daughters to kings, and the production of heirs, can be identified in more established marriages, for example in *The Winter's Tale*. Hermione and Leontes are already married with a son and heir, when her speech becomes a problem. *The Winter's Tale* is marked out as a 'romance', following Edward Dowden's *Shakespeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* of 1875. The generic

identifications of the ‘romance’ genre include a mixture of courtly and pastoral scenes, again referring to action in a royal court; as such, this play can be contrasted with other courtly drama including *King Lear* and *Henry V*. As exemplified in *The Taming of the Shrew*, female speech features prominently in the condemnation and punishment of Shakespeare’s female characters. Hermione is accused of adultery following her verbal request (ironically at Leontes’s behest) for Polixenes to remain in Sicilia one week longer. In responding to Leontes’s imperative to ‘speak you’, Hermione engages in the rhetoric surrounding marriage and performative utterances. She qualifies her silence, stating that ‘I had thought, sir, to have held my peace until / You had drawn oaths from him not to stay’ (1.2.34, 35-6). She then cites speech acts as Polixenes’s primary impediments to remaining in Sicilia: ‘Verily! / You put me off with limber vows’ (1.2.46-7). With such utterances innately caught up in the rhetoric of nuptials and sexual politics, distance is implied through oaths that may prove false: the Shepherd later observes that ‘You may say it, but not swear it’ (5.2.158). As it transpires, ‘vows’ prove to be an obstacle to Polixenes remaining in Sicilia (alive) after Leontes constructs his suspicions of adultery that place the sanctity of his and Hermione’s declarations of marital allegiance in jeopardy. While friendship forms the basis of Leontes and Polixenes’s relationship, international alliance also plays a role, thus invoking the thematic terrain of *King Lear* and *Henry V*. Once more, female speech partially dictates the direction in which the play will go, regardless of whether the female character concerned operates within the bounds of a ‘tragedy’, ‘history’, or ‘comedy’.

The theme of articulate women transcends class (in addition to genre) throughout the play, with Hermione's servant Paulina being renowned for her 'boundless tongue' (2.3.91). It is this tongue which, at the end of the play, draws from Leontes a promise never to marry without her consent:

Paulina: Will you swear
Never to marry, but by my free leave?
Leontes: Never, Paulina; so be blest my spirit!
Paulina: Then, good my lords, bear witness to his oaths. (5.1.69-72)

It is ironic that free, female speech prompts such oaths from the very man who considered that his wife's speech tore apart their marital promises. After realising his folly in accusing Hermione of adultery, he declares himself open to vocal attacks, declaring to Paulina 'Go on, go on: / Thou canst not speak too much; I have deserv'd / All tongues to talk their bitt'rest' (3.2.212-14).

Inevitably (and regularly, throughout Shakespeare's works) women with a capacity for articulacy must end the play caught up in some manner of (usually hurried) heteronormative romantic attachment. While discussion of endings in direct relation to the use of genre, including the ending of *The Winter's Tale*, forms the basis of Chapter 4, it is important to point out here that Paulina's ostensible attempt to conclude the play is subverted by Leontes's refusal to allow the final speech to be provided by female voice. In response to Hermione's quick-paced questioning of Perdita, Paulina states 'there's time enough for that' urging that they: 'Go together, / You precious winners all; your exultation / Partake to every one. I, an old turtle, / Will wing me to some wither'd bough and there / My mate, that's never to be found again, / Lament till I am lost' (5.3.130-35). This speech could have been the final one of the play, but Leontes swiftly closes her down, having to have the last word. He commands:

> O, peace, Paulina!
> Thou shouldst a husband take by my consent,
> As I by thine a wife: this is a match,
> And made between's by vows. Thou hast found mine;
> But how, is to be question'd; for I saw her,
> As I thought, dead, and have in vain said many
> A prayer upon her grave. I'll not seek far--
> For him, I partly know his mind--to find thee
> An honourable husband. (5.3.135-43)

In appropriating the verbal ending, Leontes casts aside Paulina's proclamations that she can only 'mate for life' (as Bate and Rasmussen gloss her reference to a 'turtle dove'); belittling her statement that she will 'lament', and rapidly marrying her off to Camillo.[93] The ending is somewhat frenzied as Leontes clumsily concludes the play demanding 'Hastily, lead away' (5.3.183). The power with which Leontes had endowed Paulina in 5.1 is in this scene removed, and turned back on her. Paulina had made no agreement with Leontes that he should determine when she may remarry, however he swiftly betroths her: 'Come, Camillo, / And take her by the hand; whose worth and honest / Is richly noted; and here justified; By us, a pair of kings' (5.3.126-46). After Paulina is betrothed to Camillo, she speaks no more. Her eloquence is punished through this match; we assume that her silence denotes her dissatisfaction at this treatment. To invoke Mahoney again, Paulina may recognise that the 'dominant discourse' is no longer one with which she wishes to interact, and so she removes herself from the conversation.

Hermione, who had spoken so beautifully on Leontes's behalf to convince Polixenes to stay, speaks only once following her transformation from 'statue' to living person. Leontes's sharp exclamation or reprimand, following the stage direction '[*to Hermione*]', of 'What!' (5.3.147) suggests

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[93] Bate and Rasmussen (eds), *Complete Works*, p. 766.

some gesture or look of incredulity on Hermione's part, either that Leontes has so deftly married off her confidante, or that he seems so determined to right all perceived wrongs in a single speech. He immediately follows this with a command for his wife to 'look upon my brother', then issues a shared apology to both Hermione and Polixenes. It is an apology which, ultimately, is left hanging. Leontes appears far more concerned with Florizel's betrothal to Perdita, than in forging a meaningful reconciliation with his wife: 'This your son-in-law, / And son unto the king, whom, heavens directing, / Is troth-plight to your daughter' (5.3.149-51). And Perdita truly is Hermione's daughter: the onstage time devoted to their reunion results in a much more evocative scene than a mere account by three Gentlemen, whose narrative commands 5.2. Furthermore, this filtering by male voices echoes *The Taming of the Shrew*, where Tranio and Gremio report Katherina and Petruchio's wedding.

On seeing Hermione-as-statue in 5.3., Leontes informs Paulina, 'What you can make her do, / I am content to look on: what to speak, / I am content to hear; for 'tis as easy / To make her speak as move' (5.3.91-5). This intricate linking of speaking with 'doing' recalls Hermione's innate ability to provoke action through words, a characteristic for which Leontes banished her. This once more invokes Austin's thesis; lips, too, appear to play a significant part in the reconciliation, and even the revival of love.[94] When Hermione's lips possess no capacity for words (when they are closed, or seemingly painted on) they entice Leontes to attempt to kiss a supposed statue, despite what

[94] As Leontes desires to kiss his estranged wife's lips, in an effort to salvage former affection, so Romeo's dream in 5.1 hinges his pure survival upon Juliet's lips: 'I dreamt my lady came and found me dead […] / And breath'd such life with kisses in my lips /That I reviv'd and was an emperor' (5.1.6-9).

others may think: ‘Let no man mock me, / For I will kiss her’ (5.3.79-80). The reported relation of Hermione’s and Leontes’s reunion might (superficially) suggest a happy, family reunion: Polixenes states ‘She embraces him!’; Camillo observes ‘She hangs about his neck!’ (5.3.111, 112). To return to Mahoney, however, there is a manifest difference between the active ‘embracing’ of Leontes, and the inherently passive ‘hanging about his neck’. It could be argued that ‘hanging about his neck’ conveys female submission, particularly in contrast to Hermione’s more active apparent ‘embracing’ of Leontes. The evident difference in characters’ interpretations makes this a hard scene to ‘read’ and depends, primarily, upon how it is presented in performance. Acted in a certain way, this scene could even suggest the ‘traditional’ ending of ‘comedy’, where a union restores the social chaos evident earlier in the play. However, the textual clues indicate (particularly through the third person narrations) that this situation is not ‘comic’. Returning to the theme of cross-genre links, one can identify correlations between this situation and that in *Henry V*, where non-celebratory betrothals or reunions occur.

Hermione’s final words are addressed only to Perdita, expressing no happiness at her reunion with Leontes, or indeed any speech to her estranged husband. It appears that it is only through discourse between Hermione and Leontes that their reconciliation would be complete; he must first admit that her articulacy is not dangerous to him. In Hermione’s single speech in 5.3, where she asks the Gods to ‘pour down’ (5.3.22) their graces upon her daughter, and questions how Perdita came to find the court, she neither refers, nor speaks, to Leontes. Her only mention comes when speaking to Perdita

about ‘Thy father’, which recognises Leontes purely as the biological means for giving Hermione a daughter, and nothing more. This contrasts starkly with the affectionate vocatives used by Hermione, in reference to Leontes, earlier in the play: she repeatedly addressed him as ‘my lord’, and ‘your highness’ (1.2. 61; 2.1.116). Hermione speaks only on Paulina’s cue: ‘Turn, good lady, / Our Perdita is found’ (5.3.120-21). This new use of the ‘royal we’ does not include the King of Sicilia, who was only afforded a second-hand report of his union with his long-lost daughter in 5.2. This phrasing suggests a platonic, female-only relationship between Paulina, Hermione, and Perdita: through this, it could be argued that Shakespeare is creating a new model of familial love, where consanguinity is relegated (Hermione recognises Leontes only as ‘Perdita’s father’) and love and affective bonds are highly valued.[95]

Katherine in *Henry V* was indirectly punished by a potentially loveless marriage, after the audience sees her attempting to learn English; both Paulina and Hermione in *The Winter’s Tale* were already married when their articulacy became an issue. Leontes, who demands Hermione’s speech in 1.2., quickly and powerfully revokes his invitation, simultaneously condemning her eloquence: perhaps experiencing the influence that his wife’s communication holds makes Leontes wary of her capacity for influence. The recurring theme of female speech as transgression is evident in many of Shakespeare’s plays, and is not restricted to those explored in this chapter. Isabella in *Measure for Measure* is a prime exemplar of the use of marriage as punishment; she is a character who keeps her moral and religious virtue in

[95] This subject could form part of a wider project which explores an alternative familial make-up, rather than the linear family structure; one which is worth touching upon here, but would require much more space in a different project to do it justice.

traumatic circumstances, rebuffing Angelo's inappropriate advances, trying to save her brother's life, and ultimately to be rapidly betrothed to the Duke. Marriage-as-punishment can be emphasised or even, sometimes, trivialised in production. The omission of marital vows from the constructions of marriage in Shakespeare is significant, and questions marriage's use as a closing, generic feature. These 'callat[s] / of boundless tongue[s]' influence dramatic plots and outcomes through utterances alone; words were, perhaps, the only tool at Renaissance women's disposal (2.3.111-2).

'A fruitless crown': family and female power[96]

The 'history' play arguably most concerned with marriage (and, compounded with this theme, of supplying heirs) is *Henry VIII* or, to use its alternative title, *All is True*. This second title connotes an alternative reception of the play, where it does not simply 'recount' part of a Tudor monarch's life, but implies moralistic undertones.[97] What is 'true'? This question could be linked with the concept of ending 'well', which is suggested in the title of *All's Well That Ends Well*. The inherent subjectivity of 'true' and 'well' in drama is innately bound up in the artificiality of theatre, and in the perspective of the audience. In *Henry VIII*, 'true' and 'well' merge together: the concept of ending 'well' is depicted by marriage, with the associated connotations of the restoration of social order. The 'truth' of a historical narrative combines with the 'use' of marriage as a 'successful' (or even 'happy') ending. Furthermore, the

[96] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, in *Complete Works* ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 3.1.60. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.
[97] Crystal and Crystal, p. 223.

addition of an alternative title could suggest a perhaps conscious unease with confining this play solely to the ‘history’ genre; the more descriptive and generically ambiguous title (as opposed to historical fact) indicates more focus on the tale, as opposed to the genre. As exemplified in *Henry V*, the belief that the audience is seeing a convincing depiction of ‘real’ history depends, inevitably, upon their capacity for imagination. As indicated by the Chorus in *Henry V*, the implicit contract of exchange between cast and audience members encourages belief in the action they watch. The Chorus appeals to skills of fancy and imagination, craving ‘a muse of fire, that would ascend / The brightest heaven of invention / to take A kingdom for a stage’ (PRO 1-3). In the introduction, I quoted Bourriaud’s declaration that, ‘art is a *state of encounter*’; this unspoken contract between cast and audience member is placed within this ‘arena of exchange’ where imagination is essential to the portrayal of both drama and enacted historical events.[98] The double-title status of this play and its potential search for ‘truth’ further complicate the process of genre-allocation.

The selectivity involved in the construction of a ‘history’ play grants the dramatist a delimited level of freedom. In a play such as *Henry VIII*, where a certain social situation (in this case marriage) is repeated so often, the playwright faces a choice of which marriages to dramatise.[99] In *Henry VIII*, the monarch’s first marriage to the Spanish queen, Katherine of Aragon, sets in motion events that continue throughout the king’s life. More specifically, longing for a male heir appears the King’s primary concern. Edward Stafford,

[98] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2002), p. 18. My italics.
[99] I will use this title, *Henry VIII*, in referring to this play, as it is the play’s inclusion in the canon of the ‘histories’ upon which I will predominantly focus.

3rd Duke of Buckingham, was executed in 1521 for treason resulting, primarily, from his influential courtly role, and his tense relationship with Cardinal Wolsey. The circumstances prompting the King's authorisation for an investigation against Buckingham appear, historically, to be based on the Duke's Plantagenet blood: in Shakespeare's play it is announced, by the Surveyor, that the Duke intended to capitalise on Henry's lack of a male heir, and rise to the throne himself. The Surveyor states: 'First, it was usual with him – every day / It would infect his speech – that if the King / Should without issue die, he'll carry it so / To make the sceptre his'.[100] This questionable assay on the Duke of Buckingham's character, and his ambitions for the throne, serves as a turning point in this dramatisation of the life of Henry VIII.

Henry VIII's desire for an unequivocally legitimate male heir resulted (in addition to the establishment of the Church of England) in a charade of marrying, and, consequently, a pattern of unsuccessful marriages. This yearning for a son, to satisfy the demands of primogeniture, echoes thematic elements of *Richard III*, written twenty-one years earlier. In an environment in which families are prized, Richard remains a solitary figure, endeavouring to destabilise the familial units which surround him. The audience is informed that he murdered both Henry VI and his son, Edward, and, in this dramatisation of his life, orchestrated the deaths of his brother Clarence, and Edward's two young sons. The audience is first introduced to Richard through his comparison of himself with his royal brother, Edward IV:

> He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber,
> To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
> But, I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks,

[100] William Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.2.132-35. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.

Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
[…] Have no delight to pass away the time.[101]

This immediate contrast between the Duke of Gloucester and the King of England introduces themes that will pervade the play: courtship and marriage. This outward manifestation of inward deformity serves to emphasise and somewhat to *excuse* Richard's failure to secure a wife. Where, as in *Henry V* and *Henry VIII*, the place of marriage in the quest for sons and heirs can be either foregrounded or made very subtle, *Richard III* remains unique in that the king's concerted efforts are utterly futile. The primary means through which Richard intends to attain the throne of England is by smearing Edward's sons with bastardy, and recounting Edward's own birth as illegitimate to contrast with his own claim as following 'a lineal, true-derived course' (3.7.199). This highlights the 'history' plays' predominant thematic concern with legitimate heirs to guarantee monarchical succession. Many of the 'tragedies', similarly, treat this issue as one of paramount importance, with 'tragic' endings inextricably linked with fears for the continuation of the royal line, as can be observed in *Macbeth*.

Cross-genre links can, then, be made between *Henry VIII*/*All is True* and *Macbeth*: regardless of their 'tragic'/unknown/'historic' statuses, the theme of legitimacy and the fear of illegitimacy transcend genre, permeating the plays and *constituting* significant parts of the ensuing dramatic action. Just as Othello's mind is framed to jealousy by Iago, and Hamlet's mind framed to vengeance by the ghost, so Henry's mind is turned to the question

[101] William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.1.12-16, 25. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.

of Tudor succession by the Surveyor's words, and Wolsey's plots. As the perceptions of the 'history' genre can be shaken, somewhat, through the identification of multi-genre themes, this can also be noted in such traditionally revered forms of dramatic approaches as the 'fatal flaw'. *Henry VIII* is not classed as a 'tragedy', yet it could be identified that the principles surrounding the 'fatal flaw' (as exemplified in the examples provided above) are in force in the play, acting on Henry's greatest fear and spurring him on to action. As Gentleman 2 observes in 2.1 of *Henry VIII*, 'Either the Cardinal / Or some about him near have, out of malice / To the good Queen, possessed him with a scruple / That will undo her' (2.1.155-8). This 'scruple' could potentially be identified as the flaw (in Bradley's terms) that constitutes Henry's undoing. Even though the action does not result in death, cross-genre links can still be identified here; the fatal flaw can be read (in less monogeneric terms) as representative of human anxiety.

The king's 'scruple' proves to be the preoccupation with his wife conceiving a male heir and the consequences of this desire affect the female characters (most notably Katherine) in a negative way. Marriage facilitates this undoing. In this instance, marriage is not a feature of genre charged with defining the play in a certain manner; it is not constituting genre, but undoing it as a destructive force. Queen Katherine, seemingly the only one present in the court having the power and the intelligence to see through Wolsey's part in the execution of his enemy, confronts the Surveyor: 'You were the Duke's surveyor, and lost your office / On the complaint o'th' tenants' (1.2.192-3). No one else appears to have made the connection between Buckingham's present situation, and the bias of both of his accusers; indeed Henry instructs

Katherine in her silence, urging her to 'Let him on' (1.2.197). Henry's assertion of his power is made manifest both in his command, and in his sharing of Katherine's line in his delivering it. In the BBC Shakespeare production of 1979, Claire Bloom's Katherine occupies a position of quiet confidence by the King's side as the only woman in the room hearing the Surveyor's account of events. While her indictment of the Surveyor's trustworthiness may, on the page, seem rather aggressive, Bloom executed her statement in a measured and calm way, allowing her words (as opposed to the manner of their delivery) to have impact.

In 1.2., Henry terms his and Katherine's situation 'our fail' (1.2.145) for having produced a daughter, three stillborn babies, and two babies surviving only a number of days. Henry's concern for the legitimacy of their marriage taints his regard for his young daughter, Mary: in court, he wonders 'Whether our daughter were legitimate / Respecting this our marriage with the dowager, / Sometimes our brother's wife' (2.4.176-78). This relational identity that Henry affords Katherine (he had previously referred to her as 'wife') could suggest an alteration in attitude to his wife, where her forthright speech is combined with the inability to produce a son and heir. She no longer 'belongs' to him, but places her identity with that of his brother's (a similar situation transpired in *King Lear*, when Cordelia's relational identity of 'daughter' is removed, following the events of the 'Love Trial' scene). Henry makes his concerns for lineal succession most explicit in 2.4: 'I weighed the danger which my realms stood in / By this my issue's fail' (2.4.194-95). There is an evident switch in pronouns here, with 'our fail' turning into 'my issue's

fail'. Relational identity and personal accountability are here combined, and Henry takes full 'parentage' of this 'fail'.

Political realms are secured and essentially validated through having a male heir to the throne. To refer back to my discussion of *King Lear* and *Henry V*, this anxiety is dramatically represented through the transference of daughter-as-property in both of these plays, whether successful or simply attempted. The King of France's bawdy intimations of Katherine supplying an heir to Henry further reference the concern for a male heir and monarchical guarantee of place and throne. The place of prominence for this concern in both 'tragedies' and 'histories' (and, also, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, where Baptista is clearly looking to the future and marriages for his daughters) again indicates that this is not an anxiety confined to the 'history' plays alone. In Katherine's penultimate speech, she anxiously requests Caputius to deliver a final letter to the king wherein she writes: 'I have commended to his goodness / The model of our chaste loves, his young daughter' (4.2.131-32). The King's union with Anne Bullen (Boleyn) is, by the Chamberlain at least, looked on with hope: 'who knows yet / But from this lady may proceed a gem / To lighten all this isle' (2.3.78-9). Yet, as the Old Lady reports to the King, Anne's child ''tis a girl / [that] Promises boys hereafter' (5.1.164-65). The King's marriage to Anne is evidently noticed as only serving the purposes of primogeniture; the birth a female child (and, significantly, Shakespeare's monarch) is merely a step on the path to securing a male heir.

In a similar fashion to Queen Katherine's provocative speech and actions in *Henry VIII*, the catalytic potential of wives, and the prominent concerns over primogeniture are foregrounded in *Macbeth*. Lady Macbeth

assists (with the witches, allies unbeknown to her in this respect) in the instigation of a chain of events that contributes to her husband's later torment and death, in addition to her own. Creating a dialogue between these two plays allows cross-genre links to be identified, with the concern for lineal succession straddling both 'tragic' and 'historic' genres. Hugh M. Richmond controversially noted that domestic chaos can be instigated by women who 'forget their biological role', and 'attempt to seize physical supremacy from the male'.[102] This statement brings focus straight back to the constitution of gender, and such 'biological roles' and their associated 'expectations'. Just as the Renaissance association of 'thing' with men, and 'nothing' with women (as discussed earlier in this chapter) generalises about genders to an enormous extent, Richmond's identification of these 'biological roles' suggests a pre-Butlerian concept of gender and gender roles against which so much feminist and psychoanalytic theory struggles. Butler writes: 'Bodies cannot be said to have a signifiable existence prior to the mark of their gender', the constitution of their gendered identity.[103] To paraphrase: making assumptions about gender, based on nothing more than an archaic notion and playing into the myth of the infallible patriarchy, is a short-sighted pursuit.

The living body is the physical embodiment of gender performance, in so much as it can project (through different means) very many variations of 'identity', engaging in the 'constitutive acts' that so construct a person.[104] In Butler's words, to 'deconstruct the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts', is 'to expose the contingent acts that create that

[102] Hugh M. Richmond, *Shakespeare's Sexual Comedy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), p. 71.
[103] Butler, p. 13.
[104] Butler, p. 44.

appearance of a naturalistic necessity'; the cumulative process is demonstrated through such deconstruction.[105] To return to Richmond's statement, this 'physical supremacy', in the case of *Macbeth*, embodies an alternative kind of physicality. While we may consider Lady Macbeth as a forceful and self-governing character, she has been corrupted by Renaissance patriarchal ideals, becoming absorbed in the presumed death and lack of a child. Lady Macbeth's first (and only explicit) reference to this event comes in 1.7: 'I have given suck, and know / How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me'.[106] However, her continual demands upon Macbeth's male identity question his virility and potency; and, as the audience sees, Lady Macbeth's inner trauma becomes manifested in Macbeth, who kills all those whose sons may grow to become prosperous in Scotland. Physical strength (as depicted by Macbeth's success in the initial war) is contested by physical capabilities (bearing a child) by his wife. This proves a significant gulf in the marriage that comes between the two characters, eventually contributing to the warrior Macbeth's downfall, in addition to the death of his wife.

Bradley's commentary on *Macbeth* notes that 'A good many readers […] would say that he had already harboured a vaguely guilty ambition, though he had not yet faced the idea of murder'.[107] Bradley's key point in this statement is to highlight Macbeth's ambition as the 'fatal flaw', one which is acted on and intensified by his *own* decisions. This is not the case. He continues:

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[105] Butler, p. 44.
[106] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.7.58-59. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.
[107] Bradley, p. 413.

> Suppose that his guilty ambition […] was known to his wife and shared by her. Otherwise, surely, she would not, on reading his letter, so instantaneously assume that the King must be murdered in their castle, nor would Macbeth, as soon as he meets her, be aware (as he evidently is) that this thought is in her mind.[108]

By addressing this seemingly common trait in husband and wife, Bradley acknowledges Lady Macbeth's initial interaction with her husband as a catalyst in the unfolding 'tragedy'. Indeed, in considering the title of the play, *Macbeth* could refer to either the soldier (as in traditional analysis) or to his wife; this is her name through marriage, after all. Instead we see Macbeth's soliloquised thoughts steeped in conditionals, such as his first statement following the witches' prophecies: 'If Chance will have me King why, / Chance may crown me, / Without my stir' (1.3.154-155). There appear to be no such murderous intentions in either this ponderous utterance, or in any others in the following four scenes. These prevailing conditionals illustrate an uncertain mind, inclined to leaving destiny to fate, here epitomised by 'Chance'. As Macbeth states, 'Come what come may' (1.3.159).

On hearing the proclamation of Malcolm as Prince of Cumberland, the Thane of both Glamis and Cawdor observes: 'That is a step / On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap, / For in my way it lies' (1.5.53-54), with the imperative 'must' expressing compulsion, a necessary requirement. This state of mind is clearly noticeable even after Lady Macbeth has first set to work on altering his intentions:

> If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
> It were done quickly: if th'assassination
> Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
> With his surcease success; that but this blow
> Might be the be-all and the end-all here,

[108] Bradley, p. 413.

> But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
> We'd jump the life to come. (1.7.1-7)

Even the statements so often used to illustrate Macbeth's seemingly unquenchable ambition do not definitively indicate or convey murderous intentions:[109]

> Stars hide your fires:
> Let not light see my black and deep desires. (1.4.55-6)
>
> If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
> Against the use of nature? (1.3.144-7)
>
> My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
> Shakes so my single state of man. (1.3.149-50)

As illustrated through the treatment of Buckingham in *Henry VIII*, mere hearsay that a subject or nobleman finds the idea of becoming King appealing justifies accusations of treason, and consequent execution. Macbeth's 'black and deep desires' and 'suggestion' could simply be Macbeth's musings on the witches' final prophecy. Here, Macbeth speaks only of 'desires', 'suggestion[s]', and 'thought[s]': abstractions. The 'murder' to which Macbeth refers, in the final quotation, applies to his thoughts of kingship: 'whose murder' applies to 'my thought' in the same line, meaning that Macbeth has not yet removed this idea from his mind. Ian McKellen's Macbeth, in Trevor Nunn's production, quickly draws away from his wife's kiss following 'never / Shall sun that morrow see!' (1.6.61-2).[110] In Polanski's 1971 production, too, Jon Finch's Macbeth is lying face up to

[109] A.C. Bradley cites these quotations in his *Shakespearean 'Tragedy* (1904), to reinforce, apparently, his critical work on Macbeth's naturally guilty disposition and early consideration of murder. This analysis, however, fails to grasp the uncertainty conveyed through the abstract images Macbeth presents.
[110] *Macbeth*, dir. Trevor Nunn (London: Royal Shakespeare Company, 1976).

Francesca Annis's Lady Macbeth as she states this line, upon which he looks shocked and quickly moves upright. This scene is presented particularly well: the camera focuses on Annis as she asks when Duncan 'leaves hence' and she looks to be thinking about what he has told her. In this moment, Annis is above Finch as he lies on his back in a physically vulnerable position which is perhaps indicative of his moral vulnerability with his wife.

Figure 7: *Macbeth*, dir. Roman Polanski (London: Columbia Pictures, 1971), 1.5.

Annis leans down as she tells Finch's Macbeth that 'never / Shall sun that morrow see'; Macbeth, after looking aghast for a moment, quickly moves to gain physical equality in posture.

Macbeth can be seen as the (Bradleyan) archetypal 'tragic hero': a man of power, social status, and skill. The deliberate introduction of Macbeth in the war camp, receiving plaudits for his services to the Scottish army, depicts him as the epitome of masculine strength and valour. John Drakakis observes that 'Macbeth lives in a culture that values butchery. Throughout

the play manhood is equated with the power to kill'.[111] Macbeth's confusion becomes evident when his wife questions that selfsame manhood in 1.7, as he retorts 'I dare do all that may become a man' (1.7.49), following her accusations of his apparent cowardice in the face of proposed regicide. If, as Drakakis notes, in the Renaissance, masculinity was defined by the power to kill, then the art of being a successful husband was certainly equated with the duties of procreation: violence and fertility become increasingly interlinked. In Shakespearean drama, the audience sees no successful amalgamation of warrior and father/husband duties: Bertram in *All's Well That Ends Well* uses his warrior status to avoid a reunion with Helena; Othello's prominent war-hero reputation does not balance with his quest for love; and Lear calls on his previous proficiency as a warrior in his distress in later scenes. These two markedly different elements of the male persona (warrior and husband) do not cohabit peacefully. In the genres themselves, these two qualities are set apart: we see prominent father/offspring relationships in the 'comedies', 'romances', and some of the 'problem plays'; in the 'histories' and 'tragedies', conversely, the warrior figure is foregrounded and somewhat revered. By Lady Macbeth's standards, her husband was expected to be a successful warrior and a good husband and father: the essentialism intimated by her repetition of 'man' binds these two qualities into the figure of the Renaissance man. Lady Macbeth expects Macbeth to fulfil his 'biological role', while simultaneously defying hers. Francesca Annis's Lady Macbeth uses Macbeth's desires for her (as a soldier returning to his wife) to convince him to do what she suggests, following her command to 'look like th' innocent

[111] John Drakakis, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Longman, 1992), p. 265.

flower, / But be the serpent under't' with a passionate kiss, while Macbeth continues to look startled (1.5.66-67).

Figure 8: *Macbeth*, dir. Roman Polanski (London: Columbia Pictures, 1971), 1.5.

The lack of a child to orchestrate lineal succession can be identified as playing a vital role in Lady Macbeth's actions. Macbeth's masculinity is constantly questioned by his partner's repetitions of 'man'; demanding to know whether he has the manly qualities necessary for regicide, while reminding him of his presumed infertility and lack of virility. Lady Macbeth's initial interaction with her husband, once he has returned home following his victory in the war, is one catalyst that contributes to the unfolding 'tragedy'. Before his return, she communicates her intentions:

> Hie thee hither,
> That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
> And chastise with the valour of my tongue
> All that impedes thee from the golden round,
> Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
> To have thee crown'd withal. (1.5.24-9)

As we see, 'chastis[ing]' is the means by which Lady Macbeth means to influence her husband; Judi Dench's Lady Macbeth of 1979 gasps with

anticipation, rising from her seat declaring ‘Hie thee hither’. Polanski’s production presents this speech differently, with an internal monologue from Annis’s Lady Macbeth, and she cuts this speech short at ‘pour my spirits in thine ear’. She folds Macbeth’s letter and finishes the line while firmly shutting a box within which she has put his letter, with the firmness indicating her resolve on this matter. Throughout the play Lady Macbeth makes insistent demands on Macbeth’s masculinity berating him whenever possible: ‘When you durst do it, then you were a man; / And, to be more than what you were, you would / Be so much more the man’ (1.7.49-51). Polanski’s version is interesting in that it omits the ‘I have given suck’ speech, relying on Annis’s emotive delivery of the other lines, combined with tear-filled eyes to convince her husband. Finch’s Macbeth does, however, return to his internal monologue to think ‘Bring forth men-children only’ as his wife, newly-cheered at his change of mind, dances gaily with Duncan (1.7.58, 79).

In the feast where Banquo’s ghost appears, instead of lending support to her husband in his time of need, Lady Macbeth condemns his behaviour and hallucinations, demanding ‘Are you a man?’, ‘What! Quite unmann’d in folly?’ (3.4.57, 72). While this may indicate embarrassment on behalf of the hostess, her very public indictment of her husband’s actions goes beyond what may be considered a ‘reasonable’ response. This emasculation urges Macbeth into such situations where he can, as he notes at the feast, become ‘a man again’ (3.4.107). Macbeth’s psychomachia is almost dictated by his wife’s involvement: motivated by her ‘I have given suck’ speech, Macbeth murders Duncan (1.7.56). With his wife’s taunts about his virility still in his mind, he has Banquo murdered whose lineage would supply many kings;

following Lady Macbeth's chastisements, he lays siege to Birnam Wood. Prior to having Banquo murdered, Macbeth seems to attempt to restore the 'correct' power balance in his marriage: when Lady Macbeth asks 'what's to be done?' he replies 'Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck' (3.2.44-45). Knowing that her husband has been set on the path which she desires, Lady Macbeth appears satisfied to adopt the role of the dutiful, and ultimately *feminine* wife. Just as she publicly feigned a swoon upon the news of Duncan's death in 2.3. (in Polanski's production, Annis looks pointedly at Macbeth then faints), she is guided by her husband here, and the scene concludes (uncharacteristically) without another word from her. This is calculated silence. Lady Macbeth knows that she has set her husband on this quest; this is not the oppressed, enforced silence of Isabella or Katherine. Finch's Macbeth uses Annis's Lady Macbeth's tools of persuasion in following his command that she be 'innocent of the knowledge' with a kiss and a stroke of his wife's cheek:

Figure 9: *Macbeth*, dir. Roman Polanski (London: Columbia Pictures, 1971), 3.2

As a direct result of his wife's taunts, combined with the Witches' prophecies, Macbeth dwells upon his potentially heirless reign, and Banquo's virile legacy of kings:

> They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
> Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,
> And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
> Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,
> No son of mine succeeding. If't be so,
> For Banquo's issue have I fil'd my mind. (3.1. 59-64)

This image of the 'fruitless crown' and 'barren sceptre' haunts Macbeth; he is unable to enjoy his kingship in the knowledge that his line ends with his death. It is the third prophecy presented to Banquo, 'Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none' (1.3.66), that urges Macbeth into the infanticidal quest that seemingly secures the throne. This insecurity regarding his name's future prompts him to murder his friend and to attempt to murder Banquo's son, and to command what can only be described as a massacre of Macduff's family. Macbeth's reign as a tyrant begins by his failure to provide a son and heir, which is criticised interminably by his wife.

This concern over not providing an heir is part of a larger matrix of concerns over procreational failures; another aspect is fear of illegitimate progeny. Furthermore, the role of the theme of lineal succession within marriage in several genres (including 'comedy', 'tragedy' and 'romance') indicates the lack of absolute finality in identifying themes as generic markers, always guaranteed to produce a play of a certain 'type', genre, or 'genus'. Lady Macbeth serves as a useful example in this respect: her chastising of her husband's inability to provide her with a child functions as a vital catalyst that contributes to the plot's movement into murder and (supposed) revenge.

To return to the quotation with which I began this chapter, the finality apparent in Feste's comment that 'journeys end in lovers meeting' is a precarious one. As discussed throughout this chapter, a lack of 'concluding' is most apparent in the plays' plots and structures.[112] Penny Gay states that 'The [comic] end, when it finally and satisfyingly comes, will discharge all ignorance and misunderstanding […], will bring together those who deserve to be so, in marriage or family reconciliation'.[113] As demonstrated in this chapter, marriage is certainly not a fixing device to 'discharge all ignorance and misunderstanding'; neither is it a 'happy ending' or 'resolution'. The Carpe Diem mentality of enjoying 'present mirth' in 'comedies' transcends monogeneric allocation, demonstrating a theme that transcends just 'comedy' alone; the sustained consideration of, and ultimately *concern for*, the future in the 'history' plays offers a variation on this theme. The presence and absence of mother-characters in Shakespeare's selected plays will be discussed in Chapter 2, where their influence over their children can be analysed in relation to the use and application of dramatic genres, particularly in monogeneric approaches.

[112] In my fourth chapter, I return to the concept of dramatic 'conclusions', briefly touching on the comic marriage-as-ending device in the context of applying the Kantian thesis of 'means' and 'ends' to the analysis of Shakespeare's works alongside Butlerian concepts of antifoundationalism.
[113] Gay, p. 15.

Chapter Two: 'And so, my mother'

In 2.2 of *King Lear*, the aged king declares, in his passionate tirade on seeing Kent/Caius in the stocks, that 'this *mother* swells up toward my heart'.[1] Lear's identification of this 'mother' as a female manifestation suggests Renaissance anxiety over the influence of the maternal role, also invoking contemporary concerns surrounding the power of Galenic humours in the body. In terms of Galen's theory, Lear's 'choler' (1.2.299; according to Regan, who attributes Lear's 'unruly waywardness' to his 'choleric years' (1.1.300)) equates to an excess or an imbalance of yellow bile making him innately irascible. Lear's alarm over this 'mother' ascending towards his heart (hysteria's origin, in Renaissance medical context, was supposed to be the uterus, confining it to women alone) draws to the foreground the place of mothers in the play and serves as an effective introductory example for this chapter. The mothers discussed in this chapter predominantly conform to a model of power and female strength, whether in prominent social positions (such as Gertrude in *Hamlet* as Queen) or warlike mothers of both state and family (such as Elinor in *King John* or Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*). Lear's fear of the 'mother' inside his physical form, *hysterica passio*, can also be quantified in terms of this 'warlike' expression of maternality; the 'mother' is metaphorically waging war on, or attacking, Lear's body.

The 'mother' of Lear's reckoning is an unconscious manifestation of a maternal presence that has haunted him; an absent presence. In Lear recognising his daughters' masculine qualities as derivative of his own, in

[1] William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 2.2.246. All further references will be to this edition, and will be contained in the body of the text. My italics for emphasis.

turn, as Janet Adelman writes 'he will be led to recognize not only his terrifying dependence on female forces outside himself but also an equally terrifying femaleness within himself'. [2] Therefore, the unrepresentable, vengeful 'mother' of the throat hints at the unrepresented mother-figure in *King Lear*, while also locating a vestige of 'terrifying femaleness' within Lear himself. This 'mother' is both familiar (whether or not it is accepted as a part of the king) and unknown and exterior, even uncanny.

This chapter demonstrates how the actual influence of the mother-character dramatically personifies power and influence. In terms of genre, the performativity of motherhood, conveyed partially through both the biological role and significantly through the mother's status as an influential presence, can be explicitly identified as an instructive force, contributing to the instigation and development of dramatic plots.

This chapter differs from the other chapters in this thesis first by using *Hamlet* as a prominent case study for analysis, and the way in which I have organised this chapter to operate in a pair with Chapter 3, where I consider the implications of absent mothers on resulting sibling and/or father/daughter relationships in dramatic works. Here, I map the influence of mothers on their sons in *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, *Titus Andronicus* and *King John*, using the performativity of mother-figures as an example to begin this chapter.

The performativity of the mother can be related to those plays by Shakespeare in which she features (or, significantly, doesn't feature). The methodological framework supplied in this chapter encompasses various strands of analysis. *Hamlet*, for example, has inspired a plethora of texts and

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[2] Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, 'Hamlet' to 'The Tempest'* '(London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 104.

approaches relating the play to elements of psychoanalytic theory, including Freud's infamous 'Oedipus Complex' and the sexual development of children. Where appropriate, psychoanalytic theory will be incorporated alongside textual and performance analysis to demonstrate an alternative manner in which dramatic works and female characters can be analogically contrasted, though it is not the aim of this chapter to provide an over-arching psychoanalytical critique of Shakespeare's works.

