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Some of the Most Important Events in Shakespeare Do Not Happen

Paul Innes

The beginning of Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV* takes the form of an address to the audience, as a single figure enters the stage and speaks a choric prologue directly to the auditorium. The performance technique that is enacted here is familiar enough from many other plays in the period, especially those that deal with history. However, this one is not content simply with raising the issue of the representation of prior historical events. It goes a stage further, playing with the inevitability of such events being misconstrued:

INDUCTION

    Enter RUMOUR *painted full of tongues*

  RUMOUR Open your ears; for which of you will stop

       The vent of hearing when loud Rumour speaks?

       I from the Orient to the drooping West

       (Making the wind my post-horse) still unfold

       The acts commenced on this ball of earth;

       Upon my tongues continual slanders ride,

       The which in every language I pronounce,

       Stuffing the ears of men with false reports:

       I speak of peace while covert enmity,

> Under the smile of safety, wounds the world;
>
> And who but Rumour, who but only I,
>
> Make fearful musters, and prepared defence,
>
> Whiles the big year, swoll'n with some other grief,
>
> Is thought with child by the stern tyrant War?
>
> And no such matter. Rumour is a pipe
>
> Blown by surmises, Jealousy's conjectures,
>
> And of so easy and so plain a stop
>
> That the blunt monster with uncounted heads,
>
> The still discordant wav'ring multitude,
>
> Can play upon it. But what need I thus
>
> My well-known body to anatomise
>
> Among my household? *(2 Henry IV Induction 1-22)*[1]

Here a direct appeal is made to the audience's familiarity with the process of representing offstage events. Instead of directly enacting these events, the play foregrounds the crucial importance of their misrepresentation. Thus, what might be labelled as a concept of 'reportage' is used to demonstrate that events have to be managed in order for them to be made meaningful, especially if the meanings generated are untrue.

In his New Cambridge edition of the play, Giorgio Melchiori points to the ways in which Rumour *performs* its function in his notes to the Induction. He traces what he calls an 'allegorical figure' through a series of previous textual traces, concluding that:

The idea of the false report seems prompted by Holinshed (III, 525) on the

Countess of Oxford's secretary spreading the rumour that Richard II was alive

in 1404, in Henry IV's reign, in a passage closely echoed here […][2]

In his section on the play's sources, Melchiori further glosses the same passage in

another footnote when he suggests that the Holinshed connection has been missed by

previous editors.[3] The emblematic figure of Rumour therefore has some provenance,

as well as enough currency during the Renaissance to be recognisable to the play's

first audiences. The congruence of the production of meaning and the performance of

that production are both epitomised in the stage figure at the same time. One of the

references given by Melchiori is to the performance of a mask at the court of Henry

VIII, which serves as the putative origin of the stage direction that Rumour wears a

coat of painted tongues.[4] Certainly there is enough of a recognisable performance

tradition for the audience to have no problem identifying what this figure represents

visually, as well as by its language.[5] The overall dimension of performance provides

a context for this complex of associations, which Melchiori characterises as a play

that is:

'[…] first and foremost an exploration of the ways in which a play comes to

be conceived, a re-elaboration from different angles of pre-used theatrical

materials.[6]

Accordingly, one could see Rumour not only as a stage character, but as a mouthpiece

for a form of dramatic art that is intimately concerned with its own presentations.

Shakespeare therefore chooses to open *2 Henry IV* with a statement that requires the

audiences to think about the nature of what is being presented, both in terms of its

purported reworking of historical material, and also as drama.

Brian Walsh has analysed the Renaissance culture of play-going specifically in relation to history plays. He describes it as follows:

> This self-consciousness about theatrical production is tied to the self-consciousness about history that was part of late sixteenth-century historical culture.[7]

Walsh sees Shakespeare's history plays as developing a range of theatrical techniques already associated with the Queen's Men in particular. At one point he writes that:

> The dialectic of the "now" of theatre and the "then" of the past is made, for a moment, explicitly clear, and it is no accident that a clown is responsible. Clowning with history is a signature move of the Queen's Men, a move that highlights the temporality and artifice of historical knowledge.[8]

One might add that Shakespeare does exactly the same, but in even more pointed terms, with Rumour's exhortation to the audience in *2 Henry IV*.[9] The persona delineates what it does, and then notes that this is in fact unnecessary, because the audience is already well aware of the possibilities.

