The Spatial Dynamics of Shakespearean Drama

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For Noa, Gary, and Johnny
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THE SPATIAL DYNAMICS OF SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

This dissertation’s focus is on how playgoers imagine, interact with, and participate in the construction of the theatrical space of Shakespeare’s plays. I am interested in the ways in which relations among spatial modes—off- and onstage, diegetic and mimetic, absent and present, represented and presented, narrated and embodied, verbal and visual, discursive and material—govern playgoers’ experience of Shakespeare’s plays in performance. The litany of binary terms listed above shows both the variety of ways that critics tend to describe the apparent divide between what is presented onstage and what necessitates an audience’s imagination, and the common critical practice of regarding these spaces as discrete and often oppositional. In what follows, I examine what I regard as two thoroughly interrelated concerns: how space is represented in Shakespeare’s plays and how theatrical representation as a whole is fundamentally spatial. In offering an exploration of theatrical space that focuses primarily on the exchanges and symbiotic cooperation among spatial modes, and on the interactivity of language, perception, embodiment, and environment in experiencing a play in performance, I seek to bridge what is considered by many to be the gulf that separates the logics of text and theater. Examining the dynamic relationships among spaces in and of early modern theatrical performance yields not only historically-situated readings of Shakespeare’s plays, but demonstrates that the relationship among spatial
modes governs playgoers’ experience of theatrical performance. In four chapters, I address what it means for audiences to interact with player-characters in a performance environment, to perceive theatrical space with embodied minds, and to manipulate and be manipulated by space.

Imaginative space has been a perennial concern in Shakespeare studies. In one of the seminal works of New Criticism, *The Wheel of Fire*, G.W. Knight considers a play’s “spatial atmosphere” as “the omnipresent and mysterious reality brooding over and within the play’s movement,” which can be understood as “interpenetra[ring] the action” of the play.¹ Knight’s “atmosphere” points to the fundamental problem of understanding the phenomenon of space as it exists in theatrical performance. Knight’s conception of plays as unified and discrete dramatic poems limits to the realm of the reader the ways in which thematic space is experienced. It also ignores the physicality and materiality of spaces that are not only undeniable properties of theatrical performance, but combine with imaginative space to produce theatrical space.

Practitioners of New Criticism paid scant attention to performance, regarding it as ancillary, and even antithetical, to discerning the meaning(s) of Shakespeare’s plays. In his famous rebuke of A.C. Bradley’s character-based criticism, *How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth*, L.C. Knights asserts that “the only profitable approach to Shakespeare is a consideration of his plays as dramatic poems,” and a singular focus on “the words on the page, which it is the main business of the critic to examine.”² As New Critics tended to


do, Knights subordinates the totality of the theatrical experience to verbal communication alone. For Knights, the reader’s so-called theater of the mind affords no meaningful connection to any theatrical performance, historical or theoretical, nor does it provide for the ways in which the embodied minds of playgoers encounter and negotiate a theatrical space partially inaccessible to those merely reading the playtext. For Knights, all critics need are “words, words, words” to do their job. Although Knight, Knights, and others were interested in making sense of the world-making aspects of Shakespearean drama, they were reluctant to accept the possibility that this world-making must take into consideration the relationship between language, dramaturgy, playing, and playgoer perception as they come together in a theatrical environment.

In what has come to be known as the “return to the author,” a number of scholars, whose antecedents can be found in proponents of New Critical principles, have argued that Shakespeare’s texts should be regarded foremost as literary entities, written by a poet-dramatist keenly aware that his works will be encountered by readers as printed texts. Scholars such as Lukas Erne, David Scott Kastan, and Stephen Orgel have brought renewed focus to the printed texts as “literature,” as objects of study in and of themselves, and not merely as stepping stones on the way to understanding dramatic works in performance. The literary approach seeks to position the plays as artifacts of

*Shakespeare Criticism* (Cambridge, England: G. Fraser, The Minority Press, 1933), 10. Knights states that “[T]hose who prefer another kind of evidence” to Shakespeare’s language itself for “the clue of how” the dramatic poems “should be read,” are referred to M.C. Bradbrook’s study of “the physical peculiarities of the stage and Elizabethan dramatic conventions,” *Elizabethan Stage Conventions*. Knights follows this referral with a one sentence “hasty summary” which concludes that such conventions as non-realistic staging only “helped to govern the total response obtained by means of the language of the play” (10-11).
print and bibliographic culture authorized by the dramatist-as-author and others involved in the production of printed texts, rather than as “watered-down” or incomplete products of commercial theater. Erne argues that Shakespeare was much more concerned with his literary reputation than had previously been granted, and that Shakespeare, attending to the specific medium in which certain playtexts would function, composed plays differently for the page and for the stage, perhaps explaining, to some extent, the existence of variations amongst quarto editions, and amongst quarto and folio texts.³ Kastan writes that “[t]ext and performance are…not partial and congruent aspects of some unity that we think of as the play, but are two discrete modes of production. Performance operates according to a theatrical logic of its own rather than one derived from the text; the printed play operates according to a textual logic that is not derived from performance.”⁴ Orgel succinctly articulates what the above scholars (and others) regard as an insuperable divide between text and performance: “if the play is a book, it’s not a play.”⁵ My project seeks to nuance the perceived text-performance divide by showing how both text and performance are constitutive elements of representation in and of Shakespeare’s plays, each contributing to the theatrical product.

The page-to-stage approach that has gained popularity in recent years seeks to recover the theatrical motivations manifested in (and perhaps, authorizing) the extant

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printed documents. Scholars such as Tiffany Stern argue that theatrical information embedded in the extant playtexts can be accessed by consideration paid to how plays were encountered in the performance environment. Stern highlights the ways in which the multiplicity, fluidity, and instability of early modern theatrical performance and practice impacted the materials that were used in the printing of dramatic texts. Stern writes that “[d]enying a text its theatre symbolism, confining it to the page, is to remove layers of potential meaning from it. To read the text alone and take that to be the play itself is to ignore the visual and aural commentary that shaped it in the theatre.” In his study of the performance and staging conventions of the early modern playhouse, Tim Fitzpatrick writes that

as they wrote, playwrights were inscribing ‘directorial objectives’ in their texts, and that these textual strategies were underpinned not by individual playwrights’ idiosyncratic projections of performance or by specific companies’ work practices, but by a set of generic spatial and semiotic conventions that loosely governed the way in which the early modern performance space and its inbuilt physical resources were used to stand for places and things in the fictional world.

Fitzpatrick argues that early modern playwrights such as Shakespeare not only wrote for “specific companies’ work practices,” but utilized, and innovated upon, the conventions of performance environments in ways that synthesized performance space and imaginative space in order to produce “fictional world[s].”

Performance- and theater-studies scholars view the printed play texts as (for the most part, corrupt and/or incomplete) theatrical scripts, and have argued that the plays

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can only be “realized” in performance. For example, Alan Dessen argues that in order to properly interpret a play, one must attempt to access the “original logic of presentation,” a “shared language of the theater common to dramatist, actor, annotator, and spectator,” by attending to contemporary staging conventions, dramaturgy, actors’ gestures and voices, and other signifying elements suggested by dialogue and stage directions. This information constructs the space of Shakespearean theatrical performance in which audiences and player-characters participate.

Performance criticism, however, has grown more trenchant in insisting on the player’s body as the defining characteristic of dramatic experience. For example, Anthony Dawson writes that “[t]he most important element that distinguishes Shakespeare on the stage from Shakespeare on the page is the presence of the living actor. Shakespeare was well aware of this; he built into his plays an extraordinary attentiveness to the physical being of the actor, or, to be more precise, the actor/character. The body on the stage belongs to the actor but is in a sense the character as well.”

Herbert Blau asks “[d]oes the theater begin with the actor in the center of the stage? Or with the empty space?” The either-or scenario that Blau puts forth, one that frames

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9 Anthony Dawson, “Shakespeare on the Stage” in *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Eds. Margretta de Grazia and Stanley Wells. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 233. It is also somewhat troubling that in Dawson’s discussion of “person” as player-character hybrid in his and Paul Yachnin’s *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Dawson remarks that “the person is first of all something seen” (15); yet, the example that he provides is of Enobarbas’ description of Cleopatra on her barge, a moment that is narrated, reported, but not staged.

10 Herbert Blau, *Take Up the Bodies: Theater at the Vanishing Point* (Urbana, Ill: University of
theatrical performance as either that which is borne out of the actor, or that which is borne out of the so-called empty space which the actor fills, I regard as both reductive and insensitive to the complex exchanges of material and imaginative forces that together construct theatrical space in performance. While Dawson is correct in positing that the “body...is in a sense the character,” performance demands of an audience much more than a reflexive equating of embodied player with dramatic character in a neutral or empty space. Shakespeare’s “attentiveness” extends not only to the physical body of the actor but to the entirety of theatrical space. As Charles Lyons writes, “it is impossible to separate the image of theatrical space from the image of character.”

It is in this integrated theatrical environment, in which bodies and space (and bodies in space) are mutually constitutive, that the product of both player-character and theatrical space is constructed and made legible for audiences.

Embodied Mind in/of the Theater

Theatrical space is a material and imaginative hybrid that is co-produced by the cognitive and perceptual faculties of the audience. This is similar to how we should conceive of what I call the player-character in performance, as the hybrid or blend between player and character that informs audience response via embodied and situated minds. Robert Weimann and Douglas Bruster have defined the relationship between player and character as “blended” or “double.”

Weimann and Bruster contend that
“boundaries between the verbal signs of language and the visible signs of the body became as porous as they were contingent,” and that “the dramatist’s language itself has already assimilated the player’s *gestus*, speech rhythm, and kinetic thrust prior to any subsequent embodiment,” so that “verbal and visible signs come together in the literary as well as the material production, but also in the audiovisual response of auditors-spectators.”

For Weimann and Bruster, these components are “conjoined in a dramatic discourse that is an object of, as well as an agency in, the staging of the play.”

The relationship between playgoer, player-character, and theatrical environment can be best understood, I argue, as a distributed ecological system, within and by which playgoers participate in a theatrical space that is comprised of both imaginative and material elements. Evelyn Tribble and John Sutton argue for regarding theatrical performance as a system that is “dynamic, material, and non-localizable”:

In a dynamic model of system, no one element can be identified as the unit of analysis. Rather, thought is distributed across insides (internal mechanisms constraining attention, perception, and memory); objects (artifacts and environments); and people (social systems)…The integrative label “cognitive ecology” particularly highlights the point that disparate but tightly interconnected elements within any such culturally specific setting operate in a complementary balance that shifts over time.

Tribble and Sutton go on to state that

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14 Ibid., 19.

Cognitive ecology facilitates a system-level analysis of theater: this model of cognitive ecology would posit that a complex human activity such as theater must be understood across the entire system, which includes such elements as neural and psychological mechanisms underpinning the task dynamics; the bodily and gestural norms and capacities of the trained actors; the physical environment(s), including the relationships between playing and audience space; cognitive artifacts such as parts, plots, and playbooks; technologies such as sound or lighting; the social systems underpinning the company, including mechanisms for ‘enskillment’; the economic models by which the company runs; the wider social and political contexts, including censorship, patronage, and commercial considerations; and the relative emphasis placed upon various elements of the enterprise, including writerly or directorial control, clowning, visuality, and improvisation. No one of these elements is primary, but instead each affects and modulates the others.16

Tribble and Sutton’s “cognitive ecological system” challenges a semiotic conception of performance that regards theatrical space as a sign system. The semiotic approach is articulated by Anne Ubersfeld, who asserts that

[b]y virtue of the multiplicity of its concrete networks, stage space can simultaneously convey the image of a metaphorical network, a semantic field, and an actantial [animating or energizing] model.... Likewise, once stage space can be simultaneously the figure of a given text, of a socio-cultural or sociopolitical network, or of a topography of the mind, we can be sure that there are substitutive crossovers between these different shaping structures.17

Rather than viewing theatrical space within a semiotic system which does not account for the materialities of the stage and the theatrical environment, my study follows Bert O. States, Andrew Sofer, and others who find it most accurate to observe theatrical events, as it were, through the experiential lens of phenomenology, the study of the mind-body in the world.18 Bert O. States writes that “the problem with semiotics is that in addressing

16 Ibid.

17 Anne Ubersfeld, Reading Theatre (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 110.

18 See Bert O. States, Great Reckonings In Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); and Andrew Sofer, “Spectral Readings.”
theatre as a system of codes, it necessarily dissects the perceptual impression theatre makes on the spectators.”¹⁹ Instead, a phenomenological approach that acknowledges a distributed ecology of space, which mine does, takes into account not only signifying aspects of space, but also material, sensorial, and perspectival elements of the playgoing experience.

New Historicism studies have focused upon the exchanges and overlap between social and theatrical energies that coalesce in the early modern performance environment. Orgel writes that “[a]ll at once, theater was an institution, a property, a corporation. It was real in the way that ‘real estate’ is real; it was a building, a possession – an established and visible part of society.”²⁰ In his study of the intimate, at times paradoxical, connections between the commercial theater enterprise and early modern London society that is generated by the liminal status of playhouses located in the city’s liberties, Steven Mullaney writes that Shakespearean “drama took matters of place and space, distance and displacement, quite seriously. They were the conditions of its possibility.”²¹ Louis Montrose and Stephen Greenblatt propose that early modern theatrical output does not merely reflect the dominant values of the culture, but

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¹⁹ States, *Great Reckonings In Little Rooms*, 7.


participates in the shaping and critiquing of the culture. For Montrose, the early modern theater is the locus for “a dialectic between the fictional world of the characters and the experiential world of the audience.” For Greenblatt, the mutual exchange of representation and theatricality that occurs between the social and the theatrical is thus “transferred” to the stage, where it is then revised, and returned to the audience. While my project considers the material, social, and ideological exchanges between early modern London and the liminal place of the stage as essential to formulations of theatrical space, my primary focus is on the imaginative and experiential space that interacts and coincides with the materiality, physicality, and architectonics of the theatrical environment.

**Theories of Space**

Theorizing the cognitive processes of audiences experiencing a play—the understanding that cognition relies, in part, upon one’s position within both real and imagined space—allows us to consider how the performance of bodies in space informs, in no small way, an audience’s perceptual experience. In other words, dramatic performance is enacted and experienced via the embodied mind. Studies such as Mary Thomas Crane’s *Shakespeare’s Brain* chart the “spatial patterns and structures, derived from early experiences of embodiment, which at least some cognitive scientists posit as

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the bases of human thought and language.” She writes that “Shakespeare uses particular words as focal points for explorations of the spatially centered experiences of cognitive subjectivity, as it figured in the development of the ‘individual’ in the early modern period and as those new individuals were represented by fictional characters on the space of the platform stage.” Mark Rowlands offers a challenge to what he terms “Cartesian internalism,” in which all cognitive functions occur within the mind of a person, by claiming that “minds are not purely internal things; they are, in part, worldly in character. That is, minds are hybrid entities, made up in part of what is going on inside the skin of creatures who have them, but also made up in part of what is going on in the environment of those creatures.”

Likewise, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson demonstrate that close connections between body and mind can be observed via spatial metaphor that is “pervasive…not just in language, but in thought and action.”

As I suggest above, theatrical space itself is not just the environment in which language and bodies coalesce in performance, but as a blend between word, thing, sense, perception, and imagination that is greater than the sum of its contents. Shakespeare’s plays both initiate and respond to the spatial dynamics of the performance environment,

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25 Ibid.


and through language, dramaturgy, and exchanges among embodied minds, shape the audience’s theatrical experience. I consider theatrical space to be a contested and mediated physical, social, psychological, and physiological environment, and draw upon a number of relevant theoretical contributions that, either tangentially or directly, define space as such. My chapters engage with the spatial theories of Henri Lefebvre, Yi-Fu Tuan, Michel de Certeau, and Michel Foucault, putting these analyses of space (and the particular terminology of each) in dialogue with one another in ways that illuminate how spatial modes intersect and interact in Shakespeare’s dramatic works.

In *The Production of Space*, the neo-Marxist sociologist Lefebvre contends that “[social] space is a [social] product,” meaning that society produces the space that it experiences. For Lefebvre, “[e]ach living body is space, and has its space: it produces itself in space and also produces that space.” Lefebvre’s analysis of the relationship between material, abstract, and social spaces undergirds partially the ways in which my project regards and analyzes the spaces produced in and by Shakespeare’s plays. In his “inventory” of space, Lefebvre makes distinctions between three interrelated modes of spatial production. “Perceived space” or “spatial practice” provides “the practical basis of the perception of the outside world.” In other words, this is the spatial mode accessed by the commonplace or everyday perceptions of members of society. “Conceived place” or “representations of space” is “the dominant space in any society (or mode of

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29 Ibid., 16.
30 Ibid., 40.
We can think of this spatial mode—which Lefebvre characterizes as “the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers”—as the mental, hegemonic ordering of space that is represented by maps, schematics, and verbal descriptions (and restrictions) of space. Lefebvre designates “conceived space” as “a place for the practices of social and political power; in essence, it is these spaces that are designed to manipulate those who exist within them.” Completing Lefebvre’s triad is “representational space” or “lived space”: “space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols.” Lefebvre contends that “lived space,” as a negotiation between “perceived” and “conceived” space, can offer an “[a]uthentic knowledge of space.” Within, or provided access to, “lived space,” one can “address the questions of its production” through embodied and imaginative means.

Theatrical space produces, and is produced by, the “conceived” and perceived” spaces that audiences are encouraged to synthesize in the “lived space” generated by the experience of theatrical performance. We can see Lefebvre’s three spatial modes as operating in Shakespeare’s plays in the following ways. In 2.3 of *Titus Andronicus*, Tamora, the Goth queen captured and brought to Rome by Titus, where she is quickly made Empress by Saturninus, provides two differing accounts of the scene’s location, a forest, each of which requires the playgoer’s spatial practice to perceive upon the stage.

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31 Ibid., 38.
32 Ibid., 222.
33 Ibid., 39.
34 Ibid., 388. Lefebvre writes that it is “lived space” “which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” (39).
that which is communicated through language. First, Tamora describes the forest
topography in this way:

The birds chant melody on every bush,  
The snake rollèd in the cheerful sun,  
The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind  
And make a chequered shadow on the ground.  
Under their sweet shade, Aaron, let us sit,… (2.3.12-16)

The eroticism of her scene-setting mirrors the concupiscence she feels (or wishes Aaron
and the audience to perceive she feels) for Aaron as onstage auditor. Aaron recognizes,
as perhaps the playgoer does, that “Venus govern[s] her desires” (2.3.30). However, the
conventions of the early modern non-illusory stage prohibit a playgoer’s confirmation
of the accuracy of her description. Later in the scene, after her encounter with Lavinia
and Bassianus, Tamora tells her sons (and, of course, the playgoer) that

These two have ’ticed me hither to this place.  
A barren detested vale you see it is;  
The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,  
Overcome with moss and baleful mistletoe.  
Here never shines the sun, here nothing breeds  
Unless the nightly owl or fatal raven,  
And when they showed me this abhorrèd pit  
They told me, here, at dead time of the night  
A thousand fiends, a thousand hissing snakes,  
Ten thousand swelling toads, as many urchins  
Would make such fearful and confused cries  
As any mortal body hearing it  
Should straight fall mad or else die suddenly.  
No sooner had they told this hellish tale  
But straight they told me they would bind me here  
Unto the body of a dismal yew  
And leave me to this miserable death. (2.3.92-108)

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35 Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Shakespeare’s plays are taken from The Norton
The opposing descriptions of the forest mark Tamora as presenting “conceived space”; her contradictory representation of the malleable stage location puts forth a space “designed to manipulate” both on- and offstage auditors. However, the audience’s spatial knowledge allows it not only to recognize the relationship between psychological and “real” spaces that have informed Tamora’s dueling settings, but to perceive at once the opposed descriptions as oscillating components of the overarching, and ambiguous, theatrical space presented by both.

A similar display of the manipulation of theatrical space occurs in 4.6 of King Lear, the scene at Dover Cliff, in which a disguised Edgar deceives Gloucester into believing he is “now within a foot / Of th’ extreme verge” (4.6.25-26). As presenter of “conceived space,” Edgar shapes mimetic space in a way that may temporarily deceive the audience as it struggles to discern the topography of the stage as either “even,” as Gloucester protests, or “Horribly steep” (4.6.3), as Edgar reassures both him and the audience. In one sense, Gloucester’s blindness matches the audience’s deprivation of sight of the illusory precipice that Edgar describes. However, Edgar’s aside, “Why I do trifle thus with his despair / Is done to cure it” (4.6.33-34), informs the audience that Gloucester’s deception is not theirs. The audience’s spatial knowledge allows it to perceive at once the construction of Edgar’s illusory space and the construction of the theatrical space in which the “extreme verge” is and is not represented onstage. Henry Turner writes that at this moment “the audience is now faced with the tension of either identifying with Gloucester and entering the secondary layer of illusion or identifying with Edgar and recognizing the illusion as such—which immediately forces an awareness
of the larger enabling illusion taking place on the stage before them.\textsuperscript{36} Gloucester’s fall calls attention to both the physical reality of the performance space (the bare stage upon which Gloucester falls) \textit{and} the meaningful malleability of the theatrical space in which Edgar, Gloucester, and playgoer all participate.

The theoretical approaches of Tuan and de Certeau further contribute to my project’s analysis of the dialectical relationship between space and place as presented for the playgoer in and by theatrical performance. We can think about place as both the performance environment in which playgoers experience the play—for example, the local, physical, and architectural dimensions of the Globe playhouse and its platform stage—\textit{and} the representation(s) of a dramatic location (for example, the forest in \textit{Titus Andronicus}, or Dover Cliff in \textit{King Lear}). Space, on the other hand, affords imaginative movement and changes in perception and perspective for player-characters and playgoers, such that the “place of the stage” in both senses is spatialized as it is processed through the playgoer’s contingent and incremental spatial knowledge.

Tuan argues that space is movement and possibility, while place is pause and stability:

\begin{quote}
What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value…The ideas ‘space’ and ‘place’ require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.\textsuperscript{37}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{37} Yi-Fu Tuan, \textit{Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 6.
The playgoer’s task, as articulated by the Chorus’ plea to “make imaginary puissance” (1.0.25) in *Henry V*, is to maintain an awareness both of the stability of the locatable places of the performance environment and the malleability of the theatrical space represented. Tuan contrasts “the security and stability of place” with “the openness, freedom, and threat of space,” and associates space with movement and place with pause. I find Tuan’s distinctions between place and space to map usefully onto dramatic performance, in which theatrical space stages the exchanges between, and transformations of, space and place.

My dissertation focuses primarily on theatrical moments that afford a playgoer spatial knowledge: for example, the Choruses of *Henry V*; Caius Martius’ absent-present wounds and his declaration that “There is a world elsewhere” (3.3.139) in *Coriolanus*; the “natural perspective, that is and is not” (5.1.209) presented on the stage in the final scene of *Twelfth Night*; and the re-animation of Hermione at the end of *The Winter’s Tale*. In these instances, the playgoer’s imaginative oscillation or toggling—in which perception constructs theatrical space while simultaneously revising it based upon new or seemingly contradictory perceptions—provides him or her with the potential for a spatial knowledge that elucidates not only meaning in the plays, but allows the playgoer to recognize his or her significant position as embodied participant and imaginative co-producer of theatrical space. Tuan writes that “[s]patial ability becomes spatial knowledge when movements and changes of location can be envisioned. Walking is a skill, but if I can ‘see’ myself walking and if I can hold that picture in mind so that I can

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38 Ibid.
analyze how I move and what path I am following, then I also have knowledge.” 39 A playgoer who attains spatial knowledge perceives both what is described and what is staged, even, and especially, when what is communicated in and represented by theatrical space oppose one another.

Like Tuan, de Certeau conceives of place and space as relational. De Certeau defines place as “the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence…. [It is] an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability.” 40 For de Certeau, place is stable, fixed, ordered, and proper. De Certeau defines space as the “effect” of a person’s movements and actions as he or she negotiates and engages with a particular place: “space is a practiced place.” 41 In other words, one’s experience in and of the world, one’s spatial knowledge, is governed by how one interacts with or performs places, and in a sense, transforms them into spaces. De Certeau suggests that space is an environment of potentiality, in which the social and political order associated with a place can be confronted, questioned, and modified. In fact, for de Certeau, the confrontation, questioning, and modification of the social and political order of a place, through the implementation of certain spatial practices, brings space into existence, thus making it perceptible and malleable. Treating dramatic places and spaces as a combination of material, psychological, and physiological elements of early modern drama—and

39 Ibid., 68.


41 Ibid.
therefore as meaning-making, observable, and perceptible—allows us to re-evaluate how theatrical space interacts with and influences a playgoer’s spatial knowledge. The playgoing experience demands recognition both of what is presented and what is represented in theatrical space in order to maintain a double awareness of the presentational space of the stage and the representational space of the drama. As seen above in the examples from *Titus Andronicus* and *King Lear*, power dynamics within the play are articulated through, and made available by, the spatial dynamics of the theatrical environment.

Michel Foucault’s theories examine the relationship of power, discourse, and knowledge in historical and social spaces. Foucault writes that

A whole history remains to be written of spaces—which would at the same time be a history of powers (both these terms in the plural)—from the great strategies of geo-politics to the little tactics of the habitat, institutional architecture from the classroom to the design of hospitals, passing via political and economic installations.42

In “Of Other Spaces,” Foucault recognizes the theater to be a space “capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible.”43 Foucault defines counter-sites as “being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect.” Foucault’s theater, one of many “counter-sites” that he names, resembles early modern London’s purpose-built playhouses, in which


numerous contingent and interdependent spaces can be represented at once. Foucault divides these “counter-sites” into “utopias, [which] are sites with no real place [and] present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down,” and heterotopias, “places that do exist,” in which “all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.”44 In Chapter Five, I show how *The Winter’s Tale* performs utopian and dystopian (“society turned upside down”) spaces, such that the play’s final scene produces a heterotopian space that unites Paulina’s chapel with the playhouse. In fact, moments such as Tamora’s opposing descriptions of the forest and Gloucester’s fall at Dover Cliff are two of many in Shakespeare’s plays that exhibit their heterotopian qualities by ostentatiously calling attention to the conflation and unification of—and ultimately the transcendence of the distinctions between—theatrical space and performance environment.

**Diegetic and Mimetic Space**

The integrative space of the play in performance incorporates the player’s body and the stage with absent, invisible, reported bodies, thoughts, actions, and events that are not staged, but occur in the dramatic circumstances of the play. Mimesis and diegesis are often regarded as fundamentally distinct, and thus governed by two different systems of signification. Michael Issacharoff defines mimetic space as “what is made visible to an audience and represented on stage,” while diegetic space “refers to what is described by the characters.”45 This dissertation deviates somewhat from Issacharoff’s definitions by

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44 Ibid., 24.

claiming that while mimetic space consists of what is represented onstage, diegetic space consists of that which is not materially or visibly represented onstage, but that nonetheless is present in the theatrical space of the drama. While Issacharoff’s terms position language as the fulcrum, so that that which is visible falls on the mimetic side, while that which is communicated verbally falls on the diegetic side, my distinctions place at the fulcrum the embodied minds of playgoers who must perceive far more than what is merely seen or spoken. The strict distinction between mimetic and diegetic spaces that some critics profess leads to a reductive consideration of mimesis as unmediated and diegetic spaces as mediated through verbal construction. In this regard, I also part with Issacharoff, who argues that “mimetic space does not require mediation; in contrast, diegetic space is mediated by verbal signs (the dialogue) communicated verbally and not visually.”46 Awarding primacy in theatrical performance to what is visually presented, as critics do when they speak of diegetic space as purely textual or discursive, doesn’t recognize playgoers’ perceptual position(s). Thinking of mimetic space as unmediated simply because what occurs in it is shown rather than told can distort an understanding of both mimetic and diegetic spaces. Mimetic space is not only mediated by a host of factors including verbal communication, the embodiment of a player, and the imaginative revision of the audience; mimetic space is also mediated by the unseen. Diegetic space, that which is visibly unrepresented but nonetheless exerts a considerable pull on what occurs in mimetic space, is continually engaged in the plays’ spatial dynamism.

46 Issacharoff, *Discourse as Performance*, 55-56.
William Gruber argues that “[m]imesis and diegesis run side by side, as it were, functioning as two interdependent modes of theatrical representation.” In theatrical presentation, and especially in early modern theatrical performance, the distinctions between these spaces are not clear cut. My contention is that there has been too great of a divide or distinction between the ways in which representations in theatrical space are perceived. In what is an apt description of how diegesis and mimesis collaborate to produce theatrical space, Lefebvre writes that “[v]isible boundaries…give rise to an appearance of separation between spaces where in fact what exists is an ambiguous continuity.” This “ambiguous continuity” is made available through playgoers’ encounters with both real and imagined spaces. Interactions between the bodies and utterances of player-characters in the theatrical environment (which includes player-character and playgoers) demand a spatial knowledge, super-attenuated not only to the “doubleness” or “blended” construction of player-characters, but to the multi-dimensionality of a theatrical space in which playgoers, players, characters, and environments coalesce.

What follows is an example of how diegetic and mimetic spaces interact to produce an experience for playgoers that relies upon both sensory and imaginative faculties. In 4.4 Hamlet, Shakespeare’s Danish prince observes Fortinbras and his army

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48 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 87.
as they march “over the stage” (s.d. 4.4.0) towards “some part of Poland” (4.4.9.3). 49 The territory in Poland that Fortinbras seeks to invade and conquer is referred to by the captain as “a little patch of ground / That hath in it no profit but the name,” and of which, “To pay five ducats, five, [he] would not farm it” (4.4.9.8-10). In the soliloquy that follows, “How all occasions do inform against me,” Hamlet refers to the land that Fortinbras intends to take despite “the imminent death of twenty thousand men” (4.4.9.50) as “an eggshell,” “a straw,” “a fantasy and a trick of fame,” and “a plot” (4.4.9.43, 45, 51, 52). Hamlet asks himself, as well as the audience of the soliloquy, to “Witness this army of such mass and charge / Led by a delicate and tender prince” (4.4.9.37-38); yet the audience is only given a brief glimpse of Fortinbras and his soldiers before they exit through the stage doors. The battle for the “little patch” of the Pole’s land is, of course, not dramatized onstage. Hamlet not only presents his own imaginative conception of the battlefield, but also constructs this diegetic space for the playgoer to imagine and envision. Its position offstage, outside and beyond the mimetic space of the stage, serves to substantiate Hamlet’s diminution and deflation of “the invisible event” (4.4.9.40). In other words, the meaning of Hamlet’s words is enacted by the relationship between the visually represented space of the stage and the non-visible spaces offstage. The battle’s relative insignificance, as Hamlet describes it, is reinforced by its absence from the stage, by its status as a type of diegetic discourse. However, Shakespeare chooses to position in diegetic space the site that has a profound effect on Hamlet’s psyche, his imagination, and his subsequent actions. Hamlet’s dismissive characterization

49 The italicized line numbers from the Norton edition of Hamlet indicate that these lines in 4.4. appear in Q2 only.
of the battle stands in inverse proportion to its monumental and transformative effect on his psyche, resulting, arguably, in the tragic actions he takes in the subsequent scenes of the play, including his resolution that “from this time forth / My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth” (4.4.9.55-56). In other words, Hamlet’s description of diegetic space at once dictates and opposes the audience’s perception of it. This is an exemplary instance of Shakespeare’s utilization of diegetic space in order not only to mediate mimetic actions, but to represent the psychological impact of diegetic space on the thoughts and actions of player-characters as they are presented on the stage.

**Perspectives in Space**

A brief taxonomy of the spaces that contribute to a playgoer’s theatrical experience will aid the reader, I hope, in understanding the ways in which these spaces construct, and are constructed by, a playgoer’s theatrical experience. I treat theatrical space as that which is produced through transactions among three dimensions: performance space, embodied space, and imaginative space. My project never treats these spaces in isolation, simply because theatrical performance always depends upon the exchange, overlap, and interaction among these spaces to generate meaning for audiences.

Performance space refers to the stage and its immediate physical surroundings. Performance space can be further subdivided into onstage space, offstage space (including “the heavens” above the stage, “hell” below, the tiring house behind, etc.), and audience space. I treat performance space as the material environment in which drama is presented. To avoid confusion, I use terms “offstage” and “onstage” throughout this
project to refer only to the physical space of performance, to and from which players enter and exit. While offstage and onstage denote locations in the performance space relative to the stage, these spaces must be regarded differently than mimetic and diegetic spaces, which cannot be divested of their embodied and imaginative connotations.

Embodied space can be understood, as Keir Elam states, as the product of relations and tensions between “the dramatic body performed and the actor’s body performative.” Thus, players’ bodies, their appearance, gestures, voices, movements, facial expressions, props and attire, styles of personation, position on stage (**locus** or **platea**), and spatial relations vis-à-vis other players and the audience, all contribute to the embodied space of a performance. Garrett Sullivan writes that

> A major implication of work on the extended mind is that neither cognition nor embodiment end at the (porous) edges of the human body. Instead, embodiment extends beyond and across bodies and environments; its contours are different from those of the body itself. And yet scholars smudge the distinction between body and embodiment by mapping the latter onto the former; that is, they approach embodiment as if the body necessarily limns the terrain of its operations. The early modern mind-body demands that we think about embodiment differently—that we recognize it as constituted out of somatic transactions with the world. 

Put simply, embodied space is generated from the tensions that arise from the “doubling” or “blending” of that which is presented physically and that which is represented symbolically.

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Imaginative space refers to that which an audience perceives, and thus is a product of that which is physically presented in the performance space and that which is represented in dramatic performance. In imaginative space, sensory, psychological, and social realms—as well as substances present and absent, material and metaphorical—are collapsed and reformulated as the dramatic performance dictates.

Thus, through the interactions of these spatial modes, the audience is implicated in a complex theatrical space. Weimann has demonstrated how “the material place of performance practice” on the early modern stage knits together performance, embodied, and imaginative spaces in ways that stage the plays’ (and player-characters’) expressions of social, political, and theatrical authority. Weimann writes that “[o]n the Elizabethan stage the difference between the imaginary landscape inscribed in the story and the physical, tangible site of its production was of particular, perhaps unique, consequence.”

Weimann posits that cultural and political space is mapped onto—and expressed by the configurations of—stage space as it is organized by *locus* or representational space, and *platea* or presentational space. Weimann defines *locus* as “a fairly specific imaginary locale or self-contained space in the world of the play” which “foregrounds an apparently self-contained space serving the picture of the performed, not the process of the performer performing.” He defines *platea* as “an opening in the mise-en-scène through which the place and time of the stage-as-stage and the cultural occasion itself are made either to assist or resist the socially and verbally elevated, spatially and

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53 Ibid, 181; 184.
Recently, Erica T. Lin has challenged Weimann’s theory for what she sees as the reductive equating of *locus* (upstage) with mimetic power and *platea* (downstage) with presentation of theatrical power or authority. Lin posits that the character in the position of theatrical authority, often but not always positioned in the *platea*, is the one with the most awareness of the theatrical aspects of the scene. In other words, the player-character’s position in performance space is less significant to matters of “theatrical authority” than the player-character’s expressions of awareness of the presentational aspects of the drama. Weimann’s theory relies somewhat heavily on stage position, an audience’s fixed perspective, and a dominant *visual* mode of experience, while Lin’s revision of Weimann’s formulation emphasizes the interplay between embodied and imaginative modes of perception over the particular positions of player-characters relative to stage geography. Lin’s approach influences my own analysis of how the playgoer is implicated in dynamic perspectives that manifest themselves not only in the player-characters’ physical arrangement on the stage, but by their positions in, and influence over, a comprehensive and complexly articulated theatrical space.

My readings in this dissertation are modeled on Clifford Geertz’ use of “thick description.” Geertz writes that “a thick description of a human behavior is one that explains not just the behavior, but its context as well, such that the behavior becomes

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54 Ibid., 181.
meaningful to an outsider.”56 Although I do attempt to historically situate my readings throughout, this dissertation is concerned foremost with the theatrical context of Shakespeare’s plays. I conceive of deep theatrical space as operating as an interpretive lens by which a practitioner of “theoretical performance criticism” may temporarily foreground one of the spatial modes in order to access a particular, though always constitutive, aspect of theatrical space.57 Timothy Morton describes Edmund Husserl’s phenomenological observation of objects as follows: “No matter how many times you turned around a coin, you never saw the other side as the other side. The coin had a dark side that was seemingly irreducible.”58 Deep theatrical space provides a heuristic model for the examination of the ways in which the embodied minds of playgoers perceive theatrical events that are represented “beyond and across bodies and environments.”59 As such, deep theatrical space treats the theatrical event similarly to how the Husserl’s phenomenological approach regards objects such as the coin; its “irreducible dark side” cannot be observed directly, but must be analyzed by its relation to the particular perspective of the observer.60


57 For more on “theoretical performance criticism,” see Brian Walsh, “‘Unkind Division’: The Double Absence of Performing History in 1 Henry VI,” Shakespeare Quarterly 55.2 (2004 Summer): 119-147, esp. 119-120, n.2.


60 Timothy Morton, Hyperobjects, 11.
Robert Hapgood writes that “Shakespeare’s plays show us in the audience how our own lives would look if we were enlightened enough to detach ourselves slightly from them and look at ourselves from the outside as well as the inside—with a fuller understanding of the influences that are exerted upon us, a more detached perspective on our own formulations of experience, and a greater awareness than usual that others see things differently from ourselves and have inner lives, too.”61 Barbara Freedman argues that “[t]heatricality evokes an uncanny sense that the given to be seen has the power both to position us and to displace us.”62 Readings that utilize deep theatrical space must acknowledge the critic’s own privileged perspective, while simultaneously considering the multiple and competing perspectives of the playgoer as offered by his or her participation in, and co-production of, the theatrical event.