The maternal body performs perhaps more than any other human body: it is conveyed and represented (in literature, art, and in its physicality *itself*) as evolving, developing, and, more importantly, procreating. The body can change, enlarge, and eventually give birth to a baby to continue the generative cycle. For the particular purposes of this chapter, the natural performativity in the mother-figure can be analogically aligned with the unnatural stasis imposed by genres, which anaesthetise the developing and generating potential of dramatic plots. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, Derrida's postulations in his 'Law of Genre' identify a 'principle of contamination' as inherent to the rules of genres; in this chapter, I venture that the mother figure can be seen as a dramatic embodiment of this 'contamination', preventing works from operating (as perhaps they hypothetically 'should') as 'true' representations of the genres to which they are allocated.[3]

[3] Jacques Derrida and Avital Ronnell, 'The Law of Genre', *Critical Inquiry*, 7.1 (1980), 55-81 (p. 57).

Mothers: source-texts, printing and genres

In Giovanni Battista Giraldi's *Un Capitano Moro* of 1565 (a potential source-text for *Othello*) Desdemona has both a mother and a father. In Shakespeare's text, however, the mother is eliminated, leaving Brabantio as sole parent. Comparing potential source-texts with Shakespeare's works can reveal intriguing omissions of mothers. Though this removal of a character could, on the one hand, perhaps be explicated as compliance with practical requirements of staging (women could not appear on the public stage in England until 1660), the significant number of older female characters in Shakespeare's works suggests this is not necessarily the sole cause for removal. The supposed 'problem' of the boy-actor can be negated when one considers the performed character on the stage; the character whose very life is built before the audience through a series of 'constitutive acts'.[4]

To return to *King Lear*, the play with which I began this chapter, the mother is present in the anonymous *True Chronicle Historie of King Leir* (1594), classified as a 'historie', but she is notably absent from Shakespeare's *King Lear*; allocated to the genre of 'history' eleven years later; and 'tragedy' in the first Folio of 1623. Shakespeare's excision of any reference to the maternal figure appears deliberate: the reasons for this, of course, we will never know, but the resulting world of the play can be contrasted with *The True Chronicle of King Leir* to explore the impact of the absent mother. *King Lear* is a particularly potent example: the notably patriarchal world of Lear's court is heightened by the absence of his Queen. This division of the kingdom

[4] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 44.

serves as a ceremony to allocate Cordelia her dowry portion for marriage, and to bequeath to Goneril and Regan land on which they can raise families. In contrasting *King Lear* to *King Leir*, the most notable alteration is the starting point for the play: the *True Chronicle Historie* begins with Leir's grief for the death of his wife in addition to his daughters losing their mother; his decision to divide his kingdom and abdicate is explicated as a reaction to this loss. Queen Leir's death can, in this respect, be identified as a significant prompt for the direction that the play takes. From this perspective, Leir's decision to abdicate, yet 'retain the name and all th'addition to a king', might have a more logical basis, as he has lost his ruling partner (1.1.129-30). The Lear of Shakespeare's text, however, has no wife, nor his daughters a mother: the presumed former Queen of England remains absent from depiction and speech. As discussed in Chapter 1, Cordelia's speech and actions can be identified as catalysts for the constitution of the play; Shakespeare's text appears to replace an influential mother with a daughter who has a similar capacity for instigating action. *The True Chronicle Historie* begins with the loss of a mother; *King Lear* removes this sense of loss or deprivation, presenting the audience instead with a world created by men, fathers, alone. *Leir*'s prominent placing of this information (at the beginning of the play) indicates its importance to the plot; in turn, Shakespeare's removal of this event appears significant in the lack of integration of the mother. Even from the *Dramatis Personae*, the mother is an absent influence, instructing the plot's direction.

The 'history' plays, by contrast, and somewhat traditionally, concentrate more explicitly on the macrocosm, with the microcosmic family

playing a supporting or guiding role. In a number of Shakespeare's 'histories', the work focuses on the passing of the kingdom from father to son. Where a mother is featured in this genre, then, the lack of definition in the mother/son relationship (as opposed to the well-documented dictates of primogeniture between father and son) the dynamic can be identified as more 'fictional'. As discussed in Chapter One, the selectivity involved in creating a 'history play' was predominantly based on facts and records; the augmentation of action around the notable historical points, therefore, can be more clearly identified as fictional and, furthermore, as created to emphasise the notable events. D.W. Winnicott states that:

> Experience shows, however, that a change gradually takes place in the feelings as well as in the body of the girl who has conceived. Shall I say her interest gradually narrows down? Perhaps it is better to say that the direction of her interest turns from outwards to inwards. She slowly but surely comes to believe that *the centre of the world is in her own body*.[5]

Though this is a troublingly essentialist statement, Winnicott's identification of a new microcosm being created (with the mother's interest apparently 'turn[ing] inwards') can introduce a new dimension to the layers of construction involved in the 'history' play.

'History' plays can feature the main plot as macrocosm, with the more fictional familial details playing a more supporting role as microcosm. David Scott Kastan notes in his editorial content for *1 Henry IV* that

> The [history] plays set before us an intricately woven tapestry of high and low characters, of public and private motives, of politics and festivity, of poetry and prose, of history and comedy, of fact and fiction, allowing us to see and hear not only the variegated play world but history itself as a brilliantly polychromatic pageant. More than any other of Shakespeare's

[5] Winnicott, p. 7. My italics.

> history plays, *1 Henry IV* explores and extends the territory that counts as history.[6]

Elsewhere in his editorial matter, Kastan refers a number of times to the successful weaving together of macrocosmic ('historical') and microcosmic ('comic') plots. What Kastan notes as the 'expanding of the territory that counts as history' is demonstrating an effective balance between these two plots; certainly a notable feat in Shakespearean 'historic' drama. Winnicott's identification of this microcosm lends further relevance to the role of the mother in dramatic works.[7] This tripartite micro-macrocosmic structure demonstrates, first, the mother's influence on the plays as more of an influential force than genre, as I assert, and second that due to the potential for the mother to 'create' a new world, plays that feature her can perhaps be read as more flexible entities in terms of dramatic structure.

As this chapter predominantly focuses on 'tragic' and 'historic' dramatic works, a brief consideration of titles and genres serves as an introduction to comparisons set up between these genres. The 'tragedies' and 'histories' are often entangled, and plays sometimes fluctuate between these two genres: *Hamlet* and *King Lear* are two such examples, and *Richard III* also falls into this state of generic flux. If, as Phyllis Rackin and Jean Howard claim, a royal figure automatically makes a play a 'history', the death of that monarch complicates the genre.[8] *Richard III* is an intriguing play in that, while it is categorised among Bate and Rasmussen's RSC *Complete Works* 'histories', it still retains the earlier quarto status of 'tragedy', as *The Tragedy*

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[6] William Shakespeare, *1 Henry IV*, ed. David Scott Kastan (London: Thomson, 2002), p.4.
[7] William Shakespeare, *1 Henry IV*, ed. by David Scott Kastan (London: Thomson, 2002), p.4.
[8] See Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London: Routledge, 1997).

of Richard the Third, with the Landing of Earl Richmond and the Battle at Bosworth Field. The second part of the title differs from all eight quarto editions (between 1597 and 1634) which announced *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third: Containing His treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence: the pittiefull murther of his innocent nephews: his tyrannical usurpation: with the whole course of his detested life, and most deserved death*. The Folio alterations, which condense the quartos' details of the plot, succinctly describe the main events of the 'tragedy'/'history' in terms of genre.

Richard III stands apart from some 'history' plays with its 'tragic' and also biographical title: in other plays we see, for example, *The Life and Death of King John*, *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eighth*, and *The First Part of Henry the Sixth*. Again, the difference between the quarto and the Folio texts (and, crucially, *genres*) appears in the categorisation of these 'history' plays. *Henry V*, for example, appeared in quarto as *The Chronicle Historie of Henry the fift: with his battle fought in Agincourt in France. Together with Auncient Pistoll*; with its Folio title merely *The Life of Henry the Fifth*. *The Life and Death of King John*, in contrast to *Richard III*, has a more arguably 'straightforward' printing legacy: its first publication was in the Folio in 1623 as a 'history'. The titles of 'history' plays, though, do not explicitly engage with any generic classification; the title is simply a description. Once more, interpretation of this title in generic terms depends on contemporaneous ideas of genres, and what constitutes them. Twenty-first century critics should not, as Rackin and Howard seemingly do, accept generic categorisation based predominantly on what 'types' of characters are

represented. While Aristotle locates characterisation as a secondary consideration in the *Poetics* there is clearly a 'flip-side', where privileging types of characters in critical studies has a similarly unprofitable effect. My analysis of plot and character presents two elements of plays that work together; genres should not be based on one of these dramatic devices alone, but should consider them in combination.

'Tragic' and 'historic' absence and presence.

In her essay 'Where are the mothers in Shakespeare?', Mary Beth Rose rationalises that 'If, in comedy, the maternal role remains invisible, unrepresented, in tragedy it becomes visible, dramatized and problematized'.[9] Lagretta Tallent Lenker, in *Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare and Shaw* writes that 'the tragedies [are] the genre in which Shakespeare so often depicted daughter sacrifice', and that 'The Bard's most provocative suggestions of the family's most shameful secret appear, oddly enough, in the romances'. [10] Both Lenker's and Rose's statements, associating mother/daughter relations with 'tragedies' and father/daughter incest with 'romances', may be seen to simplify complex relationships: between mother and child; and father and child. It is also interesting to observe Lenker's interjection of 'oddly enough' into her discussion of 'provocative suggestions' of incest. While Lenker's methodological focus in putting forward an approach based around characters' activity and passivity is insightful and

[9] Mary Beth Rose, 'Where are the Mothers in Shakespeare? Options for Gender Representation in the English Renaissance', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42.3 (1991), 291-314 (p. 305).
[10]Lagretta Tallent Lenker, *Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare and Shaw* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001), pp. 57, 61.

useful, her terminology here connotes a critical judgement based more on assumption that interrogation. Furthermore, Lenker fails to explicate *why* she deems it ‘odd’ that some Shakespearean ‘romances’ feature incest as a theme. Of course, in following Lenker’s logic the subject of incest might be expected to feature in the ‘tragedies’; however, in the ‘romantic’ world where wives/mothers are sent off to die in prison and husbands then expect an easy reconciliation, this uncomfortable subject is not as out-of-place in the ‘romances’ as Lenker may expect.

Important to this analysis is the fact that it does not suffice simply to state that in some genres we see the maternal body, and in others we do not: the role is too multivalent to ally its presence with certain genres alone. Furthermore, to take issue with Rose’s comment, absence does not constitute invisibility; in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Hermia’s mother may not be ‘representable’ and physically visible to the cast and to the audience, but the ramifications of her absence are clear to see. And, conversely, in the ‘tragedies’, the motherless environments in which Desdemona, Cordelia, Lavinia and (from an alternative perspective) Lady Macbeth are situated, dramatically contribute to, and visibly mould the plots of these ‘tragedies’. In the previous chapter, I discussed the impact of the childless Lady Macbeth on her role as a wife; this absence of a child depicts a converse side to the absent mother’s role (as discussed in Chapter 3).

The mother, through presence or absence, influences a number of Shakespeare’s plays. A similar motif can be identified in Lenker’s work on the father/daughter relationship: Lenker posits that the daughter can appear as

either an 'active verb', or a passive one.[11] Regardless of how 'active' or 'passive' the characters *appear*, they can exacerbate issues and tensions already within the plays: as noted in Chapter 2, Cordelia's refusal to verbalise her daughterly duties actively contributes to the circumstances which result in Lear's madness and eventual death. Cordelia's not speaking is often regarded as passivity, and Lenker refers to her as 'reduced to silence'.[12] To utilise Lenker's terminology, the maternal presence actively contributes to how the plot develops, and the maternal absence conversely creates a predominantly patriarchal environment (such as the court in *King Lear*) where worlds are created and moulded by fathers alone. However, absence and presence cannot be straightforwardly aligned with passivity and activity, respectively. In some plays (for example, *Pericles* and *Cymbeline*) mothers appear sporadically, yet leave a discernible impression. In others of Shakespeare's works the influence of the present mother is represented: Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, for example, exerts a strong maternal presence over her two grown sons, Chiron and Demetrius. Tamora's level of influence is grounded in her biological and emotional bond to her offspring, formed by the 'constitutive acts' of motherhood. Indeed, she calls on this binding attachment when she orders them to 'Revenge it as you love your mother's life, / Or be ye not henceforth called my children'.[13] Titus's revenge on her is not restricted to her position as leader of the Goths, but is simultaneously aimed at her status as a mother (to Chiron and Demetrius initially, and to her

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[11] See Lenker, pp. 49, 71.
[12] Lenker, p. 56.
[13] William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 2.2.114-5. All further references will be to this edition, and will be contained in the body of the text.

illegitimate son with Aaron). This varied use of the mother-figure challenges biological essentialism and stasis, communicating the complex nature of the role: the performative facet of the mother or dramatic works cannot be ignored.

Janet Adelman writes that carrying a child in the womb was believed to lead to the woman 'tak[ing] on a malevolent power quite divorced from the largely powerless women who might be supposed to embody it'.[14] Adelman's rhetoric, here, is significant: while she intimates that female power can only be attained through motherhood, she employs the lexis of marriage and divorce. The production of offspring and a successful marriage appear not to be congruous activities. Furthermore, the idea of separation between womb and woman is significant in Shakespeare's plays, particularly, *Richard III* and *King John*. In the former play, both Richard and the Duchess rail strongly against her childbearing and her womb, as apparent 'instigator' of Richard and his 'nature'. Indeed, as Marion Wynne-Davies notes,

> The physiological suppositions concerning the uterus in the medieval and Renaissance periods saw it as something alien. For example. Plato's description of the womb as an animal in its own right was often cited, and the organ was thought to be dominated exclusively by external forces, such as the imagination and the moon.[15]

Motherhood is depicted here as an entity entirely separate from the 'powerless woman'; with rhetoric surrounding the uterus as 'alien' and 'animal' referencing an uncanny phenomenon. It purports to be a state to be assumed, to be adopted, or indeed performed.

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[14] Adelman, p. 4.

[15] Marion Wynne-Davies, '"The Swallowing Womb": Consumed and Consuming Women in *Titus Andronicus*', in *The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. by Valerie Wayne (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 129-51 (page 135).

One of the most affective and bond-promoting processes between mother and child appeared, as Thomas Gisborne stated in his popular handbook of 1797, ‘to be herself the nurse of her own offspring’.[16] If the act of breast-feeding can have such a profound influence upon the child, ‘giving the child a great sense of security and confidence about the world’, then when (in the mistaken Renaissance belief) the child is ingesting the mother’s menstrual blood *in utero*, then s/he is even more under the maternal influence.[17] The state of femaleness-as-‘contamination’ pervades Renaissance culture: as Deborah Willis demonstrates, many elements associated with women (and with generative capabilities, in particular) were regarded as corrupted, including breast milk and menstrual blood.[18]

When Lady Macbeth demands that she be ‘unsexed’ and that ‘murdering ministers’ should ‘take [her] milk for gall’, she arguably manipulates social fears to serve her own purpose within the formulations of the ‘tragic’ play.[19] If one takes a closer look at Lady Macbeth’s infamous speech in 1.5., one can see just how her presumed state as mother endows her with the power and above all the leverage to influence her husband’s actions. She uses motherhood as a threat against Macbeth, which suggests the

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[16] Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 272; the early modern habit of putting the new-born baby under the care of a wet nurse prevailed in England until the early eighteenth century, when it largely ended, due in part to a critique following a critique by Joseph Addison in *The Tatler*.

[17] Adelman, p. 2.

[18] See Deborah Willis, *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-Hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1995). The contextual theories surrounding women’s blood and milk are also dramatised in Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi*: in 2.4 Ferdinand declares that ‘’Tis not your whore’s milk that shall quench my wildfire, / But your whore’s blood’. (John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. by M. H. Abrams (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2000), p. 1433 – 1507 (2.5.48-9).

[19] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.5.39, 46. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

authority inherent in the maternal role while simultaneously identifying motherhood as a vital dramatic component:

> I have given suck, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
> I would, while it was smiling in my face,
> Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
> And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
> Have done to this. (1.7. 58-63)

Lady Macbeth begins her speech in a relatively affectionate manner, with gentle imagery such as 'tender', 'babe' and 'milks me'; the following violent terms of 'pluck'd' and 'dash'd' provide a very stark contrast. In this circumstance, Lady Macbeth appears to use breastfeeding as the epitome of tenderness in order to emphasise to her husband the vital importance of him keeping his word. 'Culturally constructed as literally dangerous to everyone', writes Adelman, 'the maternal body must have seemed especially dangerous to little boys: fed *in utero* on her menstrual blood and then on the milk that was its derivative'.[20] The 'danger' that Adelman refers to clearly pervades more than the act of breastfeeding itself, with the power lying in the mother's potential to influence her child.

Melanie Klein's theory of 'attacks on the mother's body', in *The Psychoanalysis of Children*, expands on this potential for influence, in proposing others' wariness of the mother as being grounded in castration anxiety in the phallic stage of Freudian psychosexual development.[21] Adelman references the Freudian Oedipal theory when she states that 'object-relations psychoanalysis locates differentiation from the mother as a special site of anxiety for the boy-child, who must form his specifically masculine

[20] Adelman, p. 7.
[21] See Melanie Klein, *The Psychoanalysis of Children* (London: Vintage, 1997), p. 29.

selfhood against the matrix of her overwhelming femaleness'.[22] The mother is, therefore, primarily utilised as a contrasting presence against which the son can mould his own masculine identity in opposition to her female gender.[23] Once again, it comes down to the dichotomic divisions of male and female: the femaleness of the mother is a source of anxiety for the son or father due in part to castration anxiety and their state as males. R.D. Hinshel Woods, in critiquing Klein's psychoanalytical approaches, poses a theory that centres on the combination of anxieties surrounding both parents:

> The little boy […] is moved to violence (and paranoid fear) by the added phantasy of mother's body containing father's penis. In both sexes the idea of babies in mother's body (and also father's penis) produces aggression and paranoid fears.[24]

It is, clearly, the combination of the mother and father's bodies that can inspire more fear in the child. In *Hamlet*, the effects of Claudius and Gertrude *combined* (which Hamlet labels incestuous) prompt some of his actions and attitudes. In this scenario, Gertrude is biologically Hamlet's mother, whereas Claudius is father-by-proxy; he has been subsumed into the nuclear family matrix to supplant (in several ways) Old Hamlet. In this combination, it could be read (as it quite often is) that Hamlet is jealous of Claudius's sexual relationship with his mother and desires one himself, though the tension is founded more on Hamlet's renegotiation of his familial dynamics with Gertrude and Claudius as a ruling pair.

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[22] Adelman, p. 7.

[23] Please refer to my discussion of sex and gender in my introduction. I utilise 'female gender' here to illustrate that 'female' is used in an adjectival sense, rather than a more essentialist manner as a noun. This is primarily to illustrate the Butlerian performative nature of genders, whether male or female. 'Gender' is a noun; 'female' and 'male' are performative adjectives.

[24] R.D. Hinshel Woods, *A Dictionary of Kleinian Thought* (London: Free Association Books, 1989), p. 223.

‘Father and mother is man and wife’: contrasts and context

Lawrence Stone writes that:

> Younger sons, and particularly daughters, were often unwanted and might be regarded as no more than a tiresome drain on the economic resources of the family. The attitude towards his daughters of William Blundell, an impoverished Lancashire Catholic gentleman of the mid-seventeenth century, provides an illuminating example of parental attitudes. In 1653 he reported with sardonic malice the birth and almost immediate death of his sixth daughter and ninth child: “My wife has much disappointed my hopes in bringing forth a daughter, which, finding herself not so welcome in this world as a son, hath already made a discreet choice of a better”.[25]

Blundell, Stone elaborates, ‘shipped two of [his daughters] off to nunneries abroad, without informing their mother of his plans, at the cut-rate cost of £10 and £15 a year for life’.[26] Blundell’s apparent disregard for the role of the mother in his decision to send away two of his daughters references the Renaissance family dynamic which Shakespeare can be seen as both reflecting and (in some instances, perhaps) *refracting*. Audience members witness, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, the father’s decision to use his daughter to gain material or social benefits; this was not an uncommon practice in the drama of the period.

Lynda E. Boose notes that ‘while father and son appear slightly more often in the [Shakespearean] canon, figuring in twenty-three plays, father and daughter appear in twenty-one dramas and in one narrative poem’.[27] In the six Shakespearean plays which either feature (through presence) or reference (through absence) a mother/daughter dynamic, the mother normally either plays a minute role, is killed off, her death feigned, or else is reunited with

[25] Stone, p. 87.
[26] Stone, p. 87.
[27] Lynda E. Boose, ‘The Father and the Bride in Shakespeare’, *PMLA*, 97.3 (1982), 325-47(328).

her daughter too late into the play for a relationship to be formed successfully/dramatically, for example, Thaisa and Marina in *Pericles*, and Hermione and Perdita in *The Winter's Tale*.[28] The two prominent categories of familial relationships in Shakespearean drama are those of mother/son and father/daughter; as noted earlier, the former combination will be discussed here, with the latter providing focus for the next chapter. As Adelman states:

> In the plays of maternal recovery, the father's authority must be severely undermined and the mother herself subjected to a chastening purgation; in the plays of paternal recovery, the mother must be demonized and banished before the father's authority can be restored.[29]

In such a depiction of tug-of-war parental relationship (where one parent must be removed entirely, or suffer for the other parent to 'recover') it is clear to see how gender differences might be assumed to be at work. Adelman argues that it is the mother who 'must be demonized' whereas the father's punishment is that his 'authority must be severely undermined'. We can see patriarchal control at work through this quotation: where the mother must be banished, the father would only have his power and authority undermined and questioned; traits that the 'Renaissance man' would expect to enjoy in order to live his life. The insinuation that some manner of parental 'recovery' is necessary in the plays which address parent/child relationships indicates problematic dynamics from the very outset of the plays.

[28] In Shakespeare's works, a mother/daughter relationship features in only six out of the 38 plays; a stark contrast in comparison with the father/daughter and father/son dynamics. Furthermore, and as discussed in my first chapter, performances of the plays in which mothers and daughters are represented sometimes cut this relationship; both Branagh's and *The Hollow Crown*'s adaptations of *Henry V* completely excise the role of Queen Isabel, thus depriving Katherine of a female ally.

[29] Adelman, p. 193.

Stone, Boose, and Betty S. Flowers write comprehensively on the father/daughter and mother/son relationships, both regarding socio-historical context, and how they are depicted in Shakespeare's plays. Stone details the family inheritance dynamics that relate to the father/daughter relationship: 'Owing to the demographic insecurity which threatened all families, a father tried to see to it that the heir to the estate was married fairly early'.[30] When the father had only daughters, 'The dowry system, and the cultural obligation to marry off the girls, meant that daughters were a serious economic drain on the family finances, though they were useful in cementing political connections'.[31] Lenker notes that

> Boose and Flowers identify three patterns of daughter sacrifice operative within Western literature and mythology: the "exchange" of the daughter by the father for social benefit; the destructive "salvation" of the daughter by the father to protect the child from a lecherous but socially superior male; and the retention of the daughter by the father to fulfil his own incestuous desires.[32]

The role of daughters as purely useful to facilitate and enable amicability between separate nations, rates them as commodities to be transferred by the father to the most eligible suitor who is capable of offering a mutually beneficial relationship. The deliberate choice to retain or reject the daughter indicates that, in this higher class of society, fathers and daughters could not just simply coexist: there had to be some manner of movement, where the father either attempts to sacrifice the daughter, or arranges a marriage for her. Dreher observes that, in Shakespeare's works, some

> fathers try to prevent their daughters' marriages or, failing that, match them with men they cannot love. Jung wrote of one such father, who insisted that his daughter marry a

[30] Stone, p. 71.
[31] Stone, pp. 72-3.
[32] Lenker, p. 52.

> deformed retarded neighbour: "he wanted to marry [her] to this brutish creature … to keep her with him and make her his slave forever". […] Cymbeline's attempt to marry Imogen to the brutish Cloten would put him into this category, along with the familiar *senex iratus* fathers of the comedies.[33]

Dreher's siting of father/daughter emotional dynamics within a matrix of psychoanalytic theory portrays the complexities of this relationship both in construction and development. The marriage of the daughter, therefore, could not be regarded simply as the daughter 'moving on', but had to be judged in each different situation.

The father in many of Shakespeare's works is depicted as perhaps viewing his daughter's wedding as a ritualistic rite of passage (a customary action that essentially gifts his daughter to the soon-to-be husband). This daughter-as-commodity motif recurs throughout a variety of genres, often complicating the genre to which a play has been allocated. For example, the relationship between Hermia and Egeus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* suggests a trajectory completely alien to the ideals of the 'comedies', verging on Boose's singularly 'tragic' focus. Egeus's opinion that Hermia is a commodity is a view that transcends genres. In *Othello*, for example, Brabantio refers to Desdemona stating 'I have a daughter – have whilst she is mine'; Capulet tells Juliet 'An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend'; and Egeus informs Theseus that 'As she is mine, I may dispose of her'.[34] Thematic elements are transferable within and across genres, and can

[33] Diane Dreher, *Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare* (Lexington, KT: U of Kentucky P, 1986). p. 8.

[34] William Shakespeare, *Othello*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 2.2.111; William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 3.5.201; William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.1.43. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

(importantly) also be influenced by characters. This daughter-as-gift motif, important in illustrating the passage of time and the transference of the daughter's allegiance to that of a wife's duty, recurs time and again in Shakespeare's plays. The 'marrying-off' of the daughter appears the father's primary concern, a concern which is undiluted through motherly influence: the world moulded by the father alone saw to it that this traditional course of action was followed. In terms of genre, the concentrated patriarchal environment results in such relationships exerting influence upon the plays' dénouements.

In *Titus Andronicus*, one can identify the dependence of the father on the daughter as noted above.[35] Titus's first reference to Lavinia, in 1.1., refers to her as 'The cordial of mine age' (1.1.169). As in *King Lear*, the idea of youngest or only daughter bringing comfort to ex-warrior Kings in old age permeates *Titus Andronicus*: Titus's wish to retain Lavinia (as his own 'ornament', by not acknowledging her betrothal to Bassanius, nor enabling her marriage to Saturninus) could suggest trepidation over the full transference of daughter to husband (1.1.52). Titus's loss of control over Lavinia, through marriage, could affect him in a negative manner; *King Lear* demonstrates this eventuality, with Cordelia in France, unable to attend to her father's needs. When Marcus brings the mutilated Lavinia to Titus's attention, he states 'This was thy daughter', to which Titus responds 'Why, Marcus, so she is' (3.1.63-64). Marcus's use of the past tense, while functioning in the Ovidian sense that conveys the transformation undergone by Lavinia, could also refer to Lavinia's inability to function, now, as the ideal, Roman daughter,

[35] I will return to *Titus Andronicus* for sustained analytical consideration in the next chapter; I engage with it here to contextualise the issue of dependency in father/daughter dynamics.

used for strategic marriage to ally prominent families; Titus's rebuke suggests unconditional paternal love, which is somewhat complicated when he later states 'he that wounded her / Hath hurt me more than had he killed me dead' (3.1.92-3).[36]

Mothers, microcosms, and macrocosms

The marriage of the daughter can sometimes be bound up with fathers wishing to keep their daughters close, as opposed to 'moving on' with their adult lives and relationships. The maternal body can, sometimes, become an impediment to the son marrying: this theory is dramatically represented in *Hamlet* where Hamlet's problematic relationship with Gertrude prevents him from pursuing what may have been a decision to marry Ophelia, when he sends her letters and trinkets. In later years of the son's life, the mother's influence becomes a psychological 'point' (almost an event) that must be returned to before the son can move on. The mother is an ever-present force in her son's life. *Hamlet* depicts a mother/son relationship that often defines the play as well as influencing the direction of the plot, foregrounding the issues of a country in turmoil, with a new king struggling to form alliances with Fortinbras's threatening forces. The 'tragedy'/'history' fluctuations of *Hamlet* (through variations in the quarto and Folio texts and titles) leave this play in generic limbo, where elements of the plot in performance can be emphasised to demonstrate a 'tragic' or 'historic' genre status. As with *King Lear* and other

[36] For further discussion of the body of the mutilated Lavinia as a physical manifestation of disorder and warping of familiar relationships, see Emma L.E. Rees, 'Cordelia's Can't: Rhetoric of Reticence and (Dis)ease in *King Lear*', in *Rhetorics of Bodily Disease and Health in Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. Jennifer C. Vaught (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 105-18.

‘tragedies’, *Hamlet* moves between the microcosmic and macrocosmic facets of family and state without offering exclusive and sustained focus on just one.[37] Prior to my consideration of *Hamlet* as a case study for exploring the influence of mothers in Shakespeare, I will first discuss the prominence of the mother-character in *Richard III* and *King John*.

In only the fifth line of *King John*, Queen Elinor intervenes in the discussion held by John and the Chatillon, with the overly critical ‘A strange beginning: “borrowed majesty”!’: in contrast to *Richard III*, the play immediately cites the influence of the mother as a crucial element of the play’s construction within the formulations of the ‘history’ genre.[38] Elinor of Aquitane launched, recruited for, and took part in, the Second Crusade with Louis VII in 1145; she brought her significant inheritance and useful alliance with Anjou to her marriage with Henry II in 1152; and she ruled England as regent when Richard I left for the Third Crusade. In common with Shakespeare’s representations of monarchs, the historical facts do not play a significant part in the dramatic narrative; we can, however, recognise Elinor’s level of influence in the English court. Elinor’s prominence in her grown son’s life evidently derives from their positive mother/son dynamic: she is a trusted royal advisor (her pedigree ensures this role) and she has had vast experience both in the court, and on the battlefield. Her presence in the very first scene with the Chatillon of France, and her interjection of displeasure when the Chatillon undermines her son’s majesty, is unique in Shakespeare’s

[37] The pivotal scene taking place in Gertrude’s closet may be seen as a microcosmic insertion, indicating real privacy (as opposed to public life at court).
[38] William Shakespeare, *King John*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.1.5. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.

'histories': in none of the other plays of this genre (in the Folio) does the King's mother even feature, let alone play such a significant part, in the first scene.

Mothers significantly influence the plot of *King John*, and their role can be identified as vital to dramatic composition: maternal power is both demonstrated and questioned while impacting on the construction of the play. The sub-plot concerning Philip of Falconbridge's supposed illegitimacy and the parallel mother/son relationship represented through Constance and Arthur of Bretagne also aids in foregrounding the maternal function. Audience members witness a particularly powerful moment in 2.1, when Elinor and Constance argue over their sons' rights to the throne of England:

> Queen Elinor: Who is it thou dost call usurper, France?
> Constance: Let me make answer: thy usurping son.
> Queen Elinor: Out, insolent! Thy bastard shall be king,
> That thou mayst be a queen, and check the world.
> Constance: My bed was ever to thy son as true
> As thine was to thy husband, and this boy
> Liker in feature to his father Geoffrey
> Than thou and John, in manners being as like
> As rain to water, or devil to his dam.
> My boy a bastard? By my soul I think
> His father never was so true begot:
> It cannot be, an if thou wert his mother. (2.1.124-31)

In comparison to the smearing of illegitimacy that we see in *Richard III*, where Richard believes the key to his success is to claim that his brother and his nephews were born out of wedlock, this contrasting world (in which mothers are valued) operates very differently.

Audience members can be party to a matriarchal society that is almost exempt from patriarchal values. Upon the Chatillon's exit in 1.1 of *King John*, Elinor remarks to her son:

> What now, my son? Have I not ever said

> How that ambitious Constance would not cease
> Till she had kindled France and all the world,
> Upon the right and party of her son?
> This might have been prevented and made whole
> With very easy arguments of love,
> Which now the manage of two kingdoms must
> With fearful bloody issue arbitrate. (1.1.31-38)

In this feminocentric world, it is the mother of the King of England fearing the mother of the King's young nephew: Elinor cites 'the right and party of [Constance's] son' as her motive, yet she does not criticise her. Elinor calls upon such 'arguments of love' in 2.1., when the Citizen of Angiers requests the marriage between Lewis the Dauphin and Blanche of Castile: 'Son, list to this conjunction, make this match, / Give with our niece a dowry large enough: / For, by this knot, thou shalt so surely tie / Thy now unsured assurance to the crown' (2.1.477-80). Naming John 'Son' before she speaks reiterates their familial bond; the use of 'our' in reference to Blanche references strong camaraderie between son and mother. In both *King John* and *Titus Andronicus*, the mothers forge strong filial relationships that clearly contribute to the direction of the plays' actions. Indeed, action is *instigated* through these two mothers calling directly on their familial bond, demonstrating how mothers can command what their sons do.

The strong matriarchal society in *King John* directly opposes the patriarchy in 2.1 when both forces congregate outside the gates of Angiers: '*Enter the two Kings with their powers, at several doors [King John accompanied by the Bastard, Queen Elinor, Blanche; King Philip by Lewis the Dauphin and Austria]*' (2.1). The image of John being accompanied by his mother, his niece, and the Bastard is one of a strong and equal female presence, particularly when contrasted with King Philip flanked by the

Dauphin and Austria. The warlike background of this image further intimates the equality of genders, transcending the idea of the maternal bond as situated within the microcosmic domestic sphere. John's respect for his mother is once again made manifest in 3.3 when, following the battle, he states 'I'll send those powers o'er to your majesty' (3.3.88). On hearing of Elinor's death, John immediately equates her death as a son with his loss of power over France as a monarch. He first demands of the messenger in 4.2., 'Where is my mother's care, / That such an army could be drawn in France, / And she not hear of it?' (4.2.118-20). Later in the scene, on hearing of her demise, he exclaims 'What? Mother dead? / How wildly then walks my estate in France! – / Under whose conduct came those powers of France / That thou for truth giv'st out are landed here?' (4.2.129-32). John's loss is not simply of a mother, but of his equal in soldiering. On Elinor's death, John loses direction; the play loses its 'hero' and so the eponymous character's progress towards death begins. Elinor's instructive and influential presence on the play is immediately lost: her power in commanding the dramatic direction demonstrates her strength as a character who wields a notable and inescapable influence over the construction of *King John*.

Wombs and tombs: the 'histories'

In 3.2 of *3Henry VI*, Richard Gloucester rails against his mother, and her perceived influence over him when he was a foetus:

> Love foreswore me in my mother's womb:
> And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,
> She did corrupt frail Nature with some bribe,
> To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub;
> To make an envious mountain on my back,
> Where sits Deformity to mock my body;

> To shape my legs of an unequal size;
> To disproportion me in every part,
> Like to a chaos, or unlick'd bear-whelp
> That carries no impression like the dam. (3.2.153-62)

Where Elinor's interjection in 1.1 of *King John* demonstrates the influence of this mother over both her son and the play, it is through Gloucester that audience members learn of the Duchess's supposed capacity for influence. Gloucester entirely implicates his mother in the bodily deformities that he detests, preventing him from procreating, 'deal[ing] in her soft laws'. In *3Henry VI*, we see a dramatic model of the single-parent relationship: following Gloucester's father's death, Gloucester loses his predominant masculine role-model, and is influenced by maternal power alone. Gloucester marks out the Duchess as the predominant orchestrator of the action.

In Gloucester's case, the mother's primary influence was when she was carrying him; her subsequent presence throughout the play (in a similar fashion to Gertrude) serves as a reminder of his insufficiencies. Both the Duchess of York and Queen Margaret refer to the Duchess's womb as the 'site' of Gloucester's creation, and locate within it responsibility for his nature. Cross-genre links can be identified here through the incorporation of mother-warriors.[39] The mother-warrior is not a character type relegated to the 'histories' alone. In 4.4, the Duchess answers Richard's question 'Who intercepts me in my expedition?' (4.4.135) with 'O, she that might have intercepted thee, / By strangling thee in her accursed womb, / From all the slaughters, wretch, that thou hast done!' (4.4.136-8). This admission makes it

[39] In my use of the term 'mother-warrior', I do not refer to mothers such as Elinor, Constance and Tamora alone in the warlike ambitions, but more to the *power* and the assertions of power contained within the mothers to which I refer. My coining of this term for use in this context is further explored in my introduction.

clear how responsible the Duchess feels regarding Richard's birth, tyrannous actions and coronation; her intimation that she could have strangled him while he was *in utero* grants complete and utter power to the mother-warrior.

Gloucester's and the Duchess's relationship is one utterly comprised of blame: the Duchess alternates between blaming herself for Richard's nature, and resenting him for desecrating the sanctity of motherhood. But this is also a source of concern for the Duchess as she had stated earlier: 'Ah, that deceit should steal such gentle shape, / And with a virtuous visor hide deep vice! / He is my son – ay, and therein my shame. / Yet from my dugs he drew not this deceit' (2.2.27-30). As Adelman suggests, when the female body prepares itself for motherhood, it acquires 'power quite divorced from the largely powerless women who might be supposed to embody it'.[40] In this instance particularly, the Duchess marks a distinction between her 'dugs' (symbolic of breast-feeding and motherhood) and 'my shame' (the Duchess's own emotions). The Duchess of York epitomises the influential and performative facet of the mother: she recognises her role in all that Richard has become, indeed it is more than a role; she is the nexus, the source, the mother-warrior. *King John*, by contrast, portrays a uniquely amicable and significantly influential relationship between John and Elinor, in which she advises her son on many important issues. Critical focus should be more on the plot, the prompts therein and the accomplishments of the mother-warrior, as opposed to being trained on *King John* as representative of the 'history' genre.

[40] Adelman, p. 4.