REPORTAGE AND THE RENAISSANCE STAGE

The line drawing on the cover of the New Mermaids series of Renaissance dramatic texts gives a good indication of how someone like Rumour would have been performed.[10] Although there seems to be a couple of other characters present, the main focus is upon a figure right at the forefront of the stage. He is directly addressing the main body of spectators on the ground level, with his left arm flung wide. In fact, haranguing them is probably more correct. Such a re-imagining of Renaissance performance reminds us that our textual conventions, such as the 'aside', are relatively inadequate tools for analysing the dramaturgy of the period.

The most detailed, and still the most influential, analysis of Renaissance staging is Robert Weimann's theorising of the conditions of performance in his book *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater*.[11] He contextualises the performance culture of the period and then thoroughly analyses the range of possibilities inherent to the thrust stage in a section entitled 'Platea and Locus: Flexible Dramaturgy'.[12] His main thesis is that the large platform stage of the public theatres lends itself naturally to two main locations. The *locus* is the upstage area at a distance from the majority of the audience, and is suited to set-pieces, while the *platea* is the relatively undifferentiated space towards the front of the stage, thrust out into the midst of the audience in exactly the way encapsulated in the New Mermaids series. These two zones interact in over-determined ways, creating a complex visual counterpoint to the language and characterisation techniques of the time. Weimann's term for the combination of all of these factors is *figurenposition*, a German composite term that bears witness to the sophisticated intricacy of this kind of staging.[13] To use Weimann's terminology, then, the *figurenposition* that is created for Rumour in *2 Henry IV* requires this particular dramatic construct to be placed at the front zone of the *platea*. Here it is able to address the audience without the intrusion of what will later become the 'fourth wall' in a proscenium arch theatre, a radically different kind of performance space from that available to Shakespeare and his contemporaries. By occupying the *platea*, Rumour is able to engage the audience almost as though 'he' is one of them, a member of a group that sees and hears what happens on the stage.

If we add to this a socio-cultural awareness of the multiple layers of audience composition in the period, we begin to understand why Shakespearean drama has acquired a reputation for multiple levels of representation.[14] Or, to use an older

critical vocabulary, we can see why Shakespeare is so 'even-handed'. Following Weimann's argument, it is possible to see that this 'even-handedness' is produced by the range of performance possibilities, rather than in the playwright's own imagination. These plays can mean many different things to different audience members, often at the same time.[15] Surrounded on all sides by an audience composed of people from all social ranks, the actor has to engage the audience in ways that are dynamic, keeping their attention by using techniques of which we have only a hazy conception. The closest we come in modern performance is the theatre in the round, but even here the playgoers are a relatively homogeneous group; at the very least, they will usually behave themselves, which was not always the case in Renaissance theatres. The same usually goes for our audiences.

Given these multiple possibilities, it should be possible to extend and refine the insights of critics such as Weimann. Rumour is a performing figure as well as one that questions the veracity of historical representation, standing amidst the audience and inviting their participation in the issues being raised. However, he also inevitably gestures towards something that is not present on the three dimensions of the scaffold, a fourth dimension that can be partially grasped by means of the term 'reportage'. Other critical terms such as 'offstage representation', or (even more clumsily) the representation of offstage events, seem inadequate to address a fundamental component of Renaissance drama. To return to the title of the present essay, what is it that happens when crucial events do not happen on the stage itself, but rather are mediated by onstage figures? Rumour draws the audience's attention to exactly this problem, which is itself compounded in the case of many of the plays, including *2 Henry IV,* by that other fourth dimension, time, which is also known as 'history'.

