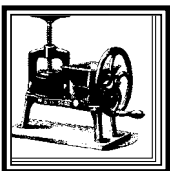


University of Gloucestershire Inaugural Lecture

No 4

*‘Like a Soldier to the Stage’:  
Field Commander Hamlet and  
the ends of tragedy*

**Professor Simon Barker**



THE CYDER PRESS



UNIVERSITY OF  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

at Cheltenham and Gloucester

## THE CYDER PRESS

... thy Press with purest Juice

Shall flow ...

(John Philips: *Cyder. A Poem*, 1708)

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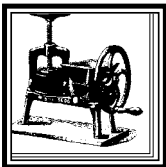


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Field Commander Hamlet  
and the ends of tragedy*

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This lecture is dedicated to  
**Peter Widdowson**: the Editor-in-Chief



THE CYDER PRESS  
Cheltenham, England



UNIVERSITY OF  
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## **Editorial Note**

Simon Barker, Professor of English Literature in the Department of Humanities at the University of Gloucestershire, delivered the fourth in a new series of inaugural lectures by the university's professors on 10 December 2008. The present booklet reproduces the text of the lecture more or less verbatim, and the editor of The Cyder Press is most grateful to Professor Barker for allowing the Press to print it.

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Delivering what became a well-known inaugural lecture at the University of Oxford in 1954, the mathematician George Temple remarked that the idea that ‘practice makes perfect’ is rarely applicable to this kind of event.<sup>1</sup> Few professors, he said, lead lives of such vicissitude and change that they are called upon to inaugurate more than two or three times in their careers. He further remarked that the inaugural lecture was like a kind of farewell speech, delivered once and for all, which is why these events, by tradition, do not conclude with a period of formal questioning.

Temple also noted that while the professorial lecture allowed the speaker a ‘great degree of freedom’, it ‘should have a theme relevant to the interests and concerns of the lecturer or those who attend’. I cannot imagine my lecture will measure up to Temple’s, which was about Romanticism in Natural Philosophy, yet, there again, the great mathematician ended his stint as a professor by swapping his academic gown for a monk’s habit. He spent the last dozen years of his life in a monastery on the Isle of Wight. I hope it will not come to that in my case, and I am not sure the Benedictines would have me, despite my interest in medieval and early modern theology. Incidentally, Temple also remarked how surprised he was by inaugural lectures that ran for less than an hour – so I hope you are all sitting comfortably.

My own view is that a lecture such as this should be related to what you profess – in my case English Literature – but also perhaps, to how you have come to profess it. This enables the lecturer to look back at their career and the opportunities it has afforded, even if this may seem a little self-indulgent. To this effect, I shall be referring to what I consider three of the more memorable points in my career. It is actually quite hard to isolate a few particular moments. If I may adapt one of Claudius’s speeches from *Hamlet*, the joys of teaching ‘come not [as] single spies, but in battalions’.<sup>2</sup> It is easy to recall very simple moments: perhaps a turning-point in a seminar on a wet afternoon, or a particularly insightful student essay. Nonetheless, I shall offer you my top-three memorable occasions as we go along.

Secondly, I think that the nature of the appointment means that the subject matter needs to be connected to the professor’s research, and with this in view I want to give an example of the kind of work I have been doing on the representation of military conflict in Shakespeare.

Thirdly, I think the lecturer is duty-bound to make passing comment on the state of his or her discipline. I have witnessed a period of quite formidable transformation in Higher Education. Universities themselves have changed: there are more of them, student groups are more diverse, technology has made a huge impact, and there has been a drive towards the development of more self-evidently vocational courses.

Furthermore, the discipline of English has itself undergone dramatic change over the course of the last twenty-five years or so. The body of texts our students study and think about has altered radically in relation to the kinds of questions we ask of it. We have devised new agendas and methods of enquiry, often dictated by our concerns with history, race, gender, and social class. Yet, I have to say that despite all these changes, 'Shakespeare has been very good to me' and thus I am sticking with the familiar.

I have chosen to speak mainly about *Hamlet* for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is the sheer familiarity of the play. *Hamlet* appears in popular discourse in a range of jokes and is very clearly open to satire. Scenes from the play have been used in advertising, such as the television advertisement for lager where Hamlet plays football with Yorick's skull: I think the slogan was 'I bet he drinks Black Label'. Then there is the association made between Hamlet and cigars, which accounts for the Bach variation we were playing just now as you assembled, for those of you with long memories.<sup>3</sup> There is also the film *Last Action Hero*, featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger, the actor who became Governor of California. One wonders if he still quotes *Hamlet* at moments of crisis.<sup>4</sup> In another realm, although not an entirely separate one, Hamlet crops up as a case study in psychoanalysis. The critic Terry Eagleton has famously noted that 'though conclusive evidence is hard to come by, it is difficult to read Shakespeare without feeling that he was almost certainly familiar with the writings of [...] [Sigmund] Freud'.<sup>5</sup>

Secondly, there is the role of *Hamlet* in education. In this audience there are many of my own current and recent students who have studied *Hamlet* at this university. I am delighted to say that there are also students here from a school in Gloucester who are studying the play for A-level, and I should like especially to welcome them to their local university.



Thirdly, and this may surprise some of you, but *Hamlet* is a good choice of play for this time of year because of its associations with Christmas, and later you will hear Tudor Christmas music playing in the background at the reception. Just before his encounter with the Ghost of his father, Hamlet remarks that ‘the air bites shrewdly; it is very cold’ (I.iv.1) and earlier Marcellus has spoken of the season ‘wherein our Saviour’s birth is celebrated’(I.i.164). These and other clues suggest that *Hamlet* begins in Advent. As the critic Steven Roth has pointed out, this also means that the play takes place over a period associated with ‘costumes, masks, revels, inversion of roles, real and play-acted rebellion, theatrical productions’ and other examples of Misrule that go on through the Christmas period right up until Twelfth Night.<sup>6</sup> This period of semi-legitimate mischief, by the way, included drinking alcohol in places of worship – so we should be all right at the reception in the Chapel later.

While the play clearly starts in Advent, it also includes Ophelia, seemingly no more than two months later, distributing summer flowers.<sup>7</sup> So the chronology, like much in the play, is disjointed, illogical and hard to make sense of. And there are other kinds of inconsistency. For one thing, we have to ask ourselves when we speak of *Hamlet*, which version of the play do we mean? Kenneth Branagh’s ‘full text’ film version of the play runs to nearly four hours.<sup>8</sup> In the theatre, however, the text is almost invariably cut in some way, and I shall later be addressing the implications of the way that some directors have chosen to reduce the length of the play for performance.