In Chapter Two, I demonstrate how the exchanges between space and place in Henry V afford audiences a spatial knowledge of the embodied and imaginative processes of theatrical representation. Shakespeare utilizes diegetic and mimetic spaces in order to juxtapose persuasive speech with dramatic action. The audience is encouraged – by the Chorus directly and Henry indirectly – to take special notice of the presentational aspects of the performance. I argue that it is Henry’s rhetoric, his evocative language, that inspires soldiers and audience members, and that also captures the audience’s eye, ear, mind, and emotions. The audience’s co-production of the imaginative components of theatrical representation as encouraged by the Chorus, combined with its experience of


witnessing Henry’s impassioned words, challenges the audience to process presentation with representation, to maintain a double awareness of the drama and the performance that is enacting it. The disguised king’s confrontation with Williams, Court, and Bates highlights Agincourt’s ambiguous status as named and located place and as malleable diegetic space. In *Henry V*, the battlefield of Agincourt is constructed by both the encouragement of the Chorus to “behold” what the bare stage cannot produce visually and to revise by imagination and awareness the glimpses the audience does get of the stage-as-Agincourt. For the soldiers, Agincourt is only “such a place,” yet to be named (by Henry) and emplaced in Elizabethan England’s historical consciousness.

In Chapter Three, I argue that contrary to critics’ near consensus that Caius Martius lacks interiority, or that he is an “empty” character, the interiority of Caius Martius is constructed both within theatrical space and experienced by an audience that must derive meaning and sense from the shifting relations between diegetic space and the performing body. With its numerous references to theatrical performance, to playing parts and delivering lines, *Coriolanus* forces the audience to be aware of the inherent duality of theatrical performance, the absent-presentation of the player presenting and the character represented. While Caius Martius’ refusal to admit the necessity of performance in order to successfully traverse the socio-political world of Rome occasions his banishment and death, along the way his character is “bodied forth” in ways that conjure significant associations between socio-political and theatrical performance. Through description, rumor, report, narration, and interpretation, a concatenation of voices forms and re-forms Caius Martius’ character, often in the player’s physical absence from the
stage. I suggest that *Coriolanus*’ spatial dynamics, particularly the exchanges between absence and presence exhibited in theatrical performance *via* the utilization of mimetic and diegetic spaces, construct Caius Martius’ character, insofar as his theatrical body extends beyond the confines of the presenting player, and towards an audience that perceives that which is neither presented exclusively on the stage nor communicated exclusively through language. The spatial dynamics of the play also give presence to unseen and immaterial elements such as Caius Martius’ concealed wounds and his offstage place of banishment “I’th’ city of kites and crows” (4.5.41). Tracking Caius Martius’ presence and absence in theatrical space provides us with an understanding of how *Coriolanus* attempts to spatially represent Caius Martius’ interiority.

While Chapters Two and Three focus primarily on the relationship between the central characters of King Henry and Caius Martius and the theatrical space that each participates in and helps to construct, the final two chapters demonstrate how theatrical space constructs meaning for a playgoer by encouraging him or her to adopt multiple and malleable perspectives.

Chapter Four examines the ways in which *Twelfth Night*’s spatial dynamics provide a lens by which to observe the intricate connections between diegetic and mimetic spaces, as well as between the perceptions of characters onstage and the perceptions of the audience as it negotiates the material and theatrical construction of these spaces. Feste’s “we three” jest presents playgoers with the spatial knowledge required to perceive the final scene’s reunion of Viola and Sebastian as “a natural perspective, that is and is not” (5.1.209). Throughout the play, mimetic and diegetic
spaces are integrated for the audience in ways that upend any strict division of representation in theatrical space into what is visually presented and what is reported.

Finally, Chapter Five examines the ways in which Paulina’s chapel enacts a feedback loop in which playgoers’ spatial knowledge affords them the perspectives from which to perceive not only what is on display visually, but to experience the theatrical product of the interactions between, and juxtaposition of, minds and bodies, and real and unreal spaces. As opposed to studies that focus upon the binary relationship between Sicily and Bohemia as dramatic places, I argue that *The Winter’s Tale’s* interdependent spaces of “utopia,” “dystopia,” and “heterotopia” construct the audience’s intersubjective experience of wonder in the final scene. I examine the thematic, and perspectival, significance of the play’s multiple, dynamic spaces, their overlap, and their interactivity—spaces governed not only by their geographical or structural opposition, but by their relationship to the audience’s multifaceted perceptual space.
CHAPTER TWO

“BEHOLD THE SWELLING SCENE”: HENRY V’S SPACES

*Henry V* offers what is perhaps Shakespeare’s most sustained interrogation of the problematic relationship among theatrical configurations of space. The play exposes the tensions between authority and theatrical space in ways that challenge audience expectations and allow for multiple and contrasting audience responses, and does so, in no small part, by attending to the relationship of diegetic to mimetic space. In what follows, I argue for the powerful gravitational force that diegetic spaces exert upon the action (and even the political or ideological elements) of the historical drama. I wish to suggest that the play frames the relationship between diegetic and mimetic space as one that generates a distributed and diffuse theatrical authority, one that depends upon the audience’s awareness in order to make meaningful connections between the spatial modes of the play.

This chapter focuses on a number of diegetic spaces and how they are represented in various ways in *Henry V* in order to demonstrate how representational elements of the performance and the imagination of the audience work together to produce what I call deep theatrical space. In this chapter, I identify four aspects integral to theatrical playing and playgoing—*beholding, mocking, digesting*, and *expecting*, all words used by the Chorus in addressing his audience—to discuss how diegetic and mimetic elements
construct, and are constructed by, the places and spaces of *Henry V*. I suggest that the audience is destabilized in ways that mirror the destabilization of power and authority on the stage. A result of this mutual destabilization, the distribution of authority from stage to audience and back, cyclically and intermittently, mirrors the ambivalence that performance yields, allowing for various and competing interpretations of the play.

That *Henry V* is preoccupied with performance and representation has been long recognized by critics.¹ The play’s Prologue voices concern for the inadequacy of the playhouse in representing “So great an object” (1.0.11) as the heroic military accomplishments of King Henry in France. Critics point to the apologetic tone of the first Chorus in characterizing the physical venue for drama as “this unworthy scaffold,” (1.0.10) “this cockpit” (11), and “this Wooden O” (13) as evidence of the play’s self-conscious regard for its own theatricality. Harry Berger argues that the Henriad should be read as a sustained critique of the values and inadequacies of theater, and particularly of performance.² For Berger, the same tactics employed by actors in convincing an audience of the truth of what is performed are utilized by the Plantagenets in solidifying, maintaining, and maximizing their power.³ I also view *Henry V* particularly as

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¹ A number of critical analyses argue for a meta-theatrical reading of the play, the most well-known being James Calderwood’s *Metadrama in Shakespeare’s Henriad: Richard II to Henry V* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), esp. 134-181.


³ This is, more or less, the standard New Historicist take on the Henriad. Other examples of this view include Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Stephen Greenblatt, the “Invisible Bullets” chapter in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); David Scott Kastan,
demonstrating the power of the theater to dramatize for its audience the theatricality of
ekingship. However, I suggest that *Henry V* is less about the inadequacies of theater than it
is about how theatrical drama engages with, and stages, history—which itself is
constructed and malleable—in ways that make evident for its audience the
theatricalizations of power. I wish to suggest, then, that it is by dramaturgical and spatial
means that Shakespeare enacts this strategy. The primary way that the play does this is
through a sustained manipulation of theatrical space. The play positions moments of
heroism and idealized kingship in diegetic space, most conspicuously in the spoken
words of the Chorus, but also in many other moments throughout the play. These diegetic
moments serve as a running commentary for the actions in mimetic space, contradicting
in some instances, and ironizing in others, what is being presented onstage.

Berger’s reading of the Henriad depends upon “the textual indications of
Shakespeare’s anti-theatricalism.” He argues, for example, that the Chorus’ patriotic
rhetoric, “his pretence of dissociating the dramatic referent from the theatrical sign”
works to “detextualize” the represented performance by calling attention to the
discontinuity between what the Chorus says and what the stage shows. While I accept
Berger’s premise that the dialectic between the Chorus’ rhetoric and the enacted drama
illuminates certain contradictions between what the audience hears and what it is shown,
I dispute his conclusion that this discontinuity stems from Shakespeare’s overall


4 Berger, “Harrying the Stage,” 131.

5 Ibid., 138-9.
dissatisfaction with the limits of theatrical performance. Instead, I suggest that it is the dialectic between two interconnected elements of theatrical performance, the diegetic and the mimetic, or the narrated and the embodied, that makes this discontinuity available for playgoers. Thus, we are justified in asking whether Berger has assumed anti-theatrical moments in the play to be merely “textual,” and therefore representative of Shakespeare’s attitude toward the theater, or whether critics such as Berger perceive instances of anti-theatricalism that are not in fact there, or that signify something else entirely.

Stephen Orgel argues that the audience is central to early modern playwrights’ conception of drama, and that instances of Shakespeare’s critical attitude toward audiences can be understood as dramatic devices in which Shakespeare attempts to “turn” a real audience into “an ideal audience.”6 In other words, Shakespeare models “less-than-ideal” audience perception (often in the form of onstage audiences), incorporates it into the dramatic performance, and in this way anticipates and influences actual audience perception. If we consider how Orgel’s theory works in *Henry V*, we can see how the play constructs a dialectical relationship between what an audience is told and what it is shown. Most studies of *Henry V* fall short of adequately explaining the relations between mimetic and diegetic spaces. Too often, critics treat the play’s diegetic spaces as an effect of the represented dramatic action, or as merely a verbal supplement to what occurs onstage. Rather, as I will show, diegetic and mimetic spaces exist in a causal, and often symbiotic, relationship with each other.

At the other extreme are the experiences of readers and playgoers in which diegesis exerts an incommensurate influence on mimetic space. For example, As Sharon

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Tyler points out, “[f]or nearly four hundred years, audiences have been seeing what is described rather than what is staged.”7 Too much focus upon either diegetic or mimetic space will weigh one’s interpretation too heavily in one direction or the other.

One of Shakespeare criticism’s longest standing debates is whether *Henry V* is a glorification or a critique of the titular English monarch. Is Henry portrayed in the final play of the second tetralogy as a hero, “the mirror of all Christian kings” (2.0.6) as the Chorus calls him, or as a ruthless and cunning Machiavellian ruler? A compelling critique of these attempts at political or ideological readings is that they often betray the ideological stance of the critic more than they reveal that of the play or playwright. My approach is to consider how Shakespeare attempts to encourage an audience’s spatial knowledge by highlighting the significance of the interplay of diegetic and mimetic spaces. What kind of play, and what kind of king, a playgoer witnesses depends on the depth of the playgoer’s spatial-theatrical awareness of what diegetic and mimetic spaces communicate, and particularly how that theatrical information is communicated.

*Seeing what is described* by the Chorus tends to yield a patriotic reading, a narrow reading, and one sympathetic to Henry. In this case, the playgoer is swept up and away by the imagined swelling scene, and persuaded by the rhetoric of both the Chorus and king. This reading is exemplified by T.W. Craik, who writes that “*Henry V* is a

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7 Sharon Tyler, “Minding True Things: the Chorus, the audience, and Henry V,” in *The Theatrical Space*, Ed. James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987), 76. Tyler claims that this confusion occurs, in part, because the Chorus “call[s] deliberate attention to the artificial nature of [the] play” (76). Assuming that Tyler’s claim is accurate (and her opinion is in line with many other critics, including Andrew Gurr), this means that the phenomenon of “audiences…seeing what is described rather than what is staged” is either caused by the Chorus’ exposing of the play’s constructedness-as-theater, or occurs in spite of this.
celebratory play, commemorating a famous victory,” and that “patriotism is [the play’s] constant theme.”

Those who instead see what is staged have a far different opinion of what the play means. This playgoer notes discrepancies and contradictions, and reads them as “coded” communicative devices. If the playgoer (or reader) pick ups these signals, it is apparent to him or her that these contradictions reveal Shakespeare’s ideological stance, and that the play is a bitter critique of Henry, war, monarchy, etc. This view, in which audiences are deceived by rhetoric and ceremony but a few privileged and adept readers “get it,” is exemplified by Harold Goddard’s well-known Henry V chapter in The Meaning of Shakespeare. Goddard argues that “[i]f Shakespeare had deliberately set out to deglorify the Battle of Agincourt in general and King Henry in particular it would seem as if he could hardly have done more.”

Instead, Shakespeare’s ideal playgoer, one possessing spatial knowledge, sees both what is described and what is staged, digesting diegetic and mimetic information, even, and especially, when what is communicated in and by these spaces opposes one another. This playgoer observes that what occurs offstage is often heroic and idealized, and in this way aligns itself, perhaps paradoxically, with what Thomas Heywood in An Apology for Actors describes as “prosperous performance.” “[S]o bewitching a thing is lively and well-spirited action,” writes Heywood, “that it hath the power to newmold the

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10 Thomas Heywood, An Apology For Actors (London, 1612), Book I, B4R.
harts of the spectators and fashion them to the shape of any noble and notable attempt.”

In *Henry V*, the “lively and well spirited action” occurs almost exclusively in diegetic space; it is reported, narrated, and gestured towards, but it is not staged. This ideal playgoer also observes that what *is* staged is persuasive speech and politically motivated rhetoric. Actions played on the stage fall short of the idealized heroism of the play’s diegetic space, setting the less-than-ideal in stark relief, physically framed by its visible position on the platform stage.

Norman Rabkin uses the gestalt psychology paradigm of the Rabbit/Duck drawing to demonstrate that one can view King Henry as *either* heroic *or* Machiavellian, and the play as *either* patriotic *or* critical, but that one cannot hold these “two opposed interpretations” simultaneously. His essay does an excellent job of presenting a compelling case for both responses to the play; nonetheless, there are significant problems with Rabkin’s argument. For example, Rabkin proposes that the essential quality of the play is its ambivalence; yet, paradoxically, this is the quality that Rabkin’s

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11 Ibid.
12 Although a playgoer’s recognition of the spatial dynamics of the play perhaps leads to a feeling of ambivalence, I claim that this ambivalence is manifested in the form of spatial knowledge or wisdom. Steven Urkowitz writes that “…much of the rhetoric supporting patriotism as well as that showing its dismal costs are carefully designed to create that ambivalence which is felt as wisdom – both positions are too strong to bear. We do bear them, believe them in their irreconcilability, and feel wise” (email correspondence). In his letter “To George and Thomas Keats (Dec. 21, 27 [?], 1817)” in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 9th ed. Vol. 2. Ed. M.H. Abrams. New York: Norton, 1993, John Keats calls this ambivalence “Negative Capability”: “when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason” (830). Compare also with Rabkin’s explanation of “complementarity” in *Shakespeare and the Common Understanding* (New York: Free Press, 1967).

analysis marks as unavailable for a reader or audience member. While one may view the play as “a subtle and complex study of a king who curiously combines strengths and weaknesses, virtues and vices,” Rabkin considers this reading as failing to account for the “crisis” that the play’s “fundamental ambiguity” should activate in us, as well as was activated in Shakespeare himself. In other words, there is no reducing Henry V to something less than its “fundamental ambiguity,” just as there’s no possibility in Rabkin’s either/or reading of holding in one’s head the two opposing views the play appears to offer. For Rabkin, Shakespeare forces us to choose, and in this way, “leaves us at a loss.”

Some critics have approached the problem of oppositional readings of Henry V by arguing that the play critiques the monarchical power structure by exposing the inherent theatricality of political manipulation. In the same stroke, Shakespeare critiques the inadequacies of theater by staging its inability to provide a substantial critique of the theatricality of power. In these assessments, theatricality is both the vehicle for, and object of, critique. To me, this is an overburdening of theatricality. As such, it can’t hold up as a legitimate interpretation. It caves in under its own weight. And the critics making these claims, most notably Berger, happen to be—in a sense—anti-theatrical, meaning that they wish to privilege the written text over the performance of the play in

14 Ibid., 295.
15 Ibid., 296.
order to demonstrate that Shakespeare was all too willing to critique performance with as much gusto as the anti-theatrical critics of our time and his own.

However, as a theatrical device, the Chorus of *Henry V* alternately orients, disorients, and reorients the audience to the malleable locations, boundaries, and territories of a play whose actions transpire over vast stretches of space and time. In doing this, the Chorus also requires playgoers to revise what is physically presented onstage, literally to *see differently* what the performance presents visually, and to *hear differently* what the performance presents aurally. The Prologue foists upon the playgoers the responsibility of active imaginative participation in the presentation of the play, “For ’tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings” (1.0.28). This imaginative responsibility is two-fold. The Chorus demands that a) playgoers fill in gaps that are not (or cannot be) physically represented onstage; and b) playgoers reassess and revise onstage actions and interactions in light of what they are told of them. In this sense, the Chorus attempts to

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17 The intense focus and scrutiny that the Choruses attract make all the more remarkable and inexplicable the fact that the first printed edition of *Henry V*, the 1600 quarto, was published without the Prologue, the five Choruses, and the Epilogue. For arguments about the differences between Q and F, see Annabel Patterson’s chapter “Back by Popular Demand: The Two Versions of *Henry V*” in *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* (Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell, 1990), 71-92, and Gary Taylor, *Three Studies of the Text of Henry V* (Oxford, 1979). In lieu of my own summary of the differences, here is Taylor’s. The 1600 quarto, besides its lacking of the Choruses, “omits, from the play as we know it, the opening scene (with its revelation of mixed ecclesiastical motives for supporting Henry’s claim to France), lines 115-35 of 1.2 (which culminate in the Archbishop’s offer of church financing of the war), all reference in 2.1 to Henry’s personal responsibility for Falstaff’s condition, Cambridge’s hint of motives other than simple bribery for the conspiracy against Henry (2.2.154-59), the bloodthirsty MacMorris and most of Henry’s savage ultimatum in 3.3, all of Burgundy’s description of the devastation Henry has wreaked on France (5.2.38-62). The effect of the differences between this text and the one printed in all modern editions is to remove almost every difficulty in the way of an unambiguously patriotic interpretation of Henry and his war” (12). However, the inclusion in the 1623 folio of the Chorus, and his role as Henry’s apologist and liaison to the audience, complicates a reading that would directly oppose the quarto to the folio.
facilitate a coherence, or seamlessness, in the thoughts of the playgoers between what is said to occur offstage and what occurs onstage. Numerous studies, however, have demonstrated the failure of the Chorus to do just that. But as far as providing the playgoer with spatial knowledge, there is much to be gained in the audience recognizing the failures of the Chorus.

**Spatial Knowledge**

As I discuss in my Introduction, Yi-Fu Tuan argues that space is movement and possibility, while place is pause and stability. The genre of Shakespeare’s history is particularly suitable to Tuan’s distinction, and this dialectical division between stable place and malleable space manifests itself in the relation between diegetic and mimetic space in *Henry V*. Thus, diegetic and mimetic spaces are politically and ideologically marked; occurrences presented in mimetic space are adopted from written chronicle history and mediated by performance. What is performed in mimetic space is limited by the inadequacies of theatrical presentation, but more than this, the play’s representation of historical events points to the inadequacies of historical chronicle and collective English memory in representing “true things” “in their huge and proper life” (4.0.53; 5.0.5). The Chorus’ liminal position as mediator between chronicle history and theatrical

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performance serves not only to reduce Henry’s accomplishments to its status as performance, but also to remove idealized history beyond the boundaries of mimetic presentation.\textsuperscript{20} Idealization is relegated to a position in diegetic space. From this position, it comments upon, complicates, and contests what transpires onstage, even for those who “have not read the story” (5.0.1). Yet, the reverse is also true; what transpires in mimetic space comments upon, complicates, and contests the idealized historical past of written chronicle.

Phyllis Rackin claims that the place of the playhouse serves to spatialize—and in this sense to demystify—the stable linearity of chronicle, just as chronicle history serves to destabilize the performance of historical drama. Rackin points to the mutually destabilizing influence of each medium upon the other. She writes that

\begin{quote}
[t]he English history play was, in fact, a deeply ambivalent medium, the place where two discursive fields, each unsettled in itself, came together in a new hybrid genre, with no established tradition and no uncontested protocols to govern the complicated negotiations between its unstable components. In most ways, the status of \textit{historia} in Shakespeare’s England was far above that of the public theater. Celebrating a heroic national past and constructing an ideological justification in heredity for the present status system, history was an honorable and much-honored institution. Identified with every sort of threat to the personal virtue of subjects and the good order of society, the new commercial theater often seemed to exemplify the disruptive forces that threatened the status quo. Nonetheless, neither history nor theater was as stable or unambiguous as this account implies. History was undergoing profound changes, and the public commercial theater was an innovation too recent to have acquired a clear institutional status or cultural significance.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{20} For the \textit{Henry V} Chorus as liminal, see Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann, \textit{Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama} (London: Routledge, 2004).

Written chronicle history is destabilized simply by being brought to the stage, while performance of these historical events, by bringing them into the present by representation onstage, is destabilized by the existence and ubiquity of idealized history. Authority figures of the drama such as Henry and the Chorus attempt to “place” the action, to stabilize and reinforce “History” for the audience, but are challenged by the instability and unaccounted-for loose ends that accompany the staging of it. So we have, in Shakespeare’s histories, a “pitched battle” between historical place (written chronicle) and theatrical space, each destabilizing the authority of the other.

Tuan makes a distinction between spatial ability and spatial knowledge that maps neatly onto what is often seen as the contradictory purposes of the Chorus. Tuan writes that “Spatial ability becomes spatial knowledge when movements and changes of location can be envisioned. Walking is a skill, but if I can ‘see’ myself walking and if I can hold that picture in mind so that I can analyze how I move and what path I am following, then I also have knowledge.”22 The Chorus asks its audience to view the actions of Henry as noble and just; yet, in order to do so, an audience must account for what the Chorus regards as the inadequacies of theatrical performance in presenting this noble and just war of Henry’s by “work[ing]” their thoughts and “mak[ing] imaginary puissance” (3.0.25; 1.0.25). The Chorus encourages the audience to see what transpires in the drama as representative of heroic action and behavior, yet begs pardon for the medium’s inability to represent Henry’s heroism. Shakespeare’s ideal audience “sees” itself doing what the Chorus asks it to do. Audiences are aware of the imaginative effort

22 Tuan, Space and Place, 68.
it takes to see the drama as the Chorus wishes it to be seen, of the vast gap between the potentialities of imagination and the material realities of theatrical performance. To read the Chorus as speaking spatial ability, while showing, or affording the audience spatial knowledge, grants the audience an awareness of the inherent “doubleness” of theatrical performance. This awareness of “doubleness” allows playgoers to regard themselves as both spectators and participants (or producers) in the fictionalized history. In this sense, some audience members may be more or less aware than others of how the Chorus simultaneously manipulates thoughts and exposes these manipulations as contributing to the “mockeries” of theatrical performance. One demonstrates spatial ability simply by behaving as the Chorus demands, by piecing out imperfections with thoughts. However, spatial knowledge requires the recognition of the Chorus as contradictory, as a dramatic device that invites questioning, skepticism, and revision. This critical approach provides the audience with powerful heuristic tools to behold in Henry V the mirroring of power and performance.

Michael Goldman points to the similarities in strategy between the Chorus and Henry, and locates within the audience an awareness of strain that occurs in both situations: “Just as the Chorus’ speeches emphasize effort and strain and the making of

23 For recognition of “doubleness” in playgoing, see Weimann, Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice, (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Weimann writes that “[t]here is probably no other text in Shakespeare’s oeuvre that, in setting out the doubleness of the theatrical frame of reference, shows how deeply the business of mise-en-scene is implicated in it. The staging of Henry V is actually made to thrive on the use (and ‘abuse’) of the threshold between the imaginary, represented product (the shown play) and the material process of bringing it about (that is, the playing of the play, the showing of the show)” (70). For performance’s role in dissociating monarchical power from theatrical authority, see Weimann, “Representation and Performance: Authority in Shakespeare’s Theater,” PMLA Vol. 107, No. 3, Special Topic: Performance (May, 1992): 497-510.
much out of little, so throughout the play we are aware of the effort and strain of leading an army, of making a kingdom bigger, of turning a man into a soldier, and indeed of turning a man into a king.”24 It is the playgoer’s thoughts that must deck the drama’s kings, but it is the playgoer’s awareness that he or she is doing the decking that governs his or her relationship to the performance.

**Beholding**

It is fitting that in folio *Henry V* the word *behold* is spoken more times by the Chorus—eight—than by any other of Shakespeare’s characters in any other of his plays.25 The speeches of the Chorus make *Henry V* the Shakespeare play most explicitly concerned with both what and how the audience beholds. Although the term is most often associated with the apprehension of the visible, George Puttenham, in *The Art of English Poesy*, uses “beholder” as a synonym for audience member, hearer, and spectator, and he “translate[s] theatrum as ‘a beholding place.’”26 “Behold” has a specifically theatrical connotation in the early modern period, closest in meaning to seeing with the mind’s eye. The fifth Chorus implies this meaning when he implores the audience to “behold / In the quick forge and working-house of thought / How London doth pour out her citizens” (5.0.22-24).27 The Prologue also calls for this kind of theatrical visualization of

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25 OED, “behold,” v.: “To hold or keep in view, to watch; to regard or contemplate with the eyes; to look upon, look at (implying active voluntary exercise of the faculty of vision).”


unperformed actions when he asks the playgoer to “Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them, / Printing their proud hoofs i’th’ receiving earth” (1.0.26-27). This kind of beholding can be detected in Simon Forman’s description of a performance of “Mackbeth at the Glob” that he attended in April of 1611: “ther was to be observed, firste, how Mackbeth and Bancko, 2 noble men of Scotland, Ridinge thorowe a wod…”28 In both cases, it is the playgoer’s responsibility to visualize the horses in motion. Forman “observe[s]” the player-characters on horseback. From both an objective perspective, “there was to be observed,” and a subjective one, Simon Forman the playgoer beholds “Mackbeth and Bancko…Ridinge thorowe a wod.”

The Prologue’s opening lines require the playgoer to be aware of both his or her spectatorial and social position vis-à-vis the theatrical performance. As a result, the associations made by the playgoer, the knowledge that the playgoer gleans from what he or she beholds, is continually destabilized:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{O for a muse of fire, that would ascend} \\
\text{The brightest heaven of invention:} \\
\text{A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,} \\
\text{And monarchs to behold the swelling scene. (1.0.1-4)}
\end{align*}
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The Prologue’s desire is that monarchs will be the audience for whose pleasure and judgment the play will be performed.29 From the first lines of the play, the playgoer’s

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29 It is likely that “monarchs” and “princes,” namely James I and Prince Henry, attended a 1605 court performance of Henry V. It is unknown whether the Choruses were included in this performance.
spectatorial and social positions are called into question, so that the playgoer must continually reassess his or her playgoing status, the playgoer’s integral role in the performance. And how a playgoer sees himself or herself as situated, both within the drama and within the performance environment, has a significant effect on how the playgoer beholds the Chorus and the king. The Prologue’s opening lines express disappointment not only in the environment of the performance and its players, but in the audience as well; the average playgoer is, of course, a great deal less than a monarch, but nonetheless, must do.  

And yet, the audience is addressed as “gentles all” in the Prologue (1.0.8), and again in the second Chorus: “the scene / Is now transported, gentles, to Southampton” (2.0.34-5). It has been noted that addressing the audience attending a performance at one of the public playhouses as “gentles” was an uncommon practice. 

So why does the Chorus do it twice?

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31 See W.D. Smith, “The Henry V Choruses in the First Folio,” The Journal of English and Germanic Philology, Vol. 53, No. 1 (Jan., 1954): 38-57. Smith argues that “[i]t is surely more reasonable to imagine that the prologue is not referring, inaccurately, to the permanent stage of the Globe Theatre but rather, specifically, to the temporary platform set up for dramatic production at Court. Far more incongruous with wording appropriate to a public performance in Elizabethan times is the classification of the audience as gentles all (‘ladies and gentlemen all’) in line 8.” This notion that the Choruses were specifically written (post 1599) for a court performance has been disputed by Gary Taylor in the “Introduction” of his Oxford edition, 18-9, as well as by R.A. Law in “The Choruses in Henry the Fifth,” The University of Texas Studies in English, Vol. 35 (1956): 11-21.

32 Just a few lines later, the second Chorus also promises to give the audience “gentle pass” across the channel to France (2.0.39).
There is certainly more than a passing connection between the Chorus’ addressing the audience as “gentles,” and Henry’s promise in the St. Crispin’s Day speech that “he today that sheds his blood with me / Shall be my brother; be he ne’er so vile, / This day shall gentle his condition” (4.3.61-63). The connection between the Chorus and Henry can be understood as the mutual marshalling and motivating of forces. The Chorus’ address of the audience as “gentles all” preemptively rewards participating playgoers for the strenuous imaginative effort it will take to perceive Henry as “the mirror of all Christian kings,” and Henry’s war as noble and just. Henry’s persuasive speeches and motivating rhetoric operate in the same way both for the onstage audience of soldiers and for the audience in the playhouse. Hence, the play establishes an intimate connection between soldiers and audience.

However, some parts of Henry V challenge and complicate this relationship. For example, when before Agincourt, Warwick wishes aloud (and within earshot of Henry) “O that we now had here / But one ten thousand of those men in England / That do no work today” (4.3.16-18), audience members may see themselves as implicated in Warwick’s slighting words. As playgoers of the public playhouse performance, they technically “do no work today”; yet as directed by the Chorus, the audience must “make imaginary puissance” and “work” their “thoughts” in order to behold the glorious victories of Henry and his men in France, and in order to “demonstrate,” in Grandpre’s words just before the battle of Agincourt, “the life of such a battle / In life so lifeless as it shows itself” (4.2.54-55). The performance generates for the audience the patriotic spirit requested by the Chorus, but it is tempered by, among other things, the political deal-
making and suspect reasons that assure Henry of his “right and conscience” (1.2.96) for his waging war in France. Moreover, ambivalence is generated by the play’s treatment of its audience as occupying both the position of “loyal subjects” that Westmorland speaks of in 1.2, whose “hearts have left their bodies here in England,” and as the subjects of Warwick’s accusations of weakness and cowardice, “those men in England / That do no work today.” In this sense, the audience is both “here” and “not here” in France; playgoers are at once participants in the imaginative production of the famous battle of Agincourt and at home in England, observing heroism from the position of spectators.

**Beholding Crecy**

One way to approach how the play constructs theatrical space by the intermediation of diegetic and mimetic action is to examine how the historical battle of Crecy is represented on and off the stage. I suggest that Crecy is offered up in *Henry V* as a model for playgoers in contributing to the production of the imaginative space of another diegetic French battlefield, Agincourt. The play not only calls upon the imagination of the audience in constructing a vision of the historic battle of Crecy based upon the description of it by the churchmen Canterbury and Ely, as well as the noblemen Exeter and Westmoreland; it also calls upon the audience’s collective cultural and theatrical memory of the victory by Edward III over French forces to do so. The audience constructs the space of the battle of Crecy according to how Henry’s advisors describe it. Yet, the audience’s position as a secondary audience to the diegetic battle allows it to witness the battle’s description as an influential tool utilized by the churchmen. The battle

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33 For more on Crecy, see Jonathan Baldo, “Wars of Memory in *Henry V,*” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47.2 (Summer 1996): 132-159.
of Crecy is presented in this particular way because it is meant to convince Henry that the same kind of glory and victory is available for him and his soldiers in France. Thus, Crecy exerts a similar signifying relation to Agincourt as Agincourt does to Shakespeare’s London audience in 1599.

The memories and images of Crecy are invoked in a way that approximates the performance space of the playhouse:

Look back into your mighty ancestors,
Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire’s tomb,
From whom you claim; invoke his warlike spirit,
And your great-uncle’s, Edward the Black Prince,
Who on the French ground played a tragedy,
Making defeat on the full power of France,
While his most mighty father on a hill
Stood smiling to behold his lion’s whelp
Forage in blood of French nobility. (1.2.102-110)

Just as the Prologue attempts to frame the swelling scene for the audience, Canterbury and Ely attempt to frame the battle for their king in theatrical terms. The historical battle of Crecy is narrated by Canterbury in the language of theatrical performance. Canterbury and Ely attempt to inflame and invoke Henry’s “warlike spirit” by translating the historical battle of Crecy into a diegetic scene no less theatrical than if it were enacted onstage. The battle gets theatrically converted at court in order to convince Henry to do what the churchmen desire him to do. Canterbury’s narrated scene echoes the arrangement of royalty that the prologue frames: “…princes to act, / And monarchs to behold the swelling scene” (1.0.3-4). Edward the Black Prince acts as Edward III watches with admiration, all told by Canterbury, who performs the role of the Prologue-at-court. Edward the Black Prince “play[s] a tragedy” for Henry; in this diegetic space, the Black
Prince both *is* and *is not* Henry. This doubling representation unites Henry with his “mighty ancestors” through Canterbury’s suggestive rhetoric; yet, it also divides Henry from his ancestors by positioning Henry as audience to this battle. The narrated passage also potentially multiplies Henry, in the sense that the king may identify himself (or be associated by others) with either the spectator-father-monarch, given his customary theatrical position of place “on a hill,” or the player-Black Prince, the “lion’s whelp / foraging in blood of French nobility,” or with both prince and king, player and spectator, son and father.34

Drawing on Ernst Kantorowicz’s well-known discussion of the king’s two bodies (the *body political* and the *body natural*), Leonard Tennenhouse argues that the multiple identities of Henry—the sense provided by the play that he is everywhere at once—help to guide, and even to contain, the responses of both on- and offstage audiences:

The king’s identity coalesces and his power intensifies as he unifies those territories that are his by hereditary law. But as this occurs, one finds that the figure of the monarch breaks apart and disappears into many different roles and dialects. He uses the strategies of disguise and inversion to occupy a range of positions from soldier to lover, as well as several roles in between. As a consequence, the king is virtually everywhere. He occupies the center of every theater of social action and in this way constitutes a state that to modern readers appears to have no coherent center at all, neither a continuous political policy nor an internally coherent self. To make sense to an Elizabethan audience, we must therefore assume the king’s body did not have to behave as if it were that of a self-enclosed individual. Rather the histories suggest that the body had to behave, semiotically speaking, as if blood had conspired with the disruptive operations of providence to produce it. In becoming so many functions and dialects of a single political body, he makes the various social groups he thus contains lose their autonomy.35

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34 Of course, Henry is not a father at this moment, but he certainly is by the Epilogue: “Henry the Sixth, in infant bands crown’d King / Of France and England, did this king succeed” (Epilogue 9-10).

35 Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres* (New York:
According to Tennenhouse, in *Henry V* “the king is virtually everywhere.” Henry’s envisioning of his advisors’ narrated history lesson presents the king from multiple positions. I suggest that the king’s multiplied presence is on display in 1.2, appearing as spectating monarch and acting prince in the narrated battle and on the platform stage, which at this moment represents the king’s court. Not only is the audience given a description of Edward III’s historical victory at Crecy, but as a secondary audience, the playgoer beholds Henry beholding the diegetic battle of Crecy. Moreover, the example of the king “virtually everywhere” models for the playgoer the multiplicity of interpretive and spatial positions available from moment to moment throughout the performance:

O noble English, that could entertain  
With half their forces the full pride of France,  
And let another half stand laughing by,  
All out of work, and cold for action. (1.2.111-114)

As I will demonstrate more extensively below, the play’s audience, the “noble English,” placed in a position that is both in the playhouse and at the scene of battle in France, may identify with either half, with those “entertain[ing] /…the full pride of France” or with those who “stand laughing by, / All out of work and cold for action,” or with both at once. In this way, both Henry and the audience resemble Pistol’s description of Falstaff’s broken heart, at once “fracted and corroborate” (2.1.113).

**Mocking**

Shakespeare plays spatially with the unification and separation of the king’s two bodies in other important ways elsewhere in *Henry V*. When Henry claims himself to be

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merely a man (decked, to an extent, in the king’s body natural), or merely a soldier, he is placed onstage in the most theatrical of spaces: before the gates of Harfleur; among his soldiers the night before Agincourt; at the French court wooing Katherine. When he is meant to be seen as king (the king’s body political), symbolic and authoritative—as when he is referred to by the Chorus as “the mirror of all Christian Kings”—these moments almost always occur offstage, whether championed by the Chorus, lauded by the churchmen, mocked by the Dauphin, or praised by Fluellen. The king as representative emblem or icon is presented diegetically; the king as soldier, as politician, as prankster, as lover, is presented mimetically. This division, in a sense, politicizes diegetic and mimetic spaces. Consequently, it signals the audience to be conscious of the division, to be aware of the significant differences between diegetic and mimetic space, and thus to be knowledgeable of its own position as synthesizers of these discrete, though interconnected, theatrical modes.

Lawrence Danson writes that the Chorus “mock[s] his own act with self-conscious exaggeration even as he earnestly enacts it.” 36 Danson recognizes in the Chorus the same mocking-as-enacting that occurs throughout the play. 37 And “mockeries” is an especially significant word in the fourth Chorus: “Minding true things by what their mockeries be” (4.0.54). “Mockeries,” then, are what the performance provides for the audience mimetically, while much of what is spoken about the king by

36 Lawrence Danson, “Henry V: King, Chorus, and Critics,” Shakespeare Quarterly 34.1 (Spring, 1983): 28. “Mock” (in all its variations/cognates) appears 11 times in the play, and like “ behold,” it is also used more times in Henry V than in any other of Shakespeare’s plays.

37 Danson, among other critics such as Goldman and Gurr, points to the rhetorical similarities between the Chorus and the king.
the Chorus is presented as if these descriptions are “true things.” Accounting for the mock-humility of the Chorus’ pleas to “excuse” the performance itself as put on by “ciphers to this great account,” the Chorus’ equating of mockeries to performance hints at the Chorus’ slight regard for the players’ capability of representing a heroic king.\(^{38}\)

However, the Chorus is quite confident in his own ability to narrate for its audience the king’s heroism. While the mockeries presented onstage don’t necessarily do the memory of the king justice, the Chorus’ linguistic presentation justifies the ways of the king to the audience.