It is a critical commonplace that such a drama is 'metadramatic', fundamentally engaged with the theatrics of its own productions. But this is no simply self-reflexive dramaturgy, because it has to keep the audience involved in order to succeed, and success includes hard-headed business realities. David J. Baker has researched the role of the nascent early modern marketplace in the economic demand for literary and dramatic works:

> This active searching consumer implies an active searching producer as well: a literary entrepreneur bent on discovering through trial-and-error the tastes of this demanding consumer, the better to supply her with the goods and services she wants.[16]

A dynamic circularity comes into existence, by which an emerging market for dramatic performance is recognised and then catered for by means of a certain kind of theatrical production. And not always successfully, it has to be said; as Baker goes on to note, some plays simply did not succeed in commercial terms: '*Troilus* repetitively stages the dilemmas of the early modern marketplace'.[17] Baker analyses Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* in terms not only of the play's insistence on the marketable value of Cressida, but also in terms of the relation between the play and the business environment in which it was imbricated. And in the latter sense, this particular production was a market failure.

The later play is in a sense not dynamic enough. Its performance techniques and the meanings it generates are not fully adequate to address the required financial ends of the theatrical business, unlike the relative popularity of earlier history plays like *2 Henry IV*. The circularity comes in to play as and when a given theatrical production attempts to address these needs, and one of the most important elements by which it can do so is of course the kinds of performance techniques it utilises.

Weimann theorises how the staging works to do this, but 'reportage' works differently from the effects he enumerates. It adds another layer to the stage, in effect creating a distanced form of presentation that can be a very potent tool for the dramatist. It goes well beyond the zones of the stage, including its three dimensions, and it is particularly illuminating that Rumour in *2 Henry IV* effectively colludes with the audience in the operation. They are indeed all in this together.

THE CASE OF DESDEMONA AND A SPANISH INTERLUDE

Reportage does not work the same way in all of the plays; to suggest so would be falsely to limit the possibilities it creates. In *Othello*, for example, Desdemona is described several times by different characters in different ways well before she enters the stage. These conflicting presentations signal to the audience that this personage is going to be of major importance, just as Rumour in *2 Henry IV* points to the importance of false representation. Additionally, though, the very fact that different characters say such varied things about her inevitably draws attention to the multiplicity of viewpoints in and of itself. And this has the added effect of pointing up the centrality of representation. Which of the characters should the audience believe? Can any of them be trusted? The rhetoric by means of which representation is enacted itself comes under scrutiny, and the audience is alerted to the particularity of any character's viewpoint in this play. What constitutes truth in such circumstances is open to interpretation:

> IAGO Even now, very now, an old black ram
>
>   Is tupping your white ewe! (1.1.87-88)[18]

This is Iago shouting up to Brabantio's window. His imprecations condense racism and misogyny with a very earthy sexual language, which tells the audience at least as much about him as it does about Desdemona.[19] He continues in the same vein:

> IAGO I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter
>
> And the Moor are now making the beast with two backs. (1.1.114-115)

These lines are very familiar to modern Shakespeare aficionados, but their very familiarity disguises their disruptive effect in performance. By shifting to prose, the medium of the vernacular, Iago moves himself closer to the audience's own language. Presumably he would be located in some part of the *platea* as he engages Brabantio in the gallery, which would place Iago in close physical proximity to the audience. This is a classic example of Weimann's concept of the *figurenposition*, and its dramatic effect is very difficult to recapture on a proscenium stage. It places Iago almost from the outset in a stage location that he will continue to occupy and exploit throughout the play, as is demonstrated by his frequent use of what editors call the 'aside', as well as the soliloquy. It is already clear to a contemporary Renaissance audience that reportage and possible misrepresentation is going to be a major technique especially associated with this character. This is important because it underscores the ways in which Iago will go on to stage-manage his manipulations, as indeed he has already done in his interaction with Roderigo. *Othello* opens with reportage and a combination of physical and rhetorical manoeuvres.

Brabantio's response to all of this when he finally catches up with Othello is equally illuminating, and again these are well known lines:

> BRABANTIO   O thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my daughter?
>
> Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her (1.2.62-3)

As with Iago's representation of Desdemona, Brabantio's bewildered accusations say at least as much about him as they do about her. He associates Othello's acquisition of Desdemona with the black arts, which of course further marks Othello's otherness in relation to the Christianity of Venice. Furthermore, a contemporary audience would be well aware of the fact that what has occurred here breaks social norms, in many ways. It is already clear that Desdemona has had sexual congress with Othello without her father's knowledge or permission, thus interrupting the normal flow of patriarchal relations. This is especially important because Desdemona is Brabantio's only child, and thus is especially valuable in an aristocratic and mercantile society, a situation further enhanced by the fact that she is a woman. Such meanings are already coming to the fore prior to the revelation of her marriage, and it should come as no surprise when Iago makes expert use of exactly these associations later in the play.