There are, in fact, several early printed versions of *Hamlet*. A rather addled text (probably worked up from actors’ memories of performing it) was published in 1603. It contains some memorable lines and is sometimes performed today. Then came the Second Quarto, the basis of most modern performances. In 1623, after Shakespeare had been dead for several years, came what we call the First Folio, the basis of Branagh’s film. Comparing and evaluating these texts is an exacting science, which you will be pleased to know I shall not trouble you with this evening. Yet what appears in one version, but not another, is important to this lecture, the substance of which is the relationship between Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and issues of military conflict in Shakespeare’s time and our own.

Despite, or because of these difficulties, *Hamlet* has haunted me across the years of my education and throughout my teaching career. From the age of twelve, I went to school in the suburbs of Manchester. Before that, we had lived in inner-city Southampton. I can tell you that if there is one thing that toughens you up more than simply growing up as a teenager in Manchester it must be growing up as a teenager in Manchester with a residual Hampshire accent. I cannot remember studying *Hamlet* itself at school, but I do remember brilliant and inspiring teachers, who clearly thought that studying English Literature was, indeed, a vocational practice.

After a period working in factories in Manchester, I was lucky enough to be accepted at the University of Stirling. It was a fantastic place to be. I undertook a four-year degree in English and History at what many people consider the most beautiful university campus in the world. This was when I fell for the people, cultures and landscapes of Scotland, which have been abiding passions. *Hamlet* and other plays of blood and guts, regicide and revenge were high on the English Studies curriculum at Stirling and they somehow suited the period and the place. These were radical times: there was music in the bars at night and revolution in the air. We were sceptical about capitalism, called for the banks to be nationalized and demanded higher taxes for the rich. Stirling had a famously liberal entry policy for mature students so you found yourself studying as part of a hugely interesting and varied student body with experience of the ‘real world’ and much to say about its inequalities. What was studied in the course of your degree transmitted itself into political discussion in the radical students’ union at Stirling. It was not uncommon to hear quotations from Jacobean tragedy in speeches made in support of striking oil-workers or against American foreign policy.

In the Department of English Studies, I was taught by the late and much missed Donald Low, but also by John Drakakis, now a Professor, and still making waves and flying his flags at Stirling. John Drakakis cut an unusual figure in the university. His Cardiff accent, Greek ancestry, and radical views on Shakespeare distinguished him in what was a surprisingly traditional department for such a modern university. He taught *Hamlet* and other revenge plays by reference to Clint Eastwood movies and the exotic German critic Robert Weimann.<sup>9</sup> In order to understand Shakespearean comedy, we were referred to the *Muppet Show* – and seminars often took place in the university’s studio theatre because he believed in the stage, as well as the page.

John Drakakis was a keen and successful rugby player and you could tell how far we had got in the season by the extent of his personal injuries. There was in fact a persistent rumour that Drakakis was the only Shakespearean critic – and one with a strong interest in feminist criticism to boot – who had once been suspended by the Scottish Rugby Union for ‘eye-gouging’. One week John had to postpone his usual three-hour seminar. He was off having a plaster cast fitted or something. But the following week he made up for it by holding a six-hour seminar. This began at the campus in the morning but in the afternoon we went to the Student Union Club just off campus – an establishment, incidentally, that had the highest turnover of any licensed premises in Scotland. Our text that day was *Hamlet* and the discussions ended up as a fierce debate about whether Hamlet himself was a revolutionary, attempting to overthrow the *status quo*, or a conservative, keen to re-establish an older order. The point was that the debate was clearly influenced by what we read in the newspapers. I discovered then what I have seen many times in my teaching and research since: that criticism is informed by politics and that criticism is itself a kind of political activity. This had been as true for T. S. Eliot as it was for the French theorists who were coming on stream at that time. This was also the exact moment when I became troubled, as I am to this day, by scene iv of the Fourth Act of *Hamlet*, which is printed in your programmes and to which I shall return.

After working for a while on a fishing boat in the far west of Scotland, I was lucky enough to be given the chance to undertake doctoral research in the University of Wales at Cardiff. Here I was confronted with the relationship between literature, criticism and politics in a hugely important way. The English Department at Cardiff came to be associated with some of the more serious debates about these aspects of the study of literature, although it had a more traditional side too. I think it did me no harm to become allied with the internationally known Renaissance scholars who taught and researched at Cardiff. These included Professor Terry Hawkes, and my research supervisor, Professor Catherine Belsey. I am not sure that being associated with me has done them much good over the years but their example has been a constant influence in my research and teaching. Here, too, by the study of theory and history, I had confirmed what I already suspected: that the period in which Shakespeare lived was one of crisis and uncertainty. Issues were contested, including those to do with the ethics of military conflict, which were to prescribe the world that we live in today. This was far from the vision of the

English Renaissance that I had grown up with – an idealised view that suggested that in the time of Shakespeare the sky was somehow bluer, the grass greener, and everyone went around talking to each other in rhyming couplets.

I want to start to bring *Hamlet* and ideas of conflict into focus by recording the first of what I am calling the three most memorable moments of my career. I suspended my doctoral work in Cardiff to take a one-year course leading to a state teaching qualification. For my teaching practice, I was posted to Ystrad Mynach College of Further Education near Bargoed in the valleys of South Wales. This was during the year of the bitter conflict between the National Union of Mineworkers and the government led by Margaret Thatcher, a Prime Minister who seemingly thought it worthwhile to sacrifice much of Britain's industry in order to defeat the Trade Unions. Among the groups of students I taught were twenty-five apprentice coal-miners studying the intricacies of electrical engineering, one of the many sophisticated trades associated with modern mining. These young men were effectively on day release from the strike. For four days each week, they were on strike, and for the fifth day, they were in college studying for their mining qualifications. I took them for 'Communication Studies' and got to know this restless, energetic and determined group during a time of unprecedented upheaval in their lives. In order to complete their course with me they each had to undertake a substantial written project and to my horror, when asked, they seemed to come up with the most ridiculous proposals. One said, with a kind of lewd wink, that he wanted to do his project 'on birds, sir, know what I mean?' Another said he was interested in 'shopping' because that was what his girlfriend was interested in. Another told me that he would 'write a play in the style of Shakespeare' as he had heard that Shakespeare was my thing. Despite my reservations I continued to enthuse about the idea of them at least starting these projects and suggested some methods for research. The weeks went by and nothing emerged. I taught them about writing and most listened attentively, although I did observe a card school seemed to have developed at the back of my class.