The positive relationship between Elinor and John, as noted above, is clear throughout *King John*. The same certainly cannot be said of the dynamic between the Duchess and Richard in *Richard III*. In 4.4, the Duchess launches into a tirade upon how troublesome Richard was throughout his entire childhood:

> No, by the holy rood, thou know'st it well,
> Thou cam'st on earth to make the earth my hell.
> A grievous burden was thy birth to me:
> Tetchy and wayward was thy infancy:
> Thy schooldays frightful, desp'rate, wild, and furious:
> Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous:
> Thy age confirmed, proud, subtle, sly and bloody,
> More mild, but yet more harmful, kind in hatred.
> What comfortable hour canst thou name,
> That ever graced me with thy company? (4.4.166-75)

In commenting thus on each of Richard's stages of life, the Duchess demonstrates how many vile qualities she believes her son had accrued through age: she moves from his birth being a 'grievous burden', to his 'proud, subtle, sly and bloody' nature in his present age. Prior to this reproach, Margaret damned the Duchess for the part she played in Richard's actions by giving birth to him:

> From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
> A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death:
> That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes,
> To worry lambs and lap their gentle blood,
> That foul defacer of God's handiwork,
> That reigns in galled eyes of weeping souls,
> That excellent grand tyrant of the earth,
> Thy womb let loose, to chase us to our graves. (4.4.46-53)

Tellingly, it is not the *Duchess* who is blamed, but her womb; the reproductive part of anatomy is given credit, as if it is an autonomous entity. The Duchess spoke similarly in 2.2 where she states 'Yet from my dugs he drew not this deceit' (2.2.30). The separation of 'mother' and 'womb' is made explicit here.

The womb is almost de-familiarised; it has taken on a force of its own, completely separate from the woman's body.

From these two examples, it would appear that maternal function, and even organs, encroach upon the female body to such an extent that motherhood apparently needs to be distinguished from *womanhood*. Motherhood is of the body, and yet not. As noted earlier in this chapter, fluids from the pregnant woman's body appear to act in an autonomous manner. The concept of the womb-as-begetter of these vile crimes (and, further, of it having the power to *undo* such actions) is again broached here: the structure of Margaret's damning sentiment reiterates the power of the womb, from its productive potential from which crept this 'hell-hound', and its affinity with death, 'Thy womb let loose to chase us to our graves' (4.4.53). The juxtaposition of death and birth locates responsibility in the role and body of the mother, whose reproductive functions were seen as being able to 'control' the offspring. This also references the deaths of two of Tamora's sons in *Titus Andronicus*; Tamora's body produced Chiron and Demetrius through childbirth, but then re-absorbed them through eating their remains. The mother's body is presented as both origin of, and destination for, two of her sons (with her third son, the infant, held as a bargaining chip for Aaron to reveal the plans against Lucius). As Richard informs Elizabeth, when he urges her to acquaint her daughter with his plans to marry her: 'But in your daughter's womb I bury them, / Where in that nest of spicery they will breed / Selves of themselves to your recomforture' (4.4.435-37).

The concept of burying or reabsorption through the womb is a key theme in *Titus Andronicus*, with its 'detested, dark, blood-drinking pit'

(described by Wynne-Davies as representative of the 'all-consuming sexual mouth of the feminine earth, which remains outside the patriarchal order of Rome') (2.3.224).[41] Wynne-Davies notes further that 'The threat posed by the Empress is such that she must be expurgated altogether from Rome to the organic and inherently feminine world of the earth, with its "swallowing womb"'.[42] The idea of Tamora being ejected from the patriarchal Rome and reabsorbed into the 'feminine' earth is intriguing; that Tamora embodies both female virility and masculine power sets up a fairly constant comparison with Titus himself. Wynne-Davies draws this comparison and the balancing of familial affection with warrior spirit, stating that in 1.1. for Titus and 3.1. for Tamora, that

> The physical actions of mother [Tamora] and father [Titus] [for their offspring] are the same: both prostrate themselves and shed tears. Both begin their speech in a commanding tone with brief phrases, and with a similar call to familial sympathies. Both refer to honourable battle and ask for pity for their offspring.[43]

The similarities between these two warriors' conduct can suggest parenthood is a means to establishing parity between the genders. To refer back to Chapter 1, Macbeth's apparent inability to balance family life with warrior duties is in intriguing contrast with Titus and, to a lesser extent, Tamora. The role of family in prompting the dramatic action is clear, and the womb appears a key symbol of this power.

The absorbing function of the womb is indicative of the influence it has over birth, life, and death. To relate it to Butler's 'constitutive acts', the maternal role (epitomised, in this instance, by the womb) transcends just

[41] Wynne-Davies, p. 135.
[42] Wynne-Davies, p. 146.
[43] Wynne-Davies, p. 138.

simply *being*, and serves as a constant reminder both of the mother's power, but also suggesting that the womb may be out of the woman's own control. Audience members can see the power from the outset; such as Gloucester cites in *3Henry VI* (and also the constant input in the son's life) as in *King John*. To quote from Edmund in *King Lear* (another illegitimate son, of course, forever influenced by his mother's and father's actions) 'the wheel is come full circle': what begins in the womb lives, and then dies.[44] As discussed in Chapter 1, the image of the ring or circle denotes eternity, a shape that does not reach an end. The implications of the ring or circle's shape includes 'nothingness' at its centre; it is a constitutive part of the ring. The sense of female sexual power and autonomy signified by the shape of the ring is important to note here. The ring or circle's place in a number of Shakespeare's works cites this object and shape as a key prop in the construction of plays featuring influential women.

Weasels and whales: the maternal role, identity, and genre

The power of the mother can be clearly identified in *Hamlet*, where Gertrude's re-marriage appears to be the primary impediment to the Prince of Denmark forming any manner of romantic attachment. Gertrude is predominantly responsible for Hamlet not returning to University in Wittenberg, and as a result his life is essentially paused while he remains in Elsinore. Gertrude is a distinctive figure: she is identified in different editions in various ways. In Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor's double-text Arden

[44] *King Lear*, 5.3.187. This idea of a circular pattern of events will be returned to in my final chapter in consideration of endings in Shakespearean drama.

edition of the play, she is identified in the Dramatis Personae as 'Queen Gertred and Queen Gertrude' (Q1 and F respectively) and noted as 'Queen' in the dialogue; in the RSC *Complete Works*, she is simply 'Gertrude' throughout, and elaborated on, in the Dramatis Personae as 'Queen of Denmark, Hamlet's mother'.[45] To return briefly to the editorial power apparent in constructing characters whether from source-texts or by characters, editorial decisions such as Thompson and Taylor's see Gertrude function more as a wife (she is, possibly, Queen through marriage) whereas Bate and Rasmussen's edition arguably focuses more on Gertrude the person: mother, wife, and also Queen. The multifaceted nature of a person (in contrast to the fairly limited scope of that person when confined by a certain title) is communicated when Gertrude is identified as 'Gertrude'.

The alterations in genre of this play inevitably impact upon the construction of character. Q1 is entitled *The Tragical Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, whereas Q2 and F declare *The Tragedie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke*. Lack of editorial consistency indicates an inability to present Gertrude decisively as wife *or* mother through the Dramatis Personae and construction of character; she occupies a grey area where she (through a constructed character, inevitably moulded by actors' or directors' interpretations) succumbs wholeheartedly to neither role.

Marvin Rosenberg, in *The Masks of Hamlet*, poses a key question: 'How maternal may Gertrude be?'[46] There appears to be an incompatibility in merging both the motherly and wifely roles of Gertrude: she is either too

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[45] See William Shakespeare, *Hamlet: the Texts of 1603 and 1623*, ed. by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (London: Thomson, 2006).
[46] Marvin Rosenberg, *The Masks of 'Hamlet'* (London: Associated UP, 1992), p. 76.

maternal or too sexualised. The tensions between Gertrude-as-wife and Gertrude-as-mother appear time and again in productions and critical analyses of *Hamlet*. Marvin Rosenberg identifies a difficulty, in performance, in acting both wife and mother:

> The relatively young Gibson Gertrude assumed that she had first married at 12, a "child bride" to a "father figure." She bore Hamlet as soon as she was "biologically able," a teenage mother; and so would have been in her early 40s when, with the virile Claudius, she had a "revelatory sexual experience".[47]

This perspective suggests (in a purely hypothetical sense) that prior to meeting Claudius, Gertrude was first and foremost a mother, with her sexual appetite coming later in life, once the essential business of giving birth to a son had been fulfilled. Rosenberg further observes that in one performance (and in unfortunately colloquial language) 'one Gertrude was sadly dismissed because, lacking in sexuality, she seems to be little more than a worried old Mum'.[48] Rosenberg's approach to analysing the various Gertrudes along the spectrum of sexual and motherly personae may not be critically astute; however his point remains interesting in identifying a problem in balancing the apparently discordant roles of wife and mother. This can be analogically related to the theory of monogeneric analysis, which I discussed in my introduction; people (in real life) do not conform to one 'type' or another, so why should characters? Gertrude's sexuality and her motherhood are two parts of the same woman; one does not have to be isolated and presented as a singular type of person. Perhaps hypocritically (in his own pursuit of monogeneric analysis in *Poetics*), Aristotle noted that unity of the

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[47] Rosenberg, p. 74.
[48] Rosenberg, p. 76.

hypothetical 'tragic hero' cannot be achieved: 'infinitely various are the incidents in one man's life which cannot be reduced to unity; and so, too, there are many actions of one man out of which we cannot make one action'.[49]

Gertrude's indeterminacy of character allows for dramatic interpretation where actors can emphasise any of Gertrude's traits. In relation to this point, Shakespeare poses some pertinent questions regarding parental identity, and child relations. *Hamlet* is a particularly intriguing play in regard both to familial dynamics and to the grounds of binary divisions of gender themselves. These seemingly 'basic' gender distinctions (particularly in relation to the overt distinction between the role of father and mother) are determinedly blurred, and conflated. Following Claudius's response of 'Thy loving father, Hamlet' in 4.3 to the Danish prince's declaration of the King as his mother, Hamlet unpicks this phrasing, stating that 'My mother. Father and mother is man and wife: man and wife is one flesh, / and so, my mother'.[50] David Tennant's Hamlet of 2009 presents this theory in a nonchalant and matter-of-fact tone, as if surprised that Claudius cannot make this intellectual leap for himself. Tennant's Hamlet also adopts a nursery-rhyme tone, which presents this theory as evident to all, even children. This conflated image reveals a great deal about parent/child relationships in the play: first, it disposes of any essentialism that might be directed at Gertrude's behaviour (thus also challenging her ontological status) as mother; second, Hamlet's decision to term them 'mother', instead of 'father', indicates, perhaps, a

[49] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Malcolm Heath (London: Penguin, 1997), p. 11.
[50] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 4.3.48-52. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

preference for Gertrude. Perhaps, also, this single authoritative parental entity would demand more respect as 'mother'. Adelman asserts that:

> In a psychic world where boundaries cannot hold, where the self is invaded, its pales and forts broken down, its pith and marrow extracted, where mother-aunt and uncle-father become indistinguishably one flesh, where even camels become weasels become whales, identity itself seems on the point of dissolving or being swallowed up.[51]

This apparent dissolving of 'boundaries', rules, and identity politics (even the most basic function of knowing what one *is*, be it weasel, whale, father, or mother) permits the female characters in particular to step outside their prescribed roles, and to take advantage of this fleeting opportunity for self-creation.

As noted earlier in Hinshel Woods's quotation, Hamlet appears to be referencing this 'combination anxiety', but expressing and processing it in a fashion that could enable him to 'control' the construction of identity. Adelman's comment that 'identity itself seems on the point of dissolving' can be read in a number of ways, perhaps analogically suggesting the collapse of tired and over-worn formulations of ontology or the 'genus' (generic) form of analysis, or else in a negative fashion where identity can be 'swallowed up', and autonomy removed from the individual. Rose's fairly simplistic claim that one 'type' of familial relationship (father/daughter or mother/daughter) can be allocated to separate dramatic 'identities' of genre will be addressed in the next part of this chapter.[52]

A variety of familial relationships are constructed in both 'tragic' and 'historic' genres; this reflects the futility of 'pigeon-holing' plays in a

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[51] Adelman, p. 29.
[52] See Rose, 291-314.

superficial manner, as dynamics between families are also widely different. As each play develops, so too does the relationship between mother and son; one can cite the importance of recognising constitutive acts in the construction of both dramatic works and relationships. Both are accumulative processes. The intense bond between Gertrude and Hamlet, for example, has been portrayed as incestuous. The relationship has, in both early and more recent scholarship, become a theme which often defines the play itself. In various performances (including, most notably, Zeffirelli's 1990 film of the play, starring Mel Gibson and Glenn Close) the question of incest between Hamlet and his mother remains one of the most recognisable elements of the production. In contrast to others of Shakespeare's plays, where the familial relationship is only one 'part' of the dramatic make-up of the play, *Hamlet* is entirely constructed around the 'vibrating triangle' of the family dynamic, centred on the premise of the newly-married mother, the resentful son, and the step-father.[53] Doran's 2009 production explicitly foregrounds the mother/son dynamic in 1.2; the relational positions of the characters to each other suggest that neither Hamlet nor Gertrude have yet acclimatised to their new roles, through the evident tension between Hamlet and Claudius with Gertrude watching on, ineffectually.

As opposed to speculations of incest between Hamlet and Gertrude, this mother/son combination is, instead, attempting to negotiate and map out the boundaries of a new relationship that now incorporates a step-father, rather than the nuclear family structure of which Hamlet had previously been a part. On entering his mother's closet in 3.4., Hamlet interrogates her, 'Now,

[53] Marvin Rosenberg, *The Masks of 'Hamlet'* (London: Associated UP, 1992), p. 76.

mother, what's the matter?' (3.4.9). This demand in itself can be read as questioning the state of motherhood: the etymology for 'mother' comes from the classical Latin *māter* (meaning 'womb' in the fifteenth-century).[54] So when Hamlet asks the 'matter', it can be read that he demands what is a mother, indicating, perhaps, his mother's insufficiency in her maternal role, when she pursues her royal one. In 2.2., Polonius asks Hamlet 'what is the matter?' (2.2.191), before qualifying his question as 'I mean the matter you read, my lord' (2.2.193). Hamlet's question 'between who?' (2.2.199), in response to Polonius's first question, could be subjected to this Latin translation, also: in this instance, 'matter' (or, indeed, 'māter') is depicted as coming between two entities; perhaps the māter/mother acts as a shield or barrier. Adelman suggests that before the son can establish his own family, he must first come to terms with his relationship with his mother. This influence of the mother could, perhaps, indicate Gertrude's unwanted presence between Hamlet's desire for Ophelia and Ophelia herself; or how Gertrude's actions have complicated Hamlet's relationship with his father, Old Hamlet. Gertrude functions almost as a shielding presence, here.

Gertrude, as both wife and mother, was, and is, the love-object of three influential men: the deceased Hamlet, young Hamlet, and Claudius. In the royal court pre-Claudius-as-king, she would have inhabited the secure position of wife to the king, and mother to his son and heir, enabling successful primogeniture. In her marriage to Claudius, Gertrude must seek to

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[54] See Oxford English Dictionary, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/122640?rskey=DNA2mK&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid [accessed 28th December 2014] and http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/114919?rskey=Y0dnoG&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid [accessed 28th December 2014].

re-establish both her claim and her previously stable role.[55] In her pursuit of a happy marriage with Claudius, she automatically, and somewhat inexplicably, draws Hamlet closer to her, requesting him not to return to University in Wittenberg: 'Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet: / I prithee stay with us' (1.2.118-19). Referring to herself in this manner as 'thy mother' reiterates her bond with Hamlet, using this as a means for persuasion, which she then builds on by directly imploring him with the first person 'I'. This is, evidently, the first instance where Gertrude exercises her maternal command over her son to change his intentions. However, as the play later demonstrates, successful balancing of her two roles of wife and mother continually eludes the Queen of Denmark; in the courtly situation of 1.2, Gertrude must stand by Claudius's side, as he expresses his contempt for Hamlet's 'unmanly grief' (1.2.92) in his 'obstinate condolement' (1.2.91).

In Doran's production, where Claudius initially turns to speak to Hamlet only to find him unwilling to engage, the king turns his attention to Laertes: in observing this overt show of allegiance to another man's son (even embracing Laertes after he has requested permission to leave Denmark) Gertrude appears appalled, and looks pointedly at Hamlet. As Claudius tells Hamlet to 'think of us / As of a father' (1.2.107-8), Penny Downie's Gertrude again looks torn between her allegiances to her husband and her son, and puts out a hand as if to stop Claudius.

[55] There are a number of possibilities as to why Hamlet did not immediately become king upon his father's death. One possibility is that Gertrude may have been Queen Regnant; perhaps Shakespeare was drawing upon contemporary events (there are certain parallels between the family relationship in *Hamlet* and with Mary Queen of Scots). Another possibility is that Hamlet was away when his father died, so Claudius, as the next most powerful *man* at court, inherited the throne.

Figure 10: *Hamlet*, dir. Gregory Doran (Cardiff: BBC Wales, 2009)

Thus, in the first scene which involves Hamlet, Gertrude, and Claudius, the audience can identify the tensions in this newly-established triangular familial relationship, which Doran explicitly foregrounds. Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* (1990) splits this 'triangle' a different way: Claudius stands at the head of Old Hamlet's tomb, with the weeping Gertrude and cloaked Hamlet on the other side. Once Claudius has finished his speech proclaiming his fatherly-like love, the cloaked Hamlet turns to his mother:

Figure 11: *Hamlet*, dir. Franco Zeffirelli (Los Angeles, CA: Icon, 1990), 1.2.

It is futile to argue that there is no psychoanalytic undertone present. In the relationship between Hamlet and Gertrude, though, it is more the case that the play centres on mother and son searching to negotiate the boundaries of a new type of relationship, with the father dead and the uncle replacing him as patriarch. Hamlet's and Gertrude's negotiations of their new relationship represent a dramatic approach to the familial dynamic, which can inevitably be interpreted by productions at various points along the spectrum (one end of which indicates incestuous relations, and the other a purely innocent mother-son dynamic).

The position of patriarch that Claudius now inhabits complicates this relationship further: the respect that he commands as King of Denmark is carried through into his personal life. However, in contrast to *King Lear*, where we might explicate the King's actions as a father by looking to his behaviour as king, in *Hamlet*, the audience learns little about the success Claudius has as king. He is a completely unknown entity. Whereas the plot of *King Lear* opens with the king dividing his country between his daughters, by

contrast, Claudius's accession to the throne of Denmark has been so recent that one cannot judge him by his monarchical status: he is, therefore, searching to create his microcosmic (stepfather) and macrocosmic (king) presences anew. As noted by David Scott Kastan, the balance of macrocosmic ('history') and microcosmic ('comedy') plot lines appear in a number of 'history' plays. *Hamlet*'s successful execution of this personal balance invokes cross-genres links while implicitly referencing the play's fluctuations between 'history' and 'tragedy'. Claudius, in this instance, embodies this space between the two spheres of macrocosm and microcosm in adapting to his new roles as both step-father and king.

Prior to Act 4, Gertrude does not appear in a single scene of *Hamlet* without the appearance of her son, whether from the beginning of the scene or joining her later. This could indicate that in the textual composition of the play she is defined by her role as mother, with her son appearing as 'evidence' of her maternal state. They seem to exist as a dyad but during the play Hamlet is rejecting the primal bond, and acting independently. This 'breaking away' of Hamlet from Gertrude can also be figured in psychoanalytic terms. Adelman states that:

> The subjection of male to female is the buried fantasy. The structure of *Hamlet* is marked by the struggle […] to free the masculine identity of both father and son from its origin in the contaminated maternal body […] [Gertrude] plays out the role of the missing Eve. Her body is the garden in which her husband dies, her sexuality the poisonous weeds that kill him and poison the world […] and the self […] for her son.[56]

[56] Adelman, p. 77. This concept of Gertrude's body as the garden, the site of destruction for both her first husband and her son, can be connected with the idea of the womb-as-tomb that we saw with Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*.

She gives birth to Hamlet, yet her influence as mother (which, in Adelman's theory, links her to other mothers, even Old Hamlet's mother) retains the potential to be the source of his downfall. In reconciling the idea of Gertrude's downfall with Adelman's reference to the 'Fall', it transpires that mothers (in recognising Eve as the mother of all) possess this innate ability to have the potential ability to destroy their sons' lives. Again, inter-generic and thematic links can be identified between this Biblical story and *Hamlet*. The mother-as-origin concept is strongly invoked through Gertrude (it is further intimated through Adelman's reference to Eve). Her constant presence in the play and in Hamlet's life suggests that the play could not progress as it does without her regular position on-stage. Gertrude is the source of Hamlet's very being; through this connection she is (inevitably and forevermore) partly responsible for his actions, and her influence on his emotional development is clearly seen as the play unfolds. Her marriage appears one significant catalyst for Hamlet's actions.

There are two scenes in particular which explicitly depict the problems in the mother/son relationship of Gertrude and Hamlet. In 3.4, which has come to be known as 'the closet scene', we see arguably the most concentrated dialogue between mother and son, in which (in the Q2/F texts, at least) Gertrude vows not to reveal that his madness is feigned. This scene raises key questions regarding the importance of the mother/son relationship, and the public/private realm of women. Can this maternal bond, by implication, only be experienced in private, or closeted behind the closed door of Hamlet's mother's room? Can Hamlet only be spoken to, and chided by, his mother, when concealed in this private domain? Since structural and

filmic *frames* distance the audience and, perhaps, the characters themselves, when we consider Polonius's vow to Claudius in 3.3, 'I'll call upon you ere you go to bed / And tell you what I know' (3.3.36-7), the closeting of the mother/son bond is emphasised: it is, first, behind the closed doors of the closet itself; and then distanced again by the proposed narrating of the incident by Polonius to Claudius. The fact that Polonius does not survive to relate this tale to Claudius exposes an intriguing vulnerability in this voyeuristic plan: if Polonius had survived, it is possible that the audience would have seen a narrative report similar to Gremio's relation of Katherina and Petruchio's wedding in *The Taming of the Shrew*. The vow is the turning point in Hamlet and Gertrude's relationship; had Polonius narrated this event, audience members would not directly have seen the tortured, exchange between mother and son, where Gertrude finally learns of Hamlet's feelings. She swears: 'Be thou assured, if words be made of breath / And breath of life, I have no life to breathe / What thou has said to me' (3.4.195-7). Polonius's death enables this scene, enhancing the dramatisation of the mother/son relationship, and the dynamic's power and resonance occupy vital roles in the play itself both as dramatic and in complicating its place as representative of the 'tragic' genre. The dramatic function of dead parents will be further discussed in Chapter 3; in this scene, Gertrude and Hamlet's relationship is refracted in the dynamic between Ophelia and Polonius, providing an alternative 'lens of interpretation' and potential for comparative analysis.[57]

The closet scene proves even more crucial to the play's construction when one considers the printing and editing habits for earlier editions. In

[57] Rosalie Colie, *The Resources of Kind: Genre Theory in the Renaissance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: U of California P, 1973), p. 8.

terms of dramatic genres, without this essential scene, the audience would be unable coherently to identify Gertrude's influence upon her son. This would-be flaw in the construction of Gertrude and Hamlet's relationship would prevent the further construction (and therefore influence) of Gertrude as Hamlet's mother. Ellen O'Brien writes comprehensively on cuts to the closet scene, which directly impinge on how Gertrude is represented as Hamlet's mother:

> Perhaps the most devastating cut [in the Q2 edition] occurred in the closet scene itself, eliminating both Hamlet's appeal to the Queen not to reveal that his madness is feigned and her vow to do so. Here we have the most direct manifestation of an association between Gertrude and her son, yet with overwhelming consistency, the acting editions and promptbooks of the [nineteenth century] cut the final twenty-eight lines of the Folio text […] Since nearly all the standard acting editions did not even print the excised lines, many actors probably never knew such a vow existed, creating a serious distortion in the textual patterns from which they might work.[58]

So the nineteenth-century audience lost the image of the caring, motherly Gertrude that swears to keep her son's secret. This vow demonstrates a vestige of protective motherly instinct that had been hidden beneath the persona of an obedient wife. When this vow is removed from the play, audience members are prevented from seeing the reconciliation between Hamlet and his mother which leaves the final scene, with all of Gertrude's motherly affection, rather isolated. The maternal image that she develops throughout the play (only as a response to the catalytic 'madness' of her son) quite obviously waxes, as her wifely devotion wanes following Claudius's overtly guilty behaviour

[58] Ellen J. O'Brien, 'Revision by Excision: Rewriting Gertrude', in *Shakespeare Survey*, 45 (1993), pp. 27-36 (31-2).

following 'The Mousetrap', and Hamlet's confrontation of her in her closet. These events make her susceptible to 'those thorns that in her bosom lodge / To prick and sting her' (1.5.92-3).

The second (albeit not quite as influential) scene in which this explicitly maternal Gertrude appears is the final one (5.2). The motherly image of Gertrude, in Laertes's and Hamlet's fight, is notably at odds with her earlier behaviour, where she stands by while Claudius verbally attacks her son: she worries about his 'fat, and scant of breath' condition (5.2.290), and wipes his face; the latter a gesture which David Tennant's Hamlet in the Doran production brushes away. Gertrude's inability to balance her roles as wife and mother leads to such unhappiness that, arguably, her only recourse is suicide. Critics are unable to agree on whether Gertrude drinks the poison accidentally, or whether it is deliberate. Following the emotional intensity of the closet-scene encounter between Gertrude and Hamlet, it is possible that Gertrude has finally realised the futility of her attempts to embody both wife and mother successfully. Premeditated suicide could, conceivably, be an option. This scene has been depicted in performance in various ways: some Gertrudes appear innocent of the consequences, others make Gertrude's drinking from chalice seem a deliberate and considered act, whereas others turn their response to Claudius's command 'do not drink' into a notable act of defiance, indicating her choice of Hamlet over her husband. Penny Downie's Gertrude looks frightened by what she is about to do, yet determinedly draws the cup to her lips. This action, where the audience sees Gertrude sacrificing herself for her son, can be read as the ultimate maternal gesture of unconditional love. However, this act comes far too late. Gertrude's previous shedding of her

maternal function, through transforming into the wife of Claudius, leaves Hamlet resentful and abandoned. *Hamlet* is partially based on the premise of Gertrude and Hamlet's new relationship: however, as we (as audience members or critics) are incapable of knowing how the nuclear family operated before Old Hamlet's death, we cannot identify any differences in Hamlet's behaviour in this new familial structure.

There are two notable turning points in the play that dictate the course of dramatic action: Gertrude's begging Hamlet not to return to university; and her swearing to keep his secret safe. To return to the concept of the performative maternal body (as discussed in the introduction to this chapter) Gertrude epitomises this evolving and generating mother: she gives birth both to Hamlet, and by her constant, complex presence, to the events of his life. Her plea for him to remain in Elsinore instigates the action that follows. In terms of the 'constitutive acts' of genres, Gertrude's influence must be recognised as a force throughout the play, influencing how it progresses. As demonstrated in this chapter, the mother/son relationship is the foundation for the entire play, and provides prompts throughout the dramatic work, moving forward the play's action. Throughout the intriguing disparities in genre in varying editions of *Hamlet*, Gertrude's influence on how the play develops remains constant.

The 'romances': incest and the mother/daughter dynamic

To turn, finally, to consideration of the 'romance' plays, inter-generic links can be identified in Shakespeare's incorporation of parallel or inverted familial structures in his works. Such inverted structures can offset the 'main'

parent/child relationship, generating sub-plots: in *The Tempest* the father/daughter relationship of Prospero and Miranda is contrasted with the mother/son relationship of Sycorax and Caliban. Shakespeare also mirrors the 'main' parent/child relationship in minor characters; he repeats the same pattern with Alonso and Claribel. These echoing or contrasting parent/child relationships serve to emphasise the dominant relationship of the play. The mother/daughter relationship (in both Shakespeare's plays and critical work on Renaissance drama) receives much less attention than the mother/son relationship; in this dynamic, the maternal figure may have been regarded as less of a 'threat', as the daughter was already 'contaminated', as it were, with *femaleness*. The issue with this relationship is not so much the effect of the mother on the daughter, but rather the patriarchal grip on society which is more intense alongside the lack of maternal influence.

As Stone's work on the Renaissance family suggests, the mother had little influence over any family matters of import: 'The system gave great power to the head of the family in controlling the marriages of his children, since he alone could provide the necessary portions for his daughters and guarantee the necessary jointures for his sons' widows'.[59] The death of the wife/mother often enables the more positive relationships of the father with the daughter. Helen Evans argues against this idea:

> In a complete reversal of the decision of the father in *Pericles* the emotional bond that Prospero establishes with his daughter is not negotiated through the absence of the mother. She is only briefly referred to by Prospero and is not mentioned at all by Miranda. Her death is neither spoken or nor commemorated in any form.[60]

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[59] Stone, p. 72.
[60] Helen Evans, *Fathers and Daughters: Emotional and Political Relationships in 'Pericles' and 'The Tempest'* (University of Birmingham: unpublished PhD thesis, 2006), p. 48.

However, and as Evans herself concedes later in her thesis,

> without the death of Miranda's mother many years prior to the play's beginning, combined with the threat of death posed by their journey to the island, the father/daughter relationship would firstly not have existed and secondly would not have been endowed with the emotional resonance that is presented during the play.[61]

These contrasting ideas from Evans epitomise the multiplicity inherent in the mother, and the many possibilities for dramatic interpretation. Although the context of Miranda and Prospero's situation must be considered, the *implications* of the isolation of their relationship should be the primary concern (the self-referential title *The Tempest* indicates that the storm is the play's focus). This concentration of the father/daughter relationship, following the demise of the mother, is not an isolated incident: Pericles sets out to find Marina following the news of Thaisa's death; Leontes's mourning for Hermione's presumed death is alleviated somewhat by his reunion with Perdita. Lenker writes that Hermione in *The Winter's Tale* 'satisfies a precondition apparently necessary for the reestablishment of the family unit' by her transformation from art to life.[62] The mother/daughter dynamic clearly instigates dramatic action through the either real or *supposed* death of the mother.

As noted earlier, the murder of Polonius can be read as a facilitative dramatic device; similarly, the death of the mother can instigate action and plot lines. Prospero references this influence and power of Miranda's lost mother, because she was virtuous and truthful; Prospero tells Miranda in 1.2., as part of the somewhat contrived back story, that her 'mother was a piece

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[61] Evans, pp. 47-8.
[62] Lenker, p. 64.

of virtue, and / She said thou wast my daughter; and thy father / Was Duke of Milan, and his only heir'.[63] This suggests that the power given to women in childbirth results in fathers who only know they are father to the child based on the mother's *word*. This power in words is switched in Julie Taymor's *The Tempest* 2011, where Prospera's research into magic is cited within a tradition of death for female practitioners of the arts where she stands apart in an almost entirely male-dominated court, viewed from inside a space in a wall, further emphasising the restriction upon her.

Figure 12: *The Tempest*, dir. Julie Taymor (California: Touchstone Films, 2011), 1.2.

Female power is invoked in several others of Shakespeare's plays: in *The Winter's Tale*, it proves absolutely fundamental to the interactions between Leontes and his son Mamillius. This is the only reference to Miranda's mother in the play: it highlights her level of power and influence grounded in Prospero's dead wife's maternal capabilities. On hearing of Antonio's

[63] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.2.56-8. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

betrayal, Miranda declares 'I should sin / To think but nobly of my grandmother; / Good wombs have borne bad sons' (1.2.119-120). Miranda's reference to her paternal grandmother once again places power in the lap (or indeed the womb) of the mother: partial responsibility for Antonio's behaviour rests, in Miranda's mind, in the influence of the mother. The imagery used by Prospero in threats suggests a subconscious (ultimately invisible) maternal presence. He threatens Ariel with a potentially womb-like incarceration: 'if thou more murmer'st, I will rend an oak / And peg thee in his knotty entrails' (1.2.294-5). In calling Caliban 'earth' ('Thou earth, thou: speak!') Prospero compares Caliban to mud and baseness, while simultaneously invoking the procreative qualities of the earth, and of Gaia, the earth goddess; mother nature.[64] Caliban is defined in relation to his mother, Sycorax: 'got by the devil himself / Upon thy wicked dam' (1.2.315, 320-1). The etymology of Prospero (he is referred to as 'Prosper' in 2.2 and 3.3) suggests his potential to prosper, to advance his family line; in addition, Ariel refers to him as 'my potent master' (4.1.36), and Prospero refers to his own 'potent art' (5.1.55) on several occasions. Through this phrasing, Prospero's 'potency' to impregnate Miranda's mother is suggested, alongside the clear reference to his own magic.

The 'romances', Lenker observes, can be identified as the breeding ground of incestuous father/daughter relations: this is emphasised in *Pericles* where, in the midst of many paternally-oriented relationships, the opening riddle places the most significance on the *mother/daughter* relationship, 'On

[64] See my earlier discussion in the chapter for work on seemingly autonomous wombs in *Richard III*.

mother's flesh which me did breed'.[65] The riddle's identification of breeding solely with the *mother* could depict an emotional connection between, in this instance, mother and daughter, or could plant blame, once again, on the maternal figure. Diane Dreher explores the psychological effects of father/daughter incest, and the basis upon which Freud was forced to retract his early theories on the act of incest:

> Incest represents humanity's primal urges gone awry. […] Early in his career, Freud cited father/daughter incest as a frequent cause of hysteria among women. But this theory threatened the foundations of patriarchy and he retracted it, explaining his patients' accounts of incest as fantasies, which became part of his theory of early childhood sexuality.[66]

It is important to differentiate between the physical act of incest and the emotional facet (as Dreher terms it 'pseudo incest').[67] This concept references divorce between emotional and physical maturity in the daughter:

> This pseudo incest grows out of traditional family patterns. Deprived of initiative in patriarchal cultures, women remain children emotionally. Like Cordelia and Ophelia, "grown women … return home to serve and care for their fathers or let them interfere in their personal affairs"; like Desdemona, they transfer their obedience to father surrogates. Patriarchal norms allow women only two choices in life: domination by father figures or defiance and loss of love.[68]

Dreher's explicit reference to Shakespeare's female characters draws to attention the two 'options' available to women of the period: domination or defiance.

With regard to dramatic works and genres, we can, time and again, see how either domination, passivity *or* defiance contributes to the direction

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[65] William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.1.66. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text; Lenker, p. 61.
[66] Dreher, p. 10.
[67] Dreher, p. 10.
[68] Dreher, p. 10.

the play takes. Ophelia's inability to challenge Polonius has a direct impact on Hamlet and consequently how *Hamlet* develops; Cordelia's defiance in refusing to engage in Lear's egocentric game functions as a catalyst in the dramatic plot, instigating all that follows the 'Love Trial'. In these two examples, the daughters concerned are enveloped by almost exclusively phallocentric control. Marina's identity is wholly grounded in her mother's presumed death: Lychorida urges Pericles to 'Take in your arms / This piece of your dead queen […] all that is left living of your queen: / A little daughter' (3.1.17-8, 21-2). The etymological significance of 'Marina' echoes her mother's death: she is inextricably connected both to the sea (which could be seen as representative of the womb's amniotic fluid) and to her mother's apparent death by drowning.

These connections between Marina and Thaisa contrast with Miranda and her dead mother in *The Tempest*: while, as stated earlier, Miranda's mother's death enables the strong relationship between Prospero and his daughter, Marina's entire identity is bound up in her mother's presumed demise. This appears ironic in considering the strict limitations imposed on the 'romance' form as a genre; familial reunions often typify the genre, rather than death appearing to be a necessary device to instigate mother/daughter reunions. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen observe in their introduction to *Pericles* that

> Pericles woos a daughter whose relationship with her father is turned inward in incest, then he woos a daughter whose father banteringly pretends to play the oppressive patriarch, when really he is delighted that she has fallen in love with the knight in rusty armour. The narrative begins with a daughter who is "an eater of her mother's flesh/ By the defiling of her

> parents' bed." It ends with a daughter who regenerates her father.[69]

Again, one can see the framing device often used by Shakespeare to foreground key issues, such as the problematic marriages addressed in the first chapter. The theme of fathers' relationships with daughters becomes a structural device that can be usefully juxtaposed with strictures of assumed 'features' of monogeneric analysis, highlighting the importance of understanding the play from thematic perspectives.

The strong emotional link of the daughter to either parent means, in Shakespeare's works, one of at least two things: either the mother can be cited as a source of blame; or the father/daughter relationship exceeds the acceptable boundaries of familial love, and engages in incest, such as in *Pericles*. Lenker's equation of the 'romances' with incest foreshadows her aligning daughter-sacrifice with the tragedies; the 'constitutive acts' of genres are reconciled with the function and the behaviour of the daughter in a way which does not restrict the plays or the characters in a performative sense. Shakespeare's 'comedies', so often focusing on marriage, can unite daughters and marriage in a manner that foregrounds the father's supposed right in marrying his daughter to whomever he sees fit. Dreher quotes from Lloyd deMause in differentiating various fatherly approaches and comprehensions of the role of his daughter:

> deMause's description of the father-child interaction readily distinguishes empathy from exploitation: "1) He can use the child as a vehicle for projection of the contents of his own unconscious (projective reaction); 2) … as a substitute for an adult figure important in his own childhood (reversal reaction); or 3) he can empathize with the child's needs and acts to satisfy them (empathic reaction). For anima-absorbed

[69] Bate and Rasmussen (eds.), *Complete Works* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), p. 2323.

> fathers like Leonato or like the infantile Lear, who dreams on Cordelia's 'kind nursery', the choice is obvious".[70]

DeMause's three types of reaction are useful in exploring the exploitative or empathic relationships of the father with the daughter. However, deMause does not take into account another form of reaction, which could be termed adoptive reaction, where the child fills the emotional void left by the absence of the other parent, and most noticeably the mother.

Father/daughter relationships are not simply either 'bad' or 'good'; there are layers of depth which characterise each individual situation. Similarly, the 'type' of mother/son relationship cannot be relegated to a specific genre, as Rose's generalisations suggest it perhaps should be. Bate and Rasmussen state that in *Pericles*, 'there are none of the subtle shades of moral grey […] Instead we have to accept black and white, and, most disconcertingly, white becoming black'.[71] I would assert that grey is a requisite component of any relationship: black and white do not suffice as simplistic means of categorising the 'type' of parent/child relationships that we see in Shakespeare's plays. Furthermore, black and white binary categories should not prevail in the study of genre; the grey should be accepted as a fundamental part of dramatic construction. Throughout this chapter, the indisputable performativity of the maternal role (doubly potent in the dramatic work) can be identified in its influence over (predominantly) sons and the courses taken by the plays. Finally, to return to the analogical link I identified between the mother and the dramatic work at the beginning

[70] Dreher, p. 8.
[71] Bate and Rasmussen (eds.), p. 2323.

of this chapter, the influence of the mother can challenge classifications of genre where it continually evolves, develops and *generates*.

