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Performing Displacement: Precarious Encounters, Hospitality Events, and the Theater of Migration

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Performing Displacement:
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A dissertation completed in partial satisfaction of the
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in English

by

Robin Alfriend Kello

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Doctor of Philosophy in English

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Professor Barbara Fuchs, Chair

This dissertation, "Performing Displacement: Precarious Encounters, Hospitality Events, and the Theater of Migration," is a study of early modern drama and its present afterlives in relation to migration and mobility. Drawing from premodern critical race studies, performance, theories of migration, and the field of Shakespeare and social justice, its temporal arc spans from the 16th to the 21st centuries, which reflects the broader challenge I pose to make use of early modern drama for a theater commensurate with the moment—a Shakespeare of the present. The introduction provides context, key terms, and a chapter overview, while the four core chapters examine dramatic texts and performances that focus on the figure of the refugee and the conditions of forced migration, drawing connections between histories of early modern displacement and case studies of refugee representation on stage in the 21st century. While deeply grounded in early modern literature and culture, the project also reflects my engagement with playwrights, directors, actors, and other theater

practitioners in the present, as part of a larger method of fostering collaboration between the worlds of performance, the university, and the community. As a sustained work of activist scholarship, this study considers the state of Shakespearean drama and adaptation as the catastrophes of global climate change and geopolitical instability continue to drive increased migration. Including studies of performances from a Syrian refugee camp and the U.S. / Mexico border, as well as readings of *The Tempest*, *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *As You Like It*, *Merchant of Venice* and other early modern dramas of displacement. "Performing Displacement" aims to contribute to the fields of Shakespeare, performance, and migration by bringing their varied methodologies and knowledge practices together to examine the creative, activist potential of Shakespearean theater and dramatic response in the present. In so doing, the dissertation demonstrates the ways in which a theater of migration that draws from early modern precedents challenges a prevailing global order that implicates those of us with privileged social identities—as audiences, teachers, scholars, or citizens—in larger regimes of exclusion that depend on the violence of borders.

The dissertation of Robin Alfriend Kello is approved.

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VITA

Robin Alfriend Kello holds a BA in Sociology from New York University and an MA in English from the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. He has taught in various capacities over the past fifteen years, including in ESL programs in Spain and the Refugee Education Program at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina. His research focuses primarily on Shakespeare and the theater of migration and Shakespeare and social justice as both dramaturgy and pedagogy. Other interests and projects include translation of the Spanish *comedia*, adaptation and appropriation, and prison education and performance programs.

The news in those days was full of war and migrants and nativists, and it was full of fracturing too, of regions pulling away from nations, and cities pulling away from hinterlands, and it seemed that as everyone was coming together everyone was also moving apart. Without borders nations appeared to be becoming somewhat illusory, and people were questioning what role they had to play . . . Reading the news at that time one was tempted to conclude that the nation was like a person with multiple personalities, some insisting on union and some on disintegration, and that this person with multiple personalities was furthermore a person whose skin appeared to be dissolving as they swam in a soup full of other people whose skins were likewise dissolving. Even Britain was not immune from this phenomenon, in fact some said Britain had already split, like a man whose head had been chopped off and yet still stood, and others said Britain was an island, and islands endure, even if the people who come to them change, and so it had been for millenia, and so it would be for millenia more. – Mohsin Hamid[1]

To invent the citizen is to invent its opposite, the refugee. – Peter Nyers[2]

What country, friends, is this? – Viola[3]

Introduction

Let us begin with the words, words ever insufficient, both too small and too slippery to contain the imperative behind this project of articulating how Shakespearean might be reimagined in both scholarship and performance in service of migrant justice. The title of this study is: "Performing Displacement: Precarious Encounters, Hospitality Events, and the Theater of Migration." *Performing* is an action, a reminder to myself that early modern dramatic literature remains a rich vehicle for the fluid and kinetic experience of theater. If words do not measure up, embodied action within the collective space of the theater may get us closer to what I mean to mean. Sites of theatrical action are crucibles for social thought as well as aesthetic experience, and what drama may occur within the wooden O, thrust stage, street corner, temple, tent or anywhere people may gather is an invitation to the imagination, extending from the world of art to that of ethics and

1. Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West* (New York: Riverhead, 2017), 158.

2. Peter Nyers, *Rethinking Refugees: Beyond States of Exception* (London: Routledge, 2006), 9.

3. William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, ed. Keir Elam (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2008). Throughout this study, unless stated otherwise, all quotations from Shakespeare's plays are from the Arden Shakespeare Third Series.

politics. Theater is place, process, and product, concerned with questions of location as well as sociality. Textual and historical scholarship are, of course, necessary to grasp hold of contexts, track transmissions of knowledge in the premodern world, and allow the excavation of occluded or defunct meanings; any scholarship worth its salt knows text and context. But theater is, above all else, performance, and keeping in mind the centrality of embodied and social action brings a necessary energy, humility, and sense of play to my research and writing on early modern drama and its afterlives. To perform is not to convey knowledge or demonstrate excellence, though it may do that too, but to step into a vehicle for entertaining an idea or circling an interesting path.[4] At the end of the play, we are different than who we were before we stepped into the theater. Our ideas may have become unsettled, jumbled, or inspired. To share performance as one witness among others with a common focal point is to be together, aware, centered in the same moment of time and swath of space. It is to be open to surprise, and to be surprised.

Displacement begins a series of words that shimmer with a sense of lost home: exile, homelessness, statelessness, the refugee, the migrant, or the immigrant. The words bring up legal definitions and moral demands; they risk romanticizing or pitying the people to whom policymakers, citizens, or anyone concerned with migration and mobility might lump into troubling categories despite the best of intentions. Their conceptual imprecision demands constant attention to the shifting relations of power when place and lack of place come to define a state of being in the world. Rosalind in Arden, Marina in Mytilene, or Othello "taken by the insolent foe";[5] James Joyce, Julio

4. See Lowell Gallagher, James Kearney, and Julia Reinhard Lupton, introduction to *Entertaining the Idea: Shakespeare, Philosophy and Performance*, ed. Lowell Gallagher, James Kearney, and Julia Reinhard Lupton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 3–16.

5. William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. E.A.J. Honigmann (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2009). Othello references his enslavement just after this quotation; in the later chapters of this study, I address more directly the relationship between captured and enslaved Africans and the diaspora, European settlers, Indigenous populations, and migrants in the present day.

Cortázar, Gertrude Stein, or Richard Wright in Paris; Edward Said or Joseph Brodsky in New York; Kurdish-Iranian poet and journalist Behrouz Boochani, a refugee incarcerated by the Australian authorities on Manus Island;[6] the characters of Saeed and Nadia in London or San Francisco in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*; and the tens of millions whose names and stories I do not know but who are referenced indirectly throughout this study—how do we even begin to bring these disparate figures into the same conversation? The literary and theological archetype of the exile often distorts the lived experience and historical contingency of the mechanisms behind and conditions of displacement. Said writes,

> Is it not true that the views of exile in literature, and, moreover, in religion obscure what is truly horrendous: that exile is irremediably secular and unbearably historical; that it is produced by human beings for other human beings; and that, like death but without death's ultimate mercy, it has torn millions of people from the nourishment of tradition, family, and geography.[7]

Beyond the risk of idealizing or dehistoricizing conditions of displacement, there is also the danger of focusing on the figure rather than the process, which often emphasizes the suffering of the individual over the violence of interlocking processes of exclusion. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh thus shifts the key term to *refuge*, rather than *refugee*, to centralize "an interest in critically tracing the processes of mobility and migration (in addition to their frequent corollary: immobility)," instead of stressing the suffering of the displaced individual.[8] I address this in greater depth in the second chapter of the study, but for the purposes of moving forward in this introduction, let us think of *displacement* as a social and geographical shift from the familiar to the unfamiliar, produced or

6. See Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend But the Mountains: Writings from Manus Prison*, trans. Omid Tofighian (London: Picador, 2019).

7. Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile," in *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile*, ed. Marc Robinson (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), 138.

8. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, introduction to *Refuge in a Moving World: Tracing refugee and migrant journeys across disciplines*, ed. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (London: UCL Press, 2020), 6.

conditioned by mechanisms of social exclusion which, in the current international order of nation-states and global dominance of racial capitalism, involve legacies of settler colonialism, imperial domination, and racialized slavery. Performing displacement is, then, inherently political.

While my focus is on *displacement* as process and product of political decisions, the nature of theatrical character and the grammar of the English language often require me to refer to the displaced individual. Yet identifying the best term for that single person is hardly straightforward, due in part to the exceptional nature of Shakespearean characters, so often royals, in contrast to the routine violence of modern statelessness and the economic and social vulnerability of displaced communities. The category of the *refugee*, while bringing into relief those mechanisms of exclusion, limits us conceptually, as it knocks against the legal definition from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."[9] Our modern requirement that the displaced individual recite and perform the trauma of "well-founded fear" to prove their worthiness is a monumental ethical failure that may retraumatize the individual while also flattening diverse cultures and identities into a single rigid system for procuring help. Who would wish to recite, before a figure of authority who does not share a common language, the very worst of one's past? The demand to demonstrate justification for fear and have that validated by an external authority thus makes asylum seekers "into criminals and charity cases simultaneously, which in turn, becomes the troubling justification for 'rescuing' them in order to lock them up or lock them in, increasingly

9. "What is a refugee?," UNHCR US, https://www.unhcr.org/us/what-refugee#:~:text=The%201951%20Refugee%20Convention%20is,group%2C%20or%20political%20opinion.%E2%80%9D.

dangerous, disease-ridden, sorely inadequate conditions."[10] These ongoing processes remain mostly invisible to the public except when there is a sudden increase in population movement, such as that produced by the Syrian war or shifting US border regulations, to which the mainstream news all too often responds with metaphors of flood, invasion, surge, influx, chaos, barbarians at the gates. The grammar of crisis occludes the broader pattern of state-produced displacement; the grammar of scarcity denies the unequally distributed abundance within wealthier nations.

The UN's definition of refugee is furthermore limiting in that it is an inherited code, an ossified interpretation of global politics that is over 75 years old, and a poor strategy to address a mischaracterized pattern of global migration. Passed down from the post-WWII global order and initially designed to accommodate people fleeing Nazi-occupied European territories, the law falls far short of addressing 21st-century forced migration. The Critical Refugee Studies Collective write of the limitations and misrepresentations of the UNHCR definition:

> [I]t does not, for instance, take into consideration that for communities such as Palestinians whose homeland has been erased by settler colonialism and militarized occupation . . . and Pacific Islanders who have been displaced by rising seawater, return is fraught or impossible, though it may be desired and hoped for. Rather than resettlement or repatriation, protracted unsettlement or 'warehousing' has become an increasingly common feature of the global refugee experience.[11]

The legal definition of refugee becomes another mechanism of exclusion, often reinforcing structurally racist processes through both the law itself and the uneven enforcement thereof. To be clear: displaced Europeans and communities that read racially as white often receive different treatment at the level of the state as well as municipality, as current Ukrainian migration into Europe

10. Kelly Oliver, *Carceral Humanitarianism: Logics of Refugee Detention* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 6.

11. Espiritu, Yen Le, Lan Duong, Ma Vang, Victor Bascara, Khatharya Um, Lila Sharif, and Nigel Hatton, *Departures: An Introduction to Critical Refugee Studies* (Oakland: University of California Press), 32.

demonstrates.[12] International law meant to apply to a post-WWII global order with a relative openness to European migrants is both unsuited to the 21st century and an effective instrument of Anglo-American and Eurocentric power under global racial capitalism. Forced migrants in the present day differ from those of WWII, not in the legitimacy of their right to asylum under international law, but that they are most often from the Global South, including former European colonies, and majority nonwhite societies.[13] The situation for African migrants in the Mediterranean is another stark example of a systemic racism at the global level that is further compounded by a legal code that is meant to apply to temporary crises being employed to address ongoing structural processes. Rather than third-country resettlement or return, refugees often experience a protracted detention, a restriction on mobility arising from forced mobility, one which denies both their liberty of movement and legal status. Rather than *refugee*, then, the most frequent term for the displaced individual in this study is *migrant*, a lexical choice intended to center agency. When other terms are employed, it is to underscore that all these words, as reflections of the global political order, are inapt, insufficient. Strict categorization reproduces the violent logic of border security.

Precarious is a nod to the work of Judith Butler, whose *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* and "Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation" were early but lasting influences on my thinking about the role of art and scholarship in a time of social horror

12. See Melissa de Witte, "Ukrainian refugees face a more accommodating Europe, says Stanford Scholar," *Stanford News*, March 24, 2022. https://news.stanford.edu/2022/03/24/ukrainian-refugees-face-accommodating-europe-says-stanford-scholar/.

13. Lucy Mayblin and Joe Turner, *Migration Studies and Colonialism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021), 114.

emerging from disavowed legacies of projects of violence.[14] In Chapter Three, I address Butler's thought and Ida Danewid's useful critique of it in terms of the imperative to acknowledge the structural and historical factors that produce precarity rather than universalizing vulnerability—the allotment of precarity is not equal, and it falls, of course, along lines of race, class, nationality, gender, sexuality and other forms of state-backed oppression reinforced by a culture that naturalizes stark inequity and historical unknowing. Shakespearean drama, even while focusing on characters who are elevated in the presumed social hierarchies of their playworlds, is preoccupied by how displacement leads to precarity. Shakespearean characters, banished, shipwrecked, displaced by war, or otherwise excluded from a safe society, dramatize the physical and social dangers that inhere in the forced journey. The *precarious encounter* is what happens to Rosalind in the woods, Marina in Mytilene, or anyone who meets anyone else while traveling. It is the mutual vulnerability of the human interaction without foreknowledge of the relation between Character(s) A and Character(s) B. It is the risk and opportunity of sharing time and space with other humans whom you might call strangers. This too is the experience of theater.

Hospitality picks up on the generative possibility and pitfalls of the term in reference to migration. What does it mean for a nation to be a "host" or a forced migrant a "guest?" Overlaying the geopolitical with the domestic, the metaphor strains and stresses the individual encounter over machinations of the state, skewing patterns that are often involuntary into ostensibly chosen dynamics and eliding issues of temporality and reciprocity. What sort of a relation is it when the guest and host never change social roles? Mireille Rosello writes: "If the guest is always the guest, if

14. See Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004) and "Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012): 134–151.

the host is always the host, something has probably gone very wrong."[15] That wrongness is encoded in the official structures that subtend state sovereignty. Rosello reads the contradictions within, and limitations of, the concept of hospitality through Levinas, Derrida, and other theorists, thinkers I also address directly and indirectly throughout this study. I claim hospitality as both an insufficient and even a dangerous metaphor for considerations of international migration in the present, but also one which may at times be generative, good to think with, especially when considering the social art of theater. Many of the plays referenced throughout this study stage a domestic world that extends its implications to the scale of the polis. Attending a play, or attending to a play, shares qualities with both political and domestic action.

That is the theatrical *event*. If hospitality fails to measure up as a metaphor for the relations between migrant communities and the nation-states to which they have migrated, it remains useful for considering the experience of theater. As Julia Lupton and David Goldstein write, theater "constitutes a hospitality event," as theater and hospitality "share a set of actions, including invitation, approach, entry, welcoming reception, and exit—routines that allow persons and things to appear and resonate in shared spaces that contribute actively to both cognition and action."[16] The event not only produces a laboratory for aesthetic experience and social thought but it allows a moment of pause, a spot of focus, a respite from the noise of 21st-century life through the temporary immersion within another world. It is in those moments when we are unmoored from routine that we are most apt to recognize the contingency and the commonplace violence of the familiar fabric

15. Mireille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 167.

16. David B. Goldstein and Julia Reinhard Lupton, introduction to *Shakespeare and Hospitality: Ethics, Politics, and Exchange*, ed. David B. Goldstein and Julia Reinhard Lupton (London: Routledge, 2016), 4.

of cultural life. The political realities I question in this study are not discrete or exceptional, but the rough yet routine weather of the world at present. Patrick Wolfe writes that settler colonization, as "both a complex social formation and as continuity through time," is "a structure rather than an event."[17] One premise of this study is that forced migration, too, is a systemic process that results from a global organization of sovereign nation-states, structure rather than event. The conferral of "the mode of state-controlled belonging that is citizenship" produces the state-controlled exclusion from belonging that is statelessness.[18] Rather than reproducing the language of exception regarding migration, the collective theatrical event charts unsettlement, carving out a break in the daily. It might defamiliarize, disrupt, or puncture the unquestioned and naturalized processes that allocate ostensibly stable political identities. It might afford, or even demand, alternative forms of belonging and ways of envisioning space and place.

Theater of Migration draws from Devika Ranjan's "migratory dramaturgy," which identifies adaptation, retelling, and radical listening as core theatrical strategies for addressing patterns of migration.[19] While Ranjan's attention to dramaturgical technique, particularly the inversion of guest / host relations, influences my readings of both dramatic text and performance throughout this study, the plays I focus on cannot be grouped together based on form, structure, or dramaturgy; rather, they share space here because of a common interest in representing and performing displacement. Through character, historical context, or thematic engagement, each work concerns mobility and

17. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 390.

18. Bridget Anderson, Nandita Sharma, and Cynthia Wright, "Editorial: Why No Borders?" *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees* 26, no. 2 (2011): 12.

19. Devika Ranjan, "Moving Towards a Migratory Dramaturgy," *HOWLROUND THEATRE COMMONS*, February 11, 2020, https://howlround.com/moving-towards-migratory-dramaturgy. I was fortunate to discover this article and speak informally with Ranjan via Zoom early in this study.

migration, and in so doing, highlights questions of author and audience implication and responsibility as well as the role of theater in addressing historical violence and imagining alternative futures. A complex and often contradictory ethics of representation and response is inevitable when dramatizing migration: a focus on humanitarian pity might preclude political action and distort reality, yet not addressing the severity of the harm might minimize the stakes. How does one engage a story that is not theirs to tell but must be told? Lindsey Stonebridge writes,

> When a writer or journalist says that he is 'giving voice' to a refugee by including her story . . . what he is probably doing is casting her in a narrative that re-makes her life in a form that he, and his [audience], recognize as human because they're familiar with that particular genre of being human.[20]

While Stonebridge's concern is not with dramatic literature as such, the risks of representation are similar: presenting spectators with figures who are *just like them* erroneously reinforces spectator identities—which, in most examples here, consist mostly of those who have not suffered a direct impact from forced migration—as universal. Spectator response likewise might stall at the affective level and fail to lead to social action. The state structures that produce forced migration are unjust; an activist theater of migrant justice might lead to audience acknowledgement and labor in service of justice. The inquiry in the following chapters aims to balance the sense of possibility that inheres in theater with the acknowledgement of how deeply entrenched our systems of exclusion are and the impossibility of measuring the social impact of activist art.

An unstated but perhaps implied modifier preceding "Theater of Migration" might be "Early Modern" or "Shakespearean," and I suspect that future iterations of this project will more directly address the conditions of temporality and heavy Shakespeare presence in the readings to come. I have omitted any temporal frame in the current version to stress that this study is not contained

20. Lindsey Stonebridge, *Writing and Righting: Literature in the Age of Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 13.

within early modern literature or culture, or bracketed by years that indicate a clean start and a stop. It is rather an examination of and argument for a Shakespeare of the present, one which seeks to acknowledge and explore the ongoing legacies of an inheritance of the Shakespearean canon and its cultural capital.[21] This requires a methodological toggling between the late 16th or early 17th century and the 21st century, as well as critical stops in the eras between them to sketch the progress of a dramatic text through time.[22] While Shakespearean drama is, on occasion, center stage, it often recedes into the wings to focus on adaptation or theatrical response. This methodology refuses the hierarchy of unquestioned Shakespearean excellence, placing it rather horizontally in conversation with modern theatrical productions. That ethic of cultural horizontality emerges from a political commitment to scholarship and creative engagement that recognizes the contingency of all social hierarchies and seeks to destabilize them in service of better futures.

This project is thus aligned with the vital work of scholars and artists in the field of Shakespeare and social justice. While situating my own work within this broader field, I intend to remain conscious of the material reality of systemic injustice and refuse to claim that the cultural work of scholarship and art is activist by default. Even those projects which are activist in nature still must remain malleable and adapt to shifting social needs and associative possibilities. Yet the formal qualities of dramatic literature matter to me not in terms of an aesthetic standard or expression of universal human feeling but as a means of engaging with social inequity, the histories from which it arises, and the structures through which it is continually reproduced. As an activist, I will continue to address injustices related to mobility on various fronts, including both border and carceral regimes;

21. The exception is the consideration of Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* in the first chapter.

22. Historical pauses between Shakespeare's time and our own are most prominent in the final chapter, in which I consider Shakespearean drama in relation to imperial and colonial projects in the Caribbean as well as North and Central America.

as a scholar, I am concerned with the possibilities of Shakespeare with respect to campaigns of justice. My guiding questions for this research are then consistent with those David Ruiter outlines in *The Arden Research Handbook of Shakespeare and Social Justice*, though I put greater emphasis on the second inquiry, which stresses intervention rather than analysis alone:

> What can Shakespeare (considered in its multiplicity: in pedagogy, performance, scholarship, etc.) say or do that could truly impact social justice in its contextual specificity, either in his time, ours, the time in between or the time to come? . . . How could the plays and poetry be used – by teachers, actors, directors, scholars, etc. – to support social justice?[23]

While Ruiter and the other scholars and artists who are working in this field explicitly center social justice, its premise is not a sui generis modern invention but an outgrowth of decades of vital art and scholarship. The trajectories in the field that most influence my readings come from global and postcolonial approaches to Shakespeare, premodern critical race studies, performance, theories of adaptation and appropriation, and social thought on migration. Moreover, my work is as influenced by discussions with theater practitioners and scholars as it is by formal study, and I am fortunate to benefit from conversations with interlocutors in academia and professional theater. Engaging with other scholars keeps the work collaborative and communal and affords interdisciplinary methods of writing and teaching; speaking with artists provides insight into techniques and interpretations that might be submerged by textually driven academic methods.

Then there is history, the past that is not past but continues to structure the world in which we live. As a project of Shakespeare in the present, this study addresses the 21st century, the early modern period, and the arc of modernity between then and now. The study of early modern literature implicitly demands the acknowledgement of history, which is also the case for projects of social justice. Rather than limiting the critical intent to interpretation and theorization of

23. David Ruiter, "Introduction: This is real life: Shakespeare and social justice as a field of play," in *The Arden Research Handbook of Shakespeare and Social Justice*, ed. David Ruiter (London: Arden Bloomsbury, 2021), 2.

Shakespeare's many scenes of mobility and migration, I focus on the ways in which Shakespearean drama is entwined in sustained historical projects of violence, specifically those of settler colonialism, imperial domination, and racialized enslavement. A theater—and a study of theater—that addresses borders and migration in relation to those legacies places social justice at the center of its concerns, highlighting how control over mobility is a crucial mechanism of state-backed social inequity. The mutually reinforcing operations of racial categorization and economic disparity that define global racial capitalism in the present depend upon reified systems that condition when, how, and where the human body is allowed to move, work, and live.

Domination dons new costumes and clever masks, but the essential operations remain the same. Older forms of direct control over territory and the bodies of working subjects have given way in the modern world to "resource extraction and continued 'sweated' labour in the global South" and underpaid migrant workforces in the world's wealthier regions.[24] In this global economic context, structures of humanitarian aid for forced migrants and sovereign operations of exclusion function in concert, resulting in a constant push and pull in which modern nation-states produce the very conditions of statelessness that they then ostensibly try to resolve through international organizations. Kelly Oliver notes the grim irony in which "war and aid are two sides of state sovereignty," as states look to international aid organizations to "take care of forced migration and refugees, while their militaries police borders to capture, detain, and control the movement of those same people."[25] This framing allows us to see how analogous processes of racial capitalism function both within and between states, as technologies of surveillance, detention, and exclusion restrict and

24. Ida Danewid, "'These Walls Must Fall': The Black Mediterranean and the Politics of Abolition," in Ida Danewid et al., *The Black Mediterranean: Bodies, Borders, and Citizenship* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 147.

25. Oliver, 7.

control the movement of vulnerable populations while technologies of commerce facilitate the production and transfer of wealth.

Shakespeare's work moves through this troubled territory due to the claims of universality made on its behalf and its undeniably persistent cultural authority. Whose name is as loud in the Anglophone world of letters? That presence is, of course, not restricted to scholars and artists but suffuses the public sphere, and the political stakes of culture are especially high in the aftermath of British imperialism, settler colonialism, and the current global power of the United States. Shakespeare, "as a sign of imperial culture, is instrumental in glossing over cultural difference," while the presence of his work "in colonial contexts paradoxically promotes a recognition that there are differences to be glossed over."[26] As the most famous and esteemed writer in the English language, Shakespeare's literal placement within early modern London is often overlooked and replaced with a voice that transcends time and location, bolstering an ahistorical and depoliticized humanism. When this humanistic figuration of Shakespeare is imbued with such authority, it becomes a powerful rhetorical tool. In the discourse of migration, this instrumentalization of Shakespearean authority was recently directed toward humanitarian campaigns through the popularization of "The Stranger's Case" monologue from the co-authored drama *Sir Thomas More*. Taken out of context and marketed by the International Rescue Committee as well as other humanitarian and refugee aid organizations and media outlets, the monologue became a well-intentioned call to acknowledge forced migration.[27] While it is undeniable that the campaign was successful to some extent on the material level, raising funds for the cause, which likely alleviated some pain, on the symbolic level, it is troubling in its

26. Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier, introduction to *Adaptations of Shakespeare: A critical anthology of plays form the seventeenth century to the present*, ed. Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier (London: Routledge, 2000), 11.

27. See "What is the Strangers' Case?" International Rescue Committee, June 19, 2018, https://www.rescue.org/uk/article/what-strangers-case.

juxtaposition of Shakespearean authority and the trope of refugee as victim. Encouraging an affective response through "two figures that are equally phantasmagoric," "the fetishized refugee and the great humanist Shakespeare," might "inadvertently reinforce the divide between citizens and strangers."[28] A phantasmagoric Shakespeare universalizes a white, English, 16th-century perspective; a phantasmagoric refugee is defined by trauma and suffering rather than agency; the divide between citizens and strangers reinforces humanitarian aid rather than structural change that addresses the causes of forced migration. When Shakespeare is employed as a putative cultural authority able to magically transcend time, the words carry weight.

If the humanist Shakespeare speaks to forms of modern liberalism that address issues of justice piecemeal while eschewing larger structural transformation, his authority can also be directed toward explicitly exploitative campaigns to legitimize and normalize hierarchical and racist violence. The stage history of *Othello* illustrates the marshalling of Shakespeare to normalize racial hierarchy and perpetuate white supremacy. In the 18th century, a Cherokee princess traveled to the Virginia colony as part of a trade embassy. According to the *Virginia Gazette*, she attempted to interrupt the play when Othello was being detained by the Venetian night guard on the orders of Brabantio. Desdemona's father cannot conceive that she would love Othello, that "a maid so tender, fair, and happy," who had rejected the white suitors of Venice, would choose the "sooty bosom" of the play's protagonist (1.2.66–70). Miles Grier observes that, while there are many reasons the princess might have objected to the depiction of violence toward the actor in blackface, for the colonists, the apparent inability to understand theatrical metaphor proved the "base intellects" of the Indigenous

28. Sabine Schülting, "'This is the Stranger's Case': Shakespeare, *Sir Thomas More*, and Refugees," in *The Shakespearean International Yearbook*, ed. Tom Bishop, Ton Hoenselaars, Alexa Alice Joubin, and Stephen O'Neill (London: Routledge, 2021), 112.

Cherokee, indicating a "racial destiny of political and economic abasement."[29] In the following century, during the antebellum, John Quincy Adams would read the play as proof of the intrinsic danger of interracial marriage.[30] In the 20th century, the figure of Othello, generally portrayed by a white actor in blackface, was often a figure of mockery who replicated pernicious racial ideas cloaked in the authoritative guise of, as Keith Hamilton Cobb writes, "Shakespeare said so."[31] Scholars and performers in the field of Shakespeare are, in the 21st century, acknowledging and addressing these legacies with a greater degree of sincerity and willingness to face the violence of history than they often have. This study seeks to extend that recognition of the past in the present.

It would be reasonable to respond to the above paragraph with the question of why truck with Shakespeare at all. My reflex response to that sort of query, one I confess to receiving often, is that the authority itself is enough, that I did not choose for Shakespeare to have its cultural presence, nor do I foresee it disappearing. To nuance that take a bit, I submit that Shakespearean theater continues to offer possibilities for activist performance in the present day despite its past uses for projects of domination; indeed, that is the driving idea behind this project of scholarship. There is much there to explore. As theater, it might unsettle the viewer's relationship to the world and others in it, a quality it shares with all art. As specifically Shakespearean theater, it is a given corpus preoccupied by concerns of mobility and displacement. Jane Kingsley-Smith writes in the foundational study *Shakespeare and Exile* of Shakespearean displacement as a form of loss, "from loss

29. Miles P. Grier, "Staging the Cherokee *Othello*: An Imperial Economy of Indian Watching," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (2016): 91.

30. See James Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America: What His Plays Tell Us About Our Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Press, 2020), 15.

31. Keith Hamilton Cobb, *American Moor* (London: Methuen Drama, 2020), 22.

of language to loss of nation, from loss of the beloved to loss of self."[32] That loss often severs the individual from broader forms of association and collective identity, and rather than dramatizing solely the psychic effects of displacement and isolation, Shakespeare's works are always arching toward the restoration of communal belonging, and often charting the failure to arrive there.

As Sarah Beckwith writes, "Shakespeare's theater is a search for community, a community neither given nor possessed but in constant formation and deformation."[33] While that search can be read—and has been read—as an archetypal or metaphysical pattern that cuts through time and space to speak to human truth, the Shakespearean source texts and responses to them that I explore here acknowledge and demand an attention to geographical and temporal specificity, even if often in flux. The search for community in Shakespeare's theater is here set against the logic of sovereign statehood that mars and tears asunder forms of community that may thrive at subnational or supranational levels or may seek to dissolve the nation-state itself. Shakespeare himself, his collaborators, and his fellow dramatists in Elizabethan England were especially attentive to the politics of mobility and migration, as they lived in a rapidly expanding urban site that was bringing in Protestant refugees from across the European continent. Except for *Cymbeline* (addressed in Chapter Three), the plays in this study are not directly engaged with the urban context of rapidly growing London and the shifting social and economic life of the capital; rather the concerns of this inquiry are more broadly focused on mobility as well as the questions of difference that accompany it. Yet

32. Jane Kingsley-Smith, *Shakespeare's Drama of Exile* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 3. For more recent work on Shakespeare and migration, see *Shakespeare and Immigration*, ed. Ruben Espinosa and David Ruiter (London: Routledge, 2014), *The Shakespearean International Handbook 19: Special Section, Shakespeare and Refugees*, ed. Tom Bishop, Ton Hoenselaars, Alexa Alex Joubin, and Stephen O'Neill (London: Routledge, 2021), and the forthcoming collection *Shakespeare and Exile*, ed. Stephanie Chamberlain, Vanessa Corredera, and James Sutton.

33. Sarah Beckwith, *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 5.

Shakespeare's theater of migration was surely influenced by the cosmopolitan and polyglot surroundings of the city that he migrated to from Stratford, and to other English playwrights who increasingly turned both to the exoticized strangers including Jewish, Islamic, and others of ostensibly non-European origin, as well as to migrants from the continent, particularly the Dutch, French, and Flemish. While I consider the 1590s more explicitly as a flashpoint of xenophobia in Chapter One, a brief consideration of four Elizabethan plays that are haunted by migration provides context for Shakespeare's theater and the city which conditioned it. Their characters and dramatic moves find fleeing and spectral reappearances throughout the dramas in the four chapters to come.

Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* (1581) tiptoes clumsily on the edges of morality play, city comedy, and Anglo-Mediterranean commercial drama, featuring the personified Usury and Hospitality, the duplicitous Italian Mercadorus, and the Jewish usurer, Gerontus.[34] The ragbag plot is driven by the interlocking forces of economic exchange and cultural prejudice. By personifying Hospitality and then having him slain—haled into a corner and murdered by Usury no less—Wilson's play channels a nativist force that conflates religious otherness with national difference and places the maintenance of English identity as paramount. The play ultimately reduces hospitality to solely its private dimension, while making the city of London coterminous with England itself: "you shall have Hospitality in London nor England no more" (8.36).[35] In the dramatic imagination of *Three Ladies*, shared confessional identity is no bulwark against generalized xenophobia, as the play blames the French and Flemish migrants for causing the rents to skyrocket and greedily outdoing

34. The focus on the intersection of commercial opportunity and the ostensible threat from figures of religious or racial difference precedes the analogous energies that drive Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, both of which are considered in Chapter One.

35. Robert Wilson, *The Three Ladies of London*, in *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, ed. Lloyd Edward Kermode (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 79–163.

London's merchants in the urban marketplace. The transferal of economic blame and view of migration as contamination in Wilson's play extends throughout early modern drama and structures xenophobic attitudes to the present day.

The multi-authored *Sir Thomas More* (c. 1600) is the most direct treatment of the stranger community on the late-Elizabethan stage, though it is set much earlier in the 16th century. Probably begun in the early 1590s, a time of increased economic friction between strangers and the English in London, it dramatizes the 1517 Evil May Day riots. Thomas More's characterization in the monologue referenced above of the "wretched strangers / Their babies at their backs, with their poor luggage" (6.85–86) articulates an affect of pity that defines the strangers by their suffering and reinforces the divisions between More's London audience, both within the play and without, and the unnamed strangers he references.[36] Despite the hullabaloo over "The Stranger's Case" in humanitarian circles in 2018 and its persuasive and poetic language, rich with imagery and rhetorical flair, the play in which it appears is generally less interested in representing the non-English with nuance or concern than in reinforcing English identity through scenes of playfulness and commensality. More, who joins in a drama performed for his benefit when one of the actors is not present and offers the "merry jest" of having a thief steal from a magistrate, is less a stern statesman than an emblem of English vitality, a figure of play and appetite (2.75). Noting that "of all the people that the earth affords / The Londoners fare richest at their boards" (9.21–22), he also echoes an earlier allegation in the play that the French and Dutch take food from locals in the markets and contaminate the city with unfamiliar root vegetables. While the rejection of anti-Catholic prejudice in

36. Anthony Munday, Henry Chettle, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Heywood, and William Shakespeare, *Sir Thomas More*, ed. John Jowett (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2011).

the play serves as corrective to much religious propaganda at the time, the play ultimately reinforces a portrait of stark cultural difference. Nation triumphs over religious identity.

Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599) has been considered an inclusive portrait of community "founded on local guild rather than national identity."[37] While Dekker certainly refuses the overt xenophobia of *Three Ladies* or any threat of anti-immigrant violence in his festive vision of English solidarity, and *Shoemaker* is also unique in giving a prominent role to a "Dutch" character, who, though the play is set in the reign of Henry IV, would recall the refugee artisans of the city, it builds toward a resoundingly nationalist conclusion. The character of "Hans" is just a simple disguise for the English Sir Roland Lacy, who dodges military service to woo his (Tudor) Rose. Employed by the jocular, Falstaffian Simon Eyre, Lacy marries Rose and procures a fortune for his boss, relying on his linguistic facility to transact business with a Dutch merchant. Once the Dutchman is properly drunk, Lacy-as-Hans brokers a deal for the foodstuffs on the ship. The dramatic arc of these hijinks bends toward a celebration that conflates Shrove Tuesday and Accession Day, fusing religious and political fervor in a mood of patriotic exuberance. The pancake bell rings; the "mad shoemaker of Tower Street" (1.130) becomes Lord Mayor of London; the king pardons Lacy his dereliction of duty and blesses the marriage; and the play concludes with the monarch stating: "When all our sports and banquetings are done / Wars must right wrongs that Frenchmen have begun" (21.195–96).[38] The love plot and ceremonial feast is not happy ending enough without the sovereign's clamor for war. Despite occasional nods toward class-based or confessional solidarity, this play that ends by recalling Anglo-Gallic enmity at a time when French

37. Scott Oldenburg, *Alien Albion: Literature and Immigration in Early Modern England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 109.

38. Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, ed. R.L. Smallwood and Stanley Wells (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

Protestants composed the second largest refugee group in London gives place to the foreign solely to contain it within a vision of English unity.

William Haughton's *Englishmen for My Money* (1598) continues in this vein of ebullient nationalism, commerce, and assimilation fantasy, and is also a crucial precedent for this study because it references the *converso* presence in London, which also troubles *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice*, as a product of forced migration from Iberia. In *Englishmen*, the old crypto-Jew Pisaro, marked by his residence at Crutched Friars, large nose, and greed, wishes to marry his three daughters to a Dutchman, a Frenchman, and an Italian. His daughters, however, are united in their Portia-like refusal of stranger suitors. Despite their Portuguese lineage, the daughters continually affirm their English identity in linguistic terms, as their father's bloodline becomes less salient to their sense of self than their "mother tongue."[39] Much of the comedy, such as it is, emerges from the failure of the suitors to reply to lines such as, "If needs you marry with an English lass, / Woo her in English, or she'll call you an ass" (2.3.159–160).[40] As in *Shoemaker*, the foreign presence is invoked to be subsumed within a vital Englishness, while also providing economic benefit to England, as the marriages eliminate the debts the young men owe Pisaro. Jean Howard observes that in the play, "English superiority is asserted by emphasizing the linguistic incompetence, gullibility and ignorance" of the strangers, while Pisaro's "Jewish difference . . . [is] seemingly effaced by his daughters' marriage choices."[41] *Englishmen* allows the father's difference to dissolve with his eventual

39. Emma Smith, "'So much English by the Mother': Gender, Foreigners, and the Mother Tongue in William Haughton's *Englishmen for My* Money," *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 13 (2001): 175.