On the day the projects had to be handed in the men had an unexpected free period before mine and had taken the opportunity to visit the local pub, The Coopers Arms, for some midday drinking. Meanwhile their manager from the National Coal Board had decided to make a spot check on the men. I remember him as seemingly about eight feet tall, and very, very angry. 'Where are the men?', he

demanded, as if he didn't know. He threatened to suspend them and fine them for not attending college. Meanwhile, urgent telephone calls were made from the college down to The Coopers Arms to see if we could get them back. During this confusion, I was told that a large number of bulky items of work had been handed in at Reception that morning and were being brought up to the teaching workshop by several colleagues. The young miners eventually turned up, full of drink and good humour, and the man from the NCB started shouting at them, beginning a serious and determined dressing-down. Then his eyes fell on the twenty-five neatly presented projects that the apprentices had handed in earlier that day, now displayed on the workbenches. They were mostly brilliant studies of engineering: maps of mines, illustrated volumes of electrical wiring systems, accounts of the then developing science of clean coal. And there, in amongst this more specialised material, was the project by the young man who wanted to do a 'study of birds, sir'. His project was entitled *The Ornithology of the South Wales Valleys* and turned out to be a beautiful compendium of line-drawings and photographs. The apprentice who had promised to work on 'shopping' had produced a project concerning the impact of supermarkets on the classic small shops of the valleys, backed up by graphs and maps and statistics.

And there too was a play called *The Miners' Hamlet* which had Hamlet as a miners' leader and Margaret Thatcher as Claudius, intent on young Hamlet's destruction. Old Hamlet (Hamlet's father) had become Old King Coal, and so on, in a wonderfully modified version of a play that he had studied at school. I swear I saw a tear fall from the eye of the NCB manager as he picked his way through these various volumes. All was instantly forgiven and forgotten. The man from the NCB went off, and we all went down to The Coopers Arms to celebrate. For me this was a lesson in the authority and power of the written word and, as I say, one of the most memorable moments of my teaching career. If only the strike had ended as happily. I also learned in a way to trust my own teaching and to understand the impact you sometimes make on students without knowing it. In many different ways, the experience taught me a degree of humility in the face of what students are capable of, if inspired and encouraged.

In and around Cardiff I was learning more about the potential relationship between literature and politics and published some early work about the links between Shakespeare and Margaret Thatcher's war in the South Atlantic.<sup>10</sup> It is sometimes

forgotten that Mrs Thatcher was widely unpopular across the land until the Falklands War and I remember the allusions to the ‘Falklands Factor’ that appeared in Michael Bogdanov’s epic production of Shakespeare’s *History Plays*.<sup>11</sup> War covered over the injustice of government policy and gave the Thatcher government the energy and popularity it needed to go on (and on). I always think here of Nietzsche’s aphorism, which you will find printed above the exhibition in the Chapel:

You say it is the good cause that hallows even war?

I tell you: it is the good war that hallows every cause.<sup>12</sup>

My experience teaching in the valleys held me in good stead when I started as a part-time lecturer at the Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff. While finishing my doctoral thesis at the University of Wales, I became the rather grandly termed ‘University Tutor’ in a drama department which was mainly in the business of teaching people to be actors and stage technicians.

One term they decided to put on a production of *Hamlet* and the director, a senior member of staff, called upon me to act as an adviser – a *dramaturg*. We met in a pub after work and when we had settled down with our drinks he leaned across the table and asked, point-blank so to speak: ‘Simon, what do you think *Hamlet* is all about?’

I thought this could be a trick question. So, as the tame academic, I dutifully went into a long speech about: the socio-economic circumstances of the Elizabethan theatre; the fact that the play was, historically, poised between a declining feudal world and a rising bourgeois one; the changing perception of God and religion as, over the course of a few decades, Catholic theology had given way to an anthropocentric new order. I spoke of the rise of the individual, the importance of what some critics have talked about as Hamlet’s subjectivity, and the fact that the play has to be seen as part of a long tradition of revenge plays. I threw in a few references to Marxist criticism, feminist criticism, post-structuralism and psychoanalysis – and I concluded by sketching in the importance of the way that the play seems to be about putting on a play – it refers to itself as a drama perhaps more than any other of Shakespeare’s plays.

At the end of this I sat back, probably rather smugly, and waited for my colleague's response. As it turned out it had indeed been a trick question because he leaned across the table again and said that all this was very well, but he saw the play himself in much simpler terms. In fact, he himself strongly *identified* with the figure of Hamlet, and I remember exactly what he had to say. He remarked that:

Hamlet is just an ordinary bloke like me. He's reached a stage in his life when, like me, he has a number of problems and has to make a number of decisions. My life is just like Hamlet's. I've got exactly his problems.

Frankly, I was astonished by this. I wondered what his home life could be like. Had his uncle killed his father who had then gone on to marry his mother? Did he go home at night to find the ghost of his father sitting on the end of his bed urging him to take revenge? And was he, even as we were speaking, debating the best way to know for sure that the ghost was right? I left the pub in a hurry – although I should say that we went on to do a fine production of the play – and I should also add that this was before Paul Clements turned up as the new Head of Drama at the Welsh College to rescue us all from ourselves.

The point was, however, a quite serious one. For this one individual the meaning of the play was entirely bound up with a very strong sense of identification. This is not only an impulse among some people who work in the theatre, but also in the work of the thousands of academic critics who have written about Shakespeare in general, and *Hamlet* in particular, over the last 400 years. One of the best examples and the most famous, is in the work of the Romantic poet and critic Coleridge who claimed: 'I have a smack of Hamlet myself, if I may say so ...!'<sup>13</sup>

So, let us think again about this sense of identification that exists in some people's interpretation of the play in the modern world. It rests upon a number of very large assumptions. For example, to be able to identify with a fictional character in this way seems to suggest that Shakespeare's play is 'timeless', 'universal' or 'transcendental'. If we are 'to be like Hamlet' we have to assume that time changes nothing because nothing has really changed in the 400 years since Shakespeare began working on the play. In other words, to identify with Hamlet means that we have to assume that there is some kind of timeless human condition, or human

nature which, somehow, is unaffected by changing historical circumstance. It also confirms the idea that the figure of Hamlet has become detached from the overall structure of words and actions of the play that's named after him. And I shall come back to this point in due course.

At one time in Cardiff, I had been working in the English Department, the Department of Education, and the Department of Continuing Education. I was also teaching for the Workers' Educational Association as well as increasingly at the Welsh College of Music and Drama. It was thus a great relief to submit my doctoral thesis and get a full-time post at what is now the University of Winchester, where these various aspects of my career to date could be practised in one space, so to speak. King Alfred's College, as it was then, had a strong tradition of interdisciplinary work and one of the friendliest staffs I have come across. I worked in English and Drama, and for the History Department, making many friends, and developing my research. I also benefited from involvement with postgraduate teaching at the University of Southampton.