The play goes on to enact a third set of prior representations of Desdemona when Othello gives his equally famous description of how he wooed her at 1.3.129-170. His speech may perhaps serve to rouse some audience sympathy on a kind of personal level, but even so the fracturing of Venetian social *mores* remains in their memories. Thus, the play prefigures Desdemona in three different ways before she finally enters the stage herself at 1.3.170, and proclaims the fact of her divided loyalties between father and husband.

What such an analysis of reportage points to is the structured logic by which Shakespeare presents his play in an appropriate way to engage with his audiences. In this respect, his dramaturgy accords with the practice of his contemporaries. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, for example, the battle that precedes and precipitates the tragic action is rendered in different ways by many of the characters. The Spaniard Don Andrea's long speech to the figure of Revenge in I.i gives the initial version, and is

presumably the most authoritative, since it comes from Don Andrea himself – except that it is undercut by his description of the pagan underworld to which he descends after his death.[20] Don Andrea describes his afterlife in much more detail than either his life or indeed the manner of his death; he does not even say who killed him. This is important because the contemporary audience will know that Don Andrea has died in battle during the annexation of Portugal by Spain, an event of major recent historical importance. The acquisition of Portugal gave Philip V of Spain the added naval might that he then used to outfit the Spanish Armada, which has resonances of a sort of anti-protestant crusade. It would have been easy enough for Kyd to keep his play in line with the Catholic attack on Elizabeth I, but instead he opts for a resolutely non-Christian revenge plot in the Senecan mould. By keeping Don Andrea and Revenge partially onstage as onlookers to the bloody events of the play, the dramaturge takes particular advantage of the ease with which stage position can effectively make the audience collude with at least some of the characters. The two figures are then able to comment throughout as a sort of Chorus, from a position of direct audience engagement.

The subsequent scene provides another narrative of the events, given by the Spanish General to his King. His version of Don Andrea's death is radically different from the version the audience has already been given. The General uses the language of chivalry, noting that Don Andrea makes great execution among the Portuguese enemy, until their Prince Balthazar rallies them and kills Don Andrea in personal combat (I.ii.65-72). This is the cue for the appearance of Horatio as a Spanish leader, who challenges Balthazar to single combat and takes him prisoner, thus winning the battle and the war. However, this leads only to further contention as both Horatio and the King's nephew Lorenzo lay claim to Balthazar and, thus, his ransom (I.ii.134ff).

This makes it very difficult for a single definition to be given of the significance of the action, and indeed the King orders both young noblemen to share the prize.

And this is only the Spanish version of events. The next scene, I.iii, provides yet another narrative of the same battle, this time given by the Portuguese lord Villuppo to the Viceroy of Portugal. His account differs in another way from the previous two, this time involving treachery:

> VILLUPPO   Then hear that truth which these mine eyes have seen.
>
>   When both the armies were in battle joined,
>
>   Don Balthazar, amidst the thickest troops,
>
>   To win renown did wondrous feats of arms:
>
>   Amongst the rest I saw him hand to hand
>
>   In single fight with their Lord General;
>
>   Til Alexandro, that here counterfeits
>
>   Under the colour of a duteous friend,
>
>   Discharged his pistol at the prince's back,
>
>   As though he would have slain their general.
>
>   But therewithal Don Balthazar fell down,
>
>   And when he fell, we began to fly:
>
>   But had he lived, the day had sure been ours. (I.iii.59-71)

By this point an audience can be forgiven for wondering what is going on. Which of these radically conflicting versions is true? Especially when each of them claims the status of eyewitness veracity. What this does, of course, is draw attention to the truthfulness or otherwise of the reports, placing the issue of reportage firmly at the forefront of the audience's consciousness. It is clear by now that whatever did indeed happen before the beginning of the play will be open to multiple interpretations, and

that not all of them will be innocent. The rhetorical position of the individual speaker

will matter greatly, and the audience is placed on alert by this series of reports.