The Dauphin (through the French ambassador) mocks Henry with tennis balls in 1.2 and insults and slights in 2.4. In 1.2 Henry mocks his mocking:

> And tell the pleasant Prince this \textit{mock} of his  
> Hath turned his balls to gunstones, and his soul  
> Shall stand sore chargèd for the wasteful vengeance  
> That shall fly with them—for many a thousand widows  
> Shall this his \textit{mock mock} out of their dear husbands,  
> \textit{Mock} mothers from their sons, \textit{mock} castles down;  
> Ay, some are yet ungotten and unborn  
> That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin’s scorn. \(1.2.281-288, \text{my italics}\)

Here is an example of Weimann’s notion of the curious separation or dissociation of authority from power, which is an exceptional quality of the Elizabethan theater.\(^{39}\) The king mocks the mocking Dauphin in the similar way to how the Chorus mocks the stage mockeries. It is in examining the uses of mocking in the play that one can observe the powerful connection between the theatrical performance of Henry in the drama, the

\(^{38}\) In the early modern period, “mock” implied scorn or derision heaped upon a subject or object. According to the \textit{OED}, a less derisive and scornful “mock,” one that simply means imitation or counterfeit, was first recorded in 1646. Yet, the Chorus seems to be utilizing both senses of the term, making suspect the late date of \textit{OED}’s first recorded usage of the second meaning.

\(^{39}\) See Weimann’s introduction to \textit{Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice}, 1-17.
character, and the theatrical performance of the “unraised spirit” playing the great English warrior king, the player. This abiding connection between theatricalized power and powerful theater is even more pronounced when examining how diegetic spaces (historical and imaginative) interact with, and act upon, the performance of the player-character.

Many others mock or are mocked in *Henry V*. Fluellen says that Falstaff was “full of jests and jibes and knaveries and mocks” (4.7.40-41). The Eastcheap crew believes that Henry mocked Falstaff into his deathbed. Nym says that “The King hath run bad humours on the knight.” The hostess says that “The King has killed his heart.” Fluellen mocks Pistol onstage with a leek. The Dauphin says that the French “madams mock at us and plainly say / Our mettle is bred out, and they will give / Their bodies to the lust of English youth, / To new-store France with bastard warriors” (3.5.28-31). The Dauphin mocks Henry, but the audience sees this mocking as ironic. Whatever intelligence the Dauphin has received is outdated. “You are too much mistaken in this king,” the Constable tells the Dauphin (2.4.30). As we are told first by Canterbury and Ely in 1.1, and later in 2.4 by the Constable, the king has transformed himself from a wayward youth into a powerful and dangerous enemy of France. Here, Shakespeare provides another subtle complication to the already-overlapping relationship between what is told and what is shown, upon which the play maintains insistent pressure. The offstage Henry of the Dauphin’s imagination is a far cry from the offstage Henry presented by the Chorus, yet both are rhetorical constructions. Both exist for the audience only as diegetic discourse. However, Canterbury’s report in 1.2, for example, of Henry’s transformation
from willful youth to skillful monarch informs significantly the audience’s opinion of the king when he appears onstage. Descriptions of the king offered to the audience help to deck the onstage Henry, for his mimetically represented actions and behaviors often don’t align with what the audience is told. Is the audience expected to align these spaces so that they express a singular meaning, as the Chorus encourages? Or instead, is the audience expected to recognize the differences between diegetic and mimetic representations of Henry and find truth in their very opposition?

Digesting

In the third Chorus, Shakespeare draws upon the material similarities between the platform stage and the deck of a ship to imaginatively transport the audience from the Bankside of London to “Dover pier,” and then across the channel to the French mainland. Calling upon the audience to “Play with [its] fancies” (3.0.7), the third Chorus encourages the type of imaginative substitution that is at the heart of theatrical endeavors generally, though especially in this play. Audience space doubles as the “rivage,” and from this perspective the playgoers are told by the Chorus to “behold / A city on th’inconstant billows dancing – / For so appears this fleet majestical, / Holding due course to Harfleur. Follow! Follow!” (3.0.14-17). In this elaborate metaphorical construction, the Chorus tells the audience that what appears as a city is in fact a fleet of ships, although the audience knows that the fleet is a stand-in for the action on the stage.

40 For the ways in which Shakespeare and other early modern playwrights exploited the structural and architectural similarities between the thrust stage and the deck of a ship, see Ralph Berry, Shakespeare and the Awareness of the Audience (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985). See also Gurr’s analysis of the opening scene of The Tempest in “The Tempest’s Tempest at Blackfriars” in The Tempest: Sources and Contexts, Criticism, Rewritings and Appropriations, Ed. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherma (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 250-265.
that is to follow. The space of the Chorus is a transitional and transactional space for the audience, allowing it to imagine dramatic space replacing the bare neutral stage of the playhouse before revising the space of mimetic action with imagination that enhances the inadequate spectacle. This is what the third Chorus means when he asks the audience to “Still be kind / And eke out our performance with your mind” (3.0.34-35). Audience attention is directed toward the stage representation of the “girded Harfleur,” first aurally, with the offstage sound effect of “Alarum, and chambers go off,” and then visually: the stage direction calls for soldiers to come onto the stage with “scaling ladders” (3.1.0).

Whereas in 3.0 the audience is implored by the Chorus to “Work, work” their “thoughts, and therein see a siege” (25), in 3.3 the audience is manipulated into a position such that it is confronted head-on by the fiery rhetoric of Henry. Shakespeare is drawing upon the convention of portraying rhetorical persuasion as corporeally- and spatially-oriented. In The Preacher, or the Art and Method of Preaching, published in 1656, William Chappell offers advice for preachers speaking to their congregation. He writes that through persuasive rhetoric, a preacher’s sermon “may possess the hearer’s affections, and by them, as by setting scaling ladders invade the fort of the mind.”41 The image of the orator manipulating the minds of an audience is continually drawn upon in the early modern period. However, in the instance of Henry at Harfleur, Shakespeare revises the convention in a way that productively complicates the metaphor. In his chapter in The Arte of English Poesie entitled “How poets were the first priests, the first prophets, the first legislators and politicians in the world,” George Puttenham writes

Whereupon it is feigned that Amphion and Orpheus, two poets of the first ages…Amphion, built up cities and reared walls with the stones that came in heaps to the sound of his harp, figuring thereby the mollifying of hard and stony hearts by his sweet and eloquent persuasion…And Orpheus assembled the wild beasts to come in herds to hearken to his music and by that means made them tame, implying thereby how by his discreet and wholesome lessons uttered in harmony and with melodious instruments, he brought the rude and savage people to a more civil and orderly life, nothing, as it seemeth, more prevailing or fit to redress and edify the cruel and sturdy courage of man than it.42

At Harfleur, Henry similarly attempts to invade the minds of his auditors. However, instead of building walls with his rhetoric as do the orators of myth such as Amphion and Orpheus, Henry threatens to topple Harfleur’s walls, to destroy the city, and to wreak havoc on its citizens. The image of destruction-by-rhetoric turns the figurative convention cited by Chappell and Puttenham on its head.

The metaphor of breaching walls and transgressing borders and boundaries resonates throughout the play. In 1.2, Henry contemplates the consequences at home if he undertakes an invasion abroad. Henry’s concern is that when he and his army invade France, England itself will be left vulnerable to attack by an invading army from Scotland, “a giddy” or dangerous “neighbor to us” (1.2.145). “We must not only arm t’invade the French,” Henry says, “But lay down our proportions to defend / Against the Scot, who will make raid upon us / With all advantages” (1.2.136-139). The Archbishop of Canterbury responds: “They of those marches, gracious sovereign, / Shall be a wall sufficient to defend / Our inland from the pilfering borderers” (1.2.140-142). Canterbury compares the people living on the edges of the English isle to a physical wall whose bodies will stand in the way of the Scottish invaders. In this way, England is a castle

under siege, and it is the duty and responsibility of those Englishmen left at home to defend the kingdom, as the constructed walls of a castle would against attackers. The lines blur between stone and flesh, wall and body, as well as between reported and represented spaces. Henry implores both his advisors and the audience, his on- and off-stage listeners, to learn from historical precedent:

For you shall read that my great-grandfather
Never unmasked his power unto France
But that the Scot on his unfurnished kingdom
Came pouring like the tide into a breach
With ample and brim fullness of his force
Galling the gleanèd land with hot assays,
Girding with grievous siege castles and towns,
That England, being empty of defence,
Hath shook and trembled at the bruit thereof. (1.2.146-154)

In this sense, the audience is asked to convert geographical space into an imaginative space which is constrained and contorted by the narrative rhetoric of the Chorus, and also by Henry’s rhetoric of conquest and sacrificial, patriotic unity. At some moments in the play, Henry calls upon the playgoer (as a member of a secondary audience, the primary being the onstage English soldiers, or offstage French) to be a conqueror; at others, the playgoer is among the conquered. Most often, the audience is asked to occupy these multiple positions at once.

43 For an instance of the wall/man metaphor being pushed to its absurd extreme, see Tom Snout as “Wall” in the performance of “Pyramus and Thisby” in the fifth act of A Midsummer Night’s Dream. The stage direction “Exit Wall” at 5.1.100 crystallizes the blending of body and border, corporeality and stage space, found in the conflations between man and wall in Henry V. The tiring-house façade is a permanent part of the stage, yet it can represent many things besides a city wall, just as a player can represent, for instance, both mechanical and nobleman. The embodying of a stage wall by mechanical Tom Snout in MND, its functioning in the play-within-a-play as both character and stage materiality, perhaps illuminates the metaphorical connection in Henry V between the soldiers, their bodies, and their physical participation in Henry’s war.
The structure of the tiring-house façade is utilized in 3.3 in ways that oppose the representational elements of the drama with the material elements of the performance space, at once unifying and dividing imaginative and embodied spaces for the audience. The second Chorus asks the audience to “Linger your patience on, and we’ll digest / Th’abuse of distance, force a play” (2.0.32). This collaborative effort of performance and audience to digest—to condense and reduce opposing or divided perceptual fields—is on display at the gates of Harfleur. Spatial dynamics carve out another diegetic interior, inside the gates, placing the soldiers and Henry on the outside, and in this sense, uniting them with the space of the audience.44 What makes *Henry V*’s spatial strategies significant are the ways in which the audience, the language, the players, and the stage are all digested in the performance of the play, and contingent upon one another to produce meaning.

Henry’s speech in front of the Harfleur gates in 3.3 forces the audience to adopt multiple, and at times competing, perspectival positions. Henry addresses the unseen citizens occupying diegetic space on the other side of the tiring-house façade, but it would be difficult for a playgoer to hear Henry use the deictic pronoun “you” in addressing an offstage audience and not put him- or herself in the position of the receiver or object.

44 *OED*, “digest,” v.: “Etymology: < Latin *dīgest-* , participial stem of *dīgerēre* to carry asunder, separate, divide, distribute, dissolve, digest
1. a. *trans.* To divide and dispose, to distribute.
1.b. To disperse, dissipate. *Obs.*
2. To dispose methodically or according to a system; to reduce into a systematic form, usually with condensation; to classify.
3. To settle and arrange methodically in the mind; to consider, think or ponder over.”
Therefore, you men of Harfleur,
Take pity of your town and of your people
Whiles yet my soldiers are in my command,
Whiles yet the cool and temperate wind of grace
O’erblows the filthy and contagious clouds
Of heady murder, spoil, and villainy.
If not—why, in a moment look to see
The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand
Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters;
Your fathers taken by the silver beards,
And their most reverend heads dashed to the walls;
Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,
Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confused
Do break the clouds, as did the wives of Jewry
At Herod’s bloody-hunting slaughtermen.
What say you? Will you yield, and this avoid?
Or, guilty in defence, be thus destroyed? (3.3.104-120)

The audience is both object of Henry’s verbal assault, standing in for the off-stage citizens of the besieged city, and subject of the speech, and thus, in the position of the assaulting, bloodthirsty English soldiers of Henry’s speech.45

Henry V further complicates the mimetic space of 3.3 by positioning Henry below the governor. While the governor’s position onstage is not specified in either quarto or folio texts, virtually all editors after Edward Capell place the governor’s entrance in the lords’ rooms above the tiring-house. Gary Taylor argues that if the governor enters onto the platform stage, and “…if a door has been opened for that entry, Henry’s ‘Open your gates’ seems absurd, as does the gap between that command and the final stage direction….It would be most unusual for no one to appear on the walls during a scene

45 According to Taylor, the governor is absent from the stage from the beginning of Henry’s speech until line 123. This reading has been challenged by a number of editors who regard the absence of a stage entry for the governor at the beginning of Henry’s speech as a compositor oversight.
like this.” The positioning of the governor above Henry compromises the English king’s place at the top of the vertical hierarchy, and places the king in a vulnerable position, one that is incongruous with his persuasive, authoritative threats that result in the taking of the city.

Henry scales the city wall with his rhetoric, yet visually the scene is much less straightforward. The figure of the tiring-house façade demonstrates how theatrical space subverts and contorts stage space that is ordinarily hierarchically arranged according to symbolic or ceremonial status. Shakespeare upends the traditional hierarchical spatial dynamics of the stage by positioning Henry below the governor, appealing upwards. This arrangement on the stage is comparable to Richard II at Flint Castle, when Richard cries out “Down, down I come like glist’ring Phaethon” (3.3.177) as he makes his way, out of the view of the audience, from above the tiring-house down to the platform stage. Appearing above the tiring-house façade, the governor surrenders from a stage position of power; Henry accepts the governor’s surrender from below, complicating the rhetorical exchange with the paradoxical presentation onstage. The spatial dynamics of the scene carve out another interior, within the already cordoned-off “Wooden O.” The gates of the town, represented by the tiring-house façade, place the citizens of the city offstage, beyond the realm of presentational space, while Henry and his soldiers occupy

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47 Compare Henry’s position downstage, occupying what Weimann refers to as the *platea* part of the stage, with the king in 1.2, where Henry on the throne dominates the *locus* position, the conventional position of royalty and power.

the position not only outside of the city in the drama, but at the front of the stage in the performance.

Expecting

The place of Agincourt is presented in parts, in scenes, not as a whole. The audience does not see a glorious and noble battle unfold in front of it, nor is it given the opportunity to enhance or revise a staged approximation of the famous battle with its thoughts, despite the Prologue’s stoking of expectation of this event: “Suppose within the girdle of these walls / Are now confined two mighty monarchies / Whose high upreared and abutting fronts / The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder” (1.0.19-22). As Robert Ornstein correctly points out, in *Henry V* “Shakespeare makes no attempt in the play to represent an epic confrontation of armies. The war is always offstage.” It is not until the fourth Chorus that playgoers’ expectations are modified, even deflated altogether: “And so our scene must to the battle fly / Where O for pity, we shall much disgrace, / With four of five most vile and ragged foils, / Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous, / The name of Agincourt” (4.0.48-52). Shakespeare could have easily chosen to present on the stage Henry’s single combat with the duke of Alençon, described in both Holinshed and Hall, as he does the fight between Hal and Hotspur in *1 Henry IV*. Instead, this confrontation is relegated to diegetic space, referenced by both Henry and Fluellen, and used as part of

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49 That is, until its naming, defining, and confining in 4.7.83-6, when Henry “places” Agincourt by naming it and endowing it with value. See below for elaboration of this argument.


the king’s gulling of the common soldier Michael Williams. Immediately following the “Alarum” and “Excursions” that signal the beginning of the battle, is the scene, 4.4, in which Pistol mocks a lowly French soldier as the boy translates. It is through the on- and offstage actions of Pistol that the audience is given another opportunity to negotiate the complex interconnections between these two theatrical spaces.

Although the audience hardly expects it, Pistol behaves heroically, according to Fluellen in 3.6, because he expresses military valor rhetorically. Yet, the audience recognizes immediately Fluellen’s misprision of Pistol’s character. In 3.2, following Henry’s “Once more unto the breach” speech, Pistol, as part of the Eastcheap contingent, displays his cowardice. Having witnessed Pistol’s onstage behavior at Harfleur, Fluellen’s praise of Pistol’s “gallant service” likely raises eyebrows amongst playgoers. Fluellen tells Gower that “[t]here is an ensign lieutenant there at the pridge, I think in my very conscience he is as valiant a man as Mark Antony, and he is a man of no estimation in the world, but I did see him do as gallant service” (3.6.12-15). After Pistol asks Fluellen to advocate for leniency for Bardolph, Fluellen seems to revise what he said about the gallant service of Pistol: “I’ll assure you, a uttered as prave words at the pridge as you shall see in a summer’s day” (3.6.60-61). Fluellen “sees” Pistol’s gallant service by witnessing the rhetorical boasting of a conventional stage miles gloriosus. The seeing of uttered words captures very nicely the multi-sensory, even synesthetic, experience of hearing a play at an early modern playhouse. Why isn’t the audience witness to this valiant Pistol? Because this heroic display of Pistol does not in fact occur in the reality of the drama; thus it can only be presented diegetically, in Fluellen’s confused reporting.
After Pistol exits the stage, his request for Bardolf’s life denied, he leaves in a verbal and
gestural storming huff. “Captain Gower, cannot you hear it lighten and thunder” (3.6.56).
In hearing the lightning, Fluellen’s synesthesia is evident once again.

Fluellen’s synesthesia exemplifies confusion between what is seen and what is
heard; the truth of what he or she hears and/or sees is at stake for the playgoer as well.
Diegetic space is seen through words (in reports of events and actions). It is even heard
from.52 And it certainly can contradict what one beholds and thus subvert audience
expectations. Gower warns Fluellen that “you must learn to know such slanders of the
age, or else you may be marvelously mistook” (3.6.74-6). This serves as sound advice for
the audience as well.

**Beholding Agincourt**

The fifth Chorus requires that the audience envision King Henry’s victorious
procession through the city of London. As mentioned above, it is a scene described for
the audience, but it, of course, is not performed on the stage.53 Yet, unlike the reported
London procession, certain events at Agincourt are, to utilize Philip Sidney’s terms, both
“told” and “shown,” both reported and represented. Sidney critiques the dramatists of the

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52 See Bruce Smith, “Within, Without, and Withinwards: The Circulation of Sound in
Shakespeare’s Theatre,” in *Shakespeare’s Theatres and the Effects of Performance*, Eds. Farah
Hears in Shakespeare?: Auditory Worlds onstage and Screen*, Eds. Laury Magnus and Walter

53 An illustrative example of the kind of license taken with Shakespeare’s text common upon the
Victorian stage occurs in Charles Kean’s production of *Henry V* in 1859. According to Gurr, in his
“Introduction” to *King Henry V* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), the Chorus
of Act 5 was transformed into “a massive set-piece” featuring “a cast of six hundred to applaud
Henry’s return after Agincourt” (46).
1570s and earlier for failing to observe “the difference betwixt reporting and representing.” Yet, in *Henry V*, Shakespeare’s purposeful and nuanced troubling of this distinction requires from the audience a particular kind of theatrical beholding. The inconsistencies and contradictions between what the Chorus tells (or reports) and what drama shows (or represents) have been extensively documented, but can be summarized as follows: “[t]he Chorus is a great painter of pictures, but they are never the pictures shown on-stage.” Competing narratives in the play about the events surrounding the famous battle contribute to Agincourt’s epistemological blurriness. It is my suspicion that the epistemological uncertainties stem from deeper-rooted, and less explored, ontological uncertainties about *Henry V*’s Agincourt. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to demonstrating how Agincourt becomes a shifting and transforming, spatiotemporal amalgam of stage, imagination, and collective memory. Beholding Agincourt demands of its audience a spatiotemporal knowledge that is sensitive to the space, place, and time of the stage, and to what the conventions of the early modern playhouse could and could not provide.

In the theater, the senses perceive performative place as the mind processes imaginative space. Beholding dramatic performance, then, as it relies on both body and mind, also denotes the observing of the identity and non-identity of space and place.

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within a discrete dramatic locale. *Henry V*’s Agincourt provides an exceptional example of how space and place shape not only the stage, but one’s total theatrical experience. Agincourt exists as a location and battle for the playgoers who behold the drama in what Brian Walsh calls the “performative present.” As many have argued, the Chorus acts as representative of, and spokesperson for, the heroic myth of Henry as “the mirror of all Christian kings” (2.0.6). The Chorus aligns itself with the audience’s collective memory as it encourages playgoers to “make imaginary puissance,” to “deck our kings” with their “thoughts” (1.0.25, 28). Shakespeare puts this collective memorialization of Agincourt in direct tension with the actions, conversations, and speeches that occur on or near the soon-to-be-famous battlefield. In this way, *Henry V* destabilizes the historical place of Agincourt as it demarcates an ad-hoc theatrical space that confronts, challenges, and contradicts the audience’s expectations of Agincourt as historical and cultural signifier.

The temporal duality of *Henry V*—in which the past-ness of history opposes the present-ness, or presence, of performance—allows the play to interrogate how collective memory, forged in the “working-house of thought” (5.0.23) by patriotism and national mythology, engages with a potentially subversive retelling and representing of the famous battle on the Elizabethan stage.

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57 Brian Walsh, “The Double Absence of Performing History in 1 Henry VI,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 55.2 (Summer 2004): 121.

58 Both Crecy and Agincourt in the play act as cultural signs, linguistic/rhetorical/spatial commodities, and means to communicate shorthand, meta-theatrical, and spatial information. Both diegetic battles, each in their own distinctive ways, play upon, or attempt to bring about, an understanding for the playgoer of the complex relationship between stage space and imaginative space.
The fourth Chorus reports a scene that is mimetically presented in a radically different form. “The poor condemned English, / Like sacrifices,” as the Chorus describes Henry’s soldiers, “Sit patiently and inly ruminate / The morning’s danger” on the eve of battle, until Henry appears among them to raise their beleaguered spirits (4.0.22-24):

O now, who will behold
The royal captain of the ruined band
Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent,
Let him cry, ‘Praise and glory on his head!’
For forth he goes and visits all his host,
Bids them good morrow with a modest smile
And calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen.
Upon his royal face there is no note
How dread an army hath enrounded him;
Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour
Unto the weary and all-watchèd night,
But freshly looks and overbears attain't
With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty,
That every wretch, pining and pale before,
Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks.
A largess universal, like the sun,
His liberal eye doth give to everyone,
Thawing cold fear, that mean and gentle all
Behold, as may unworthiness define,
A little touch of Harry in the night. (4.0.28-47)

The “little touch of Harry in the night” that first Pistol, then Fluellen and Gower, and finally John Bates, Alexander Court, and Michael Williams, encounter hardly resembles the Chorus’ rousing description. But before examining in what ways the dramatic action of 4.1 deviates from the above passage, I want to visit briefly the Chorus’ repetition of “behold” in the passage. There is an ambiguity to the first instance, “who will behold,” and last instance, “that mean and gentle all / Behold,” that seems to conflate the soldiers of the described scene with the audience and unite them in a singular gaze (in the mind’s eye) directed toward the reported vision of King Henry. I cite these lines as rather explicit
examples of the Chorus’ rhetorical strategy employed throughout the play: to conjoin the fabled past to the theatrical present by aligning dramatic subject with playgoing subject under the potent sway of a heroic theatrical monarch. This is what Joel Altman calls “participating the king,” a “ritualizing” of the theatrical “occasion” that “effectually extends the relationship of prince and subject as portrayed in [1 and 2 Henry IV] so that it becomes a relationship between player/king and audience/subject.” According to Altman, the Chorus attempts to convert the ambivalent energies of a playgoing public—that, in 1599, feared both enemies abroad (if not in France at this moment, then certainly in Ireland and Spain) and forced military conscription—to an “imaginary puissance” that synthesizes “[the audience’s] collective anxieties and aggressive impulses” by allowing them to participate in “both the heroism and the savagery of [Henry’s] French exploits while remaining ineluctably Elizabethan.” Altman and others such as Taylor attempt to reconcile the apparent contradictions between what the Chorus reports and what the drama subsequently shows onstage by claiming that Henry makes two separate trips through his soldiers’ camp, one heard and the other seen. I suggest, however, that the conflicting accounts of “Harry in the night” are intended to provide a dual (and dueling) perspective for the playgoer; the effect this has upon the audience is to force a confrontation between a heroic epic description that appeals to the collective memory of its audience, and a dramatic representation onstage that intentionally thwarts and deflates the expectations the Chorus attempts to arouse. The contradictory accounts serve to stage

59 Joel Altman, “‘Vile Participation’: The Amplification of Violence in the Theatre of Henry V” Shakespeare Quarterly 42.1 (Spring 1991): 17, 16.

60 Ibid., 7, 16.
the agon between the memorial place of the famous battle of Agincourt and the theatrical space of the yet-unnamed and unheralded French field for the audience to acknowledge and behold.

While the Chorus’ epic inflation of Henry’s nighttime sojourn engages with the historical memory of the audience, Henry’s dramatized encounters with his troops in 4.1 plays upon the audience’s theatrical memory, in particular, “the time-worn and popular dramatic motif of the king disguised.” As Anne Righter Barton demonstrates, the disguised king trope is one that Shakespeare utilizes to “summon up the memory of a wistful, naïve attitude toward history and the relationship of subject and king which [Henry V] rejects as attractive but untrue: a nostalgic but false romanticism.”

Henry, outfitted in a cloak borrowed from the officer Thomas Erpingham, first meets another blast from the theatrical past, the Tamburlaine-aping clown Ancient Pistol, who asks the disguised king “art thou officer, / Or art thou base, common, and popular?” and responds to Henry’s question, “What are you?” with the absurd and boastful reply “As good a gentleman as the Emperor” (4.1.38-39, 42-43). While there is a great deal comical in the “gross absurdities” of what Sidney calls the “mingling [of] clowns and kings,” the

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62 Ibid., 99.

play’s purpose for this exchange between king and clown is to carve out a theatrically plausible space in which common soldiers can “speak [their] conscience of the king,” can frankly critique the king’s *casus belli*, his “right and conscience” to “busy giddy minds/With foreign quarrels,” as Harry’s father advises him to do (*2 Henry IV* 4.3.341-342). This theatrical space allows for the questioning of a king that would be unimaginable in any other circumstance, and exists nowhere in the earlier patriotic plays or in Hall’s or Holinshed’s chronicle histories. It is a theatrical space that at once allows the playgoer to “feel other men’s minds” (4.1.119), while displaying onstage the consequences of this exchange for king and subject.

The soldiers’ reluctance to fight and die for the king “if the cause be not good” seems to be a rather rational attitude, one likely shared by many in the audience (4.1.128). William’s dour and vividly imagined predictions for the next day’s battle indicts Henry’s cause as it voices real concern for the king’s subjects expected to die horribly, obediently, “when blood is their argument” and nothing else (4.1.136):

…the King himself hath a heavy reckoning to make, when all those legs and arms and heads chopped off in a battle shall join together at the latter day, and cry all, ‘We died at such a place’—some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left. I am afeared that few die well that die in a battle…(4.1.128-135).

Williams’ apostrophizing of the cry of slain soldiers reconstituted on Judgment Day, “We died at such a place,” crystallizes the distinction between the Chorus’ heroic place of Agincourt, concretized in the collective memory of the audience, and the generic, non-descript “such a place” that serves only to exhibit the carnage of a war of suspect cause. According to Henry’s Crispin’s Day speech, the soldier that “outlives” the next day’s
battle “and comes home safe” will “remember, with advantages, / What feats he did that
day” (4.3.41, 50-51), but Henry embellishes what rewards will come from fighting for the
king: “For he today that sheds his blood with me / Shall be my brother; be he ne’er so
vile, / This day shall gentle his condition” (4.3.61-63). Henry’s assurances of brotherhood
with the sovereign and ascension for common, “vile” soldiers to the social rank of
gentleman come off as mere rhetorical flourishes. We can assume this by Henry’s change
in attitude after the battle, when he distinguishes between the nobles that fell in battle,
and the rest, “none else of name” (4.8.99). For the king’s common subjects who die at
Agincourt, the memorializing and heralding of “the mirror of all Christian kings”
provides little relief or reward.

Those noblemen who die, like York and Suffolk, die offstage, but are given a
beautiful and moving eulogy by Exeter. He tearfully reports on their last glorious
moments before death to Henry. Exeter describes—for an onstage audience of “King
Henry and his train, with prisoners” (s.d. 4.6.0), as well as for the secondary audience of
playgoers—how York “smiled me in the face, raught me his hand, / And with a feeble
grip says, ‘Dear my lord, / Commend my service to the sovereign’” (4.6.21-23). Unlike
York, Williams survives Agincourt, but when the audience sees him next, it is as the
object of King Henry’s post-victory gulling. There is no offstage glory, or even relief, for
Williams, only onstage mocking. If the audience follows the Chorus’ prescription to
“[mind] true things by what their mockeries be” (4.0.53), then it must find a kind of
dangerous truth in Williams’s defense of his behavior towards Henry: “Your majesty
came not like yourself. You appeared to me but as a common man. Witness the night,
your garments, your lowliness. And what your highness suffered under that shape, I
beseech you take it for your own fault, and not mine, for had you been as I took you for, I
made no offence” (4.8.49-54). Williams’ words highlight the differences between
representations of the king that the play makes available for the audience.

The play’s naming of “such a place” as Agincourt by Henry is included in both in
Holinshed’s *Chronicle* and the anonymous *Famous Victories*. Yet, in Shakespeare’s
*Henry V*, the ceremonially naming of “the field of Agincourt” serves an ironic function
(4.7.82): it attempts to contain the theatrical space that allows for critique of motivations
for Henry’s foreign quarrel and bring it into alignment with Agincourt as a toponym that
signifies the place of Henry’s heroic battle. Henry’s strategy is to endow Agincourt
with value by naming and locating it. He attempts to unite the battlefield that is fractured
by the necessities of performance, and to unite the audience that is fractured and divided
by interpretation. Moreover, Henry strives to transform the nameless battlefield into a
sacred and memorable place, and in doing so, align it with the power and authority of
ceremony. The naming of Agincourt late in the play enacts the “place, degree, and form”
(4.1.228) of ceremony. Yet, this place, because it is primarily temporal, is also temporary,
and Shakespeare exposes this vulnerability and temporariness of place by the dramatizing
of it in performance. We get from the epilogue that ends the play a summation of what
this spatialized drama yields:

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64 Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1992), 135. Helgerson writes that “[a]t the root of all representation
is differentiation. A place or a person can be represented only if it can be in some way
distinguished from its surroundings. Proper names do much of the work of distinguishing, and it
is on them that the chorographers most heavily rely” (135).
Thus far, with rough and all-unable pen,
Our bending author hath pursued the story,
In little room confining mighty men,
Mangling by starts the full course of their glory.
Small time, but in that small most greatly lived
This star of England: Fortune made his sword,
By which the world’s best garden be achieved,
And of it left his son imperial lord.
Henry the Sixth, in infant bands crowned king
Of France and England, did this king succeed,
Whose state so many had the managing
That they lost France and made his England bleed.
Which oft our stage hath shown—and, for their sake,
In your fair minds let this acceptance take. (Epilogue 1-14)

The playwright’s (and his players’) performance of history has thoroughly digested the
historical victory and accomplishments of a hero-king. The Epilogue reinforces the
temporariness of Henry’s conquest, the instability of his empire, as it points towards a
lack of confinement: the undifferentiated, chaotic space of England during the War of the
Roses. And “by a commodius vicus of recirculation,”65 an imaginative circumnavigation
of the “Wooden O” of Shakespeare’s playhouse, we arrive at Shakespeare’s earliest
history play, 1 Henry VI.

65 James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, Eds. Robbert-Jan Henkes, Erik Bindervoet, and Finn Fordham
CHAPTER THREE

“TO HEAR MY NOTHINGS MONSTERED”: DEEP THEATRICAL SPACE AND THE PERFORMANCE OF CHARACTER IN CORIOLANUS

In the first chapter I suggest ways in which theatrical space constructs audience response to performance. Henry V’s manipulation of mimetic and diegetic spaces presents for an audience an imaginative space in which opposed representations of King Henry are simultaneously produced. I demonstrate how heroism in Henry V is relegated to a position in diegetic space, not by any means excluded from the drama, but offset in a position from which to comment upon and interact with the action and events in mimetic space. The Chorus bemoans the necessity of offstage actions, but in fact, what transpires in diegetic space informs and revises the actions of the stage. The character of Henry is a product of these two mutually constitutive modes of theatrical space.

In this chapter I further explore the inter-connectedness of theatrical space and character by examining the ways in which character is distributed across spatial modes. I will show how in Coriolanus, the character of Caius Martius is constructed both within and by the theatrical space that is experienced by an audience that must derive meaning and sense from the shifting relations between voices, bodies, and spaces. I am particularly
Figure 1. Graphing Deep Theatrical Space.

Mimetic Presence = Bodying forth – first order
Mimetic Absence = Bodying forth – second order
Diegetic Absence = Abstraction – second order
Diegetic Presence = Abstraction – first order
interested in the ways in which performance distributes the relative bodying forth of theatrical bodies and dramatic characters.¹ In theatrical performance, a character may be embodied by a player (mimetic presence); conjured or summoned to the stage through the actions, gestures, and language of other embodied players (mimetic absence); abstracted by onstage characters’ report of, or reference to, the offstage, non-existent, or unseen (diegetic absence); or abstracted by onstage characters’ report of, interactions with, or reference to, other onstage characters (diegetic presence).² The play’s manipulations of diegetic and mimetic spaces articulate the character of Caius Martius for playgoers.

Shakespeare’s multiple strategies of character construction are evidenced in the physical absence or presence of the central player-character in *Coriolanus*. What is communicated to the audience by and in these presences and absences? What insights are made available when we examine the space of the theatrical drama as governed by language and bodily movement, by the exchanges between offstage absence and onstage

¹ I use the term “bodying forth” to reflect the combination of “poet’s pen” and player’s performance that produces character in deep theatrical space. In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Theseus offers an explanation of how the poet gives material form to immaterial imagination:

And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name. (5.1.12-17)

My use of “bodying forth” adapts Theseus’ description of poetic creation to fit both the player’s co-production of character with “the poet’s pen,” what I call “first order bodying forth,” as well as a player-character’s onstage performance, through speech and action, of other, offstage characters, which I identify as “second order bodying forth.”

² This four-part construction is modeled on Joel Fineman’s use of “cross-coupling” in his analysis of Shakespeare’s sonnets in *Shakespeare’s Perjured Eye: The Invention of Poetic Subjectivity in the Sonnets* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), which itself is modeled, as Fineman writes, on “A.J Greimas’ semantic square… Paul De Man’s chiasmus… and… Jacques Lacan’s ‘schema L’” (44). However, to my knowledge, none of these models of signification has been used to map the effects of theatrical space on dramatic performance.
presence, and paradoxically, by the presence of the immaterial and the absence of the material. These modes of signification—the narrated and the embodied, the abstracted and the material—are not mutually exclusive. They do not operate independent of one another, nor does any exert a unidirectional force on another. Instead, I argue that diegetic and mimetic spaces exhibit considerable overlap—which can be witnessed by attending to the drama’s treatment of material and immaterial bodies. Locked in a reciprocal relationship, these spaces reinforce and shape for the audience aspects of character, theme, setting, symbol, and more. I will suggest that the strict distinctions often made by critics between what occurs onstage and what occurs offstage in Shakespeare’s plays are those of degree, not of kind. Moreover, my argument relies upon a broadening of our understanding of the materiality of the stage to include the diegetic means by which meaning is produced and transferred onto the stage.

A rather straightforward example from the opening scene of Coriolanus shows how the communicative modes of diegesis and mimesis can collaborate to produce meaning. In the opening scene, the citizens are discussing the grain shortage and deciding who to blame for it when both the audience and those onstage hear “Shouts within” (s.d. 1.1.38). The first citizen asks “What shouts are these?” before offering an answer to his own question: “The other side o’th’ city is risen” (1.1.39). Here, offstage communication—the shouts coming from the tiring house—is mediated by onstage communication. The audience gains knowledge of theatrical communication by perceiving both its offstage origination and its onstage mediation. The first citizen’s explanation not only reveals the origin of the offstage noise; it also locates the action
occurring onstage, providing a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between the presentational space of the stage and the representational space of the drama.

In semiotic terms, the first citizen’s response to the “Shouts within” is an example of an indexical sign, language and/or gestures that refer or point to offstage space and action. But we can also see how the “Shouts within” and the accompanying interpretive index mediate mimetic space in ways the affect and modify the meaning of what audiences are presented onstage. In what follows, I examine how the character of Caius Martius and the meaning(s) of his body are similarly mediated by the relationship between diegetic and mimetic spaces.

**Perceptions of the Player-Character**

How does performance in the early modern playhouse stage the complicated relationship between player, character, and space? Contrary to critics’ near consensus that Caius Martius lacks interiority, or that he is an empty character, I argue that the essential element of Caius Martius’ character is his bodily displacement, caused primarily by his refusal to admit the necessity of performance in order to succeed in the socio-political world of Rome. Utilizing recent work done on cognitive ecology and embodiment theory,

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4 While Stanley Cavell, in *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare* (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Stanley Fish, in *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980), position language (semiotics, speech-acts) as the dominant, overriding force in the play, Keir Elam sees this linguistic mode of analysis as faulty or incomplete “because the semiotization of the body fails to come to terms with its sheer, asyntactic, pre-semantic bodiliness” (143). Elam considers the problem of interpreting or perceiving theatrical bodies as “embarrassing, since the body stubbornly resists reduction to language or signification…” (142-3). See Keir Elam, “Reading Shakespeare’s Bodies,” in *Alternative Shakespeares, Vol. 2*. Ed. John Drakakis (London: Routledge, 1988), 142-3.
I suggest that Caius Martius’ character (and dramatic character in general) is a product of spatial relations. By this I mean that Caius Martius’ body extends beyond the confines of the presenting player, and towards an audience desiring to perceive that which is neither presented exclusively on stage nor communicated exclusively through language. Attending to Caius Martius’ spatial positions and movements as player-character amongst other player-characters can help us to better understand how theatrical space displays Caius Martius’ interiority.