*Hamlet* was an important text in Winchester as it had been elsewhere. We taught the play and I also remember helping stage it with our students in the gardens of Mottisfont Abbey in the Test Valley as part of an annual summer Shakespeare festival. It rained for the whole of the three-night run and I sent a note to the director congratulating him on the first ever 'under water *Hamlet*'.

My main claim to fame amongst the students in Winchester was that I had an office next door to Colin Firth's mother who also taught at King Alfred's. Colin Firth played Mr Darcy in the 1995 television adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* and I was teaching the novel to Education students at the same time as this was being broadcast. I did consider making 'the day that Colin Firth came to collect his mum' the second of my most memorable teaching moments. However, the very mention of Colin Firth has a rather inordinate effect on one of the team who have helped put this event together this evening so I shall pass quickly on. Nevertheless, I can report that the students noted that in their opinion, Firth, emerging in his wet shirt (on the TV – not during his visit), had elevated Mr Darcy to the status occupied by other heroes in the texts they were studying. He now ranked, in their opinion, with both Heathcliff and Hamlet.



This romanticizing of Hamlet can be observed in performance over the years. The PowerPoint presentation which we played before the lecture showed how famous actors who have taken on the role reflect this sense of romance in style, costume, and (where we have records) their tone.<sup>14</sup> The other effect of a romantic view of Hamlet is that the character itself becomes isolated from the overall context of the play and, indeed, from the context of its first production. This isolation is further achieved by the kinds of cuts made to the text for performance. I would argue that what is sometimes understated in performance, often through severe editing of the text, is the way that the play unfolds against a clear background of military conflict which Shakespeare obviously thought important to the spectators in his theatre.

In fact, allusions to warfare are abundant across the Shakespearean canon, not to mention the host of other plays produced during the period in which Shakespeare was writing. Shakespeare's history plays and classical plays are full of soldiers and warfare, and even the comedies have dispossessed knights or 'gentlemen' wondering about their status in relation to soldiering. If we take the four principal tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* we can see that they are all very much concerned with warfare despite their preoccupation with matters of seemingly personal or familial disquiet. Located mainly within courts, palaces or castles, each of their protagonists struggles variously with the ethics and theology of revenge, with social caste or private jealousy, with loyalty and love, and in the case of *Macbeth*, the relationship between fate and ambition. Yet in *Hamlet* and *Othello*, the tragedy is set against a background of military conflict, and in *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, the tragedy results in warlike activity.

Othello's reputation as soldier has secured him employment by the Venetian state. Shakespeare seems to use Othello's military identity in a way that increases our sympathy for him. His downfall is associated with a loss of this image of himself, which is defined entirely by his status as a soldier and the attendant – and often brutal – codes of masculinity. This is also certainly true of *King Lear* whom one can imagine had once led armies. His increasing loss of status is measured against the loss of his knights which is understandable, but lacks credibility the more times he mentions it, and particularly by comparison with his loss of faith in his family.

History meets tragedy in *Macbeth* where military prowess most conspicuously reveals itself as a matter of sheer brutality. The Sergeant at the beginning of the

play is a little like the Captain who tells Hamlet about Fortinbras's exploits against the Poles in the first section of *Hamlet* printed out in your programme. He reports on the way that brave Macbeth ('well he deserves that name') 'unseamed' the rebel Macdonald 'from the nave to th' chops/ and fixed his head upon our battlements' (I. i. 22-3). One wonders whether this is an English view of Scottish tactics (Macbeth's own head gets the same treatment at the end of the play), or simply a rare representation of the reality of hand-to-hand combat. Whatever the case, it is a stark image that reflects upon the way war legitimises activities that within the walls of castles provoke madness, hallucinations and guilt.

Diverse as the soldiers in *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* are, they invite audiences to consider the fact that military power is ultimately superficial. It is a matter more of outward display and rhetoric than inner sensibility – and those who claim it as a badge of masculinity seem, in the end, to be the most vulnerable of men.

*Hamlet* includes what some audience members in the years leading up to the death of Queen Elizabeth, may have considered one of the most astonishing representations of warfare in the whole of the unfolding Shakespeare canon. Shakespeare's audiences may still have been absorbed by the idea of a second Spanish Armada. They were certainly able to witness the effects of Elizabeth's Irish campaigns in the spectacle of gangs of miserable and diseased soldiers in the streets of London. Had they the mind they could also have read about warfare in the many books and pamphlets available from the printing houses established in the area around St Paul's. Those who had studied or heard of this material would know of its insistence upon the appropriate qualities that defined the soldier, the ideal relationship between the military and the sovereign, and the way that warfare could be justified in the name of God and the state.

I have written extensively about military conflict in the period of Shakespeare and about these hundreds of military manuals, with their theological justifications of warfare and their accounts of civil conflict at home and campaigns overseas.<sup>15</sup> I can perhaps demonstrate something of the nature of these texts by giving you a few of their titles:

Thomas Styward, *The Paithwaie to Martiall Discipline* (London, 1588).

Geoffrey Gates, *The Defence of Militarie Profession* (London, 1591).

Matthew Sutcliffe, *The Practice, Proceedings and Lawes of Armes* (London, 1593).

James Achesome, *The Military Garden. Or Instructions For All Young Souldiers* (London, 1629).

Richard Bernard, *The Bible-Battels Or The Sacred Art Military: For the Rightly Wageing of Warre According to Holy Writ* (London, 1629).

These texts were concerned with discipline and tactics and called for the establishment of a standing army to defend and extend the emerging Protestant state. Some images from such texts are displayed in the exhibition that you can see in the Chapel after this lecture. These include the ideal soldier imagined by William Neade in 1625. His ‘Double-Armed Man’ – the image used in the publicity for the lecture and reproduced in the programme – is the apotheosis of a kind of a military masculinity.<sup>16</sup> It idealized the past, and in particular the historically symbolic longbow, but fantasized about the future: the soldier as a gentleman, aware of his cause, loyal to his king, and in an over-determined way, armed to the teeth. It is an absurd image, but one that kindled interest in the Court of Charles I, perhaps already aware that he might one day need an effective army.

A significant ideological component of this writing was its scorn for those theologians of the earlier Tudor period who had claimed that Christianity was incompatible with military conflict. The work of Thomas More and Erasmus is universally rubbished, as is that of John Colet who had famously argued with Henry VIII over the ethics of warfare in 1513. Given the military atmosphere in London at the time, some attending early productions of *Hamlet* may have experienced something of an intellectual shock at the very end of Shakespeare’s latest play. *Hamlet* begins with soldiers, contains many images and metaphors to do with war, and includes news of battles that take place, as it were, just off-stage. But at the very end of the play these diverse allusions are marshalled in a particularly acute visual and verbal evocation of the virtues of militarism and it is to this that I now wish to turn.