40. William Haughton, *Englishmen for My Money*, in *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, ed. Lloyd Edward Kermode (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 164–274.

41. Jean Howard, *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598*–1642 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 48.

death, suggesting a future where the daughters' Jewishness will be forgotten as that confessional identity, like More's Catholicism, is subsumed within Englishness. The mode is comic, and the move is to assimilate, but the xenophobia in *Englishmen* remains anything but subtle.

Each of these plays present the migrant as threat, joke, instrument for reinforcing Englishness, or means of economic advancement, articulating a cultural tension that finds resolution through the representation of a vital and triumphant national identity. Hostility toward the stranger community is rampant, while hospitality toward fellow English countrymen is invoked but rarely embraced. The conditions that push migration are ignored, even in More's celebrated plea for empathy. When characters are called strangers in these plays, little pause is made to ask *stranger to whom?* and little place is given to an imagined London that could become a secure city of refuge. While the nativist drive of these works is troubling, they illustrate the concern in early modern London with migration and the attendant construction or acknowledgement of cultural difference. In so doing, they form a constellation of contextual and intertextual reference points for the Shakespearean drama of this study. That drama too is not immune from xenophobic or nativist attitudes, yet its complex relation to migration and mobility and its present afterlives gives it greater heft and relevance than the precedents mentioned in the last few paragraphs for questions of community and political possibility.

The first chapter, "Unhousing the Jew in Marlowe and Shakespeare," examines the preoccupation with the built environment, race-making, and hospitality in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice*. These works extend the inheritance of late-medieval antisemitism and Vice plays into the world of Mediterranean war and commerce, always triangulating, with a degree of anxiety, between Christian, Jewish, and Islamic points of reference. By way of their Mediterranean settings, they mark intersections between the construction of race—often through the racialization of religion—and the conceptualization of place in early modern England. A brief analysis of the

context of migration into London in the 1590s and the "Dutch Church Libel" serves as a preface, emphasizing the relation between theatrical artifice and street politics as well as the looming threat of violence that conditions discourses of displacement. These works dramatize a political imagination in which forms of association and collective identity are dependent upon operations of exclusion. I argue that beyond illustrating and interrogating systems of the construction of race and state-supported mechanisms of prejudice, these plays challenge conceptions of citizenship that persist to the present day. The alien / citizen divide in the Venetian court continues to structure the relationship between the sovereign and securitized nation-state and those populations it renders stateless. This chapter provides the historical and theoretical foundation on which the rest of the study builds.

The next chapter examines Shakespearean adaptations and appropriations that call attention to forced migration in the present. I examine a series of case studies to theorize "Migrant Shakespeares" as an underexplored avenue of research and performance, one which considers Shakespearean source text, modern adaptation and appropriation in performance, and the historical, generic, and political relations between them. The chapter explores a number of 21st-century takes on Shakespeare that seek to call attention to issues of migration and mobility: Jessica Bauman's 2017 *Arden / Everywhere*, which refashioned the forest of Arden in *As You Like It* as a refugee camp; Adrian Jackson's 2003 *Pericles*, which interspersed migrant testimonials and Brechtian audience alienation techniques with Shakespeare's play; Saheem Ali's 2017 *Twelfth Night*, which transported the ship-thrown Viola and Sebastian to the vibrant world of Miami's Cuban diaspora; and Nawar Bulbul's 2014 *Shakespeare in Zaatari* and 2015 *Romeo and Juliet Separated by War*, in which children displaced by the Syrian war produced heavily adapted versions of canonical Shakespearean drama, including *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. My readings in this chapter are also informed by conversations with Bauman and Ali, reflecting a methodology that allows artists to inform, though

not determine, my critical interpretations. These performances illustrate how Shakespeare's outsize public presence and cultural capital might act as a foundation for an activist theater in service of migrant justice. Those works, as with the other performances considered in Chapter Two, address the risk of reinforcing an unquestioned bardolatry that celebrates a single white and Anglophone author as a transcendental genius, while also charting opportunities for a socially engaged Shakespeare of the present.

Chapter Three returns to the late plays that are often called Romances but which Sarah Beckwith more productively, I think, refers to as "post-tragic" works that "stage the recovery from tragedy in terms of the renewed possibility of mutual acknowledgement."[42] I consider *Cymbeline* in terms of its imperial and nationalist commitments, arguing that under the cloak of Christian forgiveness and romance fantasy, the play endorses an expansionist politics that stages territorial control over the British Isles as model and precedent for a larger empire as the natural inheritance from Rome. The bizarrely busy drama endorses domestic peace and forgiveness while celebrating a trajectory of *translatio imperii* at the level of geopolitics. My reading of the 2016 anti-Brexit Royal Shakespeare Company production directed by Melly Still provides a framework for analyzing the drama in terms of contemporary British politics. With *Pericles*, I draw out the thematic pattern of active hope and agency in response to the physical and social precarity of displacement. Kent Gash's 2021 reading of *Pericles* for Red Bull Theater in New York, which stages the play as a dramatic narrative of the Black Atlantic diaspora, I argue, addresses mobility and migration in relation to both settler colonialism and enslavement as overlapping projects of domination that are dependent on mechanisms of dispossession, displacement, and control over mobile bodies.

42. Beckwith, 6.

The distinctions between what Chickasaw scholar Jodi Byrd, drawing from the poet Kamau Braithwaite, has called settlers, *arrivants*, and Natives provides the core framing for the final chapter of the study, a framing to which I add the category of migrant, by establishing the United States as a nation defined by control over movement and labor.[43] Viewing racialized enslavement, colonialism, Indigenous dispossession, and migration in concert in Chapter Four brings into relief how structures of inequity have conditioned mobility in the US from the early modern period to the present day. The analysis in this chapter first alights on the US / Mexico *frontera* and the foundational scholarship and adaptive potential in the field of Borderlands Shakespeares and Latinx Shakespeares more broadly. Extending my analysis of Shakespearean drama and appropriation that takes place within, and responds to, lands marked by Indigenous dispossession due to overlapping Spanish and Anglo-American colonial projects, I consider two bilingual adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, James Lujan's *Kino and Teresa* and Seres Jaime Magaña's *The Tragic Corrido of Romeo and Lupe*. These plays turn the inheritance of Shakespeare as a vehicle of imposed Anglophone dominance into a representation of bilingualism and Latinx culture in the 21st century. In so doing, they bring into relief the colonial histories that have violently shaped this continent. I conclude the chapter and the study with the cultural afterlives of *The Tempest* as a work which continues to speak to the ongoing colonial ruptures in the present. Placing Madeline's Sayet's *Where We Belong* next to the work of the poets Raquel Salas Rivera and Kamau Braithwaite extends a "Calibanic genealogy" that has marked England, Ireland, Mediterranean Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, as well as South, Central, and North America.[44] The allegorical reading of *The Tempest* persists because colonialism persists. Robin D.G. Kelley writes:

43. Jodi Byrd A., *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xix.

44. Chantal Zabus, *Tempests After Shakespeare* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 9.

"[W]e are hardly in a 'postcolonial' moment. The official apparatus might have been removed, but the political, economic, and cultural links established by colonial domination still remain with some alterations."[45] As domination and resistance to it define hierarchical relations in the globalized world, Prospero and Caliban remain useful symbols of geopolitical relations. As territorial acquisition and extractive control over land remain as central components of nationalist and expansionist projects, the only Shakespeare we can access is a Shakespeare of the colonial present.

Chapter Four includes, as a coda, a personal reflection on the poetry of Safiya Sinclair, tracking Calibanic routes from the Caribbean to Virginia, where I also locate my own genealogy. This project does not exist without my vexed relationship to the American south or my vexed relationship to the figure of Shakespeare. Nor can it exist without my years in Spain, so disrupting my American tongue and blinkered American vision. Nor can it exist without the hours spent in cold church basements and chalk-clouded classrooms working for community-based English-language programs for recently resettled refugees and Central American migrants. I will add to that list the "zero tolerance" program of border detention and family separation, my work in prison education programs in California, the deepening recognition that material deprivation and psychological damage feed on historical disavowal, and a thousand other kidney-punches over the years that have convinced me that reimagining mobility and migration is central to projects of social justice and community formation, and that the world of culture influences that of policy. Borders harm. Affective response and humanitarian aid do not suffice. Over the course of researching and writing this study, I have become more convinced that an ethic of hospitality without a recognition of the historical forces behind patterns of migration and the inherent violence of the sovereign nation-state formation as it exists in the 21st century is ultimately hollow.

45. Robin D.G. Kelley, "A Poetics of Anticolonialism," in Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 27.

In my reading of *The Tempest* in Chapter Four, I discuss Caro Pirri's framing of the play as a document of "colonial unsettlement," of Anglo-imperial failure and colony collapse.[46] By returning to a moment in which English imperial dominance was unlikely, Pirri highlights the contingency of all imperial and settler colonial projects. This historical point suggests the broader theoretical possibilities of unsettlement as both a pattern and strategy, one which recognizes hierarchies as inherently unsettled, and which may seek to further unsettle them.[47] If Shakespeare's work has been used as an instrument of colonialism and the field of Shakespeare studies has long been entrenched in complicity with conservative and bardolatrous readings, that does not preclude its use for present and future projects of justice. Mobility need not be structured through violence, and early modern works invested in colonial hierarchies can be marshalled toward anticolonial ends.

I here bring together the history of Shakespeare studies with broader histories and theories of mobility and migration, conversations with theater practitioners, and a series of vibrant developments in performance with the intention of illuminating the possibilities of Shakespeare in the present and the imperative to unsettle hierarchies and structures of injustice. Indeed, the richness of Shakespearean texts, their cultural presence, and their implicit demand to consider history, makes Shakespeare's work especially useful for projects of social outreach, community engagement, and unsettling normative ideas that naturalize violent systems of exclusion. Unsettlement serves the work of imagining the world differently than it is, which is the engine of my scholarship, the labor of politics, and the province of art. There is much work to do.

46. Caro Pirri, "Unsettling *The Tempest*," *Renaissance Drama* 49, no. 1 (2021): 82.

47. See also Anna Brickhouse, *The Unsettlement of America: Translation, Interpretation, and the Story of Don Luis de Velasco, 1560–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Chapter One

*

Unhousing the Jew in Marlowe and Shakespeare

Venice calls Shylock a lot of names. Spurned as a "stranger cur" and spat on in the street by the Christian elite (1.3.114), he is seen as a "misbeliever, cut-throat dog" (1.3.107), a "stony adversary" (4.1.3), an "alien" (4.1.345), and most often, whether directly, indirectly, or to mark his lines in the quarto text, simply named a "Jew."[48] Marlowe's Barabas, who inherits the late-medieval dramatic legacy of the Vice figure and presages his more famous Shakespearean descendant, also receives—and returns—his share of slurs, while remaining both undefined and undeterred. Whether framed as Machiavellian villains or more sinned against than sinning, they and their coreligionists are always already guilty in their respective playworlds, cursed in the European-Christian imagination to be landless wanderers, forever paying off the infinite debt incurred by deicide. The insults they receive refer both to the ineluctable difference of the hard-hearted Christ-killer and to Jewish dispersal as fitting punishment for their inherited offense.

As Barabas states in an early soliloquy, "They say we are a scattered nation: / I cannot tell" (1.1.120–121).[49] Presenting the Jew as the intrinsically homeless and perpetually scattered "original stranger" within Christianity, Elizabethan drama engages not only with the theological awkwardness of supersession—the "chronic need both to claim and to repudiate the Jew"—but also questions of

48. All quotations of the play are from William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. John Drakakis (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2010).

49. All quotations of the play are from Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, ed. James R. Siemon (London: Methuen Drama, 2009).

early modern migration and social exclusion.[50] Often playing the role of the prototypical racial and religious other, heartless usurer, wily supervillain, or cozened dupe for the Christian audience, the Elizabethan stage Jew is also an emblem of displacement, bringing into relief patterns of human mobility and the grammar of social exclusion in early modern England.

The edicts of expulsion of the late Middle Ages, beginning with England in 1290, brought the first large-scale Jewish population movement in Europe since early antiquity, and over the course of the following centuries, Jewish expulsion became more common, while minority Christian and Muslim communities were also increasingly subject to forced migration.[51] By the late 16th century, the religious refugee had become a "mass phenomenon" on the European continent,[52] and as displacement became more frequent across early modern Europe, the Jew, as the archetypal diasporic figure, offered English playwrights a vehicle for considering mobility as well as religious and racial difference in their majority Christian society. Writers such as Shakespeare and Marlowe turned to Mediterranean locales and the early modern Jewish diaspora in a critical dramatic mode of interrogating migration, diaspora, and questions of the commonwealth.

Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* are preoccupied not just with confessional differences, theological legacies, and the received antisemitic prejudices of Christian Europe, but also by mobility and its attendant questions of home and homelessness, security and vulnerability, in spatial as well as social terms. These plays open themselves up to the Mediterranean sea and its routes for trade, naval battles, piracy, punitive galley service, and

50. Janet Adelman, *Blood Relations: Christian and Jew in* The Merchant of Venice (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 4.

51. Robert Chazan, *Refugees or Migrants: Pre-Modern Jewish Population Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 107.

52. Nicholas Terpstra, *Religious Refugees in the Early Modern World: An Alternative History of the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 4.

migration. The relation between identity and place for the stage Jew within the majority Christian society becomes the engine of drama, and the consideration of diasporic experience intersects with forms of hospitality as well as the early modern imagining of the English commonwealth. These plays dramatize Jewish mobility and exile on the scale of both the domestic as well as the civic sphere, exploiting individual characters and plots to speak to the constitution of a political body.

Speaking from the stage to an audience familiar with both England's and Spain's Jewish expulsions and perhaps Queen Elizabeth's 1596 order to expel the Black population from the Kingdom, Barabas and Shylock embody and enact, represent and reproduce, patterns of displacement, while also reacting against the threat of expulsion to which they are vulnerable from their Christian host societies. As Shakespeare scholars have addressed in the years since James Shapiro's landmark *Shakespeare and the Jews*, the stage Jew in the early modern Mediterranean calls to mind London's resident *converso* community, French and Dutch Protestant refugees, and the religious diversity encountered by English commercial adventurers and early imperialist seafarers abroad.[53] In this context of increasing cultural exchange, Jewish characters, as figures of both mobility and religious and racial otherness, often stand in for the financial opportunities of transnational Mediterranean trade as well as the perceived risks of infecting a social body erroneously imagined as—or aspiring to be—fully Anglo-Protestant.

Despite Richard Hooker's claim that, "there is not any man of the church of England, but that same man is also a member of the commonwealth; nor any man a member of the commonwealth, which is not also of the church of England," likely more concerned with Catholics

53. James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). See also Barbara Fuchs and Emily Weissbourd, eds., *Representing Imperial Rivalry in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015); Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579–1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005).

than with Jews, the commensurability of national and confessional identity is a powerful fantasy of nativist wishful thinking.[54] The construction of nationhood here depends upon the fiction of religious homogeneity and the reality of a politics of conditional inclusion that morphs under pressure into mechanisms of violent exclusion. Greater intercultural contact and human mobility in early modern England required that the culture consider itself in terms of its hospitality toward migrants, in both local and more expansive forms—will the home or the commonwealth welcome or refuse the stranger? While English cultural production often reflected xenophobic attitudes, migrants and religious minorities were never defined entirely in drama by the prejudice they suffered, and even the most nativist of early modern English representations of intercultural encounters demonstrate a fascination—if filtered through an anxiety tinged with violence—with the strategic navigation and agency of the stranger within a hostile society.

This chapter examines Marlowe's *Jew* and Shakespeare's *Merchant* in terms of space and place, and domestic and civic hospitality, shifting between *oikos* and *polis* to explore collective life and social exclusion.[55] Both plays move between the domestic and political spheres to articulate failures of community, while exploring the strategies of Jewish characters to resist persecution and maintain forms of individual or collective identity. These plays focus on the home as the locus of security, the

54. Richard Hooker, quoted in Adelman, 7.

55. The use of "space" and "place" here draws from Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), though my distinction for the purpose of this chapter is perhaps more straightforward than de Certeau's analysis. "Place" here generally refers to locations that are defined by civic identity and social use while "space" is area without evident, or with constantly shifting and contradictory, social meanings. I am not claiming, however, that the social meaning of a given place is fixed; as this study addresses at length in other chapters, a conceptual entity such as "California" or "Venice," as it applies a set of symbolic associations and actual powers to a bounded area of land, can only be fictional, contingent, and reflective of historical processes that were not inevitable and are not secure. From another angle, current society depends on placeless spaces: where is a prison or a refugee camp?

imagined unified community of a nation, and the concrete dwelling—and the Christians in these works are always coming for the home of the Jew. The Jew in these dramas likewise seeks to protect domestic space and social place, despite threats of expulsion or forced conversion, by manipulating varied forms of hospitality. While these works replay the larger expulsions of the late-medieval period onstage at a smaller scale, reproducing the sense of an intrinsic Jewish mobility and identity as irreconcilable with the image or fiction of a secure Christian social body, Marlowe and Shakespeare also grant their Jewish characters methods of opposition and critique, exposing both the violence beneath the Christian veneer of mercy and the delusion of the homogenous community, even as they are eventually, as if teleologically, vanquished by Malta and Venice and dead or absent when the curtain closes.[56]

By reading these dramas with an eye to the spatial as well as the cultural and political, my interpretations here build on Kathy Lavezzo's consummate study of antisemitism in premodern English literature, *The Accommodated Jew*, while also bringing greater focus to the house as the central hub of hospitality where questions of collective life begin. Through their shared pattern of unhousing the Jew, these plays go beyond the layered and contradictory etymology of *hospitality* examined by Benveniste and Derrida—how the distance between a guest and an enemy is so often razor thin, how to establish oneself as host in relation to guest is to enforce a hierarchical dynamic that negates hospitality—to emphasize threats of exile and forced conversion.[57] Following the

56. There are more generous interpretations of Shylock's predicament than mine, readings which see his conversion as perhaps an incorporation into the Christian fold, more assimilation or even emancipation than nominal incorporation through violence that upholds a continued exclusion and dispossession of wealth. The conversion and the final act in Belmont lead me to be less optimistic.

57. See Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality," *Angelaki* 5, no. 3 (2000): 3–18; Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2000); and Émile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society* (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1973).

Iberian expulsions of the 15th and 16th centuries, religious minorities in early modern Europe were often given the choice to convert to the official state religion or be expelled. Even so, converts often lacked political belonging and were suspected of crypto-Jewish religious rites—if not something bloodier—behind the closed doors of the home. Despite the presence of a *converso* community in London, and England's reliance on Judaic precedent in its occasional self-fashioning as a chosen nation,[58] English cultural representations of the Jew leave little room for joining, even after conversion, reinforcing a perceived inevitability of Jewish punishment, whether through expulsion or the enforcement of material confiscation and internal exile by state power. Samuel Purchas writes:

> And ever since [Biblical times], [the Jews] have lived . . . like Cain, wandring over the World, branded with Shame and Scorne . . . for many have given them terrible expulsions, the rest using cruell and unkind hospitalitie, so that they are strangers where they dwell, and Travellers where they reside.[59]

Purchas here reproduces the pernicious European-Christian myth that naturalizes Jews as perpetual wanderers, justifies expulsion, and forecloses the possibility of their full membership within the Christian state, because they are, by definition, on the wrong side of the alien / citizen divide. His notion of cruel hospitality outlines how host societies enforce conditions of internal displacement—making Jews travelers where they reside—that resonate with legacies of forced migration.

In practice, between the poles of joining or leaving, conversion or expulsion, remained that experience of cruel hospitality, and the consequent attempt to create secure space despite it, which defines the relation between the stage Jew within the Christian majority playworlds of Marlowe and Shakespeare. Despite their differences in style and tone, the hyperbolic parable of power relations in Malta and the discomfiting economic comedy in Venice both depict a cruel hospitality that

58. As an example of England as a chosen nation or new Israel, see Adelman's reading of John Foxe in *Blood Relations*, 28–29.

59. Samuel Purchas, quoted in Peter Berek, "The Jew as Renaissance Man," *Renaissance Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1998): 141.

emphasizes the importance of place and space in their larger portrayals of social exclusion based on purported religious and racial difference. Both plays ultimately dramatize sustained and catastrophic failures of sociality, from the kitchen to the commonwealth, and thus leave a potential for social thinking that would reimagine collective life beyond the terms of confessional identity and political citizenship. Marlowe's Malta is unrelenting in its bleakness, but it offers a portrait of failed sociality that challenges the limits of our political imagination, while Shakespeare's Venice and Belmont present the mechanisms of violence by which the Jew is simultaneously instrumentalized and excluded for the purported benefit of the Christian community.

Stranger Danger in 1590s London

Before turning to the Mediterranean playworlds of Marlowe and Shakespeare, I would like this chapter to dwell in 16th-century London a moment longer to historicize their inquiries into place and hospitality. With the official establishment of French and Dutch churches in 1550, England became an ostensible Protestant refuge for fellow coreligionists displaced by expulsion or war on the continent. But it was the push of extreme persecution and violence, including the Duke of Alba's 1567 invasion of the Netherlands, the 1572 St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in France—which Marlowe dramatizes in *The Massacre at Paris* and references in the prologue to *The Jew of Malta*—and the 1585 fall of Antwerp that brought unprecedented religious migration into England.

The crown, standing to gain from the skills of artisan and merchant strangers, was publicly supportive of Protestant migration from the continent, but privately suspicious of a fifth column in the event of invasion by Catholic adversaries.[60] Debates over the demands of hospitality—what might a Christian state owe its stranger community, what might the strangers owe in return, and how

60. Laura Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here Among Us: Policies, Perceptions and the Presence of Aliens in Elizabethan England* (London: Routledge, 1996), 3.

such preoccupation with reciprocity influences the social sphere—played out both in the royal court and in the public square, including the emerging theater in which Marlowe and Shakespeare would make their names. In the final decades of the 16th century, as war with Spain threatened and economic security fluctuated, tensions increased, with "actual attacks, anticipated attacks, or investigations of threatening materials" against immigrants in the records for 1581, 1583, 1586, and 1587,[61] though none had been recorded between the Ill May Day of 1517, dramatized in *Sir Thomas More*, and 1581. The emergence of Elizabethan theater coincides with and reflects the question of migration in the late 16th century and the social unrest of a nation in which the shifting attitudes of the English toward strangers left the latter in a state of precarity, as the playhouse became a testing ground for the cultural and political imagination of the commonwealth.

In April of 1593, the Privy Council considered a motion to expel all aliens residing in London, and on May 4, they discussed the allegations made by London shopkeepers that French and Dutch strangers were illegally trading in foreign products.[62] The following day, the document known as the Dutch Church Libel was found pinned to the door of one of the London churches in which Protestant refugees worshipped. Addressed to the "strangers" that "inhabite in this land," its doggerel rhymes outline a litany of allegations against immigrants and demand their immediate self-deportation on the threat of severe violence. Signed "Tamberlaine," the text threatens another "paris massacre" and accuses foreign artisans and merchants in lines such as, "Your Machiavellian Marchant spoyles the state / Your usury doth leave us all for dead."[63] With its direct reference to *Tamburlaine* and *Massacre at Paris* as well as its allusion to *The Jew of Malta*, the Dutch Church Libel

61. Yungblut, 40.

62. Arthur Freeman, "Marlowe, Kyd, and the Dutch Church Libel," *English Literary Renaissance* 3, no. 1 (1973): 45.

63. "The Dutch Church Libel," quoted in Siemon, 135.

repurposes Marlowe's rhetorical tools to depict—and attempt to incite—anti-immigrant attacks. Drama is here put to rhetorical use in the demand to purify the English social body of its strangers. While the origin of the document and whether it was intended to suggest Marlowe's authorship or merely marshal popular theatrical precedent in service of xenophobic fervor remains uncertain, the verses illustrate the centrality of the theater to political and cultural debates in 1590s London. Flattening the ironies of Marlowe's political critique as well as his mighty line in service of nativist fury, this attempt to apply theater to the social conditions of late-Elizabethan England, and to reproduce the violent monomania of the Marlovian over-reacher on the London streets, is a particularly frightening request that life imitate art.

Beyond its articulation of threatening xenophobia—the ways in which a perceived danger *from* strangers converts into danger *to* them—in an English culture that had often, if with unintended irony, represented itself as "uniquely hospitable" to strangers,[64] the Dutch Church Libel collapses religious identities while foregrounding migration, spatial instability, and cruel hospitality. Even though the Protestant strangers were coreligionists with their English neighbors, the text explicitly likens them to Jews, reproducing a set of familiar myths and allegations inherited from late-medieval European antisemitism and undermining the imagined fellowship among Protestant Christians. As antisemitism remained "paramount to a distinct sense of Englishness,"[65] myths of "Jewish" crimes could be exploited to spark prejudice, foment unrest, and unify an English populace against a common enemy, even if that enemy were nominally Protestant. The text refers to economic hardship incurred by the presence of immigrants in the city, "like the Jewes you eate vs up as bread," alluding to medieval blood libels of ritual sacrifice and cannibalism, as well as Reformation debates

64. Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 10.

65. Burton, 201.

on transubstantiation.[66] It also threatens, "Weele cut your throtes, in your temples praying," asserting the impossibility of any secure space for the religious refugees in London. The "temple" here refers not to the Jewish synagogue, but to the Protestant church, which becomes a marker of difference rather than a zone of refuge and common confessional identity.[67] The document also accuses the strangers of "counterfeitinge religion," much like Barabas's "counterfeit profession" (1.2.292), echoing an allegation often made against the resident *converso* population and suspected Catholics.[68] This conflation of the Jew and other social groups that have been expelled—the Jewish alien abroad with the stranger merchant alien at home—suggests the likelihood that the "Jewish" questions of Elizabethan drama involve mobility and nation formation as well as ostensible religious and racial difference. Making the strangers into Jews—who were already made into wicked devils or duplicitous economic villains—the document argues that they can be treated as Jews, with the constant threat of violence or expulsion. This transference also reinscribes the "Jew" as a figure whose symbolic qualities can be mapped onto others excluded from the English Christian community. Prejudice is mobile, transferable, a ready weapon.

As with the plays by Marlowe and Shakespeare at the heart of this chapter, the Dutch Church Libel addresses displacement from both the domestic and the larger political sphere. The final lines of the document encourage the strangers to leave and never return, envisioning England as a sort of ethno-state analogous to Hooker's fantasy commonwealth, an Anglo-Protestant Belmont without any Jessicas. Demanding that the strangers leave, the text also portrays the native population as at risk of losing secure place, as victims of forced migration become perpetrators of English

66. "Libel," 135.

67. "Libel," 135. The Protestant in which the migrants worshipped were generally characterized by language and nationality, hence "Dutch church" as the descriptor for this document.

68. "Libel," 136.

displacement: "In Chambers, twenty in one house will lurke / Raysing of rents, was never known before / Living farre better than at native home, / And our poor soules are cleane thrust out of dore."[69] Blaming religious refugees for rising rents, the document makes those communities displaced by their faith into the displacers of the native English. This rhetorical move justifies violence and advocates forced expulsion by framing the native English as victims of eviction on a smaller scale, while conflating the stranger merchants and artisans with the archetypally landless Jew.

Though the preoccupation with economic practice suggests the grievances of a merchant class in competition with the strangers, the document ultimately argues for the benefit to a nation imagined as Anglo-Protestant over any discrete social group. There is no suggested remedy short of expulsion that would restore the health of the English commonwealth. Near its end, the text accuses the nobles of bringing in migrants in exchange for gold, saying that they "wound their countreys brest for lucre's sake, / and wrong our gracious Queene and subjects goode."[70] In the xenophobic doggerel of the Dutch Church Libel, in its hysterical fear of danger from—and call to violence against—the stranger community, we find a horrifying plea for the state of England. Though situated in distant locales defined by trade or resistance to encroaching Ottoman power, these Mediterranean plays are also invested in thinking through the character and concerns of the English commonwealth, and the Dutch Church Libel articulates how the playworld and the London street clash over migration, hospitality, and the political project of imagining a nation.

"To Dispossess Himself of Such a Place": Mobility and Possibility in Marlowe's Malta

69. "Libel," 136.

70. "Libel," 136.

The Dutch Church Libel demonstrates the role of the stage Jew not only in "nascent discourses of national economy,"[71] but also in contemporary considerations of mobility, hospitality, and political possibility. These concerns are at the center of Marlowe's wild and raging drama *The Jew of Malta*. As a territory of the Kingdom of Aragon, Malta had expelled its Jews in 1492, though converts could purchase baptism and the right to remain on the island in exchange for 45% of their estates.[72] Having been ruled by Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Goths, Arabs, Germans, Spanish, and Sicilians, the island had been influenced by diverse cultures and religious traditions. In Marlowe's time, Malta was under the control of the Ordo Fratrum Hospitalis Sancti Ionnais Hierosolymitani, or Knights Hospitaller, a body originally founded to take in exhausted and ill pilgrims in Jerusalem, but which had developed into a military order to protect Christendom against Ottoman power. The island was most famous in Europe as a Christian stronghold in the Mediterranean, including a base for English pirates, and the 1565 Christin defeat of the Turks was celebrated throughout Christendom, including in Protestant England.

As Lavezzo observes, building Marlowe's Maltese playworld on the London stage not only places Barabas on "overlapping sites of Jewish exile," but sets the common notion of "the Jew's radical instability of habitation" against the perceived inviolability of Malta.[73] This site of ostensible Christian fortitude is thus set to be betrayed from within and besieged from without—betrayed by the Jew as usurer, murderer, Machiavel, spy, and, though less central to this chapter, besieged by the Turk as conquering imperialist—in overlapping discourses of early modern antisemitism and

71. Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare's England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 64.

72. Shormishtha Panja, "Marlowe and Shakespeare Cross Borders: Malta and Venice in the Early Modern World," *Early Theatre* 22, no. 1 (2019): 74.

73. Kathy Lavezzo, *The Accommodated Jews: English Antisemitism from Bede to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 174.

Islamophobia. Before Machevill steps on stage and the first word of the prologue is even spoken, the drama is engaged with spatial security, as well as its more often considered questions of commerce and confessional conflict. In Marlowe's Malta, transnational economic arrangements and religious disputes play out in spatial terms, and questions of hospitality involve both geographic and cultural territory.

The drama begins not in its Maltese playworld but in Britain, with Machevill (or *Make-evil*) as the personification of power hunger, inhabited by the soul of Henri de Lorraine, Duke of Guise, delivering the prologue. Though the larger plot is driven by war between Muslims and Christians, and the survival strategies of the Jew within a Christian state in crisis, the presence of the Guise reminds audiences of the internecine conflicts of the Reformation that had led to increased migration to England, as well as the larger threat of Catholic power. As the architect behind the Bartholomew's Day massacre, his appearance recalls for the audience the enemies on the continent and the military force of Spain.

The might-makes-right rhetoric of the Guise's argument includes the assertion that a "strong built citadel / commands much more than letters can import: / Which maxim had Phalaris observed, / H'had never bellowed in a brazen bull / Of great one's envy" (Prologue 22–26). Celebrating "powers of fortification" to initiate a play that will explore concrete and metaphorical gaps in the Christian citadel,[74] the character of Guise here also alludes to the 6th-century BC tyrant who was thought to be too fond of the arts and who, in an image that here foreshadows Barabas's death, was killed by his enemies in his own torture device of a brazen bull. In the suggestion that Phalaris would have done better to focus on martial matters than belles-lettres, Machevill introduces the brutal code of conduct that rules in Malta, though Barabas's vision is driven by "[d]esire of gold"

74. Lavezzo, 177.

instead of political power (3.5.4), as well as a larger metaphorical pattern involving differential symbolic economies of space. As Marjorie Garber has noted, Marlowe's spatial imagination is preoccupied by "aspiration and limit,"[75] and enclosed spaces serve as literal boundaries of the possible that stand in for the limits of any desire; the riches of Barabas's little room, great as they are, are not truly infinite. Beyond outlining the harsh ethics of the playworld, the prologue establishes the ways in which space and territory—the enclosed oven of a crafted bull, the discovery space of the stage at The Rose which becomes counting-house and cauldron to Barabas, or the fortified island of Malta itself—are involved with opening and enclosure, desire and its containment, liberty and vulnerability.

If the play offers a "geography of identity" or a "mutual constitution of self and space,"[76] then Barabas is from the outset not just of Malta, but of his counting-house, where he is able to stack a copious quantity of coin. The space of the counting house, which is the inner stage or discovery space that will also serve as Barabas's cauldron as he is drawn like his Vice forebears into the hellmouth of his own damnation at the end of the play, encloses the drama itself. From that little room, Barabas delivers his first soliloquy, which extends the patterns of spatial and geographic reference of the prologue as well as its focus on material gain. The "Indian mines" and "wealthy Moor" who can "in his house heap pearl like pebble-stone" mark a preoccupation with the contrast between expansive space and limited enclosures where accounts of profit are made, while also exoticizing and racializing distant resource rich locales (1.1.19, 1.1.21, 1.1.23). Just as Tamburlaine slices through geographic space with the sword of conquest, Barabas's mercantile argosies bring the

75. Marjorie Garber, "'Infinite Riches in a Little Room: Closure and Enclosure in Marlowe," in *Two Renaissance Mythmakers: Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson*, ed. Alvin Kernan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 5.

76. Lavezzo, 4.

wealth of the world's territories into his little room, which the audience witnesses in the little room of the theater itself. If Malta may be a stand-in for another uneasy island, focused on the outside world amidst the promise of commerce and the looming threat of war, the theater is, as a site of the collective event of performing and interrogating social identity, also a space of possibility.

The mythic imagination of Barabas moves easily across geographic space and time as he indirectly invokes Job by way of the "men of Uz (1.1.4), "old Abram's happiness" in his covenant (1.1.105), and the biblical city of Israel "Kirriah Jairim" (1.1.123). In so doing, he collapses thousands of years of history, reinforces the notion of the Jew as the original, scattered stranger, and, with characteristic bombast, transforms the Christian idea of the curse of dispersal into a blessing of untold riches. His second soliloquy converts the Abrahamic covenant into the promise of Jewish material gain within and across Christian and non-Christian societies: "I must confess we come not to be kings" (1.1.128), Barabas tells us, asserting a desire to forego political power to exploit international economic connections for rich reward in stone and spice. As Julia Lupton observes, Barabas is excluded as a stranger from the civic life of political citizenship, but has succeeded in the civil society of market relations, and it is "within this purely civil space that Barabas engineers, manipulates, and destroys different forms of fellowship, of private association, among Jews, Christians, and Muslims" throughout the play.[77] The ruthless ethic at the heart of the drama belongs to its protagonist, and the forms of life that thrive in Malta exploit notions of hospitality or fellowship to violently achieve self-serving ends, while traditional notions of collective life based on shared faith or belonging to a bounded territory are continually undermined, as varied associations are established and betrayed based on self-interest rather than national or religious identity.

77. Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 51.

Despite the high style and blank-verse braggadocio in his first two soliloquies about the character and state of the Jews, as soon as he sees his "countrymen" (1.1.142)—a term that will echo in *Merchant*—he assures the audience that he is concerned with his own fortunes, not those of any community, religious or otherwise, in Malta (1.1.172). His network consists of moguls across Europe and the Levant and the foreign banks where his wealth is secure. In Malta, Barabas is always nearest to himself (1.1.188), self-fashioned as a "society of one" on the island.[78] He is an architect of material success, spatial security, and temporary mercenary association rather than collective identity among the other Jews within a harsh and hostile Malta under Christian control. Despite his impressive rolodex of international connections and his daughter, who becomes another commodity to exchange in his quest for revenge, Barabas refuses membership in categories of social belonging arising from national or religious association, and instead reconstitutes temporary communal associations that mirror the state in their reliance on violence that can be turned against the state.

While his rebel instinct dominates the play, Barabas is not the only outsider in Malta; rather, outside and inside are difficult to demarcate, as the boundaries of community here are always unstable. As Emily Bartels writes, multinational Malta is an "island of strangers,"[79] though they are not of equal status before the state. Clearly Barabas, the other Jews, the enslaved people in the market with their prices on their backs, the false and future nun Abigail, the Spanish Del Bosco, and so forth, embody and enact different possibilities within Maltese society and cannot be considered strangers of the same order, even as all the isle's inhabitants are unmoored from the hold of national identity. Despite its national and confessional diversity, Malta is a society under Christian dominion,

78. Shawn Smith, "A Society of One: Reading *The Jew of Malta* through Serres's Theory of Exchange," *Exemplaria* 15, no. 2 (2003): 429.

79. Emily C. Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism and Alienation in Marlowe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 93.

and it is the Christian ruler, the governor Ferneze, who initially acts as the sovereign power on the isle. Lacking political citizenship, Barabas is subject to the dictates of Ferneze, who articulates the alien / citizen divide that also dictates the terms of *Merchant*, as discussed later in this chapter. When Barabas asks the governor if Jewish strangers will be taxed at the same rate as the other inhabitants of Malta, Ferneze responds, "No Jew, like infidels, / Who stand accursèd in the sight of heaven, / These taxes and afflictions are befallen" (1.2.62–65). This rhetoric turns Barabas's sense of Jewish exceptionality against him and transforms the Christian curse of dispersal into a justification for economic exploitation. Where Barabas sees the Abrahamic covenant as a future of infinite coin, Ferneze turns the idea of the dispersal as punishment into a strategy of cruel hospitality toward the original Jewish stranger who is denied access to civic life within the Christian state.