Many critics, however, are hesitant to grant Caius Martius interiority, or qualities of character, at all. Harold Bloom writes that “in personality or in character Caius Martius scarcely exists,” that “[t]here is little inwardness” in him, and that “of all major figures in [Shakespeare’s] plays, [Caius Martius] has the most limited consciousness.”5 Similarly, Lee Bliss calls Caius Martius “Shakespeare’s least self-reflexive hero.”6 Yet it is my contention that fixing the proper attention on Caius Martius’ extended mind, or his embodiment beyond the body, can reveal elements of his character long taken as non-existent or inaccessible.7 Bloom writes that the “[i]nwardness” Shakespeare endowed in earlier tragic characters such as Hamlet and Lear “vanishes in Coriolanus.”8 I argue that there is inwardness in Caius Martius, but that inwardness in this play is configured

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differently than in the plays that come directly before Coriolanus, plays in which central characters’ inwardness is established primarily through soliloquy and seeming. In Hamlet, when his mother asks the Danish prince why what is “common,” that “all that lives must die, / Passing through nature to eternity,” “seems…so particular with thee?” (1.2.74-5), Hamlet answers:

Seems, Madam? Nay, it is. I know not ‘seems’.  
’Tis not alone my inky cloak, good-mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath.  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief  
That can denote me truly. These indeed ‘seem’,  
For these are actions that a man might play;  
But I have that within which passeth show—  
These are but the trappings and the suits of woe. (1.2.76-86)

In this passage, Hamlet differentiates between visible, outward displays, “the trappings and suits of woe,” available to be seen, and invisible, inward phenomena—emotions and thoughts “which passeth show.” Katherine Maus writes that in Renaissance England, there existed a “sense of discrepancy between ‘inward’ disposition and ‘outward appearance.’” Maus argues that there was an early modern “suspicion of ‘appearances’…[which] emphasizes the disparity between what a person is and what he or she seems to be to other people.” This anxiety between appearance and reality persisted in early modern England and on the stage. However, in Hamlet’s case, despite his denial, there exists an apparent identity between exterior and interior. He dresses the


10 Ibid., 210.
part, so to speak, and performs the role; his appearance is “customary” for one in mourning for his father. Yet, this strong correlation between exterior and interior is coincidental. Or perhaps it is more accurate to state that his interior “disposition” exceeds, or is in surplus to, his outward appearance. According to Hamlet, correlation does not imply identity. Thus, on- and offstage interpreters of Hamlet’s appearance should indeed be suspicious, for identity between exterior and interior makes the interior even more unavailable than if there are discrepancies between them. Remarkably, this temporary, coincidental identity between inward and outward that exists with Hamlet—temporary because this relationship changes once Hamlet dons his “antic disposition”—is, as we shall see, neither temporary nor coincidental with Caius Martius. The complications stemming from suspect on- and offstage interpretations of Hamlet’s character are closely aligned with the interpretive and epistemological challenges posed by attempts on the part of both audiences and onstage auditors to perceive Caius Martius’ character.

Various critical schools challenge character as a valid means of addressing the plays’ meanings. Opponents of character criticism have pointed out flaws in Bradleyan character analysis, which assumes a psychological wholeness that can be examined separate from the drama or text, that somehow character is able to be separated from the language of the play.

At the other extreme, however, are those critics who collapse character into text or text into character, so that there exists no character outside of the language of the play.

11 However, there has been a return to character criticism in recent years. For example, see Shakespeare and Character: Theory, History, Performance, and Theatrical Persons. Eds. Paul E. Yachnin and Jessica Slights (Basingstoke [England]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
Stephen Orgel writes that “[c]haracters…are not people, they are elements of a linguistic structure, lines in a drama, and more basically, words on a page.”

Peter Stallybrass and Margreta de Grazia have correctly pointed out the anachronisms inherent in readers conceiving of a character as unified or stable simply because editorial conventions have presented them as such. Nonetheless, in performance the player-character moves through theatrical space, just as theatrical space could be said to move through the player-character. I contend that characters and actions presented partially or wholly in diegetic space don’t simply collapse into pure text, narration, or discourse, but are theatrically vivified through an audience’s awareness of, and engagement with, the entirety of the theatrical environment. Objections to considerations of the psychological component of character do not foreclose, to my mind, the possibility of a character criticism that takes into account the audience’s phenomenological experience of character in relation to theatrical space. By this I mean that the mimetic and diegetic spaces that compose theatrical space carry with them psychological components, display them, and offer them to the audience.

Robert Weimann argues that perception of character is based on communal response to theatrical representation. He writes that “Shakespeare’s conception of

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13 Peter Stallybrass and Margreta de Grazia, “The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text” Shakespeare Quarterly 44.3 (1993): 255-83. Stallybrass and de Grazia write that “[i]n a modern edition of a play, the list of dramatis personae precedes the play, suggesting that characters preexist their speeches. Shakespeare’s first readers, however, received no such suggestion, for none of the quartos published in his lifetime feature lists of characters; the Folio includes lists for only seven out of thirty-six plays, and in every case the list appears after rather than before the play. Readers had to arbitrate for themselves the boundaries of identity, constructing (or failing to construct, or refusing to construct) ‘individual’ characters in the process of readers” (267).
character” rests on the notion that “the identity of a person and the relationships of that
person are interconnected and that it is out of their interconnection that each must help to
constitute and define the other.”14 Weimann’s assessment of characterization is that it
should be “defined not only in terms of mimesis and expression, but as a function of
theatrical communication.”15 For Weimann, and for myself, characterization is
transactional, meaning that character is formulated and is perceivable only as the product
of negotiation between presentational and representational forces. Weimann’s
distinctions between presentation and representation highlight a similar dialectical
relationship between presence and absence in performance. Weimann writes that “while
the former [presentation] derives its primary strength from the immediacy of the physical
act of histrionic delivery, the latter [representation] is vitally connected with the
imaginary product and effect of rendering absent meanings, ideas, and images of artificial
persons’ thoughts and actions.”16 My argument extends Weimann’s conception of
negotiated or transactional character by arguing that theatrical space produces meaning
through the interplay and interpenetration of off- and onstage absences and presences that
rely not only on the language and actions of blended player-characters, but on how their

14 Robert Weimann, “Society and the Individual in Shakespeare's Conception of Character,” in
Shakespeare Survey 34: Characterization in Shakespeare. Ed. Stanley Wells (Cambridge:
vision these two differing perspectives on experience, one as socially shared, the other as
personally autonomous, are profoundly interrelated. In fact, the degree of a character’s
relatedness or ‘reflection’, the extent to which he can ‘communicate his parts to others’, is viewed
as a measure of his identity” (24).

15 Ibid, 30.

16 Robert Weimann, Helen Higbee, and William N. West. Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice: Playing
communication is perceived by others (within the drama and without). As I will show below, Caius Martius’ embodied presence on the stage is without doubt a significant aspect of dramatic performance, and in an audience deriving meaning from the performance of the player-character. Yet, *Coriolanus* provides an exemplary instance of how in theatrical performance, a living actor’s onstage presence does not account exclusively for character in any comprehensive way. The meaning that the player-character’s corporeality offers must be compensated for and completed by the production and interpretation of his interiority by both audiences and onstage auditors.

Bloom’s approach attempts to treat character as independent from the spaces in which it is performed. His trust in the plays’ exclusively and singularly mimetic achievement, in which characters are either more- or less-successful imitations of whole and continuous selves (successful, in the case of Hamlet, and unsuccessful, in the case of Caius Martius), leads him to assess the character of Caius Martius as “[b]arren inwardly,” “almost empty,” and “scarcely exist[ent].”17 For Bloom, Shakespeare’s successful characters possess an interiority that can never be fully witnessed by reader or spectator. Bloom’s conflation of “inwardness” and “character” causes him to read Caius Martius as lacking character; yet he also argues that “[t]he tragedy of [Caius Martius] is that there is absolutely no place for him in the world of the commonal and the communal.”18 Whether intentionally or not, Bloom recognizes in *Coriolanus*, as I do, the abiding interpenetration of character and space. I posit that not only is the “tragedy” of Caius Martius produced by

17 Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, 578, 580

18 Ibid., 580.
his displacement, but the character of Caius Martius is informed by, and made available for audiences through, these changing spatial circumstances.

This chapter highlights instances when the mimetic and diegetic, the seen and unseen, collaborate to produce meaning and present intelligible characters for an audience. Narrative discourse and embodied action are co-operative realms of representation; the mediation of one by the other informs audience perception. This view offers a corrective to critical notions that narration is somehow closer to authorial origin than performance, or that narration has a textual provenance separate from dramatic performance. Equally significant, my reading offers a corrective to notions that the defining characteristic of performed drama is, as Anthony Dawson claims, the “presence of the living actor.”

_Coriolanus_ shows the significance of the absence of the “living actor” in mediating events that occur onstage.

In order to examine how diegetic elements mediate, and are mediated, on the stage, I must first briefly address the presumption among some critics that dramatic performance is exclusively mimetic. Brian Richardson writes that “major theorists of both narrative discourse and the semiotics of theater generally agree that drama is exclusively a mimetic genre, while fiction combines mimesis and diegesis.” For instance, Richardson points to Elam’s statement that “drama is ‘without narratorial mediation’ and that it is ‘mimetic rather than strictly diegetic – acted rather than narrated.’”

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20 Brian Richardson, “Point of View in Drama: Diegetic Monologue, Unreliable Narrators, and Author’s Voice on Stage,” _Comparative Drama_, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Fall 1988): 193.
this understanding of theatrical performance as wholly mimetic, Holger Syme argues that performed drama relies on mediation, the play of presences and absences, deferrals to offstage, to the script, to the body of the player, and beyond the stage.\textsuperscript{21} There exists in theatrical performance two reciprocal modes of mediation: Mediation from telling and Mediation from showing. \textit{Coriolanus} demonstrates the ways in which these two modes of mediation interact to construct the character of Caius Martius. Focus on one or the other alone would fail to fully illuminate the contributions of each to an audience’s perception of Caius Martius. Ultimately, the meaning of Caius Martius’ body and coherence of his character must be determined not only by his corporeal, onstage presence, but through a combination of embodied voices—\textit{via} description, rumor, report, narration, and interpretation—that construct and inform his character, often in the player’s absence from the stage.

\textbf{Theatrical Displacement}

Caius Martius is a character articulated by his location and dislocation, by the possession of his body and its dispossession. In \textit{Coriolanus}, dislocation and dispossession are produced through the tensions between diegetic and mimetic space. Jonathan Dollimore describes “Marston’s \textit{Antonio} plays” as “[showing] how individuals become alienated from their society.”\textsuperscript{22} While Caius Martius suffers alienation, it is presented as a particularly spatial kind of alienation, which I call \textit{theatrical displacement}. The


displacement that I am defining is theatrical because performance on the early modern stage facilitates the exchange between spoken word and embodied action in spatial terms, meaning that a player-character’s movement, gesture, presence, and absence communicates multi-sensorially for an audience that is both orienting, and oriented by, the performance. Antonio’s alienation, as Dollimore primarily intends it, is not only political or economic in nature, as suffering a lack of identity with one’s material environment, but psychological as well. “Faced with a dislocated world,” Dollimore writes, “individual consciousness itself becomes dislocated.” The confluence of the political, spatial, and psychological is likewise witnessed in Caius Martius’ theatrical displacement. Gail Kern Paster writes that Coriolanus “establishes a fundamental contrast between Rome as a concretely realized setting and as a city located in the mind, a symbol of human possibility, and then demonstrates dynamic interplay between the two Romes.” The “city located in the mind” is a fundamental element not only in understanding and envisioning Rome, but also of the interconnections between the symbolic and material that inform Caius Martius’ relationship to performance both in the polis and the playhouse. In Coriolanus, performance is intimately associated with

23 Ibid., 31.
25 A phenomenological understanding of place and space in and of performance relies on the inseparability of bodies and perception. In “Phenomenology and the Dramaturgy of Space and Place,” Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism 16.1 (2001), John Lutterbie writes that “For [Edward] Casey, as for Merleau-Ponty, place is not experienced simply through our actions, but through the actions of the world on our bodies” (127). This applies not only to audiences, but to player-characters as well. Charles Lyons (“Character and Theatrical Space,” in The Theatrical Space (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); 27-44) writes that it is “impossible to separate the image of the theatrical space from the image of character” (28). For Lyons, character
Rome as both a physical and conceptual space. The play also presents the character of Caius Martius, like Rome itself, as constructed by the “dynamic interplay” between the material and the immaterial, between presentation and representation. In what follows, I examine four ways in which character is articulated in and by theatrical space: mimetic presence, mimetic absence, diegetic absence, and diegetic presence.

In Coriolanus, Shakespeare presents the audience with the tragedy of a man whose “nature,” as Menenius describes it, “is too noble for the world” (3.1.255). Menenius continues: “He would not flatter Neptune for his trident, / Or Jove for’s power to thunder. His heart’s his mouth. / What his breast forges that his tongue must vent” (3.1.256-258). This is, of course, Menenius’ perception of Caius Martius. Menenius’ words highlight the connection between the “being” that constitutes Caius Martius’ interiority and the outward display, or “seeming,” by which the character’s interiority may or may not be made available to audiences. Menenius’ characterization of the identity of Caius Martius’ heart and his mouth, his breast and his tongue, presents an intriguing problem, one that calls into question the “nature” of early modern playing, character construction, audience perception, and the spatial dynamics of performance.

How does early modern performance, which both anti-theatricalists and playwrights grant as reliant upon feigning and dissimulation, convey, through the feigning of playing, this and space form an “irreducibly aesthetic unit” (30). Lyon’s focuses exclusively on how scene (or mimetic space) contributes to character formulation. Lyon writes, for example, that “[w]e cannot understand the processes in which Shakespeare builds the image of Lear’s character unless we confront the fundamental relationship between character and scene in which the playwright reveals the dramatic figure’s perception and mediation of the discrete fictional phenomena that constitute the space in which he exists” (39). Lyon doesn’t examine, as I do, the ways in which diegetic space plays a “fundamental” role in informing character.
absolute identity between heart and mouth, breast and tongue, that Menenius points out for on- and offstage audiences? Unlike other central characters such as Richard III, Hal/Henry V, or Hamlet, Caius Martius does not confide in the audience, through soliloquy, aside, or other performative means, the strategic separation of thought and action. Perhaps because of this inability or unwillingness to feign, Caius Martius is regarded by critics as lacking interiority, as being deficient in character. Yet, the dissimulative tactics required by a player to perform or “personate” a character are the same qualities that suggest a character’s inwardness beyond mimetic display. Thomas Heywood famously characterizes successful early modern theatrical performance in this way: “as if the Personator were the man Personated.”

Successful performance calls upon a player and audience to collaboratively efface the differences between the personated and the personator by seamlessly (or seem-lessly) aligning the player’s feigning with the character’s feigning. Thus, the player’s performative feigning and the character’s dramatic feigning are conflated to produce in performance the apparent qualities, the impression, of interiority. However, this relationship of feigning shared between player and character has a paradoxical effect in Coriolanus. Caius Martius refuses to perform for his onstage auditors, but the actor playing him has no choice but to perform for offstage auditors (the audience). The requirements of player and character ensure that the differences between them are not effaced for the audience, but instead are exposed. Success in the polis and success in the theater both require a kind of double-perception of a player-character that at once registers and denies a separation between thought and action, mind and body, heart and mouth. As I will discuss further below, the

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citizens don’t demand authenticity in Caius Martius’ performance in standing for consulship. They just request that he “ask [for] it kindly” (2.3.74). In other words, the conventions of standing for consulship allow the citizens the authority to recognize—while simultaneously denying—a purposeful dissembling. Playgoing requires the same arrangement.

**Mimetic Presence**

It is a critical commonplace to point out that the dialogue between Caius Martius and Volumnia in 3.2 contains many words associated with acting. What goes, to my knowledge, unremarked upon is that the exchange presents two different theories of playing, or more precisely, two opposed ways to view the relationship between player and character in performance. Caius Martius believes that he can maintain his singular identity so that his thought and appearance remain in one accord:

Let them pull all about mine ears, present me
Death on the wheel or at wild horses’ heels,
Or pile ten hills on the Tarpeian rock,
That the precipitation might down stretch
Below the beam of sight, yet will I still
Be thus to them. (3.2.1-6)

Threat of violence to his body, even death, will not cause him to separate his will from his rhetoric, or allow daylight to come between thought and action: “yet will I still / Be thus to them.” What Caius Martius cannot tolerate is the existence of any difference between what he considers “thus,” his understanding of his self, and what others think of him, “thus to them.” Yet, Caius Martius’ character is made available to an audience precisely through this negotiation between “thus” and “thus to them.” The means by which this would be accomplished, allowing report, flattery, and praise—what Caius
Martius calls “acclamations hyperbolical” (1.10.50)—to bridge the divide between his conception of himself and other’s perception of him, Caius Martius cannot abide. His staunch refusal to accept this socio-theatrical arrangement precipitates his banishment and death.

Volumnia attempts to persuade Caius Martius to stand for consul in a way that will ingratiate himself to the citizens. Her first strategy is to remind her son of his own words: “I have heard you say, / Honour and policy, like unsevered friends, / I’th’war do grow together” (3.2.42-44). Although Menenius thinks this is “A good demand,” Caius Martius has no response except “Tush, tush” (3.2.46). If Volumnia has not misquoted Caius Martius, it must be that he considers honor and policy to combine differently in war than in peace, but it does demonstrate that Caius Martius will dissimulate in certain circumstances.27 What Volumnia implores Caius Martius to understand is that whether the city is at war or at peace hinges upon the choices that he must now make. According to Volumnia, Caius Martius “can never be too noble, / But when extremities speak” (3.2.41-42), and the direness of the circumstances requires certain behaviors normally anathema to both mother and son. Yet, Caius Martius refuses to consider any use of policy in standing for consul because, we must assume, he believes that the use of policy would signal “desire,” which in 2.3 he equates with “begging.” Instead, Caius Martius believes that it is his “own desert” alone that should suffice. In 2.3, as in 3.2, it is his refusal to accept any negotiation between private and social perception of self that

27 A case in point is his appearance “in mean apparel, disguised and muffled” in Antium in 4.4.
determines his course of action. Yet, Caius Martius’ thoughts on the benefits of the collaboration of honor and policy in war, as voiced by Volumnia, also epitomizes the breakdown of identity between words such as honor and truth, or what James Calderwood calls the “linguistic chaos” that Caius Martius “attempts to defend himself against.” Calderwood reads the play as demonstrating the impossibility of communication between the citizens and Caius Martius because such words as honor, truth, and policy mean different things to each party. However, Volumnia’s speaking of Caius Martius’ words in the above lines shows that words mean differently not only to different people or factions, but take on different meanings within the same person: Caius Martius. Meaning, then, depends on place because such words as honor, truth, and policy mean differently in war (elsewhere) than they do in peace (Rome). Yet, for Volumnia, much savvier than her son in reading the political climate, the distinctions between a place of war and a place of peace are quickly collapsing. I suggest below that like words, Caius Martius’ body—and particularly the wounds it bears—means differently depending on place. But significantly, it is Caius Martius’ “body’s action,” and not words alone, that


30 Ibid. Calderwood writes that “[l]acking a common set of values, feelings, allegiances, principles, and knowledge, and hence lacking a viable language, Coriolanus and the plebeians can have no real dialogue…[Shakespeare] is, among other things, exploring what happens to language when mere ‘opinion’ encroaches upon authority” (213). My analysis differs from Calderwood’s in this important respect: Caius Martius’ body (in its absence and presence) “speaks” as loudly and as consequently as his language.
threatens to “surcease to honour” his “own truth” (3.2.121-122). Voice and body are so intertwined in this play that when they do cleave (or appear to cleave), as the first senator says, “our good city / Cleave in the midst, and perish” (3.2.26-27).

Playing is the giving of one’s voice and body over to the script and performance, just as in Coriolanus, standing for consul demands, as Weimann puts it, “the physical act of histrionic delivery.” Volumnia’s second strategy is to convince Caius Martius that he can present himself to the citizens without him being “false to [his] nature,” but by doing what honor requires him to do. In other words, Caius Martius must “dissemble” with his voice and body, but must also know that the form of dissembling Volumnia encourages will allow him to be true to his nature, to “dissemble with,” as opposed to against, his “nature”:

Because that now it lies you on to speak to th’ people,  
Not by your own instruction, nor by th’ matter  
Which your heart prompts you, but with such words  
That are but roted in your tongue. Now this no more  
Dishonours you at all than to take in  
A town with gentle words, which else would put you  
To your fortune and the hazard of much blood.  
I would dissemble with my nature where  
My fortunes and my friends at stake required  
I should do so in honour. (3.2.53-64)

Volumnia’s theory of playing highlights the discontinuity between player and character, but also the necessity of this discontinuity to ensure a successful and convincing performance while maintaining the player’s (Caius Martius’) “own truth.” Caius Martius must temporarily submerge, under an outward display required by “custom,” “th’ matter / Which [his] heart prompts [him].” In other words, a little dissembling now will ensure his

31 Weimann. Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice, 11.
greater honor for the future. For Caius Martius, however, exterior and interior cannot be separated without irreparable damage to his “nature.”

In this way, Caius Martius’ attitude seems to oppose the kind of playing required to give his character life on the stage, to produce his “person”—the term Dawson uses to describe the blended player-character—on the stage, to give voice to the very words the player speaks in character. However, from a different perspective, Caius Martius’ theory of playing produces the kind of performance that players would likely strive towards: the authentic representation of a “person” on the stage. In *Pierce Pennilesse*, Thomas Nashe writes about the performance of Talbot “…who, in the tragedian that represents his person, [spectators] imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.” Nashe’s “him,” the “person” represented by the tragedian that the spectators behold, corresponds with Caius Martius’ deictic “thus”—“yet will I still / Be thus to them”—that the citizens will behold. In this arrangement, Caius Martius is at once the person that the tragedian represents and the representing tragedian. In the final act of the play, in the scene where Volumnia, accompanied by Caius Martius’ wife and son, appeals to him to call off his imminent attack on Rome, Caius Martius states that “I'll never / Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand, / As if a man were author of himself, and knew no other kin” (5.3.35-37).

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lines equate interiority with authorship, so that one’s interiority “represents” one’s “person.” Yet, the conditional “as if” indicates that Caius Martius knows that the self-authorship he craves can only be made legible as a performance in which he “stand[s]” and is perceived by others. These lines, along with Caius Martius’ request to his mother, “Rather say I play / The man I am” (3.2.14-15), show that Caius Martius, on some level, intuits that the identity of inward disposition and outward display is only achieved in the perception of others, that one engages with the world only through performance. In other words, being and seeming are always, and necessarily, indistinguishable to others. He must “stand / as if man were author of himself”; he must “play” the man he is. If Caius Martius’ “nature” is to be perceived by others, it must be presented through performative means. Paradoxically, for Caius Martius, his “nature” is distinguishable from the performance of his “nature” only if Caius Martius performs “false to [his] nature.”

Volumnia’s advice to Caius Martius is communicated by her words, but also, and crucially, demonstrated by her actions, her accompanying gestures that appropriately model how Caius Martius should “suit the action to the word, and word to the action” (Hamlet 3.2.16-17):

I prithee now, my son,
Go to them, with this bonnet in thy hand,
And thus far having stretch’d it—here be with them—
Thy knee bussing the stones—for in such business
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of th’ ignorant
More learnèd than the ears—waving thy head,
Which often, thus, correcting thy stout heart,
Now humble as the ripest mulberry
That will not hold the handling; or say to them,
Thou art their soldier, and being bred in broils,
Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,
Were fit for thee to use as they to claim,
In asking their good loves; but thou wilt frame
Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs so far
As thou hast power and person. (3.2.73-86)

While this describes a skilled actor, and is performed by a skilled actor, it is also
describing a Richard III-like dissembling. As a description of playing, it points toward
the anxieties about theatrical performance that so propelled the anti-theatricalist writers
such as Gosson, John Rainoldes, and others. Yet, Volumnia’s lines also chart the only
pathway available to gain power while preserving peace. In other words, Volumnia
provides Caius Martius with the script that would satisfy the “custom” desired not only
by the citizens, but by his “wife, [his] son, these senators, the nobles” (3.2.65).34 “For the
inheritance of their loves and safeguard / Of what that want might ruin,” Volumnia
implores Caius Martius to “perform a part / Thou hast not done before” (3.2.67-68, 109-
110). Caius Martius oscillates between defiance and acceptance: “Well, I will do it,”
“Well, I must do’t,” “I will not do’t,” “Look, I am going,” and finally, “I / Will answer in
mine honour” (3.2.101, 110, 120, 134, 144). His temporary acceptance of his fate
(temporary because he does not perform in 3.3 as Volumnia has coached him) causes
Caius Martius to fear two outcomes: one which results from inauthentic dissembling, that
he will not be able to convincingly perform the part, “You have put me now to such a
part which never / I shall discharge to th’ life” (3.2.105-6); and the other from authentic
dissembling, that if he performs too well, “This mould of Martius they to dust should
grind it / And throw’t against the wind” (3.2.105-6, 102-3). Either option would result in

34 Othello’s willingness to “out-tongue” Brabanzio’s “complaints” about him by recounting for
him “the story of my life / From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes / That I have passed”
(1.1.20; 1.3.128-130) can be read as a successful implementation of Volumnia’s advice to her son.
The lines beginning with “Thou art their soldier” certainly resemble Othello’s “performance”:
“Rude am I in my speech, / And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace” (1.3.82-83).
the displacement of his body, “this single plot” (3.2.102); However, the third option, the one he chooses, the refusal to dissemble altogether, also results in theatrical displacement: his banishment from Rome.

**Mimetic Absence**

While Volumnia has been characterized as “the embodiment of a principle whereby speech, not action, is the highest good,” and many analyses of *Coriolanus* similarly chart the play’s attempt to dramatize a translation of actions into words, I argue that these readings overlook the reality that in performance, speech cannot be divorced from the actions of bodies that bring it to the stage.\(^\text{35}\) The conversation between Volumnia and Virgilia in 1.3 illustrates this point. In this scene, Volumnia attempts to body forth an absent Caius Martius, to produce Caius Martius’ body by giving it “a local habitation” onstage. And it must be noted that Volumnia does so in a location doubly removed from its appropriate place, the besieged city of Corioles. In other words, not only does Volumnia perform Caius Martius in Rome, she does it in a domestic setting.\(^\text{36}\) While the doubly incongruous setting suggests the futility of Volumnia’s attempt at

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\(^\text{35}\) Jarrett Walker, “Voiceless Bodies and Bodiless Voices: The Drama of Human Perception in *Coriolanus*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Summer, 1992): 181. Walker writes that “For Volumnia, [Caius] Martius’ existence in flesh and blood is an interim substance to be converted into narrative…. [Caius] Martius’ violent public speech—speech as brute force—is a way of using words to generate action. For Volumnia, it seems, the purpose of action is to generate words” (181).

\(^\text{36}\) While determining location in Shakespeare’s plays is notoriously vexed, the stage directions read “Enter Volumnia and Virgilia, mother and wife to Martius. They set them down on two low stools and sew” (1.3.0). The stools and the women’s action of sewing give strong indication that the scene takes place indoors, in Caius Martius’ home.
conjuration, it also foregrounds the strenuous histrionic effort that she must exert in order to “possess” Caius Martius on, and for, the stage.\footnote{OED, “possess,” v.: “2a: Of a person or body of people: to hold or occupy (a place or territory); to reside or be stationed in; to inhabit (with or without ownership).”}

While Caius Martius fights in Corioles, Volumnia tells Virgilia that “[i]f my son were my husband, I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour than in the embraces of his bed where he would show most love” (1.3.2-4). For Caius Martius to be her son, to realize his true potential as her son, he must necessarily be absent from Rome, fighting the city’s enemies and receiving wounds in these battles. In language that highlights her agency in fashioning Caius Martius a hero, Volumnia reveals her hero-rearing strategy:

When he was but tenderbodied and the only son of my womb, when youth with comeliness plucked all gaze his way, when for a day of kings’ entreaties a mother should not sell him an hour from her beholding, I, considering how honour would become such a person—that it was no better than, picture-like, to hang by th’ wall if renown made it not stir—was pleased to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him, from whence he returned his brows bound with oak. (1.3.5-13)

Honor must be sought elsewhere, yet evidence of this honor, if honor is to “become” her son, must be made legible in Rome. This legibility is accomplished partly by symbolic rewards for honor, “his brows bound with oak,” which Caius Martius receives, but “picture-like” symbols must be accompanied by calculated gestus and language that further persuade the citizens of Rome of the deserving of these symbolic rewards.

Renown won on the battlefield is reward in itself, according to Volumnia, yet only if her son does not return from the battlefield. Virgilia asks “[b]ut had he died in the
business, madam, how then?” to which Volumnia responds “[t]hen his good report should have been my son” (1.3.16-17). In this instance, her son’s “good report” would replace his “person.” The words of a messenger, or perhaps Cominius, would stand for, or speak in lieu of, Caius Martius. However, if Caius Martius survives and returns home to the polis, which of course he does, then he must perform, meaning that his body and his words must perform, according to Volumnia, in political (i.e. theatrical) ways. Upon the army’s return to Rome, Cominius praises Caius Martius before the senators, tribunes, and officers at the Capitol, but admits that “For this last / Before and in Corioles, let me say / I cannot speak him home” (2.2.97-99). These praises, without Caius Martius’ active participation in “aged custom” (2.3.157), cannot alone translate his offstage deeds onto the stage. Prior to this, in 1.3, Volumnia attempts not only to “speak him home” but, through apostrophizing and embodiment-by-proxy, attempts to perform for his wife (and the audience) Caius Martius’ absent body:

Methinks I hear hither your husband’s drum,
See him pluck Aufidius down by th’ hair,
As children from a bear, the Volsces shunning him:
Methinks I see him stamp thus, and call thus:
“Come on, you cowards, you were got in fear
Though you were born in Rome!” His bloody brow
With his mailed hand then wiping, forth he goes,
Like to the harvest-man that’s tasked to mow
Or all or lose his hire. (1.3.26-34)

Through enargeia, or the performative fashioning of a speaking picture, a material presenting of a corporeal absence, Volumnia envisions the event as if it is happening in front of her own eyes, while simultaneously enacting the event for Virgilia and the

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38 “Home” is mentioned 35 times in Coriolanus, second in Shakespeare’s plays only to The Comedy of Errors, in which “home” appears 36 times.
Volumnia’s performance points to the impossibility of a complete translation of actions into words without a corporeal remainder or reminder. In fact, word and action are not opposed but collaborative in the above passage. In order for an absent Caius Martius to be heard and seen onstage, Volumnia’s narration must also imitate his actions. In other words, Volumnia’s performance shows the unavoidable reciprocality of diegetic and mimetic spaces.

**Diegetic Absence**

However incompletely, Caius Martius is brought “home” onto the stage numerous times through report of offstage action by onstage characters. William Gruber argues that scenes in dramatic works in which actions are brought to the stage through reported speech “shift the grounds of imitation from the stage to the imagination. The mimesis [in these instances] is not so much ‘in’ the staged representation as in our mental picturing of it, a picturing dependent almost entirely on the verbal template supplied by a retrospective narrative account.”40 Gruber claims that these narrated accounts, “a secondary kind of representation,” “under the control of a skilled playwright,” can “function as an adequate or possibly superior substitute for immediate visual phenomena.”41 While I agree with Gruber, I suggest that in Coriolanus reported speech not only stands in for “immediate visual phenomena,” but informs (or in some cases,

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41 Ibid.
distorts) the audience’s perception of Caius Martius’ character, depending upon how the report characterizes Caius Martius, and where along the axis of mimetic bodying forth and diegetic abstraction the reported characterization is plotted (see Figure 1).

Caius Martius’ refusal to perform only increases the suspicions of onstage auditors, and (perhaps) audiences as well. Speculations concerning Caius Martius’ inward motivations for his actions and behavior abound. In the play’s opening scene, the first citizen dismisses possible motivations for Caius Martius’ “services...done” for Rome—“‘it was for his country’, ‘he did it to please his mother, and to be partly proud’”—by saying that this is what “soft-conscienced men” such as the second citizen “can be content to say” (1.1.25, 31-32). Instead, the first citizen suspects that pride is the supreme motivation for Caius Martius’ actions in battle, that his pride “is even to the altitude of his virtue” (1.1.33-34). In 2.2, after Caius Martius returns from Corioles to stand for consul, the first officer acknowledges Caius Martius’ bravery, yet seeks to determine the ulterior motivations for such heroism in battle: “That’s a brave fellow, but he’s vengeance proud and loves not the common people” (2.2.5-6). Yet, as in the opening scene, interpretation of Caius Martius is staged in dialogue in which multiple possibilities for the cause or causes of (the offstage) Caius Martius’ behavior are presented for the audience to consider. The second officer responds to the first officer’s charge, followed by the continued exchange between the men, which is worth quoting at length:

Faith, there hath been many great men that have flattered the people who ne’er loved them: and there be many that they have loved they know not wherefore, so that if they love they know not why, they hate upon no better a ground. Therefore for Coriolanus neither to care whether they love or hate him manifests a true knowledge he has in their disposition, and out of his noble
carelessness, lets them plainly see’t.

First Officer: If he did not care whether he had their love or no he waved
indifferently ’twixt doing them neither good nor harm; but he seeks
their hate with greater devotion than they can render it him, and
leaves nothing undone that may fully discover him their opposite.
Now to seem to affect the malice and displeasure of the people is
as bad as that which he dislikes, to flatter them for their love.

Second Officer: He hath deserved worthily of his country, and his ascent is not by
such easy degrees as those who, having been supple and courteous
to the people, bonneted, without any further deed to have them at
all into their estimation and report. But he hath so planted his
honours in their eyes and his actions in their hearts that for their
tongues to be silent and not confess so much were a kind of
grateful injury. To report otherwise were a malice that, giving itself
the lie, would pluck reproof and rebuke from every ear that heard
it. (2.2.7-30)

For the first officer, what appears to the second officer as Caius Martius’ “noble
carelessness” for the “love or hate” of the citizens instead displays a strategy “to seem to
affect the malice and displeasure of the people” which “is as bad as that which [Caius
Martius] dislikes, to flatter them for their love.” In other words, Caius Martius’ supposed
indifference is itself an outward show by which the citizens can’t help but “discover”
Caius Martius’ true feelings of hatred toward them. The second officer argues that Caius
Martius, in effect, “let’s them plainly see” his indifference, but only after weighing the
“disposition” of the citizens, and presenting himself accordingly. While one can argue
that the second officer believes that Caius Martius’ behavior is natural, that his being and
seeming are perceived to be identical, the second officer’s use of “noble carelessness”
presents the possibility that Caius Martius is practicing a type of sprezzatura, a feigned
nonchalance “so as to conceal all art and make whatever is done or said appear to be
without effort and almost without any thought about it.”

42 Baldesar Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier: The Singleton Translation, Ed. Daniel Javitch,
as a debate between the officers instead reveals the shared anxiety of both as to the impossibility of truly knowing Caius Martius’ inward disposition based upon interpretation of his outward appearance and actions. According to the second citizen, the true knowledge of Caius Martius’ nature is revealed to the citizens not by Caius Martius’ actions and behavior in Rome, but by his military heroism elsewhere. Although he says that Caius Martius “hath so planted his honours in their eyes and his actions in their hearts,” this is not accomplished by Caius Martius either in mimetic space or before the citizens of Rome, and so must be obtained through the imaginative envisioning of his battlefield actions by both playgoers and citizens. A correct interpretation of Caius Martius, according to the second officer, supplements Caius Martius’ ambiguous presence with his “honours” and “actions” which are formulated in the eyes and hearts only by reference to battles that the citizens have not witnessed. In this way, Caius Martius’ character is brought to the stage, to the “eyes” and “hearts” of onstage figures and offstage audiences, not by a “living actor” communicating the character’s inward self, but by the particularly social transactions that make use of information imported from diegetic space. The third citizen asks his fellow citizens, and the audience, to “Mark” Caius Martius’ “behavior” when he comes onstage in “the gown of humility” (2.3.37, 36). The tribunes, too, attempt to interpret Caius Martius’ onstage appearance, such as when Brutus asks Sicinius “Marked you his lip and eye?” (1.2.246). The numerous onstage interpretations of Caius Martius’ appearance must prompt an audience to observe closely (along with onstage spectators) the outward behaviors of Caius Martius when he does appear onstage for evidence of non-identity between inward

disposition and outward display. And in doing so, early modern audiences would also access their fundamental awareness of the non-identity of player and character.  

In 2.1 Brutus describes an offstage encounter between Caius Martius and the citizens who have come to see him upon his return to Rome:

All tongues speak of him, and the blearèd sights Are spectacled to see him. Your Prattling nurse Into a rapture lets her baby cry While she chats him; the kitchen malkin pins Her richest lockram ’bout her reechy neck, Clamb’ring the walls to eye him. Stalls, bulks, windows, Are smothered up, leads filled, and ridges horsed With variable complexions, all agreeing In earnestness to see him. Seld-shown flamens Do press among the popular throngs, and puff To win a vulgar station. (2.1.191-207)

Paster characterizes this passage as “…a description not of the returning hero but of the city pressing its welcome upon him.” However, Paster leaves off Brutus’ following lines:

...Such a pother
As if that whatsoever god who leads him
Were slily crept into his human powers
And gave him graceful posture. (2.1.204-207)


While the final lines of Brutus’ speech continue the description of how, in Brutus’s estimation, “the city press[es] its welcome upon [Caius Martius],” they also show Brutus’ perception of how the citizens perceive Caius Martius. Soon after, the messenger gives another report that takes up the premise that Brutus initiates, but that not only includes the citizens’ response, but the nobles’ response as well:

The nobles bended,
As to Jove’s statue, and the commons made
A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts:
I never saw the like. (2.1.251-254)

Central to meaning-making in Coriolanus is the impact on playgoers of voices abstracting Caius Martius’ offstage body. These passages typify the tendency of the voices of the city to displace Caius Martius’ human body by endowing it with god-like qualities, by treating it as a symbolic representation (Jove’s statue) of the city itself. However, when the citizens, under the persuasion of the tribunes, turn on Caius Martius because he refuses to submit to the city’s political customs, Caius Martius is further displaced through his banishment from Rome. But before the citizens banish him, Brutus tells Caius Martius: “You speak o’ th’ people as if you were a god / To punish, not a man of their infirmity” (3.1.85-86), while Sicinius speaks of him after Caius Martius exits the stage as “a disease that must be cut away” (3.1.296).