It is entirely possible to overlook or forget the very end of *Hamlet*. Such is the burden of the play’s tragic dimension, centred on the figure of Hamlet himself,

that the question ‘what happens at the end of *Hamlet*?’ may well produce answers from those remembering productions which focus upon all sorts of aspects of the play’s final moments. There is certainly plenty of business from which to choose: the series of lethal physical exchanges, summaries of earlier events, and speeches about the future. Characters whom we hardly know take up important positions – and what they have to say is critical in terms of bringing some order to the chaos of the scene. Some elements of the final speeches are well known, and there is always a high level of expectation from the audience as the play draws to its conclusion.

But what do we really remember from the closing scene of *Hamlet*? There’s a kind of game I have played with various groups of people, asking them, in general, what happens at the very end of the play. The responses vary, but often people say: ‘well, everyone’s dead aren’t they?’ Or, at least, they say: ‘there’s a pile of bodies.’ Some recall Hamlet’s final words (‘The rest is silence’), which, leaving aside the ‘O, O, O, O’ that persists in many editions (from the First Folio), offer a convenient point of closure, supported by Horatio’s memorably affecting:

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince.  
Flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

(V. ii. 12-13)

But mostly people simply recall the sheer number of poisoned and lacerated bodies left on the stage, the result of the narrative of ‘carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts’, the ‘accidental judgements’, and the ‘casual slaughters’ that Horatio promises to record as a tale for posterity.

People are right to remember the body count. The bodies on stage include those of Claudius and Gertrude, as well as Laertes and Hamlet himself. From earlier in the play we have Old King Hamlet (albeit as a ghost), Polonius and Ophelia; and, of course, ‘Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead’ – to coin a phrase. For many, then, this extremely high level of carnage undoubtedly characterizes the play, just as it should seem a source of horror for those (very much still alive) who come upon the scene from elsewhere. These figures (ambassadors, soldiers and Prince Fortinbras himself) should be attuned to human frailty and bloodletting, but they

recoil in horror from what they find at Elsinore. Yet the manner in which the dead are addressed and physically removed from the stage makes for a curious reflection upon the attitudes to war that run through the play in general. The final moments of *Hamlet* start with an odd kind of competition that momentarily arises between Horatio and the newly arrived Fortinbras over what to do with the bodies. It is not entirely a question of ownership, but it has something to do with the men's mutual positions in the hierarchy of those who are left alive to reflect on the slaughter in Denmark and consider the country's future. Horatio is the local man and has his story to tell. He is protective of those who will feature in it, even though they are now dead. Fortinbras, on the other hand, is the outsider, and we cannot be entirely sure of his motives and plans. What to do with the bodies certainly has much to do with the purpose and meaning of remembrance – with stories of the dead. Wanting to get the record straight, Horatio firmly denies the Ambassador's claim that Claudius (or is it Hamlet?) commanded the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, an important correction since someone's reputation is at stake. He then advises a public display of the bodies:

He never gave commandment for their death.  
But since, so jump upon this bloody question  
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,  
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies  
High on a stage be placèd to the view;  
And let me speak to th' yet unknowing world  
How these things came about.

(V. ii. 328-34)

Horatio's suggestion that the loss of so many may be in part mitigated by their serving some didactic purpose, the bodies displayed as an exemplification of past wrongs, seems to correspond with the highest ideals of the tragic form. The use of the word 'unknowing' acknowledges the fact that there is an audience in Denmark ready to learn of the particular circumstances and events of the story. Horatio invites the idea that the whole sequence of the action, once properly told, will serve as a parable on human behaviour that will add to the common good.

For a moment, one feels the playhouse charged with the moral force of Greek tragedy, the action reaching out across the *orchestra* to embrace a civic audience in a conditioning or corrective way.

The play (or at least its story) will start again but this time with Horatio's interpretation of events and the wisdom of hindsight. Fortinbras seems to have read about the poetics of tragedy and says of Horatio's promised account 'Let us haste to hear it'; the business of tragedy is to evoke pity and terror, from which we learn to reform our ways.

Yet the bodies remain, and what happens to them arrests the flow of the tragic formula. Fortinbras agrees that Hamlet's body (if not the others) should be borne to the stage just as Horatio has suggested. I should note that it's 'body' in one variant of the text and 'bodies' in others. Yet, this order, the first he gives with his new authority in Denmark, seems quite extraordinary in terms of the ceremony that is to accompany the elevation and display of Hamlet's corpse:

Let four captains  
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,  
For he was likely, had he been put on,  
To have proved most royally; and for his passage,  
The soldiers' music and the rites of war  
Speak loudly for him.  
Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this  
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.  
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

(V. ii. 349-357)

This would have been a perfectly understandable piece of stage business in the open space of an Elizabethan theatre. It avoids leaving so many 'dead' actors on stage in full view of the audience, awaiting their 'resurrection' and already anxious for refreshment across at the Mermaid Inn. In many tragedies directions of some kind are given for the removal of bodies. So in *Hamlet* either all the bodies, or simply Hamlet's remains, are carried from the stage. Yet only Hamlet is to receive the extraordinary accolade of a military escort (with officers as bearers) and the soldiers' music, the volley of shots. And perhaps there are other unspecified 'rites

of war' that would have been familiar to Elizabethan audiences; the soldiers present may offer some kind of salute or lower their arms in tribute.

The question arises as to quite why Hamlet receives this treatment and it is one worth exploring given the nature of the play, the times, and the atmosphere of war in Shakespeare's London. One explanation may be that since, as Fortinbras observes, the whole scene looks like a battlefield, its victims should be treated appropriately as some species of paramilitary. Perhaps Fortinbras, who tells of his sorrow, treats everyone he feels sorry for as though they had been soldiers. Yet if this were the case then such dignity in death would have been extended to other parties in the casual slaughter of which he has yet to hear the detail. In matters of degree, the corpses include royalty, and a soldier is supposed to honour even his enemy's dead. Yet Hamlet is singled out for special treatment. Perhaps it is because he is a prince who has died young and wastefully, and this is Norway's version of the state funeral.

What seems more likely is that Fortinbras really considers Hamlet to be a kind of quasi-soldier. If this is the case then a number of issues arise that reflect upon the figures of Fortinbras and Hamlet, and upon the presentation of militarism in the whole play.