In practical terms, it matters little initially that Barabas sees through the Christian hypocrisy that is this play's most direct object of critique—"What? Bring you scripture to confirm your wrongs?" (1.2.11)—because he has no recourse in the political sphere, which leaves him the choice of forfeiting half of his estate, converting, or, rejecting both options, having his possessions seized. As expected, he refuses conversion, telling the Maltese governor and knights, "I will be no convertite" (1.2.83). Lupton notes that the conversion offer "carries the farcical force of a cruel joke played by theology in collusion with politics," and "the chance for civic integration, cynical at best in Marlowe's Malta, closes before it opens."[80] Barabas offers to pay half of his estate and be "used" as his "brethren are" (1.2.92), but in another long foreshadow of Shylock's Venice, the governor refuses and demands the seizure of his house. Rather than conversion or expulsion, join or leave, Malta demands that Barabas pay and stay in a state of internal displacement, losing his place but able to work, though Ferneze reminds Barabas of past exiles: "Yet Barabas we will not banish thee, / Yet

80. Lupton, *Citizen-Saints*, 57.

here in Malta, where thou got'st thy wealth / Live still" (1.2.101–103). This scene articulates the brute power of the state over its Jewish diasporic community as Malta takes the house of the Jew.

Malta takes the house of the Jew, and of the house, Malta makes a convent, replacing Jewish space within a broader Christian domain—the home of the Jew of Malta—with one of nominal Christian fellowship. The play's various plots put forward a series of mirror images of different scales—Pilia-Borza's personal extortion of Barabas recalls Ferneze's seizure of Jewish wealth at the level of the state, which recalls the Turkish demand for tribute.[81] The seizure of the house forms a similar pattern, in which text echoes historical context, as Jewish displacement within the play—the unhousing of Barabas and Abigail—mirrors the Jewish dispossession in their exile from premodern Europe, including from Malta itself. The state seeks to control the movement of Jewish bodies as well as Jewish goods. Just as Ferneze uses the excuse of the biblical curse when exacting his punishment, so the play replicates the notion of Jewish identity as essentially stateless and intrinsically errant.

Yet rather than becoming the victim of cozening or the convert, as in earlier representations of Jews onstage such as *The Three Ladies of London* and the anonymous *Croxton Play of the Sacrament*, Barabas emphatically refuses the conditions of displacement by deftly navigating territory and undermining the stability of Christian space in Malta. Control over territory and space is ultimately more significant than confessional or national identity in this playworld, and when Barabas aligns himself with other characters in temporary and instrumental collectives, it is to navigate and reassert place. When he wishes to enter the house to reclaim his possessions, Abigail tells him that it will not be possible: "there I left the Governor placing nuns / Displacing me; and of thy house they mean / to make a nunnery" (1.2.254–256). Though Abigail has been dislocated from the home, Barabas will

81. Stephen Greenblatt, "Marlowe, Marx, and Anti-Semitism," *Critical Inquiry* 5, no. 2 (1978): 298.

show Malta that he too can place and displace. The Christians come for the house, but the displaced Jew reveals how tenuous their control over Malta has always been. While extending the dramatic inquiry of desire and limitation that shapes Marlowe's oeuvre, the play's critique here cuts in two ways: Barabas's avarice and canny villainy replicates antisemitic anxieties about greedy and faithless Jewish spies—this is, after all, a play that was revived for the stage during the Roderigo Lopes affair—while also undermining the assumptions of legitimate faith and the stability of state power in majority Christian societies.

Barabas's initial response to his displacement relies not only on his plot to get Abigail admitted to the convent as a nun, but also on his ability to use the space in his house to his advantage, as he has hidden gold beneath the planks. While awaiting Abigail's return, Barabas addresses the Old Testament God: "O thou that with a fiery pillar led'st / The sons of Israel through the dismal shades, / Light Abraham's offspring; and direct the hand / Of Abigail this night" (2.1.12–15). With the typical blasphemy of the Marlowe protagonist, Barabas invokes his God to ask for gold, but his reference to Exodus also recalls for the audience both the Jewish covenant and their history of exile, from not just Israel but also late-medieval European states. Graham Hammill observes that the condition of Jews in early modern Europe made the Jew a "productive figure for imagining the plight of resident aliens in the formation of the early modern state."[82] Barabas here reminds the audience of dispersal while simultaneously refusing to be moved from his place, invoking Jewish mobility to further secure spatial security despite civic exclusion. When Abigail returns with the gold, Barabas's response, "Oh girl, oh gold" (2.1.55), reproduces the pernicious stereotype of intrinsic Jewish avarice and foreshadows Shylock's conflation of daughter and ducats, while also revealing that Barabas's house is designed spatially to increase his wealth and

82. Graham Hammill, *The Mosaic Constitution: Political Theology and Imagination from Machiaveli to Milton* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 117.

resist the Christian state. With assistance from Abigail, playing the eager convert in the convent made from the house of the Jew, Barabas demonstrates his spatial savvy to maintain his place as the Jew of Malta, while foreshadowing his navigation beneath the city in the final act. But he cannot keep Malta from seeking to confiscate Jewish space and reconstruct it as Christian.

Having reclaimed the gold, Barabas embarks on a revenge plot that begins with his purchase of a house, suggesting that some form of spatial security is a precondition for his reassertion of place in civil society as the Jew of Malta. Railing not just against the governor but the entire Christian community—Malta, Ferneze, and Christian are often conflated in the violent imagination of our protagonist—Barabas refuses to be deterred from his project of amassing wealth and securing place within the hostile island of Malta:

> In spite of these swine-eating Christians,
> Unchosen nation, never circumcised;
> Such as, poor villains, were ne'er thought upon
> Till Titus and Vespasian conquered us,
> Am I become as wealthy as I was:
> They hoped my daughter would ha' been a nun;
> But she's at home, and I have bought a house
> As great and fair as the Governor's;
> And there in spite of Malta will I dwell. (2.3.7–15)

In the dual reference to the proscription on pork and mandatory circumcision, and the 70 CE Siege of Jerusalem by Titus and Vespasian, Barabas again reminds the audience of intersecting legacies of election and exile. Key to the spatial and territorial patterns of the play, he refuses the option to grab what gold he can and take to the sea. To leave Malta would be, like renouncing his religious identity and converting, anathema to the Jew *of* Malta. Though under no illusion that Malta may allow him a secure space, he never considers fleeing with his funds—indeed, the only time he leaves the city is his brief exile when he is later thrown over the wall only to be comically resurrected. He chooses instead to reinforce his place in the social sphere by purchasing another home in which to dwell "in spite of" Malta, recognizing that Malta will meet him with cruel hospitality and choosing to maintain

his place regardless. His second house reinforces the use of constructed space as a gesture of refusal against state power, as it becomes a base of operations, a domestic space manipulated in terms of hospitality and spatial knowhow, from which Barabas directs a campaign of revenge.

That project depends upon Barabas establishing cross-confessional anti-Christian association for the promotion of violence with Ithamore, who becomes something like a sidekick, then something like a son and heir, before being killed as an enemy. Barabas, up to this point having refused community, brings Ithamore into his home and establishes a relation that briefly—all apparent structures of friendship or community in Malta ultimately collapse—appears to be more than transactional benefit. While it is evident that Barabas purchased Ithamore in a slave market, their relationship is not defined primarily by authority and subjugation but rather their mutual commitment to treachery and anti-Christian violence. As James Hefferman observes in his transhistorical survey of hosts and guests in Western literature, treachery tears the "fabric of trust" woven by hospitality, [83] and thus is a sort of anti-hospitality or inversion of hospitable relations. If the state treats its Jews and other strangers with cruel hospitality, those figures forge temporary communal bonds that take advantage of interpersonal associations based on assumed trust, converting ostensible hospitality into an opportunity for treachery.

The exaggerated violence of their recited biographies articulates a pattern of anti-Christian cruelty within Christian dominant societies. Barabas claims to have mastered poisoning, played the double agent in the wars between France and Germany, and excelled as a usurer (2.3.180–200), reinforcing the antisemitic stereotypes of the Jew who cannot be trusted and who wishes to pinch Christians economically and undermine their political stability. Ithamore recounts a history of violence that includes a spell at an inn where he slit the throats of sleeping travelers and acts of

83. James A. W. Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery in Western Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2014), 11.

injuring pilgrims in Jerusalem with a poison powder (2.3.204–211), in both cases attacking traveling guests who depend on hospitality while in an unfamiliar locale. Ithamore and Barabas develop a temporary solidarity which allows them to become a force of false generosity concealing violent intentions—their own brand of cruel hospitality—to take advantage of relations of assumed trust.

Together, they make use of Barabas's new house to exact revenge on Abigail's Christian suitors, Lodowick, son of the governor, and Mathias. Offering Abigail as a wife to Lodowick, Barabas says "I pray, sir, be no stranger at my house / All that I have shall be at your command" (2.3.136–137). By bringing both suitors into the home as the archetypal stranger becomes host, Barabas sparks their jealousy to set them against each other in the duel that kills them both. Barabas's second home is like the counting-house in that it is "open to gem trading,"[84] both the fine stones suggested by his receipt of a letter from Hormuz and his "diamond" daughter (2.3.291). This scene further undermines Christian spatial stability by dramatizing how easily Barabas as host exploits the vulnerability of his guests by manipulating the environment of his home. Watching from the border space of the doorway, he offers his daughter to them only to set up their untimely deaths.

While Barabas exploits Abigail as currency in his revenge plot by playing the host to Lodowick and Mathias, the courtesan Bellamira and cutpurse Pilia-Borza offer another vision of distorted hospitality in their association based on extralegal profit-making. Bellamira's monologue in 3.1 suggests that the scene takes place inside a bawdy house, in which at least one more body is for sale in this play constructed of mirror images. Bellamira's guests must pay the hostess, and salability

84. Lavezzo, 201. The degree to which economic exchange is gendered in this play maps onto both Bellamira's character and Abigail's, especially when the latter character is exploited as a commodity for the two suitors as part of Barabas's revenge plot. For an inquiry into Abigail that reads her character as one of agency rather than purely a figure to be manipulated by Barabas, see Vanessa L. Rapatz, "Abigail's Turn in *The Jew of Malta*," *Studies in English Literature* 56, no. 2 (2016): 247–264. For a reading of gender and sexuality in Marlowe that excludes *The Jew of Malta*, see Sarah Munson Deats, *Sex, gender, and desire in the plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997).

reigns supreme in Malta. This house, in which Bellamira claims to have lodged both merchants of Venice and scholars of Padua (3.1.6–8), also reproduces the character of Barabas's counting-house, as the courtesan brings the wealth of the world into her little room. It is thus fitting that Barabas's counting house is referenced in the scene that introduces us to the thief and the prostitute. By offering Bellamira silver stolen from the counting-house, Pilia-Borza replicates thematic patterns of the play that structure conflicts over money in terms of territory, while enclosed interior space—never secure, ever vulnerable—itself is exploited for financial gain in a distorted relations between guests and hosts.

Enraged that his daughter has converted to Christianity—becoming, as in so many other ways, a model for Shakespeare's Jessica— and concerned she might reveal his plot against her suitors, Barabas next seeks to breach the convent to poison the nuns with an offering of food. Making use of his knowledge of space and structure as well as the assumption of trust within the built environment to achieve a violent objective, he tells Ithamore, "There's a dark entry where they take [charitable gifts] in, where they must neither see the messenger, / Nor make enquiry who hath sent it them . . . Belike there is some ceremony in't" (3.4.79–83). The poison, Barabas says, was purchased in Ancona, which serves to further place Barabas, and Marlowe's Malta, within a history of late-medieval anti-Jewish persecution. The Italian city of Ancona opened itself up to Jews in the 15th century, and had been thought of as relatively tolerant to its Jewish community for the usual reasons of economic interest until in1555, twenty-five *conversos* alleged to have returned to Judaism were burned. In Marlowe's theatrical study of stereotype—"What, has he crucified a child?," says Jacomo of Barabas (3.6.49)—the play continually reminds us of the Jew's exclusion by definition from civic participation within the Christian state. From that position of exclusion, Barabas aligns himself with another non-Christian to poison the pot and offer it as a gift to the nuns. Barabas and Ithamore thus exploit an apparent community of trust by penetrating the Christian space of the

convent in a violent travesty of Christian charity.

Barabas likewise takes his revenge on the friars, Jacomo and Bernadine, through a performance of hospitality masking murderous intent. While he had previously exploited his daughter as currency, the bait he uses now is the estate itself, making of the house both the domestic space from which to offer hospitality and the fungible currency to lure the avaricious monks. Inviting them to the home to transfer the wealth gained by transnational trade into the monastery, Barabas apparently offers to exchange his infinite riches for a little room within the religious house. He represents his wealth through imagery of enclosure, goods contained like poison in a pot of porridge:

> Cellars of wine, and sollars full of wheat,
> Warehouses stuffed with spices and with drugs,
> Whole chests of gold, in bullion, and in coin,
> Besides I know not how much weight in pearl . . .
> have I within my house. (4.1.63–67)

The extended pattern of imagery sets abundance against containment, as every vessel becomes a kind of house or host and the redemption of Barabas's soul is in trade for his fabulous riches. Holding out the promise of the gift, Barabas makes the house into an alluring trap for the friars.

He finally tells them, "In Florence, Venice, Antwerp, London, Seville, / Frankfurt, Lubeck, Moscow, and where not / Have I debts owing; and in most of these / Great sums of money in the banco / All this I'll give to some religious house / So I may be baptized and live therein" (4.1.71–76). The inclusion of London on this map of economic connections gestures toward the presence of the *conversos* in England as well as English engagement in commercial practices that often mark the Jew as other, while the geographical span of transnational commerce, including cities which had a large Jewish population, is juxtaposed against the enclosure of a single religious house. Barabas manipulates his geographical and economic knowledge through a hospitality of bad faith—cruel hospitality turned against the Christians—to take his revenge on Malta.

"Oh good Barabas come to our house," Jacomo says (4.1.77); "Oh no, good Barabas, come to our house," Bernadine interjects (4.1.78); but it is Barabas who, mirroring his vengeance against the suitors, ultimately brings the friars to his house. For reasons that go unmentioned in the play but align with the rites of hospitality, Bernadine comes to Barabas's home not only to negotiate the terms of exchange—the conversion of the Jew and the transfer of his wealth into Christian hands—but also to spend the night. Like Duncan at Inverness, perhaps the most emblematic scene in Tudor-Stuart drama of the vulnerability of the guest to the host, Barabas conspires with his "trusty Turk" Ithamore to murder Bernadine in his bed (4.1.127). It is Bernadine's greed that brings him to the home, but ultimately it is the misplaced trust he puts in Barabas and his failure to recognize a feigned hospitality brings about his death.

The faith Barabas puts in "trusty" Ithamore when he decides to poison the nuns would likewise be misplaced if genuine, but the text suggests that it is merely performed and that he already suspects Ithamore's duplicity. With Abigail dead, Barabas offers his estate to his purchased slave in exchange for what he characterizes as a filial bond: "Oh, trusty Ithamore; no servant, but my friend; / I here adopt thee for mine only heir, / All that I have is thine when I am dead, / And whilst I live use half . . . Here take my keys, I'll give 'em thee anon" (3.4.42–46). The halving of the wealth recalls the terms of the state confiscation of Barabas's wealth at the beginning of the play while, in a moment of apparent generosity, Barabas brings Ithamore into the home and communes with him over the poisoned pot. If acts of hospitality often involve sleeping and eating—the set table and the made bed for the traveling stranger—so their preparation of the poisoned pottage offers a distorted vision of the rituals of home and hospitality that inverts the patterns of Christian cruelty. The pot of rice, originally made for Barabas and Ithamore to eat together, instead becomes the vehicle of massacre. While Ithamore and Barabas initially bonded in their shared hatred for Christians, Ithamore's continued antisemitic references suggest the impossibility of fellowship. He quotes the

axiom to Barabas, "he who eats with the devil hath need of a long spoon" (3.4.58–59), reinforcing for the audience the notion that Jews were anti-Christian villains. The scene concludes with Barabas stating that he will get his revenge on Ithamore, signaling to the audience that the travesty of hospitality over the poisoned pot marks a break in their relationship.

The resolution of the minor extortion plot, Pilia-Borza's use of Ithamore to demand money of Barabas in exchange for silence on the murders of the friars, also involves the performance of hospitality. When Pilia-Borza demands gold, Barabas tries to stay him with a dinner invitation, the idea being, of course, to poison the thief. When he refuses, Barabas asks again, "Pray, when, sir, shall I see thee at my house?" (4.3.55), suggesting to the audience that, just as with the suitors and the friars, Barabas can use the offer of hospitality to take vengeance within a domestic space that he controls. Instead, he is forced to attend to this crew of minor criminals presumably at Bellarmira's bawdy house, where they are drinking to their planned extortion of the Jew. In the most ridiculous scene of a play driven by a barrage of absurd and violent hyperbole, Barabas plays the French musician to enter the house and poison the revelers. As he claims to have been resident in Malta only a few months, his disguise reinforces the sense that Malta is enmeshed in networks of mobility in which national, and even religious identity, need not be a barrier to certain forms of association. Barabas is thus able to use a feigned French identity and snippets of the language to preside over another scene of music, sociality, and distorted hospitality. Leaving the house to avoid inhaling his own poison, he says, "*Pardonnez moi, monsieur*, we no be well" (4.4.67), anticipating Shylock's words while leaving the courthouse. Rather than the clever severity of Portia's courtroom rhetoric, it is the transactional hospitality of Bellamira the courtesan, and Barabas's theatricality, that allow him to poison this ragtag band of small-scale grifters.

The final act finds the Jew acting out a dual strategy of spatial knowhow and the manipulation of hospitality. Ferneze commands his officers to "see that Malta be well fortified"

during the Turkish siege (5.1.2), reminding the audience again of Malta's famed citadel and reputation for staving off the Ottoman invasion of 1565. If conquering Malta from the outside is unlikely, an internal enemy would make it less so, and Marlowe here turns to the stereotype of the Jew as an insurgent fifth column within the Christian state. Perhaps drawing from the 1522 conquest of Rhodes, referenced by Del Bosco early in the play, and in which it was said that a Jewish physician with the name of Juan Baptista served as a spy for Selim I in Malta, falsely converted to Christianity, and then assisted the Ottomans with crucial intelligence on how to breach the walls of the fortifications,[85] Marlowe imagines a deceitful Jew who topples the Christian state from within.

Having faked his death with, yet again, poison, the ostensibly dead Barabas is thrown over the walls. While Bellamira, Pilia-Borza, and Ithamore are granted burial, the Jew's body must be expelled from the city and left to the birds and beasts of prey (5.1.57). Barabas then awakes in a rage and demands vengeance, imagining architectural destruction, reclamation of Jewish territory, and Christian exile:

> What, all alone? Well fare sleepy drink.
> I'll be revenged on this accursèd town
> For by my means Calymath shall enter in.
> I'll help to slay their children and their wives,
> To fire the churches, pull their houses down,
> Take my goods too, seize upon my lands:
> I hope to see the Governor a slave,
> And rowing in a galley, whipped to death. (5.1.60–66)

While this vengeful rhetoric is typically Marlovian and could be set against monologues of the rebel playwright's other antiheroes, Barabas presents his vision of triumph in specifically geographical terms: he will become an agent of destruction of Christian space and recover his place and position, while his enemy will suffer a permanent exile on the Mediterranean. Marlowe here imagines a Jew who eradicates the political citizenship of the Christian and pushes him into

85. Burton, 209.

perpetual exile, after having already pilloried the hypocrisies of Christian antisemitism by suggesting greedy Christians are equivalent to the stereotype of the money-hungry Jew. Toward the conclusion, it is not just a common greed that flattens any moral distinction between Christian, Muslim, and Jew; both the political state and the extralegal associations of Barabas and his ilk are defined by violence. The violence against physical constructions and Ferneze at sea that Barabas imagines mirrors the antisemitic hate crimes occasionally brought on Jewish quarters in late-medieval and early modern Europe as well as the potential of nativist uprising against stranger communities, such as that threatened in the Dutch Church Libel.

Barabas's last moves as a strategic manipulator of Maltese space involve both infiltration, construction, and invitation. Siding with the Turks, he first shows them how to access the city through its sewage system. The extreme fortification of Malta's walls is irrelevant as Barabas allows the Ottomans to access the city by going underneath them, and Calymath rewards him with governorship of the isle, granting the stranger who had been excluded from civic life in Malta temporary rule over it, and the Jew, emblem of dispersal, the spatial security of the citadel. Yet for all Barabas's strategic resistance and mastery over space, he sees this position as untenable: "No simple place, no small authority, / I now am Governor of Malta, true; / But Malta hates me, and in hating me / My life's in danger" (5.2.28–31). Barabas asserts that the island itself is his enemy. With security in Malta an impossibility, he wishes to return to the *status quo ante*, in which, excluded from political life, he at least was free in the civil society of trade and enjoyed the protection of his international business and his counting house. He thus switches confessional allegiances and decides to help the Christians, telling Ferneze that it would be foolish to "dispossess himself of such a place" by handing Malta over to the Turks (5.2.66). Though his place within Malta is, as he said only moments earlier, to be hated, he remains the Jew of Malta still.

The final act has Barabas construct a cauldron into which, as he explains to Ferneze, he can drop Calymath, using a trap door, while the other Turkish troops in the city will be led into a monastery and exploded. Both schemes depend not only on Barabas's awareness and manipulation of underground space, as in the first act with the hidden gold, but on the rites of invitation and reception of guests. To vanquish the Ottomans in his own space, Barabas must encourage them, as before, to come to his residence. The messenger informs Calymath that Barabas "humbly would entreat your majesty / To come and see his lovely citadel, / And banquet with him ere thou leav'st the isle" (5.3.17–19), while the troops will feast in the monastery. Repurposing the military citadel as domestic space, Barabas "rezones it for residential use, housing a scene of hospitality rather than formal diplomacy."[86] Barabas's manipulation of the terms of hospitality, though successful in bringing Calymath to his house, is his final undoing. Ferneze cuts the cable and Barabas falls, to be boiled in a pot, and a plot, of his own devising. Barabas returns to the discovery space on the stage where we first meet him as control over civic life in Malta returns to Christian hands.

It is probably not unreasonable to assume that Barabas's comeuppance, like that of his descendant Shylock, received a hearty laugh from its Elizabethan audience. Cursing at "Damned Christians, dogs, and Turkish infidels" (5.5.85), and still, I imagine, wearing the red wig and false nose Ithamore mocks, Barabas reinforces antisemitic tropes of Jewish perfidy and anti-Christian hatred. Even as this play explores how prejudice functions in a hyperbolic mode that may render stereotypes less stable—Leslie Fielder observed over half a century ago that, compared to Shylock's psychological realism, Barabas is "too bad to be true, a caricature of the fears that fostered him"—it also traffics in dangerous antisemitic myths, which, as in the Dutch Church Libel, are all too easily

86. Lupton, *Citizen-Saints*, 70.

stripped of irony and converted into calls to violence.[87] By looking at Barabas's agency, in how he manipulates domestic space and the conventions of hospitality, this reading in no way seeks to absolve the play of its prejudice. *The Jew of Malta*, like the Dutch Church Libel, relies upon violent xenophobia to dramatize possible forms of collective life.

Those forms involve strategies of association among figures excluded from political life as well as the elite. Marlowe creates a society of distrust, in which categories of collective identity are reduced purely to instrumental value brought into being through antisocial acts. From the arrival of the Turks that threatens Christian sovereignty over the island to the cauldron drop, *The Jew of Malta* stages a political crisis that, even as it ironically highlights religious hypocrisy, also interrogates and renders unstable categories of civil and civic belonging. Yet Ferneze's authority as sovereign itself is ultimately unstable as well, even if he triumphs. His control over the island is dependent upon sanction from Spain, as we see when Del Bosco quickly makes him change his mind about paying tribute to the Turks. Taking orders from Del Bosco, who takes orders from Spain, Ferneze cannot fully embody sovereign power, as the play suggests that there is nothing naturally given about Malta—or England—being a Christian state. It is all a question of power and, in this case, the power Barabas restores to Ferneze. In Malta, the distortions of hospitality and battles over space finally render all social identities insecure: the Christians fear subjection to the Turks as they subject the Jews and other strangers, while the subjects of Malta seek instrumental associations outside of political life to survive or challenge state power.

Barabas is correct that Malta hates him—it is a hateful society, where individual and collective identity are characterized by violence and reduced to currency. But it also represents, if dangerously, a model of thinking outside of the common forms of association of faith and nation.

87. Leslie Fielder, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), 121.

Hammill argues that there is "unrealized potential" in the alliances Barabas forges in *The Jew of Malta*.[88] Those alliances challenge the legitimacy of the civic realm—and here political participation depends on confessional identity—as the most significant arena of social membership. Yet the critique of civic belonging comes from the top down as well, as the play itself contests the validity of political belonging by staging a playworld in which national identity is stripped of meaning. The play presents no stable Christian horizontal fellowship and no national "Maltese" community either. As Bartels notes, to be of Malta in this play means not to be "originally" of Malta, and everyone "seems to be a stranger."[89] While we see Christians take advantage of their dominance to extort the Jew and perhaps the audience prefers a Christian victory, there is little in this playworld that suggests the Turks could not have succeeded in this common ethic of greed and might-makes-right. The radical vision that emerges holds political possibility in its negative by undermining collective life based on accepted categories of social identity such as religion or nation.

While no society would ever admire or aspire to the relentless mutual enmity on Marlowe's island, the assault on identity in *The Jew of Malta* offers the audience a chance to consider what produces social violence and reimagine what collective identity and social life unmoored from common given categories might be. In this, the play is prescient, as beyond its bloody irony it suggests that increased mobility and global trade in a world growing smaller and more connected will require new forms of political thinking—or, if not, we consign ourselves to the paranoia and brutality of Malta. Marlowe's Maltese nightmare finally goes beyond the terms of Christian, Muslim, or Jew to question the idea of the state and citizen as natural political categories. If this is a world of strangers, then the ontology of the stranger itself, and by extension the citizen, is called into

88. Hammill, 119.

89. Bartels, 91.

question. In its critique of dominant forms of religious association—common greed surmounts common tradition among these people of the book—the play ultimately constructs a case against forms of dominant social association. A communal identity based on territory is finally no more secure than a communal identity founded on confessional practice or faith.

As a portrait of failed sociality, *The Jew of Malta* critiques not only Marlowe's England or any single set of vices, but a broader associative imagination that defines individual and community identity by way of common religion or national citizenship. In doing so, it presents no programmatic or idealized social vision—Marlowe is more interested in the individual in conflict with the state and the aesthetic pleasures of violent rebellion than imagining any form of functioning hospitality or stable collective alliances—but he shows us a portrait of a society that has failed to reimagine and replace modes of association that have been rendered unstable. From a harsh world of selfish machination, pervasive greed, and violent conflict, Marlowe is not so sanguine to suggest a stable alternative, and not even all that interested in civil stability so much as radical art, but Marlowe finally dramatizes a breakdown of relations that is not only as the result of bad actors, but of a larger failure in the social imagination in which religious or national identities become mechanisms of exclusion and smokescreens for common avarice.

Alien / Citizen: Shakespeare's Problems of Place in Venice and Belmont

If Marlowe's Malta is exaggerated in its grim portrayal of avarice, power hunger, and the possibility for community arises only through temporary associations based on violence or revenge, Shakespeare's Venice presents the conditions for a Christian fellowship and hospitality that simultaneously instrumentalizes and excludes the Jew. This covert ideology based on disavowal and bad faith masks the greed and xenophobia at its core. Antonio's generosity to Bassanio—"purse" and "person" readily available (1.1.138)—certainly conflates the erotic and the economic, but it does

not convey to the audience greed or violence, nor is it driven by the extreme enmity and taste for betrayal that fuels Malta. The Christians in Venice and Belmont are likewise presented as a stable society—Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, Lorenzo, and even the three Sals all seem to get along fine, and Portia is "always and everywhere at home."[90] Christian Venetians are welcome in Belmont and Belmont Christians are welcome in Venice.

Belmont appears initially, however, in opposition to Venice, as a proximate land of fairy tale untarnished by the grime of commercial endeavor. As "refuge for eloping lovers" and "haven of hospitality,"[91] the Belmont setting also suggests the broader interest in the drama in portraying concerns of the home as well as concerns of the state, and the questions of hospitality and exclusion that are central to both. *Merchant* is a play of bonds and bounds, debts and commitments, the secure home and the open street, how the circle—or ring—of collective life is forged and what the cost is. The following reading considers hospitality and the domestic sphere, Shylock's "sober house" and Portia's manor (2.5.35), alongside the more obvious question of religious and political exclusion in Venice, to outline how the play ultimately absorbs Jewish space in a xenophobic fantasy of European Christian conquest.

If Venice suggests England's burgeoning Mediterranean commerce and consequent increase in intercultural contact, Belmont is a locus of imagined "Christian harmony" presided over by its own "virgin queen."[92] As such, it also serves as a double for the cultural world of its London audience. What happens in Belmont, and in Portia's house—Shylock, Portia, and Antonio have

90. Fielder, 101.

91. Catherine Belsey, "Love in Venice," in *Shakespeare Survey*, ed. Stanley Wells, 44 (1991): 41.

92. Adelman, *Blood Relations*, 40.

homes in this play, while Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano are granted temporary "lodging"[93]—is thus central to the play's portrayal of community. What the audience first learns of Belmont in the second scene of the play, is that it, and its owner, are hostile to those considered to be culturally different. Xenophobia defines our heroine. Though presented as an in-joke between lady and waiting woman that allows the audience to enjoy the cheap pleasure of stereotype, Portia's attacks on the Neapolitan, the Frenchman, the Englishman, and the Scotsman, establish cultural uniformity as a virtue not just in marriage but more broadly within domestic space of her manor. She is characterized by her prejudice and its use as a mechanism of social exclusion.

The entrance of Morocco as a suitor reinforces Portia's prejudice for the audience by presenting it in clearly racial terms. It is one thing to laugh at the buffoonish behavior of those unsuitable pretenders and define them based on their place of origin, but her attack on Morocco is considerably more severe and more straightforwardly racist, phenotypic rather than cultural, intrinsic rather than behavioral. Given no indication of his personality or general appearance, Portia rejects him out of hand based on her assumption of his skin color: "If he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me" (1.3.124–126). This brutal turn of phrase informs the audience who is welcome as a suitor in Portia's home and who is not. No matter how fine his character, the color of his skin is a Belmont deal-breaker. The Englishman's narrow monolingualism, the German's dipsomania, and the Frenchman's mimicry are objectionable behaviors that Portia has witnessed, but her rejection of Morocco is crucially based on her exclusionary reaction to his skin color. Morocco even anticipates her prejudice, as the first lines he speaks to her are "Mislike me not for my complexion" (2.1.01). His blood is as red as that of

93. Sousa, Geraldo U. "'My Hopes Abroad': The Global/Local Nexus in *The Merchant of Venice*," in *Shakespeare and Immigration*, edited by Ruben Espinosa and David Ruiter (London: Routledge, 2016), 42.

anyone in Venice, yet he is doomed to failure in the casket game, as the play puts a "Moor" onstage—the white English actor likely in blackface—as part of a plot that is obsessed with the perceived cultural difference of the Jew. The sharp couplet Portia speaks on Morocco's departure—"A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go / Let all of his complexion choose me so" (2.7.79–80)—offers nothing of her character that we have not seen before. It reaffirms rather, as she withdraws into the home and closes the curtain, the centrality of racial animus to her marital motivation. Portia's defining racism matters because the plot ultimately depends upon her takedown of Shylock in the Venetian court and, as the play progresses, she becomes the dominant voice and the figurehead for the vision of community the play offers.

If "fair" Portia is set in opposition to the complexion of Morocco (1.2.113), the next scene establishes a similar opposition between Antonio and Bassanio against Shylock. On the table again are the terms of community. Before committing to the loan, and perhaps recognizing Bassanio as a profligate—he is a spendthrift as Portia is a racist—Shylock wishes to speak with Antonio. Bassanio responds by inviting him to the dinner that has already been mentioned by Gratiano and Lorenzo in the first act. While Morocco may be naïve to the racial and religious barriers in this playworld in thinking he had a chance at Portia's hand when the game was fixed from the start, Shylock is anything but optimistic about cross-confessional harmony in Venice, and he responds with a refusal that shores up the boundaries between the Christian and Jewish worlds, though they may overlap in the civil sphere of the Rialto:

> Yes, to smell pork, to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you and so following. But I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. (1.3.30–34)

Knowing that in the eyes of Christian Venice, Shylock himself is a sort of devil—which the aspiring Christian Jessica soon reiterates—he wields his New Testament knowledge and commitment to the faith like a weapon by recalling for Bassanio the story of swine containing the devil. The reference to

Matthew 8.32–34 becomes the rhetorical turn by which Shylock articulates that commensality between Christian and Jew remains outside the boundaries of possibility. They are not fed by the same food; they do not eat at the same table.

Shylock's rage in response Antonio's entrance demonstrates the inherent violence of the separation between Christian and Jew in Venice. Beyond abiding by biblical law, the initial refusal to eat moves into the language of cannibalism, in an inverse image of table fellowship: "If I can catch him once upon the hip, / I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him. / He hates our sacred nation" (1.3.42–44). Here he appeals to collective Jewish identity and Jewish / Christian animosity as an inherited and intractable legacy. Shylock knows better than to imagine the potential for interreligious alliance outside of financial dealings, and while his ire may play into the type of the wicked Jew for the audience, even at this early stage, the play complicates the portrait by offering us the image of the history between Shylock and Antonio, the Christian having spat both phlegm and insults at the Jew and unapologetically threatening to do so again (1.3.125–126). Bassanio's offer of a shared table quickly gives way to their shared enmity, as much arising from commercial disputes as from ancient division of faith, between Shylock and Antonio. As David Goldstein observes in an incisive reading of the many disappearing meals of the play, every "opportunity for eating offers, and then withdraws, the possibility of hospitality."[94] The play suggests that eating together, the host treating the guest, is the core of ethics and then continually forecloses commensality and the larger possibility for community it both represents and enables.

Somehow, however, the meal at Antonio's takes place, though it is not staged. No meal in the play is. It is perhaps as difficult to envision the sober Shylock at Antonio's table as it is to imagine a sincere leap into the Christian faith after the decree of his forced conversion or Jessica

94. David B. Goldstein, *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 89.

drinking and dancing in the manor at Belmont. Goldstein offers that the best explanation for Shylock's reversal on the dinner invitation is to get him out of the house for the sake of the plot.[95] After all, he must be away from the house for Jessica to escape it. To provide motivation beyond the dizzying rush of young love—Shylock as senex and Jessica as rebellious heroine—the play characterizes Shylock's home in terms of its owner. Indeed, both Portia and Shylock are synonymous with their homes, as Jessica moves from the "hell" of the father's home to the ostensible paradise of Belmont (2.3.2). Going, "in hate, / to feed upon / The prodigal Christian," Shylock first tells Jessica, "Look to my house" (2.5.14–16). Having dreamt of money—another cheap joke for the Gratianos in the audience—Shylock's primary concern is the security of his home. Recognizing that it is carnival time, his need to shore up the house becomes even more pronounced:

> Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum
> And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife,
> Clamber not you up to the casements then,
> Nor thrust your head into the public street
> To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces:
> But stop my house's ears—I mean my casements—
> Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
> My sober house. (2.5.28–35)

Lavezzo observes that "Shylock seems less concerned with his daughter than with maintaining the integrity of the edifice in and of itself. It is not so much human but architectural violations he fears."[96] Here the human and the spatial or architectural become one—the house has ears, and the street itself poses a threat. His home likewise must be presented as a foil to Portia's manor: Belmont lives in song, while Shylock's house is silent; Belmont is abundance, while Shylock's house is temperance; Belmont lodges the traveling stranger—if reluctantly and temporarily,

95. Goldstein, *Eating and Ethics*, 75.

96. Lavezzo, 1.

depending on nation and complexion—while Shylock's house is bound fast. While Belmont is Christian, Shylock's house, until it is inherited by the Christian who steals his wealth and marries his daughter, is Jewish.

The violation of Shylock's house in Jessica's escape from it—and her making off with parts of it in caskets full of jewels—marks the first move in the break from community that will culminate in the loss of the house and the forced conversion of the Jew. Shylock knows better than to envision any interconfessional fellowship in Venice, and the business of buying and selling on the Rialto is left on the Rialto, but he does have his daughter and his synagogue, a word which, as Lupton points out, indicated for the diaspora, "the act of assembly, the place of assembly, and the community so assembled, an increasingly important site for communal business in the post-temple, post-priestly context of semi-autonomous self-rule in host states."[97] The appearance of "synagogue" in this play is the only instance in the Shakespeare canon, and it is possible that he learned the word from *The Jew of Malta*. As Shylock is severed from his daughter, it is fitting that he turns to Tubal and to the Jewish collective life that Tubal represents.