Leonard Barkan argues that “[i]n Coriolanus we see what is perhaps the most complete Shakespearean version of the analogue between the human body and the commonwealth.” He writes that the play “juxtaposes a real body with the abstract

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45 Leonard Barkan, *Nature’s Work of Art: The Human Body As Image of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 108. Much attention has been paid, by Barkan and many others, to how Menenius’ “fable of the belly” represents Rome itself as a symbolic body made up of
body, and plac[es] them in violent opposition.”46 Yet, for Barkan, the “real body” in this construction is Caius Martius’, while the “abstract body” is that of the citizens. I argue instead that the play not only shows the citizens attempting to present themselves as an abstraction—the citizens announce that “the people are the city,” or “the body politic” in Barkan’s analysis—but also abstracts, through reported speech, Caius Martius’ body.

Caius Martius’ former allies perceive and characterize him as less a man than an abstraction. For Menenius and Cominius, Caius Martius’ character is transformed in and by his body’s absence from the stage. In 4.5, Menenius, Cominius, and others participate in what W.B. Worthen calls “narrative characterization,” in which a player-character’s “vacancy from the stage is supplemented by” report which “draws our attention to the discrepancy between narrative and performative characterization,” or the differences between how the character is described and how an audience has seen, or will again see, the absent player-character.47 Worthen and Gruber both point to Philo’s description of Antony that begins Antony and Cleopatra as an example of abstraction-by-description:

“Look where they come. / Take but good note, and you shall see in him / The triple pillar of the world transformed / Into a strumpet’s fool. Behold and see” (1.1.10-13). Both Worthen and Gruber suggest that the “discrepancy between narrative and performative

constituent parts: “The senators of Rome are this good belly, / And you [the citizens] the mutinous members” (1.1.137-138). My analysis focuses instead on how Rome acts upon both the symbolic and material body of Caius Martius. However, even Menenius’ fable displaces Caius Martius by excluding him this bodily representation of Rome.

46 Ibid, 106.

characterization” is evident here because the appearance of the player representing Antony’s person onstage cannot (nor is he meant to) fulfil the outsized demands on the player’s body that the narrative seems to require. Gruber writes that “as for the objection that it is probably impossible for any actor to convince an audience that he was once ‘the triple pillar of the world,’ one might argue that for Shakespeare's spectators that may well be the point.”48 Worthen draws a similar conclusion: “the action that follows [Philo’s introduction] quite systematically deflates Antony’s grand ostentation,” so that “the performance inscribes an undecidable, yet palpable, difference between the actor’s persona and the fictive, dramatic ‘other’ he engages and represents.”49 I suggest that, in strikingly similar ways, description and report of the offstage Caius Martius ratchets up the tensions between what an audience is told to “behold and see” and what it actually sees presented onstage. Coriolanus requires of its audience a double-consciousness, or spatial knowledge, in which it both perceives the character of Caius Martius as he is described and reported upon, and exhibits awareness of the differences in characterization as presented by diegetic and mimetic modes.

Although Menenius says that he hasn’t heard from Caius Martius and that “His mother and his wife hear nothing from him” (4.6. 20-21), the audience hears of Caius Martius from those onstage as he and his Volcian army are camped outside the city. For example, Cominius gives a report of Caius Martius: “He is their god. He leads them like a thing / Made by some other deity than nature, / That shapes men better” (4.6.94-95).


Critics such as Michael McCanles read Cominius’ narrative deification of Caius Martius, along with the reports quoted above, as evidence “[t]hat Coriolanus holds himself a god” and that “[t]he situation of Coriolanus from his arrival in Antium to the end enacts with perfect logic the necessary conclusion of his drive to be alone, a god transcendent over all.”\textsuperscript{50} However, this reading conflates onstage characters’ perception of Caius Martius as communicated through description and report with the character of Caius Martius, as if what Cominius and others narrate presents a singular and indisputable version of Caius Martius, as if description of Caius Martius’ outward display accurately communicates not only the outward display of the onstage player-character, but the dramatic character’s inward disposition. There are two substantial problems with this conclusion. The first is that Caius Martius’ own words show that, at least before his banishment, he does not regard himself as a god, but rather as under the sway and protection of the gods as is everyone else in Rome. In the opening scene, Caius Martius accuses the citizens of “cry[ing] against the noble senate, who, / Under the gods, keep you in awe,” (1.1.175-176). In response to Cominius’ praises of him after the battle of Corioles, Caius Martius remarks that “The gods begin to mock me” (1.10.78). And back in Rome, he asserts that “You have, I know, petitioned all the gods / For my prosperity” (2.1.156-157). One can argue that Caius Martius may say these things in order to appear a certain way, while still believing that he is, or desires to be, god-like. However, these instances instead show that

Caius Martius wishes to communicate an absolute separation between himself and the gods who are often referenced in the play, but are never seen or heard from.

Second, the actions of Caius Martius onstage in 5.2 and 5.3, and his interactions with those onstage in these scenes, serve to deflate the diegetic abstraction of a deified or deification-desiring Caius Martius that is conveyed in the narratives of Menenius, Cominius, and others. This view challenges McCanles’ notion that Caius Martius’ “hold[ing] himself a god” is more pronounced after his banishment. In 5.4. the play seems to call attention to the self-conscious discursive artistry by which Menenius’ words, which he compares to a painter’s brushstrokes, bring before one’s eyes a vivid (although abstracted) representation of the offstage Caius Martius. Menenius describes Caius Martius to Sicinius in the following way: “He wants nothing of a god but eternity and a heaven to throne in” (5.4.19-20). Sicinius replies, “Yes: mercy, if you report him truly,” to which Menenius responds “I paint him in the character” (5.4.21, 22). Before this scene, but after Menenius returns to Rome, Caius Martius tells Aufidius that “This last old man, /…/ Loved me above the measure of a father, / Nay, godded me indeed” (5.3.8-11). It is, in fact, Menenius’ perception of Caius Martius, manifested in his behavior towards, and descriptions of, the Roman warrior, which has “godded” him. One should note that Caius Martius uses the verbification “godded,” the only instance of the word in all of Shakespeare, to denote something done to him. It is provoked not by Caius Martius’ desiring, but by the desire of Menenius to characterize him as a god.

When Volumnia, Virgilia, Valeria, and young Martius visit the Volcian camp, Caius Martius’ words, gestures, and actions serve to undercut the verbal abstractions that
have accrued around his character in the player-character’s absence from the stage. “I melt, and am not / Of stronger earth than others,” Caius Martius says to his wife, in language that seems to directly address and refute Brutus’ accusation that he speaks “as a god to punish” and “not as a man of [the people’s] infirmity” (5.3.28-29; 3.1.85-86). He compares himself to a “molehill” who should bow to his mother, “Olympus,” instead of the other way around. “You gods, I prate,” Caius Martius cries, “And the most noble mother of the world / Leave unsaluted! Sink, my knee, i’th’ earth” (5.3.48-50). His kneeling before Volumnia precedes his mother’s kneeling before him (s.d. 5.3.50). He announces (on his knees), much more player-like than god-like, that “Like a dull actor now / I have forgot my part, and I am out / Even to a full disgrace” (5.3.40-42). And when he relents to his mother’s request to spare Rome, he declares “Behold, the heavens do ope, / The gods look down, and this unnatural scene / They laugh at” (5.3.184-186). The above actions, I suggest, accomplish, in large part by the Caius Martius’ mimetic presence, the deflation of the preceding abstractions propagated by “narrative characterization.” Here, discursive formations are mediated by the corporeal, just as in the previous scenes in which the player-character of Caius Martius is offstage, the (absent) corporeal is mediated by the (present) discursive. Cominius and the tribunes attempt to interpret Caius Martius in ways that displace and distort his body. However, the presence of Caius Martius’ body speaks back to these interpretations, revising and complicating them, while offering other and additional meanings to the audience. The next section examines how the paradoxical figure of Caius Martius’ wounds, concealed onstage yet discursively inscribed on the body of the player-character, not only
contributes to the reciprocal mediation of diegetic and mimetic spaces, but does so in ways that inform Caius Martius’ character.

**Diegetic Presence**

Caius Martius’ concealed wounds complicate theater’s relationship to the early modern player’s body by inverting the conventional understanding that in performance, what is present is seen, and what is absent is not. Although dramatically present, his wounds are materially absent, despite the fact that these wounds are (supposedly) inscribed on the body of the player-character. Caius Martius’ refusal to show his body’s wounds thus generates a diegetic presence onstage.

When, after the battle of Corioles, Caius Martius objects to his actions being praised before the soldiers, Cominius tells Caius Martius that “You shall not be / The grave of your deserving. Rome must know / The value of her own” (1.10.19-21). For Caius Martius, this is precisely the problem: Cominius’ words position “Rome” as sole determiner of Caius Martius’ “value.” Cavell writes that “part of what maddens” Caius Martius is “[t]he fact that he both has absolute contempt for the people and yet has an absolute need for them.” While this is true, what most “maddens” Caius Martius, what most significantly defines his character, is his utter contempt for having to justify in any way, or to anyone (save, perhaps, his mother) his “deserving.” The first senator tells Caius Martius “Never shame to hear / What you have nobly done,” but, of course, it is

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52 Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge*, 155.
not shame that drives Caius Martius offstage before Cominius can speak in the Capitol of “the deeds of Coriolanus” (2.2.63-64, 78). It is disgust in being expected to “idly sit / To hear my nothings monstered” (2.2.71-72). “Monstered,” in this instance, connotes both display, as a cognate of the latin *monstrare*, but also the “transform[ation of] (something) *into* a monstrous version of itself.” In other words, for Caius Martius, to display is to distort. He refuses to sit for this type of reported demonstration, its deferral to diegesis, because, ironically, it threatens to overwrite his present physical body with an abstracted body produced through flattery. Cominius wishes to praise Caius Martius “In sign of what you are, not to reward / What you have done” (1.10.26-27). Caius Martius deplores this rationale, first, because he believes there should be no distinction at all between ontology and action. It is not only that, as Menenius states, “his heart’s his mouth”; it is that he desires that what he is, he does, and what he does, he is. This is why Caius Martius cannot allow himself to perform in the ways that Volumnia and Menenius ask him to.

As discussed above, this hidebound belief in the identity of his inward disposition and outward display, despite his knowledge to the contrary, seals Caius Martius’ fate. Secondly, Caius Martius feels that ceremonial praise can *only* be outward show; even if it happens to accurately describe the honorable and heroic deeds he has accomplished in battle, it is mere flattery. Flattery distorts, “monsters,” simply by nature of it being given voice. Displaying his wounds, as he is expected to do, not only flatters the citizens, which is anathema for Caius Martius, but participating in the ceremonies necessary for standing for council is itself no more than auto-flattery, which Caius Martius feels he is above. In

2.3 Caius Martius narrates his own actions for the citizens (and audience), discounting them by providing an ironic meta-commentary:

I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother the people to earn a dearer estimation of them. ’Tis a condition they account gentle. And since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practice the insinuating nod and be off to them most counterfeitle; that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man, and give it bountiful to the desirers. Therefore, beseech you I may be consul. (2.3.87-94)

There is perhaps no more damning (and accurate) travesty of political “gladhanding” in all of Shakespeare. Ironically, it is spoken by the character most loath to perform in all of Shakespeare.

For Caius Martius, ceremony only offers the hat, not the heart. Caius Martius’ heart, his inward truth, is inaccessible to the citizens because, in ceremony, his heart can only be legitimated in the response to the offering, not in the offering itself. Because Caius Martius understands the custom to operate this way, he cannot allow himself to take part. The third citizen explains: “For if he show us his wounds and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those wounds and speak for them” (2.3.6-7). Exposing his wounds for the citizens to “put [their] tongues into” them, to interpret the wounds, would allow the wounds to mean only what the citizens perceive them to mean. Caius Martius believes that his only recourse, then, is to conceal his wounds from the citizens.

Caius Martius’ refusal to expose his wounds for the citizens can be understood as the play’s concomitant refusal to participate in the wholesale translation of diegesis (reports of the wounds) to mimesis (the material representation of the wounds onstage). For Caius Martius, this translation, if he were to relent, would repurpose “the wounds his body bears,” the corporeal evidence of “warlike service” for Rome, as a means to a
political end, as purely ceremonial as the customary “gown of humility” that conceals these wounds onstage (3.3.51, 50; 2.3.36). The wounds Caius Martius received in battle for Rome thus cannot represent themselves for either audience or onstage auditors; they cannot be transported on to the stage without their meaning being coopted by ceremony, legitimated by the tongues and voices of the citizens, and interpreted by audiences. As we saw above, the play pushes back on the notion that actions can be completely converted into words, as Volumnia desires (but which her performance does not demonstrate). In 3.3 we witness Caius Martius’ refusal to allow for the conversion of the material results of military actions into materials representative of political actions. Thus, the play exposes the liminal status of Caius Martius’ wounds; they are neither wholly diegetic, represented discursively, or wholly mimetic, represented materially. Instead, the wounds serve as immaterial indices of a “world elsewhere,” a utopia, or non-place, in which Caius Martius’ deeds in battle would speak for, or stand for, themselves, without any subsequent “acclamations hyperbolical” that attempt to explain, interpret, or repurpose his wounds for those in Rome. However, this kind of mimetic identity between material elements and the inward properties that symbols such as Caius Martius’ wounds appear to represent is impossible to achieve, or to be displayed un-problematically for an audience in performance.

Through its focus on spatial relations, Coriolanus interrogates Caius Martius’ fundamental anatopism.54 Like the wounds he simultaneously bears and conceals onstage—wounds that are neither “here” nor “not here”—the body of Caius Martius is

54 *OED, “anatopism,” n.: “A putting of a thing out of its proper place, a faulty arrangement.”*
perpetually and ostentatiously out of place. In Caius Martius’ famous response to his banishment, we can observe how the spatial realms at play, mimetic and diegetic, bodied forth and abstracted, present and absent, mediate one another in ways that foreground Caius Martius’ theatrical displacement:

You common cry of curs, whose breath I hate
As reek o’ th’ rotten fens, whose loves I prize
As the dead carcasses of unburied men
That do corrupt my air: I banish you.
And here remain with your uncertainty.
.....................................................
Despising
For you the city, thus I turn my back.
There is a world elsewhere. (3.3.124-128, 137-139)

As noted above, Paster identifies the “dynamic interplay between the two Romes” put forth in Coriolanus, between the city as an immaterial or symbolic entity potentially detached from physical location, a “city of the mind,” and Rome as a concrete and material place. Yet, the play also presents the character of Caius Martius, like the city itself, as constructed by the “interplay” between the material and the symbolic, between presentation and representation. The pressure put on the deictic word “here” in “I banish you. / And here remain with your uncertainty” (3.3.122-3) reveals much about how Caius Martius regards the polis and his relationship to it. The deictic “here” in this line points to the flickering or toggling of the “two Romes” that the play develops and calls attention to so often, but does so in a way that shows how Caius Martius’ absence and presence also toggle between the two realms. It is ambiguous whether there is an implied “you will” following “here” or an implied “I will” or perhaps even an implied “we will” (which one

55 Paster, The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare, 62.
could take as a meta-theatrical inclusive nod to the audience). If Caius Martius means to say that the citizens will remain “here,” that would be factually true. The citizens remain in Rome while Caius Martius is forced to leave the city. While the proposed disambiguating addition to Caius Martius’ pronouncement “And here [you will] remain with your uncertainty” is factually true, it is, nonetheless, no way to banish someone in the material, spatial sense of the word. Understood in this way, it is more likely that Caius Martius means to say that he will remain “here” in Rome, as a diegetic presence—“And here [I will] remain with your uncertainty.” The player could perform it a number of different ways, each having different effects on the spatial dynamics of the play. If Caius Martius gestures to the ground, to the heavens, to himself, to his surroundings, all yield different performed possibilities and meanings. Yet, the implied “I will” would suggest the ambiguous status of his body, the city, and his body in and out of the city. This strange and strained relationship between Caius Martius’ body and Rome is not only foregrounded in this passage, but reveals itself throughout the play in the exchanges and negotiations (examined above) between the player-character of Caius Martius and the perception of him by audiences and onstage auditors.

In the scenes following Caius Martius’ banishment from Rome, the audience is presented with numerous instances in which Caius Martius’ theatrical displacement is explicitly presented. In 4.5 in Antium, the servingmen confront the “disguised and muffled” Caius Martius onstage, outside of Aufidius’ banqueting hall, which is positioned behind the tiring house façade, by accusing him of not belonging: “Here’s no place for you”; “Pray you, avoid the house”; “take up some other station. Here’s no place
for you” (4.5.8, 23, 29-30). While the servingmen’s inability to recognize Caius Martius can be attributed to his disguised appearance, Aufidius’ inability to recognize Caius Martius is more problematic. The last time Aufidius and Caius Martius met face to face, in Corioles in 1.9, Aufidius immediately identifies Caius Martius, even though Caius Martius’ face is covered in blood: “‘Tis not my blood / Wherein thou seest me masked” (1.9.9-10). This time, however, Aufidius demands six times that Caius Martius identify himself, that despite the great likelihood that Caius Martius removes his disguise at line 52, before speaking lines “If, Tullus, / Not yet thou know’st me, and seeing me dost not / Think me the man I am / necessity commands me name myself” (4.5.52-56). Caius Martius, displaced from both symbolic and material Rome, is thus deprived in Antium of his corporeal identity. He must, rather humiliatedly, both “name [him]self” for Aufidius and explain the circumstances which have brought him to Antium from Rome—another powerful example of how diegetic presence is generated on the stage through the cleaving of body from voice. However, according to the third conspirator, the murder of Caius Martius shall bring about a final onstage unification of his voice and body, the identity in death of tongue and breast: “When he lies along, / After your way his tale pronounced shall bury / His reasons with his body” (5.6.56-58).

Performance in Polis and Playhouse

However, in Coriolanus what we, as the audience, see is what we don’t get. The play frustrates any opportunity to witness Caius Martius’ interiority, primarily because it is rendered indistinguishable from his exterior actions and behavior. The play’s spatial

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56 The Norton Shakespeare edition includes the editorial stage direction “unmuffling his head” at line 52, but the lines spoken by Caius Martius require the removal of his disguise for the lines to make sense.
dynamics foreclose these opportunities by its persistent focus on the presentational aspects of mimetic space. Critics often point to Caius Martius’ lack of Hamlet-ian and Lear-ian soliloquies as evidence of his lack of inwardness. Yet, Coriolanus does give two brief soliloquies. The first, a soliloquy of twelve lines in rhyming couplets, is rarely given critical comment, and is delivered in the cramped, transitory space between citizens exiting and more citizens entering. The second is delivered after his banishment, when he arrives in the Volcian city of Antium. Again, his soliloquy is disrupted by a citizen, this time a Volcian. Neither soliloquy does what the champions of Shakespeare as author of characters with “whole, continuous selves” demand of it; that is, to provide the audience with a privileged glimpse of “that within which passeth show.”

North’s Plutarch, Shakespeare’s primary source text for the play, contains a description of Caius Martius’ time spent in the wilderness of exile: “So he remained a few days in the countrie at his houses, turmoyled with sundry sorts and kinds of thoughts, such as the fyre of his choler dyd sturre up.” Shakespeare’s play gives us the “fyre of his choler” but makes unavailable for the audience the inner-turmoil, the “sundry sorts and kinds of thoughts” that may indeed fill an “empty” character. As A.C. Bradley writes, “the process is hidden.” Later in the scene in Antium, Caius Martius is approached by servingmen, one which asks him “Where dwell’st thou?” “Under the canopy,” Caius Martius responds. “Where’s that?” asks the servingman. Caius Martius answers,

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“I’th’city of kites and crows” (4.5.36-41). The ambiguity of his response points to the enduring constellation of *polis* and playhouse that thematically constructs the play. The canopy is referenced by Hamlet in such a way as to call forth in the audience’s minds not only the sky above Elsinore, but the more pertinent theatrical environment of the playhouse. “This most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire” (2.2.290-292) refers, perhaps, to the “heavens” of the Globe playhouse. There is a question of whether Caius Martius means the physical location of Rome, from which he has been banished; the symbolic “city located in the mind,” from which, of course, he has also been banished; some liminal and unseen environment of exile between the cities of Rome and Antium; some world elsewhere; or all these spaces at once. As an over-determined diegetic space, the “city of kites and crows,” like Caius Martius’ interiority, is suggested and gestured toward, but ultimately rendered unavailable for mimetic display. Both Heywood’s and Caius Martius’ evocative, subjunctive “as if” suggests the tantalizing possibility of collapsing personator into personated, diegesis into mimesis, absence into presence, but as the play posits, the gap stubbornly and permanently remains.

To conclude, *Coriolanus* articulates Caius Martius’ character by staging how a displaced Caius Martius acts upon Rome, and how Rome acts upon, or displaces, Caius Martius. Volumnia’s bodying forth of her absent son points offstage, even as her mimetic display attempts to translate absence into presence (mimetic absence), while Caius Martius’ own onstage body, and the wounds upon it, cannot “denote [him] truly” (diegetic presence). He cannot adequately be brought “home” to the city or to the stage.
through narrative reports that abstract his body (diegetic absence); nor does he possess
the political and theatrical skills to represent himself onstage (mimetic presence). Unlike
critical readings such as Bloom’s, in which Caius Martius’ character “scarcely exists,”
the character of Caius Martius must be accessed by playgoers through their knowledge
not only of how the character is represented in mimetic and diegetic space, but how the
character is perceived, both by themselves and by onstage auditors.
CHAPTER FOUR

“OF HERE AND EVERYWHERE”: DYNAMIC PERSPECTIVES IN TWELFTH NIGHT

Figure 2. “We Three Loggerheads.”

In 2.3 of Twelfth Night, Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek have commenced the scene’s raucous festivities as the fool Feste approaches:
Feste’s “we three” jest refers to a popular “sign-board representing two fools or asses and inscribed ‘We Three,’ the spectator making the third” (See Figure 2 above). Sir Toby’s response, “Welcome, ass,” conveys his sense of having solved the riddle by including himself in the physical representation of the jest, and by positioning Feste as the third “loggerhead” which completes the onstage triumvirate. However, Sir Toby’s reflexive retort offers only one of the multiple perspectival possibilities inherent in the audience’s perception of Feste’s jest. For the audience, the “picture” is simultaneously in diegetic space—Feste’s words point deictically to an unseen object offstage—and in mimetic space—Sir Toby’s words activate the representational qualities of the jest as the three players realize and participate in its onstage presentation. The audience sees both two separate representations of the picture, one diegetic and one mimetic, and one hybridized representation of the picture in deep theatrical space, as the confluence of the reported, the displayed, and the perceived. In order to parse the riddle, the audience acknowledges its own necessary implication in the jest, extending theatrical space to include the perspective of the audience; the playgoers must concede to an interpretative position both within and without of the conceit. In other words, mimetic and diegetic spaces are integrated for the audience in ways that upend any strict division of representation in theatrical space into what is visually presented and what is reported. The audience employs spatial knowledge by seeing itself seeing. Thus, Feste’s “we three” riddle

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challenges any adoption (by either a player-character or audience member) of a fixed, static, objective, or mono-focal perspective, simply because to do so renders the jest illegible. In this same manner, the final scene’s resolution asks an audience to perceive at once the physical reality of the onstage arrangement of player-characters and the extra-visual imagination required for the theatrical representation of, in Orsino’s words, “A natural perspective, that is and is not” (5.1.209). Yet, it is not just the “we three” conceit of 2.3 and the final scene’s “natural perspective” that exhibit the complex mending and patching of diegetic and mimetic modes of representation. In fact, as I will demonstrate, the whole play encourages audiences to question how truth and illusion are represented spatially.

Perspectives in Deep Theatrical Space

While Sir Toby lumps Feste in with himself and Sir Andrew as the “asses” of the riddle, we as spectators may wonder from whose perspective we should regard the visual display. Since Feste is the presenter, the “conceiver” of the jest, he is not only one of the subjects of the picture but its creator, the painter of the verbal “sign-board.” Utilizing Lefebvre’s terms, Feste appears onstage in a position of “perceived space,” or “physical space,” which informs for playgoers “the practical basis of the perception of the outside

2 I use the terms “mending” and “patching” here and throughout this chapter to explain the hybridized space produced by the interlacing and overlapping of diegetic and mimetic spaces in Twelfth Night. Feste uses these terms to explain the combinatory relationship between, and inseparability of, “sin” and “virtue”: “Anything that’s mended is but patched. Virtue that transgresses is but patched with sin, and sin that amends is but patched with virtue. If that this simple syllogism will serve, so. If it will not, what remedy?” (1.5.40-44). Like sin and virtue, both of which can potentially display its opposite, truth and illusion are arranged in theatrical space as a spatial syllogism—deduced in a sense by the audience—which displays both the truth of illusion and the illusion of truth.
world.” However, Feste’s words articulate a position of “conceived space,” or “mental space,” in which the represented “order is constituted via control over knowledge, signs, and codes: over the means of deciphering spatial practice and hence over the production of spatial knowledge.” In deep theatrical space, Feste occupies a dual position as both physical participant in and verbal presenter of the jest, just as the “we three” picture itself must be constructed by the audience’s awareness of the jest’s mimetic and diegetic possibilities. Feste’s “conceiver” role is all the more remarkable because of the relatively low social position or place one would ordinarily associate with a kept fool of an aristocratic household. While Sir Toby’s response materializes the “we three” picture onstage, placing himself, Sir Andrew, and Feste inside the mimetic construction of the jest, Feste also occupies a position of power outside of mimetic space by virtue of his presentation of the jest that is witnessed by both on- and offstage perceivers. For Lefebvre, “conceived space is a place for the practices of social and political power; in essence, it is these spaces that are designed to manipulate those who exist within them.”

The lack of power that Feste exhibits as participant in the jest as it is represented in mimetic space is overwritten by the agency he exhibits in verbally presenting the “we three” conceit. Deep theatrical space affords the audience both perspectives at once.


4 Edward Soja, *ThirdSpace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1996), 67. See my Introduction for further explanation of Lefebvre’s divisions of space into “lived space,” “conceived space,” and “perceived space.” Similar to Lefebvre’s “trialectics of social space,” so termed by Soja, deep theatrical space produces, and is produced by, the “conceived” and “lived” spaces that audiences are expected to synthesize in their perceptions of theatrical performance.

5 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 222.
The calculations of perception and perspective that the audience does in order to experience the different aspects of this paradoxical configuration—in which the playgoer occupies multiple points-of-view in order to perceive the jest as simultaneously excluding and including him/her—must necessarily be done on top of, or in addition to, mimetic space. The ability to experience both “perceived” and “conceived” spaces as occupying and overwriting the shared theatrical space constitutes the audience’s spatial knowledge. The player-characters of Twelfth Night make these spatial calculations as well, which affect not only their perceptions of the events that transpire in the play, but the ways in which they see or fail to see themselves and others.

As suggested above, the “we three” conceit models for the audience of Twelfth Night a way of perceiving onstage events that at once participates in and exceeds visual representation on the stage. In the previous two chapters, I have demonstrated how playgoers must allow for diegesis, or what is not or cannot be presented in, or represented by, mimetic space, to inform and transform mimetic space. Onstage representation of the battle of Agincourt, for example, cannot succeed without the audience of Henry V “minding true things by what their mock’ries be” (4.0.54), in other words, without imaginative efforts to supplement the mimetic space of presentational “mock’ries” with the diegetic space that contributes to the perceiving of “true things.” The character of Caius Martius likewise must be constructed—through the spatial knowledge of playgoers—by the exchanges between mimetic and diegetic presences and absences. In

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6 What I have been calling “spatial knowledge,” pace Tuan, Lefebvre would term “lived space” or “social space,” in which material and abstract spaces are integrated in such a way as to produce a comprehensive and informed understanding of one’s relationship to and participation within theatrical space.
order for the theatrical to transcend the merely visual, audiences of _Coriolanus_ must at once imagine the “world elsewhere” (3.3.139) that Caius Martius seeks, perceive Caius Martius’ perceiving of this space, and differentiate what is mimaetically unrepresented from what is theatrically unrepresentable. As Andrew Sofer points out, “most of the event we call theatre or performance depends on felt absences.” As Andrew Sofer points out, “most of the event we call theatre or performance depends on felt absences.”7 _Coriolanus’_ diegetic “world elsewhere” attains a “felt absence” in the embodied minds of playgoers. This space, although absent from the stage and mimaetically unrepresented, exerts pressure on the spaces of the play that are mimaetically represented, and thus participates in the multi-modal spatial knowledge of playgoers.

The “we three” conceit makes apparent that playgoers are enveloped in the performance of the play and stand outside of it, requiring a complex, ever-developing set of spatial practices that Shakespeare’s plays model, or “work” upon the audience, in ways especially attuned to activating the audience’s “imaginary forces” (1.0.17). In a seemingly paradoxical loop, each play’s mimaetic and diegetic spaces construct and shape relationships of perception in the performance environment, as the cognitive ecology of theatrical performance constructs and shapes each play. Evelyn Tribble and John Sutton argue that this distributed system of mind and body, of presentation and representation, constitutes the cognitive ecology of theatrical performance: “Many cognitive states and processes are hybrids, unevenly distributed across the physical, social, and cultural environments as well as bodies and brains.”8 Audiences perceive the events in, and by


means of, the theatrical space afforded by this distributed environment. As cognitive
psychologist John Gibson writes, “[p]eople are not only parts of the environment but also
perceivers of the environment. Hence a given observer perceives other perceivers. And he
also perceives what others perceive. In this way each observer is aware of a shared
environment, one that is common to all observers, not just his environment.”9 Gibson’s
claim undergirds the fundamental relationship between environment, perception, and
point of view that persists in a playgoer’s experience of theatrical performance.

The extent to which, in Twelfth Night, spatial knowledge can bridge the supposed
perceptual gaps in theatrical performance between diegesis and mimesis has been
questioned by critics such as Elizabeth Freund. Freund separates out semiotic space (what
I term diegetic space), which includes the unseen and unseeable, from the mimetic space
of performance, which she characterizes as “bound to a determinate referent” and thus
unable to represent the “undifferentiated, unstable, and unidentifiable universe of
meanings” that constitutes the “symbolic order.”10 For Freund, mimetic representation
limits the free play of possibilities (or impossibilities) suggested by the symbolic order
because it requires an audience to determine that what occurs in Illyria either is or is not
so, that what is represented is either real or illusory. Freund posits that Orsino’s
paradoxical statement in the play’s reunion scene—“One face, one voice, one habit, and
two persons, / A natural perspective, that is and is not” (5.1.208-209)—begins with

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9 J.J. Gibson, Reasons for Realism: Selected essays of James J. Gibson, Ed. E. Reed & R. Jones
(Hillsdale, NJ, 1982), 411.

10 Elizabeth Freund, “Twelfth Night and the Tyranny of Interpretation,” ELH 53.3 (Autumn,
1986), 478.
“undifferentiated singleness” that points toward semiotic indeterminacy, “one face, one voice, one habit,” before the “doubleness” of “difference” is restored to nature, in other words, “two persons” mimetically represented by the presence of the twins onstage at the same time for the first time in the play. Freund’s Derridean-influenced claim challenges the efficacy of readings which view the final scene as “announc[ing] a proper return to normative social identities and patriarchal authority” because it is merely the inherent limitations of mimetic representation that elicit such interpretations. If festive comedy is defined by the movement “from release through clarification,” as C.L. Barber argues, then this “clarification” is, for Freund, embedded in, and thus implicated by, the limits of the mimetic endeavor, and its desire for interpretive closure. However, what Freund presents as a hermeneutic impossibility for audiences, I take to be the means by which a particular, Shakespearean, mode of theatrical perception is achieved. According to Freund, in order to view the “we three” picture, “the interpreter is obliged to take a position both inside the frame and outside it,” and therefore “adopt two mutually exclusive centers of reference” (my emphasis)—one the semiotic unitary blur of indeterminacy and the other the mimetic binary of difference. Instead of regarding these modes of representation as “mutually exclusive,” I argue that in theatrical performance the diegetic unseen and the mimetic seen maintain a mutually constitutive relationship. In Twelfth Night, the agon between unity and duality is staged in deep theatrical space. The


semiotic singularity that Freund argues is unrepresentable by mimesis, and the duality that is an inevitable by-product of representation are interlaced, engaged in a “galliard” (1.3.104) that theatrical performance “bodies forth.” Oppositional spaces such as Orsino’s and Olivia’s houses, Sebastian’s and Viola’s locations on- and offstage, and the space of Malvolio’s gulling and the “dark house” (5.1.321) of his imprisonment must be considered in relation to the unitary place of Illyria, in which misprision, desire, madness, and foolery are distributed in ways that transcend opposition and difference. By sometimes opposing, and other times unifying, these spaces, Twelfth Night presents the audience with a complex spatial patterning—one that interweaves both single and double visions or versions of space—by which to experience the relationships between self, other, and environment.

Illyrian Place and Space

Unlike many of Shakespeare’s other Elizabethan festive comedies, in which characters escape from repressive social spaces into liberating, dream-like spaces (e.g. the wood outside of Athens in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, or the forest of Arden in As You Like It), the whole of Twelfth Night’s staged action is restricted to the single location of Illyria. Twelfth Night is a play in which its setting, Illyria, is co-extensive with the stage space to a striking degree, perhaps matched only in Shakespeare’s plays with the island in The Tempest. For this reason, many have attempted define the place of Twelfth Night in the hopes of better understanding how Illyria’s symbolic geography governs the actions of, and interactions in, the play.14 Should Illyria be thought of as a first or “normal”

14 There is vigorous critical debate about the nature of the place of Illyria: See Elizabeth Pentland, “Beyond the ‘lyric; in Illyricum’: Some early modern backgrounds to Twelfth Night,” in Twelfth
world, such as the setting from which the characters flee and return in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *As You Like It*? Or should Illyria be regarded as a second, or “green,” world, such as the ones to which the characters in these plays escape?

Alvin Kernan argues that Illyria exhibits qualities of Shakespeare’s first or normal worlds. Kernan writes that “[i]n *Twelfth Night*…, the action is limited to the first place, the palace of Orsino and the house of Olivia in Illyria, while the wild experiences of the storm at sea, shipwreck, separation, and loss of identity—the types of experience usually associated with the second place—have already been undergone by Viola, Sebastian, and others before the play begins. They import the understanding gained in the second place into the first place, and the play is, as it were, all ending.”¹⁵ Kernan sees Illyria as a first world that has been infiltrated by strangers, characters from the second world of Romance who interact with the native inhabitants of Illyria. Kernan’s description of the play as “all ending” positions the (diegetic) actions associated with Romance in the second place, and the entirety of the play’s staged actions as occurring after a conventional return to the normal world. While Kernan asserts that Illyria displays the characteristics of a first place, Northrup Frye sees Illyria as acting as a “green” second place. Comedies such as *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *As You Like It*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Winter’s Tale* enact “a rhythmic movement from normal to green world and back again,” in which “the comic resolution is achieved”

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by a “metamorphosis” located in the green world. Frye opposes this two-place structure to “Twelfth Night…” [which] as its title implies, presents a carnival society, not so much a green world as an evergreen one” (86). For Kernan, Twelfth Night’s symbolic geography is defined by the movements of characters from diegetic to mimetic space. For Frye, the movements of characters are contained within “an evergreen world,” one in which comic resolution nonetheless signifies the seasonal-based cyclical return from the madness of Carnival misrule to a “new order” realized by a happy ending. Yet, to my mind, neither the linearity suggested by Kernan, or Frye’s notions of cyclicity, accurately encapsulates the complex movements in, and of, Twelfth Night.

It is worth noting that neither of the endings of As You Like It or A Midsummer Night’s Dream occur exclusively in the first world, or that “metamorphosis” is restricted to the green world. As You Like It concludes with an epilogue in which the player playing Rosiland directly addresses the audience. The player-character speaks on the stage from a


17 See Alvin Kernan, “Place and Plot in Shakespeare,” for further explanation of the two-place structure in Shakespeare’s plays. See also Frye, “The Argument of Comedy” 86. Joan Hutton Landis, in “‘To Arthur’s Bosom’: Locating Shakespeare’s Elysium.” Modern Language Studies, Vol. 15, No. 4, Fifteenth Anniversary Issue (Autumn, 1985):13-21, writes that “[i]f, as Frye and Kernan have both taught us, the first place and the second place occupy central sites in Shakespeare’s dramatic geography, the story itself might designate as a third…Just as the setting in the play is a metaphor of the real world it mirrors, so is the story a mirror of the play and its fictive places and spaces; they exist, then, on different levels of abstraction” (21). Lorna Hutson and Henry Turner have both demonstrated the spatial and mimetic significance of plots (and their material reification, platts) in dramatic texts and performance. Landis argues that story or narrative can be mapped onto a dramatic geography that includes both mimetic and diegetic spaces. I argue that this unorthodox imagining of theatrical space is baked into the dramatic and thematic infrastructure of Twelfth Night, one that encourages audiences to beware of the interpretive pitfalls of fixed perspective and stable perception.
liminal position between character and player, as well as between the representation of
the play’s worlds and the presentation of the playhouse. In *A Midsummer Night’s
Dream*, the fairies of the green world, Puck, Oberon, and Titania, conclude the play
onstage in what is ostensibly Theseus’ court in Athens. The normal world of Athens—
whose state-enforced dictates and Egeus’ blocking father’s objections against the
betrothal of Lysander and Hermia have driven the lovers into the enchanted wood—has
been translated into a place amenable to the couples’ desires. The presence in Theseus’
court of Puck, “sent with broom before / to sweep the dust behind the door” (5.2.19), and
the other fairies, collapses into a single, densely compacted space that includes the green
world, the normal world containing “this hallowed house” (5.2.18), in which the
mechanical’s *Pyramus and Thisby* has been performed, and the performance environment
in which the play itself is coming to an end: “this hallowed house.” If, as Kernan asserts,
*Twelfth Night* is “all ending,” then like the endings of Shakespeare’s other festive
comedies make apparent, normal and green worlds are not delineated by geography,
symbolic or physical, but by perceptions of embodied minds in deep theatrical space,
which can be thought of as at once physical and symbolic, true and illusory, twinned and
singular, present and absent, here and everywhere.