In using Winnicott's theory that a new microcosm is constructed through motherhood, it appears that the mother's focus narrows further to this additional microcosm. The image of a matryoshka doll is particularly relevant to invoke here, as the macrocosm of society can be represented by the largest doll, a smaller doll references the microcosm of the family, and an even smaller one can be seen as the microcosm of motherhood. Conversely, in the plays considered in this chapter, the mother's influential potential widens and encompasses both her microcosmic and macrocosmic domains in addition to the play and the genre within which she performs.

Troubling Women Troubling Genre:

Shakespeare's Unruly Characters

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Chapter Three: Gender, genre, and generations

Mary Beth Rose asked 'Where are the mothers in Shakespeare?'[1] *I* ask, to begin this chapter: where are the brothers and sisters in Shakespeare? Naomi Miller and Naomi Yavneh, in their work *Sibling Relations and Gender in the Early Modern World* (2006), speculate about the reasons why an 'intragenerational' analytical approach (relationships between siblings) has, thus far, been fairly absent from critical work on children and women in Shakespeare. They write:

> Perhaps it is that the emphasis on patriarchal and intergenerational structures has occluded the intragenerational. In a world in which women were constrained principally by the triple virtues of chastity, silence and obedience, and in which women were constructed as daughters and wives (property passed from father to husband), it is perhaps not surprising that feminist scholars seeking to explore the complexity of gender relationships in the early modern world would focus on the family ties most obviously associated with issues of power and authority – parenthood and marriage – while neglecting the significant fact that sons and daughters are often brothers and sisters.[2]

This quotation explicates a possible reason why the sibling relationship has been so neglected in critical works.[3] The authors' identification of such relationships as 'family ties [being] associated with issues of power and authority' is revealing. Intragenerationality stands for (and represents, in a symbolic sense) interrogation of 'established' signifying terms, such as 'sister'. This chapter illustrates how sibling relationships influence the directions that selected plays take within the formulation of the motherless environment.[4] These relationships

[1] Mary Beth Rose, 'Where are the Mothers in Shakespeare? Options for Gender Representation in the English Renaissance', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42.3 (1991), 291-314.
[2] Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (eds.), *Sibling Relations and Gender in the Early Modern World* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p.2.
[3] Indeed, Kate Aughterson in her work *Renaissance Woman: A Sourcebook* (1995) does not identify the role of sister as important enough to deserve sustained consideration.
[4] As noted earlier in this thesis, I utilise the system of using forward slashes in identifying the relationship (brother/sister) rather than hyphenating it (brother-sister), as the latter form would imply that there is always a cohesive and satisfying co-existence of the brother and sister concerned. In contrast, (as I demonstrate in this chapter) this is not always the case, and power

can take the structure of brother/sister, sister/sister or only child (with consequentially heightened relationships with the father). Through exploring selected source-texts, I will also discuss points where Shakespeare has removed the mother from his adaptations of inherited stories and how this impacts on sibling dynamics.

In the first section of this chapter, focused on sister/sister and brother/sister relationships, I address the key points in a play that features no mother, and no sibling, which demonstrates the implications of having no intergenerational or intragenerational ally. In *The Tempest*, a certain amount of pressure is put on the father/daughter relationship: each is all that the other has.[5] In *King Lear* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, female siblings are present, but the mother is still absent; the sibling relationships in these two plays provide fascinating contrasts and tensions. Finally, the brother/sister relationship in *Twelfth Night* and *Measure for Measure* demonstrates how certain elements of the paternal role (for example, commodification of the sister, made manifest in the father through the *senex iratus* figure discussed in Chapter 1) are adopted by the brother.

Other sibling relationships which are perhaps seen as non-canonical, such as the emotional bond of non-consanguineous sisters (Helena and Hermia

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struggles in sibling relationships often prove the key element in identifying how this dynamic influences the plays. The use of the slash, I feel, indicates a pairing of these two characters, indicating analysis of these two characters without necessarily hinting at unity of spirit. Furthermore, this use of punctuation is representative of my focus on the intragenerational mode of analysis.

[5] The reason why I focus only on the female sister, or lone female child, is that this thesis as a whole concentrates on *female* characters: where appropriate, I do consider male roles, such as the impact wielded by the mother, Gertrude, on her male son Hamlet, but this is primarily for the consideration of alternative perspectives that benefit my research here. Clearly, and as I posit throughout this chapter, analytical focus on siblings of either gender is remarkably lacking in modern scholarship; this would be a fruitful area in which to conduct further research in the future.

in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and the twins' relationship in *Twelfth Night*, are also significant. The state of siblinghood is intricately caught up in identity politics. In engaging with the concept of intragenerationality, I illustrate the analogical similarities between siblings and dramatic works. In identifying a hitherto under-explored area of Shakespearean drama, I demonstrate *how* intragenerationality can be utilised both literally (in relation to siblings) but also analogically, where 'accepted' examples of a 'type' of dramatic work are concerned. The focus on intragenerationality in this chapter demonstrates the benefits of contrasting and comparing certain groups of entities. For example, the 'inter' model may be applied to contrasting 'comedies' with 'tragedies', where the 'intra' model may compare 'comedies' with 'comedies', recognising that beneficial connections can be drawn from exploring within categories.

Relational identities and frames

Rather than discussing homogenous groupings (such as 'sister' or, to relate it to drama, 'tragedy'), this process of analysis calls to account 'static' modes of analysis. These modes can include monogeneric approaches to criticism in looking at plays as representatives of a particular genre, where the intricate goings-on *within* such constructions as 'sister' or 'tragedy' are ignored. Earlier in this thesis, I discussed the merging of dramatic genres that create sub-genres such as 'tragi-comedy' and 'black comedy'; this amalgamation of two genres' titles aids in building 'inter-genre' links while still referencing the two separate genres, for example: 'tragicomedy'. In a symbolic sense, works focussing on genre as an infallible 'structure' also correspond to this 'between/inter' approach, where genres are identified as single entities that may have potential for cross-

pollination. Identifying the potential for the mixing of genres is a performance-liberating move, which privileges evolution of analysis and the acceptance of *genera mista* over monogeneric approaches. Intragenerationality would appear to pay more attention to what is occurring *within* the genre itself ('comedy' as a body of work, as a corpus) avoiding the critical pitfall of declaring a direct 'comic' lineage from Sophocles through Shakespeare to Coward.

The works considered in this chapter are taken from a variety of genres: the 'romance' form of *The Tempest* offers a starting point from which the complexities of familial relationships can be observed. By addressing the 'comic' *Taming of the Shrew* and the 'tragic/historic' *King Lear*, cross-genre links are exposed, negating monogeneric analysis. Similarly, the direct sibling influence on the device of 'comic closure' through marriage in *Twelfth Night* is contrasted with the 'problematic' *Measure for Measure*.[6] Again, the cross-genre links materialise: 'problem play' is a less-rigid category than 'comedy' or 'tragedy', and the unclassifiable nature of the plays is communicated through what I consider to be the *ironic* use of this label.

Lagretta Tallent Lenker's concept of the 'daughter as active/passive verb' is relevant here, tailored to this chapter's purpose, so referring to the sister as either active or passive verb.[7] Lenker posits that the daughter can appear as either an 'active verb', or a 'passive' one; what constitutes 'active' or 'passive', however, is incredibly subjective; regardless of how 'active' or 'passive' the characters appear to critics and audience members, they can still exacerbate issues and create tensions within the plays. Cordelia's refusal to verbalise her

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[6] Lawrence Danson, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p. 75.
[7] Lagretta Tallent Lenker, *Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare and Shaw* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001), pp. 49, 71.

daughterly duties (with her silence attributed, wrongly, to passivity) contributes as much to the circumstances that result in Lear's madness and eventual death, as do Goneril and Regan in their campaign against their father and his allies.[8] I discussed earlier the etymological similarities between 'gender' and 'genre', and the significance of this discovery to this research: these terms originate from the same root, the Latin 'genus', for 'kind', 'sort', or 'type'.[9] 'Generation', too, shares this root in a more extended fashion; the stem 'gene' comes from 'generare' (from the Latin to 'bring forth') which, in turn, evolves from 'genus'.[10] 'Generation', therefore, fits into the *process of becoming* method of analysis that I apply to gender and genre; it is to be experienced in its activity, in its 'series of constitutive acts'; not simply reflected on, in the approach that intergenerational analysis appears to suggest, building links *between* entities, but never interrogating what is happening within them.[11] This is the niche which my research occupies: as a foundational part of this work, I promote a mode of analysis that examines plays within the same genre, with the intention that, through contrasting such works, their differences and uneasy co-existences can assist in showing how monogeneric analysis is often insufficient. This also, importantly, applies to gendered categories or roles such as 'sister'. The fact that sister/sister relationships have such similar effects on the plays (both in the ways in which they are presented, and in their influence on the course of the plays) indicates that there is little fundamental difference in the construction of female

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[8] Lenker, p. 56.
[9]See the Oxford English Dictionary: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77468?rskey=f2uIev&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid [accessed 1st April 2013].
[10] See the Oxford English Dictionary: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77517?rskey=nJ0D0w&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid [accessed 1st April 2013].
[11] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 44.

affective relationships between the 'tragic' *King Lear*, and the 'comic' *Taming of the Shrew*.

The theme of relational existences is one that permeates this chapter. Mary E. Fissell's *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (2004) features an Elizabethan woodcut on the front cover:

Figure 13: Samuel Rowlands, 'Well Met Gossip: Or Tis Merrie When Gossips Meet' (1619)

This illustration, by Samuel Rowlands, entitled 'Well Met Gossip: Or Tis Merrie When Gossips Meet' (1619), aids in highlighting how women's 'statuses' were construed in the Early Modern period: through their relationships to men.[12] The focus on 'widow', 'wife' and 'maid' lends itself to relational analysis. Furthermore, if one looks at the depictions from right to left, the progression of a woman's relationship status can be identified: from maid, to wife, to widow. 'Daughter', however, is a label that is seized upon by scholars of Renaissance women, as is 'mother', in addition to the three listed above. Monographs such as Lisa Jardine's *Still Harping on Daughters*, and Juliet Dusinberre's

[12] Mary E. Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), front cover.

Shakespeare and the Nature of Women mark these *relational* roles as notable points of interest. As readers of such critical texts on gender in the Renaissance, we can learn about relationships often regulated by conduct books of the period, between daughter and father, wife and husband, and mother and son, in reference to cultural practices of marriage, education, and dowries. Such 'titles' reflecting early modern domestic arrangements (daughter, wife and mother) can be, as Miller and Yavneh state, 'easily located not only in indices, but in chapter headings and even titles of comprehensive studies of the early modern world'.[13]

This statement identifies a negative habit in some critical studies of gender in the Renaissance: critical attention appears most often to be paid more to the institutions and mores that dictate how lives are lived in the period than (as is evinced in the fairly absent body of work on sibling relations) how women fit into the cultural hierarchy. This practice considers women not as individuals, but as representatives of a group; this is like looking at a play not as a play but as part of a generic structure. Miller and Yavneh's identification of this translation of diversity of experience into chapter headings and indices, furthermore, extends to the over-arching premise of my research: critics of dramatic works often focus more on constraining structures and forms, than on the performance of plays themselves. This chapter (indeed, this whole thesis), in contrast, locates such features within the wider perspective of the play itself.[14]

[13] Miller and Yavneh, p. 2; for such examples of these 'titles of comprehensive studies', see: Michael Winkelman's *Marriage Relationships in Tudor Political Drama* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); or Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion, and Education in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

[14] Many critical works, by their very natures, do engage in this habit of focusing on one feature and analysing that feature in respect to a number of works; indeed, my own thesis focuses on gender and genre, as opposed to considering every present feature in Shakespeare's works. I identify this habit not to propose that my own research does not operate in a similar manner, but more in the sense of considering 'constitutive acts', and how these relevant features contribute to the performative text as a whole. Kordecki and Koskinen explicate the title of their monograph, *Re-Visioning Lear's Daughters*, by stating that 'the word "re-visioning" calls attention to the

Similarly, features of dramatic works such as death, marriage, or family reunions, have been identified by some critics including Linda Bamber and Penny Gay as markers of particular genres, without consideration of the dramatic work as a whole. I avoid the general or generic ideas, preferring to focus on the specific and individual ones.

Returning to the concept of 'identity politics', the 'stylized repetition[s] of acts' have inevitably promoted monogeneric analysis through the perception that since a work repeats an element of an earlier 'comedy', then it must be a 'comedy'. [15] To quote, again, Simone De Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, she states that '[the body] is our grasp on the world and the outline for our projects'.[16] De Beauvoir succinctly negates potential problems with familiarisation and relational identities, venturing that familiarity is more a starting point from which to begin exploration. No more than 'comedy' should be the be-all and end-all of a play's identity should 'sister' be an all-encompassing classification when multiple identities form a play or a woman.

While 'mother' and 'wife' are, contextually, 'relational roles', 'sister', too, is a relational role; however, my focus on relationism is predominantly located within what Miller and Yavneh note as relationships of power: mother/son and husband/wife. 'Sister' is not a role that is automatically bound

active and inventive shifting of possibilities, the refocusing of the critical lens on Lear's daughters', p. 3. This is the approach that my thesis takes: as opposed to disregarding certain features of dramatic works and ignoring their existence in favour of conducting a particular reading, my research engages in this 'refocusing of the critical lens', on the reading and viewing of performance play-texts in an alternative way.

[15] Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre Journal*, 40.4 (1998), 519-31 (p. 520).

[16] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (London: Vintage, 2010), p. 46.

up in a power struggle (in comparison to mother or wife).[17] The *OED* defines 'sister' as participating in three of these quoted terms:

> A female in relationship to another person or persons having the same parents; Used to designate qualities, conditions, etc., in relation to each other or to some kindred thing; One who is reckoned as, or fills the place of, a sister.[18]

These three definitions reveal contrasting aspects of the 'sisterly' role, with each term becoming less certain, with words such as 'designate' and 'reckon' creeping into the final two definitions, with less essentialist expectations of role being communicated. Furthermore, the varying interpretations of 'sister' in modern usage depict the differences in this term/role; the word denotes female allegiance, friendship and similar positions, in addition to kinship. Indeed, the *OED* marks out its definition of 'a female holding a similar position to another' as being utilised in 1616 in *Henry V*; *Measure for Measure* is also cited under the definition of 'a female member of a religious order'.[19] The *OED* also identified 'sister' as a verb, one who 'stand[s] to a person in the relationship of a sister', with its earliest usage in 1609 in *Pericles*, conveying this relationship as one that comprises dynamism and action in its role.[20]

The sibling relationship in the Renaissance (fraternal or sororal) differs from the roles of wife and mother as explored earlier in this thesis; it is less of a *prescribed* set of expectations or norms, and as such had fewer mores and rules

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[17] Of course, there are some plays within Shakespeare's oeuvre where sibling dynamics *are* notably bound up in expressions of male power, including *King Lear* and *The Taming of the Shrew*; however, the role of sibling is less prescriptively bound up in this matrix of assertion than, for example, the function of daughter.

[18] http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/180434?rskey=8xJU1h&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid [accessed 7th April 2013].

[19] See the Oxford English Dictionary: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/180434?rskey=XIfBlH&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid [accessed 7th April 2013]. Isabella's double-use of 'sister' will be returned to shortly.

[20] See the Oxford English Dictionary: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/180435?rskey=XIfBlH&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid [accessed 7th April 2013].

to which to abide. This is communicated, too, in the comparative lack of scholarly research into this relationship. As discussed in regard to the wife and mother functions earlier in this thesis, regulations communicated through contemporaneous conduct books can be a useful tool against which to illustrate the departure from such rigid norms; rejection of such mores can be more clearly recognised. Conversely, a *lack* of such scholarly attention to the role of 'sister' can grant a certain level of freedom to the relevant characters. Scholars of women and gender have, as noted by Miller and Yavneh, often focused critical attention on the effects and systems of simply *being a woman* in the Renaissance, including discussions of marriage, inheritance, dowries, and education.[21] However, such institutions as marriage and education necessarily influence and impact on a brother/sister, sister/sister, or, indeed an *only* child dynamic, in addition to the important emotional facets of this relationship involving love, jealousy, and competition. I demonstrate the complexities of the sibling dynamic throughout this chapter in relation to my overarching focus on the relationship between gender and genre.[22]

Relating to the idea of institutions, the image of the monument of the Andronici (the tomb in which Titus Andronicus inters his deceased sons) is particularly pertinent. It presents a stately and significantly *closed* object, perhaps resonant of the institution of patriarchy itself, in its very formation and

[21] Please see Miller and Yavneh for more complex discussion of indexing cultural events in women's lives.

[22] Across the wider perspective of Renaissance drama (which unfortunately I do not have the space, here, to discuss) the sibling relationship has also been picked up and represented in a variety of ways. To turn to the *Duchess of Malfi*, briefly, the Duchess's sibling relationship with her elder brother, the Cardinal, and her twin brother, Ferdinand, forms the basis for most of the ensuing action; Ferdinand's potentially incestuous desires for his sister results in the emotional torture, and eventual death, of the Duchess. This dysfunctional sibling relationship is certainly not one that should be employed as a benchmark for consideration of other sibling dynamics in the Renaissance, but it is a useful example to reference, as it is not Shakespeare alone who employs the sibling relationship as a dramatic tool.

exclusionary practices. Men reside ‘within’, all grouped together physically and having fought bravely. Analogically, the Andronici tomb could potentially be symbolic of monogeneric approaches to dramatic analysis; in implicitly excluding ‘different’ approaches, performance analysis can be seen as ‘closed’. Julie Taymor’s adaptation *Titus* (1999) presents this monument in a fascinating way; she closes off the tomb further by making its location subterranean, necessitating a formal procession into its depths to inter the recently-deceased sons of Titus. This presentation is remarkably similar to Taymor’s adaptation of *The Tempest* where, as included earlier in this thesis, a screen-grab shows Prospera’s meeting framed through an archway.

Figure 14: *Titus*, dir. Julie Taymor (California: Walt Disney Studios, 1999), 1.1.

Further metaphorical significance of this tomb can be identified; as Marion Wynne-Davies observes, tomb and womb are given an analogous relationship in *Romeo and Juliet*, where ‘the tomb is described as “detestable maw” and a

"womb of death"'.[23] In Taymor's adaptation the order of scenes is inverted: *Titus* opens with the eponymous character returning home with the bodies of his dead sons, rather than the play-text's 1.1, foregrounding the power of the patriarchy/senate in Rome. Indeed, the entire adaptation is framed with the question of familial legacy, represented by the boy initially seen playing with toy soldiers, who is in fact Lucius's son. Of this directorial decision, Taymor states that:

> When I came to do the film, I started to think about point of view; could I just tell this story the way it is? Of course you can, it's Shakespeare, why not? On the other hand, the way it's rounded up at the end is very Elizabethan. It's not particularly meaningful for us now and the idea of a child, this twelve year old boy watching his family go at it, watching these blood lines, these tribes, these religious rites, this whole event, what is it that we put the children through and what is the legacy that they're left with [...] The arc of the story is the child's, it's a parallel story to the story of the Andronici.[24]

Identifying the boy's 'legacy' and the 'arc of the story [as] the child's' reinforces the concept of lineage and its efficacy as a framing device for the film.

Titus's relationship with Lavinia is, therefore, depicted as almost reverential: it appears that he initially values her above his (mostly dead) sons, the majority of whom have fought for Rome. Claiming that Mutius bars his way can only be indicative of the strategic marriage he plans for Lavinia, and the children/sons he expects her to produce. *The Tempest*, in comparison to *Titus Andronicus*, provides an alternative model of the father/daughter relationship, where the construction of an entirely new, isolated society both foregrounds and

[23] Marion Wynne-Davies, '"The Swallowing Womb": Consumed and Consuming Women in *Titus Andronicus*', in *The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. by Valerie Wayne (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 129-51 (page 135).
[24] *Titus*, *IMDB* http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120866/faq?ref_=tt_faq_1#.2.1.7 [accessed 10th January 2015].

questions the familial dynamic. It is important to recognise the parallels between this play and *Titus Andronicus*, where there *was* a mother who has been subsequently removed (by death) from the plays.[25] The relationship, and the circumstances in which this relationship was developed, are due to the *enabling* death of the mother: the concept of maternal demise as a plot device analogically links the potential maternal influence with the dramatic evolution and interpretive nature of plays.

Taymor's film adaptation of *The Tempest* (2010) identifies the father/child dynamic as central to the plot, and in her alteration of Prospero as father to Prospera as *mother*, she questions the very basis of that relationship, and how it can alter when father 'becomes' mother. Taymor's decision to alter the sex of the sole parent locates the newly-created matriarch in a matrix of motherhood and sorcery which was anyway at the heart of the distrust of mothers (and indeed *women*) in the Renaissance. Helen Mirren's portrayal of Prospera can emphasise the *power* of the mother: she is in control of the island, and her maternal state is strengthened by invoking the power of witch/sorceress/mother. Through Taymor's directorial decision, Prospera's desire, in all her games with Ferdinand and Miranda, could reveal that the widow of the Duke of Milan wishes to see her daughter married back into the society from which she came. This could be opposed to (perhaps) simply making a profitable match with her daughter and Ferdinand. Prospera's motivations for creating this match between Miranda and Ferdinand provide, furthermore, an opportunity for Prospera to reassert her social influence and control. In an interview at the Venice Film

[25] The reason I identify this as a 'positive' relationship, is due to Miranda and Prospero's closeness, and the bond that has seemingly been facilitated through the death of Miranda's mother.

Festival, following the first screening of Taymor's adaptation, Helen Mirren stated that:

> Women have been punished for being powerful for many centuries, and I thought that was the remarkable thing about changing Prospero into Prospera: you can bring in that history of female struggle. […] Golda Meier, Margaret Thatcher – you never quite know if it's because they are trying to prove themselves as masculine and testosterone-y as the men around them.[26]

Mirren's invocation of powerful, twentieth- and twenty-first-century women, traces the struggle of female power back to accusations of witchcraft directed at women (and more specifically the conflation of midwife/healer and witch) in early modern culture. The power-relations between parents is brought to the foreground in Taymor's production; this emphasis and the change in gender in the production can reveal intriguing differences between the make-up of father/daughter relationships, and the corresponding mother-daughter one. With Taymor's alteration of 'father' to 'mother', the film starring Mirren can be seen as questioning the foundations on which many theoretical considerations of the 'romances' were built. As Lagretta Tallent Lenker observes, a number of plays were assigned to this category based on the mother/daughter reunions near the ends of the plays; removing this possibility by situating the mother firmly in the dramatic action implicates the play as representative of the 'romance' genre.[27]

The relationship of Miranda and Prospero evolves throughout the play, as she moves from being entirely dependent on her father, to becoming betrothed, and then becoming a wife, recalling Rowlands's woodcut. While this is a set of circumstances entirely manufactured by Prospero, there is an important

[26]http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/film-news/7996708/Dame-Helen-Mirren-changes-gender-of-Prospero-in-The-Tempest.html [accessed 29 November 2010].

[27] See Lagretta Tallent Lenker, *Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare and Shaw*, particularly pp. 1 – 15.

transition to be identified, here, where Miranda's attitude and relational status alter due to her relationship with Ferdinand. This relates to how the father/lone daughter relationship impacts on the development of *The Tempest* as a play, questioning the assumptions surrounding 'romance' works that the father/daughter reunion is central to its categorisation as a play of this genre. Evidently this is established through the removal of the mother. The transitional phase depicts how the daughter is emotionally breaking away from this bipartite relationship, the intense dramatisation of which foregrounds this action.

The father/daughter transition is apparent in many of Shakespeare's plays: the father clearly must accept his own diminishing control over his daughter, and learn to trust her judgement as she gets older. The father's role is altered to adjust to the concept that his daughter is growing up, and moving towards establishing her own family with her husband. Prospero instigates a 'game' surrounding Miranda and Ferdinand's courting: initially punishing Ferdinand, he weaves an elaborate plot, through which he can test his motives. Prospero's rather odd offer of Miranda to Ferdinand is both formal and threatening:

> Then, as my guest, and thine own acquisition
> Worthily purchased, take my daughter: but
> If thou dost break her virgin-knot before
> All sanctimonious ceremonies may
> With full and holy rite be ministered,
> No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
> To make this contract grow; but barren hate,
> Sour-eyed disdain and discord shall bestrew
> The union of your bed, with weeds so loathly
> That you shall hate it both. (4.1.13-22)

Prospero appears wary of his daughter's development as an autonomous, sexually-active individual: his elaborate description, depicting the consequences if Miranda and Ferdinand had sexual intercourse before they were married,

suggests a great deal of forethought. Prospero demonstrates an underlying desire to reunite Naples and Milan, but this does not appear the sole cause for Miranda and Ferdinand's relationship. The parallel dynamics in *The Tempest*, with Alonso and Claribel, and the subtly inverted relationship with Caliban and his mother Sycorax, are juxtaposed with this exceptional bond between Miranda and Prospero. Claribel's marriage to the King of Tunis suits Alonso's purposes as Duke of Milan, in that he desired a beneficial marriage that allies two countries. The prevailing opinion that the 'romances' often featured father/daughter reunions will be returned to later in this chapter, through analysis of two 'comic' works in specific relation to this initial reference to the wholly patriarchal environment established in *The Tempest*.

To turn to the 'tragic' genre, Lesley Kordecki and Karla Koskinen note that 'Marvin Rosenberg does not see the daughters as "mere appendages to Lear's story" but rather says that "if they were not thought of only as Lear's daughters, the play might be their tragedy"'.[28] This observation clearly depicts the father/daughter transition in action, and the crisis of dramatic identity that results in their daughters being located within their father's story: this invokes the Bradleyan perception that the 'tragic hero' occupies the centre of the dramatic action, which unfurls around him. Where Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia are seen as only Lear's daughters, as appendages, this results in a perhaps superficial representation of their own stories, where only the seemingly 'necessary' actions involving the daughters are shown in relation to *Lear's* dramatic journey. As Rosenberg argues, if Lear's three daughters were not

[28] Lesley Kordecki and Karla Koskinen, *Re-visioning Lear's Daughters: Testing Feminist Criticism and Theory* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2010), p.2.

simply accepted in their relational state as daughters, the action that unfolds around the three of them might well have been deemed their tragedy. Furthermore, this raises the question of identity politics, in that Lear's 'daughters' are commonly perceived as daughters, not as sisters in a homogenous grouping. This relates, again, to the separate classifications of dramatic works in a generic sense, where plays are only perceived or recognised in one fashion, although they implicitly include or even embody other 'types' of genre. Rosenberg's example details how the father's clinging on to his daughters operates in a negative fashion, where the true consequences of the three *sisters*' notably individual journeys are neither acknowledged nor experienced in any detail. Indeed, near the start of 5.3., Cordelia demands 'Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?'; the syntax of Cordelia's questions frames 'sisters' as a secondary consideration (5.3.8).

The emotional side of a sibling relationship has been more or less ignored in favour of a focus, albeit sporadic, on the more institutional or classifiable aspects of the relationship, on the rare occasion that this dynamic has been critically analysed in Shakespeare's works. The Renaissance father/daughter dynamic, however, has been so often considered by critics that this emotional side of the biological connection *has* been identified and analysed, which provides a useful insight into the transitions made by the father and daughter (as a two-person familial unit) in Shakespeare's works. Dreher observes that:

> The profound influence that a father has on his daughter's emotional development has been established in our time. "Her father's imprint marks a woman's identity for all time – her sense of self, her work, her love relationships" [...] He is the first man in her life.[29]

[29] Dreher, p. 12.

This level of influence of the father on his daughter's life, regardless of the historical period in which this relationship is set, is a significant, developmental dynamic. Shakespeare's portrayal of this relationship is multifarious: an audience member can see both positive and negative representations. Dreher also states that:

> Shakespeare depicts the father/daughter relationship in the midst of a difficult double transition. She stands on the brink of adulthood, he faces the crisis of middle life, and their individual drama is enacted against a backdrop of dynamic social change.[30]

This is a thought-provoking and visually-appealing image, which invokes the image of Janus, the Roman god of gates and doorways. Janus (the god after whom the month of January was named) with one head facing the past, and the other facing the future, can epitomise a transitional period, where the past and also the future are simultaneously represented. In this fashion, the inextricable link between father and daughter, and the tensions between his recognition of his impending mortality and her shift towards independence, can be characterised as a Janus-figure.[31] To pursue this further, Janus is often linked with the Greek Goddess Hecate, who was associated with guarding borders, doorways, and cross roads; this invokes an image of a threshold, of liminal spaces to be crossed**.** This transitional period is repeatedly evoked in Shakespeare's plays which depict the father/daughter relationship, and its consequences often impact on the course of the play.

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[30] Dreher, p. 14.

[31] Of course, the father/daughter relationship is not always a straightforward, biological one; in several of Shakespeare's plays, an audience member witnesses a case of mistaken fatherly identity, such as in *The Winter's Tale*, where Perdita identifies the shepherd as her father. Also, in *Pericles* and *Cymbeline* we see an alternative perspective to the father-figure; in *Pericles* we witness an incestuous relationship between Antipholus and his daughter, which is followed by the emotional fatherly connection between Marina and Cleon. In *Cymbeline*, too, the King's relationship with Innogen (later Fidele) is more convoluted by the queen's jealousy, than a straightforward father/daughter dynamic.

Blood and bonds

Where the intergenerational bond between father and daughter is evidently one full of complexities and motives for the daughter's marriage, the intragenerational one between sisters appears to be predicated more on offering kinship and emotional support. In considering emotional bonds, as opposed to consanguineous ones, *The Merchant of Venice* is the play wherein the idea of the 'bond' is most analysed and interrogated. In 3.1, Shylock, in conversation with Salerio and Solanio, refuses to engage in any act of sympathy with Antonio's 'ship of rich lading' being wrecked 'on the narrow seas: the Goodwins', declaring 'Let him look to his bond'.[32] David and Ben Crystal give the following definitions for 'bond' in early modern usage: '1) deed, contract, pledge; 2) duty, commitment, obligation'; these explanations present the two ways in which this term is used throughout *The Merchant of Venice*, and how the word can be rendered complex when both of these definitions are considered.[33] In the way in which Shylock uses it here, 'bond' relates to both of these senses: the 'bond' was the agreement with Shylock, but further, this agreement was founded on Antonio's emotional bond with Bassanio. In this sense, this is a double-bond, as opposed to the 'single bond' (1.3.137) Shylock references in 1.3, which Bate and Rasmussen gloss as intimating the particular details and conditions surrounding the agreement. Antonio is *bound* both by the notary's seal and by his love for Bassanio.

The *lack* of a sibling and of a mother impacts upon the father/daughter relationship, where the emotional connection that might be formed with a sibling

[32] William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 3.1.3, 32. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.
[33] David Crystal and Ben Crystal, *Shakespeare's Words* (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 49.

is absent, resulting in the intensification of the child's relationship with the father. In certain cases, the absence of a consanguineous sibling makes way for the presence of an emotional sisterhood, an affective relationship that approaches the close bounds of biological sisterhood. Increased patriarchal control (in the daughter not having an intragenerational ally) can also be observed in the two plays under consideration in this part of the chapter; neither *King Lear* nor *The Taming of the Shrew* have mother-characters, so the wholly patriarchal environment is in evidence. The consequences of this intense patriarchal control in terms of how the plot develops are particularly striking in these two plays, and in the two dramatic works that I use to aid in the contextualisation of the blood-bond of sisterhood, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *As You Like It*. Patriarchy wields a strong force over the two plays under primary consideration, and the sister/sister dynamics both respond and react to this control in various ways. Such reactions inform the directions the plays take, complicating their genres through influence being wielded by young women breaking away from 'natural' (relational) bonds.

A Midsummer Night's Dream plays an important role in my contextualising of both the intensified father/daughter relationship, and also the emotional facet of sisterhood. The patriarchal environment, unmediated by the presence of a female adult, is apparent in this play, and directly informs the course of the action, in a strikingly obvious sense: if Hermia's father had not threatened his daughter with death or life in a convent, the young lovers would not have taken to the forest, thus initiating the main action of the play. Theseus, the voice of authority in Athens, warns Hermia, emphasising to her the power a father holds over his daughter:

To you your father should be as a god,
One that composed your beauties, yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form of wax
By him imprinted and within his power
To leave the figure or disfigure it.[34]

Hermia is here presented with the displeasure of both the micro- and macrocosmic patriarchal forces, in the figures of her father and the Duke of Athens: Theseus and Egeus are authoritarian bodies in both home and state. The idea that a daughter is, to her father, 'but as a form of wax' suggests the absolute authority of the father; particularly in this society where mothers are absent, and Amazons (Hippolyta) are tamed, their voices in court unheeded. Here, the father's actions are cited as driving forces in instigating plot; the sisterly bonds that are heightened due to these events then spur on the pursuing action.

Hermia seeks refuge in the forest outside Athens following the angry exchange with her father Egeus over her refusal to marry Demetrius; in this attempt to flee her father's command, Hermia calls upon her best friend Helena to run away with her. Similarly, in *As You Like It*, following her uncle's banishment of Rosalind from the court (and threat of execution) Duke Frederick's niece flees to the Forest of Arden with her cousin (and the Duke's daughter) Celia. The bond between Celia and Rosalind is foregrounded in the play as Celia begs her cousin, 'I pray thee, Rosalind, sweet my coz, be merry'.[35]

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[34] William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.1.48-52. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.

[35] William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.2.1. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text. 'Coz', the abbreviation of 'cousin' or 'cozen', was 'used in fond or familiar address, both to relatives and in the wider sense': http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/43568 [accessed 7th April 2013]. The *OED*'s reference of this term 'to relatives' indicates how it can also be used in regard to emotionally close relationships, as opposed to simply 'blood' relations alone.

This explicit reference to their relationship, combined with Celia referring to Rosalind as 'coz', demonstrates a strong and influential bond, combined with a present, though extended, blood relationship. Following her father's accusations that Rosalind seeks to 'rob [Celia] of [her] name', Celia declares that 'We still have slept together, / Rose at an instant, learned, played, ate together, / And whereso'er we went, like Juno's swans, / Still we went coupled and inseparable' (1.3.70-3). In a strikingly similar fashion, in anger at Hermia's supposed 'fashion[ing] of false sport', Helena invokes their close bond to express her frustration and confusion over the situation currently unfolding in the forest:

> all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
> The sisters' vows […] So we grew together,
> Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
> But yet an union in partition,
> Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
> So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart. (3.2. 199-212)

In *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, there is a repeated sense of coupling and union; rhetoric such as 'shar'd', 'grew together', 'union', 'coupled', and 'inseparable' pervades these examples, with both sets of friends (sisters by bond) being presented as two parts of a single entity, truly 'two lovely berries moulded on one stem'.

In these examples, neither of the two sets of female characters *are* sisters (though there is the blood-tie of cousin between Rosalind and Celia). These two plays demonstrate how female bonds can be constructed and called upon in times of need. The role of 'sister' can be construed in both senses of blood and bond. I refer to these examples as a foundation on which to begin exploration of the consanguineous sisters in *King Lear* and *The Taming of the Shrew*; two plays from opposite ends of the generic 'spectrum' in their allocated 'tragic' and 'comic' forms.

It appears that female characters not linked by blood can afford one another a greater level of affinity and camaraderie than those that *are* true sisters. This revelation regarding character has important implications for how plays are constructed, in terms of genre and critical assumptions (where perhaps 'natural' interpretations are in fact proven wrong). This concept fits into the nature-versus-nurture argument, which implicates biological essentialism, and advocates self-fashioning; the constructing of quasi-sisterly bonds provides more emotional support and alliance than the biologically-rooted connection of familiarisation. It all comes down to the active building of the self, or by extension the dramatic work; Butlerian 'constitutive acts' are in evidence, in the examples here.

In addition to advocating implicitly the supremacy of *building* identities (identifying the processes of becoming, as opposed to being reliant on essentialist methods of classification) the sister/sister relationship has dynamic and instructive influences on the plots themselves. In times of distress (threat of execution or banishment by the patriarchal presences in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It*) the characters join forces to escape this threat. It will become apparent that the two sets of blood-sisters in the plays concerned do not operate in the same sense; the father's role sets up a divide-and-conquer motif that often keeps the sisters apart, because their joining together threatens the patriarchy.

Such uniting of sisters can be identified as a force that shakes patriarchal control in Shakespeare's works; these demonstrations of camaraderie result in the 'active' presentation of sisters, to use Lenker's terms. In this regard, there are significant numbers of parallels between *King Lear* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, which call into question once more generic divisions (there are similarities

between 'tragic' and 'comic' plots). The fact that there are so many similarities between these two works, in terms of sibling relationships, is intriguing, and the affinity alone between these two plays disproves Dreher's statement regarding the 'explosion' and 'resolution' of the 'father/daughter relationship'.[36] Before these similarities can be explored in depth, analysis of how the sister/sister relationships are initially presented is vital: identifying the first interactions in the play provides a basis from which to begin exploration of the influence of these dynamics.

In both plays, there is an effective contrasting of the perhaps stereotypically 'passive' sister, and the more 'active' one; in this mould, one can see Cordelia as 'passive' as opposed to Goneril and Regan's more 'active' state; Katherina can be construed as 'active' in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Bianca as 'passive'.[37] This terminology, furthermore, works effectively with the theme of commodification, where the more 'passive' sister is the one (in these two plays) viewed as a commodity; Bianca is repeatedly referred to as a prize to be attained by Hortensio and Gremio, and Cordelia is introduced in the 'Love Trial' scene as 'Although last and least […] our joy' (1.1.83, 82). This commodity status, of course, is what primarily drives these two plays. The 'Love Trial' is the catalyst in *King Lear*, where the rupture between the three sisters is made most explicit. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, it appears that Bianca's potential marriage can only be experienced in parallel with Katherina's, and this forms the foundation both for the ensuing action and for Katherina's unhappy marriage.

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[36] Dreher, p. 14.