Tubal, named after the figure in Genesis who brought Jews into Europe through Spain, echoing the diasporic identity and mobility behind the religious conflict in this play, gives Shylock the news of Antonio's wrecked argosies and of Jessica's extravagance outside Venice, informing him that she had exchanged a ring for a monkey. The lost ring, an image that will become crucial in the next few acts, is the metaphor for the loss of the bond the object represents. The pathos of Shylock's response—"Thou torturest me, Tubal. It was my turquoise: I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys" (3.2.109–111)—offers a backstory of Shylock as not just Jew, usurer, or stern father to a rebellious daughter, but as husband and even a

97. Lupton, *Citizen-Saints,* 83.

man in love. It is of course possible that the audience found just deserts in Shylock's loss of the ring, and it may have even played for comedy, but can a modern audience fail to be moved by this moment of pathos?

Whether or not he will get his revenge on Antonio, at this point Shylock is an individual with a history, and he has just lost the most valuable relation in his life. What he has left is Tubal and the synagogue, the repetition of which only reinforces those larger losses: "Go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue. Go, good Tubal, at our synagogue, Tubal" (3.2.116–118). As Lupton observes, this exchange with Tubal fuses religious community and a political assembly of Jews outside of the official civic life of Venice: "With Tubal, Shylock eats, drinks, and prays, but also buys, sells, walks, and talks, combining civil and civic functions,"[98] including, in this case, legal recourse against Antonio that may see the Merchant "out of Venice" by way of his death (3.2.115). Wishing for the ultimate social exclusion of his enemy, Shylock will, of course, will lose through his conversion the only community left him, that of Tubal and his fellow Jews in Venice.

While Shylock engineers his revenge, Portia welcomes Bassanio into her Belmont home. She trades the riddance offered to the dark-skinned prince for the wish to keep Bassanio there indefinitely, or at least for a time sufficient to teach him to cheat the casket game. "I pray you tarry. Pause a day or two / Before you hazard . . . I would detain you here some month or two / Before you venture for me. I could teach you / How to choose right, but then I am forsworn" (3.2.1–11). As if she were a hostess taking a hostage, Portia's hospitality is on the threshold of undoing Bassanio's agency, while the language of detention reminds the audience that Tubal and Shylock have sought out a jailer to take Antonio into custody. Portia's stated desire to stack the odds in Bassanio's favor should leave little doubt that she does so and that in fact she is bringing him in on

98. Lupton, *Citizen-Saints*, 83.

the plan. With a narrative structure that demands it—we have seen two suitors choose the wrong caskets—the fairy tale precedent, and Portia's preference for the Venetian, Bassanio cannot lose. So, when he chooses the lead casket after the song that chimes, "Tell me where is fortune bred, / Or in the heart or in the head, / How begot, how nourishèd" (3.2.63–65), it matters not just that the core marriage plot is resolved but that we see Portia's willingness to cheat for advantage, that her vaunted intelligence is met by an commensurate propensity to stack the deck. The lines of the song blend imagery of reproduction and food, suggesting tenets of the home as the central locale family and nourishment. This scene brings Bassanio into the house, which is conflated with its presiding presence, Portia, throughout the play. Portia continues to align herself with the home even as she suggests she is now turning it over to her fiancé, as she offers the ring that stands for their bond:

> Myself, and what is mine, to you and yours
> Is now converted. But now, I was the lord
> Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
> Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
> This house, these servants and this same myself,
> Are yours, my lord's. I give them with this ring. (3.2.166–171)

If, in this extension of the language of conversion and exchange that makes of identity a commodity throughout the drama, Portia gives self and home over to Bassanio with the ring, then the ring trick she will soon devise restores her self-possession and control over space. Portia's manor "must transform from a lodging house" for itinerant suitors "into a stable home,"[99] and after the offer of the ring, it becomes the catalyst for the union of Gratiano and Nerissa as well as the residence, for a time that I imagine to be brief, for the already betrothed Jessica and Lorenzo.

Jessica's presence as Lorenzo's bride, however, threatens the racial and cultural uniformity of Belmont's inner circle—if Portia is at home wherever she finds herself, Jessica is never at home—and at this point in the play, the concerns of the household and those of the political world become

99. Sousa, 46.

tightly intertwined. Having escaped from the self-described hell of the Jewish father's home, Jessica suggests the triumph of conversion; her children will be Christians brought up in a Christian house. Yet the play reminds us continually of its concern with her Jewish blood, and the question of whether the Jew can ever truly convert, and on what terms conversion may or may not grant access into the Christian commonwealth, is simultaneously present. Adelman's reading of Belmont, England, and the Jewish characters of the play, is direct:

> Jessica's entrance into Belmont thus troubles the serenity of that fantasy of England—and troubles it not only through her resemblance to the conversos in London but also because she carries with her a complex set of allusions to a narrative of nationhood that reopens the question of blood sameness and blood difference exactly where it is most likely to be perplexing to a contemporary Englishman: in the vexed arena of country and nation.[100]

Taking Belmont as a microcosmic figuration of England, Jessica's presence there not only challenges the presumption of religious or racial homogeneity but also the terms by which community is forged. It is no wonder that she is rejected by Portia and the play at large. If Jessica were considered truly Christian and welcomed into Belmont as a faithful convert, it would suggest an investment by the play in the prospect of sincere conversion and the resolution of a fractured community by way of assimilation, and even perhaps offer the possibility for a more optimistic reading of post-conversion Shylock. What the play offers instead is Gratiano, surely one of the least gracious, graceful, or amusing characters in all of Shakespeare, calling her Lorenzo's "infidel" and instructing Nerissa to "cheer yond stranger" (3.2.217, 236), names elsewhere used, as in the court scene, to refer to Shylock. "Infidel" and "stranger," Adelman observes, excludes Jessica on religious as well as civic grounds, while Gratiano's command is only logical if she is set apart onstage and looks as if she is unhappy.[101] The rule that divides the citizen from the alien, wielded as a weapon

100. Adelman, *Blood Relations*, 89.

101. Adelman, *Blood Relations*, 73.

against Shylock in court, also cuts Jessica from the community of Belmont. She is, after all, of her father's blood, and as her identity is racialized, the sincerity of her conversion still does not grant her acceptance in Christian society.

In this context, the temporary appointment of Jessica to Portia's position in the manor is an ironic reminder of the exclusion we see in both Venice and Belmont. Like her father in the Venetian court, Jessica does not stand a chance in that Christian household. When Portia tells Lorenzo, then, "I commit unto your hands / The husbandry and manage of my house / Until my lord's return" (3.4.25–27), the couple of Lorenzo and Jessica becomes a dramatic foil to that of Bassanio and Portia. Yet the fairy tale romance of the latter pair replicates with distortion in the former—to bring Jessica into Belmont means to also bring Shylock and Jewish lineage. While many critics have discussed the ironies of the in-such-a-night exchanges of Lorenzo and Jessica—those famous tales of unfortunate love and what they bode for the couple—their conversation with Lancelot just after Portia and Nerissa leave makes the same point in a more direct register. With no clear dramatic purpose, Act 3 of Scene 5 begins with Lancelot berating Jessica. She is not Jessica, but the "Jew's daughter" (3.5.10), and as such must be both spiritually damned and socially alien. When she protests that she will be saved by Lorenzo, who has made her Christian, Lancelot responds, "Truly, the more to blame he . . . This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs" (3.5.19–22). As with every reference to pork in the play, the joke shores up the boundary between Christian and Jew, alien and citizen, and finally even Lorenzo and Jessica.

If Lancelot's point relies on reminding Jessica and Lorenzo that their marriage transgresses the boundaries of community in Venice, Lorenzo answers him with the same charge. Lancelot tells Lorenzo that he is accused of being "no good member of the commonwealth" (3.5.31), and Lorenzo then responds to Lancelot, "I shall answer that better to the commonwealth than you can the getting up of the negro's belly: the Moor is with child by you, Lancelot!" (3.5.34–36). What happens in

Venice cannot stay in Venice and be kept out of Belmont, and questions of sexual union are linked to questions of the commonwealth. As Kim F. Hall observes, this exchange asks the audience to consider the difference between the relations of Lorenzo with Jessica and Lancelot with the unnamed Black woman, while also pointing to "the nexus of anxieties over gender, race, religion, and economics (fueled by the push of imperial/mercantile expansion) which surrounds the various possibilities of miscegenation in the play."[102] Among those anxieties is the question of politics, of the responsibility of the individual to the social body. Lancelot's punning response to the charge, "if she be less than an honest woman, she is indeed more than I took her for" (3.5.38–39), suggests that the Black woman is intrinsically immoral, which thus excuses his use of her, as the play uses her for a racist joke that extends to its depiction of Jessica. By asking the audience to compare the two relationships, the play not only begs the question of how Lorenzo might be using Jessica—in such a night does she "steal from the wealthy Jew," he says (5.1.15)—but also what the consequences may be for intercultural marriage and for bringing the racial or religious other into the home. The scene closes with preparations being made for dinner, and for a suggested, but never staged, commensality that might stand in for a larger sense of community, but how welcome will Jessica be at this table?

The commonwealth of Venice, much as it may fear intercultural contact, welcomes the economic benefit of diversity just as Lorenzo welcomes Jessica's caskets of loot pilfered from the father. As the detained Antonio tells us, the "trade and profit of the city / Consisteth of all nations" (3.4.30–31). It is reasonable to ask of Shylock why he thought he would have any standing against Antonio in the Venetian court. Shylock's position, though, depends upon his awareness of the economic benefit he brings to the city. What he fails to consider is the political crisis that his bond produces in Venice. That tear in the social fabric requires the state, with Portia acting as its agent, to

102. Kim F. Hall, "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?: Colonization and Miscegenation in 'The Merchant of Venice,'" *Renaissance Drama* 23 (1992): 89.

reaffirm the sharp boundary between citizen and alien. In this context, Shylock's assertions of Venetian hypocrisy are no more of an asset to his case than his contract with Antonio. Shylock tells the Duke,

> You have among you many a purchased slave
> Which, like your asses, and your dogs and mules,
> You use in abject and in slavish parts,
> Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,
> 'Let them be free, marry them to your heirs.
> Why sweat they under burdens? Let their beds
> Be made soft as yours, and let their palates
> Be seasoned with such viands?' You will answer:
> 'The slaves are ours.' So do I answer you.
> The pound of flesh which I demand of him
> Is dearly bought; 'tis mine, and I will have it. (4.1.89–102)

Shylock here misapprehends his position before the court. In his analogy, he is the owner of the enslaved person, the one who can purchase certain rights even if they contradict a moral code. If the Venetian slaver were to be asked to grant their slaves the hospitality of downy sheets and fine foods, surely that slaveowner would respond as Shylock imagines. The bond "dearly bought" echoes Portia's line to Bassanio, "Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear" (3.2.312), aligning the Jewish lender and Christian heiress and ironically underscoring Shylock's inability to grasp his political identity before Venice. To the state, he is not Portia or the owner, but is more akin to the enslaved person or the animals in the analogy, to be used to generate profit. Venice, however, proud of its charter and its trade, cannot say that to Shylock directly. The court requires a justification based on law, and so the flustered Duke responds to Shylock by threatening to dismiss the court unless letters from Bellario arrive, which then arrive on cue, and Balthazar / Portia is instated in the court to stand in for Bellario.[103]

103. Portia's decision to name herself after the one figure of the Biblical Magi who was reputed to be Black is perhaps another racist joke, i.e., it suggests to the audience the irony of "fair" Portia taking the name of a known figure who was thought to be Black.

As Shylock stands for law, Portia stands for the power of the Venetian city-state to suspend or, more precisely, reinvent law, which she first manifests specifically as the authority to dispossess the Jew of his estate. Toying with Shylock, she says he may have his bond, "But in the cutting it, if thou dost shed / One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods / Are by the laws of Venice confiscate / Unto the state of Venice" (4.1.305–308). Echoing the beginning of *The Jew of Malta*, the Christian state asserts its right to absorb Jewish property and wealth. These overlapping political and religious discourses come through in Portia's specification of "Christian" blood and repetition of "Venice." Shylock relents, forfeits his bond, and is willing to leave the court with nothing.

Then Portia brings out the fictitious old law to resolve the crisis brought about by Shylock's apparent attempt to shed Christian Venetian blood: "If it be proved against an alien . . . He seek the life of any citizen / The party 'gainst which he shall contrive / Shall seize one-half his goods. The other half / Comes to the privy coffer of the state" (4.1.345–350). Shylock's bond is a threat not only to Antonio, but to Venice more broadly, and Portia here restores order by enacting the right of the state to distinguish alien and citizen and dispossess the Jew of his property. As Lupton observes: "if the life of a citizen is at risk, so too is civic life, *bios politikos*, more generally,"[104] and thus Antonio gets half, and the state, as the body that bestows and protects citizenship, gets half. Jewish wealth is again absorbed into the Christian community, citizen remains citizen, alien remains alien, and the Duke can pardon Shylock's life because Portia has resolved the larger political crisis brought about by Shylock's bond.

Shylock responds to the Duke's pardon, "Nay, take my life and all. Pardon not that. / You take my house when you do take the prop / That doth sustain my house" (4.1.370–371). For Shylock, the physical house stands for his social place, and his ability to generate wealth offers a path

104. Lupton, *Citizen-Saints,* 96.

toward civil participation within the city-state. Without that, he becomes a sort of refugee in Arendt's definition, lacking political identity as well as ontological self-possession.[105] A Shylock with no house, no business, and no daughter, would be a man alone indeed, but Venice goes even further to strip him of his religious community as well. Antonio offers Shylock the right to maintain half of his wealth while he lives—though all will go to Lorenzo on his death—on the condition that he convert. Shapiro is excellent on how Shylock's identities as resident alien and Jew knock against each other in the court, and the ways in which cultural, religious, and citizenship categories can be collapsed and weaponized by the state:

> As much as it might want to, given its charter, Venetian society cannot punish Shylock because he is a Jew. But in the terms of the play it can convict him as a threatening alien. In order to accomplish this delicate maneuver in the space of these dozen lines, the nature of his difference is reconstituted: a Jew at the start of the speech, three lines later, he is an alien. Yet once Shylock is convicted as an alien, he can be punished, not as an alien, but as a Jew, who must 'presently become a Christian.'[106]

Rather than bringing Shylock into some sort of Christian commonwealth—can we imagine Shylock next to Antonio in church or holding political membership in Venetian society?—this decree puts the Jew into a sort of internal exile in Venice. The forced conversion is the annihilation rather than the assimilation of his identity, and there is no suggestion that the Jew who nearly murdered a Christian in open court will be granted place in Christian Venice. In this play that consistently suggests that even the sincere Jessica can only hover on its edges of the grating harmonies of Christian society, Shylock's social identity post-conversion can only be precarious. Unwell, he leaves the court and does not reappear onstage. After a courtroom scene in which he has gleefully and relentlessly attacked Shylock, Gratiano shows Nerissa to the house of the Jew, where she will deliver the deed that wills it to Lorenzo.

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105. Lupton, *Citizen-Saints*, 97.

106. Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, 189.

For many recent critics of the play, it is tempting, even sufficient, to stop there. Shylock, after all, has been done in, and it is with him that the most crucial questions of the play seem to reside. Even the comic plots have been resolved with the triple marriages, and it is difficult to imagine a modern audience finding much investment or pleasure in Portia's ring trick. Yet return to Belmont we do, and it is the final locale of the play that will have the final word on hospitality. If Act 4 resolves the political crisis engendered by Shylock's attempt to take Antonio's life, Act 5 reestablishes the domestic sphere as the place where questions of community begin. As noted, the old tales recited by Jessica and Lorenzo foreshadow the failure of their union in grand and mythic terms. The rest of the final act suggests that the terms of that failure will depend on the ostensibly ineluctable cultural difference of Jewish identity that, despite her willing conversion, Jessica cannot shed in Belmont.

While the ironies of their exchange beneath the moon articulate the precarity of their marriage, Jessica's exclusion becomes most evident in the house. Informed that Portia is returning, Lorenzo tells his new bride, "But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica, / And ceremoniously let us prepare / Some welcome for the mistress of the house" (5.1.36–38). Lorenzo here recognizes Portia's manor as a center of ceremony, which suggests the rites of domestic hospitality and the commensality that are mentioned in this play but never staged, but its most immediate meaning as the play concludes is not food—the kitchen fails again—but music. Where this leaves Jessica, and the questions she represents in terms of conversion and assimilation, depends on her position in Belmont.

As music suffuses the play's final act, Jessica's last line positions her outside the circle of hospitality: "I am never happy when I hear sweet music" (5.1.69). She is Shylock's daughter after all, in blood and taste both, and this statement, never answered, serves to "align her with her father's

melancholy and musicless house; after Portia's return, she has nothing left to say."[107] While the trial scene subjects Shylock to the violence of state power, the return to Belmont portrays the luxury that the production of wealth affords. Shylock's money funds Bassanio's courtship, but now Bassanio oversees the manor in Belmont and Shylock has been dispossessed. As Kenneth Gross observes:

> [W]e sense the deep ceremonious charm, generosity, and play, eve then innocence made possible by the magic of money; we sense as well how the place is haunted by a vague awareness of the sacrifices or shames that subtend this innocence, and the guards in place against knowing these more clearly.[108]

Jessica remains outside such "ceremonious charm" and Belmont's hospitality leaves us finally not with the comfort of opulence but with the taste of shame. Nerissa hands Lorenzo the deed that dispossesses Shylock on his death, and Lorenzo responds: "Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way / Of starved people" (5.1.293–294). How the irony of the Exodus reference lands on the ears of the daughter of diaspora is uncertain. In Jessica's final silence, like that of Caliban or Isabella, the play leaves it up to us to envision what sort of a future she might find.

If Marlowe treats the audience to a hyperbolic bloodbath of anarchic energies, Shakespeare depicts—in Venice and Belmont, in private and public—a Christian society that maintains its stability by reinforcing racial and religious boundaries and excluding the Jew. John Gillies notes that the play gives us two sides of Venice: Antonio represents the city-state as "a community bounded by interlocking circles of kin, 'commonwealth,' religion, and 'kind'," while Shylock represents the city in its cosmopolitan aspect.[109] Belmont, however, is not split into opposing sides or possibilities; it is an

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107. Adelman, *Blood Relations*, 77. Perhaps "sweet" is significant as a modifier here and it is not music per se but the music of Belmont that doesn't suit her. Either reading reinforces her exclusion from the Belmont community.

108. Kenneth Gross, *Shylock is Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 30.

109. John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 125.

image of Christian harmony defined by its practices of social exclusion and mislike of purported outsiders on the basis of infidel blood or their dark complexion. Venice is vicious, but Belmont, all too easily a proxy for England, is the true locus of cruel hospitality in the play. With Portia as its dominant voice, *The Merchant of Venice* finally articulates a cultural sphere where both social place and domestic space for Jessica and Shylock can only be precarious.

Shylock's Ghetto and 21st-Century Displacement

I suspect that Shakespeare knew few specific details about Venice's ghetto, formed in 1516 on an island occupied by metal foundries (*geti*), already fortified as a military-industrial enclosure, and populated in part by communities previously expelled from other European states.[110] Jews in Venice were likewise, barring certain exceptions, not permitted outside of the designated zone after nightfall, which would have made it complicated for Shylock to dine at Antonio's table. Not only is it unlikely that Shylock could have owned his home, as Jews were forced to rent at exorbitant rates, but he would also likely have been required to brick up all outward facing windows and doors. So much for the need to stop up the casements, the peril of the public street below, or Jessica's plan of escape. With these extreme measures the Venetian city-state enacted to, in part, "divert public calls for their expulsion altogether," Jews often referred to the ghetto as their *get*, for the Hebrew word for divorce.[111] Verisimilitude aside, what these plays understand is that the violence of social exclusion plays out in spatial terms, which outline the limits of hospitality of a given state or political body. They thus stage an opportunity to reimagine political life outside of commonly accepted and naturalized categories of belonging.

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110. Terpstra, 89.

111. Terpstra, 89.

Returning to Shylock more than four centuries since the play's first performance, and half a millennium since the founding of the Venetian ghetto, offers audiences an encounter with the failures of social imagination that lead to spatial exclusion. The millions of refugees, asylum-seekers, and *de jure* or *de facto* stateless persons in the world today are emblems of that failure. As Shaul Bassi notes of the 2016 production by Compagnia de' Colombari, which took place in the same streets Venetian Jews walked in the late 16th century, the play demands a consideration of "modern ghettos and the modern walls and fences which modern political regimes" continue to construct.[112] The walls in our political imagination predicate the walls on our borders and are concrete reminders of the violence of state power. A model of the nation-state that was just coming into being in Shakespeare's time remains the global norm, even as some theorists have recognized that its moral and political failures have led us to the "twilight of state sovereignty."[113] As I argue in the next chapter of this study, Shakespearean drama in the present might be used not to reinforce notions of canonicity or cultural superiority, but to challenge the legacies of thinking that have brought us to our own contemporary crises in citizenship and the immeasurable harm of modern displacement.

Shylock and Barabas, *estate-less* as well as stateless,[114] speak beyond the worlds in which they find themselves to offer a dramatic encounter with forms of social association and exclusion that reverberate from sovereign decision-making power to the home, and from their 16th-century worlds to our own. Derrida writes: "Hospitality is owed to the other as stranger. But if one determines the other as stranger, one is already introducing the circles of conditionality that are family, nation, state,

112. Shaul Bassi, "Shylock in the Thinking Machine: Civic Shakespeare and the Future of Venice," in *New Places: Shakespeare and Civic Creativity*, edited by Paul Edmonson and Ewan Fernie, (London: Arden Bloomsbury), 175.

113. Seyla Benhabib, "Borders, Boundaries, and Citizenship," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 38, no. 4 (2008): 676.

114. Lupton, *Citizen-Saints*, 57.

and citizenship."[115] *The Jew of Malta* carries an incipient political force by shattering these circles of conditionality to question the ontology of strangerhood itself, while *The Merchant of Venice* depicts the flexible grammar of cruelty required to reinforce them. For Marlowe, raw state power triumphs, temporarily, as the sovereign is always likely to get toppled and replaced. For the Shakespeare of *Merchant*, peace and prosperity depend on the exclusion of the religious and racial other, as circles of conditionality flex and solidify in turns to shore up the power and wealth of the majority.

Considered together, by presenting the diasporic Jew as a figure of mobility and exclusion, these plays force the critical question of how to forge community in a world in which violence pushes migration and stable citizenship is not a given. In *Rethinking Refugees*, Peter Nyers asks what it would mean to "reformulate our political categories and practices with diaspora—or the refugee" as the starting point.[116] Beyond ideally causing non-migrants to give more care to the ethical demands posed by statelessness and displacement and confront the cruelty of the modern nation-state toward migrants, it might also begin to dissolve the hard line that separates citizen from alien in our political imagination. Marlowe's play interrogates the category of the stranger while illustrating that common strangerhood does not resolve the issue of power—these strangers are still marked by difference and their social positions, though unstable, exist within a structured hierarchy. Shakespeare's play stresses the violence required to continually produce the stranger. Together, they suggest new forms of civil and civic association that are still to be determined, challenging the political imagination admit the failures of present organization and go beyond the nation-state. Imagining political categories that are not rooted in national identity might allow us to recognize common human mobility and establish subnational and supranational forms of communal relation in which political categories

115. Derrida, "Hostipitality," 6.

116. Nyers, x.

such as “stranger,” “citizen,” or “alien” no longer make coherent sense. Starting with the refugee highlights the failures of citizenship.

Chapter Two

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Migrant Shakespeares: Revising the Canon to Perform Displacement

A light scratch on the Shakespearean corpus reveals a consistent pattern of social and geographic displacement. Nobles banished to deserted lands or neighboring nations, prisoners of war, diasporic Jews, captured Moors, shipwrecked strangers in need of hospitality and asking, like Viola, "What country, friends, is this?"—such are the migrant voices that populate Shakespeare's stage. In the foundational study *Shakespeare's Drama of Exile*, Jane Kingsley-Smith observes that fourteen of the plays depict the banishment of at least one central character, and the number increases considerably if minor roles and other forms of exile are included.[117] The threat of violence in these dramas, often on the order of a sovereign tyrant, persistently pushes characters into zones of precarity, dangerous places that threaten the physical body and the social self. Drawing from the varied legacies of Plutarch's Roman chronicles, classical dramatic precedents, Holinshed's histories of the British Isles, and late-medieval pastoral and prose romance, Shakespearean drama is marked by what theater scholar Una Chaudhuri has called "geopathology," or the "struggle with the problem of place" that "unfolds as an incessant dialogue between belonging and exile, home and homelessness."[118] This early modern theater of migration dramatizes the intersection of geographic space and forms of belonging through collective cultural or political identities.

What it might mean to be *of* a place, excluded *from* a place, or inhabiting the borderlands in between geographic locales or social communities forms a common Shakespearean dramatic inquiry,

117. Kingsley-Smith, 1.

118. Una Chaudhuri, *Staging Place: The Geography of Modern Drama* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 15.

and exile likewise provides a familiar dramatic structure that extends from biblical and classical legacies into the present. "Certain mythic cornerstones," scholar of refugee theater Emma Cox observes, "the painful separation, the journey, the encounter with others, the longing for home, and sometimes, the *nostos*" provide audiences with a recognizable and powerful narrative pattern.[119] Stories of displacement, driven by the risk that inheres in forced migration, are both foundational and perennial in the cultural expression of varied global traditions. As Edward Said writes in "Reflections on Exile," his classic essay on the topic: "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home."[120] That fracture in the life of the refugee forms a dramatic narrative hinge, which Shakespeare's plays exploit in a sustained engagement with the costs of community and exclusion.

Who is granted the right to safely belong under the umbrella of collective political identity and who is refused that right remains a defining axis of ethical and political life in the global present. As forced migration has continued to increase in the 20th and 21st centuries, from the millions displaced by World War II to the ongoing flight from Syria in the present, to a future that will undoubtedly be defined by the migration of climate refugees, displacement is a central feature of the modern world, the stories we tell ourselves about it, and how we envision the future. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, 89.3 million people, one percent of the global population, were classified as forcibly displaced at the end of 2021—a number large enough to form the fourteenth most populous nation.[121] Even so, the figure excludes millions of people who do not fit the strict

119. Emma Cox, *Theatre and Migration* (London: Red Globe Press, 2014*),* 9.

120. Said, 137.

121. "Figures at a Glance," *UNHCR*, June 16, 2022. https://www.unhcr.org/us/about-unhcr/who-we-are/figures-glance.

criteria of the UNHCR, which makes distinctions among displaced persons and excludes the category of the economic migrant. As global wealth disparity and unequal distribution of risk from accelerating climate change force greater human mobility, the border between migration as economic necessity and as a flight of physical safety will become even more difficult to draw. "You have to understand," writes the poet Warsan Shire, "that no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land."[122] Said's unhealable rift within the individual is a wound writ large on the global body.

Given the urgent ethical and political demands raised by the tens of millions of displaced people in the present, directors and other theater practitioners have recently turned to Shakespeare to dramatize 21st-century global migration and the broader unwillingness of the international community to develop long-term solutions to accommodate displaced populations. The public discourse around migrants all too often focuses on a perceived threat to state security rather than the moral harm caused by a refusal to accord rights to temporarily stateless persons and foster international arrangements that seek to restructure the conditions that produce displacement. Shakespearean revisions in performance offer a mode of engaging with issues of migration, suggesting that the fault is not in our stars—or the stars of whoever is rendered stateless—but in the deficient moral imagination of the modern nation-state, and in particular in the wealthier nations who benefit from a global political organization based on stark borders, but who fail to aid those who lose their political identity when forced to escape danger in their homeland. In our current global context of mass migration, the persistent concern in Shakespeare's works with displacement serves as a springboard for socially committed theater-makers to stage migration and call attention to the responsibility of the non-migrant audience to migrant justice.

122. Warsan Shire, "Home," quoted in Serena Parekh, *Refugees and the Ethics of Forced Displacement* (London: Routledge, 2015), 136–137.

As a broad object of study, Migrant Shakespeares might encompass such widespread cultural products as the popularization of "The Stranger's Case" monologue from *Sir Thomas More* by the International Rescue Committee, the choice of the phrase "Tempest Tossed" as the title for the podcast of immigration scholar and former United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Alex Aleinikoff, and other uses of Shakespeare's name and words to spread awareness of forced migration. Shakespeare's resonant language and outsized presence in the cultural imagination affords appropriative potential beyond the theater. This chapter casts a smaller net, engaging with productions that appropriate, revise, adapt, interrogate, and complicate Shakespearean source texts and playworlds to represent migrant experience and participation through performance. Following Julie Sanders's premise that "performance is an inherently adaptive art,"[123] this chapter considers productions that make substantial additions and alterations in the source text or strong choices of setting and language to foreground the experience of forced migration. These Shakespearean revisions go beyond merely highlighting the thematic patterns of exile and separation in the source text to instead incorporate representations of and commentary on modern forced migration. Audiences would therefore not return from the shows I address here with the sense that they attended a standard Shakespeare play—though the name may have helped sell the ticket to begin with—but would acknowledge a consideration of the conditions of migrancy in the performance.

As the evident social interest of such productions involves the ethics of representation and reception beyond theatrical pleasure, my consideration of the productions here concerns the dramatic strategies that they employ to engage the audience with issues of forced migration. Working from Helena Grehan's conception of performances that cause "an ambivalence about the responsibility produced by and in response to the work," I analyze both the appropriative uses of

123. Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2006), 48.

Shakespeare in these plays and their dramatic representations of refugee experience in terms of the ethics of spectatorship.[124] Central questions that must be asked when staging or examining Migrant Shakespeares include: At what point, if at all, does the dramatization of forced migration intersect with its global reality? How might the choice and presentation of Shakespeare reproduce or undermine assumptions of Anglo-European, i.e., white, cultural superiority? How might a non-refugee viewer, untouched in direct material terms by the world's displaced, reimagine their relationship to those countless—and often nameless—others subject to distant atrocities? Staging forced migration poses questions regarding citizenship, nationhood, and the moral harm overtly caused or tacitly accepted by the world's wealthier nations to the most vulnerable global populations. Migrant Shakespeares, and the case studies examined in this essay, may offer the possibility for new debate or resistance to the harsh logic of the border guard, yet they also risk falling into forms of representation that seem to speak for the dispossessed or inadvertently reinforce Euro-chauvinist and nativist assumptions about the cultures from which most refugees are displaced. The vexing question of what the social art of performance might become in the public realm of the *polis*, even if unanswerable in any definitive sense, cannot be fully side-stepped when the stakes are this high.

In the following sections of the chapter, I examine five case studies of Migrant Shakespeares: Jessica Bauman's 2017 *Arden / Everywhere*, an adaptation that reimagined the forest of Arden in *As You Like It* as a refugee camp; Adrian Jackson's 2003 *Pericles*, which intertwined migrant testimonials with the main plot of the play; Saheem Ali's 2017 *Twelfth Night*, which used the history of the US. Wet Foot / Dry Foot immigration policy to place the ship-thrown Viola and Sebastian amidst Miami's Cuban diaspora; and Nawar Bulbul's 2014 *Shakespeare in Zaatari* and 2015 *Romeo and Juliet Separated by War*, in which children displaced by the Syrian conflict presented Shakespearean

124. Helena Grehan, *Performance, Ethics and Spectatorship in a Global Age* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 22.

adaptations conceived and directed by Bulbul. The critical intent here is to address both performance strategies and audience reception at the intersection of Shakespearean drama and activist interventions in service of migrant justice. These case studies demonstrate the ways in which Migrant Shakespeares offer possibilities for a theater of justice while also risking the perpetuation of the unquestioned hierarchies and social injustices the plays and their cultural afterlives reinforce. While the cases differ in how far they stray from the source text and how direct their critique of state or audience may be, together they present both the risk and opportunity in the work of repurposing Shakespearean precedents in the present moment and form a set of possibilities for the uses of Shakespeare in an engaged theater of migration.

"What Happens if You Take the Stakes Seriously?": Jessica Bauman's *Arden / Everywhere*

"*As You Like It* is a play that I've always kind of hated," director Jessica Bauman tells me.[125] The people in the forest of Arden, she says, "always felt like they had just stepped out of the L.L. Bean catalogue," and she could not understand why they were not "starving."[126] I confess to sharing the impression that Shakespeare's comical-pastoral, at least as I have seen it performed, carries too few genuine moments of humor and too many set-pieces that might work better in an early modern commonplace book than on a 21st-century stage. Despite the wit of Rosalind and the appealing vision of harmony in the forest, the play has always struck me as unbearably light in comparison to the rich ethical engagement in much of the dramatic corpus. Bauman argues that the problem lies not in the play as such, but in its performance tradition, which has stressed a strained rustic humor over the vulnerability of the characters who have fled the court to find refuge in the woods.

125. Jessica Bauman in discussion with the author, April 2020.

126. Bauman, discussion with author.

Recognizing the modern prevalence and precarity of forced migration, Bauman says: "If they go home, they'll be killed. We have a word for people in that situation. We call those people refugees. What happens if you start to take the stakes of the play seriously?"[127]

Bauman's production of *Arden / Everywhere* was performed in New York in 2017. To take the stakes seriously, her adaptation stresses Shakespeare's language of hunger and vulnerability, represents the Arden scenes as taking place within a refugee camp, and is performed by actors from nine different countries, who share personal migration stories and sing interludes in their native languages. The production also draws from Bauman's experience as an instructor of theater workshops in Kakuma, Kenya, in the most populated refugee camp in the world, as an influence on the setting, staging, and movement of the adaptation. For her, taking the stakes of displacement seriously means doing the research into the current conditions in which refugees housed in temporary camps live as well as considering migrant resettlement in the United States. The dramatic composite she creates derives from three primary sources: the play text of *As You Like* It, Bauman's own experience with refugees and immigrants both in Kakuma and in New York, and the testimonials of the actors, who share their stories of migration.

The intent in *Arden / Everywhere* to transform its source, and the Shakespearean pastoral mode of humor that ensues when the mannered courtiers bump into the country bumpkins, into a more engaged meditation on forced migration and the conditions of refugee camps in the present is ultimately limited by the generic demands of the play itself, especially the welcome return to court, which reinforces conservative notions of hierarchy in an ostensibly happy conclusion. The representation of Arden in the source text as an idyllic space also troubles Bauman's intention to stage it as a refugee camp. The premise of much theater of migration is that "refugees need to be

127. Bauman, discussion with author.

understood and their situation brought to a wider public in order to create empathy" and foster the conditions for social change, and often the primary dramatic technique for evoking an audience response is an explicit focus on the suffering of refugees, which risks characterizing the migrant subject primarily as a victim.[128] Bauman thus refuses what she calls a "trauma narrative" that stages victimhood, instead demonstrating through her dramaturgical choices that the hardship endured by displaced people does not diminish the fact that they "have all the experiences all the rest of us have, like falling in love or getting in stupid fights with their friends."[129] Yet the decision to hew closely to the language and structure of the original also leads to a production that obscures the political particularity of forced migration and the urgency of action regarding the harm caused by displacement and encampment. *Arden / Everywhere* ultimately articulates both the richness of opportunity in bringing out themes of displacement in Shakespeare and the risks of its use in theatrical engagement with modern refugee experience.

The opening scenes of the play emphasize the violence of expulsion and the grief of family separation. Unnamed and unspeaking figures enact a dance of families and friends parting, with strong embraces and somber turnings-away, on the steps next to the audience. As they descend, the characters of Rosalind and Duke Senior hug in center-stage. The Duke is then stripped of suitcase, hat, and scarf, whisked away and left standing in the dark, arms locked and shivering, before a stranger takes him by the arm and offers another scarf to shield him from the cold. Beyond establishing the premise of the drama, this opening dumbshow presents the audience with conditions of expulsion and refuge: the Duke is evidently forced to leave on the threat of violence, must part from his family, and is then welcomed into Arden with a gift that acknowledges his

128. Alison Jeffers, *Refugees, Theatre and Crisis: Performing Global Identities* (London: Palgrave, 2011), 50.

129. Bauman, discussion with author.

vulnerability to a new environment. Drawing from Levinas and Derrida, scholar of refugee theater Alison Jeffers suggests that thinking "ethically about refugees begins with hospitality and responsibility for the Other, with small local acts of (necessarily) compromised hospitality that stand in for hospitality on a larger scale."[130] While small acts amount to little without structural change, Jeffers's observation suits the space of the theater, in which small and limited forms of community might foment the social imagination and find later expression in the broader cultural and political sphere. Bauman's staging is especially useful in these terms because unlike Jeffers, who reinforces a Self / Other binary in her reading of hospitality, *Arden / Everywhere* dramatizes a community helping itself, a reciprocal collective relation in which, at least while in Arden, hierarchy is absent. The space of the theater as a hospitable dwelling in the opening scenes reinforces the hospitality offered to the exiled Duke Senior. With a gesture of welcome, the play stages the small, representative act that proposes a broader ethic of acknowledgement and care.

The negative mirror of that ethic is the brutal expulsion enacted by Duke Frederick. Instead of Charles the wrestler telling Oliver and the audience the backstory of Duke Senior's expulsion, Bauman presents us with Frederick's press secretary, Tommy Schrider (who also plays Jacques) as a slick political operative in a suit and tie. The lights fade on the shivering Duke Senior and rise again on this media savvy court spokesman, amidst the noise of clicking cameras and unseen journalists jockeying for position. While the language conforms to the original, the context and delivery underscore the irony of the scene. "Three or four loving lords have put themselves into *vol-un-tary* exile with him,"[131] he says, stretching out the syllables and pointing the index fingers of both his hands at the audience as if to warn us not to contradict the party line. When asked where Duke

130. Jeffers, 15.

131. *Arden / Everywhere*, directed by Jessica Bauman, produced by New Feet Productions in collaboration with Baruch Performing Arts Center, New York, October 2017.