Fortinbras facilitates the end of the play and allows a channelling of all that has happened through his person and into the future. Like everyone else, he will hear Horatio's story, but what is more important he will assert his 'rights of memory' in Denmark. Someone needs to get a grip and if the military theorists' ideals are accepted in their approach to diplomacy, and their values adopted in terms of the desired military leader, then Fortinbras fits the bill. Yet in terms of how the play has proceeded, Fortinbras is an unknown figure; his reputation depends almost entirely upon an identity derived from his decision to go to war over 'an eggshell' as we have already learned in Act IV – if our production includes that scene. The fact that he orders military rites for Hamlet's 'passage' to the 'platform' invites the audience to consider that Fortinbras may well be about to establish a new order in Denmark, but it will be one framed by his own line of work and his military values. Fortinbras obviously links royalty with militarism alone; he states that Hamlet, had he 'been put on', would have 'proved' most royally', and would, presumably, have even more fully absorbed and demonstrated the values associated with a soldier.

All this seems hardly seems credible when Hamlet is measured against the lists of qualities that the contemporary military theorists saw as requisite in the ‘true’ soldier. If anything, Hamlet lacks a uniform identity, let alone an identity that would be set off by donning a uniform. He is a figure dispersed across a range of sometimes complementary but often rather discontinuous identities. Many of these have been formulated for him by criticism, editorial decisions, and at the hands of countless actors and directors. Hamlet was a kind of point of identification for the Romantics, a case study for Freudians, a Renaissance man for humanists. In the theatre and on the screen he has been played as a rebel, a conservative, an atheist, a believer, a dissolute student, a philosopher, a hippie, a masochist, a misogynist, though rarely of all these things in a single production. One fixed point about the figure of Hamlet is the difficulty we have in fixing him. Another is that he exhibits absolutely no potential in terms of a life in the armed forces. He cannot fight very well and his mother says he’s fat. Had they been around at the time I suppose he might have made a passable suicide bomber. He’s pretty good at collateral damage – and I would include Ophelia here as well as Polonius.

Oddly, the only moment at which we see Hamlet securely fixed with a single identity is when Fortinbras practically declares him to have been a soldier all along. Fortinbras may be complimenting Hamlet by offering him the very best of treatment according to his own military values, and the audience may miss its significance, but in fixing Hamlet thus he potentially seals the Prince off from his own (or should I say Horatio’s) story. Thus military aesthetics usurp the tragic form.

Fortinbras’s credentials correspond neatly with some of the ideals expressed by the military theorists, although the audience only has a glimpse of these in the fourth act and the evidence comes from the single Norwegian Captain and is at once interpreted for us by Hamlet himself. Coming across Fortinbras’s army *en route* to engage the Poles, Hamlet had asked of the Captain the nature of the land that was to be fought over. The Captain replied that:



Truly to speak, and with no addition,  
We go to gain a little patch of ground  
That hath in it no profit but the name.  
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it,  
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole  
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

(IV. iv. 8-13)

For sixteenth-century military theorists such a campaign may have seemed as justified and as impressive as Hamlet deems it to be. The accent is upon ‘name’ and prestige and one can speculate upon whether the action is called for in order to boost the reputation of Fortinbras and his uncle back in Norway: the Falklands Factor again. Hamlet considers this a turning-point in his quest for revenge and is spurred on:

Witness this army of such mass and charge,  
Led by a delicate and tender prince,  
Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed  
Makes mouths at the invisible event,  
Exposing what is mortal and unsure  
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,  
Even for an eggshell.

(IV. iv. 38-44)

Given the atmosphere in London at the time of *Hamlet*’s first performances this image of a military paradigm may have invited some scepticism. Hamlet’s aesthetics may have been appealing to the military writers of that time: the talk of divinity in arms and of a military spirit, but it is an abstraction that must have seemed a long way from the actual experience of war for some members of Shakespeare’s audience. Yet this is a play and there is room for idealism. What is more telling is the seamless and circular relationship between Hamlet and Fortinbras. Hamlet recognises Fortinbras as a ‘delicate and tender prince’. Given the way that the campaign is such a source of inspiration in terms of his own stalled pursuit of Claudius, Fortinbras instantly becomes, for Hamlet, an embodiment of his own better self that has hitherto been obscured by doubt

and hesitation. Hamlet gazes upon what he should have been and must become. Militarism provides him with a quasi-spiritual framework of consciousness and a programme for action that, albeit on the grand and tragic scale, mirrors the relationship between the military subject and the civilian subject found in the contemporary military theory. Since Hamlet knows little of Fortinbras beyond his leadership of this campaign over ‘an eggshell’, he cannot think of the possible consequences of such foreign wars of prestige and honour.

It is interesting to note that this scene does not appear, not in full at least, in the very earliest of the printed versions of *Hamlet* or in the Folio version produced by Shakespeare’s friends in 1623. On many occasions the scene is omitted from performances, despite the fact that this means that one of Hamlet’s most famous speeches is lost. Although there are some things I am less than happy about in Kenneth Branagh’s interpretations of Shakespeare, one thing that pleases me about his film version of *Hamlet* is that this scene is given tremendous prominence, spurring Hamlet on to his revenge in a rather frightening and crazy way.<sup>17</sup> Also in this film, Fortinbras is presented as bloodthirsty and ambitious, seemingly delighted by the slaughter at Elsinore because it has saved him from taking over Denmark by force. The production notes to the screenplay suggest that this is potentially a *coup d’état*.<sup>18</sup>

Some critics have seen the dilution of these military aspects of the play over the years as in part due to the official moves towards more peaceful international relations after the accession of James VI to the English throne. My own view is quite the opposite. I feel that the play may have become more and more sensitive as debates about warfare increased – and James’ son undertook disastrous campaigns abroad in the name of military and royal prestige: the Falklands factor yet again. Whatever the case, at the end of the play, Fortinbras’ treatment of Hamlet’s body can be seen as a compliment repaid. He knows little of Hamlet ahead of Horatio’s story, but seems to recognise in the prince something of himself, which is not surprising since Hamlet has apparently taken on his mantle. By intuition, Fortinbras’s first command in Denmark is to give Hamlet a soldier’s funeral which, one might assume, would be what he would wish for himself. In a way, Hamlet had *become* Fortinbras in Act IV and moved a step further towards his revenge. In a reciprocal way Fortinbras *becomes* Hamlet, another ‘delicate and tender prince’ for Horatio’s story, and the guns fire off their homage to the dead

soldier-prince. Horatio still has his story to tell, but in the annals of Danish history this will now be a story of a soldierly prince, mortally wounded in the line of duty, but replaced by an equally princely soldier from a neighbouring country. Talk of military discipline, the terror and pity of war, and the loss of our better selves can nicely frame the story. For Danish history this will sound more decorous than a narrative of ‘carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts’, ‘accidental judgements’, and ‘casual slaughters’, all of which it might prefer to keep quiet about.