Furthermore, this third version is spoken by a figure named 'Villuppo',

although the audience is never directly given his name. It is more a gestural

characterisation, using a sort of Iberian name as shorthand for 'the bad guy in all of

this'. The object of his calumny, who is named 'Alexandro', is similarly left

unnamed to the audience, although the significance of the name the text gives him lies

in the reference to Alexander the Great. Alexandro tries to undo the damage done

him by Villuppo, but the Viceroy is deceived. Alexandro is dragged off to prison, and

the scene ends with a short machiavel soliloquy by Villuppo:

> VILLUPPO   Thus have I with an envious, forged tale
>
> Deceived the king, betrayed mine enemy,
>
> And hope for guerdon of my villainy. (I.iii.92-95)

The significance is clear: reportage can be used for political advancement in a faction-

ridden court, which in turn puts in question the status of any representation of off-

stage events.

Even this, though, is not the final version. In the very next scene, Don

Andrea's beloved Bel-Imperia asks Horatio directly to narrate the circumstances of

Don Andrea's death, and he gives yet another different description:

> HORATIO   But wrathful Nemesis, that wicked power,
>
> Envying at Andrea's praise and worth,
>
> Cut short his life, to end his praise and worth.
>
> She, she herself, disguised in armour's mask,
>
> (As Pallas was before proud Pergamus)
>
> Brought in a fresh supply of halberdiers,

> Which paunched his horse, and dinged him to the ground.
>
> Then young Don Balthazar with ruthless rage,
>
> Taking advantage of his foe's distress,
>
> Did finish what his halberdiers begun,
>
> And left not until Andrea's life was done. (I.iv. 16-26)

Despite the contemporary Renaissance arms, the discourse this time is Homeric, as a personified deity intervenes in the personal conflict between Andrea and Balthazar. The reference to Pallas Athena before the walls of Troy reinforces the point. The play has now reached the fourth time this battle has been recounted, and so its importance as a crucial element has to be obvious to the audience by now. Indeed, the entire beginning of the play is structured by means of reportage. The action has been set in motion by events beforehand, and the audience is attuned to how their consequences will be played out in full.

THE MODERN GAZE: CINEMATIC SHAKESPEARES

The full nuances of such complex interactions can really only be teased out in full by contemporary audiences. There are several reasons why this should be so, and they all relate to the history of theatrical development and cultural change after the Restoration. The shift away from the large open air platform stages to more expensive indoor theatres plays a crucial role here, since it narrows both the stage and its audience composition. In general, later theatregoers are less likely to make their displeasure at boring parts of a performance known so vociferously as their predecessors. The staging dynamic also changes, since a more static proscenium arch set-up lends itself to a more staid kind of performance, simply as a result of the reduced possibilities in audience perspective.

One way to investigate the cultural shift that has taken place is to look at the same phenomenon of reportage in film, since it might be expected that the technological capabilities of the medium would enable the director to overcome the shortcomings of the proscenium stage as a platform for Renaissance drama. Put crudely, the question becomes whether or not the cultural familiarity of contemporary audiences with reportage can be translated for a more specifically visual culture. This is of course a broad oversimplification, but as an exercise it throws up some very peculiar results.

Many films are able directly to show scenes that do not take place on stage with relative ease. When he is explaining the death scene to the onlookers at the end of *Romeo and Juliet*, the Friar says:

> FRIAR   But he which bore my letter, Friar John,
>
> Was stay'd by accident, and yesternight
>
> Return'd my letter back. (5.3.250-252)[21]

In his film version, Zefirelli instead uses the resources provided by film to show the 'accident' happening. In his version, the Friar carrying the letters goes off into a partially hidden grove at the side of the road, presumably for a break, and Romeo thunders past on horseback almost immediately afterwards.[22] This seems straightforward enough, but it does imply that the director feels a need to fill in for a modern cinema audience the very gap that Shakespeare simply leaves unshown. It may be that Zefirelli's version points to a symptomatic awareness that 20th century audiences need more information than was necessary for a contemporary theatre audience.