Senior will live, the spokesman speeds up his language to a barrage in the idealized pastoral mode, concluding: "where they fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world. Thank you very much!," and steps offstage.[132] Though the audience has already witnessed the pain of separation between Duke Senior and Rosalind, Bauman here reinforces this adaptation as a refugee drama by calling attention to the ways in which public figures establish narratives that justify exclusion and differentiate between categories of migrant. The court spokesman here signals to the audience a necessary skepticism of the official narratives of migration endorsed by state power. While the source text gives little reason to suspect Charles of spinning the story to protect the version of the court, the evident insincerity of the smooth-talking political advisor here highlights the irony of the reference to utopian peace and permanent spring.

Surrounded by dark-clad henchmen and sporting a suit and dapper pocket square, Duke Frederick appears at the wrestling match as a sort of oligarch and a fitting impresario of violent entertainment. As the competition leads directly to the banishment of Rosalind, and Orlando's necessary escape, he makes clear that he deals in a vocabulary of violence and that expulsion is his signature sovereign move. If the danger in court arises from the tyrannical tendencies of Duke Frederick, Bauman emphasizes the vulnerability of the banished characters, and seeks to represent threats in the forest as comparable to those at court. She says, "Shakespeare sets up this refugee story, and once everyone is in the woods and their paths are crossing, he stops being interested in the story. He lets it go because he's more interested in this pastoral romance thing."[133] Just as Celia announces her decision to change her name to something more fitting for an exile, pronouncing "*Al-i-en-a*" in this production with slow deliberation to emphasize the key term, *Arden / Everywhere*

132. *Arden / Everywhere.*

133. Bauman, discussion with author.

concerns itself with the condition of being alien, even as the text it is based on dives headlong into the "pastoral romance thing." Jeffers argues that "all theatre about refugees attempts to create a better understanding of refugees for non-refugee audiences."[134] While *Arden / Everywhere* is often torn between Bauman's concern with forced migration and the preoccupation of her source text with a rustic humor, by shifting the setting from forest to refugee camp, it facilitates audience engagement with conditions of migrant experience that are often obscured in public discourse around admission or refusal of displaced persons.

Once the dramatic action moves into exile in Arden, Bauman's production introduces its core intervention in terms of the play's contrast of court and country—the refusal to present the latter locale as an Edenic commune, instead modeling the exilic space on a refugee camp. Kingsley-Smith asserts that Shakespearean pastoral depends on the premise that the constricting hierarchies of sovereign power in the court give way to a gentle refuge in the forest, and that in *As You Like It*, Duke Senior's banishment is "envisioned not as an absence, but as a home-coming" in a broader dramatic progression from "alienation to companionship, oppression to liberty."[135] In *As You Like It*, the community in exile is constructed—and at times seems to exist—to eventually return to court and set aright Duke Frederick's unnatural usurpation. Shakespeare's Arden is a form of restorative vacation, which will eventually serve to repair the political world from which the characters have been banished. While Shakespeare's play rarely presents the perils of the forest—the lioness, the threat of hunger—Bauman navigates and reimagines the source text to call attention to both the possibility for companionship amidst the hardship of involuntary displacement and the physical

134. Jeffers, 14.

135. Kingsley-Smith, 109–110.

danger of the refugee condition.[136] She thus cuts out or ironically recontextualizes Shakespeare's language of rustic utopianism, instead establishing the camp of Arden as a setting of both precarity and community, a zone in which agency is restricted but not entirely lost, and danger and deprivation are set against resilience. By moving the description of the banishment before the entry of Orlando and Oliver, she likewise foregrounds the play as a representation of forced migration over fraternal or political conflict, or an aimless vacation preceding an inevitable conclusion in marriage and restoration of status. Yet once in the forest, staged as a refugee camp, the play must work to maintain its concern with forced migration.

Duke Senior's court in exile is a compound in disrepair, introduced to the audience amidst loud drumming and the shouts of men in mismatched and tattered clothing playing soccer, which becomes the common language of movement for the scenes of exile. The audience immediately sees that we are not in a lush forest, but a semi-urban series of residences evidently modeled on a refugee camp. Stacked wooden pallets and corrugated iron make up the background, while the foreground reveals large stone slabs, bits of old clothing, plastic bags, and similar detritus of modern life, in a landscape of waste repurposed by those who have been forced to leave their societies. The architecture and decor of the entire space suggests construction by materials that have been donated or discarded. Bauman has described the refugee camp in Kakuma, Kenya, where she led theater workshops, in these terms:

> [Residents] live in what amounts to a medium-sized city with no infrastructure: no electrical grid, no plumbing or sewage, just communal water taps and pit latrines; only one paved road (the one that leads to the UN compound), no public transportation. The refugees live in houses built from cement blocks, mud walls, and corrugated metal roofs.

136. I do not mean to suggest that there is no precarity as such in Shakespeare's Arden. There are threats of violence and references to economic hardship. Such risks, however, are often minimized by the generic form of the play and Shakespeare's general concern with the "pastoral romance thing" over the dangers of exile. While Bauman takes issue with the performance tradition, the language of the play itself is a limitation for stressing precarity. This is not the case in the late plays explored in Chapters Three and Four of this study.

> No windows, no ventilation, no electricity or plumbing. The camp was built as a temporary solution to the crisis of displacement from a series of wars, but there is nothing temporary about how long people are there.[137]

Bauman's Arden, like Shakespeare's and like the Kakuma camp, is a world apart, but there is little green to be found there. It is a social and geographic space of precarity, but not of abjection. Rejecting the trauma narrative common in representation of refugees by non-refugees, Bauman focuses instead on vitality and resourcefulness amidst the privation of the camp—soccer, song, small commerce, and flirtation fill the hours. Such a perspective aligns with what Dunn and Cons have called the "burdened agency" of refugee subjects.[138] Within Bauman's makeshift construction of Arden, the primary burden on the characters is exposure to bodily danger, whether through violence from others or vulnerability to illness, hunger, and harsh weather, but the characters are not positioned to perform suffering in an explicit attempt to elicit empathy from the audience. As Shakespeare's text allows Bauman to create distance from the victim / threat paradigm into which refugees too often fall in public discourse, Arden as a camp becomes "Everywhere," a place of physical hardship and loss of political identity to which any of us could be relegated.[139]

This refusal to present the characters as emblems of trauma by emphasizing these dangers to the exclusion of other elements of experience or follow the production history of the play into the

137. Jessica Bauman, "Theater and Meaning at Kakuma Refugee Camp," *HOWLROUND THEATRE COMMONS*, November 30, 2016, https://howlround.com/theatre-and-meaning-kakuma-refugee-camp.

138. Elizabeth Cullen Dunn and Jason Cons, "Aleatory Sovereignty and the Rule of Sensitive Spaces," *Antipode* 46, no. 1 (2014): 94.

139. Writing from Los Angeles with both humility and anger about makeshift encampments and semi-urban collective dwellings defined by risk and precarity, I cannot but think of the houseless populations that surround me. Adrian Jackson's Cardboard Citizens theater company, discussed later in this chapter, makes this necessary connection between the unhoused and forced migrants as problems of place. Incarceration too exists in this field of injustices that involve mobility and immobility.

mode of the rural commune, presents a dramatic and ethical challenge that the production must navigate. The primary obstacle is the sustained idealized language in the source text. Duke Senior, for instance, introduces the audience to Arden by rhapsodizing on its rustic pleasures: "Now my co-mates, and brothers in exile, / Hath not old custom made this life more sweet / Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods / More free from peril than the envious court" (2.1.1–4).[140] This language offers some possibility for ambiguity, and Ryan Farrar notes that depending on the performance, Amiens's response, "Happy is your grace / That can translate the stubbornness of fortune / Into so quiet and sweet a style" (2.1.18–20), might suggests that the Duke's pastoral paean serves to "mask the despair that results from his displacement."[141] In *Arden/Everywhere,* Amiens emphasizes the irony in this scene by coughing and shivering while delivering his lines, conveying to us that the characters may be far from Frederick's henchmen, but not, perhaps, from other forms of peril that emerge from the condition of displacement, such as exposure to illness and rough temperatures.

Duke Senior's act of translation, converting the ostensibly harsh into the pleasant by finding good in everything, extends further into the play. Once Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone have made their way into Arden, the sense of danger subsides and the forest is generally characterized as a hospitable space, where Rosalind and Celia have no trouble purchasing a home from Corin. Old Adam's hunger is likewise quickly sated by the offered food of Duke Senior, who says with customary grace "sit down and feed and welcome you to our table," undercutting Orlando's sense of a rough, antisocial forest in an act of hospitality that mirrors his own initial introduction into

140. The idealized language here is the bucolic utopian than a reflection of the rhetorical labor required for the Duke to make the most of a bad situation and cheer his compatriots in exile.

141. Ryan Farrar, "*As You Like It*: The Thin Line Between Legitimate Utopia and Compensatory Vacation," *Utopian Studies* 2, vol. 1 (2014): 369.

Bauman's vision of Arden.[142] Besides the lion attack toward the end of the original, itself a fantastical contrivance to force the reconciliation of Orlando and Oliver and the ensuing resolution of the play, for the main characters, Shakespeare's exilic journey moves from the implied danger of the road to a comfortable pastoral settlement. Though Bauman cleverly translates the lion attack to an encounter with a group of toughs who assault Oliver, that scuffle and an inserted argument between Audrey and William—and her evident anger at him— are the only harsh notes in the drama until its conclusion, at which point the audience will be reminded that not everyone gets to return, and is finally brought back out of Arden into New York and the production's concern with 21st-century migration.

Arden / Everywhere inserts or revises elements of the source text to remind the audience of its setting as a settlement for displaced persons. Based on Bauman's experience of camp commerce, Corin is a sort of merchant and fixer, who sells cigarettes, magazines, phone chargers, and other small goods from a kiosk, translating the country wisdom of Shakespeare's shepherd into the business savvy of the entrepreneurial gray-market capitalist in the camp environment. Likewise contrasting the forest pastoral with the semi-urban, makeshift zone of the refugee camp, Orlando spray-paints a heart encircling a large "R" on a corrugated metal backdrop instead of marring the bark of trees with his bad verses. At times, Shakespeare's pastoral language is successfully repurposed to the space, such as Corin's comic gesture toward a group of men to whom he has just sold tobacco, mentioning his pleasure in seeing his "ewes graze and lambs suck" while they eagerly inhale cigarettes.[143] Often, however, the references to animal husbandry and rural life jar against the setting. Touchstone's play on *goats* and the *goths* of Ovid, for instance, calls attention to the

142. *Arden / Everywhere.*

143. *Arden / Everywhere.*

complexity of staging Shakespeare's Arden as a refugee camp, suggesting practical questions, such as the presence or absence of animals in the camp, which is an issue of verisimilitude as well as a missed opportunity for this production to thicken its representation of encampment and refugee experience. Such details also raise the broader question about precisely what sort of a space Arden is in this adaptation. If the original play is concerned with an apparent opposition between court and country, to what is this space of the camp opposed? How do the various odes to rural life in the play fit into an adaptation that is certainly not a celebration of the refugee camp?

In the latter half of the drama, in which the original plot is less concerned with exile than with pastoral play, Bauman includes inserted monologues from the actors, who narrate their own experiences of migration and resettlement. Though *Arden / Everywhere* is restricted by its source text in how radically it can transform the setting of the forest, by choosing a cast predominantly of immigrants and making space for their narratives—in their own words and voices—this production elucidates the conditions of modern migrant experience without becoming overtly didactic or moralistic in its message. As the play goes on, Bauman's Arden becomes a multilingual space, where we hear songs in Swahili, Russian, and Sinhalese, Audrey berates Touchstone in rapid-fire and often comically harsh Spanish, and actors repeatedly break character and the fourth wall to speak to the audience. The inclusion of multiple languages and direct address reminds spectators that the actors themselves have made a journey analogous to the one depicted in the drama and have experienced some form of displacement. While *As You Like It* becomes centered almost entirely on Rosalind and Orlando's budding courtship, *Arden / Everywhere* begins its second act with the actors briefly telling their own stories of migration. Kambi Gathesha, who plays Oliver and Silvius, tells the audience about growing up in a community of exiles, in which linguistic and cultural diversity was a common condition: "It was the only utopia I have ever known. As a child, I never felt different because

everyone was from somewhere else. I had to come to the States to feel like an alien," he says.[144] The presence of this story within the broader context of Bauman's adaptation articulates that while those of differing languages and nationalities, even amidst hardship, get along well in this vision of Arden, living as an immigrant in the United States often involves prejudice and exclusion. This interruption of the Rosalind / Orlando plot and hiatus from Arden allows the play to subtly implicate its non-migrant audience, if not in the causal factors of forced migration, certainly in a broader cultural lack of comprehension of migrant experience and attention to the violence therein.

Though occasionally the dramatic structure and generic conventions of the original text cause awkwardness in Bauman's adaptation, the snippets of languages besides Shakespeare's English, first-person migration accounts, and camp-like setting center the play as a story of displacement and possible homecoming, while also emphasizing the value of linguistic and cultural diversity. In these additions, the play uses the Shakespearean frame to speak directly to its New York spectators in the present moment. Such demands for diversity are easily legible to American theatergoers and society more broadly, and Bauman's cast represents a vision of a multiracial and multilingual United States that until recently has been too rarely seen in the history of stage productions of Shakespeare, in which BIPOC actors have often been absent or relegated to minor roles. *Arden / Everywhere* was praised in the press for its onstage diversity. As a favorable review in the *New York Times* states,

> [T]his story . . . becomes a meditation on immigrants and refugees today, with a multilingual cast that mixes amateurs with professionals. It's an approach that might well have warmed the heart of that prescient champion of multiculturalism in the arts—and son of Russian immigrants—[founder of the Public Theater] Joseph Papp.[145]

144. *Arden / Everywhere.*

145. Ben Brantley, "Reinventing Shakespeare According to the Gospel of Joseph Papp," *New York Times*, September 7, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/07/theater/shakespeare-according-to-joseph-papp-public-theater.html.

While the reviewer is correct to connect Bauman's project to the social mission of the Public Theater, which brought BIPOC actors into Shakespeare productions, in what was then called "colorblind casting," before many other Shakespearean theater companies had addressed the lack of diversity on stage, this reading that conflates refugee experience with multiculturalism in the arts more broadly indicates a dilemma of definition in representing migrants onstage. Defining the refugee as a distinct category or generalizing migrant experience both carry risks of misrepresentation. Celebrating diversity in general occludes the political decisions that expose specific categories of people to greater risk, and the specificity of those histories might create a greater sense of urgency for action. This mixture of Shakespeare's dramatic narrative, which often moves in the airy zone of imagined rustic pleasure, and the elements of the play that call attention to 21st-century forced migration, exists in a theatrical space that spans dramatic entertainment and social education, raising the question of how a given production might choose specific strategies for the representation of vulnerable populations to predominantly privileged audiences without drifting into what Yogita Goyal has called "sentimental globalism," which allows American audiences in particular to imagine themselves as "global citizens, constituting themselves as global via their humanitarian empathy."[146] While the affective mode in general might be a way to reach audiences, and is not entirely vacant of the political, the extent to which it is a useful tool in fomenting action on behalf of refugee populations or disrupting common narratives of victims in need of rescue or threats to state security remains uncertain.

Stressing the forced nature of migration due to war or persecution, the harm and dangers of the camps, and the difficult process of being granted third-country resettlement, for example, might instill in an audience a pressing moral duty, as well as a sense of the specific historical circumstances

146. Yogita Goyal, *Runaway Genres: The Global Afterlives of Slavery* (New York: NYU Press, 2021), 13.

that have caused various patterns of global displacement. Yet, as noted earlier, it might also flatten out refugee experience as defined primarily by suffering and deny the full humanity and agency of refugees themselves while putting the more privileged, often European or North American theater audience, in the role of speaking for or needing to somehow rescue more vulnerable subjects. Distinguishing between refugees and other categories of migrant may also feed pernicious narratives that separate supposedly deserving subjects from others and reinforce the need for the refugee to perform trauma to gain acceptance in a country of resettlement. Even the conceptual contrast between ideas of voluntary and involuntary migration is fraught. As Emma Cox et al. write in *Refugee Imaginaries*, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary is "problematic in so far as it elides the ways in which there remains a degree of agency" in forced migration, while what is considered voluntary migration is "often a response to various forms of privation."[147] The opposition between forced and free erases such nuance and specificity. Yet when the refugee and other categories of migrant become entirely synonymous, the specific harms refugees endure are elided, and the moral responsibility toward them remains within the community of the audience rather than extending to individuals in global conflict zones and camps. Outside of Shakespeare, few refugees are royals, and the global displaced make up one of the most vulnerable populations on the planet. Likewise, few of them return home. The production and study of Migrant Shakespeares—including studies such as this one that seek to examine theatrical representation of refugee experience without falling into the logic of categorical differentiation that belongs to the border agent—must consider the need for historical specificity regarding the causes of migration as well as the dangers of categorization when

147. Emma Cox, Sam Durrant, David Farrier, Lindsey Stonebridge, and Agnes Wolley, introduction to *Refugee Imaginaries*, ed. Cox et. al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 9.

discussing forced migration. One example of such specificity is the work of Nawar Bulbul in response to the war in Syria, discussed in a later section of this chapter.

In suggesting the shared vulnerability to forced migration and the universal humanity that remains even amidst the privation of much refugee experience, *Arden / Everywhere* is positioned to minimize the harm of encampment and the broader political structures that perpetuate forced migration. The migrant narratives the actors share mostly resonate on the level of emotion, the sentiment of leaving home and finding oneself in a new place, rather than the more political consideration of causal factors. While the affective can lead to action in service of structural change, it is less likely to do so when the structural factors that need to be changed are not addressed, even when addressing them might come across as preachy or didactic. For instance, though the makeshift appearance of the set invokes the camp, *Arden / Everywhere* does not engage deeply with the precarious conditions common within the camps themselves, especially as new encampments are built as greater numbers of asylum-seekers arrive in Europe. A recently destroyed settlement in Calais, France, which has inspired its own critically acclaimed refugee play that was produced in both London and New York, has been described as follows:

> This camp, called the "Jungle" first in French media, but later by its own inhabitants and by the global media, was characterized by very poor housing, little food, and inadequate water, sanitation, and health services. There were no police inside the camp; fights often broke out; smugglers operated; blazes ignited by cooking fires, candles and gas canisters frequently destroyed people's shelters and homes.[148]

While the Kakuma camp that Bauman visited was surely in better condition than that described above, such locales are all too common in refugee experience. Building on the foundational thought

148. Marie Godin, Corrinne Squire, Aura Lounasmaa, Tahir Zaman, and Katrine Moller Hansen, introduction to *Voices from the Jungle: Stories of the Calais Refugee Camp,* ed. Godin et. al. (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 2. See also Surindar Dhesi, Thom Davies, and Arshad Isakjee, "Informal Migrant Camps," in *Handbook on Critical Geographies of Migration*, Katharayne Mitchell, Reece Jones, and Jennifer L. Fluri, eds., 220–231.

of Hannah Arendt in forced migration studies, Serena Parekh writes that even beyond these harsh conditions, increased vulnerability to physical and sexual assault, and the legal harm of lacking citizenship and the rights it entails, statelessness causes a broader "ontological harm" by depriving the refugee of the right to work, express social agency, and engage in meaningful speech and action in the public sphere.[149] Noting that the average residence in a refugee camp is currently 17 years, Parekh encourages a shift in the consideration of moral obligations to refugees, which is currently focused on admission to a third country, and instead advocates an "ethics of the temporary" that reimagines responsibility to migrants before they are resettled; indeed, theater might play a role in fostering such responsibility.[150] Resettlement itself likewise may restore legal protection and some sort of public agency, while also subjecting the refugee to the discrimination and lack of opportunity that comes with the widespread racism and presumed cultural-linguistic superiority rife in many countries of resettlement—Gathesha's experience of alienation, not in his exile from his native Kenya but in the United States, demonstrates this harm. Migrant Shakespeares like *Arden / Everywhere* face the challenge of adapting an original source text in such a way that it tells a coherent and dramatic story about forced migration today while articulating a larger political and ethical imperative to acknowledge refugee experience—both before and after resettlement—and suggesting to non-refugee audiences a sense of commensurate moral responsibility.

Shakespeare's *As You Like It* concludes, as it must, in a conservative and conciliatory mode, in which tyranny has given way to nonviolent collective life but the hierarchies disrupted in the woods are reestablished in the court. The social order disrupted by Frederick's usurpation and Oliver's fratricidal envy is restored, as both the play's villains receive a form of redemption. The

149. Parekh, 74, 84.

150. Parekh, 3, 52.

teleology of the genre never allows for the possibility of a permanent sylvan commune in Arden or full revolution in court, and the vertical relations presented at the beginning of the play are reinforced with Duke Senior's return. As Kingsley-Smith observes, as soon as the marriages are performed, preparation begins for the hike back to court, and the "ultimate consolation for exile, the subject's return to civilization, finally undermines all its other ameliorations by insisting that the natural landscape is no place for such exiles."[151] Like their noble descendants in Shakespearean drama, Prospero and Miranda, it seems that they were always destined for return to their courtly habitat, naturalizing the hierarchies of belonging and status which the time in the woods might have challenged. Duke Senior informs his company, "And after, every of this happy number, / That have endured shrewd days and nights with us, / Shall share the good of our returned fortune / According to the measure of their states" (5.4.78–81). If the forest sojourn in *As You Like It* allows for a kind of pastoral break that temporarily gestures toward the perniciousness of hierarchies of wealth and social condition, the conclusion, as in the late plays of dislocation and restoration, suggests not only the happy return to court but the perpetuation of noble lineage through marriage and procreation.

Arden / Everywhere weighs the happy ending for the primary characters—the success of any adaptation of *As You Like It* demands that the audience is at least rooting for Rosalind and Orlando—against the knowledge that in the actual refugee experience to which the play alludes, such returns are all too rare, as encampments meant to be temporary stretch into years and decades for its stateless residents. How to leave the audience with a sense of urgency while also providing a dramatically satisfying conclusion? As Bauman says: "the stakes of the conversation we are collectively having in this country around migration is that there is an ethical mandate not to let people be passive. How do you do that in a way that doesn't make people hate you because you put

151. Kingsley-Smith, 142.

them on the spot?"[152] Even beyond audience response and the question of how and when to put spectators on the spot, how might a play begin to explore what form the refusal to be passive would take?

The powerful conclusion of *Arden / Everywhere* effectively balances the demands of an adaptation focusing on migrant experience with the resolution of the source text. Duke Senior reads the news of his return and restoration in a letter from the court. After cheerfully pumping his fist in the air at the recognition of imminent homecoming, he slows down and somberly articulates that the future of the exiles will be "according to their *status* and their *birth*," stressing the categories of inclusion and exclusion, exclaims "oh!" in pained surprise, and turns in silence to the minor characters on pallets behind him.[153] The demarcation of social status in Bauman's adaptation becomes the stark dividing line between those who return and those who remain. While the main characters of the play find the longed-for *nostos*, their separation from the minor characters is reminiscent of the pained goodbyes of the opening dumbshow. The production concludes with the characters who are left behind, after series of solemn embraces to say farewell, to a change in lighting and a sound of chimes that mirror the beginning of the play, speaking rapidly to the audience in a multiplicity of tongues. The actors present their own narratives of migration, though with more speed, urgency, and volume than the monologues interspersed throughout the play thus far, and because they all speak at once in a variety of languages that are their native tongues, it is difficult to make out the words.

Jeffers argues that scholars need to "listen to the listeners—the writers, actors, and directors who create theater and performance work, while maintaining the imperative to listen to refugees

152. Bauman, discussion with author.

153. *Arden / Everywhere.*

themselves."[154] Bauman's *Arden / Everywhere* emerges from attention, care, and listening, to Shakespeare's play, her cast, her students in Kakuma, and the globally displaced who have been forced to ask Rosalind's core question of "wither shall we go?" (1.3.103), while knowing that both the journey and the return could mean death. For some, the voyage ends in statelessness and confinement; for others, it ends in resettlement into a society that sees you as alien; for all too few, it ends in a form of homecoming or rebuilding of a satisfying life in a new place. The power of the conclusion of *Arden / Everywhere* is in its acknowledgement of the uncertainty of one's place after the journey and the rarity of the return. Amidst the languages at the end, I can make out ensemble actor Jorge Pluas saying, "Yo soy de Ecuador. . . Cuando vine a este país," before the voices rise and meld together in confusion and then suddenly the lights are cut.[155] In the final moments of the play, the actors demand that the non-refugee audience do the difficult work of learning to listen to stories of migration and resettlement, what happens when one leaves home and comes to a new country, though what might come of that listening remains uncertain.

Languages of Home(lessness): Saheem Ali's *Twelfth Night* and Adrian Jackson's *Pericles*

While *Arden / Everywhere* often tempers the comedy of the original text with more serious notes to explore conditions of displacement, Saheem Ali's 2017 *Twelfth Night*, produced by the Public Theater's Mobile Unit, presents a raucously festive Illyria, drenched in bright pastels and moving to the rhythms of dance, pop, and Latin music. In Ali's version, Viola and Sebastian are refugees who find themselves thrown from the sea into a predominantly Cuban community in South Beach Miami. If, by chance, the costumes of white linen guayaberas and fedoras fail to clarify the

154. Jeffers, 2.

155. *Arden / Everywhere.*

setting for the audience, a soundtrack featuring Will Smith's "Miami," with that catchy chorus of "Welcome to Miami, Bienvenidos a Miami," should leave no doubt that the south Florida setting, driven by music, humor, and the Spanish language, is in line with Ali's vision of creating and exploring diverse theatrical worlds where he would "personally like to exist."[156] While this streamlined and joyous dramatic romp of a *Twelfth Night* does not make the same sort of direct ethical inquiry or demand on the audience as other productions explored in this chapter, or address the experience of Cuban exile and the global political order that conditions modern forced migration as richly as do Cuban playwrights such as Nilo Cruz and Rogelio Martinez. Yet, the Public's Mobile Unit reaches audiences—in prisons, community centers, and shelters—that other New York theater productions do not.[157] In this context, Ali's choice to represent a historically specific diaspora and include Spanish in a US-based production articulates possibilities for Migrant Shakespeares to engage with refugee histories and challenge linguistic racism.

Ali developed the idea for the South Beach setting after learning of the 1995 US government implementation of the Wet Foot / Dry Foot policy, which stipulated that any Cuban who touches American soil would be granted legal residency and a path toward citizenship, while migrants apprehended at sea would be denied entry and returned to Cuba. Consistent with a long Cold War diplomacy that sought to undermine states across the world whose anticapitalist policies and global image might challenge US economic interests, the United States had granted Cubans immigration privileges denied to other refugees and asylum seekers for decades, and the 1960 Operación Pedro Pan and 1981 Mariel boatlift had already brought many Cubans to the United States. The adoption of Wet Foot / Dry Foot in the mid 1990s further facilitated migration by sea and assisted in the

156. Saheem Ali in discussion with the author, February 2020.

157. See "Mobile Unit," Public Theater, https://publictheater.org/programs/mobile-unit/.

growth of south Florida as a Latinx diasporic space, as greater migration to Miami from South America and the Caribbean has led to what in the present day is a more diverse Latin American, rather than Cuban-dominant, cultural atmosphere. The premise of the shipwreck and the separation of the twins allowed Ali to establish a clear and specific vision for his *Twelfth Night*. Rather than present a generalized exilic experience or a diverse array of migrant populations more representative of south Florida in the present, Ali instead constructs a dramatic and sensory portrait of the mid-1990s Cuban diaspora in Miami. He says, "Shakespeare doesn't really tell us why Viola and Sebastian are on the boat. What if they are Cuban citizens trying to make it to the US and they arrive on South Beach?"[158] In Miami, the twins join a diaspora of their compatriots, finding cultural and linguistic familiarity and community in their displacement from their native country.

Despite its primarily comic mode and lack of any direct commentary on the broader political conditions that drive both the production of refugees and the decisions regarding who is and who is not granted legal status in the United States, the fidelity of Ali's *Twelfth Night* to the history of Cuban migration after Wet Foot / Dry Foot in the 90s provides audiences with a platform for considering both the specific experience of Cuban migrants and broader ways in which the security of individuals and communities is conditioned upon geopolitical relations and arrangements between nation-states. As scholar of Cuban theater Yael Prizant observes, "Although there are only 90 miles between Cuban and American shores, the extreme division of the two countries, politically, socially, and economically, has created acute dislocation for Cubans on the island as well as in the United States."[159] The costuming choices and culturally specific soundtrack in this production serve to

158. Saheem Ali, interview by Julia Reinhard Lupton. "The World His Stage: A Conversation with Director Saheem Ali." University of California, Irvine. February 9, 2021.

159. Yael Prizant, "Ninety Miles Away: Exile and Identity in Recent Cuban American Theater," in *Performance, Exile and 'America'*, ed. Silvija Jestrovic and Yana Meerzon (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 64.

represent Cuban diasporic experience and allude indirectly to a state of cultural dislocation even as it plays against a festive backdrop. Ali notes that Malvolio is a sort of "Cuban Republican,"[160] referring to the fact that Cuban Americans have tended to be more conservative in their voting habits than other immigrant populations in the United States, and in another addition of cultural allusion, Feste blasts Latin tunes from a street cart, and the costume and colors in the show evoke the Caribbean, creating an unmistakably Latinx inflected dramatic atmosphere that reads as specifically Cuban for those who are culturally familiar with the South Florida Cuban diaspora. While Ali's production does not delve deeply into the more directly political or emotionally difficult issues of Cuban residence in the United States—these twins, of course, will be reunited, while multiple marriages ensure a happy conclusion, and the more troubling aspects of the Malvolio subplot are toned down—but by employing a historically specific diasporic setting and representing a bilingual community within the United States, it presents migration as contingent upon questions of citizenship, political decisions, and threats of persecution that trouble notions of voluntary migration, while also celebrating the Latin American and Caribbean cultural and linguistic footprint in the United States.

With Shakespeare's vaguely Adriatic Illyria transported to South Beach, Ali's production includes the linguistic influence of the Cuban diaspora on the city, and about 20% of the dialogue is in Spanish.[161] The inclusion of such a significant amount of Spanish challenges dominant English-centric notions of Shakespeare, whose plays have always included multiple languages and cultural influences, while also serving as a persistent reminder to the audience of the migration and displacement that ultimately goes beyond the specific representation of the Cuban diaspora. Working with the writer Ricardo Peréz González to translate key sections of the play into Spanish

160. Ali, interview by Lupton.

161. Ali, interview by Lupton.

and ensure that the specific variant of Spanish aligns with that of the Cuban diaspora, Ali presents audiences with the rarity of a bilingual society represented onstage and, like Bauman, directly addresses American audiences of Shakespeare in a language other than English. Ali, who is bilingual and says that certain moments of emotion or nostalgia cause him to speak in his native Swahili,[162] has Viola talk to the audience in Spanish without English translation through subtitles or restatement to clarify, especially at moments of heightened emotional tension or concern. The dialogue between Viola and Sebastian when they are reunited at the conclusion is entirely in Spanish, which for them is what Ali calls "the language of home."[163] The language of their past, entwined with family reunification, facilitates a new sense of home in the diasporic space of the present.

The use of Spanish in a United States production might also cause audiences to consider the multilingual American society that has emerged over centuries out of settler colonialism, imperial expansion, commercial and industrial projects, and the more recent geopolitical and socioeconomic arrangements that fuel migration. While Ali's production is specifically Cuban-American, the association of the Spanish language with the southern US border might make audiences consider the largest group of asylum seekers entering the United States now: refugees fleeing violence in Central America and traveling by land through Mexico. The linguistic intervention thus simultaneously thickens the atmosphere of the Cuban diaspora in the play and evokes other Spanish speaking migrant populations and the intersections of Spanish and US imperial policies over centuries. Although the audience for the Public's Mobile Unit—including people in prisons, homeless shelters, and community centers in the New York area—is likely to be more diverse than a typical Shakespeare audience and perhaps less inclined to hold overt prejudices toward Spanish speakers

162. Ali, interview by Lupton.

163. Ali, discussion with author.

and other migrant groups, the inclusion of Spanish in the work of the most canonized English-language playwright at a time of widespread debate coupled with explicit xenophobia from powerful political and media voices, in response to migrants who often speak Spanish (in addition to Indigenous languages) seeking refuge in the United States is a progressive theatrical and cultural intervention.

Carla Della Gatta argues that using Spanish or other languages onstage "will be interpreted differently by audiences depending on how the culture(s) associated with that language are viewed within the larger culture of the playwright, the performers, and the production location."[164] Beyond such cultural factors, Ali's *Twelfth Night* was produced at a time in which the president of the United States and his ruling party continually perpetuated virulent anti-migrant rhetoric while also passing materially harmful anti-migrant actions, including the Muslim ban and the "zero tolerance" policy of family separation at the border. In this context, the division of families—a consistent theme in Shakespeare's theater—might resonate with American audiences more strongly at a time in which their government is the agent of separation, as productions of Migrant Shakespeares more broadly might go beyond the concluding reconciliations of the original works to demand reflection on current patterns of migration and displacement. The inclusion of Spanish likewise works against bardolatrous legacies that reinforce notions of Shakespeare as an emblem of Anglo-European cultural superiority as well as the broader linguistic racism endemic in the United States.

Della Gatta writes, "any type of linguistic encounter inserted into the staging of canonized, English-language writers will embed into the production a challenge to the colonialist and patriarchal

164. Carla Della Gatta, "Staging Bilingual Classical Theatre," *HOWLROUND THEATRE COMMONS*. September 15, 2020. https://howlround.com/staging-bilingual-classical-theatre.

legacies that either overshadow or go unrecognized in the work by audiences today."[165] Ali's *Twelfth Night* provides a case study of how Shakespeare can be used as a vehicle to intervene in broader discussions about the politics of language and migration, and suggests how bilingual Shakespeares in the United States might highlight not just the linguistic and cultural diversity of the country but the ways in which borders and border-crossing define modern experience. That a prominent theater director approached Ali after the show to tell him that it really was not necessary for the characters to speak in Spanish illustrates how crucial those discussions are;[166] that in the years since his *Twelfth Night* there have been more bilingual Shakespeare productions, such as Seattle Shakespeare Company's 2021 audioplay of Meme García's *house of sueños*, a Salvadoran-American adaptation of *Hamlet* with dialogue in English and Spanish, underscores the potential of Shakespeare and Shakespeare-inspired theater in staging migration and challenging linguistic racism.

Radically opposed in tone and structure to Ali's *Twelfth Night*, Adrian Jackson's 2003 *Pericles* intervened in the public discussion around refugees and asylum by using Shakespeare as a vehicle for fragmented dramatic presentation and direct confrontation with its audience. A collaboration between the Royal Shakespeare Company and Cardboard Citizens, which Jackson founded as a theater company for the unhoused, previously unhoused, refugees, and asylum seekers, the show emerged from workshops that combined refugee testimonials with a condensed version of Shakespeare's play. Jackson says that after making theater "for and with displaced people" for over twenty years, he was "interested to test a hypothesis that *Pericles* would speak to them."[167] The resulting production, staged in a large Southwark warehouse, engaged with the modern reality of

165. Della Gatta, "Staging."

166. Ali, discussion with author.

167. Adrian Jackson, in Bate and Rasmussen, eds., *Pericles* (London: The RSC Shakespeare, 2012), 143.

forced migration by presenting first-person testimonials, representing the drama of Pericles's and Marina's journeys as primarily defined by displacement, and forcing the audience into positions of physical and psychic discomfort analogous to refugee experience.

The warehouse that functioned as a theater for the production was modeled on a refugee camp and processing center in Sangatte, France, and the audience was forced to undergo a Kafkaesque ritual of evaluation by state authority. *Guardian* theater critic Michael Billington writes of the harsh introduction to Jackson's *Pericles*:

> The audience are treated as detainees in an asylum-processing center. We are checked in, issued with tags, and shepherded into a vast hall, where we sit at desks and are confronted by intimidatingly complex immigration forms. Various refugees leap up and tell their stories before being officially silenced. We then get homiletic lectures on the virtues of Shakespeare, English and the royal family before selected detainees launch spontaneously into a retelling of *Pericles*.[168]

By putting the audience in the position of the asylum seeker before the inhospitable bureaucracy of the state, the production emphasizes both the difficulty and theatricality involved in making a case for asylum, while also providing a dramatic frame that inverts the standard power relation between refugees and government officials. Jeffers calls this recitation of suffering in which the asylum seeker must convince a government official of the legitimacy of their case "bureaucratic performance,"[169] often involving the reproduction of a trauma narrative, which in turn may retraumatize the speaking subject and reproduce the figure of the refugee as primarily a victim. While displaced people have the right to request asylum, the government has the right to design the process by which such requests are made, the criteria that count as sufficient proof of persecution, and, as this production of *Pericles* makes clear, the right to silence the request by denying its legitimacy. The language used in Jackson's adaptation to cut narratives short emphasizes the contradictory predicament of

168. Michael Billington, Review: *Pericles*, *The Guardian*. July 28, 2003.

169. Jeffers, 37.

bureaucratic performance, as voices of authority interrupt to warn the asylum seekers to "in future, please try to avoid stories which are too long, too culturally specific, or too painful to listen to."[170] Asylum seekers must rehearse their own suffering as a performance before state authority, but if they do not do so in accordance with preestablished rules that they often do not know, they could harm their case. Their performance likewise must include a sufficient recitation of suffering to demonstrate plausible fear of persecution, but the broader society where they resettle may have little patience for the complicated specificity and moral difficulty of their narratives. Jackson's *Pericles* forces audiences to acknowledge the conditions of requesting asylum that are often absent or underplayed in broader debates about refugees.