[37] It is important not to conflate Renaissance and twenty-first century ideals in consideration of such a term as 'passive': in the Renaissance, passivity was a prime virtue in women, including their lack of verbosity, and their acquiescence to the patriarchal characters' wills. Furthermore, and as documented throughout this thesis through consideration of Cordelia and Ophelia, comparable 'passivity' can translate into active influence over plays.

Close to the end of 1.1 in *King Lear*, the earliest point in the play where the sisters' biological connection is referenced, Cordelia's words to Goneril and Regan are particularly instructive in considering their bond:

> The jewels of our father, with washed eyes
> Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are,
> And like a sister am most loath to call
> Your faults as they are named. Love well our father:
> To your professed bosoms I commit him. (1.1.276-80)

Cordelia's use of the third person in reference to herself can indicate her breaking away from the trio of sisters. Cordelia's identity is undergoing a dramatic transition at the time of speaking: she is reformulating her identity due to her banishment by her father, neglect by her sisters, and her impending marriage to the King of France. Cordelia's statement that she is '*like* a sister' is particularly interesting; however Bate and Rasmussen's editorial gloss in the RSC edition does not make reference to this understated simile. This can be read as Cordelia stepping outside her biological role as sister, experiencing it anew; this further intimates her moving away from this sisterly trio. Therefore, tensions are clearly evident in the first scene with all three sisters; audiences do not see the three sisters together (alive) on stage again.

In 5.3, within fourteen lines of Lear and Cordelia's exit, under guard, Goneril and Regan enter for the last time.[38] In Goneril and Regan's conversation at the end of 1.1, where they confer over how to deal with Lear's 'rashness', this collusion and threat of overthrowing Lear become most apparent: Goneril demands of Regan, 'Pray you let us hit together' (1.1.304). Where, in the 'Love Trial' scene the sisters were pitted *against* each other, each speaking solely in the first person to declare their love for Lear, the pronouns 'we' and 'us' dominate

[38] Discussion of the three sisters' final appearance on stage together is also present and analysed further in my final chapter.

this conversation, as the two elder sisters realise that their strength could potentially lie in numbers against their father. This conversation ends in a sinister fashion, with Goneril changing Regan's suggestion of considering their actions; Regan tells Goneril that 'We shall further think of it', to which Goneril responds 'we must *do* something, and i' the heat' (1.1.308-9, my italics for emphasis). Tensions between these two sisters are shown when, following Lear's outraged dispute with Goneril, she displays concern for the solidity of her alliance with Regan: 'What he hath uttered I have writ my sister. / If she sustain him and his hundred knights / When I have showed th' unfitness –' (1.4.325-7). The trailing off of this utterance is threatening, and suggests that division may come between the sisters; this does not, however, materialise until their battle over Edmund's affections, and Goneril and Regan initially work together to destroy Lear's allies, and contribute to the king's downfall.

The sister/sister relationship in *The Taming of the Shrew* is invoked early in 1.1: following Hortensio and Gremio's competition for Bianca's hand in marriage, Baptista tells them 'For how I firmly am resolv'd you know; / That is, not to bestow my youngest daughter / Before I have a husband for the elder' (1.1.49-51). There is a competitive force at work, here, and this is how a viewer first meets both Katherina and Bianca. Daughters and sisters cannot, for some reason, be experienced and addressed individually, but there must be a contest between them; this is evident in *King Lear* in the 'Love Trial', and also in this instance. Hortensio, Gremio, and Lucentio repeat the state of events throughout the play: Tranio declares to his master that:

> If you love the maid
> Bend thoughts and wits to achieve her. Thus it stands
> Her elder sister is so curst and shrewd
> That till the father rid his hands of her,

Master, your love must live a maid at home. (1.1. 178-82)

Gremio and Hortensio briefly forget their competition to win Bianca, and join forces as ‘this bar in law makes us friends’ to work toward a common goal, finding a husband for Katherina: ‘it shall be so far forth friendly maintained / by helping Baptista’s eldest daughter to a / husband we set his youngest free for a husband, / and then have to’t afresh’ (1.1. 136-9).

In 1999, director Gil Junger reimagined Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew* in a wealthy twentieth-century setting in the USA; the ‘romantic-comedic’ *10 Things I Hate About You* foregrounds the sibling relationship between Katherina and Bianca, introducing it within the first fifteen minutes of the film. Julia Stiles’s Katherina is presented on the sofa in her house, when her father enters, quickly followed by Bianca; Bianca greets her father with ‘Hi Daddy’, kissing him on the cheek, to which he responds ‘Hello, precious’. Stiles’s Katherina responds to this affectionate nickname with a disgruntled roll of the eyes, which is swiftly followed by antagonistically demanding of her sister ‘and where have you been?’ In only five seconds, the viewer can locate a general feeling of bad-will, bordering on resentment, between the two sisters, along with the predisposition of the father to regard his youngest daughter as ‘precious’, as opposed to his questioning of Katherina: ‘well hello, Katherina: make anyone cry today?’ A further point of note in this adaptation is that, only a few seconds later, Katherina opening a letter from Sarah Lawrence College: upon exclaiming happily that she ‘got in’, she takes the letter and runs away from her father and sister, throwing herself on the sofa to revel in this news. The symbolic relevance of this motion is that, in gaining information that can lead to her independence, Katherina’s potential spatial distancing from her sister and father is presented in

a microcosmic fashion here, by moving away from the two of them. This echoes *King Lear* where Cordelia appears aware of the necessary reconfiguration of her identity, and distances herself from her sisters by referring to herself in the third person. The juxtaposition of the infantilisation of Bianca, through this repeated addressing of her father as 'Daddy', and Katherina's longed-for independence, results in a confused familial dynamic. This motif of sisters distancing themselves, or being cut out of the family relationship, is often provoked, and further capitalised on, by the fathers concerned. This impacts on the direction the play takes through the constant reformulation of the sisters' identities and their associated behaviours.

Divide-and-conquer

In both *King Lear* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, there is a noticeable divide-and-conquer motif in evidence on the fathers' parts. To turn to *King Lear*, a 'tragedy' in which Dreher states that 'the conflicting tensions in Shakespeare's father/daughter relationships are […] exploded', this divide-and-conquer theme is particularly noticeable, and its impact upon the course of the play is clearly recognisable.[39] This division is presented in a symbolic and very visual manner in 1.1 of Trevor Nunn's 2008 production (a filmed replica of the 2007-08 stage performance in both London and Stratford); McKellen's Lear is given a very large map which clearly depicts his planned severance of England.[40] This action can be perceived as relating to the macrocosmic and microcosmic perceptions of Lear's court: in terms of the macrocosm, England has indeed been split into three,

[39] Dreher, p. 14.
[40] Trevor Nunn (dir.), *King Lear* (UK: Channel Four Television, 2008).

even if it is simply on a map; in microcosmic terms, Lear's personal kingdom, his family, will be metaphorically split up through the dividing of his daughters. Symbolically, Lear's division of the kingdom in fact represents his success separating his daughters. Indeed, this fact is anticipated by a clear distance between the daughters in the opening scene of Nunn's *King Lear*.

King Lear is driven significantly, in its actions, by the two elder sisters scheming together, along with Regan's husband, Cornwall. This can be construed in an analogical sense with regard to genre and the dramatic work: in dividing a play into 'characteristics' the play is less likely to be experienced as a whole, with its mutating and developing structure less evident, when it is dissected, by critics, into individual pieces like a 'biology lesson', as Megan Becker-Leckrone terms this approach.[41] In the case of this play, collusion and construction can be identified as effective, influential processes, with Goneril and Regan's ends being met in overthrowing their father, but their own deaths accompany his end.

In the relationship between the three sisters in *King Lear*, there is an unidentified tension between the two elder sisters and Cordelia. To turn to how the intragenerational model of characterisation is dramatised in the first scene of *King Lear*, it is strikingly obvious how the *absence* of emotional sisterly bonds impacts on how this vital and wholly instructive scene unfolds, even though the sisters are physically present. The tension between the three sisters in relation to their father's affections has often, in critical works, been attributed to a jealousy over Lear and Cordelia's closeness; this can be validated to some extent when one considers the interaction between the King and his three daughters in 1.1.

[41] Megan Becker-Leckrone, *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2005), p. 7.

Lear introduces Goneril and Regan as 'Goneril, / Our eldest born', and 'our second daughter? / Our dearest Regan, wife of Cornwall?' (1.1.44-5, 58-9). The descriptions of Lear's daughters grow lengthier as he progresses through them: Goneril is simply identified by her position in an age hierarchy among Lear's daughters; Regan is identified likewise, but with the addition of her wifely status. Then, we turn to Cordelia: 'Now, our joy, / Although our last and least' (1.1. 74-5). A shift in emotional connection is clearly identifiable, here: there is no sense of positive description in Lear's introductions of Goneril or Regan. This close relationship between Lear and Cordelia is keenly recognised and enacted in Nunn's *King Lear*; Goneril and Regan enter the room in Lear's palace together and with their husbands, whereas Lear enters last, laughing, with Romola Garai's Cordelia on his arm. This demonstration of affection places more emphasis on the father/daughter bond, the intergenerational; in addition, focus on the intergenerational relationships forgoes these vital interactions between sisters of the same generation. Drawing parallels *between* generations, rather than considering just a single entity results in such static forms of analysis as the monogeneric approaches to which I offer an alternative.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, the divide-and-conquer element is much more easily attributed to the father; Baptista time and again demonstrates a preference for his younger daughter, to which Katherina reacts angrily. Elizabeth Taylor depicts this resentment particularly vehemently in Zeffirelli's production of 1967. In the midst of Hortensio and Gremio's vying for her affections, Baptista exclaims to Bianca no fewer than three times in only 25 lines to 'Go in, Bianca': 'Bianca, get you in. / And let it not displease thee, good Bianca, / For I will love thee ne'er the less, my girl' (1.1.75-7). Katherina's anger is expressed through

her exclamation of ‘A pretty peat! It is best put finger in the eyes, and / she knew why’ (1.1.78-9). Baptista’s preferment of Bianca is again demonstrated when he permits, even *commands*, Katherina to stay outside with the competitive men while he speaks with Bianca: ‘Katherina, you may stay, / For I have more to commune with Bianca’ (1.1. 100-01). This dividing of the sisters seems an attempt to avoid an overthrow of their father.

In the film adaptation *10 Things I Hate About You*, when Bianca is refused permission to attend a party because Katherina is not going, she addresses her sister: ‘Can you for one night forget that you are completely wretched and just be my sister?’ This demand places a certain level of essentialism in the role of ‘sister’, where it is apparently possible to ‘just *be*’, in a rather zen-like fashion. This does, however, fit into the *a priori* model of analysis, where assumptions are made prior to the actual event of becoming; this sense of ‘simply being’ does not actively engage with the construction of a self or an identity or, indeed, a play. In this sense a viewer can read Katherina’s rebellion against Bianca’s demands to ‘just be [her] sister’ as rejecting essentialist modes of classification or ‘just being’. Bianca makes reference to an elusive set of sibling guidelines, where just ‘being’ is tantamount to being a good sibling. Bianca expects Katherina simply to be able to put by her beliefs and opinions while she attends a party, thus demonstrating that she is, in a biologically essentialist, and static sense, Bianca’s sister. This sentiment analogically relates to dramatic works, where one can apply Bianca’s logic to that of dramatic critics such as Bamber and Gay who assume that ‘comedies’ will conform to an expected, monogeneric set of guidelines, and that ‘tragedies’ conform to another entirely, in relational (and familiar) dramatic identities.

Lear's 'Love Trial' features the 'divide-and-conquer' motif, where all three sisters are encouraged to beat each other in their asseverations of love for their father. The intergenerational, patriarchal control is here demonstrated by fathers not wishing for their daughters actually to get along, potentially for the reasons made evident through Goneril and Regan's aggressive collusion. Goneril and Regan's conversation at the end of 1.1, where Goneril says to Regan: 'Sister, it is not little I have to say of what most nearly appertains to us both' (1.1.293), appears a new situation, as if these two sisters had not worked together before. Of course, we cannot know whether this is the case, just as we cannot gauge what it is that has resulted in the two elder sisters' dislike of Cordelia. Later in *King Lear*, an audience member witnesses further division between the two elder sisters when Edmund comes between Goneril and Regan, with each of the sisters interested in establishing a relationship with Gloucester's younger son. The conclusion of this battle for Edmund's affections results in both Goneril and Regan dying, demonstrating that Lear has ultimately been successful in his divide-and-conquer strategy, and that death, the most terrible of eventualities, accompanies his plan.[42] Lear's fear over his daughters colluding and joining forces is exemplified when Goneril and Regan enter separately in 2.2; Ian McKellen's Lear (in Nunn's film production) spits and shakes with rage as he demands 'O, Regan, will you take her by the hand?' (2.2.383). Goneril and Regan's physical touch alone is enough to disconcert the king, as it foretells the actions that are to follow.

Analysis of the sister/sister relationships in *King Lear* and *The Taming of the Shrew* reveals a number of important details about this dynamic. Most

[42] Please see Chapter 4 for further discussion of death and instructive female bodies in *King Lear*.

importantly for this thesis, the relationships' influences on the plots of these two plays can be clearly identified. These two plays were specifically chosen for this chapter as they are not only from the differing critically-identified 'moulds' of 'tragedy' and 'comedy' but they also share key characteristics while presenting different angles of the sister/sister bond. The emotional feelings of jealousy and resentment are present, while also depicting (at points) an unbreakable bond, and sincerest love. Exploring these sibling relationships further demonstrates how influential these sibling bonds can be as they underpin action within the scenes.

Public and private spheres

Emotional restraints can also be identified in the brother/sister relationship, where the brother can take on certain facets of the fatherly role, including the established patriarchal concept of daughter/sister as commodity. As I have, in this section of the chapter, touched on the concept of commodification from the father's patriarchal command, the next part of this chapter will identify how this theme transfers over to the brother, and how such treatment affects the ways in which the plays develop.

In 1.2 of *Twelfth Night*, the newly-shipwrecked Viola tells the Captain that 'my brother he is in Elysium'; this statement is only her second thought upon discovering that she is landed in Illyria, suggesting the deep sibling ties and cares for her brother who, 'Perchance […] is not drown'd'.[43] Elysium was, in Classical mythology, the paradise of the afterlife; admission was reserved purely for renowned heroes such as Achilles and Aeneas, and mortals related to the

[43] William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.2.3. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

Classical gods. The connotations of Elysium here represent the high regard that Viola has for her brother, as being fit to reside in such a paradise alongside heroes and demi-gods. In the Renaissance, the concept of Elysium (or the Elysian Fields) evolved to admit not only chosen heroic or god-like individuals, but also offered space for righteous loved ones to continue their interests in mortal affairs. We learn, from Viola's grief, that the sibling relationship can, in its most positive state, elevate a lost sibling to the status of hero. Such hyperbolic expression draws attention to this relationship in a play where Viola's mourning for her brother is echoed in Olivia's grief for her lost brother and father. Both states of loss have an introductory function in *Twelfth Night*; these two key female characters are immediately defined by this sense of loss and grief for an apparently dead sibling. The first detail an audience member learns about Olivia comes four scenes before they actually meet her. Valentine reports to Orsino that is Olivia's intention that:

> The element itself, till seven years' heat,
> Shall not behold her face at ample view
> But, like a cloistress, she will veiled walk
> And water once a day her chamber round
> With eye-offending brine: all this to season
> A brother's dead love, which she would keep fresh
> And lasting in her sad remembrance. (1.1.25-31)

The power of this image lies predominantly in the description of 'a brother's dead love', where it is intimated that, although he is physically lost, her brother's love remains; this transcends the biological facet of siblinghood, hinting at the emotional connection, and at the love that binds Olivia and her brother *as* brother and sister. This love is dead on her brother's part, but Olivia the sister must actively work at the affection to keep it alive and fresh. The foregrounding of these sibling relationships demonstrates the affection held by the remaining sister for the lost brother, and highlights the importance of this dynamic to how the two

prominent female characters of *Twelfth Night* operate. The brother/sister sibling connection illuminates how alternative genderings of this sibling bond can have different effects.

To turn, first, to the idea of public and private spheres, in *Measure for Measure*, a double concept of sisterhood is presented. Isabella's belief in her role as a novice threatens the foundations of her consanguineous relationship with Claudio. This duality of sisterhood demonstrates a microcosmic and macrocosmic tension between Isabella's role in the wider community (as a novice) and her role in the family as a sister. An audience member may witness Isabella's ongoing struggles in negotiating and balancing her two roles; we watch her initial steps into religious sisterhood while she attempts to fulfil the demands of her blood bond with Claudio. One facet of sisterhood cannot, apparently, be experienced without due consideration of the alternative one; these two types of sister intermingle, almost inextricably, and sometimes we cannot identify where Isabella (Claudio's sister) stops, and Isabella the would-be-nun begins. Isabella is not, at this stage (prior to having taken Orders, of course) obligated to fulfil only one identity. In an analogically similar way, dramatic works have the potential to reflect more than one dramatic 'identity' or genre, rather than being restricted to one alone.

Certain themes within *Measure for Measure*, significantly identified as a 'problem play' by F.S. Boas, exemplify how plays can be successful works in performance without being slotted into a monogeneric category; rather, their plural nature is embraced through the coining of a new term. Identity politics more often than not restrict and inhibit growth, for the sake of an inexplicable anxiety to categorise those entities that do not yield up to traditional or perhaps

straightforward methods of classification.[44] Isabella's reluctance (or, perhaps, *refusal*) to embody just one type of sister can be read as an attempt to move against such essentialism as connoted through Bianca's demand, where just *being* a sister follows an imaginary set of sibling guidelines. Isabella has (prior to the play's beginning) made a conscious decision to become a nun; therefore she has stepped away from essentialist concepts of just *being*, and she is *becoming*, she is consciously and deliberately shaping her own identity. Isabella may not be the type of character with whom an audience associates rebellion and a refusal to conform: in becoming a religious sister, this rebellion can be masked by piety and dedication to God and the convent. The convent can be ironically identified as the metonymic site of both restriction and expression of Isabella's noncompliance.

A particularly vital force in *Measure for Measure* is the concept of public and private domains; furthermore, the idea of the private sphere is exaggerated and made even more private through the inclusion of the convent as a dramatic site and religious sisterhood. One of the most telling points of *Measure for Measure* is that Vienna as a state has reached the point where any attempt at distinction between the various spheres of activity and sites of assembly (such as the courtroom, the cloisters, ducal palace, and brothel) has become almost impossible. Lucio's successful, and disconcertingly *easy* attempt in 1.5 to gain access to the convent, epitomises this slippage between the public and private spheres particularly succinctly. Vienna is a state where lines between religion and prostitution have become either blurred, or completely permeable. Further,

[44] It could be ventured that this type of sisterly duality can be located in juxtaposition to Bianca's demand in *10 Things I Hate About You* – to which I referred earlier in the chapter – that Katherina would 'for one night forget that *you* are completely wretched and just be *my* sister?'

Angelo's endeavours to persuade Isabella that he might save Claudio's life if she gives herself to him physically suggests a lack of faith or belief in the idea of a truly *private* domain, both of the convent and Isabella's chaste body. The site of religious sisterhood, the convent, is the epitome of the private sphere: as we observe in 1.5 where Lucio calls on Isabella, the nuns keep their convent secure against the outside world, the macrocosm, the public sphere. This is most apparent in the first five lines of 1.5, where Isabella's and Francisca's conversation centres on the idea of restriction and privacy: Isabella explicates her questioning of the nuns' 'privileges', with 'I speak not as desiring more, / But rather wishing a more strict restraint / Upon the sisterhood'.[45] Isabella's desiring of a 'more strict restraint' conveys her devotion to the life of the religious sisterhood; an element of fear can also be recognised, where Isabella actively seeks to be contained within the convent and even subsumed by 'the sisterhood'. Through this exchange, a double concept of restraint can be identified: there is the physical locking away of Isabella within the convent; there is also the pervading sense that Isabella is being emotionally restrained by a self-inflicted barrier, segregating herself from the outside world.

The concept of restraint is a theme broached on several occasions in *Measure for Measure*: in 1.2 Claudio responds to Lucio's question, 'Whence comes this restraint?' (1.2.115) with 'From too much liberty, my Lucio. Liberty / As surfeit, is the father of much fast; / So every scope by the immoderate use / Turns to restraint' (1.2. 116 – 20). Friction is evident between the two concepts of restraint and liberty; this tension pervades the whole play, manifesting itself

[45] William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 1.5. 1-5. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

in expressions of the public and the private. This is symbolic: genre-oriented study can represent restraint, but the dramatic performance is more liberated in terms of the licence for directorial interpretation. In *Measure for Measure*, Lucio's entrance to the convent in 1.5 permits and even *enables* the meeting of the two 'types' of sisterhood; the religious is pitted against the blood bond, with the threat of execution for Claudio looming in the background. There is an intriguing contrast set up between the public (the bawdy house setting, populated by Mistress Overdone and Lucio in 1.2.) and the private (the nunnery), and Isabella's reluctance to transfer her sisterhood from the bounds of religion, over to her blood relations. Isabella occupies, as Francisca details, a liminal position: she operates within this strange realm of both public and private where, in such a closeted and cloistered space, she is the only one permitted to 'turn the key' and 'know [Lucio's] business of him' (1.5.3-9).

Isabella is presented with the power to unlock the door, and admit a person to the convent; her positions within both of these spheres imbue her with a unique type of influence. Invoking the discussion of doors and thresholds as presented in Chapter 1, with regard to Katherina in Zeffirelli's production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, stepping over a threshold is an indication that a boundary is being transgressed. In the case of Katherina, such thresholds and doors *physically* represent the stepping into different domains, and *symbolically* intimate liminal, restrictive terrains, demonstrating the restraint of female autonomy by wifehood.

Each of Isabella's 'personae' are associated with a certain domain: the microcosmic convent or the macrocosmic Vienna. These physical settings echo the type of person, or role, that Isabella is currently enacting. Even in a restrictive

sense, when Isabella returns to the wider Vienna from the convent, her attempts at keeping up her religious persona are thwarted and she is forced to relegate her ambition to become a nun. As the internal feelings of dramatic characters can be presented through pathetic fallacy, so the physical locations of *Measure for Measure* demonstrate an analogically similar mirroring function. Boundaries are broken down in this play: previously assumed identities and 'suitable' places for certain activities are undermined and interrogated, with thresholds blurring and crumbling. *Measure for Measure* represents a world in flux, with identities altering and changing, demonstrating their sheer mutability and fallibility. As a 'problem play', this 'category' implicates the allocation of genre, questioning the need for such boundaries, encouraging processes of flux and evolution.[46]

Isabella's refusal to surrender herself to, and even *embody*, the mores of the Renaissance sister (consanguineous, as opposed to religious) is evident throughout *Measure for Measure*: time and again audience members can identify this disinclination to sacrifice one model of sisterhood for another. There are two particularly relevant scenes that exemplify this crisis of sisterly identity: 2.4 where Angelo proposes his astoundingly hypocritical bribe to Isabella; and 3.1 where Isabella recounts the tale of this encounter to Claudio. To turn, first, to 2.4, the two distinct facets of Isabella's role as 'sister' are explicitly displayed, and she makes clear her religious reasons for refusing Angelo's offer. Isabella has to be coaxed, even heckled by Lucio, to engage with Angelo; on two occasions she more or less accepts his threats to execute Claudio, and turns to leave. Isabella makes a distinction between her human body and her devotional soul: to Angelo's demand 'Which had you rather, that the most just law / Now took your

[46] Of course, in my theoretical paradigm I contend that *all* of Shakespeare's plays incorporate elements of 'problem' plays. Please see my introduction for further analysis on this theme.

brother's life; or to redeem him, / Give up your body to such sweet uncleanness / As she that he hath stain'd?' she responds 'I had rather give my body than my soul' (2.4.52-6). This rather naïve distinction does not acknowledge the effects upon her soul if she were to surrender to Angelo's will.

After Isabella has made clear to Angelo that she would not surrender her virginity to him, Angelo bluntly states 'Then must your brother die' (2.4. 104). In responding to this, Isabella sites herself in the role of religious sister, declaring that ''twere the cheaper way. / Better it were a brother died at once, / Than that a sister, by redeeming him, / Should die for ever' (2.4.105-8). Isabella builds on this (to 21st-century ears, at least) cold and emotionless statement by declaring 'Then, Isabel live chaste, and brother, die: / More than our brother is our chastity' (2.4.183-84). This explicitly conveys how Isabella prizes her religious sisterhood above her familial obligation. Isabella's role as a religious sister indicates that she has chosen her fellow, non-sanguineous, sisters in the convent. There is a notable tension here between the present life and the everlasting one. Isabella prizes eternal life over the fleeting existence, once we have 'shuffled off this mortal coil', imagining the world evolving and developing in an analogically similar manner as I posit that plays are continually reimagined and reinvented.[47] This contests the perception of dramatic works as proceeding in a linear fashion (from means to ends), ending in seemingly appropriate monogeneric ways.

The first scene in which an audience member witnesses the sibling interaction between Isabella and Claudio, 3.1, assists in establishing further the parameters of this relationship, and foregrounding the key issues which drive the

[47] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 3.1.73. All further references will be to this edition and contained within the body of the text.

plot forwards. The patience with which Isabella endures the majority of Angelo's hypocritical suggestions alters when she comes face-to-face with her brother. Upon Claudio's suggestion that she take Angelo's offer, grounding his plea in his fears over dying, Isabella's rage becomes very apparent: 'O, you beast! / O faithless coward! O dishonest wretch! / Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice? / Is't not a kind of incest, to take life / From thine own sister's shame?' (3.1.135-39). This alteration in character can suggest that Isabella would have expected better conduct from Claudio; her rage, then, would be predominantly spurred on by disappointment, fear and his apparent wavering intent. Once again, the tensions between religious sister and biological sister surface; Isabella's refusal to 'lie with' Angelo results in his wounded ego, which further prompts his desire to see Claudio subject to the death penalty for his 'crime' of impregnating Juliet. Thus we see Isabella's religious sisterhood interfering with her blood bond, and her high morals not permitting her to bow to Angelo's perverse request. One must ask: would the genre of *Measure for Measure* have altered had Isabella not been faced with this dual sisterly identity, and had fulfilled Angelo's wishes? Hypothetically, would such a play have been classed as a 'comedy', due to Isabella's quick relinquishment of her virginity and morals? Or might she be driven, Lucrece-like, to death, had Angelo so disgraced her? This intimates a certain (and, more importantly, always-present) flexibility of genre: *Measure for Measure* is the ultimate 'problem play', where tensions between the 'comic' and 'tragic' elements of the play are foregrounded and, most importantly, accepted. In an analogically similar fashion, Isabella's conflicts as religious and consanguineous sister complicate her own perception of self as to where her loyalties should lie.

Where Isabella's religious convictions complicate her sisterly bond with Claudio, the public and private spheres are represented in different ways in *Twelfth Night*. The first that an audience member learns of Olivia in *Twelfth Night* is that, while she has not embraced the religious terrain of privacy like Isabella, she has secluded herself in a life of mourning and grief. This can be particularly identified in Helena Bonham Carter's representation of Olivia, in Trevor Nunn's 1996 film production of the play. Bonham Carter's character adopts the traditional 'trappings and the suits of woe' as defined by Hamlet (1.2.86) by dressing all in black, and keeping her face hidden with a veil:

Figure 15: *Twelfth Night*, dir. Trevor Nunn (London: BBC Films, 1996), 1.5.

Mark Rylance's presentation of Olivia in this scene, in the Shakespeare's Globe production (2012), also shows the character in deep mourning:

Figure 16: ***Twelfth Night*****, dir. Tim Carroll (London, Shakespeare's Globe, 2012), 1.5.**

Grief is presented in different ways in these two productions: in Nunn's version, Olivia is leaving the churchyard in a state of utter mourning; whereas in Carroll's production, the pathos is undercut by amusement as Mark Rylance's Olivia appears to float across the stage to the titters of the audience members. In 1.2. Viola relates her own grief to Olivia's despair in yearning to serve a woman who has also experienced the death of a sibling: the loss of their respective brothers binds Viola to Olivia in an emotional sense. Her decision to serve Orsino, upon learning from the Captain that Orsino desires Olivia, can be construed as predominantly driven by a desire to empathise with Olivia's situation.

The veil can suggest that Olivia's face (a public feature in the sense that it is on display to anyone that she comes across) is transitioning from the public to the private. Olivia's witty response to Cesario's 'text' stating she would be the 'cruell'st she alive, / if [she] will […] leave the world no copy' that she will leave 'diverse schedules' of her beauty is mocking the idea that her appearance is public property (1.5.174-178). Furthermore, to reference Butler's discussion of drag in *Gender Trouble*, Olivia symbolically moves from being a sister to being

a mourner by putting on this face-covering apparel. Her identity appears to be undergoing a noticeable change, or (in the least) to have a certain element of malleability or fluctuation. Olivia's act of donning the veil can be read, in hindsight, as more superficial: in then removing it during her conversing with Cesario, she hastily changes from mourner to wooer, in her attempted pursuit of him.

Figure 17: *Twelfth Night*, dir. Tim Carroll (London: Shakespeare's Globe, 2012), 1.5.

The flexibility of Olivia's attitude and public persona (in her shifting from mourner to wooer to bride) can be applied to dramatic works, again invoking the identity crisis previously discussed in reference to *Measure for Measure*. Generic works can oscillate between 'tragic' and 'comic' with little apparent effort. Olivia's exterior presentation of grief invokes the public and private spheres in relation to sibling bonds; Olivia *appears* obligated to display her (private) grief through material (essentially public) means. Interestingly in Carroll's production, as Olivia sees Cesario out, she begins to giggle and fidgets with the veil, playing with it and lifting it as if to put it over her face again but does not. The veil, which had previously been imbued with so much meaning

and grief, is now nothing more than a plaything in the presence of Olivia's new interest, Cesario. Indeed, as Rylance's Olivia frantically commands Malvolio to run after Cesario, she unceremoniously flings the now-crumpled veil onto the table in the centre of the stage.

The Captain's description of Olivia locates her explicitly in relation to male relatives: 'A virtuous maid, the daughter of a count / That died some twelvemonth since, her brother, / Who shortly also died, for whose dear love, / They say, she hath abjured the sight / And company of men' (1.2.36-41). Viola, in Trevor Nunn's film, sighs as she says 'O, that I served that lady' (1.2.42). The foregrounding of this scene communicates the influential place the loss of a brother has on this play: Viola has barely set foot on Illyria's shores when she learns of Olivia's loss, and makes the drastic decision to disguise herself as a man to serve Orsino. This scene in the play, furthermore, strongly recalls the founding premise of *The Merchant of Venice*, where Portia's love life is also governed by an absent male relative, again generating cross-genre links where *The Merchant of Venice* has, as E.L. Risden documents, sometimes been grouped with the problem plays.[48] While only an implicit, thematic link, this example still demonstrates that certain characteristics do not belong to one generic category alone.

'Two lovely berries moulded on one stem'

Plays such as *The Merchant of Venice* can be particularly appealing due to the fact that they are seemingly unclassifiable; the pursuit of a 'type' or 'destination'

[48] E.L. Risden, *Shakespeare and the Problem Play: Complex Forms, Crossed Genres and Moral Quandaries* (McFarland: Jefferson, CA, 2012), particularly pp. 15 – 42.

for such plays demonstrates how the theme of identity is so bound up in the consideration of genres. However, it is monogeneric analysis that has led to this label being invented and its continued use; *Measure for Measure*, as a further example, would not neatly fit into 'comic' or 'tragic' categories, so this pigeonhole was introduced as a receptacle for the 'rebellious' plays. Twinned siblings present an alternative intragenerational dynamic that has especially relevant consequences for the study of gender and dramatic genres through the theme of identity politics. Viola and Sebastian's strong emotional connection cannot be explicated purely on the basis that they are siblings; they are twins. This phenomenon has been debated for centuries; it has been proposed that twinned siblings are able to experience moments of psychic knowledge.[49] Furthermore, the physical representation of twins on the Renaissance stage was a performative affair: Farah Karim-Cooper in *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* reveals specific details as to how the illusion of twins (with unrelated actors) was created through stage make-up and apparel, and other important facts involved in the creation of visual identities on the early modern stage.[50] *The Duchess of Malfi* is a useful work to contrast with Shakespeare's representations of siblings; the Duchess's twin relationship with Ferdinand is staggeringly dysfunctional, and the rupture in their sibling dynamic (or assumed sibling 'bond', in addition to their relationships with the Cardinal) demonstrates,

[49] Alessandra Piontelli (also quoted shortly in this chapter) acknowledges that in rhetoric such as 'reputed' and 'would seem', extrapolating such details about the twin relationship is, for the most part, conjecture; the pervading sense that their knowledge and spiritual connection transcends ordinary human experience repeatedly hints at this possibility without any truly solid facts to verify this assumption. See Alessandra Piontelli, *Twins in the World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008).
[50] See Farah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007), especially pp. 1-22.

again, how close relationships are not automatic, biologically-determined entities, but are established through actions and behaviours.

Viola and Sebastian's relationship in *Twelfth Night* appears a more positive representation of the twin dynamic. In acknowledging Viola and Sebastian as twins, an audience member is engaging with, and believing in, the performance that is being presented to them. The use of twins can reveal some important details regarding on-stage construction of gender and how plays are constructed in the light of complex identities (as earlier discussed in relation to the futility of applying genres) and illusions. The cross-dressing element of *Twelfth Night* plays an integral part in consideration not only of the public and private realms of the play, but also of how gender is constructed on the early modern stage. Viola's integration of herself/Cesario within Orsino's court reveals some key aspects surrounding the construction of identity. The specific details of Viola's transformation and process of entering Orsino's court are not divulged; all that is focused on is that she *becomes* this character, this acquisition of a new identity. Indeed, this apparently seamless adoption of character is potentially identified as a gap that needs filling, by Trevor Nunn, in whose film there is the insertion of a visually-informative sequence representing Viola's female-male transition, epitomised by chest-binding and the transference of jewellery. The reasons *why* Nunn makes the decision to show this scene could perhaps be reflective of the modern film-viewer's demands; it is possible that twentieth-/twenty-first-century viewers demand realism; it is plausible that early modern audience members were more readily able to suspend disbelief than modern film audiences.

As Alessandra Piontelli observes, in *Twins in the World*,

> Human origins are also a source of curiosity to everyone, and twins, having shared the same pregnancy and interacted unseen in the womb, would seem to possess superior knowledge about where we all came from. Twins are reputed to be united by a special link, which resembles the fantasy of romantic love that it is possible to find a perfect "twin soul" or "twin mate" with whom to communicate without words.[51]

To refer to my discussion of emotional sisterly bonds in regard to Helena and Hermia, similar principles apply to the consanguineous twin relationship of Viola and Sebastian. Helena creates a metaphor for her close relationship with Hermia, detailing that they are 'Two lovely berries moulded on one stem; / So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart' (3.2. 209-11). Viola and Sebastian's relationship, in fact, is a case of two entities with one origin or stem. As such, this imagery relates to another discussion earlier in this thesis of Luce Irigaray's study of the plurality of female genitalia as opposed to opinions that dismiss the vagina as 'nothing', which contrasts with the singular male 'thing'.[52] This expression of plurality recalls the images used by Helena of the 'two berries on one stem'. The concept of duality references my consideration of Isabella's double identity, and exemplifies the plural forms that an 'identity' can take, so an entity is not simply 'a woman' or 'a comedy' but encapsulates numerous forms and straddles various 'categories' or genres without committing to simply one (participating in something rather than *belonging* to a definitive category).

The twin swap, and 'comic closure'[53]

While, for the purposes of this chapter I have addressed *Twelfth Night* as an example of the 'comic' form, such interrogation should be located within the

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[51] Alessandra Piontelli, *Twins in the World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), p.2.
[52] Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1985), p. 24.
[53] Danson, p. 75.

parameters of sustained critical cynicism in relation to monogeneric criticism. In *Twelfth Night*, audience members witness a rapid tying up of loose ends. The conflation of the male with the female twin, where the female Viola/Cesario is easily (and disconcertingly) replaced with the male Sebastian for the purposes of betrothal, can present contrasting viewpoints: the swap demonstrates a vital instability in the gendering of such characters, where a female twin can be so simply exchanged with her male counterpart. This dramatically presents the Butlerian theory that gender is a performance, a series of acts that result in the attribution of 'male' or 'female' (indeed, Trevor Nunn's production emphasises the outwards construction of gender by inserting a 'makeover' scene where Viola becomes Cesario early in the film).

Twelfth Night is a particularly important play with regard to the adoption and manipulation of gender roles, both in Viola's cross-dressing as Cesario and the twin swap at the close of the play. However, there is also a negative element to this character-switch: there are some truly dark elements to this action.[54] Olivia, a vulnerable and mourning woman, is completely hoodwinked by Viola's performance of Cesario; instead of acquainting her with the truth (the *whole* truth) on Sebastian's appearance in Illyria, no thought is extended towards how she might react to discovering that her assumed love is female, and that she is expected to marry Viola's brother, whom she has never before met. Interestingly, in Carroll's production, upon the revelation that Cesario is Viola and as she is embraced by Sebastian, Rylance's Olivia adjusts her ruff and floats to the far right edge of the stage, away from the reunion:

[54] Danson, p. 75.

Figure 18: *Twelfth Night*, dir. Tim Carroll (London: Shakespeare's Globe, 2012), 5.1.

Olivia's silence at this revelation is intriguing and ironically telling. Sebastian explains this turn of events:

> So comes it, lady, you have been mistook.
> But nature to her bias drew in that.
> You would have been contracted to a maid,
> Nor are you therein, by my life, deceived.
> You are betrothed both to a maid and man (5.1.253-57).

The ambiguous syntax used in the first line appears to blame Olivia: *she* has 'been mistook', rather than being outwardly deceived by Viola/Cesario's adept performance at 'being male'. Throughout the play, while Viola/Cesario has, as Orsino notes, 'said […] a thousand times /Thou never shouldst love woman like to me' (5.1.253-4), the truth has not been even *implied*, let alone fully revealed to her. That blame could be attributed to Olivia's perceptions is unjust. Sebastian quickly follows this light-hearted accusation with his stating (not proposing, not commanding, just *stating*) that she is now betrothed to him, 'both to a maid and man'. This image can be read in two ways: as Stanley Wells glosses in the Oxford Shakespeare edition of the play, 'maid and man' 'literally means "a man who is

still a virgin"'.[55] An alternative reading is that this transference is facilitated by the physical similarities between Viola and Sebastian. This results in the intimation that Olivia is (through Viola and Sebastian's optical illusion as twins, and striking aesthetic parallels) betrothed to a visual image, rather than the actual person or gender.