This suspicion that an over-determining factor may be at work can also be applied to Zefirelli's much later film version of *Hamlet*, starring Mel Gibson in the

title role.[23] Here again some minor details that are missing from Shakespeare's plays are filled out by the filmic medium. When Queen Gertrude uses reportage to narrate the circumstances of Ophelia's death (4.7.166-183),[24] her speech continues as the screen fades to and from a direct visual representation of the moments leading up to Ophelia's drowning.

The examples from Zefirelli's movies seem relatively 'innocent', as they show in a reasonably simple way events that would otherwise remain simply reported. However, the same logic can be utilised in ways that help to produce meanings that go beyond the Shakespearean use of reportage. An excellent example is provided in Kenneth Branagh's film of *Much Ado About Nothing*.[25] The supposed seduction of Hero is one of those crucial Shakespearean scenes that do not happen on stage at all. It is entirely reported, and yet remains symbolically central, and as with Don Andrea's death in *The Spanish Tragedy*, the audience is given conflicting versions of what happened by different characters. There are two versions of the truth in this play. The first occurs in direct prose conversation between Conrade and Borachio at 3.3.139-157, and is fully authoritative since Borachio describes his role in it with Margaret.[26] The second, of course, comes in the repudiation scene (4.1). The audience already knows that the whole thing is a deliberate set-piece, since they have observed the plot in its making. But the dramatic irony is complicated further by the fact that Shakespeare does not directly show it happening on stage. This concentrates the audience's attention on the results of the plot, by means of an especially condensed and effective piece of reportage.

Branagh, however, feels the need to show it, presumably because it is far too important to the plot to be left simply said, but not shown. His rendering makes use of two camera angles, one that shows Borachio and Margaret from above and to the

side, and another that shows them from an orchard underneath the windowed balcony on which they are placed. The result is that the audience is given full visual realisation of what is happening, including an indication of how realistic it looks to the men below and a direct representation of the effect upon them; indeed, Claudio has to be silenced before he cries out in response to what he thinks he sees. Branagh's inclusion of the scene translates and updates the Shakespearean text for a modern film audience and its interpolation is directly implicated in the shift from an aurally aware culture to one that is much more visually attuned. This is not necessarily a negative change, as if Shakespeare's play is somehow more innocent, but it does point towards a profound cultural difference. Branagh's movie shows the scene for precisely the same reason that Shakespeare does not: its central significance for the rest of the play must be fully realised. In Shakespeare's case, audience awareness of the implications of reportage is brought into play. In Branagh's, the visual medium is paramount.

In his film version of *Macbeth*, Roman Polanski takes the same logic much further.[27] The way he does so is much more radical in its implications than either of the directors mentioned so far, because he shows events that do not directly take place in the Shakespeare play in such a way that they are invested with extra layers of meaning. The most important event that takes place offstage in *Macbeth* is of course the murder of Duncan; Polanski does not simply show it in the same way that Branagh does with the seduction of Hero. Instead, Polanski has Macbeth, played by Jon Finch, use one of the daggers to pull back the covers from the sleeping king, who is shown to be wearing very little, if anything at all. Macbeth makes as though to do the deed, but hesitates and seems incapable of following through. Duncan wakes, perhaps because he feels the cold, or senses that someone is standing over him. He recognises Macbeth, mouths his name and then his eyes go wide as he sees the

daggers. In this version, Macbeth almost *has* to kill Duncan because he has just been caught with direct evidence of treasonous intent. The violence with which he does so is extreme, to say the least, as he stabs the king several times and then finishes him off with a direct dagger thrust to the throat. Blood goes everywhere, and just in case the audience doesn't full realise the importance of what has just been shown, the crown is seen rolling onto the ground in two separate shots. Macbeth's murder of Duncan is thus made into something more than the result of personal ambition only.

It is therefore very clear that Polanski does not simply feel a need to show events that Shakespeare keeps offstage; he does so in ways that affect the meanings of the play. The murder of Duncan is not an isolated instance of the logic of Polanski's production, although it is the most obvious. At the very end of the play, Fleance is shown to stand momentarily between Malcolm and the throne, and as the titles roll Donalbain is shown limping off to meet the witches, neither of which happens in Shakespeare.   The message, of course, is that the cycle of violence is going to continue beyond the ostensible conclusion of the film.