By following this initial shock to the audience with an education on Shakespeare, the English language, and the monarchy, Jackson's *Pericles* reinforces the fact that it is not just before the law that asylum seekers must perform, but before the broader society itself, and against presumptions of cultural superiority and expectations of assimilation. While Ali's inclusion of Spanish might challenge the legacies of linguistic racism and cultural assumptions regarding Shakespeare in the United States, here Jackson directly implicates the Shakespeare industry in England in its broader hostility toward non-English languages and cultures. Jackson's warehouse serves as a model of the state in miniature, in which Shakespeare is used as a tool to reinforce the value of the English language itself, subjects are educated in nationalism, and reverence for the royal family is a precondition of citizenship and belonging; the temple of Diana is even presided over by a large image of the late Princess of Wales. Beyond the fortuitous coincidence of names, the inclusion of Diana weaves celebrity and monarchy as emblems of an essential Britishness. The jarring and deliberate audience alienation in the drama keeps the affective mode of "sentimental globalism" at a distance and underscores the ways in which

170. Cox, 17.

performance and narrative are subject to manipulation. As Cox observes, the "potential for the mix of Shakespearean drama and refugee testimony to produce uncritical pieties was undercut by lines that invited audiences to think critically about both as modes of representation."[171] The production thus highlights representation and dramatic performance as critical components in how stories of forced migration are shaped and received both by migrants themselves and other actors. While Brechtian distancing strategies will not work for all audiences—the *Guardian* critic found the show something to be "endured more than enjoyed"—such strong dramatic choices demand audience engagement with present questions regarding displacement and asylum.[172]

After the initial processing and assignation of ID numbers, audience members are escorted throughout the warehouse to various rooms within the larger space, while refugee testimonials are interwoven with dialogue from *Pericles* to bring out common themes of displacement. Some of the personal stories resonate directly with Shakespeare's play, such as the testimony of an Indonesian woman who recounts being on a boat with hundreds of other refugees that capsized, three of the women on board went into labor, and she saw one of the women who had died and her baby floating by with the child's umbilical cord still attached.[173] While Jackson's unwillingness to comfort the audience might force them to consider their complicity in the global injustice of forced migration, his juxtaposition of *Pericles* and verbatim testimony articulates another risk of representation in Migrant Shakespeares: boat-wreck and birth at sea are consistent with the imagery and themes of the play and form an interesting narrative conversation between Shakespeare's age and our own, but how is an audience to reconcile the fantastical, romance elements of the play with

171. Cox, 16.

172. Billington.

173. Bate and Rasmussen, 134.

the biographical trauma of refugee experience in general and the horror of this vignette in particular? Moreover, by focusing on trauma, does Jackson not risk reproducing notions of refugees as victims common in bureaucratic performance or engaging audiences in a kind of voyeurism of suffering? Testimonials allow a non-refugee theater artist such as Jackson to avoid ventriloquizing the story of another, but as a theatrical strategy it might also engage the audience in what Susan Sontag calls "the pleasure of flinching."[174] In the final scene of recognition between Pericles and Marina, Jackson intercuts their reunion with a video of a therapist engaging with a refugee who is too traumatized to speak, thus tempering the sense of restoration with the reality of ongoing suffering. Yet the focus on suffering also reinforces a trauma narrative in which refugees are defined by their victimhood. For non-refugee artists to engage with refugee experiences, there will always be such complicated ethical and aesthetic quandaries in the attempt to navigate the representation of forced migration.

Jeffers argues that the anger and resentment that could emerge from putting the audience in an uncomfortable position—which Jackson's *Pericles* does both physically and morally, even as it rhetorically undercuts a tendency toward sentiment—is too often transformed into a response of pity by representations of suffering.[175] As in *Arden / Everywhere*, the Shakespearean source tends to confuse the genre and tone of a story of modern forced migration. "Having become engrossed by tragically authentic stories of loss and separation, I found it difficult to be suddenly yanked back into Shakespeare's geographically restless romance," writes the reviewer.[176] Ali's *Twelfth Night*, by contrast, celebrates the culture of the Cuban diaspora in the United States without directly addressing the pain of displacement or role of the state in facilitating or hindering migration. Ali develops a "language of

174. Susan Sontag, "Regarding the Pain of Others," in *Later Essays* (New York: Library of America, 2017), 570.

175. Jeffers, 53.

176. Billington.

home," Jackson a language of homelessness; together, their plays articulate the ethical and theatrical complexity of staging Migrant Shakespeares for audiences in New York and London. That Ali's production was for the Public's Mobile Unit further complicates questions of spectatorship—how to stage displacement for audiences that are more likely to have experienced, through state power or economic hardship, displacement themselves? The question of specificity likewise remains persistent; when does it serve the artist to generalize, and when is the history crucial? To begin to address that question, the final section of this chapter considers theater produced in Jordan and Syria by children displaced by civil war, and the role of Shakespeare and refugee theater-makers in a global campaign of visibility and resistance to the Assad regime.

Global Audiences, Citizenship Practices, and Theater as Political Resistance: Nawar Bulbul and Syrian Refugee Shakespearean Adaptation

The Zaatari refugee camp, located in a desert near Jordan's northern border with Syria and an hour and a half from Amman, is the largest in the world for populations displaced by the Syrian civil war. It holds nearly 80,000 refugees from the conflict, and nearly 60% of those resident in the camp are under the age of 24.[177] In 2014, the director, playwright, and actor Nawar Bulbul, famous for his role in the popular historical series *Bab-el-Hara*, which itself reminds audiences of legacies of both colonialism and nationalism as it covers the period of French occupation in Syria, came to the Zaatari camp with the intention of producing Shakespeare with displaced children. Bulbul was forced to leave Syria in 2011 after his participation in anti-Assad street protests and refusal to publicly recant thereafter, despite being urged by officials to go on television and say that he "was

177. Joi Lee. "Syria's War: Inside Jordan's Zaatari Refugee Camp." *Al Jazeera*. April 5, 2018.

wrong for supporting the protesters" and "Bashar-al-Assad has helped make our country great."[178] Bulbul first fled to Lebanon, then to France, where his wife holds citizenship, finally relocating to Jordan in 2013, where he went on to collaborate with displaced children on two Shakespeare projects: the 2014 *Shakespeare in Zaatari*, an adaptation of *King Lear* with snippets of *Hamlet*, and *Romeo and Juliet Separated by War* in 2015, a Skype production that took place simultaneously in Amman, Jordan and Homs, Syria.

These productions garnered widespread media attention while also providing a framework for community and practices of collective belonging among displaced Syrian children. Bulbul says in the documentary chronicling the first production: "Why play Shakespeare in Zaatari? I am a clever fisherman, and I used an irresistible bait. All the fish came to eat it."[179] While Bulbul's objective may have been to use the media to attract a humanitarian response to Syrian children displaced by war, his use of Shakespeare from a non-Anglophone context marks an oppositional cultural intervention that exploits assumptions of the Euro-North American world about Shakespeare and the Middle East. As Bart Pitchford notes in "Hela L'Wein: Performing Nationalisms, Citizenship, and Belonging in Displaced Syrian Communities," Bulbul's choice of plays "subverts an imposed Western order that believes Shakespeare to be beyond the capabilities of both children and those from the Arabic World," and suggests a "desire to upend orientalist beliefs about Syrian people's knowledge and cultural sophistication."[180] Bulbul's Shakespeare was at once a rejection of pernicious assumptions regarding cultural superiority, a project to bring attention to refugees from Syria, and an

178. Gerald Barton Pitchford, "From Loss to Laughter: Syrian Refugees Write Plays," *American Theatre*, April 27, 2016, https://www.americantheatre.org/2016/04/27/from-loss-to-laughter-syrian-refugees-write-plays/.

179. *Shakespeare in Zaatari*. Directed by Maan Mousli, 2017.

180. Gerald Barton Pitchford, 117. "Hela L'Wein: Performing Nationalisms, Citizenship, and Belonging in Displaced Syrian Communities." Ph.D. Dissertation. 2019.

act of community among displaced children. As he intended, the fish of the global media responded, including the *New York Times, CNN, Al Jazeera*, *The Economist*, and *The Guardian*, as the story of child refugees performing Shakespeare succeeded in "transfixing international journalists and others desperate for signs of hope."[181] While it is difficult to know to what extent that attention was converted into material contribution or political action, Bulbul's project goes beyond a lure for the media to establish a framework for collective citizenship practice among the actors, and in so doing uses theater as a critique of war and mode of resistance to Assad's dictatorship.

Bulbul's choice to work with youth reflects the demographics of the displaced Syrian population in Jordan, where in 2014 more than half of the nearly 600,000 registered refugees were under 18, and fewer than a quarter of the 60,000 children in Zaatari regularly attended school.[182] Having gone to Zaatari with the intention of performing Shakespeare with a group of these children, Bulbul was able to raise money to buy a UNHCR tent from the local gray economy in the camp. It was deemed "Shakespeare's Tent," painted by the child actors as part of a larger art component to the theater work, and served as the rehearsal space for the *Shakespeare in Zaatari* project.

Bulbul stripped the Shakespeare of its most troubling and violent scenes to focus the drama of *King Lear* on a story of family rupture and reconciliation in a divided kingdom. He says, "In *King Lear* there are many paths you can take. I focused on the main story—an aging king giving away his kingdom to his daughters. I want to say the struggle is between hypocrsiy and honesty, and honesty

181. Hennesy, Katherine and Margaret Litvin, introduction to "Special Issue: Arab Shakespeares," *Critical Survey* 28, no. 3 (2016): 2.

182. Ben Hubbard, "Behind Barbed Wire, Shakespeare Inspires a Cast of Young Syrians," *New York Times*, March 31, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/01/world/middleeast/behind-barbed-wire-shakespeare-inspires-a-cast-of-young-syrians.html.

is better."[183] While Pitchford reads the opening scene as "a condemnation of Assad who sold off parts of the country's wealth to his close relatives and friends based on their loyalty,"[184] Bulbul presented the show to the media as a drama of universal morals rather than any form of direct political critique of either the Assad regime or the global actors that continually fail to provide adequate support and concern for displaced populations. My focus here acknowledges Bulbul's broadly universalist approach as well as Pitchford's read of political resistance, while centering the role of the international audience—the fish on Bulbul's line. To reinforce the theme of truth-telling, Bulbul employed a chorus who occasionally commented on the action. When Goneril and Regan flattered Lear in formal Arabic, for example, the chorus of children yelled "Liar! Hypocrite!"[185] The figure of honesty here is unmistakably Cordelia, who is banished from the kingdom and finds her father, himself turned away by Goneril and Regan, to have died in the storm. The *Lear* section concludes with Cordelia informing the audience of his death.

In between each scene, the director chose to intersperse bits of *Hamlet*, as if, Pitchford observes, "Bulbul is simply using scenes from *Hamlet* as an interlude to *King Lear*, or maybe *King Lear* as an interlude to *Hamlet.*"[186] Dramatic narrative, a plot moving toward a resolution, is subsumed under the broader imperative to exploit evocative lines in the specific context of a refugee camp. The scenes included are the opening of the play, where the castle guards first see the ghost, a dialogue between Hamlet and his father, and finally a version of the play's famed soliliquoy, or

183. "A special performance: Syrian refugees are putting on Shakespeare plays," *The Economist*, February 18, 2014, https://www.economist.com/pomegranate/2014/02/18/a-special-performance.

184. Pitchford, "Hela L'Wein," 126.

185. Hubbard.

186. Pitchford, "Hela L'Wein," 47.

rather its most well-known line: "to be or not to be." Taking place after the end of the final scene of *Lear* and concluding the entire performance of *Shakespeare in Zaatari*, it is repeated many times in both Arabic and English. The boy playing Hamlet first calls out, "Akūn ow la akūn. To be or not to be," from the center of the theater space, and then the rest of the actors join in, while he leads them through the audience, repeating the chant before lining up and bowing. By presenting it as a chant rather than a question leading to introspection, the repeated phrase takes on the character of a collective demand from the children. This direct engagement with the physical audience also speaks to the larger global community exposed to the play through the various media outlets that covered the event and Maan Mousli's documentary *Shakespeare in Zaatari*. As Pitchford observes, this ending as an explicit call to highlight "the crucial question at the heart" of this theatrical project: "should they (displaced Syrians) fight to exist—in Syria, in Jordan, in the world—or should they simply fade into insignificance."[187] That is a question posed to the broader world who will not witness the play but will be exposed to the work through the media. Taking the age of the children and the global media spectacle of the performance into account, as well as the rhetorical nature of the phrase "to be or not to be" in this context, the question posed is not just whether or not displaced Syrians should take some form of action to survive as a collective—when presented in these terms, who would not wish for their survival?—but what the international viewers are prepared to do in service of that survival. For the global audience, then, the idea is how to assist in ensuring the continued existence of a community that has been displaced by civil war.

For the community of children itself, theater-making is an act of belonging that highlights how citizenship is both "a narrative and an affective construction," that involves the grounding of collective identity "around temporal structures presupposing a past, present, and future," and

187. Pitchford, "Hela L'Wein," 126.

includes an active psycho-emotional register that goes beyond being "a strictly legal, institutional product of state authority and rationality."[188] The temporary statelessness of the children and their separation from family and community create the conditions through which new collective identities are forged. Denied legal and political citizenship outside of the Syrian state, the child residents of the camp call themselves into being as a community through theater as a collective cultural practice in the making of *Shakespeare in Zaatari*. Dwight Conquergood writes of refugee theater,

> A high level of cultural performance is characteristic of refugee camps in general . . . [T]hrough performative flexibility they can play with new identities, new strategies for adaptation and survival. The playful creativity of performance enables them to experiement with and invent a new 'camp culture' that is part affirmation of the past and part adaptive response to the exigencies of the present. Performance participates in the re-creation of self and society that emerges within refugee camps.[189]

In addition to the material privation of camp residence, refugees are effectively stateless, no longer holding the legal and political rights granted by citizenship, nor a collective bond rooted in a stable idea of nation. Bulbul says of taking the actors of *Shakespeare in Zaatari* on a visit to Amman, "They have no home in Jordan, nor Syria, nor anywhere. They were so happy to visit Jordan. For them, Jordan is outside of Zaatari."[190] Despite geography, this is legally the case under international law: Zaatari is not Jordanian political space. While Syrian refugees in Jordan cannot restore their deprived legal and political rights themselves, nor control the response of powerful actors in the global community to their displacement and the losses incurred in consequence, they can enact citizenship through performance. In so doing, they affirm a sense of collective identity and shared futurity.

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188. Anne-Marie Fortier, "Afterword: Acts of Affective Citizenship. Possibilities and Limitations," *Citizenship Studies* 20, no. 8 (2016): 1038.

189. Dwight Conquergood, "Health Theater in a Hmong Refugee Camp: Performance, Communication, and Culture," in Refugee Performance: Practical Encounters, ed. Michael Balfour (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012): 38–39.

190. *Shakespeare in Zataari*.

Bulbul's *Shakespeare in Zaatari* project publicizes the conditions of the refugee camp and resilience of the displaced Syrian population for a global audience, as the cultural work of performance enables a model of collective participation that does not require validation by the nation-state.

As with *Shakespeare in Zaatari*, Bulbul framed *Romeo and Juliet Separated by War* to the media in broadly humanitarian rather than oppositional terms*:*

> We wanted . . . to draw attention to the areas under siege by the regime in Syria after the failure of humanitarian organisations to send food, water and medicine there. We also wanted to send a message to the world that the besieged people are not terrorists but children threatened by shelling, death and destruction.[191]

Bulbul's second Shakespeare project with Syrian children was successful in garnering media attention, if not to the same extent as its predecessor, and a documentary was made by France's Arte-TV. *Romeo and Juliet Seprated by War*, however, is more directly oppositional to the Assad government than its predecessor. The broader context of the production during the regime's siege of the city of Homs, alterations to its source text that make direct reference to the Syrian conflict, and the technological innovation and cross-border collaboration involved in the live theater event articulate an anti-Assad and pro-revolutionary message, while producing an exemplar of resistance theater that could serve as a model for transnational drama in the future.

Bulbul had initially intended to follow *Shakespeare in Zaatari* with a work by Molière or Cervantes to be performed on March 27, 2015, World Theater Day, but he was banned from working in the camp after falling out with Jordanian authorities and UNHCR camp administrator Killian Kleinschmidt. He then developed the concept of a Skype adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* with actors in Syria and Jordan, and approached Souriyat Across Borders, a hospice in Amman for Syrians wounded by the war, with the idea. Both the cast and much of the audience in Jordan would

191. "Photographs of a Syrian *Romeo and Juliet*," *British Library*, https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/photographs-of-a-syrian-romeo-and-juliet-2015.

consist of those injured by Assad's army or the Islamic State, and Ibrahim, the eleven-year-old boy who played Romeo, had lost the use of his right leg in the shelling of Damascus. While Bulbul worked with wounded actors from Souriyat, Syrian drama teacher and activist Abu Ameen rehearsed clandestinely with teenagers in al-Waer, a suburb just outside Homs, which was then besieged by the Assad regime and undergoing routine bombings. Aware that performing theater with two presumed dissidents, Ameen and Bulbul, would be considered treason, Ameen's cast worked secretly in an apartment protected by the Free Syrian Army, while the shelling from the state siege continued outside their rehearsals and performances.

Wary of surveillance by the Syrian regime as well as possible censorship of politically sensitive material by the Jordanian state, Bulbul and the actors from Souriyat sought out a privately owned rooftop for performance. With Homs under Assad's control and cut off from international communication, Ameen arranged with the Free Syrian Army for satellite internet, using the success of *Shakespeare in Zaatari* to frame the project in terms of pro-revolutionary messaging.[192] The equipment provided to Ameen and his cast in Homs, originally purchased by the Assad regime and taken by soldiers defecting to the Free Syrian Army, was essential to the simultaneous rehearsal and production of the play, in a "tactical use of regime technology . . . employed in service of theatre as a revolutionary apparatus."[193] Regardless of the content of the play, the mere existence of the production as an emblem of communication between besieged and displaced Syrians is an example of dramatic art in opposition to the state power of Assad's dictatorship.

Yet Bulbul's adaptations to the text extend the anti-regime, in addition to the more broadly anti-war, messaging of the play. As Pitchford notes, performing across a controlled border and

192. Pitchford, "Hela L'Wein," 147.

193. Pitchford, "Hela L'Wein," 158.

through a frequently interrupted Skype connection centers the disruption of the civil war, and in one of the performances, the audience could see bombs falling in the background of the video feed, forcing the global spectators to simultaneously acknowledge the fictional dramatic world of the play and the violent reality of Homs in that moment, though what comes of that recognition remains uncertain.[194] That juxtaposition reminds spectators who are privileged to live in a zone free of war of their relative global fortune. After one Skype interruption, the narrator in Homs said, "I swear, if we are not caught by bombs or explosives, and if Juliet is not fired at by a sniper, we will still be here in the next scene."[195] Bulbul likewise emphasized the Syrian war by renaming Shakespeare's Friar Lawrence, who marries the lovers in the source text, Father Frans, invoking the Jesuit priest Frans van der Lugt, who had aided poor Muslim and Christian communities in Syria since the mid-1960s and was shot twice in the head by an assassin in 2014 at the age of 75. Rather than following Shakespeare into a conclusion of double suicide for the young lovers, *Romeo and Juliet Separated by War* ends with its protagonists throwing away the vials of poison. Romeo says, "Enough killing! Enough blood! Why are you killing us? We want to live like the rest of the world."[196] While that final message may be read as reproducing Bulbul's broad humanitarian themes—in theory at least, survival and peace are universal desires—the second-person address implicates the regime and, more obliquely, the international audience of the theater event.

Beyond the critique of Assad and global inaction, the play also demonstrates how technology can serve to facilitate political theater across borders. Transnational live-virtual theater here not only surmounts the communications embargo imposed by the Syrian state in the besieged city of Homs,

194. Pitchford, "Hela L'Wein," 54.

195. "Photographs of a Syrian *Romeo and Juliet*, 2015."

196. "Photographs of a Syrian *Romeo and Juliet*, 2015."

but also models a form of theater and community-making that does not depend on, and might even subvert, the logic of borders securitized by state power. As Devika Ranjan observes, "technology and migration are increasingly interdependent—not only as migrants are surveilled at the border and in their daily lives by technologies of control, but also through our near constant online communication with people around the world."[197] Just as Shakespeare might be employed to reproduce or undermine notions of cultural superiority, virtual productions across borders can serve commercial or political powers that benefit from the global status quo or challenge strict regimes of migration in service of a broader theater of migrant justice. The dramaturgical innovations and theater communities that emerged out of the Covid-19 pandemic suggest that even when live performance is possible, the global immediacy of virtual productions—speaking to the global immediacy of issues of forced migrations—carries potential for the theater of migrant justice.[198]

Implicated Audiences, Engaged Theater, and the Future of Migrant Shakespeares

How Shakespeare, the quintessential old, dead, white guy, whose very iambs drip for many with British imperialism and its modern afterlives, might be employed in the service of migrant justice raises critical questions of representation and responsibility. If theater is to engage with the political present without reproducing past injustice, why reassert the cultural weight of an English playwright from the 16th and 17th century whose nation and language are synonymous with a colonial legacy that extends into the present? Theatrical representation of global injustice is already a vexed project, even without the grand figure of English literature behind it. As Sontag asks, "What does it

197. Ranjan.

198. For the development of virtual theater strategies and communities following the Covid-19 outbreak, see Barbara Fuchs, *Theater of Lockdown: Digital and Distanced Performance in a Time of Pandemic* (London: Methuen Drama, 2021.

mean to protest suffering, as distinct from acknowledging it?"[199] And if theater-makers want to work in the space between acknowledgement and protest, how to avoid voyeurism or the substitution of sentimentality for action? If sentiment and affective response may, in certain cases, lead to action, it is difficult to say what form that action might take. Even theater that leads to an increased humanitarian response—which is what Bulbul explicitly calls for—often reproduces a global paradigm wherein multinational non-profits bring aid while nation-states continue to perpetuate the conditions that fuel what is called humanitarian crises.

A sufficient critical response to those questions and concerns is not merely beyond the scope of this chapter, or even this study, but not accessible in any definitive general sense; they are interrogations to attend to and work out in practice, and in performance, rather than to theorize conclusively. Depending on the case, context, and perspective of theater-makers and audiences, Shakespeare both might or might not be employed as a vehicle of colonizing or decolonizing work, while theater both might and might not be an effective platform for political representation and action. While Nawar Bulbul's Shakespeare adaptations were performed live for Syrians in Zaatari and Amman as well as besieged residents of Homs, spectators of the productions discussed here consisted mostly of non-refugee populations in the UK and the US. And Bulbul's global audience—readers of the *New York Times* and *The Guardian*, for example—is predominantly made up of a generally privileged and educated class living in the wealthier nations of the world. In these plays, as with any art made from the conditions of forced migration or inquiries into border injustice, issues of reception involve the subject position of the audience vis-à-vis the representation onstage.

In their relation to refugees, most viewers of Shakespeare are what Michael Rothberg has called "implicated subjects" who "occupy positions aligned with power and privilege without being

199. Sontag, 570.

themselves direct agents of harm."[200] Neither perpetrator nor victim, the implicated audience is not responsible *for* global displacement, but is responsible *to* it. Placing citizens of privileged nations in relation to refugees (while acknowledging the inequality within such nations) in these terms suggests the need for an ongoing commitment to migrant justice, one that does not fade after the curtain closes. The implicated audience might take the rush of stories in the final moments of Bauman's *Arden / Everywhere*, for example, or the processing center in Jackson's *Pericles* as a theater experience that spurs further interrogation of both self and the social world regarding potential action to address injustices that arise from the current organization of the global polity. As I note in the introduction to this chapter, Grehan's concept of "ambivalence" in theater response is a way to think beyond diverging paths of programmatic politics or moral disavowal.

The directors discussed here, and theater artists in resistance to injustice more broadly, would likely concur that the stage is not the arena for programmatic politics anyway, but nor is it an escape from the social world. The ongoing work of each director considered in this essay demonstrates alternative uses of Shakespeare and the theater of migration. Bulbul followed his Shakespearean adaptations with the 2016 *Love Boat*, which interspersed personal testimonies of six Syrian refugees—as in *Arden / Everywhere*, the actors told their own stories onstage—with snippets of Aristophanes, Goldoni, Molière, Cervantes, and, yes, Shakespeare. Until international travel was halted in 2019 due to the pandemic, Bauman had been working with theater artists and migrants in shelters on the US / Mexico border, which she then resumed and toured *The Frontera Project* in 2022. Jackson, after adapting *Pericles*, went on to write *A Few Man Fridays*, which alludes to *The Tempest* in its dramatization of the displacement of the Chagos Islands residents by a US military base, and Cardboard Citizens continues to create theater with displaced migrants and homeless populations.

200. Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Redwood: Stanford University Press, 2019), 1.

Ali recently directed a bilingual audioplay of *Romeo and Juliet*, extending his use of theater, and Shakespeare, against anti-migrant perspectives and linguistic racism.

Audiences, artists, and scholars must remain critical of the ways in which the theater of migration might undermine its objectives or be co-opted by commercial or political interests antithetical to it, and Cox et al. suggest that "it has never been more urgent to ask what the relationship is between audiences and consumers, or whose interests are served by the audiencing of refugee arts."[201] Questions of *by whom* and *for whom* must be asked in any theater that is ostensibly in service of migrant justice. Using Shakespeare to represent stories of refugee experience adds an extra ethical challenge due to the way his works have been misrepresented and exploited in the past in service of white supremacy and colonial power. As Mohegan theater-maker Madeline Sayet points out, until the Shakespeare industry comes to terms with how arguments of universal cultural value reproduce white supremacist logic, "theatres that produce his work cannot be welcoming spaces for people whose ancestors were beaten and forced to give up their own languages and learn Shakespeare's."[202] Though redressing historical injustice is a process that can never be complete, there is some reason to be optimistic about the progress of the Shakespeare industry in the past few years. Publications such as *Teaching Social Justice Through Shakespeare* and the *Arden Research Handbook of Shakespeare and Social Justice*, the prevalence of #ShakeRace, antiracist projects such as Red Bull Theater's "Othello 2020" series, numerous conferences from 2020 to and 2023 dedicated to addressing racist legacies in classical theater, creative and scholarly work on Latinx and Indigenous

201. Cox et. al., 5.

202. Madeline Sayet, "Interrogating the Shakespeare System," *HOWLROUND THEATRE COMMONS*, August 31, 2020. https://howlround.com/interrogating-shakespeare-system. I address Sayet's work extensively in the final chapter of this study.

adaptations—all of these trends suggest—though there is much work to be done—that change is occurring in the performance and study of Shakespeare.

Migrant Shakespeares in research and performance contribute to this progress by bringing together artists, audiences, displaced populations, and scholars to consider the moral harm of forced migration and the implication of privileged subjects within the global order. When "who you are allowed to be is brutally dependent on the caprices of whichever – and whatever kind of – nation-state you happen to have been born in, forced to leave, barred entry to, detained in, tolerated by, or, at best, welcomed into on the most contested and fragile of terms,"[203] theater will continue to reflect and engage with that global fragility and contestation. Zones of migration such as the Mediterranean—explored in Motus Theater's 2014 *Della Tempesta*, a reworking of The *Tempest* and Aimé Césaire's *Une Têmpete*—and what Ruben Espinosa calls the "peripheral space" of the US / Mexico border provide opportunities to dramatize and challenge regimes of power that prioritize border security over migrant justice.[204] The consistent pattern of family separation in Shakespeare's plays likewise might also provide a framework for US based theater-makers in particular to address the horror of state immigration policies. Such ideas are explored in the chapters to come and remain to be filled in further in an engaged theater and criticism.

If the collective work of theater-making, performance research, and teaching can be considered as acts of citizenship in Anne Marie Fortier's sense of "individual and institutional practices of making citizens or citizenship, including practices that seek to redefine, decentre or even

203. Cox et al., 1.

204. Ruben Espinosa, "The Bard, The Border, and the Peripheries of Shakespeare Performance," in *Teaching Social Justice Through Shakespeare,* ed. Hilary Eklund and Wendy Beth Hyman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press): 77. The final chapter of this study also engages directly with the US / Mexico border.

refuse citizenship," then Shakespeare might be exploited to challenge notions of presumed cultural superiority as well as naturalized geopolitical structures that cause widespread displacement and render tens of millions without legally recognized belonging.[205] Future performance communities, especially as technology and the response of theater practitioners to the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the potential of transnational virtual performance, are likely to be vibrant sites that offer new subnational and supranational ways of being and acting outside of the preestablished political and legal categories of citizenship as defined in the current international organization of nation-states. The study and production of Shakespeare in radical adaptation and Shakespeare-adjacent works might challenge traditions of canonical drama on the page and stage as well as the global order that implicates those of us with stable, privileged political identities—as audiences, artists, scholars, or citizens—in the moral harm of forced migration, while also celebrating and enacting alternative modes of collective life in service of engaged art and migrant justice.

205. Fortier, 1040.

Chapter Three

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Fractured Families and Displaced Nations in Post-Tragic Shakespeare

Romance loves a stranger. Among the common patterns in the late Shakespeare plays that have often been categorized as romances since Edward Dowden first lumped their rare music together in contrast to the tragedies, comedies, and histories in the late 19th century, each of them depends upon displacements and dilated wanderings before improbable reunion.[206] Sarah Beckwith refers to these works as "post-tragic," as they counter the bleakness of the tragedies, especially *Lear*, in grand affirmations "of peace before violence, of the social before the individual, of trust before doubt."[207] *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter's Tale* are likewise post-tragic in terms of their endings, by way of which both presumed and real losses give way to open futures.[208] Their dramatic punches depend upon extreme suspension of disbelief in exchange for the reward of recovery and restoration. The lost child is found; the rift in the family is healed; reconciliation is favored over revenge.

206. Cyrus Mulready offers a useful corrective to the Dowden inheritance in *Romance on the Early Modern Stage: English Expansion Before and After Shakespeare* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). While the concept of Shakespearean romance has often allowed "no other playwright access to the genre" in the critical literature, obscuring messy narrative and dramatic traditions that precede his plays and elbowing out other authors, a focus on the works that have been characterized as such merits recognizing their common patterns, 44.

207. Beckwith, 2.

208. The obvious absence of *The Tempest* from this list is because despite the common strategies it shares with those other plays, the representation of Caliban in the text and the long history of colonial readings in the scholarship requires separate treatment. I take up the work and its legacies in the next chapter.

This essay takes up *Pericles* and *Cymbeline* in terms of their patterns of mobility, their cultural afterlives in performance and literature, and the urgent concerns of mass displacement and imperial legacies in the present. Along the lines of both family structure and larger sociopolitical organization, these two plays map forms of community that emerge from a future-oriented attitude that is complemented by collective labor. Yet, as with all of Shakespeare's works, they are also involved in histories of Anglo-European and American expansionist ventures and patterns of bardolatry that reinforce his presumed cultural superiority; and, like the late plays in particular, they are invested in reinforcing social hierarchies. In their movement toward reconstitution of the family and the social body, in which shared vulnerability becomes a foundation for community, *Pericles* and *Cymbeline* "sustain an insatiable hunger for hope, our yearning for the world to be otherwise."[209] Yet the plays and cultural afterlives discussed here also underscore the challenge of creating that *otherwise*, while offering possibilities for the role of theater in that work.

Seas of Displacement and Acts of Hope in *Pericles* and its 21st-Century Adaptations

In the final days of October 2021, Little Amal, a twelve-foot-tall puppet representing a ten-year-old Syrian refugee girl in search of her mother, arrived at Shakespeare's Globe in London. Amal had made the journey from the Turkey-Syria border to England, in a collaboration between Handspring Puppet Company and Good Chance Theatre, to call attention to the precarious conditions of forced migration and the particular plight of child migrants in the 21st century.[210] That

209. Kiernan Ryan, introduction to *Shakespeare: The Last Plays*, ed. Kiernan Ryan (New York: Longman, 1999), 17.

210. Little Amal is based on a character in Good Chance Theatre's acclaimed production, *The Jungle*, written by Joe Robertson and Joe Murphy and set in a refugee camp in Calais, France. The settlement closed in October of 2016. In the spring of 2023, *The Jungle* will play at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington D.C. in collaboration with Wooly Mammoth Theatre Company, whose mission includes the promotion of social justice.

same week, Kent Gash directed a staged reading of Shakespeare's *Pericles* for Red Bull Theater in New York that invoked the oceanic displacements caused by transatlantic slavery as well as current movements for racial justice.[211] The concurrence of Amal's voyage and Red Bull's production highlights interrelated forms of control over human mobility across varied epochs and geographic networks as well as the possibilities for using theatrical performance to address patterns of historical violence and their ongoing legacies in the present.

The coincidence of Little Amal's journey and Gash's staged reading in 2021 marks an intersection in current movements for migrant and racial justice and the relationship between mobility and global racial capitalism in the *longue durée*. Projects of Euro-American imperial expansion and modern global commerce depend upon the exploitation of displaced bodies, and, as social theorist Ida Danewid observes, forced migration, colonization, and racialized enslavement are all "linked to the creation of highly expendable, super-exploitable, and *moveable* labouring subjects."[212] The refugees who migrate to Europe via perilous Mediterranean routes make up incipient diasporas, while descendants of formerly enslaved and colonized people in settler states continue to live within systems designed to perpetuate white supremacy. Both the racial injustice within nation-states and the border regimes that restrict movement between them emerge from the specific historical conditions of global racial capitalism, imperialism, and settler colonialism. Amal means *hope* in Arabic, but the bleak geopolitical reality of the present all too often renders a hopeful

211. Gash's production was streamed by Red Bull Theater in New York, October 25th–29th, 2021.

212. Danewid, "These Walls Must Fall," 147. Danewid's essay makes a useful critique of Judith Butler's model of vulnerability as a politics rooted in ontology rather than history, leading to pity rather than justice. For the purposes of this essay, I see *Pericles* as a play rooted in a more Butlerian ontological model but its current uses in performance and adaptation discussed in the latter part of this essay as offering models for exploring specific historical contingencies. The italics are in Danewid's original text.

perspective inaccessible or reduces it to passive optimism. A cynic might well read the "Little" that precedes "Amal" ("little hope") as a grim irony. The aim here, however, is to consider the ways in which the small messages of hope imbued in both Little Amal's journey and Gash's staged reading of *Pericles* might carry active ethical and political heft.

This reading revisits the interrelated themes of precarity and hope in Shakespeare's *Pericles* and examines how they are adapted by 21st-century writers and activists to speak to modern-day experiences of oceanic migration and displacement. I first trace how Shakespeare's drama depicts physical and social vulnerability through a succession of oceanic displacements, arguing that the core ethic of the work, conveyed through the character of Marina, is a form of hope constituted by active and creative labor, rather than mere patience or faith in providence. I then turn to the play in the present as a vehicle for making use of Shakespearean drama in service of imaginative projects of migrant and racial justice.[213] I examine recent responses to the play—in theater, the novel, and interdisciplinary civic initiatives—that highlight the relation between oceanic displacement and future-oriented resistance in terms of contemporary forced migration and restrictive border regimes. Works such as Ali Smith's 2019 novel *Spring*, which responds to the political fervor of Brexit, and Adrian Jackson's 2003 theatrical adaptation, which sets the play in a migrant processing facility, take up the labors of hope in *Pericles* to engage with the specific injustices of 21st-century forced migration. Author and organizer Mariame Kaba has stated that hope is a "discipline"; these narratives articulate disciplined hope by rejecting both Panglossian delusion and passive acceptance

213. My identity with respect to the histories explored in this essay is neither that of a migrant nor part of a formerly colonized community but that of a white scholar-activist who writes on Shakespeare in performance and the intersections of theater and migration. My ancestral links to the historical injustices I discuss here are, as far as I know, to the European settlers, while my social and intellectual commitments are to a more just future and the exploration of the role of art and culture in an imaginative and strategic politics of abolition and liberation.

of the world in service of adaptive and activist art.[214] In these reimaginings of *Pericles*, the patterns of active labor in Shakespeare's play are projected onto the justice movements of the present, as the fantastical romance strategies of the drama come to speak to an inheritance of past projects of domination. I conclude this section with a discussion of Gash's staged reading, which invokes the Middle Passage and centers the Black diaspora, ultimately enacting an ethic of active hope in response to the ongoing legacies of the expansionist projects of enslavement, imperialism, and settler colonialism.[215]

In *Pericles*, an ethic of hope emerges in response to shared vulnerability and interdependence, and the dizzying episodic movement of the play dramatizes precarity by perpetually setting its characters at sea.[216] From the moment that Helicanus advises the eponymous prince to "go travel for a while" to avoid the wrath of Antiochus until the concluding family reunion (1.2.104), the play aligns oceanic mobility with precarious existence. Though the common capacity to suffer harm cannot be disentangled from the "organization of economic and social relationships, [and] the presence or absence of sustaining infrastructures and social and political institutions" in the world,

214. Tamara K. Hopper, editor's introduction to *We Do This 'Til We Free Us*, Mariame Kaba, ed. Tamara K. Hopper (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021), xxv.