Another effect of this ‘commissioning’ of Hamlet can be observed when the play is considered, as it often is, alongside the other three principal tragedies. Hamlet may have been, like Fortinbras, a ‘delicate and tender prince’ but once he is imagined as a soldier – let’s call him ‘Field Commander Hamlet’ – he fits in with the set of plays that includes *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. As I said earlier, the protagonists of each of these is a soldier of some kind, and given the circumstances of their mutual downfalls one is reminded of the military theorists’ scorn for what they consider to be the malign influence upon soldiers of women and the domestic.

I should like to conclude by making a couple of points about my research into the relationship between Renaissance theories of war and their representation on the stage. It is my belief that the fierce arguments in favour of a modern, professional, standing army that took place across Europe in the Renaissance dictated the principles of the modern state that developed from this period. One of the great ironies of British history is that it was not the Stuart state, but its opponents, who took to heart the military theory of the time. A component of Oliver Cromwell’s New Model Army, regrouped in the Scottish town of Coldstream, eventually escorted the restored Charles II into London, shortly afterwards becoming the Coldstream Guards: the first regiment of the modern British Army.

That people should settle their disputes by force of arms is a ‘given’ of the modern state, but was called into question by Renaissance theologians and severely questioned in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Much of my work seeks to project these Renaissance arguments onto the modern world in order to defamiliarize some of our assumptions. But I am very aware that the issues I raise are predicated on the real or imagined deaths of many millions of soldiers and civilians. I am grateful, in terms of these modern concerns, for the many

contributions made to my work by serving and ex-military personnel. I am aware especially, in dealing with notions of tragedy and remembrance, that these are tremendously sensitive issues and should not be considered merely vehicles for academic research.

It is apparent that Shakespeare's plays have a very clear resonance in the way that we think about war in the present. Shakespeare is used in order to remember war, such as in the quotation adapted from *Henry V* on the war memorial here in Cheltenham. Sometimes Shakespeare has been used to glamorize war, or as propaganda – and copies of *Henry V* are distributed to American soldiers as general issue. And there are various and many kinds of mystification of Shakespeare. I can just about tolerate business leaders claiming *Henry V* as a paradigm – although I guess they have to leave out the bit where Henry likens himself to Herod (the literal anti-Christ of the Christmas story) when he threatens rape and murder at the siege of Harfleur.<sup>19</sup> And in going around the country holding inspirational seminars for trainee managers, Richard Olivier may have overlooked the fact that his father, Laurence, apparently came to distrust the values represented by the figure of Henry. I am less happy about Kenneth Branagh playing Colonel Tim Collins in a 2008 documentary about the latter. Tim Collins, you may remember, was the British Army officer who gave the quasi-Shakespearean speech as he led his soldiers into Iraq. Later, however, he called the war an act of 'common assault', and more recently one of his lieutenants has alleged that some of Collins's men were actually discouraged by the Shakespearean rhetoric.<sup>20</sup>

Shakespeare was not necessarily anti-war. Yet if we look closely, we can see that the plays reveal the potency of war as a means of distracting people from their real interests. We can see how war cultivates a certain kind of alluring masculinity, and how, in text and in real life, military conflict is neither inevitable nor natural.

After that moment of seriousness, we come, almost inevitably perhaps, to *Doctor Who*. I may therefore summarize my views on *Hamlet* by one reference to the current Royal Shakespeare Company production, directed by Greg Doran and starring David Tennant. We note some negative commentary about the RSC's employing the popular star from *Doctor Who* in the lead role. In fact, David Tennant is a very fine actor with several earlier RSC performances to his name.

Arguably, *Doctor Who* did a great service to Shakespeare by including an episode where the Doctor goes back in time to meet Shakespeare and see inside his theatre – an episode that ignited interest in Shakespeare for many a *Doctor Who* fan.

Astonishingly, though, the end of the current production comes at the point noted in your programmes. The final words are ‘goodnight sweet Prince’ so we don’t even get the ‘flights of angels’. I wondered why this could be, and so did some members of the audience after one performance this summer at one of those ‘meet the cast’ discussions. The actors, including such old hands as Patrick Stewart and John Woodvine, did not appear to know either; they simply said that it did not seem to fit in. Clearly, omitting the military funeral alters the play in the terms I have been speaking about in this lecture. In the moral laboratory that is Renaissance theatre, a significant ingredient has been left out here, and the production, whilst good, veers inevitably towards the romantic individualism so common in severely cut versions of the play.

But thinking about *Hamlet* and *Doctor Who*, it suddenly occurred to me that an actor so well known for playing the Doctor might have an ulterior motive for omitting the last scene of the play. In giving his blessing to Fortinbras as the new leader in Denmark, Hamlet has summoned a force that is driven by dubious honour, committed to total warfare, militaristic order and absolute violence – a force, perhaps, exhibiting fascist tendencies. In other words, had the David Tennant production this summer actually included Fortinbras’s final speech, then it would have been as though Hamlet had handed over power in Denmark to none other than the Daleks.

There I leave *Hamlet* and come back to universities and careers. Over the course of my education and career in teaching I have been given the opportunity to travel widely, to teach bright young (and not so young) people, to think and to write and to work hard in what I still regard as public service. My education took me to both Scotland and Wales, and I remember when I was interviewed for my post in Winchester that the Principal of the time peered at me over his glasses and said ‘you haven’t lived in England for a long time, have you?’ To this day, I do not know whether this was a compliment or an accusation.

I have also worked alongside some absolutely wonderful people, many of whom are here tonight. This brings me to the second high point of my career, which, in the end, must be my appointment to this institution. In the fishing communities of Scotland they talk of lucky boats and lucky skippers – those who catch fish and look after the people who work for them. Being appointed to this institution was like joining a lucky boat. I came here to lead an English team that contained people who were already my friends and others whom I had admired from afar for their skills as academics. The ethos among most people here is of the collective rather than the corporate, and the focus is upon teaching as well as research.

There is a continuing debate in the university about our aims and practices and I am pleased to see that much of what is advocated, especially about student research and student engagement, is exactly what we have been doing in the Department of Humanities for many years. This is not, however, a department that rests on its laurels and there are changes afoot. Earlier this term I went across to our Oxstalls campus in Gloucester to give a lecture to Shelia Mander's students on the new Performing Arts Degree. I walked into the teaching room and saw someone coming towards me who looked like me but strangely older and greyer. In fact, it was me since it was one of those dance studios with a mirrored wall. But the whole afternoon reminded me of when, twenty years ago, I worked across the disciplines of drama and English, the page and the stage, in the University of Wales and at the Welsh College of Music and Drama. Contact between our English students here at Francis Close Hall and this new course at Oxstalls is in its early stages, but we are working hard to see what can be done to cement relations and build some interdisciplinary links to the mutual benefit of the students and the staff. And if this is done I shall have come, as it were, full circle.