Antecedents for the negotiations of mind, body, and environment that constitute
distributed cognition in theatrical performance can be located in the transformation of
conceptions of place and space occurring in the early modern period. David Wiles writes

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18 For the liminality of prologues and epilogues, see Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann,
*Prologues to Shakespeare’s Theater: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama*
that “[c]lassical and medieval space was finite and bounded, but the renaissance and the enlightenment introduced the new conception of space that was infinitely extensible.”¹⁹

Wiles includes the frontispiece of John Case’s *Sphaera Civitatis* (1588) as a representative example of the Ptolemaic conception of bounded space, in which concentric circles represent the celestial sphere, positioned directly under Elizabeth I as the “mobile primum.”

Figure 3. John Case, *Sphaera Civitatis* (1588).

Like Wiles, Edward Casey posits that the early modern world in which *Twelfth Night* was first performed was one in transition. Casey writes that “[t]he Aristotelian cosmographic

model of a hierarchical universe with an immobile earth situated at the still center gives way to the idea that any part of the universe can be considered a fully valid center: the universe is ‘all center.’ This in turn implies that every place is a center—a center of perspectival viewing from which all other places can (at least in principle) be seen.”20

Early modern anxieties about changing conceptions of man’s place relative to his environment can be seen in the lines below from John Donne’s Anatomy of the World:

The sun is lost, and th’earth, and no man’s wit
Can well direct him, where to look for it.
And freely men confess, that this world’s spent,
When in the planets, and the firmament
They seek so many new; they see that this
Is crumbled out again to his atomies.
’Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone;
All just supply, and all relation. (207-214)21

Despite Donne’s speaker’s dismay that “no man’s wit / can well direct him where to look” for the evaporated wholeness and unity of the world, the atomization of man’s spatial cognition of the universe into “pieces,” mere elements of “supply” and “relation” that contemporary developments in mathematics and cosmology engendered, found its material analogue in the early modern theater, where playwrights such as Shakespeare staged this transformation from objective place to subjective space. According to Casey, “space is no longer situated in the physical world but in the subjectivity of the human mind that formally shapes the world.”22 Early modern thinkers like Descartes favored

20 Edward S. Casey, The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 117.


22 Casey, The Fate of Place, 136.
space over place. For those in the wake of Cartesian space, an absolute and uniform space dominated—the grid of absolute space replaced the spirit of relative place. Casey writes that “[b]y 1600 so much express attention has been paid to space that place comes to be regarded as something secondary, even effete and otiose.”

We can think of Twelfth Night as being performed in the midst of a sea-change in notions of place and space, and as performing the various ways one can experience one’s self and others in both place and space. I’m suggesting that in Twelfth Night Shakespeare dramatizes spatial “complementarity,” in which “radically opposed and equally total commitments to the meaning of life coexist in a single, harmonious vision.” Relationships between identity, disguise, and madness play out in a single, unified, dramatic locale and in the multiple and relative spaces “bodied forth” by theatrical space. Changes in perception and perspective of both characters and audience transform dramatic place into a hybridized theatrical space that allows for mimetic and diegetic modes to play out upon and within an inclusive setting that both “is and is not” Illyria, that both “is and is not” the playhouse, and that can spatially represent both Orsino’s “natural perspective” and Viola’s paradoxical statement, “I am not what I am.”

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23 Ibid.


25 More recent studies pull away from earlier structuralist analyses that focuses upon literal movement forced, in a sense, by the symbolic landscape and conventions of comedy and toward cognitive- or phenomenological-tinted analysis that tends to emphasize less the “actual” settings and places of the play than the connections between spaces and how their connections are displayed between mind, body, and environment. In Shakespeare’s Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), Mary Thomas Crane focuses on how cognitive space operates within Illyria, and especially between the two households. Crane examines the polysemic qualities of the word suit that “reveal that desire and constraint are
**Spatial Foolery**

In *Twelfth Night*, verbal wit serves as a social currency which characters exchange for the ability to traverse Illyria. It is no coincidence that Viola and Feste, often recognized as the characters most adept at verbal wit, are the characters most able to move between, and within, spaces such as Orsino’s court and Olivia’s household.

Attending to how characters’ movements are governed by their facility with language illuminates the connections in the play between linguistic and spatial agility. Many commentators point to the dialogue in 3.1 between Viola and Feste as not only an interconnected on the most basic levels and that movement of the play is not toward the control of desire and disguise but toward an acceptance of the constant flux between loss, desire, and control that forms the basis of the cognitive self” (96). In order to determine “[t]he role of spatial perception in subject formation,” Crane traces the characters and their linguistic exchanges through space: “Shakespeare makes evident the spatiality inherent in our thinking about desire and questions the adequacy of those spatial metaphors” (37, 97-98). Crane writes that unlike (Lacanian) psychoanalytic theory, which Crane sees as placing language and thought in opposition to the body, so that alienation of the subject results in the fragmentation of mind and body (or vice versa), “a cognitive version of the spatial formation of subjectivity involves not just an image of the embodied self…, but a tangible experience of it based on the somatosensory signals from both inside and outside the body that are combined into a coherent body image” (39). The structuralist “worlds” of Frye and Kernan, on the other hand, encourage an understanding of the play in which place is regarded with an absolute objectivity, a perspective that offers an overarching, bird’s-eye (or reader’s eye) view of the play’s action. This is what Bertrand Westphal, in *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, Trans. Robert T. Tally (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), terms a “monofocal reduction,” the “impossibility of seeing space in its totality” (126). Thus, critics sensitive to phenomenological concerns regard this perspective as out of the reach of the play’s characters, as well as out of the reach of the audience. In both cases, “gaze” is not objective or universal, but intimately connected to bodily position and environmental influences. In other words, the structuralist notion of dramatic place runs counter to the phenomenological, or subjective “gaze,” in which the character’s point-of-view, and the actions and desires influenced by, and projected out from, this position cannot be separated from the relationship of subject and world that determines perception. However, both the objective perspective with which the structuralists approach *Twelfth Night*, and the phenomenologically-influenced subjective perspective offer an incomplete picture of the totality of the play’s theatrical space, the former because of its reliance on the objective (impossible) view of the critic, the latter because of the nature of subjective perspective: “Derived only from a single source, the knowledge of a given space will be restricted, as the view of a single person, and thus less valuable” (126). Instead, as *Twelfth Night* encourages, subjects must see from multiple positions, such as the perspectives needed to fully perceive, and participate in, Feste’s “we three” jest.
exemplary display of verbal wit, but one in which the controlling power of language is at the heart of the exchange. Feste says, “To see this age!—A sentence is but a cheverel glove to a good wit, how quickly the wrong side may be turned outward” (3.1.9-11).

What often goes unremarked is how Feste’s words contribute through spatial metaphor to the articulation of the inextricable connections between perception and environment with which the play seems to be preoccupied. Gaston Bachelard’s phenomenological approach to spatial perception leads him to conclude that “[o]utside and inside are both intimate—they are always ready to be reversed, to exchange their hostility.” As we’ve already witnessed with Feste’s “we three” jest, “A good wit” can manipulate perception so that one’s sense of being inside or outside of a particular space, one’s perceived position relative to one’s environment, is both temporary and indeterminate, “always ready to be reversed.”

The vexed relationship between perception and environment is the subject matter of the initial exchange in 3.1 between Viola and Feste that leads to Feste’s “wit” to “cheverel glove” analogy. Viola asks Feste, “Does thou live by thy tabor?” (3.1.1-2). Viola inquires of Feste’s vocation, a musician or fool, based upon the instrument “tabor” which editors assume he carries into the scene. However, Feste’s retort transforms the question from one of vocation to one of location: “No, sir, I live by the church.” “Art thou a churchman?” Viola counters. To which, Feste responds, “No such matter, sir. I do live by the church for I do live at my house, and my house doth stand by the church”

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(3.1.3-5). Viola then says, “So you mayst say the king lies by a beggar if a beggar dwell near him, or the church stands by thy tabor if thy tabor stand by the church” (3.1.7-9). Viola’s response demonstrates her ability to keep up with, and even to outdo, Feste’s verbal calisthenics.

The deft conceptual maneuvering displayed by both participants in 3.1 finds its opposite in the slow wit of Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who attempts to give excuse for his lack of perceptiveness: “Methinks sometimes I have no more wit than a Christian or an ordinary man has; but I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to my wit” (1.3.71-73). Like Feste’s “we three” jest, the dialogue between Sir Andrew and Maria in 1.3 plays upon Sir Andrew’s inability to see himself as the fool in this particular configuration of mimetic space:

Sir Andrew: …Fair lady, do you think you have fools in hand?  
Maria: Sir, I have not you by th’ hand.  
Sir Andrew: Marry, but you shall have, and here’s my hand. (1.3.55-57)

Maria’s response brings Sir Andrew’s “fools in hand” from diegetic space onto the stage, positioning for on- and offstage audiences Sir Andrew as one of the fools in question: “I have not you by th’ hand” (my italics). The hand he offers fills the space of a fool’s hand, and by the transitive property of theatrical embodiment, Sir Andrew’s body fills the space onstage of a fool that he took to be elsewhere, offstage. Because the audience is in a position from which to experience the combined effect of the verbal unseen upon the visual seen—what Keir Elam terms “optical allusions” to describe the “countless verbal indications of visual processes” that occur in the play—the audience sees a fool where Sir
Andrew does not. However, in this instance, the visual emblem of Maria and Sir Andrew holding hands completes onstage the representational circuit initiated by the verbal jest.

While in 1.3 Sir Andrew’s body enacts onstage Maria’s “hand” quibble, Viola and Feste’s 3.1 exchange derives its humor from the quibbling on “by,” meaning both one’s position relative to the object or setting, and one’s conceptual relationship to the object or setting. In other words, their word-game relies on the productive confusion between subjective perception (space) and objective location (place), as well as between physical proximity and metaphysical presence. “By,” along with “in” and “out,” and “here” and “there,” are considered by Bachelard to be “the unfortunate adverbs of place.” The subject-positions that these adverbs (or prepositions) of place attempt to convey are never stable or permanent. In Twelfth Night, for characters and audiences, one’s ability to recognize one’s perspective as constantly in flux dictates one’s ability to successfully navigate the topsy-turvy world of Illyria, which Karen Greif posits as “a world of deceptive surfaces, where appearances constantly fluctuate between what is real and what is illusory.” To Greif’s accurate claim I would add that what fluctuates is not only the apparent, but the perspectives by which one apprehends the apparently real and the apparently illusory.

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29 Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, 212.

When Feste leaves the stage in 3.1, Viola gives her assessment of the “allowed fool” and of folly (or foolery), pointing to the separation between the two:

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool,
And to do that well crave a kind of wit.
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
The quality of persons, and the time,
And, like the haggard, check at every feather
That comes before his eye. This is a practice
As full of labour as a wise man’s art,
For folly that he wisely shows is fit,
But wise men, folly-fall’n, quite taint their wit. (3.1.53-61)

Feste’s wit both allows him “to play the fool” and differentiates him from the folly which his skilled fooling “shows” in others. Feste’s statement “I wear not motley in my brain” (1.5.49-50) highlights the performative qualities of foolery, just as Viola’s “I am not that I play” (1.5.164) highlights the performative qualities of gender. Feste’s outward appearance does not present visually his interiority; his motley and tabor are merely the wardrobe and property of the fool’s profession and the player’s role, but cannot fully define or confine Feste’s character. In his dialogue with Viola, Feste says that “Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun, it shines everywhere” (3.1.33-34). What is suggested here is the complex distribution of foolery in deep theatrical space: as both something that physical embodiment can make apparent in mimetic space, and as something disembodied, semiotically and linguistically patching and mending diegetic space to mimetic space. In this sense, foolery is a free-floating signifier that perception places. Feste’s fooling “shows” the folly in Olivia’s continued mourning for her brother:

Feste: I think his soul is in hell, madonna.
Olivia: I know his soul is in heaven, fool.
Feste: The more fool, madonna, to mourn for you brother’s soul,
      being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen. (1.5.59-62)
According to Michael Bristol, Feste “traverses the boundary between a represented world and the here-and-now world he shares with the audience.”\textsuperscript{31} Feste’s liminal status is marked by his refusal to be emplaced, defined by either his social or theatrical position. Like the Chorus in \textit{Henry V} and Time in \textit{The Winter’s Tale}, Feste occupies a liminal place between the presentational display and the representational event. However, unlike prologues, epilogues, and choruses, Feste participates in the spaces carved out by representation (Olivia’s house, Orsino’s court) and interacts with other characters in the drama. He suffers “misprision” in his encounter with Sebastian that causes him to frame Illyrian space as a kind of negative space of perception, in which “Nothing that is so, is so” (4.1.8). As Malvolio points out, Feste is also at the mercy of the perception of others: “Unless you laugh and minister occasion to him, he is gagged” (1.5.74-75). Yet, here Malvolio mistakenly conflates Feste with folly; it is Malvolio who will later experience the ocular equivalent of being gagged as he is kept from seeing \textit{and} kept out of sight from the audience in the “dark house.” Feste’s freedom of movement (relative to the confinement of Orsino, Sir Toby, Olivia, and Malvolio) resembles the freedom of movement that folly or madness exhibits in the play, infecting one character after another in ways that resemble the spreading of a plague, as well as “traversing the boundary” between diegetic and mimetic spaces. Andrew McConnell Stott is correct to suggest that we shouldn’t regard Feste as actively or purposefully – as a quality of character—

“guiding the community to greater awareness…knitting it together in happiness.”

Instead, we must recognize Feste’s “fundamental elusiveness” as a liminal entity indifferently modeling for the audience a way of being, seeing, and being seen in the Illyrian world.

**Between Illyria and Elysium**

Orsino’s court and Olivia’s household are oppositional, as two separate locations in the play’s dramatic geography, and constitutive of the single place of Illyria. Similar to the status of the twins in the “natural perspective” of 5.1, these locations provide the play with a binary spatial structure, while also exhibiting traits that point to their identity. There are a number of other twinned-singular place relationships put forth in the play, beginning in 1.2 with Viola’s question about where she and the Captain have washed up and the whereabouts of her brother. In the audience’s initial encounter with Viola, she problematizes the question of place by positing an opposition between normal (Illyria) and green (Elysium) worlds that breaks down almost immediately.

Viola: What country, friends, is this?
Captain: This is Illyria, lady.
Viola: And what should I do in Illyria?
        My brother, he is in Elysium. (1.2.1-3)

Elysium serves as a type of edenic, utopian space which appears to offer an alternative, an opposite, to the present location, but in fact, does not. In some ways, the relationship between Illyria and Elysium resembles Frye’s two-world structure for most festive comedies, in which Illyria stands in as the first, or normal, world, and Elysium stands in

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as a green world. However, spaces in *Twelfth Night* are never presented as straightforward, uncomplicated, or non-contradictory. To modify Bachelard’s phrase, diegetic and mimetic spaces are “always ready to be reversed.” Elysium provides a diegetic opposition to, and reference point for, the spaces that are dramatically realized. It presents the audience with an alternative point outside of the bounds of mimetic presentation but inside the bounds of theatrical representation. Elysium occupies a diegetic, narrative space that is unavailable mimetically. Yet this diegetic space exerts a force upon the mimetic scene on the Illyrian coast that suggests both identity (both Elysium and Illyria as green worlds) and difference (Elysium as a green world that Illyria is not). These juxtaposed worlds, cutting across and penetrating diegetic and mimetic modes, endow the audience with a spatial knowledge by which it can draw upon multiple perspectives.

Early modern theatrical performance directs the collective gaze of the audience onto mimetic space, but there are some significant moments in which the collective gaze is threaded through the perspective of a character reporting the events he or she has witnessed. From the beginning of the play, the audience is asked both to see what Orsino sees and to see him seeing, the former determining the perception and perspective of Orsino, the latter calibrating the perception and perspective of the audience.

> O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first  
> Methought she purged the air of pestilence;  
> That instant was I turned into a hart,  
> And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,  
> E’er since pursue me. (1.1.18-22)

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33 For more on the significance of Elysium in Shakespeare’s plays, see Joan Hutton Landis, “‘To Arthur’s Bosom’: Locating Shakespeare’s Elysium,” *passim.*
Here, the hunter becomes the hunted, the pursuer becomes the pursued, and the suitor exchanges places with the object of his suit. Orsino’s transformation from hunter to hunted is a traditional Petrarchan love conceit which the play interrogates. His self-referential gaze collapses upon itself in a tautology; his desire is both source and object. Before the arrival of the twins to shake up the fixed perspectives of those in Illyria, Orsino’s perspectival reversal displays nothing more than an affect Orsino exploits in order to remain in his melancholy.

**Desire, Madness, Perspective**

Orsino’s self-referential, recursive desire presents in miniature the self-referentiality that defines Illyria. Illyria’s solipsistic focus can be best seen in the frequency in which the phrase “as any in Illyria” or its numerous variants are uttered by the characters. It is repeated enough times to be considered a type of catchphrase for the play. Sir Andrew says it twice in 1.3: “As any man in Illyria, whatsoever he be, under the degree of my betters; and yet I will not compare with an old man” (97-99), and “I think I have the back-trick simply as strong as any man in Illyria” (103-104). The repetition of the phrase reinforces the understanding of Illyria as a place unto itself, as a place in which one can only compare the behavior that occurs there to other behaviors occurring there. In other words, this phrase (and its frequent usage) points up the autopoietic nature of the place, of Illyria, as both setting and state of mind, as both physical place and perceived space.34 The behaviors of those in Illyria are self-generating, self-sustaining, and self-reflexive, cutting through the patched and mended

34 *OED*, “autopoiesis,” n.: “The self-maintenance of an organized entity through its own internal processes; (in extended use) self-organization, self-regulation. Also: self-creation.”
worlds of green and normal, and diegetic and mimetic. The absurdity of the self-comparison, the tautological riddle, reaches its apex with Malvolio’s utterance in the “dark house”: “I am as well in my wits as any man in Illyria” (4.2.99). When only a single point of view is offered, there is, by definition, no opportunity for perspective. In other words, in the catchphrase “as any man in Illyria,” an opposite pole from which to gain another perspective of the events of Illyria appears to be unavailable. This monofocalsism produces and sustains the undifferentiated desire exhibited by Orsino, as well as the madness which the characters exhibit. Yet, as we’ve seen, the singularity of Illyria is tempered by the doubleness that diegetic spaces offer. By confronting the offered theatrical space of the play, the audience may experience the kind of madness that is felt by the characters, simply by virtue of having nothing to compare mad behavior to, or having to compare mad behavior only to itself. If this is true, then Freund’s “undifferentiated” symbolic order persists, and is therefore unrepresentable in dramatic performance. And as she argues, the representation of difference in the final scene is undermined by its suggestion of “clarification.” However, as we’ve seen, Twelfth Night’s duality exists at a subatomic level, as it were. The mending and patching of mimetic and diegetic spaces in the audience’s spatial practice makes it aware of the duality existent between language and image, and allows for comparison of one mode of representation from the perspective of the other.

By exploiting this duality, Twelfth Night charts a deliberate course towards the play’s final-scene peripeteia, in which the “crowded stage and the hectic movement of actors across the width and along the depth of the platform...[allow] each of them to
witness the reunion of the twins from a different visual and psychological perspective.”35

The audience first becomes aware of the theatrical potency of *Twelfth Night*’s multi-perspectival exchanges between language and image, between diegetic and mimetic spaces, in 1.2, when the Captain gives Viola a description of her brother out at sea after the shipwreck:

…after our ship did split,
When you, and those poor number savèd with you
Hung on our driving boat, I saw your brother,
Most provident in peril, bind himself—
Courage and hope both teaching him the practice—
To a strong mast that lived upon the sea,
Where, like Arion on the dolphin’s back
I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves
So long as I could see. (1.2.8-16)

The captain’s description of Sebastian’s rescue introduces into the play a consistent trope in Shakespeare’s plays, that of the speaking picture, a means by which diegetic speech produces a complex mimetic space in performance. The Captain narrates his perspective as his visual knowledge reaches its vanishing point. Shakespeare returns to this trope in 1.3 of *Cymbeline* in a similar description of “the diminution / of space” delivered by characters onstage, but directed out (deictically) into diegetic space.

Pisanio: For so long
As he could make me with his eye or ear
Distinguish him from others he did keep
The deck, with glove or hat or handkerchief
Still waving, as the fits and stirs of’s mind
Could best express how slow his soul sailed on,
How swift his ship.

Innogen: Thou shouldst have made him
As little as a crow, or less, ere left
To after-eye him.

Pisanio: Madam, so I did.

35 Elam, “New Directions: ‘Ready to distrust mine eyes,’ 120
“[F]rom / The smallness of a gnat to air” illustrates the vanishing point in the dramatic geography that ends on the horizon, but the entire passage, like its antecedent in *Twelfth Night*, similarly provokes in playgoers a search for the vanishing point in which the diegetic “melts” into the mimetic. This arrangement positions the audience at-sea, able at once to perceive what the character sees and to perceive the observer as he narrates diegetic space. Yet, the audience, looking out from the player-character’s perspective, adopts a viewpoint that extends out from the stage to envelop its surroundings, including the audience space itself. These vanishing-point descriptions allow for the imaginative toggling between multiple, and opposed, spatial positions, the results of which is the multiplication of perspectival possibilities, and the realization in dramatic performance of an inclusive, expansive, and richly articulated theatrical geography.

In 2.4, Viola produces a recursive movement that reverberates in deep theatrical space, and that activates a type of sensorial synesthesia for the audience. Although Orsino demands that Viola-Cesario (and the audience) “Make no compare / Between that love a woman can bear me / And that I owe Olivia” (2.4.99-101), ears nonetheless receive what the eye then must “compare” to the arrangement of the two player-characters onstage. Although Orsino speaks of the disparity between a man’s capacity to love and a woman’s, his words draw the audience’s attention to Viola’s love for the player-character onstage, the “love a woman can bear me.” Viola appears to Orsino as Cesario, yet she
appears to the audience as both Cesario (from Orsino’s mono-focal perspective) and
Viola-in-disguise:

My father had a daughter loved a man
         As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman
         I should your lordship. (2.4.106-108)

Utilizing a subjunctive verbal construction, “were I a woman,” Viola expresses a love
that occurs both in mimetic space, her love for Orsino, and in diegetic space, Cesario’s
narration of the love of “a man” by Cesario’s father’s daughter. Viola’s presentation of a
narrated, offstage space implicates both her and Orsino in mimetic space, allowing for an
overlaying of diegetic and mimetic spaces in the audience’s complex perspective. Viola
produces a speaking picture of a diegetic event, supposedly the “history” of an experience
of love for a man. Her disguise both causes and makes evident Orsino’s misprision.
Viola’s speaking picture, however, allows the audience to experience Orsino’s
misperison, as well as the uncanny temporal, spatial, and gender/sexual duality (a
palimpsest in, and of, space) produced by this moment. Temporal duality is achieved in
theatrical space: while Orsino believes that Viola is conveying a past experience, Viola
describes the present as it transpires onstage. Spatial duality is also achieved: the diegesis
of character, action, and emotion is produced in mimetic space via the distributed
perceptual environment that the audience shares with the player-characters. And finally,
the scene brings to the fore the gender/sexual duality that occurs when Viola speaks of
the experience of one whom Orsino takes to be Cesario’s sister: “My father had a
daughter.”
The following passage’s heightened polysemic quality, and its dramatic irony, allows Viola to tell Orsino of an occurrence that has never occurred, “She never told her love,” at the very moment in which she enacts onstage this illusory, diegetic event, thereby realizing it:

She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i’th’ bud,
Feed on her damask cheek. She pined in thought,
And with a green and yellow melancholy
She sat like patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed? (2.4.109-111).

The audience must co-produce the multiplicity of possibilities, and see both what “is and is not,” in order for the full effect of the scene to be experienced, and for both diegetic and mimetic spatial modes active in the presentation of the scene to be accessed. To crystallize for the audience the unity of diegesis and mimesis in play at this juncture, the player-character Viola may indeed become still, delivering the lines with as little physical movement as possible: “She sat like patience on a monument.” This appearance onstage of a speaking monument precedes a scene featuring Shakespeare’s most famous living statue, Hermione, the spatial dynamics of which I have more to say in the following chapter. Sufficed to say, Viola’s body, at this moment, like Hermione’s in the final scene of The Winter’s Tale, demands to be seen both as it appears onstage, and as it is overwritten by the narrative that Viola speaks and enacts.

The above passage from 2.4 demonstrates how concealment and revelation are distributed across the play’s theatrical environment. The convergence of mimetic and diegetic modes of representation in her enactment of narrative events on the stage suggests for the audience both the real and the illusory qualities of what is displayed
before one’s eyes. While Viola’s disguise provides strategic concealment of her true identity and of her love from both Orsino and Olivia—“Conceal me what I am,” Viola says, “…For such disguise as haply shall become / The form of my intent” (1.2.49-51)—Olivia’s desire cannot be concealed: “A murd’rous guilt shows not itself more soon / Than love that would seem hid. / Love’s night is noon” (3.1.138-139). However, what Olivia believes to be the unavoidable revelation of her true desire, illuminated by the light that love can’t help but produce, is in fact a revelation of her misdirected desire. In other words, Olivia’s desire is a symptom of the “very midsummer madness” (3.4.52) of which in 3.4 she will accuse Malvolio of displaying, made visible onstage for both Viola and the audience:

Olivia: Stay. I prithee tell me what thou think’st of me.
Viola: That you do think you are not what you are.
Olivia: If I think so, I think the same of you.
Viola: Then think you right, I am not what I am.
Olivia: I would you were as I would have you be.
Viola: Would it be better, madam, than I am?
   I wish it might, for now I am your fool. (3.1.129-135)

This stichomythic exchange stages the illusory, Olivia’s misprized desire, and the real, Olivia’s desire to be misprized: “I would you were as I would have you be.” This scene, like the whole of Twelfth Night, encourages a skepticism of appearances, not because what is presented can be only real or illusory, but because theatrical space, by drawing upon mimetic and diegetic absences and presences, can represent at once the real and the illusory. For example, Viola tells Olivia that “I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth, / And that no woman has, nor never none / Shall mistress be of it save I alone” (3.1.149-151). These lines body forth for the audience the objects of desire that are absent from the
stage, but nonetheless exert pressure on the scene by their mimetic absence. Viola speaks the truth, for while “no woman” shall be “mistress” of her heart, she desires that Orsino will be master of it. Just as Viola-Cesario seeks to woo Olivia as liaison for the absent Orsino, here and elsewhere Olivia acts as stand-in for Orsino as well. And while Viola says that she has “one heart, one bosom, and one truth,” in fact her brother Sebastian is “Yet living in my glass” (3.4.345), the mirror-image of Viola-Cesario “in this fashion, colour, ornament, / For him I imitate” (3.4.347-348). In the play’s final scene, when Viola and Sebastian are observed together on the stage as “two persons,” Orsino recognizes a “trick of singularity” (2.5.132) in their appearance: “One face, one voice, one habit” (5.1.208). In other words, as Viola-Cesario can be said to stand in for the absent Sebastian in 3.1, Olivia’s desire can be regarded as both misdirected at Viola-Cesario, and as accurately directed (in a way that foreshadows the play’s conclusion) at the mirror-image of Sebastian. As David Carnegie writes, “Twelfth Night is a play in which Viola, in a sense, does become her brother; in which the qualities Olivia loves in Cesario do transmigrate into Sebastian, [and] in which an apparent pageboy transforms into ‘Orsino’s mistress, and his fancy’s queen’.”36 Orsino’s and Sebastian’s absent bodies are theatrically represented in ways that both complicate and explicate mimetic space.

The mimetic space of Olivia’s orchard in 2.4 is further complicated and explicated by what is revealed in the following scene. In 2.5, the audience finds out that Sir Andrew has surreptitiously observed the interactions between Viola and Olivia: “Marry, I saw your niece do more favours to the Count’s servingman than ever she

bestowed upon me. I saw’t i’th’ orchard” (3.2.4-6). Although Sir Andrew reveals to Fabian that he believes Olivia saw him “As plain as I see you now” (3.2.8), neither Olivia or the audience (until this moment) has knowledge that Sir Andrew observed Olivia and Viola speaking in the orchard. The play does not confirm or deny that Sir Andrew has witnessed the conversation; it merely confirms for the audience his misprision of what he says that he has seen. This ambiguity further serves to undermine the audience’s ability to believe what it sees, or in this case, what it does not see. Fabian tells Sir Andrew that what he witnessed was merely a performance that displayed the opposite of what Sir Andrew perceived: “She did show favour to the youth in your sight only to exasperate you, to awake your dormouse valour, to put fire in your heart and brimstone in your liver” (3.2.15-17). The audience should recognize that Fabian’s interpretation of Olivia’s actions in the garden is no more than the initiating of the gulling of Sir Andrew that will follow. And Sir Andrew is too much of a fool to see the similarities between this gulling and the gulling of Malvolio in the garden that he, Sir Toby, and Fabian witnessed from behind the “box-tree” in 2.5. Whereas with Malvolio’s gulling, the audience is aware from the outset of the scene that an on-stage audience “Observe[s] him, for the love of mockery” (2.5.15-16)—thus participating in the jest by observing it along with the on-stage audience—the post-facto discovery of Sir Andrew’s observing of Olivia and Viola in the orchard suggests the illusory, always-already performative quality of what transpires on the stage. This information also has the effect of retroactively expanding the mimetic space of the previous scene by including the diegetic space from which Sir Andrew observed the exchange. In fact, Sir Andrew’s diegetic observation demonstrates
for the audience the folly of all theatrical observation. Sir Andrew’s experience parallels
the audience’s in this significant respect: both Sir Andrew and the audience not only
share a position in diegetic space from which to observe the performance, but are
implicated by their perceptions and misperceptions of the constellation of “true things”
and “mockeries” that constructs the play-world of Illyria in a performance environment.

**Malvolio’s Dark House**

Madness in *Twelfth Night* is on display whenever characters take to be self-
evident truths what their fixed and blinkered perspectives reveal to them. Olivia believes
that her true desire is illuminated, tautologically as it were, by its own clarifying light:
“Love’s night is noon.” Yet, what instead gets illuminated onstage for the audience is
madness masquerading as love. As Feste remarks, “Foolery…shines everywhere,”
meaning that a character’s misprision is both the source of the light and the object under
its illuminating force. Malvolio’s gulling exposes this paradoxical relationship between
self and environment, in which one’s subjective perspective makes knowledge of one’s
misperception impossible, by mapping the play’s motifs of true and illusory appearances
onto the (theatrically) reversible properties of daylight and darkness.

Because, as Olivia points out, Malvolio is “sick of self-love” (1.5.77), he can see
only what is illuminated by his madness. Maria’s “discovered” letter confirms for
Malvolio the truth of his suspicions of Olivia’s love for him. Although both on- and
offstage audiences witness Malvolio’s interpretive straining to see himself as the object
of Olivia’s desire, Malvolio’s own warped desire allows him to see only himself in the
role: “Daylight and champaign discovers not more. This is open” (2.5.140). Like Olivia,
who reveals to Viola her desire to manipulate desire, “I would you were as I would have you be,” Malvolio desires to “make” “the alphabetical position” M.O.A.I “resemble something in me” (2.5.107-108). Yet, both Olivia’s and Malvolio’s madness forecloses any alternative perspective from which to observe the discrepancies between what is evident to others (including the audience) and what is self-evident.

John Manningham’s diary entry, in which he recounts the Candlemas Day 1601 performance of “Twelve night, or what you will” at Middle Temple, describes Maria’s letter as “prescribing [Malvolio’s] gesture in smiling, his apparell, &c., and then when he came to practice, making him beleev he tooke him to be mad.”37 In other words, by following the instructions of the letter, Malvolio presents for the audience a visual emblem of Illyrian madness. Sir Toby’s comment, “His very genius hath taken the infection of the device” (3.4.116-117), also speaks to the ways in which, by ingesting Maria’s diegetic prescriptions, Malvolio’s internal “infection” is displayed externally by the player’s body in mimetic space. The audience sees Malvolio’s dress and behavior as not only presenting but proving his madness. However, what is striking about the scene of Malvolio’s imprisonment in the “dark house” in 4.2 are the ways in which any strict correspondence between what is visually apparent with what is objectively true breaks down. The play itself breaks down these correspondences in order to produce the synthesis of truth and illusion that is the audience’s theatrical experience.

Malvolio’s “dark house” is a theatrical prison which the audience must imaginatively construct at once the real and the illusory, the seen and the unseen. In determining Malvolio’s position as on- or offstage in 4.2, I follow, among many others, John Astington’s claim that in early modern performances Malvolio is “entirely out of sight and speaking from the tiring house, possibly from behind one of the stage doors.”

If this is so, then not only is Malvolio unable to see onto the stage from “here in hideous darkness” (4.2.26-27), but the audience is also temporarily unable to see Malvolio within the tiring house. When Feste, disguised as Sir Topas, asks Malvolio, “Sayst thou that house is dark?” Malvolio answers “As hell, Sir Topas” (4.2.30-31). Feste and Malvolio continue the exchange. Feste responds:

> Why, it hath bay windows transparent as barricadoes, and the celestories toward the south-north are as lustrous as ebony, and yet complainest thou of obstruction?

Malvolio: I am not mad, Sir Topas; I say to you that this house is dark.

Feste: Madman, thou errest. I say there is no darkness but ignorance, in which thou are more puzzled than the Egyptians in their fog.

Malvolio: I say this house is as dark as ignorance, though ignorance were as dark as hell; and I say there was never man thus abused. I am no more mad than you are. (4.2.32-42)

Feste-as-Sir Topas attempts to convince Malvolio that what he perceives as a “dark house” is in fact as illuminated as the stage space from where Feste speaks, and that it is only Malvolio’s ignorance that prevents him from seeing so. Yet, if the bifurcated construction of space into off- and onstage is meant to suggest a correspondence between

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literal blindness caused by the prison’s darkness and psychological blindness of Malvolio’s madness, then the audience must be aware of its own blindness in its inability to see Malvolio “within,” its inability to see the darkness that he describes.\footnote{Malvolio’s line “By this hand, I am” (4.2.93) suggests that Malvolio’s hand may be visible reaching out through the stage door at this moment.} Instead, the audience must first imagine the “dark house” from Malvolio’s perspective before dismissing this perspective as illusory. However, trusting in Feste’s characterization of the space of Malvolio’s imprisonment means that the audience, too, may be the object of another of Feste’s jests. Malvolio cannot see, yet Feste follows Maria’s prescription to “put on this gown and this beard” (4.2.1), and “dissemble myself in’t” (4.2.4) so that he appears not to Malvolio in a disguise (for this is unnecessary) but to the audience, in order to present visually what both “is and is not.” While the space of presentation (either a performance in daylight at the Globe or perhaps by candlelight at Middle Temple) appears not to be dark at all, the scene’s space of representation, its conceived space as described and inhabited by Feste, is far more ambiguous. Once again, as with the ‘we three’ jest, the audience is implicated in a complex theatrical space that requires multiple perspectives from which to see itself seeing.

A Natural Perspective

Directly following the scene of Malvolio’s imprisonment in the “dark house,” Sebastian interrogates his surroundings and what he has witnessed in ways that perhaps model the audience’s own confronting of the confusion regarding what is real and what is illusory:

This is the air; that is the glorious sun.
This pearl she gave me, I do feel’t and see’t,
And though ’tis wonder that enwraps me thus,
Yet ’tis not madness. (4.3.1-4)

Sebastian itemizes the material realities of his situation, concluding (temporarily) that these sensory perceptions prove not madness, but wonder, a kind of happy “accident and flood of fortune” (4.3.11) that has befallen him, but that perhaps clouds his understanding of the truth of his experience. Next, he narrates his attempt to locate his companion:

Where’s Antonio, then?
I could not find him at the Elephant,
Yet there he was, and there I found this credit,
That he did range the town to seek me out.
His counsel now might do me golden service… (4.3.4-8)

These lines call attention to the ways in which visual confirmation alone can yield false perceptions: “I could not find him…/ Yet there he was.” While of course Antonio must have left the Elephant before Sebastian arrived, there is an element of temporal slippage or simultaneity suggested by these lines that may be produced either in diegetic space, or as we saw with Viola’s diegetic report in 2.4, in mimetic space. Sebastian’s lack of “ocular proof,” as it were, nonetheless does not discount the truth of Antonio’s “felt absence” in the Elephant. Four lines later, Sebastian announces “That I am ready to distrust mine eyes” (4.3.13), because he cannot ultimately convince himself that either his own or Olivia’s madness is not the cause of his contradictory perceptions. Although Sebastian recognizes “There’s something” in Olivia’s behavior “That is deceivable” (4.3.20-21), he cannot perceive what precisely this is.