215. While this essay focuses most directly on Gash's centering of the Black diaspora, the director stresses in the "Bull Session" that his interpretation of *Pericles* in terms of collective trauma and joyful reconciliation includes populations that were colonized as well.

216. Joseph Campana examines the play in terms of Butler and vulnerability in "The Traffic in Children: Shipwrecked Shakespeare, Precarious *Pericles*," in *Childhood, Education and the Stage in Early Modern* England, Richard Preiss and Deanne Williams, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 37–57. Campana takes issue with seeing Marina or her father as figures for precarious life in Judith Butler's framing in part due to their exceptionality and noble status. I see value in reading the play through these terms if shared vulnerability is not devoid of its political utility or divorced from specific campaigns of justice, as I discuss at length later in the essay.

Pericles foregrounds vulnerability as an essential and shared condition over structural inequity.[217] Focusing on the dangers of the sea—shipwrecks, separations, kidnappings, and risky shoreline encounters between strangers—the play stages a series of displacements that highlight vulnerability by threatening both the physical and social identities of its characters.

While Pericles responds to that essential vulnerability by submitting to fortune and acknowledging his limited—or even absent—agency, Marina models labors of care and strategies of active hope. As the play moves forward, and the focus shifts to Marina rather than her father, this hopeful attitude of resilience and resistance through labor becomes its central ethic and ultimately enables the curative conclusion that Gower sings of in the first scene: "It hath been sung at festivals, / On ember eves and holy ales, / And lords and ladies in their lives / Have read it for restoratives" (1.0.6–9).[218] This choric preface proposes that the expansive restoration for the characters in *Pericles* will transfer to the audience as well through a form of theater that not only depicts but enables social repair.[219] Yet that restoration only presents itself as a possibility after a series of oceanic displacements and scenes of precarity that include both presumed and actual losses—shipwreck, drowning, family separation, captivity, and sex trafficking—across an eastern Mediterranean geography suffused with peril.

Presenting the Mediterranean as both site and emblem of human precarity, perpetually reconfiguring relations between people as well as the localities between which they travel, *Pericles*

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217. Judith Butler, "Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012): 148.

218. All quotations of the play are taken from *Pericles*, ed. by Suzanne Gossett (London: Arden Bloomsbury Shakespeare, 2004).

219. Like *The Tempest*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter's Tale*, *Pericles* moves teleologically, if with swings and roundabouts, toward grand reconciliations of physical, social, and spiritual identity.

moves through sea-swept scenes that simultaneously pose risks and offer mechanisms of repair through collective work. Not only are the doubly shipwrecked Pericles, the sea-thrown Thaisa, and Marina who is not "of any shores" embodiments of precarious life (5.1.94), but the entire playworld is presented as a rough and watery geography of risk. In the shoreline encounters of the play, the tension between the individual as subject or object, one who exerts agency or is forced to submit to chance as well as human and nonhuman actors, extends in a sea-swept theater of precarity to residents as well as travelers. The play figures the sea not as a mechanism that levels risk irrespective of social position, but rather as a locale that serves to emphasize the condition of vulnerability. As the central figure in the first part of the play, Pericles responds to his vulnerable condition by recognizing the limitations of his agency and submitting to what may be.

In the initial scene of shipwreck, *Pericles* establishes shoreline locales as sites of "threshold reality," both in Bradin Cormack's sense of jurisdictional sovereignty between political states and as places where the body may experience interstitial states between health, injury, and death.[220] Pericles in Tarsus is situated as a noble among other nobles, but his arrival in Pentapolis structures a seaside encounter that raises concerns of class and labor. As a threshold site, the shore poses risks to the self, scrambling any identity rooted in stable locality and leaving Pericles at the mercy of nonhuman powers of wind and rain as well as the collective of coastal workers in Pentapolis. The prince washes up on shore as a dripping figure of need. Naked, stranger to the kingdom, deprived of any marker of his royal status, and subject to the elements, his dependence on others is total. Whereas Lear on the heath taunts the heavens and rages against the storm, Pericles responds to the rough waters both above and below him with acknowledgement of what he views as the futility of human endeavor: "Wind, rain and thunder, remember earthly man / Is but a substance that must yield to you, / And

220. Bradin Cormack, *A Power to Do Justice: Jurisdiction, English Literature, and the Rise of Common Law* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 256.

I, as fits my nature, do obey you" (2.1.2–4). Pericles here suggests that it is fitting for the human being to submit and acknowledge the self as object rather than act as an agent in the world, patiently giving over his physical and social selves to both the elements and the coastal laborers.[221]

Through the fishermen's response to the stranger, the play contrasts the passivity of its protagonist with a focus on active labor that will ripple throughout the rest of the drama. Pericles first addresses them, "Peace be at your labour, honest fishermen" (2.1.51), aligning them in their "shoreline workplace" both with their environment and with each other through collective engagement with their world.[222] Their community as workers is founded upon the collective labor of fishing, which ultimately yields the armor of Pericles. With the recovery of that armor, Pericles can go on to the tournament for Thaisa's hand, setting in motion the central plot of the play. When Pericles introduces himself not as a prince but simply as a "man, whom both the waters and the wind / In that vast tennis court hath made the ball / For them to play upon" (2.1.58–60), he suggests that an attitude of patience is the ideal perspective for navigating risky seas that "appear to be governed by arbitrary fortune."[223] Yet this perspective fails to acknowledge the critical role of the fishermen in his fortune—had their labor not produced his armor, or had they refused to offer it to him, Pericles would have been unable to find a place in the court of Simonides. Yet the fishermen

221. See Gossett's note on the relation to *Lear* and question of nature in this speech in the Arden *Pericles*, 222.

222. Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Shakespeare Dwelling: Designs for the Theater of Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 130.

223. Jane Hwang Degenhardt, "Performing the Sea: Fortune, Risk, and Audience Engagement in *Pericles*," *Renaissance Drama* 48.1 (2020), 115. Characterizing Pericles as an "*accidental* imperialist" whose patience rewards him with territorial expansion, Degenhardt's reading aligns with Valerie Forman's *Tragicomic Redemptions* and Steve Mentz's *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean* in exploring what the prince gains through his haphazard seafaring, 116. I here read the play as less interested in empire or commercial acquisition as in precarity, labor, and hope.

go beyond simply recovering the armor and offer their own clothing to furnish him with suitable attire. While the comment of Fisherman 2, "We'll sure provide" (2.1.158), refers directly to the bases, or leg coverings, worn by knights on horseback, the larger ethic it suggests combines labor and care. In contrast to the passivity of Pericles, the community of fishermen engages with the affordances of their seaside workplace to ensure both his survival and their own.

As we hear their ethos through their spirited speech, the fishermen's commentary extends from the blue world of the sea to the political and economic conditions of Pentapolis, highlighting the class divisions that fracture society through an analogy between fish life and human life. Sea creatures live, as Fisherman 1 tells us: "as men do a-land: the great ones eat up the little ones" (2.1.28–29). Explicitly comparing the avarice of the rich to the appetites of the more powerful fish, the laborers articulate class consciousness in a larger economic critique that the play picks up and evades in turns, while highlighting a core focus of the drama on varied forms of vulnerability. Pericles glosses their improvisatory parable in terms of common human weakness: "How from the finny subject of the sea / These fishers tell the infirmities of men / And from their watery empire recollect / All that men may approve or men detect" (2.1.47–50).[224] Stressing the shared vulnerability of humanity, Pericles belies his position as royalty and overlooks the specificity in their critique of power. The mortal infirmities and social inequities that the fishermen convey by way of their finny conceits place them aside the washed-up royal and his story of loss and restoration; yet, unlike the passive prince, they project themselves as a vital collective of workers, defined in name by their profession and aligned with their environment and with each other through their shoreline labor.

224. In his oceanic reading of the play, Mentz argues that the sea in this scene "insulates Pericles's imperial project from one strain of political critique by linking him to workers who criticize landlords" *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 73.

The generosity of the fishermen facilitates the success of Pericles in Pentapolis, where he arrives as a stranger, thrown ashore by oceanic catastrophe, but leaves the city married to the princess Thaisa.[225] While the first storm goes un-staged, replaced by the water-beaten prince's arrival on the shores of Pentapolis, in the scene of Pericles's and Thaisa's stormy departure the stage itself is transformed into the ship. As Steve Mentz has observed, this dramaturgical decision "directs the play's attention more closely to the entanglement of human bodies with rough water," highlighting the collective oceanic network and the essential physical and social vulnerability common to all.[226] Yet that anthropo-oceanic encounter that threatens the seafarers also delivers Marina, and Pericles responds by addressing his laboring wife, her nurse, the storm, and the goddess of childbirth:

> O, how Lychorida!
> How does my queen? – Thou stormiest venomously;
> Wilt thou spit all thyself? The seaman's whistle
> Is as a whisper in the ears of death,
> Unheard. [*Calls*]
> Lychorida! – Lucina, O,
> Divinest patroness and midwife gentle
> To those that cry by night, convey the deity
> Aboard our dancing boat; make swift the pangs
> Of my queen's travails – Now, Lychorida! (3.1.7–14)

While scholars have suggested that this scene marks the authorial transition in the play from George Wilkins to William Shakespeare, the more significant shift in terms of its symbolic architecture is from an emphasis on loss and harm to collective healing through acts of hope. Pericles first calls on Lychorida, nurse and midwife whose name, in echoing the word "liquor," evokes the restoratives of Gower's opening speech as well as the sea-drenched liquidity of the play itself. On the verge of

225. The word "stranger" appears repeatedly in the Pentapolis scenes, and rarely throughout the rest of the play, though Marina, the true emblem in the play of oceanic wandering, refers to herself as a stranger in the scene of reunion. See the *Oxford Shakespeare Concordances: Pericles*, ed. T.H. Howard-Hill (Oxford University Press, 1972), 211–212.

226. Mentz, 81.

hopelessness, he turns to her, and through her, to Lucina. As a goddess of childbirth aligned with Diana, Lucina is the light after the storm and the future that might be possible beyond the rough waters of the past. The rest of the play will suggest that the future depends upon a hope that emerges from labor rather than patience, action rather than faith. Thaisa's "travails"—labor, sea travel, and exposure to risk—lead to the birth of Marina, and her mother's recovery functions as a transition between a dramatic arc that is primarily focused on Pericles to one that centers on his daughter. While the name of Pericles graces the title page, Marina becomes the true central character of the play—central precisely because she is never fully settled in place—and an active foil to her passive father. The scene of Thaisa's restoration thus functions as a dramatic hinge, turning the play from the past harms suffered by Pericles to the future recovery and hope that emerges through the actions of their daughter Marina.

The play's pivot to Marina depends upon the physician Cerimon's creative labors of care in his revival of Thaisa, which, as with the fishermen scene, shows the routine labor of one's profession giving way to the exceptional labor of responsive care. Cerimon's response to the storm is illustrative: "Get fire and meat for these poor men" (3.2.3). This offer of nourishment highlights acts of care in response to the risk and potential of the shoreline. In Cerimon's call for food and the "rough and woeful music" of his ceremony to awaken a body on the cusp of death, the play further emphasizes acts of hope in response to vulnerability (3.2.87). The queen's lament as she comes to consciousness invokes both childbirth and the uncertainty of displacement: "O dear Diana, where am I? Where's my lord? / What world is this?" (3.2.103–104). Like Pericles on the shores of Pentapolis, Thaisa's physical displacement also portends a social displacement from the previous social structure that held her. Thaisa here aligns the loss of a husband with the loss of a locality, articulating her sense of self as oriented within a specific family structure and place. Calling on the

goddess of childbirth, she hopes to be restored to an intimate community and recognizable identity after being deprived of these by the storm.

The temple of Diana where Thaisa finds refuge further highlights the play's concern with sites of care. In that sanctuary, she may recover, maintain her safety, and form community with the other devotees.[227] Beyond simply enabling Thaisa's security, the temple space affords the opportunity for actions that spring from a hopeful orientation toward the future. Julia Lupton notes that "in a messianic mood, we might imagine that *the sanctuary Thaisa seeks for herself* after surviving childbirth and tempest becomes *sanctuary that she extends to others* in her years of temple service."[228] Lupton's compelling supposition offers the temple, like the Pentapolis shoreline, as a local site of community and careful labor. While Pericles chooses to mourn through patience and negation—giving up speech and allowing his hair and beard to grow—the play that bears his name turns to the vital work of hope.

Crucially, *Pericles* demonstrates the work of hope in the face of seeming impossibility, a hope as necessary as it is hard won, rooted in labor and persistence. Just as Thaisa's rescue and revival, as well as her extension of service to a community of care, proceed from highly unlikely odds, Marina's birth and survival demonstrate hope through her active response to the extremities of precarity. Marina's forced return to sea when kidnapped by pirates, in a shoreline encounter that reverses Pericles's meeting with the fishermen, articulates the real threat of piracy in the early modern Mediterranean and the danger of a young woman becoming an "object of international masculine

227. Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, in which Emilia's sanctuary in an Ephesian abbey primes the play for the full family reunion, makes a similar move.

228. Lupton, *Shakespeare Dwelling*, 148. The italics are in Lupton's original text.

desire," contained within a single point on the violent map of the Mediterranean sex trade.[229] As both a young woman and a stranger to Mytilene, Marina is doubly exposed to potential exploitation, and the play could construct her as primarily a figure of suffering or an objectified commercial body. Instead, she emerges as the core emblem of human agency and potential in *Pericles*.

Marina is not the sole figure of vulnerability in the city, and despite her nobility, her precarity in Mytilene aligns her with the very workers who seek to convert her into a commodity. Her captors intend to sell her body to perpetuate their own survival. Like the fishermen of Pentapolis, Bolt becomes an unexpected voice of class critique when he questions Marina: "What would you have me do? Go to the wars, would you, where a man may serve seven years for the loss of a leg and have not money enough in the end to buy him a wooden one?" (4.5.173–176). Bolt's question compels a recognition of the larger socioeconomic conditions that underlie the motivations of the brothel-keepers, the sex workers they employ, and their customers. The general condition in the city seems to be one of penury, and both the residents and transients who appear there, Marina excepted, are marked by physical, economic, and spiritual abjection. Marina's gesture of refusal—she not only maintains her chastity but converts would-be customers into remorseful penitents solely through her speech—constitutes an act of hope in the face of impossible odds that distinguishes her from her father. While her later marriage to Lysimachus might leave audiences with sour faces, scratching their heads at the unsuitability of the match and its reinstatement of patriarchy and inherited hierarchy, Marina's resistance to her captors and her role as shoreline educator and artist mark her as a core figure of agency in the play.

229. Vitkus, 41. See also Campana's "The Traffic in Children" for a discussion of forced child labor in the early modern theater. While Pericles sees himself as an object during the storms, Marina is treated as a salable object, a property for trade, when she is taken captive and subsequently purchased in Mytilene.

The creative and collective labors of Marina and her schoolmates at the seaside center action as a foundation of community. When the unshorn, unspeaking Pericles arrives at Mytilene, Marina is said to be at "a leafy shelter that abuts / against the island's side" (5.1.43–44), where she "Sings like one immortal, dances / As goddess like to her admired lays," silences scholars with her wit, and "with her nee'le composes / Nature's own shape of bud, bird, branch, or berry" (5.0.3–6). While the "typically English trades of sewing and weaving" suggest the gendered aspect of this domestic labor, Marina's edifying curriculum is also one of survival, craft, and collective care, as that local site of language, dance, song, and needlework offers an escape route for other young women on the isle who might otherwise be forced into the sex trade.[230] From her "unaligned position," not fully on land nor at sea but moving along the edge that divides an aggressive urban environment and a risky oceanic space, both threats to the body and social self, Marina becomes a source of hope within a position of precarity.[231] The leafy shelter facilitates her agency within the playworld's broader instability and reinforces the role of action in constructing and maintaining hope.

While often read as triumphant, the family reunion that concludes the play suggests a sense of stability that may be only temporary. After Pericles and Marina venture from Mytilene to Ephesus to reunite with Thaisa, Pericles decrees that he and Thaisa will return to rule in Pentapolis, while Lysimachus and Marina will reign in Tyre. These future relocations will again separate the family across an oceanic network, setting them out on different routes in the same Mediterranean environment that has been the site of much real and imagined loss. If the tale this play tells is restorative, it is not because the characters are finally secure on dry land or that they have eliminated

230. Vitkus, 42.

231. Jennifer Munroe and Rebecca Laroche, "Ecofeminist studies." In *The Arden Research Handbook of Contemporary Shakespeare* Criticism, ed. Evelyn Gajowski (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 286.

risk, but because the defining ethic of active hope has triumphed over passive faith and desperation. That the drama concludes with a continuation of oceanic mobility suggests that hope develops neither from a sense of insular security and protection from harm, nor from a reduction of human agency, but rather from creative action in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

That unceasing saltwater movement in *Pericles,* its episodic shifts "from bourn to bourn, region to region" (4.4.4), as well as the need to embrace acts of hope amidst the widespread human displacement of the present moment, align the themes of the play with current concerns regarding migration and campaigns on behalf of migrant justice.[232] While Marina and Pericles exist in an exceptional, fairy-tale playworld, their maritime labors speak to a present moment of oceanic mobility. Explicitly set in the eastern Mediterranean, the oceanic geography of *Pericles* maps onto core 21st-century sites of displacement and privation, as migrants primarily from Africa and the Middle East seek asylum inside a Fortress Europe that seeks to keep them out or, failing that, confines them to carceral spaces.[233] In this century, the island of Lesbos, where Mytilene is located, was also the site of the Moria camp, which had been the largest refugee settlement in Europe until it burned down in 2020.[234] These Mediterranean border regimes and mobility controls reflect the larger

232. In the program notes to the Gash reading, Noémie Ndiaye cites the recent surge in popularity and connects it to the opportunities for multiracial casting that the various Levantine settings of *Pericles* afford. She also notes that the play remains suffused with troubling associations that often align fairness, whiteness, and moral good.

233. For a consideration of the geographic overlap between the play's settings and current Mediterranean migrant routes, see also Rui Carvalho Homem, "Offshore Desires: Mobility, Liquidity, and History in Shakespeare's Mediterranean," *Critical Survey*, vol. 30, no. 3 (2018), 35–56. Homem focus is more on economics and the Mediterranean imagination of the plays themselves, while I am more concerned here with creative response and present utility.

234. Six Afghan asylum seekers, including two minors, have been sentenced for the arson, though they maintain their innocence. Before its destruction, the overcrowded camp had become a symbol of the failure of the European Union to respond humanely to asylum seekers at its borders.

global organization of power as current migrant precarity emerges from historical arrangements that foster a radically unequal distribution of risk both within and between modern nation-states.

The specific human displacements of this century are another chapter in a "long history of racial capitalism which has always sought to control the movement of the poor" and the bodies of the most vulnerable.[235] While the source text ultimately reinforces patriarchal and monarchical values, stressing Marina's restored nobility and centering a single, exceptional royal family, artists have recently rejected that logic of hierarchy and instead taken up the play as a vehicle for social critique. Their works draw out the strands of active hope in the source text—its orientation to the future and its labors of care—to speak to the patterns of human mobility that arise from Euro-American imperial projects and centuries of global racial capitalism. Such art responds critically to the current racial inequality of settler-colonial nations such as the United States and the militarized border regimes that punish Mediterranean refugees as intersecting processes of modernity. In a contemporary global context defined by such injustices, artists have found in *Pericles* a dramatic entry point to challenge the regimes that control human mobility and restrict social opportunity.

Adrian Jackson's 2003 *Pericles* is foundational in recognizing the patterns in the play that mirror modern forced migration.[236] His Cardboard Citizens production took place within a warehouse that was made into a migrant processing facility, and refugee testimonials were interspersed with text from the play to create a hybrid of drama and nonfiction narrative monologue. Audience members were granted ID numbers, given forms to fill out, and lectured on the greatness of Shakespeare, while performers narrated migrant memoirs in fits and starts. Jackson

235. Danewid, "These Walls Must Fall," 147.

236. For a more substantial consideration of Jackson's *Pericles*, see the previous chapter in this study.

explains how after making theater both "for and with displaced people" for over twenty years, he became interested in discovering if *Pericles* would be especially resonant in those communities.[237] He recounts in an interview that in one of the workshops used to devise the play, there was an audience member whose family had fled from both Franco's Spain and Pinochet's Chile. Her mother, born at sea, was named Marina. Beyond such unlikely resonances, the play positions the non-refugee audience in a space that replicates the carceral conditions of migrant holding facilities. This adaptation thus illustrates the theatrical utility of the play to speak to specific present arrangements—such as the brutal containment of humans within London's detention centers—while also alluding to the continuity of patterns of forced migration via sea routes throughout modern history.

Yukio Ninagawa's spectacular 2003 production for the National Theatre of London likewise focused on forced migration, opening with an aerial assault that displaces the central family. Presenting them as war refugees in flight, the production combined the "immediate relevance" of violent forced migration with the play's larger "mythic shape of death and rebirth."[238] That Jackson's interpretation converts a warehouse into a mock detention center for migrants and Ninagawa's play is structured as an air war despite the absence of battle in *Pericles* illustrates the openness of the play-text to varied approaches to forced human mobility under current geopolitical regimes. The coincidence of these two productions in 2003, the same year in which the United States and its allies, including the United Kingdom, invaded Iraq suggests a common interest among early 21st-century

237. See *Pericles* (London: Macmillan Education, 2012), edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, 151. Cardboard Citizens, originally working primarily with unhoused people, extended its work to migrants in the early 21st century. Sarah Beckwith also cites this production in *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* as bringing out "both the loneliness of grief and the terrible commonalty of the experience among the dispossessed," 99.

238. Gosset, preface, xvi.

theater-makers in approaching violent dispossession, domination, and migration through a conceptual reframing of Shakespearean drama.

Theatrum Botanicum's 2005 *Children of the Sea,* performed in Matara, Sri Lanka, and at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, likewise engages with patterns of forced migration. Casting teenagers displaced by the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, the play presents a hybrid of Shakespearean drama and traditional Sri Lankan performance. *Pericles* is a play-within-the-play, told to the children as they seek refuge following the disaster. The involvement of actual children orphaned by climate catastrophe highlights the complex ethical relations between text, performance, actor, and audience when Shakespeare is employed to tell stories of trauma and resilience. The show can be read simultaneously as Shakespearean appropriation by the performers as well as the audience's appropriation of those children's own suffering.[239] While *Children of the Sea* differs from the other productions discussed in this section because its central catastrophe is framed outside of explicit geopolitical networks, the toll of natural disaster on poorer nations compared to wealthier ones is evident, as is the link between global climate change, extreme weather events, and forced migration. *Children of the Sea* makes use of the original patterns of displacement in *Pericles* and situates them within a specific catastrophe.

More recent dramatic and narrative interpretations of *Pericles* in the United Kingdom center Marina as a figure of active resistance and resilience and address displacement in terms of the relationship of the nation to its recently arrived migrants. *The Marina Project*, a collaboration between the University of Birmingham and the Royal Shakespeare Company, reimagines the central family in

239. See Genevieve Love, "Tsunami in the Royal Botanic Garden: *Pericles* and *Children of the Sea* on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe," *Borrowers and Lenders*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2006). The question of audience implication and trauma voyeurism is at issue in all the productions here and the ethics of representation and the positionality of the audience are always at issue in theater.

the play as displaced Syrian Christians in present-day London. Focusing on her refusal in the brothel, the scholars and theater-makers involved in the creation of this collaboration see in Marina a form of "radical chastity" that asserts bodily autonomy, allowing the displaced person to enact "a displacement from the status quo," which embraces sexual chasteness as an antifeminist block in a larger patriarchal social structure.[240] While the project has not yet resulted in a full performance, the collaboration between theater-makers, Shakespeare scholars, and experts on forced migration suggests transdisciplinary opportunities for engaging with Shakespearean precedent and current patterns of migration.

Ali Smith's 2019 novel *Spring* likewise introduces Marina into the present United Kingdom by way of her gesture of resistance, alluding in the narrative to a group of pimps who call the police to take away a young woman who is driving away customers. Smith's protagonist, Florence, is a refugee reincarnation of Shakespeare's Marina, and the novel centers her as a figure of radical hope despite the harms of family separation—at one point, there is an offhand mention in the text that her father is thought to have drowned off the coast of Greece. Before Florence is even introduced, the novel positions itself in relation to 21st-century Mediterranean migration, as one of the characters states: "Don't be calling it a migrant crisis . . . I've told you a million times. It's people. It's an individual person crossing the world against the odds. Multiplied by 60 million, all individual people."[241] Just as Marina finds a way for her labor to be useful within her seaside schoolhouse, Florence facilitates escape and shelter for detained refugees. While the novel is certainly measured in the hope it associates with activism, it depicts an activist movement whose work takes the form of

240. Katharine A. Craik and Ewan Fernie, "The *Marina Project*," in *New Places: Shakespeare and Civic Creativity*, edited by Paul Edmondson and Ewan Fernie (Bloomsbury, 2018), 121.

241. Ali Smith, *Spring* (New York: Penguin, 2019), 68.

disciplined action despite unlikely success. As one character posits, "true hope is a matter of the absence of hope."[242] Consistent with the oft-cited Gramscian adage about pessimism of the intellect tied to optimism of the will, Smith's novel allows the paradox of hope without hope to be resolved through action rather than mere belief. *Spring* and other recent adaptations of *Pericles* suggest that disciplined and creative work, rather than time alone or stolid faith in providence, can play an important role in the curing of collective wounds.

Kent Gash's 2021 staged reading emphasizes this ethic of an activist hope emerging from legacies of mobility and violence. By tying his decisions about casting, costume, and accent (including the Caribbean inflections of the Pentapolis fishermen) to the Black Atlantic diaspora rather than to histories of Mediterranean migration, Gash extends the play's inquiry into oceanic mobility and its adaptive capacities to address legacies of racial injustice associated with displacement. The reading was staged as part of Red Bull's larger "Pericles 2021" project, which explored the play "with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) voices in our present moment" and included creative works and discussions by BIPOC theater-makers addressing *Pericles*'s current relevance for decolonial and racial justice movements in the United States.[243] On the surface, it would seem an unlikely play for such an exploration; of the late plays, only *The Tempest* is frequently taken up to contest the violence of history.[244] The language of the play-text itself, in its

242. Smith, 60. Smith's novel is peppered with both explicit references and more subtle allusions to *Pericles*, including a quip where a character calls himself "Pericles of Tired," 31. Shakespeare's Pericles is, of course, tired; both Marina and Florence show few signs of fatigue.

243. The initiative followed Red Bull's "Othello 2020" series, which responded to the uprising of 2020 following the police murder of George Floyd and the racial justice movements that precede it by discussing the overlap of Shakespearean drama and racial injustice.

244. The *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race* contains excellent essays on race in Shakespearean tragedy, history, and comedy, but there is little focus on the late plays. Joyce

obsession with Marina's fairness and the casual description of the "black Ethiop reaching at the sun" on the shield of a knight reinforces pernicious racial formations that serve to construct and elevate whiteness as a superior cultural and moral rather than phenotypic quality (2.2.25). As Joyce Green MacDonald observes, Shakespeare's texts often simultaneously "invoke blackness" and "paradoxically limit the physical presence of black people."[245] Yet that textual limitation vanishes in performance, allowing theater-makers to interrogate or upend the social values within a play and employ thematic patterns that do not recreate the hierarchical or prejudicial logic of the Shakespearean source.

Cast entirely with BIPOC actors, including Black actors in the major roles, Gash's production resonates with decolonial and racial justice movements in the present and fully rejects the racial politics of the original play, which conflate fairness and beauty with whiteness of hue. In the context of Red Bull's "Pericles 2021" project, which sought to explore the resonance of the play at a time of long overdue calls to acknowledge and repair legacies of colonization and racial injustice, Gash's race-conscious casting choices both indicate the diasporic setting of the playworld and imbue the play with immediate political relevance. When the words of Shakespeare's characters are spoken by these actors—especially Callie Holley's Marina—the production invokes specific histories of displacement and dispossession that speak with urgency to the present. Gash interprets the play, as he puts it, in terms of "the absurd brutalities visited upon Black people, people of the African diaspora, and those who have been colonized." Gash reimagines the drama, then, as a celebration of

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Green MacDonald's "Actresses of Color and Shakespearean Performance: The Question of Reception" however, notes that the Trinidad and Tobago born Edric Connor, played Gower in a 1958 production of *Pericles* by the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford.

245. Joyce Green MacDonald, *Shakespearean Adaptation, Race and Memory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 7.

collective resilience and hope, stating, "Black people cannot be destroyed . . . We can rise and thrive, and in fact, we must, and we will, and there will be great joy in the doing of that."[246] The director here notes the brutality of imperialism and racialized enslavement as oceanic enterprises whose wounds run deep but will eventually heal through community and celebration. Highlighting the past dispossession and active resistance of the Black diaspora, Gash's reading looks backward to look forward, making use of the play to speak directly to communities who have endured terrible harm under global and mobile regimes of racial capitalism and white supremacist projects, but whose ultimate and enduring story is one not of trauma but of joy.

The arc from suffering to reconciliation culminates in the final act, as Callie Holley's Marina and Grantham Coleman's Pericles recount their pasts, enacting collective healing through narrative. In a discussion with Gash, Noémie Ndiaye calls specific attention to the resonance of Marina's lines when she first meets her father: "My derivation was from ancestors / Who stood equivalent with mighty kings, / But time hath rooted out my parentage, / And to the world and awkward casualties / Bound me in servitude" (5.1.81–85).[247] Though Gash does not alter Marina's original lines, when spoken by Holley as a Black woman, the losses Marina has endured carry the greater heft of history. No longer the exceptional case, this Marina invokes countless people who were stolen and treated as property during the transatlantic slave trade. As Ndiaye puts it, "the identity of the performer and the text as it was written generates a meaning that exceeds the meaning originally intended."[248] In staging this reunification, Gash's production re-creates from *Pericles* a stunning and significant

246. "Bull Session | PERICLES." YouTube. https://www.redbulltheater.com/pericles-reading

247. "Bull Session | PERICLES." YouTube. https://www.redbulltheater.com/pericles-reading.

248. "Bull Session | PERICLES." YouTube. https://www.redbulltheater.com/pericles-reading.

dramatic moment, one which does not center the trauma emerging from racialized enslavement but the acts of collective healing through resistance and work, including the creative work of weaving narrative and the performance of theater. The unlikely fantasy of Shakespeare's *Pericles* finds itself transformed by Gash for a specific diasporic history, as the various layers of meaning that emerge from text and context ask audiences to simultaneously consider Marina's plight as a character, legacies of racialized enslavement over centuries, and Holley's position as a Black woman living in the 21st-century United States.

Gash's centering of the "human incompleteness, vulnerability, in and to the world at large" that characterizes hope in *Pericles* links the play specifically to the history of the Black diaspora and echoes traditions of messianic thought that add an urgent politico-spiritual valence to the play.[249] While the messianic moves in the drama suggest the centrality of active hope to any community who has endured historical trauma, Gash's *Pericles* extends a distinct tradition of Black liberation thought that has been central to both Caribbean and North American justice campaigns, which foregrounds the foundational displacements of colonization and slavery but looks toward a future of freedom through social action. Stuart Hall writes of messianism in Black liberation thought:

> There we find the analogue, critical to our history, of "the chosen people," taken away by violence into slavery in "Egypt"; their "suffering" at the hands of "Babylon"; the leadership of Moses, followed by the Great Exodus—"movement of Jah People"—out of bondage and the return to the promised land. This is the ur-source of that great New World narrative of freedom, hope, and redemption which is repeated again and again throughout slavery: the Exodus and the "Freedom Ride." It has provided every black liberatory discourse with its governing metaphor.[250]

249. Lupton, *Shakespeare Dwelling*, 121–123.

250. Stuart Hall, "Thinking the Diaspora: Home Thoughts from Abroad" in *Essential Essays, Volume 2: Identity and Diaspora*, ed. David Morely (Duke University Press, 2018), 209.

In this formulation, the violent displacement of human beings is countered by renewed control over mobility by displaced communities, marking freedom over movement as the central component to repairing the harms of history. Reading Hall's characterization of diasporic messianism in concert with *Pericles* brings out the urgency of Gash's production, how it articulates a sense of hope that is also charged with political utility, connecting past and present harm with a push toward future healing, and articulating the capacity to move as essential to liberation.

In a recent interview on the theme of Shakespeare and social justice, Arthur L. Little, Jr. discusses how Shakespearean drama "can be used" in the present as well as how it has "worked with or against the history of social justice" over the centuries.[251] Shakespeare's works, often weaponized to either evade racial specificity through claims of universality or to bolster putative white cultural superiority, have often worked against justice, and their role in fostering imperial projects is evident. Yet the capaciousness of the plays and the cultural capital they carry also allow them to become vehicles for social projects that combat this legacy. Recent developments in the study of Shakespeare and social justice that build upon decades of scholarship on Shakespeare and premodern critical race studies, and the engaged artistic responses explored here, offer an ethic of active hope against the violent dispossessions of history.[252] Performance alone cannot suture the wounds of history or their ongoing present legacies, and it is important that the putatively progressive spheres of the academy and theater remain aware of the risks of conflating sentiment with politics or structural with

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251. Arthur L. Little, Jr. "Arthur L. Little, Jr.," in *The Arden Research Handbook of Shakespeare and Social Justice,* ed. David Ruiter (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 37.

252. See the *Arden Research Handbook of Shakespeare and Social Justice*, *Teaching Social Justice through Shakespeare: Why Renaissance Literature Matters Now*, and "Shakespeare and Social Justice in Contemporary Performance," a special issue of *Shakespeare Bulletin* vol. 39, no. 4 (2021), edited by David Sterling Brown and Sandra Young. As only a few examples of theatrical work that directly addresses the issued discussed here, see Keith Hamilton Cobb's *American Moor* and Madeline Sayet's *Where We Belong*.

metaphorical change. Institutions must be held accountable, and material commitment must back up the symbolic gesture. Yet the stories we choose to tell and how we tell them are not vacant of political utility.

The concurrence of Little Amal's journey with Red Bull's *Pericles* foregrounds the historical and cultural relations between varied forms of oceanic mobility and injustice and the ongoing rupture of the past in the present. As Christina Sharpe writes,

> In the wake, the semiotics of the slave ship continue: from the forced movements of the enslaved to the forced movements of the migrant and the refugee, to the regulation of Black people in North American streets and neighborhoods, to those ongoing crossings and drownings in the Mediterranean Sea, to the brutal colonial reimaginings of the slave ship and the ark; to the reappearances of the slave ship in everyday life in the form of the prison, the camp, in the school.[253]

The harms of history continually take new forms in the power relations of the present and the exertion of control over the moveable—or containable—subject remains a constant as the brutality of the past reshapes itself at the expense of the most vulnerable. Power over the conditions of movement has been and continues to be an essential tool in constructing and maintaining global racial capitalism. Against such reconfigurations of familiar patterns of mobility and exploitation, the odds of fostering a more just future at times may appear impossible. As of this writing, that is certainly how it often seems. Yet art may be a site for envisioning and fostering active labors against those odds. Hope is not synonymous with justice; it is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition that drives the work of constructing a future that acknowledges the harms of the past and moves toward repair.

The reading of *Pericles* and its recent reimaginings discussed in this essay demonstrate how the cultural inheritance of the most canonized writer in English, often falsely claimed as universal,

253. Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 25.

can also be used in modes of performance tied to a politics that entwines hope and labor in the present against the brutal legacies of the past. That includes projects rooted in the historical specificity of forced migration and current racial and diasporic justice movements as entangled and mutually conditioning processes in "Europe's constitutive history of empire, colonial conquest, and transatlantic slavery."[254] Activist adaptation and response affords an opportunity for creators and audiences alike to meet the bleakness of the present with renewed commitment to the future in both attitude and action. The artistic and political moves we make through that commitment, including the reimagining of story and performance as strategies of care, can aid in the healing of past injury. The making and remaking of theater can both arise from and push forward acts of collective hope.

States of Union: Exile, Empire, and the Dual Futures of *Cymbeline*

Cymbeline too scatters its characters across varied geographies and political entities, severing them from ties of family or habitation and dramatizing displacement in an extended prologue to miraculous reunion. Yet unlike *Pericles*, whose Mediterranean isles and seaside cities, imported from the play's Hellenic source and later reworkings of it, do not map clearly or directly onto the geopolitics of Shakespeare's early 17th-century moment, *Cymbeline* is obsessed with the matter of Britain and specifically its Roman origins and colonial inheritance by way of *translatio imperii*. The plot of *Cymbeline* arises from a series of fractures: the split between Posthumus and Innogen arising first from his banishment from court and then his jealous rage; the military conflict between Britain and Rome due to King Cymbeline's refusal to pay tribute to the empire; the break in the family of the king, whose kidnapped sons are raised in rural Wales; the opposing locales of Lud's Town and

254. Ida Danewid, "White Innocence in the Black Mediterranean," *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 7 (2017), 1675.

Milford Haven; and the bizarre temporal shifts between a recognizably early modern Europe and a 1st-century Britain under the dominion of the Roman empire.