Trevor Nunn's production presents Olivia showing a surprised (and, possibly, titillated) expression at this turn of events, whereas it would certainly be a critically astute directorial move to display some emotional shock or outrage at how she has been deceived. This, again, raises the problems with critics such as Lawrence Danson identifying marriage as a 'happy ever after', fitting convention with which to tie up loose ends and restore social order. One cannot forget the unsatisfactory ending to *Twelfth Night* where the mistreatment of Malvolio undercuts the (already suspect) betrothal scene with darker notes and threats. Throughout the exchange in 5.1 Olivia remains tellingly silent: as discussed earlier, in relation to Cordelia, silence cannot be simply read as either passivity or acceptance. She finally speaks when the conversation turns to Malvolio: on Viola's mention of the 'notoriously abused' steward, Olivia engages with this theme, declaring that the Captain 'shall enlarge him' (5.1. 369, 272); she does not refer to her sudden betrothal to Sebastian. Following the revelation of the true cause of Malvolio's 'madness', Olivia then turns to the matter of Viola and Orsino's nuptials: 'My lord, so please you – these things further thought on – / To think me as well a sister as a wife, / One day shall crown th'alliance on't, so please you, / Here at my house and at my proper cost (5.1.307-10). Olivia foregrounds herself as a 'sister' to Orsino, rather than

[55] William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, ed. by Roger Warren and Stanley Wells (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p. 214.

immediately identifying herself as a wife to Sebastian, demonstrating participation in two types of familial relationships. She then turns her attention to the case of Malvolio, lavishing sympathy on the steward rather than directly addressing events in her own future. Helena Bonham Carter's Olivia demonstrates psychological transference through her sincerely empathetic approach to how Malvolio has been abused; the screen-grab illustrates how her sympathy is conveyed visually.

Figure 19: *Twelfth Night*, dir. Trevor Nunn (London: BBC Films, 1996), 5.1.

This theme of potential unhappiness in marriage is one that strongly links *Measure for Measure* and *Twelfth Night*: both newly-betrothed characters (Isabella and Olivia) remain silent when their impending nuptials are discussed. To turn to the closing scene of *Measure for Measure*, as a section to contrast with its correlating scene in *Twelfth Night*, the whole premise of the Duke's proposal to Isabella is based on Claudio's life being saved: 'If he be like your brother, for his sake / Is he pardon'd; and for your lovely sake / Give me your hand and say you will be mine' (5.1.488-90). While this is voiced in a conditional mode, there is no real sense that the Duke will be satisfied with a refusal from Isabella. This

manner of ending (expression of conclusion from a male character met by silence from a female one) is not the only example in Shakespeare's works: in *The Winter's Tale*, the wonderfully articulate Paulina is betrothed by Leontes to Camillo without her acceptance; and Hermione does not respond to any of Leontes's exclamations of joy in reunion with his wife. As discussed in my first chapter, Hermione's final words are addressed to Perdita alone, only recognising Leontes as Perdita's father and not as her husband. This is not love for love's sake: the Duke's proposal in *Measure for Measure* is grounded in loose threats, which strongly suggests that unless Isabella agrees, his pardon of Claudio will be removed. Indeed, in the case of Lucio, the Duke determines that when 'The nuptial [is] finish'd, /Let him be whipp'd and hang'd' (5.1.510-11). This explicitly marks betrothals and weddings as not as clear-cut as they would seem: as regards Lucio, marrying his 'punk' is a punishing and humiliating ritual which he must undergo before he is executed. The Duke's manipulation of Isabella's feelings for her brother carries a similar threat: it is a wedding or an execution.

Illusion is a key concept in *Twelfth Night*, and one which can illuminate the wider study of genre in Shakespeare. In 5.1 Orsino ponders over what he witnesses, musing 'One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons, / A natural perspective, that is and is not' (5.1.209-10). As the Duke identifies here, through his use of 'perspective', the twinned siblings are a natural phenomenon, an optical illusion capable of distorting and presenting an alternative status that both 'is' and 'is not'. As communicated in 2.2 of *Richard II*, 'Like perspectives, which, rightly gazed upon, / Show nothing but confusion: eyed awry, / Distinguish form'.[56] Isabella, in *Measure for Measure*, also identifies the fragile nature of

[56] William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 2.2.18-20. Although this particular example refers

perspective: in 2.4, in the midst of her exchange with Angelo, she responds to his cutting ‘Nay, women are frail too’ with ‘Ay, as the glasses where they view themselves, / Which are as easy broke as they make forms’ (2.4.123-5). This identification of the fragility of mirrors demonstrates how a certain perspective or perception can be disproved or shattered.

In *Twelfth Night*, to return to the twin siblings, Antonio ponders, demanding of Sebastian, ‘How have you made division of yourself? / An apple cleft in two is not more twin / Than these two creatures’ (5.1. 216-9). Once again Shakespeare employs images of fruit to convey homogeneity, whether appertaining to emotional or physical similarities. One possible explication of this decision could be to indicate further the naturalness of such close bonds, both in the cases of, for example, Sebastian and Viola, and Hermia and Helena. In these cases, blood connection is not a deciding factor, a biological imperative, but it is the performance and execution of such closeness that truly demonstrates an intimate bond. Essentialism (in the sense that sisters and brothers should operate in a certain manner due to their familial ties) is banished, here, and emotional bonds are prized as highly as consanguineous connections. Relating this to dramatic works, such seeming ‘natural categories’ and divisions as ‘comedy’ and ‘tragedy’ do not mesh well with performances of affinity and camaraderie: how, then, can static, essentialist categories such as ‘genre’ and ‘gender’ prevail in twenty-first century scholarship, when they are so clearly negated in the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries? Orsino’s expression ‘that is and is not’ can be related to the creation of judgements on the

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to a material ‘perspective’, a specific reflecting-glass in which forms are blurred (or, as David Crystal glosses, ‘a picture in which perspective is altered so as to appear distorted unless seen from a particular angle’) similar resonances relate well to the optical illusion of twins. (David Crystal and Ben Crystal, *Shakespeare’s Words* (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 325.)

characteristics and identities of plays, representing how attempts at locating *one* meaning, *one* identity in a play ultimately cater to a reductionist view. As I demonstrate in this thesis, critical texts and writers cannot always agree that a certain play does belong to the 'comic' category, making sure that the play both 'is and is not' representative of the 'comic' genre.

In my introduction, I referred to Foucault's *The Order of Things*, which puts forward possible reasons for some critics' need to categorise and promote order among entities that do not automatically lend themselves to such restrictive categories, such as twins and dramatic works. The representation of various sibling relationships in Shakespeare's works assists in banishing notions of essentialism, which analogically relate to genre-oriented study, in addition to interlinking with other problematic features of genre such as, in this case, the 'comic closure' of impending nuptials.[57] As Isabella's retort to Angelo in 2.4 suggests, perception is not necessarily a true reflection of what is 'there': glasses can distort and alter their reflections, meaning that everything is subjective; everything has multiple angles and sides, and not one true significance alone. I also discussed Sara Salih's innovative metaphor in responding to Judith Butler's assertion that there is no option to create a new gender 'wardrobe', but the contents can be altered to present new ways of 'doing' gender. There may, perhaps, be no option for complete overhaul of the wardrobe, but Salih's incorporation of 'ripped clothes and sequins represent […] attempts to "do" gender in subversive and unexpected ways'; ways in which can be applied to discussions of how genre can be 'done' or analysed in alternative manners.[58] In

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[57] Danson, p. 75.
[58] Sara Salih, *Judith Butler*, *Routledge Critical Thinkers* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 66.

pursuing analysis that focuses on intragenerational relationships (as opposed to *inter*generational ones), this chapter represents the addition of some further sequins and the start of some further ripping of parts of my ideological wardrobe from which ‘genre-d’ approaches are taken.

Chapter Four: 'Produce the bodies': death, genre and endings[1]

In her essay 'Representing Ophelia' (1990), Elaine Showalter asserts that '[Ophelia] appears in only five of [*Hamlet*'s] twenty scenes'.[2] What Showalter misses is Ophelia's final scene, where she is borne into the graveyard by a train of mourners, to be interred. Showalter's overlooking of Ophelia's appearance in this scene reflects a prominent critical tradition, where scholars fail to reach a consensus on the part that the body-in-death plays on the stage. This lack of recognition of Ophelia is, ironically, in sharp contrast to her role in the play. Ophelia is continually watched throughout *Hamlet*: Polonius 'looses' his daughter to Hamlet, primarily for Claudius and himself to watch the ensuing action, akin to some voyeuristic, narcissistic game.[3] Showalter acknowledges this element of surveillance of Polonius's daughter, but inexplicably shies away from looking at Ophelia in her sixth scene; her essential role in the graveyard scene is ultimately pivotal to the plot of *Hamlet*.

Recognition of Ophelia's final entrance is nowhere to be found in Showalter's writing; it can be surmised that the critic denies her role due to her lack of speech, of life, identifying a problem with how female corporeality is perceived on the stage.[4] Showalter's statement demonstrates the presence of short-sighted disregard for the dead female body in critical texts in addition

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[1] William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 5.3.232. All further references will be to this edition and will be contained in the body of the text.
[2] Elaine Showalter, 'Representing Ophelia: women, madness, and the responsibilities of feminist criticism', in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. by Geoffrey H. Hartman and Patricia Parker (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 77-94 (p. 78).
[3] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 2.2.168.
[4] Corporeality, in a wider sense, is not a specifically gendered issue; however, for my research purposes, I focus on the dead *female* body, while simultaneously not asserting that *male* corpses are not subject to similar processes of analysis.

to directorial decisions. Referring to these directorial decisions also establishes a foundation for a question integral to this chapter: where do critics make the distinction between the bodily end and the *performative* end? The bodily end occurs when the corporeal self is eliminated through death; it has been broken down; it has expired. Can the same be said of the performative end?

The first part of this chapter focuses on *King Lear*, *Hamlet* and *King John* with reference to Henry VI's part in *Richard III*, discussing the instructive dead body, and its effect on the construction of the plays where it influences actions around it. Death is not the performative end for Ophelia, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia or Queen Elinor. The second part of the chapter considers plays' endings, interrogating what I term a 'linear fashion' of analysis where, in foundationalist processes, 'means' always result in 'ends'. In discussing the potency of selected endings in relation to cyclical processes of analysis and dramatic use of time, I explore the dramatic significance of means-and-ends with specific reference to *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, and *The Winter's Tale*. Throughout this chapter, comparisons are drawn with other plays where appropriate. Analysis of examples from all five of the predominant critical genres ('comedy', 'tragedy', 'history', 'romance' and problem plays) demonstrates how the endings of selected plays are at odds with the idea that their singular genres appear to be cemented by the ways in which they conclude. Through demonstrating that constitutive acts form dramatic *wholes*, I specifically examine the relationship between means and ends to expose the fallibility of

genre as a classificatory system of analysis, using female characters as catalytic forces.

The influence of dead female characters in *King Lear* is presented in a different manner to that of Ophelia in *Hamlet*. In 5.3 of the play, the Duke of Albany commands: 'produce the bodies, be they alive or dead' (5.3.232), referring to his wife Goneril, and her sister, Regan. The Gentleman's full report that the smoking blade 'came even from the heart of – O, she's dead! […] Your lady, sir, your lady; and her sister / By her is poisoned' (5.3.225-6), makes it clear to Albany that Goneril 'slew herself' (5.3. 246). In the RSC *Complete Works*, Albany's command is immediately followed by the stage direction '*Goneril and Regan's bodies brought out*', resulting in a final scene comprised almost entirely of death.

In Trevor Nunn's film production of *King Lear* (2008) the bodies of Goneril and Regan are diagonally positioned on the stage, drawing audience members' attention to the specific point of the dead King and his youngest daughter.[5] This production differs from many stage performances where, in the theatre, perhaps five hundred audience members can each have a different perspective on the scene's events, depending on their seating, and where their gaze and concentration are focused.[6] Michael Bristol states that 'a dead body is an instructive object'.[7] 'Instructive' can be interpreted in two ways: first, that the body reveals important information about *that* body itself. Or, second,

[5] *King Lear*, dir. Trevor Nunn (Royal Shakespeare Company: Channel Four Television, 2009).
[6] In differentiating between the media of watching a Shakespearean play as a theatrical event, and film (on DVD, through a television set), I wish to illustrate how the relationship between the viewer/audience and the characters is altered through different viewing perspectives and different media.
[7] Michael Bristol, *Carnival and Theatre: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge, 1985), p. 187.

that the body prompts and influences actions around it; just as the positioning of Goneril and Regan's bodies encourages the audience's gaze to fall on Lear and Cordelia. Nunn's filmic production directs the audience to look on this bloody sight alone; the gaze is instructed, through the use of the stretchers upon which Goneril and Regan are presented:

Figure 20: *King Lear*, dir. Trevor Nunn (London: Channel 4, 2008), 5.3.

Michael Grandage's stage production of *King Lear* (2010; starring Derek Jacobi) entirely omits not only Albany's command, but also the ensuing stage direction, and the re-presentation of Goneril and Regan to conclude their roles in the play. What might have warranted such a cut? Does an audience feel less disturbed through the omission of bringing out two more inert female bodies? Sam Mendes's *Lear* (2014; with Simon Russell Beale as the eponymous character) expels the ambiguity surrounding Goneril's death, and the removal and consequent re-presentation of the dead sisters. Anna Maxwell Martin's Regan remains on-stage (convulsing under the centre-stage table) as she dies from the poison, and Kate Fleetwood's Goneril sits at the table and slits her own throat. This dramatic decision intensifies the grotesque

elements of the sisters' deaths, building up the number of dead bodies on the stage. My reference to Grandage's production illustrates the complexities of representing the female body in death. As I asked earlier, where does the distinction between the bodily and the performative end lie? Does the intimation of metaphorical resurrection offered at the close of *King Lear*, for example, where Albany recruits Edgar as his right-hand man to rebuild the broken England, leave the audience with the impression of an appropriate ending?

The sense of catharsis potentially provided by the ending of *King Lear* can be related to Aristotle's use of this term in his *Poetics* (335BCE); in Ancient Greek usage, 'catharsis' meant the purification or the cleansing of the soul in order to progress. The range of emotions experienced in 'tragedies' (the plays wherein Aristotle notes the cathartic properties most often) involves a breakdown including great pain or an overwhelming sense of pity or sorrow. Catharsis, then, is a process by which audience members acknowledge the events of the play, while the actions simultaneously demand purgation, often epitomised through the obliteration of everyone involved in the action. To this end, Aristotle's thesis in *The Nichomachean Ethics* locates the responsibility of performing actions and (by implication) the power of restoring 'order' within the individual. He notes that that 'a human being is a first principle of his actions as he is of his children'; the intricate linking of the person with their actions (indeed, likening them to children) makes clear the concept of origin and individual responsibility.[8]

[8] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by H. Rackham (London: Heinemann, 1926). III. v (p. 45).

To use the idea conveyed through the very title of *All's Well That Ends Well*, do endings, by their very function, rectify any wrongdoings that have taken place in the course of the play? James L. Calderwood writes in *Shakespeare and the Denial of Death* (1987) that

> We look in vain, then, for closures of form and meaning, and cathartic consolations. The irresolution and Manichean conflict that characterizes for Murray Krieger the "tragic vision" are not reassuringly contained by the austerity of tragic form but burst through it and persevere to the end. Or, rather, to the un-end – because in a sense the play has not ended but merely stopped. When Lear enters with Cordelia, Kent's anguished "Is this the promised end?" underscores the failure of the play to fulfil its implicit promise of a just and satisfying conclusion.[9]

Calderwood, reminiscent of F.S. Boas here in his discussion of the failure of the play to deliver a 'satisfying conclusion', touches on how *King Lear* not only does not provide any sense of a 'just' ending, but hardly 'ends' at all (Calderwood prefers the term 'stopped', which is especially relevant for this chapter). Calderwood's recognition of no sense of an ending, merely a stopping, highlights what I argue here, that there are inherent problems in using plays' endings to solidify monogeneric categorisation.

Methodologically, works by Immanuel Kant, Carol Rutter and Julia Kristeva inform this chapter. Kant interrogated the relationship between means and ends, motivations and actions; as he writes, 'the moral *worth* of an action does not depend on the result expected from it, and so too does not depend on any principle of action that needs to borrow its motive from this expected result'.[10] Thus the means of a process of creation are more significant, in a moral sense, than the result or the *end* itself; he continues,

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[9] James L. Calderwood, *Shakespeare and the Denial of Death* (Amherst, MA: U of Massachusetts P, 1987), p. 164.
[10] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. by H.J. Paton (London: Hutchinson, 1951), p. 66 (my italics).

stating that the 'true' function of duty 'must be to produce a *will* which is *good*, not as a *means* to some further end, but *in itself*'.[11] This appertains to Kant's pronouncements on the obligations of duty; however, the sentiment that the means should be appreciated for their own worth, not as a necessary passage on to an end is particularly relevant through acknowledgement of the dramatic journeys involved in the constitution of a play. Similarly pertinent is Kant's instruction to 'Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end'.[12] This statement engages with the idea of human consciousness, alongside appreciating the processes that are involved in constituting an end; multivalent forces (including the characters within the plays) do necessarily contribute to such constructions of dramatic works. Examples from Shakespeare's works that can be explicitly related to Kant include the orchestration of the 'Love Trial' in *King Lear*, where the 'true function' of duty is dramatised through Cordelia's refusal to participate in Lear's game.

The relationship between means and ends has particular relevance with regard to my use of a Butlerian framework to analyse Shakespeare's works. The 'process[es] of becoming', as Julia Kristeva termed the dynamic constituting of identities, can be reconciled with the exploration of 'means', as opposed to the focus on the end result alone.[13] This Butlerian approach highlights the performative aspect of the constitution of identity. Indeed,

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[11] Kant, p. 62.

[12] Harry Van der Linden, *Kantian Ethics and Socialism* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1988), p. 29.

[13] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia U P, 1982), p. 3.

‘process’ can be identified as synonymous with ‘means’, further clarifying the link with means and ends with Butler’s treatise on constituting gender. Maintaining focus on the deterministic *end* (whether ‘female’, in the instance of gender, or ‘comedy’, with reference to genre) removes all sense of dynamism and imposes a problematic stasis upon dramatic constructions.

‘The thing itself’[14]

Before I move on to consider the impact of the female body on the generic make-up of the plays in this chapter, it is important, first, to consider that body, as Lear determines it, ‘the thing itself’ (3.4.88), alongside some conflicting critical opinions. The (specifically female) character-as-corpse poses many a representational problem, intensifying critical uncertainties regarding the boy-actor quandary as discussed in my introduction; an audience member or viewer has to move past the obvious live-actor/dead-character paradox, focusing, instead, on the performance of death that is witnessed. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the representational ‘issues’ caught up in the boy-player/female character necessarily come under consideration through analysis of the female corpse. In focusing on the problems of representation, critics become, like Showalter, blinkered to the space of pure performance that the character-as-cadaver inhabits, unable to reconcile Ophelia’s participation in a scene, whether as a dead or alive entity, as equally important or instructive.

Carol Rutter, in her discussion of the dead female body, states that ‘Speechless, motionless, [the character is] reduced by death from somebody

[14]William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 3.4.88.

to *the* body'.[15] However, despite her own italics, Rutter fails to pursue the important implications of the powerful transition that she herself identifies: 'reduced […] from somebody to *the* body'. The alteration of the ambiguous *some*body to the specific, subject-status of the body grants instructive power to the body concerned; the unspecified, indeterminate 'some' is negated, in death, where the body rises to such a state of prominence that it is accordingly referred to as the body. This indicates the instructive potential of the body. The 'tragic hero' is no longer the centre of the dramatic universe; events have progressed with the focus shifting so that the body (Cordelia or Ophelia) now occupies the central position in the dramatic picture.

In an analogical sense, just as plays enact their very identities without the audience perhaps being aware of this phenomenon, so the body-on-stage acts even when it is not *seen* to act. To remain with Rutter for a moment longer, she writes that:

> The actorly body who plays dead, works, in performance, at the margin […] the corpse, the actor's body occupies a theatrical space of pure performance where it has most to play when it has least to act.[16]

Rutter makes clear the distinction between 'playing' and 'acting', while conveniently side-stepping the problems associated with biological essentialism: she focuses, simply, on the non-gendered 'actorly body'. The indolent Gravedigger in *Hamlet* defines Ophelia-as-corpse as 'One that was a woman, sir', explicating that, 'rest her soul, she's dead' (5.1.103). Throughout this chapter, I will refrain from referring to characters' corpses *as* 'corpses': audiences and readers *know* they are dead; no physical switch has

[15] Rutter, p. 2.
[16] Rutter, p. 2.

been implemented where 'Ophelia' becomes reconstituted, in dramatic terms, as 'Ophelia's *body*'. No phenomenological event has taken place where Ophelia's very *species* has altered.

The body is the bearer of meanings; such meanings are not rendered obsolete, necessarily dissolved or even wholly rewritten in death. Cordelia's *body*, for example, remains a site of action, whether we see it as a redemptive object or a corpse decaying before our eyes; her transgression in the 'Love Trial' scene remains written on her body. Cordelia, even in death, forces Lear to recall her paradoxical speaking of nothing when he looks on her body.[17] As Cordelia is re-presented on the stage, her body brings with it the reminders of her own actions; her unwillingness to play Lear's game that proved to be vital as the play progressed. The mirror that Lear calls for is, in fact, already present; he can see his own mistakes and miscalculations on the dead body of his daughter. Rutter writes that:

> Usually, male death ends the story as the dead exit heroizes (sometimes problematically) the corpse. Women, however, mostly die offstage, accessories, both "adjunct" and "means to" heroic male dying.[18]

This raises some problematic questions; Rutter's reference to women as 'accessories' in male deaths trivialises a complex process. Additionally, the terms that Rutter uses can be seen as informed by Kantian means-and-ends philosophies. The concept, intimated by Rutter, that women are 'means to' the male death scenario is both appealing in itself and also somewhat disconcerting when we read it in the light of 'adjunct'. It is suggested, here, that women contribute to the death of the male character, as 'means'. Using

[17] Rutter, p. 2.
[18] Rutter, p. 4.

this term also complicates Rutter's assertion that female deaths are merely 'adjunct' to male demises; can one be both a catalytic presence and adjunct? Rutter's slightly contradictory approach to the on-stage female body again manifests itself in her identification of Cordelia as a 'prop': '[Cordelia] is a prop […] she's a theatre prop, "property" – belonging to – Lear's performance'.[19] This idea that Cordelia is a commodity (in that in death, as in her life, she belongs to Lear, is bound by the familial bond which he rejected in the first act) is both troubling and perhaps even trivialises the scene.

'All tragedies are finish'd by a death'[20]

It is well documented that, in Greek 'tragedies', an onstage death is never witnessed.[21] For the sake of propriety, and simultaneously bowing to technical limitations, the murder itself (where applicable) was enacted off stage, with the body sometimes brought in later as 'proof'. This custom was omitted in Shakespeare's plays: we *see* the deaths of, for example, Lear, Macbeth, Othello, and Hamlet; repeatedly, an audience witnesses the eponymous character's death, whereas other characters (such as Falstaff in *Henry V* and Gloucester in *King Lear*) expire offstage, with their deaths later reported. Gloucester also provides an intriguing example in that the blinding scene is one of the most graphic, and significantly *onstage*, displays of violence in Shakespeare's works. Lavinia, for example, in the notoriously gruesome *Titus Andronicus*, is mutilated offstage. Is death, then, an

[19] Rutter, p. 16.
[20] George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, in *The Major Works*, ed. by Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 373-880 (3, 9, 66). While *Don Juan* is a satirical work, the premises surrounding 'comedy' and 'tragedy' are useful to refer to as concise sentiments.
[21] See John Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (Stanford, CA; Stanford UP, 1980), pp. 65-72.

‘appropriate’ ending to mark out a play as a ‘tragedy’, even if the deaths do not occur onstage? As I discussed in Chapter 1, the fact that audiences do not witness the ‘comic resolution’ provided through weddings makes their classification as ‘comedies’ more tenuous. If death has been cited as a means of ending the ‘tragedies’ (including the deaths of the eponymous characters, but also other characters), how can death and marriage be similarly potent as endings when we see one but not the other? We witness deaths, but not weddings. Michael Neill writes that, for Shakespeare’s contemporaries, ‘“Death … *was* tragedy” and its mere presence in the catastrophe was sufficient to identify it as belonging to the tragic kind, just as a comedy was typically marked by its nuptial endings’.[22] The forceful and conclusive linking of death with ‘tragedy’ by Neill, exemplifies this static form of analysis, where dramatic features and dramatic genres are conflated so that one is inextricably associated with the other.

Kant’s thesis on the hypothetical imperative is applicable to the ‘Love Trial’ scene in *King Lear*: ‘To tell the truth for the sake of duty is something entirely different from doing so out of concern for inconvenient results’.[23] Kant relates this to the concern for ‘inconvenient results’ which challenge the means-and-ends theory: this relates particularly well to Cordelia’s sense of duty (‘I / return those duties back as are right fit’ (1.1.99-100)) which helps expose the ‘Love Trial’ scene as part of the means which contribute towards the end, the ending of *King Lear*, the death of Lear. The body functions as a reminder, further complicating the idea of death being the end: even in death, the female characters’ bodies play on. As Lear mourns over the body of

[22] Neill, p. 30.
[23] Kant, p. 68.

Cordelia, he recalls the first act of the play: ‘her voice was ever soft, gentle and low / an excellent thing in woman’ (5.3.270-1). To reference Edmund in *King Lear*, the hypothetical wheel has truly come full circle: Lear’s focus on Cordelia’s voice, her means of transgression, recalls the ‘Love Trial’ where all went catastrophically wrong for Lear, and the entire action of the play was initiated. In Nunn’s *King Lear*, the play-text for the final scene is altered, further marking out Cordelia as a commodity: in the F text, Albany declares ‘the Gods defend her’ (5.3.63); whereas in Nunn’s production, he wishes ‘the Gods defend them’. Despite Cordelia’s attempts at autonomy, even in death, productions seemingly have to link Lear and Cordelia. Nunn’s directorial decisions help both to foreground issues of female power and, problematically, to reinforce the notion that Cordelia is inextricably connected to Lear even in death.[24]

In contrast with Nunn’s production, Richard Eyre’s film production of *King Lear* (1998) presents an interesting interpretation of Goneril and Regan’s bodies interacting, in a dramatic and visual sense, with that of Cordelia.[25] On Albany’s command to produce the bodies, the two eldest daughters are brought in upon a wheeled, elevated table; when Ian Holm’s Lear enters with the body of Cordelia, he places her on this same platform. When Lear dies, he falls on this table, too. The final image that a viewer sees is this very neat but simultaneously disturbing picture of Lear and Cordelia’s

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[24] To turn briefly to *Othello*, the manner in which female characters die is an indication of the patriarchal society in which they live: Desdemona, although initially deemed ‘A *maiden* never bold; / Of spirit so still and quiet’ (1.3.105-6) uses her voice in a manner in which we can cite her as responsible for Othello’s madness; she is smothered to quieten this mode of transgression.

[25] *King Lear*, dir. Richard Eyre (BBC, 1998).

bodies in full view, but a sheet covering Goneril's and Regan's with only the lower part of their sprawled legs visible.

Figure 21: ***King Lear*, dir. Richard Eyre (London: BBC, 1998), 5.3.**

This mode of 'producing the bodies' results in a cumulative effect of bodies piled up on the platform: in a way, this conflates the male and the female corpses while simultaneously posing interesting dilemmas regarding their rather unceremonious 'dumping together'. Lear and Cordelia are the two characters that face upwards, while Goneril and Regan are out of view, for the most part, being covered with the dirty sheet. Goneril and Regan are first on the table, indicating the order of deaths. Cordelia is then placed on this platform, followed by Lear.

Tony Davenall's 1988 production, with Patrick Magee as Lear, re-presents Goneril and Regan for a fleeting moment: their bodies are brought on stage on a hurdle, Edgar touches both of them, then on Albany's instruction to 'cover their faces', the two daughters are taken off stage. The momentary glimpse of their bodies perhaps communicates that while their deaths must be acknowledged, they are not integral to the final scene;

conversely, while Grandage and Brook's directorial decision not to present the bodies could be due to any of several factors, such as lack of space on the stage, it is a deliberate directorial decision, and they are visible by their absences.

Figure 22: *King Lear*, dir. Tony Davenall (London: Thames Television, 1988), 5.3.

The case for adhering to the play-text (as Trevor Nunn's production does) is that the final image of *King Lear* is one of destruction; the royal line is obliterated. We see the expired king, the hanged daughter, another daughter stabbed by her own hand and her sister 'by her is poison'd' (5.3.227). Aristotle suggests that the value of tragedy predominantly lay in achieving catharsis in watching it, through aesthetic distance (the knowledge that what is being performed is artificial) and purifying emotions. The all-female death scene (prior to Lear's death) that confronts audience members can suggest little in the way of cathartic redemption for the characters and the country. Of course, Edmund is in the process of dying at this moment; when I refer to the all-female death, it is specifically invoking the female character-as-corpse, expired, and deceased; as Albany states of Edmund's death, 'that's but a trifle

here' (5.3.312). However, perhaps the desecration of the royal court due to poor personal and political decisions serves as the purification of England (a national catharsis) which Albany and Edgar may work to restore.

The directorial decisions of both Grandage and Brook prevent the audience viewing such a spectacle. Or does the lack of this re-presentation *protect* the audience from such a scene of destruction? For nearly 200 years it was Nahum Tate's *King Lear* that was presented on the stage, complete with its 'happy ending' that resulted in Lear outliving his 'tragic' end, and Cordelia and Edgar ruling England together. In the construction of the play, James Calderwood exemplifies the fine line between a 'satisfying conclusion' and an unsatisfying one:

> Earlier in the scene, with Edgar triumphant over Edmund, the evil daughters dead, and Lear and Cordelia about to be rescued, the Apollonian form of tragedy has seemed on the verge of enclosing the Dionysiac turmoil. […] But now the playwright ostentatiously subverts his generic form. Edmund's wheel of fulfilling form becomes Lear's wheel of fire: the theatrical screw is given another twist. Lear stumbles on stage with Cordelia, and we are worse than e'er we were.[26]

Calderwood succinctly encapsulates the potential for a 'good' ending prior to Lear's entrance with the dead Cordelia; the 'bad' characters are dead or near to death, and for a moment, as the Gentlemen disappear from the stage to rescue the king and his youngest daughter, hope is still possible. It is this hope that Lear so desperately clings to, as he imagines Cordelia's breath on a mirror and stirring a feather; but, as Calderwood states, Shakespeare 'subverts the generic form', removing any possibility of hope or cathartic resolution. Hope, though, can be a contested concept. I agree with Emma L. E. Rees, who reads

[26] Calderwood, pp. 164-5.

'Lear's hopes for a happy future "i'th' cage" as poignant in their naivety', noting that 'Cristina Alfar ascribes a more sinister motivation to them, arguing that "Lear looks forward to his period of imprisonment with Cordelia as an interval during which he owns his daughter completely"'.[27] Having been trapped in a nightmarish scenario in which his two elder daughters sought his death and uprooted his kingdom, Lear's desire for a peaceful confinement with Cordelia (evident even in 1.1. where he reveals that he 'thought to set [his] rest / On her kind nursery'), thankful for her forgiveness, seems a real (albeit dreamlike) possibility (1.1.17-18). His attempts at ownership of Cordelia failed completely in the first Act of the play.

As we see through such directorial decisions as Grandage's and Brook's, the omission of the re-presentation of Goneril and Regan's bodies generates a multitude of questions.[28] The lack of re-presentation of Goneril and Regan's bodies deprives audience members of a sense of justice, or as Aristotle terms it 'proportionate reciprocity': 'The very existence of the state depends on proportionate reciprocity, for men demand that they shall be able to requite evil with evil – if they cannot, they feel they are in the position of slaves'.[29] Audiences cannot 'requite evil with evil' through this directorial action; in turn, this may question the moral integrity of the play, where the

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[27] Emma L. E. Rees, 'Cordelia's Can't: Rhetorics of Reticence and (Dis)ease in *King Lear*', in *Rhetorics of Bodily Disease and Health in Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. by Jennifer C. Vaught (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 105-18 (p. 115).

[28] This visible absence is complicated in the sense that, if an audience had not *read King Lear* prior to watching Grandage's production, they might assume that Goneril and Regan's bodies are simply not presented whatsoever, and they might not realise that this cut has indeed been made. While my research focus is, primarily, upon the play-as-performed, the textual cuts that are made *do* have important ramifications for how the play is perceived, and such cuts need to be considered. It is vital to keep the balance correct between textual and performance analysis in these instances. Performance analysis is foregrounded, but textual analysis contributes to this perception of visible absence.

[29] Aristotle*, The Nicomachean Ethics*, III.iii, p. 139, V.v. p. 281.

unnecessary brutalising of Gloucester is not a response to any evil, but is purely vindictive torture. Goneril and Regan's deaths are not merely a gruesome spectacle to reflect the destruction at the close of the play, but bear symbolic significance too.

Tate's *History of King Lear* (1681) makes two prominent alterations to Shakespeare's *King Lear* as we know it: first, Edgar and Cordelia are in love; and (most notably for this chapter) Cordelia and Lear do not die at the close of the play. The first scene between Edgar and Cordelia, where an audience is made aware of their love, is slotted in after the scene corresponding to the 'Love Trial' scene, which does not differ significantly from Shakespeare's; this immediately sets up a contrast between the plots of Goneril and Regan following Shakespeare's 'Love Trial'. In 5.6, the scene is set with the direction of '*A Prison: Lear asleep, with his head on Cordelia's lap*'; this can be usefully contrasted with the final scene in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, where Lear enters with the dead Cordelia in his arms.[30] An audience member witnesses an alternative physical balance of power and passivity, here, with Lear prostrate in Cordelia's (living) presence; the balance oscillates from Lear with his head on Cordelia's lap, to Lear carrying his dead daughter.

This was the *Lear* that prevailed on the stage for over 150 years. As Peter Womack documents, from 1680-81 'it was [Tate's] adaptation, or in further adaptations of it, that the play was always performed until Macready went back to a (heavily cut) Shakespearian text in 1838'.[31] 'During this time,

[30] Nahum Tate, *The History of King Lear*, in Sandra Clark (ed.), *Shakespeare Made Fit: Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare* (London: Everyman, 1997), pp. 291-374 (5.6.1). All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.
[31] Peter Womack, 'Secularizing *King Lear*: Shakespeare, Tate and the Sacred', *Shakespeare Survey* (2002) vol. 55, 96 – 105 (p.96).

Lear appeared on the English stage without the Fool, with a happy ending, and usually with an added love story leading to the marriage of Edgar and Cordelia'.[32] Womack adds that 'It was Tate's version that established itself as a stock play in the early eighteenth century; it was Tate's *King Lear* that Garrick took up in 1742 and made into his greatest role'.[33] Contextually, and as Jonathan Bate observes in his feature for the programme of Mendes's *Lear* (2014), 'the Lear of Shakespeare could indeed not be acted. The madness of George III meant that the London theatre managers kept this play about a deranged old king off the stage, for fear of offending the court'.[34] This contextual factor could be one reason why *Lear* was not performed in its original Shakespearean form; the 'happy ending' provided by Tate's version may have been more appealing than the scene comprised of death presented by Shakespeare's *Lear*.

A further significant difference in Tate's *King Lear* is that Lear is capable of recognising Cordelia's intentions in speaking her mind: in 5.6, Lear defends Cordelia from the executioners, stating ''Tis my *Cordelia*, my true pious Daughter' (5.6.32), thus avoiding the death and consequent body-as-reminder play by Cordelia. Lear's final lines proceed thus:

> Thou, Kent and I, retir'd to some cool Cell
> Will gently pass our short reserves of Time
> In calm reflection on our Fortunes past,
> Cheer'd with relation of the prosperous Reign
> Of this celestial Pair; Thus our Remains
> Shall in an even Course of Thought be past,
> Enjoy the present Hour, nor fear the Last. (5.6.148-54)

[32] Womack, p. 96.
[33] Womack, p. 96.
[34] Jonathan Bate, 'The History of a Whole Evil Time', Programme for *King Lear*, National Theatre (2014).

This speech is remarkably optimistic, with abounding rhetoric of enjoying the present time, in such images as 'calm reflection', 'enjoy the present hour', and 'gently pass[ing] short reserves of time'; it partially calls to mind the lines from *Twelfth Night*, discussed in Chapter 1, where 'present mirth hath present laughter'.[35] There is no consideration of a future as bleak as Shakespeare's play-text, merely a potentially naïve focus on the immediate situation.

The predominant difference in the instructive potential in Shakespeare's text is that Goneril and Regan followed Lear's command to '*say* which of you doth love us most'; Cordelia, conversely, was banished for refusing to indulge the egoistic 'game' as merely 'saying' would not suffice (1.1.51). As Lear comes to recognise, his motives for constructing the 'Love Trial' may not have been for the benefit of his kingdom, and he inevitably, and rapidly, comes to regret his banishment of his youngest daughter. Cordelia's body prompts him the most, then, by having his neglect and rejection written on her very physicality; her corporeal self, that 'face of hers' (1.1.266) that Lear professes he will never see again, is a tangible and pathos-riddled *reminder.* As Lear states, had Cordelia been alive, 'it is a chance which does redeem all sorrows' (5.3.275); her life (following his remarkably early recognition that 'I did her wrong') would have been the balm to soothe all previous wrongdoings and woes (1.5.17). Rees notes that 'That absence, that catalytic, catastrophic (non-)power which so enraged Lear in the opening Act is here redefined by him as he caresses her dead body'.[36] Recalling Rutter's statement earlier in this chapter on Cordelia being merely a 'theatre

[35] William Shakespeare *Twelfth Night*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 2.3.49.
[36] Rees, p. 115.

prop, […] belonging to Lear's performance', this sentiment is proven wrong by the utter engagement and hope invested in Cordelia at this point in the play.[37] Cordelia does not simply exist, limp and puppet-like to be acted around; she is a vital component of this scene. She forces Lear to, in Rees's words, 'redefine' her earlier actions (and, simultaneously, his response and actions) as he cradles her body. Her lack of response in not misting the mirror or moving the feather is a performance that contributes significantly to this scene; she truly 'has the most to play when [she] has least to act'.[38]

The image of that horror?