As I said earlier, one thing about inaugural lectures is that there is no question period so that leaves me a space to offer some thanks and, of course, to tell you about the third of the high moments in my career. First, I should like to thank the university, the Vice-Chancellor, and the appointments board for promoting me to a Professorship. I know we should all like to express our appreciation of the Head of Humanities, Dr. Shelley Saguaro, and her very able team for this evening's occasion. Many people have been involved in organising the event with its diverse and intricate facets. Those people will be thanked individually in due course, but I would like to make special mention now of the four student helpers whom you

met on your way in: Sally Richards, Dan Cocks, Chris Jones and Gemma Jones. Their willingness to help reminds me that I should pay tribute to the students I have taught over the years, in a variety of institutions. Many keep in touch and have gone on to very successful lives and careers. One person from this group who could not be here this evening is David Amigoni, who was my very first student. He was first because his name was first on a list of six students I was to start teaching, and first because he turned up a quarter of an hour early to find me nervously awaiting this initial experience as a postgraduate tutor. I can tell you that David Amigoni is himself now a professor of English at the University of Keele – a promotion achieved at an astonishingly young age.

I cannot tell you how much pleasure it gives me to see so many people from within and beyond the university here tonight. I should like to thank you all very much indeed for coming and I hope you will enjoy the reception that Shelley and the team have arranged. That leaves me with the third of my career high spots. You will remember that the first was teaching the miners in the South Wales valleys in the 1980s. The second, as I just said, was my appointment to this university in the 1990s. As to the third, well, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is quite simple really: for me the third high spot of my career to date is, without doubt, this one.

## Notes

- 1 George Temple delivered his inaugural lecture as Sedleian Professor of Natural Philosophy before the University of Oxford on 2 March 1954. The lecture was entitled *The Classic & Romantic in Natural Philosophy*. See: [http://www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/Extras/Temple\\_Inaugural\\_I.html](http://www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/Extras/Temple_Inaugural_I.html)
- 2 King Claudius remarks: ‘When sorrows come they come not single spies/ But in battalions.’ (IV. v. 78-9). References throughout are to the 1604-5 Second Quarto of Shakespeare’s play, *The Tragical History of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, in Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor’s two-volume Arden edition of *Hamlet* which also includes the First Quarto and the First Folio (London: the Arden Shakespeare, 2006).
- 3 J. S. Bach, *Air ‘on the G String’* (Suite No 3 in D).
- 4 John McTiernan (dir.), *Last Action Hero* (Columbia Pictures: 1993).
- 5 See Terry Eagleton, *William Shakespeare* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. ix-x. In the full sentence Eagleton archly includes Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Wittgenstein and Derrida as influences on Shakespeare.
- 6 Steven Roth, ‘Hamlet as The Christmas Prince: Certain Speculations on *Hamlet*, the Calendar, Revels and Misrule’, in *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 7.3 (January 2002), 1-89, p. 5. See: <http://www.shu.ac.uk/emls/07-3/2RothHam.htm>
- 7 See Roth, pp. 14-15 for an analysis of this inconsistency in the play’s chronology.
- 8 Kenneth Branagh (dir.), *William Shakespeare’s Hamlet* (Castle Rock Entertainment: 1996).
- 9 See, for example, Weimann’s *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theatre* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), and pp. 131 ff. for a discussion of *Hamlet*.
- 10 See especially, ‘Images of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’ in *Confronting the Crisis: Proceedings of the Essex Sociology of Literature Conference, July 1983* (Colchester: University of Essex Press, 1984), pp. 16-26, republished with an introduction, as ‘Images of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries as a History of the Present’, in F. A. Barker, et al. (eds), *Literature, Politics & Theory*, New Accents Series, (London and New York, Methuen, 1986), pp. 173-189.



- 11 See the account of these productions in Michael Bogdonov and Michael Pennington, *The English Shakespeare Company* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1990).
- 12 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathusa* [1883] (London: Penguin, 1961), p. 74.
- 13 From *Table Talk* [1827]. See Terence Hawkes (ed.), *Coleridge on Shakespeare: a Selection of the Essays, Notes and Lectures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge on the Poems and Plays of Shakespeare* (London: Penguin, 1969), p. 158.
- 14 The slides included images of early Hamlets played by: Richard Burbage; Thomas Betterton; David Garrick; John Philip Kemble; John Howard Payne; Edmund Kean; Charles Kean; Edwin Booth. Later ones included John Gielgud; Laurence Olivier; Richard Burton; Derek Jacobi; Mel Gibson; Kenneth Branagh; Mark Lester; and David Tennant.
- 15 See Simon Barker, *War and Nation in the Theatre of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
- 16 William Neade, *The Double-Armed Man: By the New Invention: Briefly Shewing some Famous Exploits atchieved by our Brittish Bowmen* [London: 1625], reproduced in facsimile with an introduction by Stephen V. Grancsay (York, PA: George Shumway, 1971).
- 17 Branagh includes the scene (from the Second Quarto) in his First Folio screenplay.
- 18 Kenneth Branagh, *Hamlet by William Shakespeare: Screenplay, Introduction and Film Diary* (New York and London: Norton, 1996).
- 19 See *Henry V*, III. iii. 84-124, a scene omitted from productions that interpret the play as uncritically pro-Henry.
- 20 The final episode of the BBC's *Ten Days to War* drama/ documentary recalling the days leading up to the invasion of Iraq concluded with 'Our Business now is North', broadcast on the 19 March 2008. For the background to Collins's speech see Simon Barker, "'Faking It': Provenance, Persuasion and the Renaissance Military Subject' in Ros King and Paul J. C. M. Franssen, *Shakespeare and War* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 109-121. For doubts about the efficacy of the speech see Doug Beattie, *An Ordinary Soldier* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2008), pp. 59-60.



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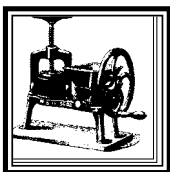
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Simon Barker is Professor of English Literature at the University of Gloucestershire. Before joining the university he was Head of English at the University of Winchester and has also taught in the University of Wales, for the Workers' Educational Association, and at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Recent books include (with Hilary Hinds) *The Routledge Anthology of Renaissance Drama* (2003), *Shakespeare's Problem Plays* (2005), *The Gentle Craft* (2007) and *War and Nation in the Theatre of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (2007).



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