This necessarily schematic outline is an attempt to draw out the importance of the fourth dimension of reportage on the Renaissance stage. Many more examples from many plays could be adduced of the central importance of events that are not directly shown. The aside into modern film versions looks at the same issue from a different angle, an anamorphic view of the ways in which various directors feel the need to fill in the gaps left by Shakespeare. As noted previously, this is not necessarily a negative, nostalgic yearning after some lost stage utopia. At the very least, however, it demonstrates awareness on the part of the film maker that the centrality of what is left unsaid can best be underscored by showing it directly to the

modern filmgoer. Less alert than a Renaissance audience member to the rhetorics of

reportage, the modern audience member apprehends the importance of events by a

form of seeing that is of course technologically unavailable in the earlier period.

However, the reliance placed by the director on this radically different form of seeing

allows the gaps to be filled in for a much later culture. The result may be similar, but

the way it is achieved bears witness to a major shift in cultural perceptions.

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[1] Giorgio Melchiori ed: *The Second Part of King Henry IV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007), 81-82.

[2] Melchiori 2007, 81 n.

[3] Melchiori 2007, 7 n.2.

[4] See Melchiori 2007, 17 for a line drawing of what such a figure might look like.

[5] In their edition of the play for the RSC, Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen suggest something similar in their notes to the Induction when they write that Rumour is an 'allegorical figure traditionally covered in painted tongues'. See Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen eds: *William Shakespeare: Henry IV Part II* (Houndmills: Macmillan 2009), 27.

[6] Melchiori 2007, 1.

[7] Brian Walsh: *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009), 29.

[8] Walsh 2009, 48.

[9] Walsh mentions the uncertainties of meaning generated by Rumour figures at 89-90, although he does not specifically refer to *2 Henry IV*. See his section on Rumour in *The True Tragedy of Richard III* at 91-93.

[10] See, for example, J.R. Mulryne ed: *Thomas Kyd: The Spanish Tragedy* (London: Ernest Benn Limited and New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc 1983).

[11] Robert Weimann: *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function* ed. Robert Schwartz (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1978). Weimann develops his ideas further in *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre* eds. Helen Higbee and William West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000).

[12] Weimann 1978, 73-85.

[13] Weimann 1978, 224-236. See also my discussion of these issues in relation to Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, Paul Innes: 'Out of the Repertoire: *Women Beware Women* and Performance History' in Andrew Hiscock ed: *Women Beware Women: A Critical Guide* (London and New York: Continuum Books 2011), 44-49.

[14] See especially the work of Andrew Gurr: *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996) and *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642* 3rd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995).

[15] I have treated these issues in relation to *Julius Caesar* elsewhere. See Paul Innes: '"Pluck but his name out of his heart": A Caesarean Cross-section' in Jonathan Holmes and Adrian Streete eds: *Refiguring Mimesis: Representation in Early Modern Literature* (Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press 2005), 79-98.

[16] David J Baker: *On Demand: Writing for the Market in Early Modern England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2010), 17-18.

[17] Baker 2010, 77.

[18] Edition used is by E.A.J Honigmann in Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan eds: *The Arden Shakespeare: Complete Works* (Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd 1998), 939ff.

[19] Such language is common enough in Machiavel characters as they develop into the Malcontent figure. Marston's play of course picks up on these associations; see also the figure of Bosola in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*.

[20] Edition used is from the third edition of the New Mermaids series, eds. J.R. Mulryne and Andrew Gurr: *Thomas Kyd: The Spanish Tragedy* (London: Methuen 2009).

[21] Taken from Proudfoot et al eds. 1998, 1005ff.

[22] The VHS version used is *The Franco Zefirelli Production of Romeo and Juliet* (Paramount Pictures Corporation 1968).

[23] The VHS version used is *Hamlet: A Franco Zefirelli Film* (Columbia TriStar 1990).

[24] Harold Jenkins ed: *Hamlet* in Proudfoot et al eds. 1998, 291ff.

[25] The DVD version used is *William Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing: A Film By Kenneth Branagh* (The Samuel Goldwyn Company 1993).

[26] A.R. Humphreys ed: *Much Ado About Nothing* in Proudfoot et al eds. 1998, 911ff.

[27] The DVD version used is *Roman Polanski's Film of Macbeth* (Columbia TriStar 2002).