In the final scene of *King Lear*, Kent demands 'is this the promised end?' (5.3.261), to which Edgar replies 'or image of that horror?' (5.3.262). Edgar's concept of the 'image of that horror' reminds us, at this desperate point in the play, of the theatricality inherent in this presentation of death and destruction, and calls to mind Hamlet's assertion that the theatre, after all, 'is to hold as 'twere the / mirror up to nature' (3.2.15-6). The idea of the mirror, however, has the power to reflect or refract the image which it presents; this is emphasised further when, earlier in the scene, Lear asks for a 'looking glass' (5.3.259) upon which his happiness and her very life depend: 'If that her breath will mist or stain the stone, / Why then she lives' (5.3.260-1). As discussed in Chapter 3, mirrored reflections can present an alternative perception or illusion of what is actually 'there'. As Shakespearean 'tragedies' are often characterised by critics as featuring a return-to-social-order motif at

[37] Rutter, p. 16.
[38] Rutter, p. 2.

the close, there is the idea that hope is always there, even in death.[39] Hope is not always a shiny, all-restoring force, however, particularly when one considers the painful element of hope in Pandora's Box, where Elpis, the spirit of hope, provides the gods' 'last laugh'. It is the final emotion to which doomed human beings futilely cling.

The relationship between life and death is afforded great prominence in *King Lear* as a thematic feature of the play. In the first scene alone, Lear cites death as the ultimate end-point and place of attainment: included among his articulated motives for abdicating is that, post-abdication, he may 'unburdened [,] crawl toward death' (1.1.40). This desire is complicated by Cordelia's refusal to allow Lear to toy with her, as during his attack on Kent, he declares 'So be my grave my peace' (1.l.126). Where the dramatic feature of the 'tragic' death can be used in a literal sense, where the tragic hero's death appropriately concludes the play, it can be utilised in a more symbolic sense to illustrate the character's ultimate acceptance of defeat and disappointment. In *Othello*, the eponymous character's suicide is, primarily, a response to his despair; Iago's vindictive acts did not directly cause Othello's demise, but his treachery did contribute to the deaths of other characters. Othello's suicide came from the realisation that his murder of Desdemona was unfounded, and her supposed transgressions were nothing but fabrication. Desdemona's smothered body bears the meanings of her love for Othello and, most importantly, her innocence; his suicide results from this knowledge. This symbolic nature of death can also be identified in *Hamlet*:

[39] Such works and critical opinions include Tom McAlindon, 'What is a Shakespearean Tragedy?', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*, ed. by Claire McEachern (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), pp. 1-22.

the ‘tragic’ element of *Hamlet* is not necessarily Hamlet’s own death, but the accumulation of miscalculations and wholly unnecessary slaughter; Hamlet’s death merely confirms the disaster, as opposed to being the absolute focal point of the play. The eponymous character’s death (that which Bradleyan analysis would perhaps have us believe is the most important element) appears somewhat anticlimactic (in comparison with *Lear*, for example), and reveals the web of relations and the futility of placing complete focus on Hamlet alone. *Hamlet* dramatically depicts how the ‘tragic hero’ is but one part of a social make-up, as opposed to being privileged (in genre-oriented analysis) as the central figure.

The theme of death occupies a prominent place in *Hamlet*: this is, of course, the play recognisable through the iconic (but also archetypal in the Renaissance period) image of a man holding a skull, often accompanied by an incorrect rendition of Hamlet’s ‘alas, poor Yorick’ line. This offers an immediate juxtaposition between the living and the dead; Branagh’s representation of *Hamlet* encapsulates this uncertain relationship through engagement with Yorick’s remains.

Figure 23: *Hamlet*, dir. Kenneth Branagh (California: Castle Rock Entertainment, 1996), 5.1.

Where, in *King Lear*, it is Cordelia's body which has the most profound effect upon the King, in *Hamlet*, the eponymous character has two female presences/cadavers impacting upon his 'destined' course: those of Ophelia and Gertrude.

As explored in Chapter 2, it is Gertrude who convinced Hamlet to remain in Elsinore; Ophelia is his love interest, an interest that, through her passivity, results in Hamlet's 'noble mind being here o'erthrown' (3.1.147), and Ophelia herself rendered distracted and frantic. This passivity, however, proves instructive in *Hamlet*; through her dogged obedience to her father, Ophelia fails to support Hamlet emotionally, and so urges on the action unwittingly. So it seems hauntingly fitting that the consequences of her death (the performance in the graveyard) prove such an important scene in the play.[40] To turn to Gertrude's death, the poisoned chalice provides an escape

[40] See Beth Ann Bassein as quoted in Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over her Dead Body* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1992), p. 59, discussing problematic identification of passivity in female death.

route from a relationship fraught with tensions throughout the play. Gertrude's suicide (as I contest it truly is) prompts Hamlet to the action urged upon him by his father in the very first act of the play. Hamlet's words immediately following his mother's death, 'O, villainy! Ho! Let the door be locked: / Treachery! Seek it out' (5.2.256-7), strongly echo his pronouncements on Claudius as a 'smiling villain' much earlier in the play.

'One that *was* a woman, sir'[41]

The exchange between Horatio and Hamlet in 5.2 indicates that death is not an issue for a solitary individual, but extends further. So, when one considers the pivotal moment in the graveyard at Ophelia's burial, and also Hamlet's return to Elsinore, one can easily identify the wider impact of Ophelia's death. In the play-text, Laertes jumps into the grave to '[catch] her once more in mine arms'; in the scene, there is also a graveside brawl and the revelation that Gertrude had hoped Ophelia 'shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife' (5.1.202, 195). In *Hamlet*, the instance of Ophelia's burial proves a site of action. Ophelia-as-corpse is included in this dramatic dialogue; in Doran's *Hamlet* Laertes physically hauls Ophelia up by her arms and embraces her in the grave itself.

[41] Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 5.1.104. My italics.

Figure 24: *Hamlet*, dir. Gregory Doran (Cardiff: BBC Wales, 2009), 5.1.

Laertes's surprisingly physical eruption of grief, however, demonstrates little regard for the sanctity of death, illustrating, instead, a desperate need to hold his sister one last time, regardless, or perhaps because of her inert state. It is this demonstration of desperate, grief-stricken affection that prompts Hamlet's rapid emergence from the bushes, wherein he was hiding with Horatio, and the ensuing rage that we witness. David Tennant's Hamlet then leans over the grave and jumps in while protesting his love for Ophelia: 'I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers / Could not – with all their quantity of love – / Make up my sum' (5.1.224-26). The graveyard marks out the point at which Ophelia's various relational identities collide. She is: Laertes's sister; Polonius's daughter; the desired daughter-in-law of Gertrude; in addition to the possible could-be, should-be lover and wife of Hamlet. Ophelia, so pulled every 'which way' in life, is subjected to a similar motion in death; the brawl between Hamlet and Laertes is predominantly predicated

on the question of whether Hamlet's or her brother's love is greater.[42] Her physical form (separated from her personality and other emotional facets of being) remains to inspire such displays of distress and the consequent (fatal) alliance between Laertes and Claudius.

Figure 25: *Hamlet*, dir. Gregory Doran (Cardiff: BBC Wales, 2009), 5.1.

This very sexual imagery (suggestive of the missionary position in intercourse) provides an intriguing undertone to an already-poignant scene. Through his actions Tennant's Hamlet is essentially violating the grave: a hole in the ground in which someone is to be interred. It does not function as a space to be entered and exited multiple times; so when Laertes and Hamlet repeatedly encircle and enter the grave, it is forced into a strange site of action/passivity.

The lack of reverence towards the grave is beautifully encapsulated in Branagh's film production, where the gravedigger flings skulls up in the air, smokes while still in the grave up to his waist and has three skulls in front of

[42] As with the Captain's description of Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Ophelia is primarily identified in relation to the men in her life.

him functioning in an ornamental capacity. James Calderwood asks ‘What, finally, is Hamlet’s remedy?’, responding with ‘It is not perfectly clear what it is, but we can say with some assurance where it is – in the graveyard’.[43] For it is:

> In the graveyard his revulsion for a world of sleepers and feeders subsides when he discovers that all must eat, that Lord Such-a-one and Yorick, the beautiful Ophelia, and even Danish princes must come in the end to a last supper. […] Thus it is at the edge of a grave that Hamlet cries “This is I, / Hamlet, the Dane!” and affirms both his individuality and his communality, and apparently achieves a sense of resigned “readiness” that lets revenge be thrust upon him.[44]

This graveyard, then, is a place not just for mourning, but also for pivotal moments. It is not a coincidence that Hamlet’s final recognition of himself and the consequent framing of his mind to revenge comes at the precipice of Ophelia’s final resting place. The grave is, therefore, both a site for rest and a spur for action. That Hamlet declares ‘This is I, / Hamlet, the Dane!’ at Ophelia’s graveside demonstrates that Hamlet finally comes to know himself at this point in time, space and his own story. That Showalter disregards Ophelia’s part in this scene is troubling; it provides a turning point that cannot and should not be ignored.

To return to the motif of the ring proposed in the first chapter of this thesis, I quoted Irigaray stating that the vagina ‘represents the horror of nothing to see’; the grave, similarly, sits under the lip of the earth, and in this instance where it is Ophelia buried, the female influence transcends life/death, underground/over-ground dichotomies.[45] So, in this instance, the grave enters

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[43] Calderwood, p. 31.
[44] Calderwood, p. 31.
[45] Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1985), p. 26.

into a complex site/sight relationship: it is both un-seeable and physically visible; it belongs liminally to the dead and, sporadically, to the living. The irreverent treatment of the grave by the living marks it out as a site that eludes 'typical' behaviour, forcing the living character into odd performances, such as the Gravedigger (in Branagh's production) and Tennant's Hamlet (below).

Figure 26: *Hamlet*, dir. Kenneth Branagh (California: Castle Rock Entertainment, 1996), 5.1.

Figure 27: *Hamlet*, dir. Gregory Doran (Cardiff: BBC Wales, 2009), 5.1.

Such invasions of the traditional site of death and of Ophelia's body itself by living characters marks Ophelia's grave as a site of oppositions and confusions, of death and life. Branagh's production provides a different perspective to Doran's: audience members watch a side-view shot of Laertes in Ophelia's grave:

Figure 28: *Hamlet*, dir. Kenneth Branagh (California: Castle Rock Entertainment, 1996), 5.1

The scene is set with the side of the grave behind Laertes, the man in the grave holding the dead body, and the lip of the grave in front of him; this is a multi-dimensional image that perfectly encapsulates both (physically) the depth of the grave, and (symbolically) the scene's significance to the plot.

In contrast to Ophelia's burial and the action that is sparked by the death, procession of solemnity and interment of this young woman, Hamlet's death is less resonating and instructive. Michael Neill states that

> To Fortinbras the final spectacle of slaughter may resemble a triumphal banquet of death, where undifferentiating 'havoc' levels "so many princes at a shot" (V. ii. 364-7). The carefully orchestrated rites of funeral closure, together with the gathering rhetorical emphasis on the memorializing power of

> narrative, serve to reassert the human claim to put a shape upon
> the confusion of death.[46]

Fortinbras's later instruction to 'Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage' (5.2.350) reflects this triumphal sacrifice that he perceives Hamlet's death to be, yet confuses Hamlet's status with a soldier, whose devotion to his country would have prompted immediate action in contrast to scenes and scenes of procrastination. The image with which Fortinbras would leave us is one of Hamlet as a hero, who has worked tirelessly for the sake of his country, which is at odds with the reality of the Prince's characterisation; it also does not reflect the various structural prompts that Hamlet has had along the way, including Gertrude's role in his return to Denmark and the lack of support from Ophelia at key points in the play. To return to Rutter, who stated that 'Usually, male death ends the story as the dead exit heroizes (sometimes problematically) the corpse', in this instance the effect of 'heroizing' the ineffectual Hamlet is more inconceivable than 'problematic'.[47] Where Hamlet's death proves something of an anti-climax; where Rosencrantz and Guildenstern expire offstage, and Polonius is stabbed through an arras, it is Ophelia's corpse that proves to be perhaps one of the most visually-used and reproduced images of death (alongside, of course, Yorick's skull).

Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey observe in the footnotes to their edition of *The Taming of a Shrew*, that 'history', in Renaissance terminology, indicated the telling of a story; David Crystal, in *Shakespeare's Words* defines 'history' firstly as a 'story, tale, or narrative'.[48] 'To history' as

[46] Neill, p. 87.
[47] Rutter, p. 4.
[48] Crystal, p. 223.

a verb, furthermore, is defined by Crystal as to 'recount, narrate, relate'.[49] Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin's *Engendering a Nation* defines the 'history' plays as works that are 'above all distinguished by their subject matter'.[50] While I do not believe that this is substantial enough to set apart one set of plays from another (why, for instance, are *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet* not definitively of the 'historic' genre?) it provides a useful sentiment of liberation from structural mores associated with other dramatic genres, such as the fatal flaw, and the familial reunion.

There is not, as such, a similarly genre-defining dramatic feature in those plays designated 'histories'. However, precisely because of this, there can arguably be more freedom in interpretation, with the subject of royalty becoming a starting point for the following acts. As seen in plays that could have evolved from Holinshed, deviations in specific details are made by the playwright concerned, for example the loss of Queen Lear from Holinshed's tale of King Lear. Lack of differentiation between the 'tragedies' and 'histories' is noteworthy. As I discussed earlier, 'tragedy' and 'history' were interchangeable titles/genres in several of Shakespeare's works; quartos and Folio alterations between the genres occurred in at least five of the plays, including *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*. *King John* is similarly useful with regard to its generic title: *The Life and Death of King John*. *King John* is only one of two plays (the other being *Richard II*) that identifies life *and* death in its title; *The Life of Henry the Fifth* and *The Famous History of the Life of Henry the Eighth* refer only to life, as the monarchs do not die during the course of the

[49] Crystal, p. 223.
[50] Jean E. Howard, and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 11.

plays themselves. Death is clearly not an essential characteristic of the 'history' plays.

'Histories' and proportionate reciprocity

In the first quarto edition of 1603, *Richard III* was entitled *The Tragedy of Richard III*; Heminge and Condell, however, categorised this play as a 'history' in the Folio. To pursue this idea that a 'history' is a narrated tale (coming from David Crystal's *Shakespeare's Words*), the concept of *catharsis*, where morality is bound up in the tragic plot, is much in evidence in *Richard III*, with particular reference to Aristotelian treatises on revenge and punishment. Aristotle, in *The Nicomachean Ethics*, wrote that:

> a man is the origin of his actions, and […] the province of deliberation is to discover actions within one's own power to perform; and all our actions aim at ends other than themselves. It follows that we do not deliberate about ends, but about means. […] The very existence of the state depends on proportionate reciprocity, for men demand that they shall be able to requite evil with evil – if they cannot, they feel they are in the position of slaves.[51]

Aristotle's thesis raises a number of interesting points in relation to means and ends, in addition to the perception of rightful justice. It is particularly relevant to note that he prescribes that 'we do not deliberate about ends, but about means'; Aristotle's allocation of importance to means aligns with Kantian philosophy, particularly in locating what Kant terms 'moral worth' not on the 'result expected'. In relation to justice, and especially in regard to Goneril and Regan, the concept of extracting a sense of justice from death can also be applied to the eponymous character in *Richard III*. Such a sentiment would

[51] Aristotle, 3.3.15-16, p. 139, 5.5.6, p. 281.

clearly implicate the audience members or readers in questioning their morals; but audience members could also be styled as vicarious revengers, sympathetic to Aristotelian expressions of revenge and punishment.[52] Revenge proves to be a driving force in the motivations of characters, shaping the action of the king and of those around him.

The differences between revenge and punishment are many, particularly in this instance. Characters who might wish to enact revenge on Richard for crimes throughout the play (for example, Margaret, Anne and Clarence) are not alive to claim justice by the time of Richard's demise. Nor, indeed, can most of these characters claim any level of responsibility for the path that Richard treads that culminates in the bloody scene at Bosworth. In many of Richard's scenes, there is a higher ratio of female characters to male characters, for example in 4.1 and 4.4. There are two scenes in particular that demonstrate how susceptible Richard is to the female influence: his interaction with Anne and Henry's corpse in 1.2; and his altercation with Elizabeth and Margaret in 4.4. Queen Margaret instigates 4.4, by confiding in the audience that 'Here in these confines slyly have I lurked, / To watch the warning of mine enemies […] And will to France, hoping the consequence / Will prove as bitter, black, and tragical'.[53] Margaret hints at the progression of the plot, here: by referring both to the 'warning' and to the 'consequence', she appears to see how Richard's downfall is enacted. Her statement that 'Thus hath the

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[52] To clarify my use of Aristotle, here: where, in other parts of the thesis, I take issue with his prescriptions on genre, it is not necessarily Aristotle's works itself with which I disagree, but, rather, critics' reliance upon channelling ancient considerations of drama in twentieth- and twenty-first century monographs.

[53] William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Richard III*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 4.4.3-7. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.

course of justice whirled about' (4.4.104) further indicates this concept of a pre-destined course for Richard, one that she hopes is orchestrated through justice, in the Aristotelian manner, by 'God's just ordinance' (4.4.186), as the Duchess of York terms it. The fast-paced delivery of 4.4, where Richard, Elizabeth, and the Duchess share lines and fire short lines at each other, intimates the growing pace of the play; from initially refusing to hear his mother ('I [...] cannot brook the accent of reproof'), Richard's responses grow longer throughout this scene, culminating in a 50 line tirade on Elizabeth's criticisms of his schemes.

Upon hearing of Clarence's imprisonment in the Tower, Richard immediately blames this turn of events on Queen Elizabeth, stating 'Why, this it is when men are ruled by women: / 'Tis not the king that sends you to the Tower, / My lady Grey his wife, Clarence, 'tis she'. (1.1.64-6). While presenting Clarence's situation as the queen's fault, Richard is also contemptuous of Elizabeth in referring to her by her maiden name, Grey. Richard sarcastically states that 'We are the queen's abjects, and must obey' (1.1.108); Richard's swapping of 'subjects' for 'abjects' simultaneously disregards (almost forcefully denies) his subject status. Both of these early examples indicate a level of fear on Richard's part (indicative through his impotent railing) about how influential the women in the play *could be*.

Richard is cursed both by Anne and Queen Margaret, in 1.2 and 1.3 respectively; he expresses his dissatisfaction with his physical shape almost as soon as the play begins, and has engaged in a war of words with Anne in his attempt to woo her. Anne's curses are prophetic: 'If ever he have wife, let her be made / More miserable by the death of him / Than I am made by my

young lord and thee' (1.2.26-8). 1.1 closes with Richard's confession of his wicked schemes:

> I'll marry Warwick's youngest daughter.
> What though I killed her husband and her father?
> The readiest way to make the wench amends
> Is to become her husband and her father:
> The which will I, not all so much for love
> As for another secret close intent,
> By marrying her which I must reach unto (1.1.156-61).

This soliloquy is a vital insight into the play. Richard evidently sees marrying Anne as a means to his ultimate end: 'The which will I, not all so much for love […] By marrying her which I must reach unto'. The use of marriage as a means is noteworthy in the sense that Richard sees the contract of marriage as merely a stepping-stone, a task he must complete before he can 'reach unto' his main purposes. In this respect, marriage is the means, and the eponymous character's death is the end (though not Richard's 'secret close intent', however); this again demonstrates the futility in allocating death and marriage as indicative features of genres. The foregrounding of the delivering of Henry VI's corpse to such a prominent point in the play, the second scene, indicates that this scene is of some particular relevance to the plot.

Anne's uncertainty over whether 'honour may be shrouded in a hearse' (1.2.2) conveys a key insight into the relationship between the living Henry VI, and the corpse that is now before her. As discussed earlier in the chapter, the lack of a phenomenological alteration between living character and corpse means that Henry's honour should still be intact, even in death. This theory, of course, relates to Ernst Kantorowicz's thesis concerning the body natural and the body politic; it is Henry's mortal body (the natural one) that is wounded and has expired. The necessary combination of the body politic and

the body natural means that the policy and government that reside in the politic body transcend death; the king's influence and prominence remain to remind Richard and Anne of his 'God-given role'. Kantorowicz notes the inextricable combination of the two bodies:

> thus form one unit indivisible, each being fully contained in the other. However, doubt cannot arise concerning the superiority of the body politic over the body natural. His Body politic is more ample and large than the Body natural. Not only is the body politic "more ample and large" than the body natural, but there dwell in the former certain truly mysterious forces which reduce, or even remove, the imperfections of the fragile human nature.[54]

In applying this to Henry's body, such 'mysterious forces' in the body politic remain to transcend the physical wounds on the body natural. Henry's honour (the body politic) remains, and cannot be easily hidden. The ambiguity of Anne's statement suggests the character's uncertainty over the status of the corpse, and how meanings and deeds remain written on the body itself.

To consider, briefly, the stage directions in 1.2, the coffin containing Henry VI is subjected to much movement: on Anne's command, '*they set down the coffin*', then '*they lift the coffin*' following her next instruction to 'come, now toward Chertsey with your holy load' (1.2.4, 29, 30). On Richard's tirade on the 'Unmannered dog' (1.2.39) that he perceives the Gentleman to be, '*they set down the coffin*' (1.2.42), Anne then '*uncovers the body*' (1.2.54) for Richard to 'behold this pattern of thy butcheries' (1.2.54). In this sequence of events, the corpse is inducted into a performative state, where it operates as 'proof'. In line 236 of this scene, the stage direction '*Exit corpse*' (1.2.236) is given. Henry's body is at the centre of a pivotal moment

[54] Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1957), p. 9.

in the play; where in *Hamlet* it is the dead female body instructing the eponymous character, in this instance events are set in motion by Anne and Richard while she attempt to escort Henry's body to be interred at Chertsey. This stage direction of '*Exit corpse*' is qualified with '*[borne by the other gentleman]*'; the playing and acting differentiation that I discussed in relation to Rutter earlier in the chapter, is much in evidence here, as the direction has to be clarified that the corpse is 'borne by the other gentleman' (1.2.236). The corpse is treated as any other character leaving a scene. For example, we have '*Exit Catesby*' in 3.2., and '*Exit Queen Elizabeth*' in 4.4; this could indicate that the corpse-in-play motif is valued by the playwright (and/or his editors), and it is seen as contributing to the scene being played out before an audience. As Rutter argues, the body 'occupies a theatrical space of pure performance where it has most to play when it has least to act'.[55] Indeed, this use of the corpse as a character is the only example in Shakespeare's oeuvre that a character who is deceased before the play's beginning is included, marking out this instance as exceptional.

The intimation, here, is that Henry's eternal soul is free from Richard's machinations; this also implies that the body is tangible, it can be touched, spoiled, or deformed, whereas the soul or the spirit is not subjected to such treatments. Clearly, the female body in interaction with the male corpse provides an alternative perspective on the role that the corpse plays: the first plot-influencing scene of *Richard III* is situated at the side of a corpse, in a similar manner to Ophelia's grave being the site of such an epiphany in *Hamlet*. In the BBC Shakespeare production of *Richard III*, Henry's corpse

[55] Rutter, p. 2.

becomes a focal point when Anne's figurative assertion that Henry's 'wounds / Open their congealed mouths and bleed afresh' is translated literally.

Figure 29: ***Richard III*****, dir. Jane Howell (London: BBC, 1983), 1.2.**

Zoë Wanamaker's Anne and Ron Cook's Richard face each other on either side of Henry's body, marking out the corpse as a key site of contention. Where the site of the dead female body (in both *Hamlet* and *King Lear*) can be determined in Nicolas Bourriaud's terms as 'an arena of exchange', so too can the site of the dead male body when it comes into dramatic interaction with the play's female characters.[56] Anne's reactions to Richard's taunts and threats reveal significant details regarding how the corpse is considered and addressed in Shakespeare's plays; of course, this lack of respect for the body transcends the 'histories', as discussed in relation to Laertes's physical actions with Ophelia in Doran's production.

[56] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2002), p. 11.

‘Ears stopped with dust’[57]

The Life and Death of King John provides, through the play-text title, a fairly conclusive description of the events that an audience/reader will experience during the course of the play: we are told that the work addresses the life as well as the actual death of the monarch. *King John* offers a different perspective on the death-as-ending scenario, that I will illustrate briefly here, to contrast it with the depictions in the other plays addressed in this chapter. The eponymous character’s death is somewhat anticlimactic, where John falls sick from unknown causes and dies, not as a result of the on-going war in Angiers. Queen Elinor is a commanding and influential female presence throughout the dramatic narrative; she was a famed warrior, and widow of Henry II. She immediately demonstrates her powerful status by interjecting into the Chatillon of France and John’s conversation at the start of the play. In David Giles’s BBC Shakespeare adaptation of *King John*, Elinor’s influence is clearly identified in the first scene; at the arrival of the Chatillon, John takes a sideways seat on his throne, with Elinor standing in front of him, almost as if she is guarding the king.

[57] William Shakespeare, *The Life and Death of King John*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 4.2.119-21. All further references will be to this edition and contained in the body of the text.

Figure 30: *King John*, dir. David Giles (London: BBC TV, 1984), 1.1.

Leonard Rossiter's John presents a façade of relaxation; his informal position on the chair, coupled with the cup from which he sips several times, indicates that his mother's alert presence perhaps acts as a shield between himself and the French visitors. His position on the throne could also be read as slightly defensive or cautious. John is controlled (either by force or more likely by loyalty) by Elinor; similarly, Elinor presents herself as a guard or even a filter through which John is accessed in his court. The cumulative nature of the Butlerian concept of the constitutive acts is very much in evidence in *King John* where, in contrast to *Richard III*, there are no scenes to be singled out as particularly influential; the play and Elinor's influence develop in tandem. This could indicate that the 'means' of the play (*how* the ending is arrived at) function as a coherent and influential whole: in this respect, *King John* differs from the plays addressed earlier in this chapter. For the purposes of the focus here on death and endings, particular attention is paid to the scenes where Elinor and her son die: 4.2 and 5.7.

Elinor’s death is reported by the Messenger: ‘my liege, her ear / Is stopped with dust: the first of April died / Your noble mother’ (4.2.119-121). Contrasting with *King Lear* and *Hamlet*, then, the sight of the female corpse does not affect John; rather, it is the power of words that spurs John onwards in the plot, in a similar vein to *Richard III*. Rossiter’s John becomes distract and presents his distress in facial expressions while frantically enquiring after his ‘estate in France’ (4.2.130). In contrast to *Richard III*, *King John* ends fewer than thirty lines after the expiration of the eponymous King; John expires, having blamed his companions for their lack of aid in his process of dying:

> Poisoned, ill fare: dead, forsook, cast off:
> And none of you will bid the winter come
> To thrust his icy fingers in my maw,
> Nor let my kingdom’s rivers take their course
> Through my burned bosom […]
> I beg cold comfort: and you are so strait
> And so ingrateful, you deny me that. (5.7.36-45)

The very title of the play is here called to mind, as the play does, indeed, address the life and the death of the monarch: with John dead, the play appears to have lost its subject, and so concludes. In this sense, the play is biographical. Upon John’s death, Salisbury informs the Bastard that; ‘You breathe these dead news in as dead an ear. – / My liege, my lord! – But now a king, now thus’ (5.7.68-9). The symbolic use of the word ‘dead’ in reference to the news (as well as literally, in referring to John) sets up a comparison between the several forms of death: in this sense, ‘dead’ means serious news, bearing in mind the action that will inevitably follow the death. The final part of Salisbury’s statement, ‘now a king’, is ambiguous. The stage direction ‘*To King John*’ indicates (similarly to Anne’s reference to Henry VI’s honour in

Richard III) that the late King's royal status is still in evidence, despite lack of life. This provides a strong reinforcement that morality and social status do not simply 'vanish' upon one's death: just as the female characters' bodies explored in the 'tragedies' prompt and instruct the eponymous characters to action, so words about, and reactions to, dead bodies wield their influence upon the 'histories'. Elinor is an example of the mother-warrior type of character; a woman imbued with power and influence, who also takes her place on the field of war. Elinor's influence in clearly recognisable in *King John*, and her death is a significant spur for action for the King.

As demonstrated, the re-presentation and the symbolic idea of female deaths, and how female characters interact with dead bodies, help to inform and to instruct the courses that these four plays take: the body-as-reminder motif features in all four of the works considered, whether the dead body is brought out, or, as in *King John*, is not. The Kantian concept appertaining to means-and-ends is communicated through each play, as indeed it is in this chapter itself; I focus more on the cumulative processes constituting the dramatic whole, rather than on the end 'results' (whether that may be weddings or deaths) alone. It is vital to consider *how* the dramatic works reached these points; which events informed the plays; which characters contributed to the developing and altering nature of the works themselves. As discussed in relation to *King Lear*, through Kent and Edgar's discussion of the 'promised end' and 'the image of that horror', the potential of death as a reflective or refractive dramatic device has been interrogated in depth, with what I contend is the dramatically relevant and revealing relationship between the bodily end and the performative end.

‘Our little life is rounded with a sleep’[58]

To return to the beginning of this chapter, Trevor Nunn’s production of *King Lear* perfectly encapsulates the image of the ‘promised end’ (5.3.271), with Goneril and Regan’s bodies directing the audience’s gaze upon Lear and Cordelia. Nunn’s presentation invites many interesting questions regarding the female characters’ places in the images of death. At the close of the play, Albany requests Edgar and Kent to aid with the resurrection of the kingdom. Kent refuses: ‘I have a journey, sir, shortly to go. / My master calls me, I must not say no’ (5.3.342-3). Through this intention, Kent perhaps hints at the secular futility of locating hope in death; he is shortly to add his own death to the slaughter that is the final scene. Kent’s exit from the scene with this intention increases the male-female death ratio. Lear occupies the centre of the stage with Cordelia laid across him, while Goneril and Regan flank their father and the surviving male characters stand around this spectacle. Nunn appears to emphasise the place of female death in the play: it is a key component in the final visual image of *King Lear*. Additionally, Kent’s chosen act of suicide suggests free will in the pagan universe of a play that has been introduced and presented as exceptionally deterministic; additionally, Kent’s impending suicide is adjunct to the ‘main’ deaths of the play. Whether Kent does intend to die from suicide is unclear, however Nunn’s production strongly suggests that this is the case. After Albany implores Edgar and Kent to rule England with him, Kent replies ‘I have a journey, sir, shortly to go: / My master calls me, I must not say no’ (5.3.342-

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[58] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 4.1.169-70.

43). Given Kent's devout commitment to servitude to Lear throughout the play, 'raz[ing] his likeness' and persevering in the love for the King despite banishment, the reference to 'master' cannot be to anyone other than Lear (1.4.4). Indeed, Kent makes reference to Lear as his master in 1.4: Kent states that 'Now, banished Kent, / If you canst serve where you dost stand condemned, / So may it come thy master whom thy lov'st, / Shall find thee full of labours' (1.4.4-7). Nunn's production of the play indicates suicide as a possibility further, through Jonathan Hyde's Kent, clearly distressed by Lear's death, pulling out a pistol from its holster at his waist as his voice breaks and he turns away from the image of the dead King.

I have already referred to linear and circular imagery in Shakespeare's works particularly in my discussion of the relevance of the ring in Chapter 1.[59] The cyclicity of dramatic time and the format of the plays themselves contribute to the important destabilisation of genre as a critical tool. In applying (no)thing imagery to this discussion of time in relation to endings and genre, cyclical and linear modes of time are contrasted: the less linear structure of time is one that does not automatically stop once an assumed point or destination has been reached. As intimated through the image of a cycle, the reimagining and evolutionary potential of a play progresses, rather than simply 'stopping' at a putatively designated destination. Applying the cyclical concept of time to analysis of dramatic works, therefore, removes theories of origin (or foundation) and destination, demonstrating the plays' potential to reinvent themselves, to continue in performance, and not to have

[59] This is discussed as a primary focus in Anna Mackenzie, '"Identity Politics": Dramatic Genres, Shakespeare's Plays, and the Butlerian Framework', *The Problem with Literary Genres* 1.107 (2011), 5-24.

the static notion of a sudden 'end' inflicted on them. This, in turn, calls into question the critically-established method of 'suitable' endings. Critics such as Juliet Dusinberre, Richard Dutton, Jean E. Howard, and Angela Pitt adopt the linear style of analysis, where they perceive that the plays move from beginning to end, whether that be the father/daughter reunion in the 'romances' or marriage, in the 'comedies'. Kristeva writes that:

> As for time, female subjectivity would seem to provide a specific measure for that which essentially retains *repetition* and *eternity* from among the multiple modalities of time known through the history of civilizations. On the one hand, there are cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm that conforms to that of nature and imposes a temporality whose stereotyping may shock.[60]

Kristeva's 'Women's Time' offers a (rather problematic) suggestion that women may experience time in a different manner to men, which is mainly based on menstrual cycles, the 'eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm'. I would like to clarify that, although time itself is not a specifically female configuration, the manner in which we (as either audience members or readers of Shakespearean drama) experience the dramatic illusion of time as a reinventing and regenerative construction, can have important implications for literary criticism, and for how the influence of female characters can be clearly recognised. It is within such cyclical formulations of time that the female characters exert influence, dramatically challenging those monogeneric approaches that threaten to subsume their autonomy and subdue the plays' inherent performativity.

Twenty-first-century Westerners commonly hear phrases such as 'his time had come', or 'it was time', intimating the reaching of an ultimate

[60] Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time', trans. by Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, *Signs*, 7.1 (1981), pp. 13-35 (p. 16).

destination, or the completion of a journey such as, in these instances, death. To consider, briefly, the relevance of a circle, this shape suggests continuity, fluidity, and infinity; there is no *end* to this circle (whether the end of a play or the 'time' that is supposed to have come, representing death). The cyclical approach to analysis follows this shape, as opposed to using a linear structure with its demarcated 'beginning' and 'end'. The shape of rings has significance for both our consideration of genre and of gender; the shape as a wedding ring is a metaphor for restriction in marriages, complicating the 'happy ever after' resolution. This is an image that bears significance in the consideration of applied endings to dramatic works. Dramatic works are intrinsically formulated in a continually evolving and developing process. This is made clearer to see through engaging with cyclical approaches to analysis. Furthermore, this method of analysis identifies the potential influence of *all* characters, and the dynamic of the play as a whole.

The cyclical form of analysis demonstrates that while the eponymous character (Lear, for example, or Othello,) may be seen as occupying the dramatic centre of the play, forces around him (such as the vital presence and influence of the female characters) contribute to the progress and the eventualities of the play itself. The beginning and ending are, furthermore, just points in the plays that are repeatedly glimpsed and provide 'starting points' for other plays; where one play 'ends', another may be seen as beginning from a similar thematic point, whether that theme be familial relationships or marriage, to use just two examples. For instance, *The Merchant of Venice* depicts the anticipation of marriage and the process of wooing; *Othello* presents a new marriage; and *Macbeth* an established

marriage. One can perceive the dramatic presentation of marriage as a timeline where, in various plays, a different point is marked off on the marital lifespan. The 'happy ending' motif (as employed by critics such as Lawrence Danson, and discussed at length in Chapter 1) is depicted as not a conclusive means of ending, but a single element on the cyclical timeline; just one piece of the 'comic' puzzle.[61] In the first part of this chapter, I focused analysis on how the death-as-ending motif is actually subverted by the instructive female body; this section of the chapter considers the concept of cyclical time, and the vital importance of the performative cycle of the plays, where plays do not just 'stop', but are continually re-imagined and altered in subsequent performances.

In 2008, the RSC's run of 'history' plays was termed a 'cycle', and a group of plays advertised for the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival also adopted this term.[62] Such rhetoric indicates something important about the way in which plays are perceived in relation to time. As discussed earlier, there is no sense, in performance, that plays just 'stop'; the reason that many audience members will have seen *King Lear*, for example, more than once, is that every production is different. An audience witnesses certain points of the dramatic 'process of becoming'.[63] The play-text as a 'vessel' enables

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[61] I feel it is important to clarify my position on the audience's engagement with the cyclical approach I offer. Of course, audience members leave the theatre from individual performances; I refer to the play as a text-for-performance, where it is the interpretation and the 'life cycle' of the play that is the focus. In a sense, the play is a perpetual construct, as a run of a certain play may last for months at a time, with a steady flow of audience members entering the theatrical space.

[62] For examples of a course of plays being referred to as a 'cycle', see http://www.london2012.com/get-involved/cultural-olympiad/theatre-dance-and-comedy/world-shakespeare-festival.php, and http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/theatreblog/2011/feb/01/royal-shakespeare-company-ensemble [accessed 30th March 2014].
http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/46505?rskey=WW7aZ2&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid entry 3 [accessed 3rd March 2014].

[63] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, p. 3.

successful transference to an infinite number of stage productions, where *Much Ado About Nothing* can be simultaneously performed in Stratford, Manchester, Hong Kong, Washington, and Auckland.[64] It is within such formulations of time that, as Butler notes, 'the articulation of an identity [...] instates a definition that forecloses in advance the emergence of new identity concepts'.[65] However, it is not the concept alone that is under question here, but relations to that conceptualised entity; as discussed earlier in this chapter, identities or actions within a social context necessarily impact on communities and/or other close parties. This foreclosing of identity imposes foundationalist terms on people and plays that are capable of individual interpretation and dynamic evolution.

As discussed in Chapter 1, with reference to the wedding ring, neither the ring nor cyclical time is a tangible, strictly female-empowering mechanism. The symbolic relevance, in addition to its dramatic relevance, enables an audience to recognise the multifaceted and dynamic processes of constitution of the play. The world 'inside' the play, and all the individual characters, are subject to the same processes of becoming. As explored in Chapter 2, the performative potential of women (such as their perceived transition from 'woman' to 'mother') does not necessarily restrict their dramatic performance and vigorous processes of becoming, but actually contributes to their dynamic and influential states.[66]

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[64] The sometimes problematic relationship between page and stage has been discussed in my introduction and first chapter, with specific reference to early quarto editions being labelled as 'bad'.
[65] Butler, p. 62.
[66] See *The Order of Things*, as quoted in the introduction to this thesis.