Anthony Dawson suggests that Sebastian doubles as the audience at this moment in a way that provides the audience another perspective to see itself seeing. Sebastian
mirrors the audience in his valiant, though frustrated, attempt to make sense of the Illyrian world, as well as in his ultimate “surrender to the salutary madness” that Shakespearean comedy demands:

Sebastian immerses himself in the waters of Illyria and teaches us to do the same... As the outsider thrust suddenly into Illyria, he occupies a place similar to ours... His position as exemplar of the subtitle [‘What You Will’] underlines his special relationship with the audience.40

While Dawson’s claim is insightful to an extent, it also seems to restrict audience perception to a single, rather blinkered, subject position, that of Sebastian. Like Sebastian, the audience struggles to piece together a coherent picture from the confusion of identity and displays of madness in Illyria. Yet, Sebastian perceives the Illyrian world as one constructed on binaries of truth and illusion. Either “I am mad,” he says, “Or else the lady’s mad” (4.3.16); “though ’tis wonder…” Sebastian concludes, “Yet ’tis not madness” (4.3.3-4); and finally, “this may be some error, but no madness” (4.3.10). To distill the audience’s experience of plot machinations and character interactions to Sebastian’s limited, mono-focal viewpoint yokes the audience’s own perspective to a single character in the play, one far less informed and aware than is the audience.41


41 In “Shakespeare on the Stage,” Dawson writes that “[t]he most important element that distinguishes Shakespeare on the stage from Shakespeare on the page is the presence of the living actor” (233). Here, Dawson’s point restricts performance to the “presence of the living actor,” which excludes not only the absences that diegetic space contributes to theatrical apprehension, but the interplay between absence and presence that deep theatrical space recovers. Dawson’s analysis of Sebastian in *Indirections* similarly excludes the significant contributions that a more holistic understanding of theatrical performance includes, one in which the audience not only observes the space that contains the present actor, but is implicated in the latticed exchanges of perspective that occur in deep theatrical space.
Instead, as I have been suggesting throughout this chapter, the audience’s
dynamic and shifting perspectives allow it to transcend spatial and semiotic binaries in
order to view not only the final scene’s visual emblem as “A natural perspective,” but the
play itself as co-producing for the audience, along with the audience’s active
participation and imaginative awareness, an extra-visual experience “that is and is not.”
Ernest Gilman writes that the appearance of the twins onstage at the same time activates
in Orsino a “recognition of the doubleness of his ‘perspective,’ [and] signals a final
rebalancing of the mind on a vantage point between two halves of a full, if paradoxical,
awareness.”42 I would say that “the mind” that is “rebalance[ed]” and the mind’s access
to a “full…awareness” of how paradox can be represented is less Orsino’s than the minds
of the audience. When Sebastian appears onstage with Viola in the final scene, he asks
“Do I stand there? I never had a brother, / Nor can there be that deity in my nature / Of
here and everywhere” (5.1.219-221). While no player-character and no playgoer can be
said to experience the play from “everywhere,” the audience of Twelfth Night may indeed
understand itself to have come pretty close.

42 Ernest B. Gilman, The Curious Perspective: Literary and Pictorial Wit in the Seventeenth
CHAPTER FIVE

“MAK[ING] POSSIBLE THINGS NOT SO HELD”: UTOPIAN, DYSTOPIAN, AND HETEROTOPIAN SPACES IN *THE WINTER’S TALE*

While the final scene of *Twelfth Night* represents in theatrical space the reunion of Viola and Sebastian as “A natural perspective, that is and is not” (5.1.209), the final scene of *The Winter’s Tale* presents a spectacle, Hermione’s transformation from stone statue to living body, meant to produce a feeling of wonder for both on- and offstage audiences. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the complex spatial knowledge required from playgoers in order to experience *Twelfth Night*’s “natural perspective” from both within and outside of the final scene’s mimetic display is initiated by theatrical events that occur earlier in the play, most notably Feste’s “we three” jest. This chapter will show how *The Winter’s Tale* similarly utilizes exchanges and juxtapositions between spatial modes (diegetic and mimetic, off- and onstage, unreal and real, dreams and actions, “old tale” and spectacle) to prepare its audience for what it encounters in the play’s final scene. However, unlike *Twelfth Night*’s revelation of the twins as “One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons” (5.1.208), in which dramatic irony separates the playgoer’s knowledge from the characters’ knowledge, in *The Winter’s Tale* Shakespeare withholds knowledge of Hermione’s preservation in Paulina’s “removed house” (5.2.96) from on- and offstage audiences alike (except, of course, from Paulina). Both audiences are simultaneously, as Prospero states in *The Tempest*, “jostled from [their] senses”
(5.1.158), thus experiencing something “that is and is not” a resurrection, “that is and is not” a statue come to life. In the multi-modal space of Paulina’s “poor house” (5.3.6), both audiences perceive Hermione as “stone no more” (5.3.99). Leontes’ “amazement” (5.3.86) is aligned with our own; the “settled senses of the world” (5.3.72) are upended for both on- and offstage audiences. When Paulina announces “You perceive she stirs” (5.3.103) as Hermione descends to embrace her husband, it is at once an embedded stage direction and a command directed to “all that look upon with marvel” (5.3.100). Leontes speaks not only for those onstage, but for all who witness Hermione’s transformation, when he remarks that “we are mocked with art” (5.3.68). In Chapter Two, I point to a shared relationship of mocking and being mocked among player-characters and playgoers. Yet, the statue scene exploits a fundamental difference between the way playgoers are “mocked with art” and the way that the onstage audience in the statue scene is “mocked with art.” I will suggest in what follows that this fundamental difference is a matter of theatrical perspective. The statue scene enacts a feedback loop in which playgoers experience a wonder that is at once their own and inseparable from the wonder achieved by witnessing the onstage audience experiencing wonder for themselves. From this privileged and multiple perspective, playgoers see themselves seeing, experience themselves experiencing, and thus obtain spatial knowledge not only of what the performed drama represents, but of how theatrical performance is able to present it. Playgoers’ theatrical experiences are ultimately liberated from any particular or fixed perspective, mono-focal viewpoint, or “settled sense.” But how does the play produce these perspectives for its audience? How does The Winter’s Tale transport us there?
Many studies of *The Winter's Tale* emphasize the significance of its binary structure, in that they tend to focus upon the movements of the plot that correspond to shifts in the play’s dramatic locations, which dictate, or are dictated by, concomitant shifts in genre. For example, structuralist readings map Sicily and Bohemia onto the two-place pattern that Shakespeare utilizes in a number of other plays. Sherman Hawkins describes *The Winter's Tale* as a “variation of [Frye’s] green world formula,” which Frye describes as “a rhythmic movement from normal to green world and back again.”\(^1\) James Siemon charts the play’s “double withdrawal”: “First, a withdrawal from the sterile social world of Leontes’ court to the fecund world of pastoral Bohemia; and second, a withdrawal from the sterile world of Polixenes’ court mores to a Sicilian court that now has as its center not Leontes’ destructive mania but Paulina’s creative magic.”\(^2\) Richard Proudfoot writes that “*The Winter’s Tale* conforms to [a] two-part structure,” which he acknowledges has received “extensive attention in…criticism” contemporaneous with his own, and which presents “the nature and extent of the parallels and contrasts of action, word and theme which create the peculiar balance between the play’s two halves and also between its comic subplot and its main action.”\(^3\)


others regard the bifurcated symbolic landscape of normal and green worlds as governing the thematic structure of the play. Joan Hartwig argues that the dual settings undergird a tragic-comic construction, in which the shift from Sicily to Bohemia signals a corresponding generic shift from tragedy to comedy. Finally, Peter Platt aligns the shift in location with a shift in theme: “Structurally, the play breaks down neatly into two sections, the first more epistemological, the second more aesthetic and theatrical, in focus.” Each of the readings, when considering the audience’s perception (if considered at all), assume a rather straightforward relationship between place and perspective. Those critics who associate the play’s spaces exclusively with its settings or locations, or who, as Siemon does, suggest a return to a stable place that has merely swapped out one characterological cynosure (Leontes) for another (Paulina), fail to recognize that the most significant spaces of the play cannot “neatly” be categorized as either normal or green, Sicilian or Bohemian, tragic or comic, reported or enacted, or for that matter, dreamed or embodied. These in-between and multimodal spaces exert considerable force on a playgoer’s spatial knowledge of theatrical events. Likewise, as I will show, playgoers’

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5 Peter Platt, Reason Diminished: Shakespeare and the Marvelous (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 153. Platt bifurcates the play into “Part One: The Rational,” in which “Leontes’ rage for knowledge…is the dominant concern of the first three acts,” and “Part Two: The Wondrous,” “acts 4 and 5, where Shakespeare requires readers and audiences to take non-naturalistic, nonrational leaps of space and time” (153). This division seems to exclude from the Sicily portion of the play the “leaps of space and time” that the diegetic sojourns to the space of the “twinned lambs” (1.2.66-73), Leontes’ flashback to his “unbreeched” youth, and Leontes’ and Hermione’s courtship (1.2.100-104), certainly should include. Platt’s division also dismisses Cleomenes and Dion’s sublime articulation of their experience at Delphos as something less than wondrous, even though it is this scene (3.1) and the reading of the contents of the oracle in the trial scene (3.2) that activate the counter-current to Leontes’ irrational actions, and initiate the play’s march towards a wondrous resolution.
perceptions exert considerable force on the in-between and multimodal spaces of the play. Like Escher’s “Drawing Hands,” spaces are co-produced by playgoers’ perceptions as perceptions are co-produced by the presentation and representation of spaces. Yi-Fu Tuan contrasts “the security and stability of place” with “the openness, freedom, and threat of space,” and associates space with movement and place with pause. While there is much to recommend the studies that foreground the play’s binary structure, I would like to posit that instead of focusing on the two static or “paused” places of *The Winter’s Tale*, and the structural equivalences and contrasts between them, we should consider the thematic, and perspectival, significance of the play’s multiple, dynamic spaces, their overlap, and their interactivity—spaces governed not only by their geographical or structural opposition, but by their relationship to the audience’s multifaceted perceptual space. In the distributed cognitive ecology of theatrical performance, audiences of *The Winter’s Tale* are encouraged not only to perceive what is on display visually, but to experience the theatrical product of the interactions between, and juxtaposition of, minds and bodies, and real and unreal spaces.

**The Winter’s Tale’s Deep Theatrical Space**

In “Of Other Spaces,” Michel Foucault writes of “sites…that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect.” According to Foucault, “utopias are sites with no real place [and] present society itself in

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a perfected form, or else society turned upside down,” while “heterotopias” are “places that do exist...[they] are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.” Foucault’s distinctions between these sites, or “other spaces,” provide a framework by which I will examine how spaces are utilized in *The Winter’s Tale*, and particularly how diegetic and mimetic spaces, separately and in combination, take on the qualities of “utopia,” “dystopia,” and “heterotopia.” The mediation of these spatial modes prepares the audience to co-produce a particular type of wonder, that which is necessary not only to see, but to perceive with “ambivalent consciousness” both the theatrical orchestration of Hermione’s re-animation and the dramatic consequences of her restoration. The three kinds of space that I will examine in *The Winter’s Tale* are the desirable, but impossible utopian spaces, in which what is presented is transparently evident, though unseen by the audience; the dystopian spaces, in which a character imposes an internal, affective illogic onto an external world; and finally, the dynamic, heterotopian space of the play’s final scene, in which various perspectives operate in concert to determine an as-yet-undetermined theatrical reality. These interactive spaces of the play prepare the audience to experience the wondrous transformation in the final scene’s heterotopian “chapel” (5.3.86). I put forth a reading that foregrounds the spaces within, and by, which theatrical truth and falsehood, and the

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8 Ibid.

9 Hartwig, “The Tragicomic Perspective of *The Winter’s Tale,*” 191. Hartwig argues that “[m]oving in and out of illusion is an important part of the tragicomic progress toward an ultimate recognition which requires ambivalent vision” (191).
relationships between them, are discovered. The whole of the play operates in a way that encourages multiple, often contradictory, ways of perceiving the spaces produced by the theatrical performance. These ways are informed, in large part, by a diegetic mode that mediates the audience’s (and the player-characters’) encounters with the mimetic. *The Winter’s Tale* prepares an inter-subjective space for the audience’s theatrical awareness of what it encounters in the final scene by cumulatively and recursively developing throughout the play the interactivity of the overlapping spatial environments required for the climactic production of wonder.

Barbara Mowat writes that the audience is “simply unprepared for many of the major incidents” of the play. ¹⁰ However, there is a more expansive spatial preparation being perpetrated upon the audience that begins with the opening scene and continues through Leontes’ deictic final line, “Hastily lead away” (5.3.155). By strategically leading and misleading the audience, *The Winter’s Tale* prepares it for theatrical possibilities which dramatic irony would simply not allow, if the play’s final *coup de theatre* is to truly move the audience. Instead of Mowat’s “foiled expectations” (77), playgoers’ expectations are temporarily, though continually, subverted in order to “resolve” the audience “For more amazement” (5.3.86) that is fulfilled by Hermione’s re-animation. In a paradoxical formulation designed to elicit wonder from the audience, the mimetic space of Paulina’s “poor house” transforms (or digests) the performance space—the platform stage, discovery area, and audience space—as well as all previous spaces produced by the play, by effacing any lingering distinctions between dramatic and

performance space. In other words, the formation and re-formation of deep theatrical space performs the final space of wonder in which audiences are “required” (5.3.94) to participate. What the final scene of *The Winter’s Tale* does, I argue, is “resolve” (5.3.86) the scene of spectating in such a way that produces wondrous theatrical possibilities from spaces that are unavailable to observe from any fixed or singular perspective within the drama itself.

The spaces that I will examine in this chapter operate in contrapuntal motion to the two-place structure of Sicily and Bohemia. In the first three acts of the play, Leontes, as a spatial “tyrant,” attempts to contort mimetic space so as to rid it of embodied, disembodied, and hybridized elements that by their representative presence contradict his “Affection” (1.2.140): the bodies of Hermione, Mamillius, Polixenes, Camillo, Paulina, and the newborn Perdita, as well as the utopian spaces of the “twinned lambs,” the Delphos oracle, and the burial crypt. These absent-presences infiltrate Leontes’ mind and the playgoer’s, subverting Leontes’ “co-join[ing]” of dystopian affective space and the play’s malleable mimetic space, and ultimately resolving “the infection of” Leontes’ “brains” (1.2.147) by dramatizing the breach between them. Transitional spaces—in which the staged events of Antigonus’ diegetic dream and offstage death-by-bear, the

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12 The play demands of its audience what Stephen Miko calls “consciousness of artifice.” In “Winter’s Tale,” *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 29.2 (1989 Spring): 259-275, Miko suggests that this “consciousness of artifice” is established primarily by an audience recognizing generic conventions as such, so that an audience resides “both inside and outside” these conventions (263). I argue that the primary way that Shakespeare leads audiences to a “consciousness of artifice,” while still allowing them to experience the wonder of the final scene, is by mediating and manipulating the play’s spaces and the audience’s ever-shifting relationships to these spaces.
dialogue between the shepherd and the clown, and Time’s speech occur—not only shift
the play’s location from the court of Sicily to “the deserts of Bohemia” (3.3.2), and to a
certain extent, the play’s genre from tragedy to comedy, but also recalibrate the
audience’s spatio-temporal perspective so that the play not only transports the audience
away from Leontes’ affective mind-space, but towards a distributed vision of Bohemia
“that is and is not” a pastoral utopia. Thus, the play’s theatrical space is structured so that
the apparent utopian space of the pastoral is infiltrated by the dystopian space associated
with two diegetic representations of court (the Sicilian and Bohemian courts), transported
to the stage by Antigonus, Time, Autolycus, and Polixenes. The relationship between
utopian and dystopian space established by the earlier representation of Sicily is mirrored
in the sheep-shearing scene so that dramatic reality (of Perdita’s identity, for example)
contrasts with what is presented mimetically. Finally, the events of Paulina’s “removed
house” enacts a heterotopian space that is co-extensive with the theatrical space of the
performance environment, synthesizes the narrative “old tale” and embodied spectacle,
and bodies forth for the audience a wondrous re-combination of the play’s real and unreal
spaces.

**Utopian Space**

In the first lines of the play, Archidamus tells Camillo that if he and Leontes “visit
Bohemia on the like occasion whereon my services are now on foot, you shall see, as I
have said, great difference betwixt our Bohemia and your Sicilia” (1.1.1-4). The opening
dialogue between the representatives of Bohemia and Sicily make much of the gap or
breach not only between these two settings, but between the two characters who rule
these respective realms. While it is conventional for the characters to be referred to by the names of the territories which they govern, in *The Winter’s Tale* Shakespeare plays upon the slippage between character and setting. The scene introduces the quality of “between-ness” that not only suggests the physical and psychological estrangement of Leontes and Polixenes from each other, but distinguishes a utopian and unified past and absence from a fallen and disavowed present and presence.\(^\text{13}\) This first hint in the play of a dynamic, “between” space, whose theatrical qualities cannot be perceived in on- or offstage space exclusively, bears fruit in the play’s final two scenes, in which both the narrated and visual, the diegetic and mimetic, contribute to the audience’s experience of theatrical wonder as something that occurs between the playgoers’ perceptions and what is presented onstage. The conversation between Archidamus and Camillo establishes that it is the kings of Sicily and Bohemia who articulate the space of their realms, while delineating the geographical settings of the play, the “here” of the court of Sicily in which the exchange takes place, and the “not here” of Bohemia. Yet, the exchange also presents the possibility for an intermediary space that is neither here nor not here, neither

\(^{13}\) In *Shakespeare and the Theatre of Wonder* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), T.G. Bishop writes that “[d]rama…unfolds between stage and audience as well as between here and not here,” and that “[t]his ‘between’ is the preposition *par excellence* of the theatrical” (3). Bishop goes on to state that “[t]he emotion known as wonder is a characteristic and heightened experience of this ‘between’ quality of theatricality. Wonder particularly raises the question of the theatre’s interest in the emotions it generates through its characteristic creation of a dynamic space of flux and indeterminacy—between stage and audience, between the real and the impossible, between belief and skepticism, between reason and feeling. Into this space the audience lets itself be pulled” (3). As we will see, by foregrounding theatricality, and sustaining focus on the transformative properties and possibilities of illusion, the final scene of *The Winter’s Tale* returns the audience to the very site from which it has never really left: the heterotopian space of the playhouse.
exclusively mimetic nor diegetic, that is neither completely absent nor completely present.

These first lines contain a sly allusion to Sidney’s *Apology for Poetry*, particularly the passage in which Sidney castigates dramatists of “our Tragedies and Comedies” for violating the classical unities of time and place, “the two necessary companions of all corporal actions”: “For where the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, by both Aristotle’s precept and common reason, but one day, there is both many days, and many places, inartificially imagined.”

After citing some examples in which these unities are violated—among which appear the lines “[w]hile in the meantime two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field,” that are paraphrased and parodied by *Henry V*’s fourth Chorus—Sidney writes “[a]gain, many things may be told which cannot be showed, if they know the *difference betwixt reporting and representing*.” Is it possible that in the play that includes such brazen violations of the unities of place and time, Shakespeare chooses to begin with a knowing wink and nod to the dramatic unities’ most famous contemporary champion? Even the title of the play, *The Winter’s Tale*, challenges the strict divide that Sidney recommends between reporting and representing, or between narrative tale and dramatic performance. For this tale, unlike Shakespeare’s source material, the prose romance *Pandosto* by Robert Greene, is embodied and enacted in the playhouse, such that its performance emphasizes

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15 Ibid., 115.

16 An example of early modern “trolling”?
the collaboration of narrative report and dramatic presentation, even as it calls attention to
the “great difference” between these two modes of theatrical communication.

Camillo reveals that there was not always “great difference betwixt” Bohemia and Sicily:

They were trained together in their childhoods, and there rooted betwixt them then such an affection which cannot choose but branch now. Since their more mature dignities and royal necessities made separation of their society, their encounters—though not personal—hath been royally attorneyed with interchange of gifts, letters, loving embassies, that they have seemed to be together though absent; shook hands as if over a vast; and embraced as it were from the ends of opposed winds. The heavens continue their loves. (1.1.19-27)

The ambiguity of “branch,” in the sense both of reaching towards and of separating from each other, captures the indeterminate, here/not-here status of the relationship of the kings as it is presented in the mimetic space of the following scene. Camillo offers a view of the childhood friendship of Leontes and Polixenes as taking place in a utopian space, temporally and visually removed from the stage space of Sicily at the beginning of the play. The breach between the two kings, the “separation of their society,” is mimetically enacted by the presence of their representatives, who “royally attorney” their “encounters” even while they speak of the “affection” once “rooted betwixt” Leontes and Polixenes. Before the audience meets these two kings on the stage, it has been told of their once immediate bond, while shown their separation via the mediation of their representatives. The first scene thus establishes a spatial palette for the play—scenes that will hone the audience’s ability to recognize both the separation of, and overlap between,

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17 OED, “branch,” v.: “1. To bear or put forth branches; 2b. b. To spring out, as a branch or branches from the stem or root; to deviate from an original direction, strike off in a new path; to diverge from a central point.”
or the “branch[ing]” of) mimetic display and the spatiotemporal lacunae suggested by both the language and actions of characters onstage. For instance, Charles Frey writes that in the opening scene “Shakespeare…has done much to help an audience hear and see the innocence of youth…But it is an innocence of youth under instant siege.” In other words, the relationship of the kings, forged in the fire of “the innocence of youth,” is corroborated by the mimetic display of its opposite or absence. Leontes’ suspicion of youth (Mamillius) and innocence (Mamillius and Hermione) in 1.2 makes visually apparent for the audience the inversion of what is described by Camillo in the first scene, and Polixenes in the following scene. The encounter between Leontes and Polixenes in 1.2 displays in mimetic space their current relationship as “together though absent,” in which the player-characters of Hermione and Mamillius stand between them onstage, and present the visual concretization, the filling and fulfilling, not only of the “vast” that now separates the kings, but the “vast” that stands between what Leontes sees and what he concludes from these sights.

The dialogue between Polixenes and Hermione in the play’s second scene continues this dramaturgical gambit, presenting mimetic space as the here-and-now of Sicily, while referencing its diegetic opposite and absent other, the utopian space that is the subject of their exchange. Answering Hermione’s inquiry of her “lord’s tricks and


19 The onstage presence of Hermione’s pregnant body contrasts visually with Polixenes’ narrated memories of “those unfledged days” (1.2.77). Many have pointed out how the staging possibilities of 1.2 allow for the onstage positioning of the players to enact and comment upon, in oblique but symbolically significant ways, the language spoken in the scene, beginning with Polixenes’ opening lines. For example, in “Six Points of Stage-Craft in *The Winter’s Tale,”
yours when you were boys” (1.2.62), Polixenes describes his and Leontes’ boyhood spent together in edenic, and undisturbed, splendor:

We were, fair Queen,
Two lads that thought there was no more behind
But such a day tomorrow as today,
And to be boy eternal.

...  
We were as twinned lambs that did frisk i’th’ sun
And bleat the one at th’ other. What we changed
Was innocence for innocence. We knew not
The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dreamed
That any did. (1.2.64-66, 69-73)

Polixenes’ description of his and Leontes’ childhood bonding re-presents the utopian space introduced in the opening scene, a diegetic space outside of and beyond the mimetic space of Sicily. Yet, it also demonstrates the two kings’ “twinned” reverence for this “eternal” time and space as a utopian memory shared by Leontes and Polixenes. The transparency of this remembered vision is articulated by the self-evident exchange of “innocence for innocence” (1.2.71) that Polixenes tells Hermione takes place there between the two boys. Polixenes describes not only a prelapsarian state of undifferentiated nature and language (young Polixenes and Leontes can only “bleat the one at th’ other” (1.2.70)), but also an uncorrupted diegetic space, one that must be held firmly in the audience’s imagination in order to compare it against the ultimately unstable hybrid space of Leontes’ dystopian mind as it is embodied onstage. It is in this space

Shakespeare Survey 11 (1958): 31-41, Nevill Coghill suggests that Polixenes’ “like a cipher, / Yet standing in rich place” confirms “that he is standing beside Hermione (she is perhaps upon his arm?) and addressing her...To a visiting King there can be no richer place than next to the Queen. This Queen, however, has something specially remarkable about her: she is visibly pregnant” (33, emphasis in original). Coghill and others see Polixenes’ lines “time as long again / Would be filled up,” (1.2.3-4), along with “burden” (1.2.3) and “multiply” (1.2.7) as reinforcing the pregnancy image that is presented mimetically by the “visibly pregnant” body of Hermione.
between diegesis and mimesis, between absence and presence, that Leontes attempts to convince those on- and offstage of the veracity of his delusions.20

Dystopian Space

Figure 4. BBC Production of The Winter’s Tale.

Dystopian Space

Figure 4. BBC Production of The Winter’s Tale.

20 My assertion here, and throughout this dissertation, that not only the linguistic, but also the spatial, properties of diegesis must be considered when analyzing the theatrical performance of Shakespeare’s plays challenges Howard Felperin’s well-known deconstructionist reading of the play, “The Deconstruction of Presence in The Winter’s Tale,” in Shakespeare and the Question of Theory, Ed. Patricia A. Parker and Geoffrey H. Hartman (New York: Methuen, 1985), 3-18. Felperin argues that because “all literature…is, in an important sense, unrepresented or, rather, under-represented action” (14), and always mediated by “the radical subjectivity of the listener or interpreter” (11), it is therefore impossible to distinguish Leontes’ “interpretive uncertainty” (8) from our own. For Felperin, The Winter’s Tale’s inescapable “world of reference…finally has no objective reality or ontological stability, but recedes into an infinite play of signs and deferral of affirmed or authoritative meaning” (14). Felperin’s privileging of “page” over “stage” unnecessarily collapses diegetic and mimetic spaces into uniformly distributed linguistic representation. However, my reading seeks to preserve the meaningful spatial distinctions between diegesis and mimesis that I believe the play seeks to preserve, though at times subvert, as well. For two other notable challenges to Felperin’s analysis, both to different ends from each other, and my own, see James A. Knapp, “Visual and Ethical Truth in The Winter’s Tale,” Shakespeare Quarterly 55.3 (2004 Fall): 253-278, and Platt’s chapter “Reason Diminished: Wonder in The Winter’s Tale” in Reason Diminished, 153-168.
There has been vigorous debate in scholarship of the play concerning the precise moment when Leontes’ suspicions of Hermione’s chastity commence. All agree, however, that by the time he (along with the audience) observes Hermione and Polixenes paddling palms and pinching fingers, As they now are, and making practised smiles As in a looking-glass; and then to sigh, as ‘twere The mort o’th’ deer— (1.2.117-120)

Leontes is in the throes of a jealous rage that influences all that he thinks, says, and does until late in the trial scene, when he admits that “I have too much believed mine own suspicion” (3.2.149). Leontes’ extended asides in 1.2. demonstrate the fitful, circuitous development of a dystopian mind-space. The “dangerous unsafe lunes” (2.2.33) of the Sicilian king convince him that “All’s true that is mistrusted” (2.1.50); Leontes, then, seeks to convince on- and offstage audiences that what is mistrusted (Hermione’s guilt, Mamillius’ and Perdita’s dubious paternity, his own cuckoldry) is indeed true. However, unlike the delusions of other central figures of tragedy, such as Lear, whose authority erodes as his madness increases, or Othello, whose already-tenuous agency is nullified by Iago’s Machiavellian designs, Leontes’ status as Sicilian king awards him on the early modern stage, in equal measure, indisputable dramatic and theatrical authority. Because

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21 For example, see Coghill, “Six Points of Stage-Craft in The Winter’s Tale.” In “The Deconstruction of Presence in The Winter’s Tale,” Felperin also challenges critical assumptions about what the audience “knows” in these opening moments of the play.

22 Along with many others, I think it is legitimate to regard the first three acts of The Winter’s Tale as a tragedy-in-miniature. See, for example, G. Wilson Knight, “Great Creating Nature: An Essay on The Winter’s Tale,” in William Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale, Ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987). Knight argues that “[t]he play is in three main sections. The first is tragic; the second pastoral; the third must for the present be left undefined” (8).
of this dual authority, the play allows Leontes’ misprisions to subsume the mimetic space of Sicily so that it is nearly co-extensive with his “diseased” thoughts. Immediately after witnessing Polixenes and Hermione “paddling palms and pinching fingers” (1.2.117), i.e. holding hands within view of Leontes and the audience, Leontes asserts that “This entertainment / May a free face put on” (1.2.113-114), and that this “is entertainment / My bosom likes not, nor my brows” (1.2.120-121). The two references to “entertainment” in seven lines highlight the meta-theatricality of the action as it unites Leontes’ interpretation of observed events with the audience’s perception of these same onstage actions. Leontes’ lines suggest a deception by Polixenes and Hermione that manifests itself as performance. Yet, this performance, this “entertainment,” is conveniently over-determined, such that audiences may (at least temporarily) be deceived by Leontes’ faulty interpretation and adopt it as their own; in other words, whatever physical interactions that are performed between Polixenes and Hermione both expose their suspected “ill-doing” (1.2.72) to the eyes of Leontes and the audience and deceive, or distract with a “free face put on” (1.2.114), observers from actions not performed in mimetic space, that which is imagined by Leontes but unseen by him or others.

According to Leontes, Polixenes and Hermione “derive a liberty / From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom, / And well become the agent” (1.2.114-116). However, the “agent,” the interpretive power that seeks to transform mimetic actions into diegetic deceptions, is Leontes’ jealous imaginings and extrapolations. James Knapp states that Leontes’ narration-cum-analysis of onstage events “shift[s] the attention from the

23 Perhaps the closest Shakespearean analogue to Leontes, in terms of the co-extension of the spaces of mind and stage, is Macbeth.
spectacle onstage to the spectacle of Leontes’ mind.”²⁴ I suggest that instead of shifting
the audience’s perspective from the mimetic to the affective, Leontes’ speeches in 1.2.
unite the mimetic and the affective. What is displayed onstage also, in effect, displays
Leontes’ mind. Leontes’ dramatic-theatrical authority manipulates the stage so that it
conflates spectacle and speculation.

Real and unreal spaces interact and overlap in deep theatrical space as Leontes’
attention shifts between the couple onstage, the presence of Mamillius, and the distortions
of each that are articulated by his voiced thoughts. ²⁵ Robert Weimann’s well-known
argument posits that cultural and political space is mapped onto, and expressed by the
configurations of, stage space as it is organized by locus and platea. Erica Lin challenges
Weimann’s theory for what she sees as the reductive equating of locus with mimetic
power and platea with presentation of theatrical power or authority. These complications
involve aural and gestural aspects of performance, while Weimann’s theory relies
somewhat heavily on a fixed perspective and a visual mode of experience. Lin posits that
the character in the position of theatrical authority, often but not always position in the


²⁵ In the BBC filmed production of The Winter’s Tale, midway through the second scene, Leontes
utters the speech beginning “Too hot, Too hot,” (1.2.106-118) directly into the camera. The shot is
composed so the actor playing Leontes is downstage, his face foregrounded in a way that takes up
the entire right half the frame, while the actors playing Hermione and Polixenes are still visible
upstage, over Leontes’ shoulder in the background of the shot (see Figure 1 above). Filmed
performances utilize technology that was, of course, unavailable to early modern theatrical drama
to communicate for the audience—by visual, spatial means of perspective, focus, and shot
composition—psychological and affective components of characters. Yet, the technologies of
early modern performance also attempt to present for the audience multiple perspectives,
sometimes aligned and sometimes opposed. In the BBC production, Leontes’ speech is delivered
and visually composed in a way that elicits an intimate, even conspiratorial, relationship between
viewer and player-character. The filmmakers’ decision to present this scene in such a way can
surely be justified by what is found in Shakespeare’s playtext.
platea, is the one with the most awareness of the theatrical aspects of the scene. In a hybrid of Weimann’s and Lin’s conceptions, I suggest that Leontes’ position is one of dramatic-theatrical authority. His status as king of Sicily gives him primary dramatic authority, but when he speaks asides, to himself and to the audience, he usurps a theatrical authority as well. However, Lin’s idea is that the character in the position of theatrical authority has an apparent awareness of the presentational aspects of the drama. In fact, unlike platea characters, Leontes’ perception does not extend outside of the space of the drama. His political authority alone convinces him of the truth of his understanding of things, but his theatrical authority (his asides that are heard only by the audience) contorts the events of the stage to fit his “diseased opinion.”

Leontes asks Mamillius, “Art thou my boy?” (1.2.122). Mamillius’ affirmative response, “Ay, my good lord,” and Leontes’ admission that “They say it is a copy out of mine” (1.2.124) is certainly not enough to convince Leontes, who “need[s] no more / Than what” he “know[s]” (2.1.191-192), that his suspicions are misplaced. But the audience, who like Leontes must observe and interpret what is presented mimetically, must also observe and interpret Leontes’ observation and interpretation of mimetic events, thus complicating not only Leontes’ subject position, but their own as well. As Anthony Dawson correctly suggests, this exchange plays upon “the discrepancy…between what Leontes sees and what we see, and let[s] the language of Leontes’ jealousy convince us of its actuality.”²⁶ Yet, in order to be convinced either of the actuality of what Leontes thinks he sees or the illusoriness of Leontes’ thoughts, the

audience must (at least partially) turn their attention to a diegetic space which includes their own perception of events. “They” may refer to the absent-present denizens of the Sicilian court, “They’re here with me already, whisp’ring, rounding, / ‘Sicilia is a so-forth’” (1.2.217-218); or the audience themselves, who are becoming ever more cognizant of the lengths to which Leontes’ paranoiac fantasies extend; or both at once. Playgoers are further made privy to Leontes’ mental associations when he halts his speech to refer to the onstage actions of Hermione, “Still virginalling / Upon [Polixenes’] palm?” (1.2.127-128) before expanding his dystopian purview from the specific (Hermione) to the general (all women): “Yet they say we are / Almost as like as eggs. Women say so, / That will say anything” (1.2.131-133).

_Mirror (and) Stage_

Contributing to the complex spatial cognition required of the audience is the fact that the impetus for Leontes’ increasingly byzantine associations is Mamillius’ suspect (at least for Leontes) resemblance to his father, thus illuminating Mamillius’ body as spectacle, as an object of speculative vision. Keir Elam argues that “[i]t is performance that permits us to read Shakespeare’s bodies both in their non-idealized or em-bodied corporeality and in their signifying power.”27 The “interplay between the corporeal and the symbolic” is on display while Leontes interacts with Mamillius, as he envisions a boyhood version of himself both in his mind and confronting him onstage.28

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28 Ibid, 162.
at his feet) tells Leontes that “You look / As if you held a brow of much distraction,” and
asks “Are you moved, my lord” (1.2.147-149), Leontes responds:

No, in good earnest.
How sometimes nature will betray its folly,
Its tenderness, and make itself a pastime
To harder bosoms! Looking on the lines
Of my boy’s face, methoughts I did recoil
Twenty-three years, and saw myself unbreeched,
In my velvet coat; my dagger muzzled,
Lest it should bite its master, and so prove,
As ornament oft does, too dangerous.
How like, methought, I then was to this kernel,
This squash, this gentleman. (1.2.152-162)

Leontes’ diegetic vision of himself as an “unbreeched” youth is projected onto
Mamillius’ present body onstage, reflecting a distorted amalgam of himself and
Mamillius back at him. This complex perceptual relationship constructs a “natural
perspective” in mimetic space that resembles Foucault’s “mixed, joint experience” that
can occur in a space “between utopias and…heterotopias” when one gazes into a mirror.

Foucault writes that

[t]he mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see
myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the
surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own
visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is
the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does
exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I
occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place
where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it
were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other
side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes
toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions
as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment
when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the
space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has
to pass through this virtual point which is over there.29

The performance environment is always already a heterotopian space that juxtaposes the real and unreal, which the “blended” perception of the audience allows it to see as such.30 However, at this point in the play, Shakespeare wishes to call attention not to the stage as a transcendentally heterotopian space (which he reserves for the final scene), but to the stage’s capacity to display both the truth of illusion (Leontes’ boyhood reflection literally gazing back at him; “Come, sir page, / Look on me with your welkin eye” (1.2.137-138)) and the illusion of truth (Leontes’ false perception that Mamillius is not his own, “Though he does bear some signs of me” (2.1.59)). As Stephen Miko asserts, “the arbitrary illusions of Leontes seem to control not only the play’s action but its form.”31 Action and form coalesce in the configuration of “twinned” bodies, as Leontes’ “unbreeched” self-reflection meets its mimetic manifestation as the boy onstage who returns his gaze. This perspectival image performs the space “between utopias and…heterotopias” by presenting for the audience the integration in deep theatrical space of utopian, diegetic space and dystopian, mimetic space by the juxtaposition of Mamillius’ representing body, “the lines / Of my boy’s face,” and Leontes’ misrepresenting language, “yet were it true / To say this boy were like me” (1.2.136-137).

30 For the “blended” perception of playgoers, see Bruce McConachie, *Theatre & Mind* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), passim.