'A good play needs no epilogue'[67]

Many dynamic processes of construction (as noted above in relation to the marital ring and performances of women) are exposed and highlighted in Shakespeare's works. These are plays which regularly break the confines of what may be considered dramatically conventional (a clearly defined start and end of the play, for example).[68] Shakespeare's epilogues and prologues resist a generalisation of dramatic frameworks, and extend the plays. A particularly intriguing avenue of inquiry is to see which characters' voices end the plays: in *As You Like It*, it is Rosalind imploring the audience for applause; a female character's voice is granted the opportunity to end the play. In a transparent reference to convention, Rosalind declares, 'It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue, but it is no more / unhandsome than to see the lord the prologue' (5.4.173-4).

As discussed in Chapter 1, with reference to *The Taming of the Shrew*'s Q1 play-text, the inclusion of the prologue (or induction scene, in this example) foregrounds the introspective comment on the play; the taming in *The Taming of the Shrew* is highlighted as potentially metadramatic, being performed for Christopher Slie/Sly, as opposed to being a moral commentary on the action of the play. In *As You Like It*, questions are also begged of Rosalind's 'comic closure' through marriage. Rosalind's role as a self-conscious epilogist can be argued to transcend the 'comic' marriage-as-ending scenario, and her real redemption is located in the prominence

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[67] William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 5.4.175. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.

[68] Such monogeneric critics who appear to seek a clearly demarcated beginning and end of plays include Penny Gay, Andrew Stott and Linda Bamber who use such terms as 'vacation', 'resolution' and 'happy ending' in their references to dramatic devices.

afforded her, as a single entity, in her autonomous delivery of the epilogue. Rosalind is important in her own right, rather than achieving recognition through marriage. This character is not subsumed by the apparent 'comic' resolution through a wedding; Rosalind has suffered the most throughout the play and is rewarded, it may be seen, with the final words.

This breaking of the confines of the dramatic frame by a female voice highlights the insufficiencies of this mode of ending from the perspective of the female characters. Rosalind claiming autonomy through this action can be seen as a rare glimpse of a female character's perspective, as she transcends the dramatic frame and Renaissance dramatic conventions. This epilogue also functions as an opposite presentation of female speech and perhaps even a virtual corrective, to Leontes's treatment of Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*. Rosalind asserts, in this epilogue, that 'a good play needs no epilogue' (5.4.175). This amusingly self-deprecatory statement, which indeed challenges Rosalind's presence on the stage at this very moment, can still give us insight into the use of epilogues. So, by this logic, why are epilogues included in, for example, *As You Like It*, and *The Tempest*? Epilogues and prologues break the boundaries of play structures; the intimation is that that current beginnings and ends of the plays are, perhaps, not functioning in the ways in which they should. In delivering the epilogue, an actor has to step outside their character to provide a conclusion.

In the second scene of *As You Like It*, Monsieur Le Beau, in responding to Rosalind's demand that he 'tell [them] the manner of the wrestling' (1.2.79), states that 'I will tell you the beginning, and if it please your ladyships, you may see the end, for the best is yet to do: and here, where

you are, they are coming to perform it' (1.2.80-2), to which Celia adds 'Well, the beginning that is dead and buried' (1.2.82). Le Beau's statement provides some interesting views on the relationship between beginning and end, as he is willing verbally to provide the context (the beginning, in this instance) but will require Celia and Rosalind to see the ensuing action, if it pleases them. This can also be applied to the play itself, as Rosalind is banished for no reason other than that she might take some of the court's favour away from her cousin, Celia, and Orlando prepares to fight Charles. Matters, at the start of the play, appear very grim. If the play *begins* in this manner, is there any real hope that matters might improve? This may be an ironic comment on the behalf of the playwright, where he seems to be warning against judging matters on their beginnings alone, before experiencing the rest where perhaps, 'the best is yet to do' (1.2.81).

An interesting opposition is set up, here, by Le Beau's rhetoric incorporating reference to speech and action: Le Beau may tell his ladyships the beginning, but the end must be witnessed; speech alone can be static and non-dramatic, but it is required that the end be actually *experienced*. Celia's pronouncement that the 'beginning is dead and buried' (1.2.82) indicates the insufficiency of Le Beau's present recounting; after his story has begun, she interjects with 'I could match this beginning with an old tale' (1.2.85). Bate and Rasmussen gloss this remark with 'tale: puns on "tail" (as opposed to beginning)'; the oppositions, here, set up between end and beginning, and the beginning being 'dead and buried', are particularly relevant in the formulation of the play, and also with regard to Rosalind's concluding epilogue.[69] Duke

[69] Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (eds.), *Complete Works*, p. 480.

Senior demonstrates the required faith and willingness to experience events before judging: in 5.4., he declares that 'We'll begin these rites, / As we do trust they'll end, in true delights' (5.4.171-2).

Kenneth Branagh's insightful film production of *As You Like It* (2006), starring Romola Garai, draws the viewer's attention in particular to matters of time and ending.[70] The adaptation offers an intriguing take on how the epilogue is performed. The dance following Jacques's exit is prolonged, and morphs into the following piece of oriental artwork, which continues the Japanese theme as used throughout the production:

Figure 31: *As You Like It*, dir. Kenneth Branagh (London: Shakespeare Film Company, 2006), 5.4.

In watching this adaptation at home, the viewer might assume this is the end of the film, particularly with the production credits following so swiftly on; furthermore, after this artwork is presented, a striped curtain is pulled across

[70] *As You Like It*, dir. Kenneth Branagh (HBO Films, 2006).

the screen, playing into the theatrical tradition of drawing the curtain across the stage once a play has concluded.

However, after these credits have been shown, the viewer then sees Rosalind in a backstage scene, with actors' trailers and production and cast members:

Figure 32: ***As You Like It*****, dir. Kenneth Branagh (London: Shakespeare Film Company, 2006), epilogue.**

This sequence is presented as rather informal: Bryce Dallas Howard's Rosalind (still in character, it appears) sheds her coat, giving it to a waiting assistant, is handed a plastic cup of water, and makes her way to her own trailer. The last glimpse we have of her is when she steps into her trailer, and shuts the door that has a sign declaring '*As You Like It* Rosalind':

Figure 33: ***As You Like It*, dir. Kenneth Branagh (London: Shakespeare Film Company, 2006), epilogue.**

The power balance is, in this sequence, firmly in Rosalind's/Howard's favour: in siting the epilogue outside both the confines of the play and outside the boundaries of the standard film (where, ordinarily, the production credits indicate the end of the film) Rosalind occupies a space all of her own. The hand-held camera follows her walk from the set to her trailer, and she is passed cups of water and looked at by fellow cast members throughout.

The final, lingering image of the play is the door shut by Rosalind; this echoes the use of doors in Zeffirelli's *Taming of the Shrew*, as discussed earlier. Zeffirelli employs doors to designate the restrictive territory of wifehood; they are thresholds that intimate restriction. Conversely, Branagh's use of the trailer door actually suggests an element of freedom: Rosalind is 'contained' neither by the dramatic limits, nor even by the (filmic) limits of the play. She has a double barrier in the sense that the curtain indicates the end of the play, and then the production credits are shown; she alone occupies this space, and she also decides when to bar the camera entry to her private

trailer, by shutting the door. This presents an effective depiction of the use of the epilogue; one in which Branagh has picked up on the clues in the play-text which indicate where Rosalind strives for independence. In this example, 'the end' is twice subverted in this production, using tactics from both the stage and the screen to indicate a false end, beyond which Rosalind steps.

Branagh's references to both stage and screen conventions of concluding behaviour are unusual and effective. Rosalind's subversion, therefore, is doubly powerful. Time as a linear construct (where rhetoric such as 'the end' pervades) reflects the goal of defining plays through their genres; both systems are engaged in a pursuit of destination, a desire to render dynamic processes static, through employing a strict formula of 'start' and 'end'; 'origin' and 'destination'. Rosalind's apparent refusal to remain within the linear dynamic of designated 'start' and 'end' demonstrates the complexities of containing dramatic characters within frames. *As You Like It* as a valid 'comedy' would surely end with a wedding, as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or *The Merchant of Venice* (see Chapter 1 for discussion of these two plays in relation to the 'comic' conventions). The way in which it actually concludes could make an audience wonder whether, in Rosalind's terms, 'good plays prove the better by the help of good epilogues'. This statement is intriguing when one considers whether an underlying dissatisfaction with the ending necessitated Rosalind to step outside of the dramatic confines to comment on the play's structure, and muse on the use of epilogues.

Shakespeare infuses *All's Well That Ends Well* with the image of the ending as a goal, a point where all confusions and previous animosities are

eradicated, though in some instances the timing of such statements comes across as mocking. As Helena states 'Whate'er the course, the *end* is the renown'.[71] She later points out that 'All's well that ends well yet, / Though time seem so adverse and means unfit' (5.1.25-26). This calls to mind Kant's prescriptions on the relationship between means and ends, where the means must be acknowledged as a vital part of the journey, not relying on ends alone in the pursuit of monogeneric classification. The ironic title of the play makes no attempt to gloss over Bertram's behaviour, but rather offers a somewhat tongue-in-cheek comment on how marriage is assumed to restore everything to a satisfactory state.

All's Well That Ends Well focuses largely on the image of the wedding ring, both as indicator of female power, and as a bartering mechanism by Helena for Bertram's unwilling agreement to marry. Helena invokes the imagery of bartering where a ring is assumed to facilitate sexual relations between husband and wife. As the King recalls: '[Helena] call'd the saints to surety / That she would never put [the ring] from her finger / Unless she gave it to yourself in bed' (5.3.108-110). As discussed in Chapter 1, this ring transcends its physical appearance alone, operating as a symbol of female sexuality. Diana, when called upon to give evidence in the presence of the King, states that 'Mine honour's such a ring; / My chastity's the jewel of our house' (4.2.45-46). She uses Bertram's exact pattern of speech, inserting 'honour' and 'chastity' to create an abstraction of Bertram's family's ring; her virginity. This echoes the jewel/case conversation between Benedick and

[71] William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 4.4.36. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.

Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing*, where Benedick bawdily asserts that a case can be purchased into which to put this ring, reminiscent of the concluding lines of *The Merchant of Venice*.

All's Well That Ends Well has already been discussed in this thesis, but for the purposes of this chapter, I will focus, briefly, on how it employs the epilogue, and the effects that this use has on the sense of the dramatic ending. Towards the end of 5.3 there is, once again, an alteration in pace in the final scene. The King states that 'Of that and all the progress more and less / Resolvedly more leisure shall express. / All yet seems well, and if it end so meet, / The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet' (5.3. 354-7). Such language as 'resolvedly' and 'leisure' indicates a slowing-down, a more relaxed approach to hearing the unfolding of Helena's story. In contrast to *As You Like It*, the epilogue is performed by an unspecified character: in the RSC edition of the play-text, this is merely signalled 'Epilogue', with no indication as to who is expected to recite this part. The epilogue begins with the following lines: 'The King's a beggar now the play is done. / All is well ended if this suit be won, / That you express content, which we will pay / With strife to please you, day exceeding day' (5.3.358-61). However, it is not, primarily, the fate of the King that has been up for debate throughout the play. A rather ironic sense of uncertainty pervades the ending of *All's Well That Ends Well*: the epilogue hinges its declaration that 'All is well ended' on the ambiguous '*if* this suit be won'; there is no explicit sense that Helena has achieved her goal with Bertram. As such, the epilogue does little more than leave an impression of doubt. Rosalind's assertion that 'a good play needs no epilogue' is complicated, in that this problem play is a case in point. The ambiguous

and undecided ending of *All's Well that Ends Well* almost requires an epilogue that would clarify how Helena progresses from her final words in the play, but this sense of relief, or simply just clarification, does not come.

This idea of the 'good play need[ing] no epilogue' also transfers to *The Tempest* where, in contrast to *As You Like It*, it is a man, Prospero, who executes the epilogue. Prospero's soliloquy in 5.1 acutely demonstrates the powerful, and wholly regenerative aspect of time: 'Graves at my command / Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth / By my so noble art'.[72] The image that 'art' (in its various formats) has the potential to breathe life into corpses and resurrect them to 'let 'em forth' intimates the relationship between time and dramatic works. Furthermore, the use of one genre (in this case, the 'romance') to comment pertinently on another demonstrates this interactive relationship that is stifled by critics adopting a 'one genre at a time' method of analysis. Earlier in the play, Antonio, in conference with Sebastian, asserts 'what's past is prologue' (2.1.255). Reference to this technical feature demonstrates a metatheatrical awareness of the dramatic tools on which Shakespeare draws in a variety of his works; the use of epilogues invites analysis of the potency of endings. This, furthermore, implies that the current ending is not a satisfactory means to conclude the play.

As I explored in Chapter 1, with reference to *The Taming of the Shrew*, the use of metadrama in what I refer to as Q1 of this play, renders artificial 'the end' to what might be assumed 'the plot', which becomes purely a performance for the entertainment of Christopher Sly (F)/Slie (Q). Similarly,

[72] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 5.1.53-5. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.

an epilogue (for example in *The Tempest*, or in Puck's plea to the audience at the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) occupies an interesting space *between* play and metadrama: a multi-partite relationship between character, actor, playwright, and audience member. Obviously as important theatrical constructs, had prologues and epilogues been employed in *all* of Shakespeare's plays, one might assume that they would simply operate as functional dramatic devices; but the fact that only nine of Shakespeare's 38 plays (including the two collaborative works, *Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Cymbeline*) employ an epilogue, demands questions of the 'endings', and the authenticity or artificiality of such methods of closure. Puck draws our attention to such artifice: 'if we shadows have offended, / Think but this, and all is mended, / That you have but slumbered here / While these visions did appear'.[73] In this instance, Puck steps outside the microcosmic world of the play, acknowledging the audience for the first time in this theatrical event, and speaking words that cannot, entirely, be attributed to his character alone. Of course, as critics we cannot say that this is Shakespeare's voice, but in certain cases an audience can see a hint of the author: for example, Prospero's decision to 'break his staff' and 'drown his books' has been read (by some critics) as symbolic of Shakespeare retiring from sole-authorship, as *The Tempest* was his last solo-authored play.[74]

In the varying uses of the epilogue, as in *The Tempest* and *As You Like It*, as previously discussed, many types of theatrical boundaries, including the

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[73] William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 5.1.393-4. All further references will be to this edition, and contained within the body of the text.
[74] As already discussed in this thesis, the authorship question is not my critical focus, here; however, a brief acknowledgement of this critical train of thought bears particular relevance to this chapter.

fourth wall, are disrupted; in *As You Like It*, the epilogue was used to present an autonomous, female perspective, whereas in *The Tempest*, the voices of the character, the actor, and the author himself, indicate a surrendering of the quill, and the concluding of an era. While Prospero demonstrates a remarkably self-absorbed manner of conclusion, in the sense that in the nineteen-line epilogue, he uses ‘me’ or ‘I’ (including their variants) thirteen times, it is hard for the reader or an audience member to take this epilogue purely at face value. Shakespeare’s epilogues seem, therefore, to be reserved for those statements or sentiments that need to be picked out and displayed in their own ‘frames’, rather than being subsumed by prose or blank verse in other parts of the plays. Epilogues are not, as such, framing devices in the sense that the induction and corresponding scene at the end of *The Taming of a Shrew* construct a frame; they are designated spaces that can be used for important theatrical comment.

To contrast, briefly, Shakespeare’s use of epilogues in his sole-authored works with that of his collaborative *Pericles*, with George Wilkins, there is a clear difference between Wilkins’s dramatic writing and Shakespeare’s. Where, in the case of *Henry V*, and to an extent *As You Like It*, the epilogue and Chorus step out from the structures of the dramatic forms itself, Gower’s function as the Chorus is a notably rigid and separate character from the works by Shakespeare alone: Gower is an omniscient presence, who is neither caught up in the action, nor has the capability to become emotionally involved with the dramatic narrative. Calderwood discusses the ‘playwright’s ostentatious [subversion of] generic form’; this appears a further example of Shakespeare notably marking out his plays’ differences to

other more generically-acceptable dramatic works.[75] The Chorus in *Henry V* takes on a predominantly practical role, presenting the play, making announcements, explanations and leading audience members through changes in time and space.

The formal and somewhat rigid style of Gower's lines makes his rhyming couplets stand apart from the rest of the dramatic work, rather than depicting how the works resist the strictures of time and genre. The epilogue is particularly clumsy, and evidently contrasts with Shakespeare's epilogues: 'So, on your patience evermore attending, / New joy wait on you. Here our play has ending' 5.2. 17-8. Just preceding this statement, Gower sums up the action of the entire play, rather than using the epilogue as an extension of the play itself, in which to assert a pertinent point or raise an intriguing question. Epilogues depict how the confines of the dramatic form can be broken, and they use this space to its full potential. Gower's somewhat lethargic statement at the beginning of 5.1 merely serves to indicate that the play is reaching its conclusion: 'Now our sands are almost run, / More a little, and then dumb' (5.1.1-2).

'The wheel is come full circle'[76]

At the beginning of this chapter, I discussed the implications of Michael Grandage's decision not to re-present the bodies of Goneril and Regan in the final scene of *King Lear*; the effects of this include the loss of the Aristotelian sense of revenge and punishment; and the bodies' instructive potentials. The

[75] Calderwood, pp. 165.
[76] William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 5.3.187.

prefix ‘re’ is vital in this respect; it indicates a repeating of an action. It is not that something new is enacted, but that what is already there is reimagined and keeps on evolving. Time and genre both function as structuring systems in drama; a significant difference between genre and dramatic time is that time does not stifle dramatic dynamism in the way in which monogeneric criticism reduces theatrical potential to just one genre alone. Rather, it is the manner in which we (as audience members) experience time in plays (that is, in the cyclical sense) that most reflects the ever-changing and developing nature of dramatic works.

The binary divisions in genre (‘comedy’ and ‘tragedy’) in *Measure for Measure* are used by Robert Watson for an article title: ‘False Immortality in *Measure for Measure*: Comic Means, Tragic Ends’. Watson identifies this ‘in-between’ state of the problem play, further discussing the significant extremes of ‘comic’ and ‘tragic’ endings: ‘ending with marriage emphasizes the survival of the type through procreation; ending with death emphasizes the extinction of the individual creature’.[77] *Measure for Measure* fluctuates between such assumed ‘final’ destinations as death and marriage with such apparent ease that an audience member might question whether or not they are able to distinguish between the ‘comic’ and ‘tragic’ states of drama. Isabella is explicitly involved in both possible eventualities, as she moves from mourning her brother, to being propositioned by the recently-revealed Duke. Two speeches in particular, alongside the Duke’s final lines, convey important details regarding the conclusion of this play. In terms of the level of freedom afforded to female characters in this play, there appear to be two

[77] Robert N. Watson, ‘False Immorality in *Measure for Measure*: Comic Means, Tragic Ends’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41.4 (1990), 411-432 (p. 411).

extremes: we see Isabella, who wishes for ‘more strict restraint’ (1.5.4) upon her admission to the Nunnery; and then we witness Mistress Overdone’s sense of freedom (although undercut at points by her trepidation over the impact of the new laws on her business) in the bawdy house.

This opposition between freedom and restraint is one that pervades the play. The action of *Measure for Measure* is predominantly situated in the fact that society in ‘this fourteen years have [been] let slip’ (1.4.22); time proves to be the instigating factor in the Duke’s decision to leave Vienna in the control of Angelo. As such, the freedom of the past fourteen years is directly responsible for the strict and utterly precise ruling of Angelo over Vienna. This freedom/restraint opposition is similarly communicated through the theme of marriage: it is an absence of marriage which introduces and partly instigates the plot, and the play concludes with the proposed marriages of Isabella and Duke Vincentio and of Angelo and Mariana. Claudio and Juliet’s actions prior to the start of the play are punished through the Duke’s capturing of Isabella, and Angelo being forced to marry Mariana. As discussed in Chapter One, the use of weddings as a ‘happy ending’ conclusion is extremely problematic, and the fact that the absence of a wedding begins *Measure for Measure* and the theme of marriage is used as a plot-changing device (the ‘bed trick’ for instance) throughout the play is particularly intriguing. Marriage and weddings are, therefore, marked out as *troubling* activities that have the potential to disrupt and change people’s lives in negative ways.

The ways in which weddings have been critically used to indicate ‘resolutions’, in light of the consideration of their inclusion in *Measure for*

Measure is staggering. Some of the problems contained in marriage are epitomised through the Duke's final speech in the play, which raises a number of uncertain issues:

> Dear Isabel,
> I have a motion much imports your good,
> Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,
> What's mine is yours and what is yours is mine.
> So, bring us to our palace, where we'll show
> What's yet behind, that's meet you should all know (5.1. 556-61).

Does Isabella resist Angelo's blackmail, survive the betrayal of her brother and the severe emotional trauma that is evident throughout this play and retain her pure nature just to be 'married off' to the Duke to bolster, apparently, a highly suspect notion of 'happy ever after'?[78] The tenses used in the Duke's speeches in 5.1 fluctuate between past, present, and future; this speech is predominantly rendered in the future tense, which undermines the ending itself. The conditional clauses still indicate a level of uncertainty as to how the play will eventually unfold: the rhyming couplets result in a quicker pace, which again intimates the downward trajectory of the generic arc. As discussed earlier, an audience is unable to see what transpires in the Duke's palace; however, the continually repeated rhetoric of restriction and the future conditional tenses would indicate that this plot could still, to return to Watson, result in either a 'comic' or a 'tragic' ending, reflecting the Derridean thesis of participating in multiple genres rather than belonging to one genre alone.

To refer back to Edmund's statement that 'the wheel is come full circle' (5.3.187), critical attention should be placed more on the 'is' than the 'has', to avoid acting like (in Becker-Leckrone's terms) 'scientists of the dead':

[78] The unsatisfactory nature of this ending is briefly mentioned and treated irreverently, in the comedy television series *Teachers* (series 3, episode 7).

‘archivists, archaeologists, and necrophiliacs’.[79] Promoting a mode of analysis that appreciates dramatic works for their regenerative, cyclical natures and processes of becoming enables the plays to evolve and develop in a truly dynamic and *dramatic* manner; in Don John’s words, there is no completely suitable way or reason to ‘measure the occasion that breeds’ (1.3.2). This is a sentiment that extends into the concluding chapter, where an ‘ending [of] despair’, in Prospero’s terms, or a putative ‘end’ is avoided (EPI. 15).

[79] Megan Becker-Leckrone, *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2005), p. 7.

Conclusion: Happy Ever After?

In Sonnet 130, Shakespeare initiates his anti-Petrarchan sonnet by immediately referencing how his 'mistress' eyes' are 'nothing like the sun', creating a stark contrast between his sonnet and the Italian poet's mode of expression.[1] This is a poem that undergoes numerous abrupt changes of direction in the short space of fourteen lines. Helen Vendler is one critic who argues that the rhyming couplet in the Shakespearean sonnet is the point at which meaning is created and the crux of the poem exposed.[2] L. E. Semler notes that 'the rhyming couplet delivers a tight sense of conceptual and aural completion [it is] a proverbial statement that is a complete truth in itself'; furthermore, 'the notion of the sonnet […] is consolidated in the couplet'.[3] The concept that the couplet is a 'proverbial statement' and a 'complete truth in itself' indicates that, first, the statement is perceived as a well-known fact (through 'proverbial'), and second, that the couplet is wholly accurate and a self-contained truth. This approach places problematic emphasis on the ending of the sonnet, similar to monogeneric analysis identifying the endings in Shakespearean drama as being the points that hold the 'meaning' of the entire play, or the place in which a genre is confirmed.[4]

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[1] William Shakespeare, 'Sonnet 130', in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), p. 2548, l. 1. All further references will be to this edition and contained in the body of the text.

[2] Helen Vendler states that the sonnet is comprised of 'a quatrain-answer before a summarizing couplet' in Vendler, *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Harvard: Harvard UP, 1997), p. 50.

[3] L. E. Semler, '"Fortify Yourself in Your Decay": Sounding Rhyme and Rhyming Effects in Shakespeare's Sonnets', in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare's Poetry* ed. by Jonathan Post (Oxford: OUP, 2013), pp. 449 – 467 (pp. 453, 453).

[4] For example, Penny Gay states that comedies' 'feel-good end[ings] [meet] our conventional expectations of a happy ending. Gay, *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's Comedies* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), pp. 70, 139.

In Sonnet 130, it is the beginning of the sestet, the change in direction of the apparent thrust of the argument, that makes readers re-assess and redefine the previous lines. In Sonnet 130, the less-than-flattering descriptions of how ‘the breath that from my mistress reeks’ and ‘black wires grow on her head’, are not simply forgotten in the rhyming couplet ‘And yet by heaven I think my love as rare / As any she beli’ed with false compare’ (ll. 8, 4, 13-14). Indeed, the change of direction is Shakespeare’s reprieve in an otherwise outwardly critical sonnet. Until this point, the narrator refutes all conventional expressions of physical beauty in relation to the poem’s subject; when the change comes, in the narrator’s utterance of the words ‘I love’, the connotations alter, indicating that the poem is not as critical as it seems. The meaning of the poem is generated in how Shakespeare first sets up the Petrarchan mode, and then provides specific examples as to how his narrator’s love differs from such hyperbolic protestations. The poem is formed by its whole structure, not just isolated parts such as the couplet. This example is the first of several stages of change, followed by more detailed explorations of ‘his mistress’s’ outward behaviour with the syntax altered to place the narrator’s views ahead of the facts. The couplet is another stage in establishing the sestet’s argument; it is not a summary of the poem or a ‘complete truth in itself’. Where critics such as Vendler and Semler search for a sense of closure and self-contained ‘truth’ in the couplet, this approach can nullify integral parts of the poem, through denying the sense of a coherent argument being built *throughout* the sonnet.

The rhyming couplet in Sonnet 130 does not render irrelevant and unimportant the previous twelve lines, and the conclusions to dramatic works

do not right all of the wrongs that have gone before. Bassanio betrayed his new wife Portia in giving away her ring; Angelo blackmailed Isabella and attempted to execute her brother; and Katherina suffered emotional and physical abuse at the hands of Petruchio. These harrowing examples of betrayal and despair are not all corrected in conclusions where, for instance, Isabella's religious convictions are ignored and Katherina's spirit is publicly subdued. Conclusions are not closures; neither do they erase previous conduct or words.

Like Sonnet 130, the meaning of this thesis is not held in the conclusion alone, but in the whole form and structure; the sonnet can be read as a microcosm of plays, where the conclusion does not nullify everything that has gone before. This thesis operates in the same way, endeavouring to avoid its own 'ending [of] despair', to borrow Prospero's term (or even, dare I say, a 'happy ending'?); an ending which might undermine my discussion of performative evolution and perpetual re-imagination.[5] I here present not a traditional conclusion as such, but a consideration of key points in this thesis, and how the principles discussed can benefit future analysis and inspire other projects.

In analysing Shakespeare's works through the conceptual lens of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, this thesis has explored the influence of female characters on the construction of dramatic works. This approach is in opposition to monogeneric analysis, where genre can be viewed as the governing force in dramatic works. Heather Dubrow documents this issue in relation to its origins in 335BCE, stating that Aristotle's treatise

[5] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), EPI. 15.

'is largely devoted to enumerating the qualities of tragedy, comedy and epic. […] Behind regulations like these lie certain presuppositions that were to prove no less influential than the rules they generate'.[6] Two key points of exploration were how monogeneric criticism is a problem, and questioning how such approaches can persist when the foundations of monogeneric analysis are inherently unstable. The instability of monogeneric criticism is particularly identifiable through consideration of variations of plays (quarto and Folio editions) and editorial approaches starting with Heminge and Condell; as such, this is a supplementary area of study in this thesis. In order to discuss the performance of gender on the stage in more detail, this thesis also considers approaches to boy-players in the light of Butler's work on gender performativity to illustrate that the gender of the actor is not a necessary component in discussing the gender of characters. Nicolas Bourriaud states that 'art exists in a state of encounter' (without differentiating between the process of construction and the 'final' product), and that art forms an 'arena of exchange'; this is an essential concept in negotiating the cast/audience member relationship and the unspoken contract that happens in the theatre.[7]

The existing literature surrounding Shakespearean/Renaissance drama and genre is varied. There are problems, exemplified in A.C. Bradley's statement justifying the omission of *Titus Andronicus* from his study of Shakespearean 'tragedy' as not meeting his requirements for the 'ideal tragedy'.[8] Of course, Bradley was a product of his age and circumstances, but

[6] Heather Dubrow, *Genre* (London: Routledge, 1982, repr. 2014), p. 48.
[7] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2002), p. 18.
[8] A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1904), p. xv.

the way in which his theories can now be viewed indicates how dramatic criticism has evolved since *Shakespearean Tragedy* was published and how it might develop further. Strides have been taken since Bradley's 1904 work, but steps still need to follow in how we, as scholars, interrogate theatrical works.

The approach that I have presented in this thesis promotes a method of analysis centring on characterisation and dramatic dynamism, offering, to borrow Sara Salih's metaphor, my own addition of sequins, to the 'wardrobe' of genre study.[9] This thesis has demonstrated ways to reframe, in modern scholarship, Aristotle's consideration of character as a secondary consideration to plot.[10] Cross-genre links have been made throughout, so as to illustrate the transferability of plot devices, where dramatic actions are not symptomatic or indicative of one genre alone, for example where Andrew Stott problematically states of 'comedy' that its taste is 'escapist, interested less in the "recurring disasters of life" and more in stories in which problems always resolved in the inevitable happy ending which celebrated and cemented family unity'.[11]

The underpinning theory of this thesis is predicated on challenging a monogeneric critical system that remains impervious to the influences of character; Linda Bamber, who states that 'in the comedies we may take a vacation from the serious concerns of the play because everything is sure to

[9] Sara Salih, *Judith Butler*, *Routledge Critical Thinkers* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 66.
[10] Rosalie Colie, *Resources of Kind: Genre Theory in the Renaissance* (Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1973), p. 113.
[11] Andrew Stott, *Comedy* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 42.

work out anyway', exemplifies this approach.[12] My textual analysis incorporates discussion of different versions of Shakespeare's plays, including quarto, Folio and adaptations (or 'varieties', to continue the theme) alongside performance analysis. This type of analysis in the consideration of the inherent instability of the 'Shakespearean text' was particularly revealing: there is no definitive and absolute text of, say, *Hamlet* so how can genre analysis be so apparently fixed? Of course, textual analysis is just one part of Shakespearean scholarship and I firmly believe that the plays as they appear on paper are 'play texts', documents for performance. Performance analysis has been vital to explore how these issues of genre and female influence translate onto the stage or screen; highlighting the significant differences in directors' and actors' interpretations is key. As such, I briefly return to some film adaptations that dramatically present the lack of satisfactory marital outcomes for female characters in four plays: *Henry V*; *The Taming of the Shrew*; *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*.

The screen-grabs I present below struggle against the theory of marriage as a 'cure-all', exemplified by Bamber where she states that 'In *The Winter's Tale*, the happy ending resolves the anxious wait for the fruits of time; in *The Tempest*, we are in a place where resolution follows resolution without preliminary anxiety'.[13] Of 'comedies', she states that

> The possibility of betrayal in this [comic] world is very slight. The women will not betray the men, the comic world will not betray its chosen people, the playwright will not betray *our* expectations of a happy ending. The world of Shakespearean comedy is fundamentally safe and its women fundamentally good.[14]

[12] Linda Bamber, *Comic Women, Tragic Women: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare* (Bloomington, IN: Stanford UP, 1982), p. 172.
[13] Bamber, p. 186.
[14] Bamber, p. 21. My italics.

These two quotations exemplify key problems in monogeneric analysis, concerning the ‘comedies’ and ‘romances’, presenting a view that *The Tempest* at no point offers any form of anxiety, and that ‘comedy’ is always a safe ‘world’. I have italicised Bamber’s use of ‘our’ in the indented quotation: by implication, Bamber is citing an agreement between the playwright and audience members that a ‘happy ending’ is always expected. As will be shown in the performance analysis below, even if a ‘happy ending’ is expected, that does not mean that it will be provided.

If Katherine, in *Henry V*, refuses the strategic marriage to the King of England, then France’s powerful enemy remains; the conquered Katherine is a personification of the subdued France. In *The Hollow Crown* adaptation (2012), Mélanie Thiérry’s Princess Katherine presents a dejected figure standing in isolation on the other side of the court room as Henry and her father discuss her ‘ownership’ by the English King.

Figure 34: *Henry V*, *The Hollow Crown*, dir. Thea Sharrock (California: Universal Pictures, 2012), 5.2.

Katharina in *The Taming of the Shrew* is a key example for depicting dissatisfaction with marital arrangements; in Zeffirelli's production, her unhappiness at being married to Petruchio (exemplified by her rage in the first screen-grab below, where she declares 'I will n –' before being physically grabbed and silenced by Petruchio to forcibly prevent her from saying 'not') reaches new levels, showing despair, pain and emotional distress. This pain is evident in the second picture below, where Katharina sinks, despairingly, into a crowd of apparent well-wishers with anxiety and disbelief clear on her face as she clutches at her father.

Figure 35: *The Taming of the Shrew*, dir. Franco Zeffirelli (Los Angeles, CA: Columbia Pictures, 1967), 3.2.

Figure 36: ***The Taming of the Shrew*****, dir. Franco Zeffirelli (Los Angeles, CA: Columbia Pictures, 1967). 3.2.**

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Bassanio's betrayal of Portia is powerfully represented in the BBC's 1980 adaptation, where John Nettles's Bassanio puts up little resistance in parting with the ring, and Gemma Jones's Portia's purse-lipped disapproval is evident.

Figure 37: ***The Merchant of Venice*****, dir. Jack Gold (London: BBC, 1980), 4.2.**

In a further BBC production, Isabella's dissatisfaction at receiving a proposal from the absentee Duke in the 1979 *Measure for Measure* is also clear, where

the Duke's extension of his hand towards Isabella is met with stony-faced, clearly unimpressed, silence from the novice.

Figure 38: ***Measure for Measure*****, dir. Desmond Davies (London: BBC, 1979), 5.1.**

Additionally, the positioning of bodies in this adaptation indicates perhaps an anxiety on the Duke's part to re-establish his authority; one means of doing this is to stand on the stage in front of Isabella, thus physically asserting his dominance.

These screen-grabs depict the unhappiness experienced by four women in these plays (three 'comedies' and one problem play), though of course the number of problematic unions extends far beyond just these four works. On the page, these examples can allow varied interpretations of the female characters' reactions, but their displeasure is clear in *performance*. In including these visual representations in the conclusion, I wish to emphasise the problems-in-plots experienced by female characters which can be glossed over or denied by critics coercing plays into monogeneric moulds. In reference to *Measure for Measure*, for example, Penny Gay seems determined to force this 'problem play' into the comic form (which meets

'our conventional expectations of a simple happy ending') through defining this work by its ending alone, stating that '*Measure for Measure* does conform to the comic model by ending with marriages'.[15] In doing this, the complexities of plot are ignored by analytical narratives forcing weddings such as Katherina's into a 'happy ending' formula which ignores previous dramatic action (this chimes with the theory of the rhyming couplet that makes irrelevant everything that has happened in the previous 12 lines of the sonnet).

Uneasy endings have been a recurring theme throughout this thesis, whether in respect of ending-by-death or ending-by-marriage. Hamlet's last utterance before shuffling off this mortal coil was prophesying that 'the rest is silence'; Isabella and Paulina (*Measure for Measure* and *The Winter's Tale*, respectively) respond to their impending betrothals by remaining silent.[16] This thesis does not rest in silence; I ascribe not an ending to this thesis, but an identification of how it functions as a starting point for future projects. This research, and its potential for further scholarship, presents its own 'process of becoming'.[17] Drama is, as Philip Davis writes of Shakespeare's ways of thinking, 'dynamic, not programmatic, it [is] a template of eclectic possibilities'.[18] The texts in which Shakespeare is preserved, whether Folio or quarto versions, are only guidelines for performance, not definitive editions to which readers, performers or directors must slavishly adhere; the

[15] Penny Gay, *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's Comedies* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), pp. 139, 106.
[16] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), 5.2. 342.
[17] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia UP, 1982), p. 3.
[18] Philip Davis, *Shakespeare Thinking* (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 6.

texts are unstable. Every *Complete Works* is not 'complete'. The page is a vessel to transport a play-text for construction and revival on the stage.

In concluding this thesis by reaffirming the shifting potential of printed play-texts, I do not refute or try to simplify their instability as 'texts' but illustrate the transferability of the 'problem' sentiment in exploring Shakespeare's works as rarely conforming to monogeneric principles. Marjorie Garber is absolutely right when she states that the 'grouping of the "problem plays" allowed for the segregation of those more troubled works from apparently more joyous comedies and allowed a deferral of the "problem" of their genre identification'.[19] 'Deferral' is the key word in Garber's statement. In this thesis, I do not defer discussion of these 'problems of […] genre identification', but I demonstrate instead how monogeneric approaches and analysis which distance (female) characters from the plot in an Aristotelian manner no longer suffice. E. L. Risden, expanding on Leonard Tennenhouse's work, states that 'when we agree on a "problem" label, we may not agree on exactly "what problem the play poses" or even the way it poses a problem'.[20] I have demonstrated a variety of 'problems', and the issue is not within the play itself, but is clearly identifiable in monogeneric approaches to criticism. The problem, as I have shown, stems from Aristotle in 335BCE, via Bradley (1904), through Vincent de Beauvais (1250), Dover Wilson (1969), Bamber (1982), Lewis (1992) to Danson and Stott (2000 and 2005), Gay (2010) and Bickley and Stevens in 2013. This representative

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[19] Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), p. 537.

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timeline of monogeneric theorists demonstrates that this is not a pre-twentieth-century problem, but one that persists. My original intervention in the field of Shakespearean scholarship is in challenging not problem plays, but *problem criticism*. The women of this thesis, the mother-warriors, daughters, wives, sisters, Ophelias, Isabellas, Paulinas, and the numerous others, demonstrate the instructive and pervasive influence on modern scholarship when troubling women trouble genre.

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