31 Miko, 262.
Richard Meek writes that “the depiction of Leontes’ vivid imaginings seems to warn us against imagining that we can see things that are not there.” Yet, the act of playgoing itself requires audiences to revise what they see in mimetic space by an imaginative perception of “things that are not there.” Audiences are encouraged to envision Leontes’ and their own productive co-mingling of real and unreal spaces when he articulates his theory of perception:

Affection, thy intention stabs the centre.  
Thou dost make possible things not so held,  
Communicat’st with dreams—how can this be?—  
With what’s unreal thou coactive art,  
And fellow’st nothing; then ’tis very credent  
Thou mayst co-join with something, and thou dost—  
And that beyond commission; and I find it—  
And that to the infection of my brains  
And hard’ning of my brows. (1.2.140-148)

Leontes’ notoriously difficult speech reveals, at the very least, his attempt to understand his “Affection” as an internal catalyst in formulating a decidedly subjective perspective on external events. Leontes’ “affection” “make[s] possible things not so held” by “co-join[ing] with” what he derives as the truth of what he has observed. Yet, the seemingly true (to Leontes) product of this derivation is itself generated by being “coactive” with “what’s unreal.” Leontes’ perceptions then, while seeming to reside in the space between internal and external, are in fact wholly internalized and projected outward onto the objectively observable, a process which can (and in the case of Leontes does) yield false conclusions. As I said above, the perceptions of the audience are generated in a similar

fashion. However, the crucial difference between the audience’s perception and Leontes’ is the audience’s awareness, both of what it witnesses, and the perspective(s) from which it is witnessing. We may echo Leontes’ question: “How can this be?” I don’t mean to be arch by suggesting that Leontes’ troubles stem from the fact that he doesn’t know, as audiences are aware, that he is participating in something other than, or beyond, “real life.” While this possibility would strip the first portion of the play from the tragic potency it possesses, this awareness, or something akin to it, unites Leontes and the audience as participants in the wondrous re-amination of Hermione in Paulina’s chapel. For what audiences accept as “art,” (significantly a “coactive art”), as theatrical performance, Leontes is willing to accept as an “art” that masquerades as “magic”: “If this be magic,” Leontes announces just before embracing the transformed Hermione, “let it be an art / Lawful as eating” (5.3.110-111).33 In the trial scene, Hermione confronts Leontes: “You speak a language that I understand not: / My life stands in the level of your dreams, / Which I’ll lay down” (3.2.77-79). To which, Leontes responds, “Your actions are my ‘dreams’. / You had a bastard by Polixenes, / And I but dreamed it” (3.2.80-82). This exchange exemplifies the leap that Leontes makes between his myopic “affection,” his “dreams,” and the “something,” Hermione’s actions, that “co-join[s]” with it to produce Leontes’ false perception, which Leontes then observes as self-evident “true opinion” (2.1.39). In The Art of English Poesy, George Puttenham calls metaphor

33 The ambiguous grammatical construction of the line “With what’s unreal thou coactive art” elicits the primary meaning of “art” as the early modern equivalent of “are,” though it also allows for a (mis?) hearing of “art” as the art produced by the co-activity of affection and “what’s unreal.”
“the figure of Transport.” After the oracle’s pronouncements are read, Leontes will admit that he has been “transported by my jealousies” (3.2.156). But in the moments before this event, audiences hear the linguistic manifestation of transportation that occurs in Leonte’s mind at once from “actions” to “dreams,” and from “dreams” to “actions.” However, for Leontes this transportation is imperceptible.

**Leontes’ Stage**

Yet, the play does not make it easy for the audience to maintain any affective distance between the events of the stage, “actions,” and Leontes’ interpretation of them, his “dreams,” especially when Leontes’ perceptual purview expands outward so as to encompass audience space:

There have been,
Or I am much deceived, cuckolds ere now,
And many a man there is, even at this present,
Now, while I speak this, holds his wife by th’arm,
That little thinks she has been sluiced in’s absence,
And his pond fished by his next neighbour, by
Sir Smile, his neighbour: nay, there’s comfort in’t,
Whiles other men have gates, and those gates opened,
As mine, against their will. Should all despair
That have revolted wives, the tenth of mankind
Would hang themselves. (1.2.191-201)

Audiences may hear themselves referred to in these lines, aided in reversing its perceptual focus from the stage to itself by the gestures of the actor playing Leontes. Leontes’ lines “even at this present / Now while I speak this” widens the aperture, so to speak, so as to include not only his own conspiratorial fantasies, but those potentially held by playgoers. The likelihood that at this juncture Leontes’ attention (in some

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capacity) is turned outward to the audience, or is meant to activate in audiences some acknowledgement of their own spectatorial perspective, is further solidified when, in his conversation with Camillo a few lines later, Leontes asks “Was this,” meaning both Leontes’ (present) cuckoldry and Hermione’s (absent) guilty actions:

...taken
By any understanding pate but thine?
For thy conceit is soaking, will draw in
More than the common blocks. Not noted, is’t,
But of the finer natures? By some severals
Of headpiece extraordinary? Lower messes
Perchance are to this business purblind? Say.” (1.2.222-228)

The dialogue quibbles upon “understanding” as both a quality of cognition and a spectatorial position. In inquiring as to whether any others have concluded that his “wife is slippery,” Leontes here may be differentiating between kinds of viewing in the playhouse. While the “Lower messes” or groundlings, whose “understanding pate[s]” Leontes sees from his perspective onstage, “Perchance are to this business purblind,” and cannot see what is so evident to Leontes, those “of the finer natures,” or gallants who, as Thomas Dekker sarcastically writes, “by sitting on the stage” gain “such true scenical authority,” ostentatiously distinguish themselves from “the common blocks” referenced by Leontes, with “feathers…chiefly in their hats,”: “some severals / Of headpiece extraordinary.”35 Leontes implicitly suggests that since the gallants’ spectatorial position is more comparable (both in status and in proximity) to his own, they may have more

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likely noted what he has about Hermione’s behavior than “the common blocks” literally
at his feet, looking up at the king and his stage-court. Camillo, still unsure of the extent of
Leontes’ suspicions, does not provide him with the confirmation by others that Leontes
craves, instead responding, “I think most understand / Bohemia stays here longer”
(1.2.229-230).

While it is indeed true, as Frey asserts, that “[t]hrough many devices of speech
and stagecraft, Shakespeare presents a Leontes of isolation and constriction,” in the
second and third acts of the play, Leontes’ isolated and constricted world is
simultaneously constructed for the audience as porous and penetrable. I suggest that the
exchanges between diegetic and mimetic spaces that occur in these acts demonstrate the
permeability of Leontes’ Sicilian mindscape, so that audiences experience Sicily as at
once ordered and disordered by what Camillo calls Leontes’ “diseased opinion”
(1.2.299). The first part of the play exploits both the similarities and differences between
Leontes’ perception of events and the audience’s perception. Leontes’ words and actions
prepare the audience to see from multiple perspectives by foregrounding the separation
between what is mimetically presented and how that mimetically presented action should
be understood. While Sicily appears to devolve into a space where, according to Leontes,
“All’s true that is mistrusted” (2.1.50), these mimetic puncta pierce the dystopian façade
imposed upon theatrical space by Leontes and enforced by his “forceful instigation”
(2.1.165). When a lord suggests that “more it would content me / To have [Hermione’s]
honour true than your suspicion,” Leontes declares both to Antigonus and the lords that

Our prerogative

\[36\] Charles Frey, Shakespeare’s Vast Romance, 124.
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Calls not your counsels, but our natural goodness
Imparts this; which if you—or stupefied
Or seeming so in skill—cannot or will not
Relish a truth like us, inform yourselves
We need no more of your advice. The matter,
The loss, the gain, the ord’ring on’t, is all
Properly ours. (2.1.165-172)

Leontes’ “prerogative” appears to be co-extensive with the space of the space. However, this same stage space displays interactions between Leontes and others that call attention to the differences between Leontes’ dystopian imposition of his affective truth and what audiences take to be true. Matters of proximity dictate Leontes’ plans for revenge at the opening of 2.3. Even in his unreasonableness, Leontes demonstrates a reasoned pragmatism that can, at the very least, differentiate between modalities of offstage space:

Nor night nor day, no rest! It is but weakness
To bear the matter thus, mere weakness. If
The cause were not in being—part o’th’ cause,
She, th’adulteress; for the harlot King
Is quite beyond mine arm, out of the blank
And level of my brain, plot-proof; but she
I can hook to me. Say that she were gone,
Given to the fire, a moiety of my rest
Might come to me again. (2.3.1-9)

In measuring the reach of his power, Leontes equates physical space, “quite beyond mine arm,” with mental space, “out of the blank / And level of my brain, plot-proof,” suggesting by its opposite that that which is within Leontes’ range of physical authority, the imprisoned Hermione, is thus also within the “blank and level” of his brain. In other words, Leontes speaks what the audience witnesses: the alignment of physical and mental space in Leontes’ attempted usurpation of theatrical space. Like Lear, whose mind is increasingly spatialized as he becomes increasingly disoriented, as evidenced when his
thoughts drift (seemingly against his will) to his two daughters’ “monster ingratitude” (1.5.33) — “O, that way madness lies” (3.4.22) — Leontes’ mind is displayed for the audience at the very moment that it is displaced from its “local habitation.”37 Two events in quick succession in 2.3 expose for the audience Leontes’ inability to prevent diegesis from infiltrating (thus displacing) the comprehensive accordance between mind and space, between dream and action, that he seeks to maintain.

First, a servant brings report of Mamillius’ worsening condition, “He took good rest tonight; ’tis hoped / His sickness is discharged” (2.3.10-11), from whom Leontes wrests narrative control:

To see his nobleness!
Conceiving the dishonour of his mother
He straight declined, drooped, took it deeply,
Fastened and fixed the shame on’t in himself;
Threw off his spirit, his appetite, his sleep,
And downright languished. (2.3.12-17)

The audience can find some semblance of order in Leontes’ disordered mind as his thoughts flow (rather seamlessly, based upon Leontes’ conviction that Polixenes is Mamillius’ true father) from the offstage Mamillius to the absent Polixenes: “Fie, Fie, no thought of him. / The very thought of my revenges that way / Recoil upon me” (2.3.18-20). As shown above, Leontes’ first use of the word “recoil” in 1.2 marks animaginative transportation back to his own pastoral youth, which is initiated by thinking of himself as

37 See Henry S. Turner, “Lear Without: the Heath,” Renaissance Drama 28 (1997): 161-193, for Shakespeare’s attempt to have the player-character of Lear perform his phenomenological displacement by utilizing the apparent “placelessness” of the early modern platform stage. In my second chapter, I suggest a similar collaboration between Caius Martius’ diegetic thoughts of a “world elsewhere,” his theatrical displacement, and the perception of audiences.
“boy eternal” while looking at his son. In these recoiling re-visions, Leontes is further “transported by [his] jealousies” towards the climactic revaluation of the relationship between illusion and truth that is initiated by the revelation of the oracle, but not completed until the revelation of the living Hermione.

Second, Paulina defies a lord’s order that “You must not enter” (2.3.26) and confronts Leontes with his newborn daughter, whom she carries onto the stage. Paulina intends to “bring [Leontes] sleep” by “purg[ing] him of that humour” which precludes sleep, her chosen metonym for Leonte’s sanity. Without sleep, there can be “No bourn ‘twixt dreams and actions. Paulina tells the king that “The good Queen— / For she is good—hath brought you forth a daughter— / Here ’tis” (2.3.65-67). The scene presents Leontes’ multiple, unsuccessful attempts to clear the stage of elements which contradict his misprisions; yet, the newborn remains onstage for 117 lines after Leontes’ first acknowledgement of her presence: “Give her the bastard” (2.3.73). The newborn (or whatever stage property represents it) remains onstage despite Leontes’ increasingly exasperated demands for Paulina to exit and for it to be carried away: “Away with that audacious lady!” (2.3.42); “Out! / A mankind witch! Hence with her, out o’door—” (2.3.67-69); “Hence with it, and together with the dam / Commit them to the fire” (94); “Once more, take her hence!” (2.3.112); and after Paulina finally leaves, “My child? Away with’t (2.3.132); “Take it up straight” (2.3.135); Go, take it to the fire” (2.3.140). It is only when Antigonus finally takes up the baby to “bear it / To some remote and desert place, quite out / Of our dominions” (2.3.175-177) and exits the stage, that word is
brought to Leontes that Cleomenes and Dion have returned with the “contents” of Apollo’s oracle (3.1.20).

**Utopian Space, Too: Oracular Space**

As I have thus far shown, Leontes seeks not only to impose his will on the court of Sicily, but to map his willful mind upon theatrical space. There are, however, breaches that occur. Diegesis—given spatial form by Cleomenes’ and Dion’s articulation of the utopian space of the Delphos Oracle—works upon, and ultimately upends, the dystopian space of Leontes’ Sicilian nightmare-world by offering the audience an alternative perspective by which to observe mimetic events. The corrections to Leontes’ jealousies are transported to him, just as another perspective by which to view dystopian space is brought to the audience from diegetic space.

Unlike *Cymbeline*, in which the player-character Jupiter makes an appearance on the stage, descending from above, as the stage directions read “*in thunder and lightning, sitting upon an eagle. He throws a thunderbolt. The ghosts fall on their knees,*” (5.5.186) no player-deity appears on the stage in physical form in *The Winter’s Tale*. Instead, the play allows the audience to envision the sublimity of the Delphos oracle through the eyes of Cleomenes and Dion, two of Leontes’ trusted advisors. Leontes announces that “Twenty-three days / They have been absent. ’Tis good speed, foretells / The great

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38 News of Mamillius’ death, brought by messenger, mirrors this oracular procession of offstage to onstage, diegetic to mimetic.
Apollo suddenly will have / The truth of this appear” (2.3.198-201). “Well arrived from Delphos” and “Hasting to th’ court,” Cleomenes and Dion describe what they have experienced abroad in ways that highlight contrasts between Leontes’ active will as imposed upon the audience’s imagination and the passivity by which Cleomenes and Dion experience their surroundings. While as many have pointed out, the wonder and awe expressed by Cleomenes and Dion foreshadow to some extent the wonder experienced by off- and onstage audiences in the scene of Hermione’s re-animation, this scene also reflects backwards toward what the audience has already witnessed in ways that highlight how Leontes’ imposing will has kept an as-yet-unrealized truth from the stage. “The climate’s delicate, the air most sweet,” Cleomenes states, “Fertile the isle, the temple much surpassing / The common praise it bears” (3.1.1-3). Dion reports “How ceremonious, solemn and unearthly” (3.1.7) was the sacrifice that they had witnessed. The praise for the ceremony and solemnity of the event bristles against both the “sacrifice” of the infant that Leontes has ordered immediately prior and the kangaroo court proceedings that follow. Cleomenes states, “But of all, the burst / And the ear-deaf’ning voice o’th’ oracle, / Kin to Jove’s thunder, so surprised my sense / That I was nothing” (3.1.8-11). Cleomenes’ characterization of himself as “nothing” before the “voice o’ the oracle” recalls Leontes’ raging incredulously against the possibility of himself as the only person able to intuit his wife’s betrayal from evidence “That lacked sight only” (2.1.179):

39 The play’s “confusion” of Delphos and Delphi not only removes the site of the Oracle from its “real” location, but also removes The Winter’s Tale from other literary and dramatic works which utilize this location. Here, along with the swapping of Sicily for Bohemia as the pastoral location of Greene’s prose work, and the inclusion of a Bohemian sea-coast (as is well-known, Bohemia, in reality, is landlocked), Shakespeare has removed geographical reality from his play.
Is this nothing?
Why then the world and all that’s in’t is nothing,
The covering sky is nothing, Bohemia nothing,
My wife is nothing, nor nothing have these nothings
If this be nothing. (1.2.294-298)

The foundation of Leontes’ world rests upon “nothing” (Hermione’s guilt) “co-join[ing]
with something” that would confirm his suspicions and justify his “Affection.” Without
this absent-present hybrid, “the world and all that’s in’t is nothing.” However, it is
perhaps telling that unlike Cleomenes before the oracle, Leontes does not (or cannot)
envison his own nothingness. In other words, Leontes sees nothing outside of the
relationship that he has constructed between his perception and the possibility of a world
separate from this solipsistic construction. As a model for playgoing, Cleomenes
imagines a perspective other than his own, brought on by his “surprised…sense,” by
which to regard himself and his perceptual position relative to the oracle. In being
“nothing,” one can stake multiple, simultaneous positions and compare them, seeing
oneself both inside and outside of these points of view. Because at this point in the play
Leontes cannot envision a perspective outside of himself, his mono-focalism serves as an
example for audiences of how not to perceive in the playhouse.

Scene 3.1 is exemplary of the ways in which, throughout the play, diegetic
narrative infiltrates and manipulates an apparently (but not actually) place-bound stage.
Despite its diegetic status, utopian spaces such as that of the Delphos oracle pierce the
mimetic façade presented onstage. Playgoers conclude that truth cannot be seen in and of
itself as a self-evident or unmediated presence; instead, it must be imported from
elsewhere in order to be contrasted with Leontes’ dreams and the conflation of these
dreams with mimetic space, as well as the playgoer’s own perception of this conflated space. The oracle’s pronouncement is a quite literal enactment of diegetic space mediating mimetic space. It exemplifies what Simon Palfrey recognizes as The Winter’s Tale’s “proxying architecture” that also governs the speaking picture of Leontes and Mamillius locked in a mutual gaze. As Palfrey writes of this image, “[t]he son is made a kind of metonym of the father, or a synecdoche shared mutually, each able to act out whole the other’s part.” 40 Similarly, the absent oracle confronts Leontes’ supposed “just and open trial” (2.3.204) of Hermione by metonymically representing a “true scenical authority” that provides an external perspective on Leontes’ solipsistic authority. The “voice of supreme judgment” speaks from offstage at three removes from mimetic space: first, through Apollo’s priest; next mediated by the words of Cleomenes and Dion; and finally by the officer who “Break[s] up the seal and read[s]” the written pronouncement (3.2.130). Yet in the trial scene, the oracle’s truth, like the absent image of Camillo as a “man of truth” who “glisters / Through” Leontes’ “rust,” infiltrates the onstage setting, thus upending the illusion of presence and immediacy which Leontes seeks to enforce by his tyrannical “Affection.”

Once the oracle’s pronouncement breaches the space between Leontes’ dreams and the stage’s actions, and Leontes is “jostled from [his] senses” by the offstage death of Mamillius and the apparent death of Hermione, Leontes asks

        Prithee bring me
        To the dead bodies of my queen and son.
        One grave shall be for both. Upon them shall
        The causes of their death appear, unto

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Our shame perpetual. Once a day I’ll visit
The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there
Shall be my recreation. So long as nature
Will bear up with this exercise, so long
I daily vow to use it. Come, and lead me
To these sorrows. (3.2.232-241)

The final utopian space introduced in the first half of the play is the burial crypt, or
“chapel,” that Leontes tells audiences he will visit “once a day,” but that is not staged.
Like the isle of Delphos, this diegetic space exists in opposition to the corrupted Sicilian
space of the first three acts. As opposed to Leontes’ Sicily, a space “recreat[ed]” by his
paranoid fantasies, the “chapel” space governs Leontes’ relationship to it. In other words,
whereas the possibilities of the mimetic spaces that have preceded it have been defined
and limited by Leontes’ “recreat[ing]” energies, this diegetic space defines and limits
possibilities, paused in audience’s minds while the action leaps temporally and spatially.
The “chapel” allows for only mourning and Leontes’ “recreation,” so that Leontes
resembles Cleomenes in Delphos, “so surprised” by “sense / That I was nothing” (3.1.10-
11). The final “chapel” scene will unite on- and offstage audiences in an inter-subjective
perception that maps the shared perspectives and “recreat[ing]” possibilities of these
utopian, diegetic spaces onto the mimetic space of the stage.

Bohemian Space

It is no coincidence that it is Antigonus who responds to Leontes’ declaration that
the public trial of Hermione is a “business / [that] will raise us all” with the aside “To
laughter, as I take it, If the good truth were known” (2.1.198-199, 200-201). Antigonus is
a figure of transition and transportation who gestures to comedy in the midst of tragedy
and whose voice and presence audiences encounter first when the setting transitions to
“The deserts of Bohemia.” While some have argued that the pastoral setting of Bohemia promises an idealized refuge from “that fatal country Sicilia” (4.2.16-17), a utopian space anticipated by Polixenes’ narration of “twinned lambs that did frisk in the sun,” the transitional spaces of the play complicate this supposed promise. The mariner tells Antigonus that “the skies look grimly” (3.3.3); “’tis like to be loud weather” (3.3.10), and that “this place is famous for the creatures / Of prey that keep upon’t” (3.3.11-12). The threatening conditions of Bohemia push against conventional pastoral imagery and align the space less with the pleasant natural environs of Polixenes’ “twinned lambs” and the “delicate,” “fertile,” “most sweet” “climate” of the isle of Delphos than with the “goads, thorns, nettles, tails of wasps” that has fueled Leontes’ insomnia. Thus, playgoers may experience Antigonus’ narrated dream of Hermione as less a break with the Sicilian setting than a continuation of Leontes’ dystopian dreams. Antigonus’ ignorance of the oracle’s repudiation of Leontes’ accusations allows him to maintain the belief that the newborn is “the issue / Of King Polixenes” (3.3.42-43), which the audience now knows to be false. However, both Antigonus and playgoers are ignorant, at this point, of Hermione’s preservation. Knowledge and ignorance simultaneously orients and disorients the audience to this transitional space. After Antigonus’ subsequent offstage mauling, “Exit pursued by a bear” (3.3.57), and the infant Perdita is discovered by the Shepherd, the father tells the son “Heavy matters, heavy matters. But look thee here, boy. Now bless thyself. Thou metst with things dying, I with things newborn” (3.3.103-105). Here, stage business meets theme, action meets form. The Shepherd’s words mark the play’s “theatrical and spatial pivot,” a crux upon which offstage and onstage are balanced.
upon a “center…not big enough to bear / A school-boy’s top” (2.1.104-105). It is
within this placeless place that Time speaks.

Time’s chorus has the effect of placing Leontes both where he is, by the report of
his actions in the absent years that the play has relegated to diegesis, and where he is not,
“In fair Bohemia” (4.1.21), where Polixenes’ violent threats directed at Perdita resemble
Leontes’ “diseased opinions” displayed in Silician court. Time’s narration of “Leontes
leaving / Th’effects of his fond jealousies so grieving / That he shuts himself up” (4.1.17-
19) brings him to the minds of “Gentle spectators” (4.1.20), offering up Leontes as an
absent-presence that haunts Bohemian space, “scratch[ing]” its utopian, pastoral façade
with “briars,” and allowing into mimetic space dystopian energies emanating from the
Sicilian and Bohemian courts.

Audiences are told by Autolycus (in disguise) that he, a “servant of the Prince”
Florizel, was “whipped out of court” (4.3.82) for reasons undisclosed. As a “linking
character between court and country,” Autolycus practices his deceptions on the country
inhabitants such as the Shepherd and the Clown, whose ambitions reveal them to be not
the simple and natural rustics of the traditional pastoral mode, but liminal figures
exposing in Bohemia the same vexed relationship between truth and illusion that
playgoers have noted in the Sicilian court. Perdita, who thinks herself a “poor lowly
maid, / Most goddess-like prank’d up” (4.4.9-10) as Flora for the sheepshearing
festivities, calls attention both to her performance in the supposedly natural environment,
as well as the overarching connections between the pastoral and the courtly. She wishes
to (but does not) “tell [Polixenes] plainly / The selfsame sun that shines upon his court /

41 Platt, Reason Diminished, 160.
Hides not his visage from our cottage, but / Looks on alike” (4.4.431-434). I suggest that the playgoer is meant to maintain a similar position as the “selfsame sun” in regarding both Sicily (from which the audience has been transported and to which it will return) and Bohemia as spaces capable of displaying elements and energies of both utopia and dystopia. The most revelatory connection between the overlapping spatial modalities of *The Winter’s Tale* occurs late in the sheepshearing scene, when Polixenes directs his Leontes-like anger toward Perdita: “I’ll have thy beauty scratched with briars and made / More homely than thy state” (4.4.413-414) and “I will devise a death as cruel for thee / As thou art tender to’t” (4.4.428-429). By this interaction, writes Richard Studing,

> [t]he splendor, extravagance, and dream texture of the sheep-shearing festival [has] been shattered. And all the characters are awakened to the reality of sin and its destructive force. The youthful dreams of love and marriage, the dreams of enlarged rustic wealth and the ‘courtly illusion’ of rural Bohemia are reduced to the coarseness of Polixenes’ act. For salvation, the inhabitants of the green world must make flight, must ‘make for Sicilia,’ and confront the seat of original sin.\(^42\)

While I agree with Studing’s argument that “[e]specially in the context of the first three acts of the play, the situations of pastoralism often cast a negative aura on country life,” the passage quoted above frames the final act as a return from an apparently green world to an apparently normal world. Instead, I argue that the play embarks not upon a return, but a “recoil[ing]” synthesis of utopia and dystopia that will transport both player-characters and audiences to a heterotopian space in which, as Foucault posits, “all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented,

contested, and inverted,” a space that neither has been, though, of course, the playgoer has been there all along.

Heterotopian Theater

Shakespeare scholars often claim that the final scene of *The Winter’s Tale* generates wonder for the audience primarily by visual means. Andrew Gurr writes that “[t]he end of *The Winter’s Tale* should be seen as a breakthrough…for the stage prioritizing the visual over the aural.”43 Gurr puts forth a teleological view of early modern drama as inevitably progressing towards a visual theater that culminates in our modern two-dimensional perspective and proscenium stage. In his study of the role of iconography and iconoclasm in early modern theatrical representation, Michael O’Connell argues that the final scene of the play “construct[s] visual wonder as the truest image of what theater can be.”44 According to O’Connell, the statue scene, with its embodied transformation and foregrounding of the relationship between illusion and corporeality, presents a way to understand theatrical performance as privileging the visual over the narrative. Philip Edwards writes that the final scene of *The Winter’s Tale* encourages an interpretation that “[s]eeing is believing, and *only* seeing is believing. Those passages of the story which are not privileged with performance are relegated to

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the status of old wives tales.”45 Critical analyses such as those above posit that the ending of *The Winter’s Tale* demands of the playgoer the giving over of one’s perceptions completely to the visual display, which stages dramatic truth through visual spectacle, so that audiences are encouraged to believe what they see performed onstage as representative of theater’s “truest image.” The problem with these studies (and others that put forth similar claims) is not their recognition of vision as a (and perhaps, the most) significant thematic element of *The Winter’s Tale*. I’ve demonstrated how the play demands different kinds of vision from the audience. I suggest that the studies mentioned above don’t adequately take into consideration the multiplicity and complexity of the space of perception in the final scene, and how the space is co-produced not only by an audience’s vision, but by its holistic perceptual experience.46

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46 Mowat divides the play into two parts: “‘life as tale’ and ‘life as drama.’ The former presents experience as ‘mediated by the teller, distanced, fixed in past time,’ while the latter presents us life that is ‘immediate, active, present.’ The double perspective ‘results from the juxtaposition of narrative and dramatic modes’” (Mowat quoted in Platt, *Reason Diminished*, 164). This argument deems visual dramatic spectacle as unmediated, as if what was displayed was not a theatrical event, but one occurring in the real world. Many critics, including Peter Platt, argue that one way that the reunion of 5.2, as reported by the gentlemen, differs from the spectacular reunion of 5.3, is that 5.2 is mediated by the gentleman’s language. However, these critics under-emphasize the mediation between report and representation that must also be accomplished in Hermione’s re-animation. Platt writes that “[w]ithholding the reunion of both Leontes and Perdita and Leontes and Polixenes initially seems a rather cruel move on Shakespeare’s part, especially because of the elaborate descriptions of the Gentlemen. I believe, however, that in act 5, scenes 2 and 3, Shakespeare is juxtaposing the conflict he has developed throughout the play: reason and wonder, language and dramatic spectacle” (164). Yet, Platt’s argument overlooks moments in the play in which “language and dramatic spectacle” don’t conflict, but cooperate. The final two scenes of the play, working not in opposition, but in conjunction with one another, present an alternative, inter-subjective vision that foregrounds the possibilities of theatrical perception.
Northrup Frye argues that “the fact that [the] conventional recognition scene [5.2.] is only reported indicates that Shakespeare is less interested in it than in the statue scene.”

However, as I have been arguing, the scene of report that precedes the “chapel” scene prepares playgoers to experience spectacle not only through their own eyes, but through the multisensory experiences of others that is concomitantly measured against their own multisensory experience. The first gentleman reports of the reunion of Leontes and Camillo:

I make a broken delivery of the business, but the changes I perceived in the King and Camillo were very notes of admiration. They seemed almost, with staring on one another, to tear the cases of their eyes. There was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture. They looked as they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed. A notable passion of wonder appeared in them, but the wisest beholder, that knew no more but seeing, could not say if the importance were joy or sorrow. But in the extremity of the one, it must needs be. (5.2.8-17)

Vision itself, “no more but seeing,” generates wonder, but does not allow witnesses to specify or to interpret the wonder. Spectacle presents the possibilities of either “a world ransomed, or one destroyed,” “joy or sorrow,” that narrative would further clarify. As Meek grants, “[t]his description is…noteworthy for its figuring of multiple interpretations, and the implication that it is not enough merely to see events to decipher their meaning.”

Spectacle lacking the accompanying “tale” paradoxically sheds more heat than light.

It is often argued that the statue scene marks a transition from Leontes’ domination of Sicily to Paulina’s manipulation of the space. In his otherwise

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irreproachable defense of the logic of Shakespeare’s stage-craft from charges, both historical (Ben Jonson, Samuel Johnson) and contemporary (S.L. Bethell), Coghill claims that the focus of the final scene should be on Leontes because *The Winter’s Tale* “is a play about a crisis in the life of Leontes, not of Hermione, and her restoration (it is not a ‘resurrection’) is something which happens not to her, but to *him*.”49 This reading undervalues the multiple points of view presented in the final scene. At Paulina’s “removed house,” in the final scene of *The Winter’s Tale*, Hermione’s statue is revealed to Leontes, the other player-characters, and the audience:

O, thus she stood,
    Even with such life of majesty—warm life
As now it coldly stands—when I first wooed her.
I am ashamed. Does not the stone rebuke me
For being more stone than it? (5.3.34-38)

This passage underscores the abiding interconnection of the subject of vision and its object. Leontes not only gazes upon the supposed statue of Hermione, but as his words denote, he is concerned with the way in which the object of his gaze “rebukes” him, looks back upon him and renders judgment. This exchange complicates the directionality of vision in the playhouse. Leontes’ unidirectional vision determines a space that is internal and subjective, while intersubjective vision determines another kind of space, one that is external and dynamic. The audience is asked to “see” in a multitude of competing ways at this moment. Barbara Freedman demonstrates the close connections between theatricality and visual perception: “What do we mean when we say that someone or something is theatrical….We refer to a fractured reciprocity whereby beholder and beheld reverse

positions in a way that renders a steady position of spectatorship impossible. Theatricality evokes an uncanny sense that the given to be seen has the power both to position us and to displace us.” The audience sees along with Leontes the statue of Hermione, but also is asked to see from the perspective of the statue, observing the character who’s “more stone” than the purported stone statue and recalling the behaviors of Leontes for which he is so remorseful. Derek Traversi writes that upon return to Sicily in the final act of the play, “the past is not forgotten, but taken up, assumed into the present, transformed by a healing action of ‘grace’ which only the passage of time has brought to maturity.”

Traversi points to temporal juxtaposition, but I argue that the audience’s relationship to the heterotopian space of the chapel is transformed not only by time, but by the spaces that have been established previously. Moreover, the audience must not only see Leontes looking at the statue, and the statue looking back at Leontes, but also see the exchange of vision from the position of theatrical spectator.

Although Hermione’s transformation from stone to flesh is meant to be a surprise for both off- and onstage audiences, Leontes preemptively provides agency for the statue, endowing it with the ability to “rebuke” Leontes. This provocation opens up the possibility for Hermione in her transitional capacity as a player playing a statue to gaze back, as it were, to confront those onstage from the position of object of the collective gaze. These shifting visual perspectives also serve to transform the place of the stage into a dynamic space allowing for multiple points of view and modes of viewing.

50 Freedman, Barbara, Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy, 1.

51 Derek Traversi, Shakespeare: the Last Phase (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1979), 166.
revelation of the statue by Paulina has generated in Leontes the awful memories about how he has behaved years prior, his misrecognition resulting in the current situation in which the supposed statue rekindles memories within him. He addresses the statue, but this address can also be understood as an apostrophic, diegetic address to the wife he believes to be dead:

O royal piece!
There’s magic in thy majesty, which has
My evils conjured to remembrance, and
From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,
Standing like stone with thee. (5.3.38-42)

The presence of Hermione’s statue has not only reflected back on Leontes an allegorical stoniness representative of the unfeeling heart he possessed many years ago, but has left Perdita silent and unmoving herself. This is an instance in which the presence of a player playing a character “playing” a statue has affected Perdita in such a way as to make her statue-like as well: she stands silent and “like stone.” According to Leontes, the statue has “took the spirits” of Perdita, and left her “standing like stone with” Hermione. In Paulina’s removed house, Hermione’s statue stands lonely and apart. A homology between drama and theater is generated between the removed site and the discovery space on the stage. Paulina asks both on- and offstage audiences to “Prepare / To see life as lively mocked as ever / Still sleep mocked death. Behold, and say ’tis well” (5.3.18-20). While many commentators focus on the seeing that Paulina demands of auditors, I suggest that the focus is placed as much (if not more) on preparation as it is on sight.

Unlike other spaces in Sicily, the location of the final scene is no longer a space that can be said to be governed or controlled by Leontes. In this symbolic shift in
location, the boundaries compromised in the previous acts between the affective space of Leontes’ fevered mind and the collective space over which Leontes’ governs are reestablished. Yet, boundaries between perceptions are also collapsed. Leontes’ entrance into Paulina’s “poor house” is an act of contrition, a humbling of the king as part of his penance, but it also shows the separation between the actions on the stage and Leontes’ perception and manipulation of this space:

O Paulina,
We honour you with trouble. But we came
To see the statue of our queen. Your gallery
Have we passed through, not without much content
In many singularities; but we saw not
That which my daughter came to look upon,
The statue of her mother. (5.3.8-14)

It is worth noting that the audience does not pass through the gallery; this is a narrative conceit. The description of Paulina’s house activates a sense of movement or progression inside a site. The characters have passed through the diegetic space of the gallery in order to reach the chapel in which Hermione’s statue is kept. Paulina brings out Hermione as inanimate statue in order to allow Hermione to witness proof of Leontes’ remorse and forgiveness. This is true and authentic proof, as opposed to Leontes’ incorrect corrupted proof (his misprision) of Hermione’s infidelity. In this way, Hermione can be seen as an active participant, not only being observed, but also observing herself the behaviors of those on stage. This is a way to understand the complex visuality taking place on the stage in the statue scene.
Paulina requires silence and stillness from the onstage audience. Yet, it is also a requirement for the audience itself. In this instance, she addresses the onstage auditors and the audience:

Either forbear,
Quit presently the chapel, or resolve you
For more amazement. If you can behold it,
I’ll make the statue move indeed, descend,
And take you by the hand. But then you’ll think—
Which I protest against—I am assisted
By wicked powers. (5.3.85-91)

Paulina’s words have the effect of expanding and extending the chapel to signify not just performance space, but the playhouse itself. Paulina threatens to cut off (by the drawing of the curtain dividing the discovery space from the stage space) Hermione from Leontes, or reborn art from reborn nature. O’Connell writes that “[t]hough Paulina’s words direct Hermione’s movements, in a primary way an audience is required to accept, and is affected by, what is seen.” However, one must consider that not only does Paulina “direct Hermione’s movements,” she directs the movements and attention of both on- and offstage audiences. We must also recognize that Paulina confronts the spectating audience in a way that must make it aware of its own incomplete vision. The embodied experience removes Hermione’s re-animation from the doubt of straight narrative report. But this experience is not exclusively visual. It is theatrical, meaning that it is multi-sensorial and multi-perspectival.

**Bottom’s Heterotopian Dream**

Good Paulina,
Lead us from hence, where we may leisurely
Each one demand and answer for his part

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52 O’Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye*, 141.
Performed in this wide gap of time since first
We were disserved. Hastily lead away. (5.3.152-156)

The play’s final lines demand further discussion from “all,” player-characters and
playgoers alike, “that look[ed] upon” the play “with marvel.” There is good reason to
imagine that Bottom’s diegetic dream anticipates *The Winter’s Tale*’s dream in
heterotopian space. As the player-characters are imagined to resume the conversation
offstage, so playgoers perhaps spark or continue a discussion of art and nature, truth and
illusion, belief and knowledge outside of the playhouse, away from the stage. I’ll ask here
two questions: What is “Bottom’s Dream” if not the desired (by Shakespeare) playgoing
experience for those witnessing the final scene of *The Winter’s Tale*? What is “Bottom’s
Dream” but Leontes’ (and our own) soon-to-be articulated experience, if drama’s magic
can be said to “work” upon “your thoughts”:

Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was—and
methought I had—but man is but a patched fool53 if he will offer to say what
methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen,
man’s hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report what
my dream was. (4.1.202-207)

Bottom is sensitive both to the experience and the representation of the dream: “I will get
Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream” (4.1.208). We can commune with the dead,
as Stephen Greenblatt desires, by seeing the play as (we imagine) they did.54 Of course,
this is said to be impossible; so many have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate its
impossibility. But as Stephen Orgel suggests, we can legitimately explore in

53 Remember that Feste is a “patched fool,” but, as I suggested in Chapter Four, so is the playgoer
listening to and watching Feste perform.

54 Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in
Shakespeare’s texts his imagined, ideal playgoer. I think so too. Shakespeare may have imagined a playgoer sensitive to the representation of the seen and unseen, the known and unknown, one if not possessing, at least deriving wonder from “Negative Capability.” The ideal playgoer is moved by the play as Bottom is moved by his dream, though the ideal playgoer turns out to possess (at least potentially) the performer as well (and playwright to boot!). Shakespeare did. Bottom says that the ballad is his addition to the play: “It shall be called ‘Bottom’s Dream’, because it hath no bottom, and I will sing it in the latter end of the play, before the Duke. Peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death” (4.1.208-211). In *The Winter’s Tale*, “Bottom’s Dream,” or the wonder barely (and exactly) expressed by Bottom’s words, comes at “the latter end of the play,” and is sung not at “her death,” but at her, and our, “recreation” in heterotopian space.

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