Like *Pericles* and other post-tragic Shakespearean works, *Cymbeline* is oriented toward the future, not only with the unspoken Christian nativity just beyond its temporal frame but, as Lupton points out, "natality" in Hannah Arendt's sense of "new beginnings—in the form of fresh stories, relationships, and institutions."[255] Such beginnings occur within the family as well as the state, and the futurity of *Cymbeline* opens simultaneously toward the restructuring of domestic relations and a sense of British imperial destiny. The note of peace and pardon that concludes the play comes through the dual reunions of Posthumus with Innogen and Cymbeline with his sons as well as the unlikely truce between Britain and Rome. Yet that conclusion "divorces the domestic from the imperial," as Posthumus "declines from the heir apparent to the heirs' brother-in-law," and Cymbeline's sons inherit a Britain that will build on proximate acts of colonization to more distant imperial ventures.[256] The final peace leaves hierarchy intact. Read in the symbolic, fairy-tale mode, *Cymbeline* is a messy expansion on the thematic patterns in *Pericles* of vulnerability and care, separation and reunion, and hope in the future after trial and loss. As a drama preoccupied with national identity and transnational relations, however, the play refuses xenophobic isolationism while embracing an expansionist imperial heritage rooted in British exceptionality. Mixing the concerns and strategies of Shakespeare's Roman plays and the late, post-tragic works, *Cymbeline* not only dramatizes the fracturing and reunion of the family but interrogates ideas of nation that may hearken back to the time of Brute, descendent of Aeneas and mythical founder of Britain, but which remain

255. Lupton, *Shakespeare Dwelling*, 155.

256. Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 180.

resonant in the time of Brexit and border imperialism. The healing of the core divisions of the plot and the return to place of the displaced with which the play concludes thus refuses to resolve a core split between an ethic of care and forgiveness within the family and a contrasting imperial attitude toward relations between states both near and distant. Those conflicting trajectories offer possibilities for an interpretation that seeks an honest accounting of the violence of the imperial moves in *Cymbeline* while also giving due to its attention to communal care as an ethic that could be applied at the scale of *polis* rather than be restricted to the realm of *oikos*.

The double movement between the imperial and the domestic begins with the banishment of Posthumus, an order of exile that cuts him off from both Britain and Innogen, whom the play constructs as a synecdoche for Britain itself. Posthumus is thus "*radically* placeless" from the outset, not only out of place in a cosmopolitan Italian milieu in which he is easily duped by Iachimo but lacking in origins.[257] The courtier's inability to "delve him to the root" suggests that Posthumus cannot be securely located in space or time (1.1.28).[258] He is rather, as his name tells us, a figure of futurity whose legacy will be in some fashion entwined with the fate of Britain. While the first few acts of the drama center the calumny plot during his exile and rehash the paranoically jealous mind state Shakespeare had already explored with Othello and Leontes, that foreground of marital strife plays before a backdrop of imperial competition. The wager scene in Rome brings to the stage a cross-European cohort from Italy, Spain, Holland, France, and England, all states that were vying

257. Janet Adelman, "Masculine Authority and the Maternal Body: The Return to Origins in *Cymbeline*," in *Shakespeare: The Last Plays*, ed. Kiernan Ryan (New York: Longman, 1999), 117. The emphasis on radical is mine.

258. All quotations of the play are from *Cymbeline*, ed. by Valerie Wayne (London: Arden Bloomsbury Shakespeare, 2017).

for power in the "great game of international empire" in the early modern period.[259] The spatial and temporal shift between Cymbeline's court in Lud's Town and an Italy figured as contemporary with the Jacobean period in which the play was written expands the inquiry into nationhood from origins to future expansion, from the time in which Britain was colonized by Rome to the time when James I was advocating for union between England and Scotland and English privateers and early colonizers were making the moves of a nascent empire.

The misogynistic insecurity of Posthumus—his fear of the "woman's part" in himself—articulates a psycho-sexual anxiety that expands into a matter of imperial consequence when Iachimo travels to Lud's Town with the intent to prove Innogen unfaithful or at least assemble sufficient evidence to convince her husband that she has betrayed him (2.5.20). As customary in the symbolically overstuffed *Cymbeline*, Innogen says to Iachimo: "My lord, I fear, has forgot Britain" (1.6.105). Britain here is not only a political entity in which the identity of Posthumus is deeply invested, even lacking the roots of genealogy, but also a metaphor for Innogen herself, who shares the name with Brute's wife and first queen of Britain in the mythic origin story of nation. This forgetting of "Britain" creates present and future risk, as the threatened violation of Innogen mirrors both the advantage a colonizing Rome might take of Britain and the early modern geopolitics gestured toward obliquely in the wager scene. With Iachimo using the trunk as a Trojan horse to enter her bedchamber, a series of classical references proliferate to express the broader imperial stakes of this scene of domestic vulnerability: he likens himself to Tarquin before Lucrece (2.2.12); Innogen has been reading the tale of Tereus and Philomel (2.2.45); and her tapestry depicts the first meeting of Cleopatra and Mark Antony (2.4.70). While the first two allusions clearly emphasize the

259. Paul Innes, "*Cymbeline* and Empire," *Critical Survey* 19, no. 2 (2007), 2. Italy is an outlier here because it was not a major player on the imperial stage in the early modern period, though its presence in this list, as in the play more generally, is due to its Roman inheritance.

threat of sexual violation Iachimo poses to Innogen, the scene at Cydnus marks the play's broader interest in the role of masculinity in the domestic as well as the political sphere.[260]

Such references also reinforce that both early modern Italy and Jacobean England have inherited a legacy from Rome that includes cultural narratives and the social values they promote—stories of love and death and, crucial here, notions of masculine and martial virtue—as well as forms of social and political organization. While Posthumus remains radically displaced until the final act, Innogen is first confined to the court as punishment for marrying a man who challenges the social hierarchies to which she was born. With Iachimo's arrival, her bedchamber in Lud's Town (or Troynovant) becomes a symbolic site of external invasion. Innogen thereby becomes a feminine incarnation of Britain itself: the play presents her vulnerability in terms of conquest, suggesting in the early scenes a British empire that might be sacked and destroyed before it has even been born.

That risk is emphasized by the refusal of the British to pay tribute to their Roman colonizers. Cymbeline's queen and her son Cloten articulate nationalistic and xenophobic hubris as the prevailing attitude in court toward transnational relations. When Cloten says, "Britain's a world / By itself, and we will nothing pay / For wearing our own noses" (3.1.213), he combines the sense of a sovereign political community with phenotypic characteristics, making use of a racialized overlay for isolationist ends by referencing the Roman nose with implicit contrast to British faces. Cymbeline, though brought up and educated in Rome, decides to follow his queen and her son and wage war rather than pay tribute. His court, as the "antitype of cosmopolitanism" in the play, enforces an ethic of insularity that severs its identity not only from Rome but from even the other nations of the

260. Iachimo's ekphrastic monologue, one of many moments of self-sampling in this play, calls back to Enobarbus's stunning description of Cleopatra's barge in *Antony and Cleopatra* and that play's conflation of martial and marital relations.

island.[261] While Cloten may claim that their kingdom is protected by a "saltwater girdle" that encircles them (3.1.70), the threat to Innogen posed by Iachimo belies any notion of safety in secure space. Just as the play presents Innogen, like Marina before her, in idealized terms, it constructs the characters who most directly pose sexual threats to her, Iachimo and Cloten, as abhorrent. Their violence and duplicity in matters domestic aligns with their ultimate unsuitability as theorists of nation or actors in service of international arrangements; the play refuses their narrow nationalism. Through Cloten and the queen—the only characters in the play who are excluded from the grand reconciliation and forgiveness of the final scene, and whose deaths occur as if morally scripted—*Cymbeline* rejects the nativist and isolationist conception of national identity. As agents of disunion, they oppose the ethic of harmonious coalition the play endorses.

That ethic of unity is found through travel and displacement, as Innogen's journey to Wales brings about the fortuitous meetings that enable the final reconciliation. Crossing the Severn, whose name evokes the play's intersecting patterns of severance and reunion, Innogen finds her way to Wales and Milford Haven. As both the site from which Henry II invaded Ireland in the 12th century and where, three hundred years later, Henry VII alighted before marching on England, the Welsh port, like the Roman plot, suggests Britain's futures as colonized and / or colonizer. With the Roman eagle of *translatio imperii* flying west, the subjugation of Wales under an English dominated Britain "is reinvented in the play as both an internal affair of the British Isles and the first step towards the creation of the new British empire as it looks to the west."[262] Beyond Wales lies Ireland; beyond that, the Atlantic and the colonies, such as James Fort, Virginia, which was settled a few years before *Cymbeline* was written, named for the Stuart monarch, and to this day known as

261. Randall Martin, *Shakespeare and Ecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 115.

262. Innes, 12.

Jamestown. The play dramatizes, as Willy Maley puts it, that the "formation of the British state, an experience characterized by successive crises of sovereignty, was both a prerequisite to Empire *and* an act of Empire."[263] Innogen is like the image of the duck-rabbit whose identity shifts between incompatible forms: fleeing from danger in the court where she is at risk of an unwanted betrothal to Cloten and the designs of the queen, and suffering from hunger and exhaustion, Innogen looks the part of a refugee who finds sanctuary in a Welsh cave; yet viewed as a geopolitical harbinger and foremother of British Empire, she is also a sort of colonist-adventurer with a Union Jack in her knapsack.

She arrives in Wales, like Prospero on the Mediterranean island of Caliban to which he then lays claim, both as a displaced person and as an emblem of supposed European civilization who assumes all else to be uncivilized. "Who's here?," she asks, "If anything that's civil, speak; if savage, / Take or lend" (3.6.24–25). Her journey into the ostensibly wild lands of Wales simultaneously calls back to the past founding of Britain as well as the present and future of colonial encounter.[264] Like Thaisa's restoration by Cerimon or Marina's mentorship of her pupils, the scene is presented first in terms of domestic hospitality and care. As Arviragus refuses the offer of money for meat, likening silver and gold to "dirty gods" (3.6.54), the play contrasts Wales with Cymbeline's court, presenting the brothers as figures of an ancestral British purity that has been lost and must be recovered. Arviragus's "Most welcome!" to Innogen-as-Fidele, figure of faithfulness to both husband and nation, arises from an intrinsic affinity while also articulating the broader ethic of generosity that defines the Welsh characters (3.6.71). The acts of care expressed by them toward Innogen / Fidele

263. Willy Maley, *Nation, State and Empire in English Renaissance Literature: Shakespeare to Milton* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 31. The italics are in Maley's original text.

264. Valerie Wayne, introduction to *Cymbeline*, ed. Valerie Wayne (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), 62.

as they nurse her back to health mark a sense of hospitality absent from the court in Lud's Town; indeed, their provision of food functions as a dramatic counterpoint to the poisonous concoctions the queen mixes to drug her enemies.

Shortly after meeting her, Arviragus emphasizes bonds of commonality in asking the stranger, "Are we not brothers?" (4.2.3). In exile, Innogen finds the family she has never known, yet not yet knowing their true identities, she hedges on this question of hierarchy: "So man and man should be. / But clay and clay differs in dignity / Whose dust is both alike" (4.2.3–5). The comment offsets the wish for equality with the recognition of differing social status, reflecting the play's larger ambivalence about the putatively uncivilized locale of rural Wales. Yet Innogen in the cave, taking on the garb and attitude of the boy Fidele, also here articulates a moment of possibility, one in which imperial concerns abate and domestic care comes center stage. Lupton suggests that if we read Innogen's journey in terms of "the cultivation of alternative economies and neglected tools that might readjust our relationships," then her "momentary dream of making a permanent home in the cave" might appear "as the utopian vision of a queer family living off the grid."[265] Such a vision would displace the preoccupation with national destiny with domestic care for the family.

Yet that is a move that *Cymbeline* is ultimately unwilling to make, and the play's flirtation with exile as the rejection of imperial destiny and domestic peace as an ideal that supplants political strategy is revealed as a restorative field trip. As with the rural sojourn of *As You Like It*, the royal exiles are bound to return. The court of Lud's Town and its international role was present in Wales all along in the pasts and futures of Belarius. As an exile, banished from the court on suspicion of conspiracy with Rome, Belarius, like Posthumus, is suspended before an inevitable return. Cymbeline's credulity in believing the slander tracks with his later gullibility in failing to realize that

265. Lupton, *Shakespeare Dwelling*, 193.

his queen was plotting against him, but the heirs to the kingdom bear the qualities that suggest that the future of the state is sound.

Raised by Belarius and nursed by Euriphile, whose name contrasts the nativist ethic of Cloten and the queen and foreshadows the eventual rapprochement between the imperial powers of Britain and Rome, the boys are unaware of their origin. Like Posthumus, they too cannot delve themselves to the root, though they imagine themselves to be sons of Belarius and Euriphile. Belarius tells the audience when the heirs are offstage, "They think they are mine and though trained up thus meanly / I'the cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit / The roofs of palaces, and nature prompts them / In simple and low things to prince it much / Beyond the trick of others" (3.3.82–86). As princes, they cannot but *prince it*, and like Marina in Mytilene or Perdita at the sheep shearing festival, their exceptionality, in this play that begins and ends with the word, is in their *blood*.[266] Nature over nurture, clay and clay differing in dignity in an essentialized hierarchy, stretches throughout the late plays, punctuating their stunning moments of possibility with a troubling idealization of royal lineage and hierarchy more broadly.

The late plays move concerns of dynastic destiny and expansionist politics to the foreground, and none do so more explicitly than *Cymbeline*, which follows *Lear* in mining the British past for its possible futures, rewriting tragedy into peace and prosperity. Innogen's travels, though spurred by the domestic plot of Posthumus's jealous rage, mark this double movement into past and future, and she not only reflects on her relation to her husband but on the character of the nation itself. "I'the world's volume," she says, "Our Britain seems as of it but not in't, / In a great pool a swan's nest / There's livers out of Britain" (3.4.137–139). While eschewing the vile nationalism of

266. Patricia Parker, "Simular Proof, Tragicomic Turns, and Cymbeline's Bloody Cloth," in *Blood Matters: Studies in European Literature and Thought, 1400–1700*, ed. Bonnie Lander Johnson and Elanor Decamp (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 198.

Cloten, Innogen upholds British exceptionality, and grounds the gesture in the authority of no less than Virgil. Giving echo to the first *Ecologue*, which refers to Britain's isolation from the world, Innogen allows *Cymbeline* to dramatize *translatio imperii*. Innogen may recognize the reality of "livers" outside Britain—a vital organ in a body politic as well as one who survives—but she is not outside of Britain at all. Rather she finds herself moving toward the origin of *Cymbeline*'s construction of British identity. Her time in Wales balances "alienation and inclusion," as she is "both part of the landscape, at home there, and in danger of losing her identity."[267] The journey is fundamental to the architecture of theme and plot in *Cymbeline*, but the princess was never going to stay for too long in that cave. Innogen, then, becomes the agent that must bring Milford Haven back to Lud's Town, and the reunion of Wales and England with the return of the heirs enables the peace between Britain and Rome.

That reunion heals another symbolic fracture that cuts through the play—the supposed binary of civilization and savagery. English nationalism in the early modern period, Jodi Mikalachki writes, is caught up in the desire both to "establish historical precedent and continuity" and "exorcise a primitive savagery it wished to declare obsolete" that manifested in "anxiety over the nature of familial relations and the status of the family as a model for the order of the state."[268] Britain's vexed relationship with Rome in the play arises from a dual position of colonized and colonizer. The origin story of Brute and the character names taken from Holinshed and Geoffery of Monmouth remind the early modern English of a past where they too were, in the terms of the play, uncivilized. The play even toys with this assumption of savagery when Guiderius, quick to insult,

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267. Huw Griffiths, "The Geographies of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*," *English Literary Renaissance* 34, no. 3 (2004): 347.

268. Jodi Mikalachki, "The Masculine Romance of Roman Britain: *Cymbeline* ad Early Modern English Nationalism," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (1995): 302.

takes Cloten's head. Yet Belarius's characterization of Cymbeline's sons, the horrendous villainy of Cloten, and the Virgilian precedent of beheadings remind us that we are in an allegorical drama of empire, if a bizarre one, and the destiny of the family is the destiny of the state.[269] That future must move Milford Haven back to Lud's Town, and the heirs back to their father's court, which is sure to tame any lingering savage habits while maintaining that intrinsic and essential royal character. The boys nursed by Euriphile will set the course for the future of Britain, as Innogen's exilic journey into Wales establishes the foundation for the question of the family and the question of the state in *Cymbeline* to be simultaneously and paradoxically resolved in the final scenes.

What scenes those are! We have national and personal prophecy foretold and then reinterpreted due to new evidence, dreams of ancestors, misrecognitions, Jove, violence, death, the threat of punishment leading to unlikely pardon, and a series of extended public confessions. Beckwith notes that the scene of *anagnorisis* in *Cymbeline* recreates community in a "crescendo of self-disclosures" and "an infection of truth-telling that overcomes the protagonists, in the narrow path between the ludicrous and the wondrous, and between delight and dangerous risk."[270] In that narrow path, the play articulates an ethic of forgiveness and care that suffuses every character left alive. Iachimo, unlike his predecessor Iago, not only confesses but is forgiven. Posthumus, unlike his predecessors Othello and Leontes, had already forgiven Innogen before he knew that she was faithful all along; now, he unknowingly strikes her, but is forgiven for that. Guiderius is forgiven for his murder of Cloten, Belarius for his kidnapping of the king's children, and even the jailer cries out: "O, there were desolation of jails and gallowses! I speak against my present profit, but my wish hath

269. Among other grisly deaths in *The Aeneid*, Priam's beheading is a possible point of reference for the death of Cloten, in an allusion that also extends the metaphor of the body politic this play shares with *Coriolanus*.

270. Beckwith, 105.

a preferment in't" (5.4.164). In these final scenes, the temporal coincidence of Cymbeline's court with the birth of Christ is crucial, laying way for a peace into which the child will be born. While Christian traditions clearly have no monopoly on peace or pardon, *Cymbeline* concludes with "a new dispensation that promotes humility and forgiveness and prohibits revenge and suicide," with a Judeo-Christian God "in the guise of Jupiter [who] replaces indifferent or capricious gods."[271] Providence ensures a happy, if bizarre, ending for all involved, and the king closes the drama with: "Never was a war did cease / Ere bloody hands were washed, with such a peace" (5.4.483–484). The blood of soldiers prefigures the blood of Christ and a future of Christian redemption.

Yet there remains the future of Britain, and on that question the play offers a somewhat murkier and more politically motivated ethic. In *Cymbeline*, the British win the battle but choose to pay tribute to Rome anyway, in a treaty concretized in the king's decree: "Let a / Roman and a British ensign wave / Friendly together" (5.5.478–580). In the context of the explicit xenophobia of Cloten and the queen, this image suggests a sort of internationalist cosmopolitanism, a gesture of goodwill toward neighbors. Yet the historical context of the play—James I's moves toward union with Scotland, as depicted on a 1606 mashup flag of St. George and St. Andrew that is another sort of double ensign, as well as colonization in Virginia and elsewhere—suggests an expansionist ethic consistent with the *translatio imperii* that drenches the play in classical allusion.[272] If the play rejects isolationism in favor of "an organically rooted but globally receptive British identity," that term *receptive* cuts both ways.[273] The Jacobean moment pushes for a less English-centric nation, and indeed

271. Robert S. Miola, "Immortal Longings in Shakespeare's Rome," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Religion*, ed. by Hannibal Hamlin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 266.

272. See Wayne, footnote n479–480, *Cymbeline*, 377.

273. Martin, 132.

the word England never appears in the play; the play's most immediate unionist call is that of the British isles. Likewise, the Roman rapprochement mirrors the politics of James I, who looked to his European neighbors and sought peace with the other empires of the continent, including Spain and the pope. In the mind of James, peace for Britain in the early 17th-century required friendly relations with other European powers who were active in Scotland and Ireland.[274]

Yet the Roman eagle of conquest flying westward toward the Atlantic portends a greater empire which will *receive* other territories under the crown of the United Kingdom. Rewriting Britain incorporated into Rome as voluntary allows the play to present the progression from Roman to British empire as "natural, continuous and unproblematic."[275] Reading the play from the vantage point of the present, it is not anachronistic to see imperial longings, and even proleptic imperial nostalgia, in *Cymbeline*; indeed, how could we not in the aftermath of British empire? Brian Lockey succinctly notes the pattern of imperial inheritance: "Shakespeare presents Roman rule as necessary to English law and civility, but what is implicit here is that Rome and Roman conquest of Britain serve as the universal examples which the now civil realm of Britain can follow with regard to less civil nations."[276] To paraphrase a former US president, *Cymbeline* ultimately endorses the idea of a kinder, gentler empire, which is a hubristic fantasy of all expansionist nations that disavows the intrinsic violence of territorial conquest.[277]

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274. John Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics 1603–1707* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 140.

275. Innes, 9.

276. Brian Lockey, "Roman Conquest and English Legal Identity in *Cymbeline*," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 3, no. 1 (2003): 137.

277. As director of the C.I.A. overseeing Operation Condor in South America, as only one example of US interference in his long tenure in politics, George H.W. Bush was no stranger to violent techniques of imperial influence.

The dual futures of *Cymbeline* are finally incompatible, as the two plots move in opposing directions and cannot simultaneously and satisfactorily resolve. Adelman writes that if one plot "moves toward the resumption of heterosexual bonds in marriage, the other moves toward the renewed formation of male bonds as Cymbeline regains both his sons and an earlier alliance with an all-male Rome, the alliance functionally disrupted by his wife."[278] The core ethic of the play splits Posthumus and the renewal of marital relations against the recuperation of family bonds in service of empire in the Cymbeline plot. Posthumus's earlier line, "Statist though I am none, nor like to be" (2.4.16), takes on new resonance as both he and Innogen are divested of potential political power; their role in the Britain of *Cymbeline* is central, but symbolic. If Innogen-as-Fidele is granted an agency absent in the historical record of her namesake and offers an "alternate model of masculine and national relationality and identity, premised on peace rather than conquest," it is finally her brothers who will actually inherit control of Britain and decide what sort of a state that is to be.[279] Forgiveness gives way to political machination and Britain wins not only the battle but the mantle of imagined masculine virtue passed peacefully from its Roman colonizers. If the late plays seek grace and community after hardship and violence, *Cymbeline* is troubling because it giftwraps its imperialist politics in the alluring twine and paper of Christian forgiveness and fantastical romance. Like the hopeful conclusion of *Pericles* and improbable recoveries of *The Winter's Tale, Cymbeline* offers its audience a moment of powerful reconciliation, a restart button of family and state. But that eagle flying westward carries past and future bloodshed in its beak and claws.

Conclusion: Brexit, Borders, and the Disavowals of Shakespeareland

278. Adelman, "Masculine Authority," 109.

279. Joseph Bowling, "'Part Shame, Part Spirit Renewed': Affect, National Origins, and Report in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, *Renaissance Drama 45*, no. 1 (2017): 106.

A guidebook to Stratford-upon-Avon, published just before World War I in a series called *Beautiful England*, presents an idealized vision of the West Midlands village it calls *Shakespeare-land*. Graham Holderness writes that it represents the role of Shakespeare, simultaneously local and universal, in characterizing both English identity and British global reach:

> In these images and representations, there is no contradiction between Little England and the British Empire, rural tranquility and global domination, English pastoral and colonial power. Stratford, the heart of England, sits picturesquely at the center of Empire apparently unaffected by it.[280]

Cymbeline itself is a sort of Shakespeareland, which simultaneously claims pride in empire and disavows the dirty work of conquest on which empire is built. Obsessed with the role of Britain and torn between isolation and incorporation within broader global coalitions, it is thus a fitting work for the time of Brexit.

Former Member of the European Parliament and Conservative politician Daniel Hannan quoted Cloten's quip about Roman noses in the run-up to the referendum, the academic Richard Wilson cited the friendly ensigns of the play's conclusion to deploy Shakespeare in the Remain campaign, and Melly Still's 2016 *Cymbeline* for the Royal Shakespeare Company explicitly staged the dystopian consequences of leaving Europe.[281] In Still's vision, Britain has become a concrete wasteland, devoid of nonhuman life save a tree stump enclosed in a glass case as memory of former flourishing. Italy meanwhile is vibrant and fashionable. With a program that includes a pro-Remain article by columnist Rachel Sylvester, the production unapologetically employs Shakespearean text and authority to dramatize the dire consequences of British isolationism.

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280. Graham Holderness, "Shakespeare-land," in *This England, That Shakespeare*, ed. by Margaret Tudeau-Clayton and Willy Maley (London: Routledge, 2010), 204.

281. Emma Smith, "May as Polonius, Gove as Cassius: is Brexit a Shakespearean Tragedy?" *The Guardian*, Apr. 12, 2019.

While the characters who speak in English are often unintelligible, the Europeans have their lines projected above them to further emphasize the overarching point that post-Brexit "Britain is a mess—socially, environmentally, and linguistically—but Europe thrives."[282] Like the politician Chris Bryant, who wrote, "I have not a shadow of a doubt that William Shakespeare would have voted Remain . . . His parish was the whole of Europe," Still's production enlists Shakespeare to support a message of *European* unity.[283] While the production addresses a particularly fractious moment in British politics, it also ironically reinforces the sense of national exemplarity and exceptionality for which Shakespeare stands. Fintan O'Toole writes that Brexit responds to a common arrogant feeling "that there is something amiss with an arrangement in which [England] appears as just one prosperous, privileged European democracy among the others . . . The 'ex' in Brexit also stands for 'exceptional."[284] O'Toole roots that exceptionality in part in an empire conquered and quickly lost following the Allied victory in World War II. But there is also an assumed exceptionality in the English language's chief export: the symbolic cultural capital of William Shakespeare.

Francesca Romana Ammaturo likens Brexit to nesting dolls, as "British 'border imperialism' is placed at the very heart of European 'border imperialism'" and "Brexit not only leads to the crystallization of a foregone and fictitious British identity, but it also further essentializes European identity."[285] Though some of the rhetoric regarding the vote involved the idea that world trade

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282. Rachel Ellen Clark, "The Anti-Brexit *Cymbeline* / Royal Shakespeare Company," *Early Modern Culture* 12 (2017), 137.

283. Chris Bryant, "This sceptic isle would most displease pro-Europe Shakespeare," *The Guardian*, April 21, 2016.

284. Fintan O'Toole, *The Politics of Pain: Postwar England and the Rise of Nationalism* (New York: Liverwright, 2019), xii.

285. Francesca Romana Ammaturo, "Europe and whiteness: Challenges to European identity and European citizenship in light of Brexit and the 'refugees/migrants crisis,'" *European Journal of Social Theory* 22, no. 4 (2019), 561.

would increase outside of EU hindrances, the racial politics of the referendum are evident. The presumption of British identity as Anglophone and white and the xenophobia that drove Brexit are pernicious fictions rooted in prejudice and imperial disavowal. Such fictions depend upon culture, and the centrality of Shakespeare to British and Anglophone cultures in settler states cannot be disentangled from an empire that has taken on new forms and transferred to new nation-states with the dissolution of British global dominance. Ammaturo's point also reminds us that the cocktail of nationalism and disavowal that Shakespeareland or Brexit might emblematize is not solely a British phenomenon. As an English speaker, United States citizen, and teacher-scholar of early modern literature, I cannot escape Shakespeareland, nor can the plays and their afterlives be fully divested of imperial commitments. Yet they are larger than any single political motive and can and must be reimagined in performance and scholarship. The post-tragic plays of Shakespeare are in search of communities of care, forgiveness, and hope in response to social and physical vulnerability and in the face of incalculable loss. Those patterns run strong through both *Pericles* and *Cymbeline*.

Yet Shakespeare has also been used as a tool in projects of empire and campaigns of linguistic and cultural erasure, from the Anglophone dominance within the British isles to the structural racism, Indigenous dispossession, border control, and expansionism of its former colony and chief inheritor of empire, the United States. In the preface to the Arden Shakespeare edition of the play, Valerie Wayne writes: "Teaching and working in a place where the Hawaiian monarchy was illegally overthrown by US citizens in 1893, and where the indigenous people still live with the consequences of colonialism, has made me more attentive to related issues that arise in *Cymbeline*."[286] Wayne suggests the *translatio imperii* of an eagle that flies beyond the Atlantic and the American continent to the Pacific. A little over a decade before Hawaii became a US state, Commissioner of

286. Wayne, preface, xviii.

Indian Affairs John Collier, inspired by British colonial administration, compared the relationship between the US and its Indigenous populations to its control of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Philippines.[287] I teach and work in the unceded homelands of the Gabrielino-Tongva, transferred to the United States from Mexico, itself recently independent from Spain, in the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. This nation too depends upon the disavowal of history and the willful refusal to acknowledge ways in which people inevitably cross borders but borders also violently cross people. That broader ethical and political failure is behind this extended inquiry into Shakespearean drama and migration. In the final chapter of this study, I turn to the legacies of Shakespeare in North American lands multiply marked by British, Spanish, and US imperial ventures.

287. Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long History of Indigenous Resistance* (New York: Verso, 2019), 138.

Chapter Four

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American Dispossessions: Shakespearean Appropriations in the Colonial Present

Shakespeare has always been mobile. From the sources he lifted and rearranged from varied non-Anglophone cultures to the imposition of Shakespearean text, language, and purported aesthetic excellence throughout centuries of British and US imperial and settler colonial projects, to our present moment of contestation in theater and the academy of what Mohegan playwright Madeline Sayet has called the "Shakespeare system"—the work and its legacy has always been in flux.[288] The border in the current global order of sovereign nation-states, however, is a marker of restriction, by which the inevitable mobility of human beings is contained while capital flows freely. Border controls violently reify the conditions of 21st-century relations between nations, while maintaining the economic and political dominance of certain geopolitical entities, and certain groups within them, at the expense of the world's most vulnerable populations. The border is a crucial instrument of racial capitalism in the present, one which continually crosses and separates communities and families.

Acknowledging the violence that subtends modern border regimes as well as the instability and contingency of all political geographies, I turn in this final chapter to Shakespeare in the colonial present in the lands known as the Americas, with a particular focus on the US and its expansionist interventions in Mexico and the Caribbean.[289] I use "present" rather than a modifying prefix such as

288. Sayet, "Interrogating."

289. I write "known as the Americas" because the conflation of United States citizen with "American" indicates and perpetuates an unspoken sense of superiority to Latin and South America. It is salutary for US citizens to travel to Hispanophone countries where they are reminded that they are *norteamericanos* or *estadounidenses*, not simply *americanos*.

"post" with no intent to ignore or evade the rich contribution of postcolonial theory to my field of study nor to conflate territorial and economic domination, but rather to underscore that the world in which we live remains deeply colonial. The latter sections of this chapter return to the relevance of *The Tempest* as a colonial play in conversation with 21st-century calls for liberation, articulating how colonialism persists not only in the haunted afterlives and present consequences of former empires but in the ongoing reality of the US disavowal of its own settler colonial history, the status of a Puerto Rico that remains an unincorporated territory, and ongoing legacies of racialized enslavement from the Caribbean to Virginia. I likewise entwine my analysis of colonialism with the inquiry into migration that sustains this project to emphasize how both patterns are conditioned by the current global organization of political geography, specifically the mechanisms of border surveillance and detention that subtend the sovereign nation-state. The specific political state by which I am granted citizenship, due to military or economic power and strategic concerns, has continually interfered and disrupted other states for material gain. Centering colonialism in an analysis of migration calls into question the "naturalness or inevitability of sovereignty and citizenship,"[290] while underscoring historical and theoretical connections between common patterns of dispossession from settler colonialism in what is now the US and the current militarized regime of surveillance and detainment that defines the southern border of this nation.

The journalist Jacob Sobaroff, who covered the family separation policy of the Trump administration for NBC News and MSNBC, unwittingly drew out the historical continuity between the US government's purported concerns of national security and disavowed projects of white supremacy when he commented to Joy Reid on her Saturday program:

> It's just never been done before. It's reminiscent of Native American children being taken away from their parents or children separated from their families at Japanese internment

290. Lucy Mayblin and Joe Turner, *Migration Studies and Colonialism* (Cambridge: Polity, 2021), 78.

> camps. This is not an immigration policy we have seen before from the federal government.[291]

By bracketing the internment camps on US soil—reminiscent themselves of border detention policies and temporary settlements for displaced refugees—Sobaroff elides a specific instance of racialized control over movement that, far from being unprecedented, charts a legacy that proliferates in similar forms in the present. Failing to see the separation of Indigenous families in an earlier period and 21st-century border policies as similar projects of enforcing white, Anglophone dominance within North American territory, Sobaroff falls into the language of crisis and exception. Thus, the examples he chooses sketch a profile of a long national project marked by intersecting and mutually conditioning patterns of colonialism and restrictions on mobility and migration.

While the role of Shakespeare in relation to Japanese internment camps, and 19th- and 20th-century Asian-American migrants in the predominantly Anglophone United States more broadly, merits its own study, I here take up Sobaroff's juxtaposition of past Indigenous and current migrant family separation to further address the role of the most canonical writer in English in relation to appropriations and adaptive responses in the present.[292] I first consider two recent adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* set in the US / Mexico Borderlands, James Lujan's *Kino and Teresa* and Jaime Seres Magaña's *The Tragic Corrido of Romeo and Lupe*. Building from the scholarship of Katherine Gillen and Adrianna M. Santos, which has highlighted the decolonial potential in these works, I argue that US /

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291. Jacob Sobaroff, *Separated: Inside an American Tragedy* (New York: HarperCollins, 2020), 234–235.

292. A study of Shakespeare in the mid-century United States might include the letter posted in the window of T.Z. Shiota, an importer in San Francisco, after the announcement of imminent internment. It concludes: "At this hour of evacuation while the innocents suffer with the bad, we bid you, dear friends of ours, with the words of beloved Shakespeare, 'PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW'." Quoted in Alan Taylor, "World War II: Internment of Japanese Americans," *The Atlantic*, August 21, 2011, https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2011/08/world-war-ii-internment-of-japanese-americans/100132/.

Borderlands Shakespeares, and Latinx Shakespeares produced elsewhere in the Americas, offer a valuable model of Shakespeare in service of social justice by centering specific histories and geographies that demand attention to overlapping legacies of Anglo-American and Spanish colonialism, an Indigenous presence that troubles conceptions of the nation-state, and the dramatization of an activist impulse that challenges US state power.[293] I then turn more explicitly to questions of Native dispossession in an analysis of Madeline Sayet's *Where We Belong* as an anticolonial drama that articulates dual projects of Indigenous language and land reclamation in the long shadow of Shakespearean legacy. The third part of my analysis extends an engagement with *The Tempest* by way of the Caribbean afterlives of Caliban in the poetry of Raquel Salas Rivera and Kamau Braithwaite. In a personal coda to this extended inquiry into American dispossessions and the colonial dynamics of migration and border regimes in the present, I conclude with a reading of Safiya Sinclair's "Notes on the State of Virginia, I" to delve into the matters of both family and national history, and both the poetic and the political drives, that have sustained the four chapters of this study and that continue to nourish my ongoing scholarship and activism.

La herida abierta of the star-crossed *frontera*: Borderlands Riffs on *Romeo and Juliet*

293. See: Gillen and Santos, "Borderlands Shakespeare: The Decolonial Visions of James Lujan's *Kino and Teresa* and Jaime Seres Magaña's *The Tragic Corrido of Romeo and Lupe*," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 38.4 (2020), 549–574; *The Bard in the Borderlands: An Anthology of Shakespeare Appropriations in La Frontera, Volume 1*, edited by Katherine Gillen, Adrianna M. Santos, and Kathryn Vomero Santos (Tempe: ACMRS Press, 2023); and Carla Della Gatta, *Latinx Shakespeares: Staging U.S. Intracultural Theater* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022). My use of the term "Borderlands" derives from the work of Gillen, Santos, and Santos as well as the foundational writing of Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012).

Kevin Bruyneel argues that "settler memory" produces both "colonial unknowing" and "racial unknowing."[294] Just as the United States generally does not prefer to think of itself as a settler-colonialist state, public discourse has long ignored the structural racial injustice that has perpetuated white supremacy. Current cultural debates over the teaching of the 1619 Project and the oft-quoted adage that the United States is a "nation of immigrants" share a common refusal to openly acknowledge legacies of enslavement and colonialism that condition migration policy as well as racial politics.[295] The border that cuts across the United States and Mexico provides a generative space for addressing this disavowal in creative projects of imagining otherwise through the performance of activist theater. By repurposing Shakespearean precedents with a specific focus on the location that Gloria Anzaldúa has called an "*herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds" of the US / Mexico Borderlands, *Kino and Teresa* and *The Tragic Corrido of Romeo and Lupe* provide a dramatic antidote to settler memory that acknowledges the colonial domination and resistance in that specific geographical expanse, the past and present Indigenous legacies that predate European contact, and the Indigenous and Latinx relation to Anglo-European and US culture and politics.[296]

294. Kevin Bruyneel, *Settler Memory: The Disavowal of Indigeneity and the Politics of Race in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 4.

295. That the invocation of "nation of immigrants" is often followed by "but also a nation of laws" articulates either bad faith or ignorance on two counts, by disavowing settler colonialism and the fact that border-crossing has historically been a civil, not a criminal offense, and that the legal right to claim asylum is universal, though the right of sovereign states to enforce their own border policies often takes precedence over the needs of asylum seekers. For more on the history of this phrase and how it functions in public discourse, see Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *Not "A Nation of Immigrants": Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy, and a History of Erasure and Exclusion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2021).

296. Anzaldúa, 3. While I generally eschew the term "Third World" in my own work, the force of Anzaldúa's metaphor relies on that violent contrast of wealth and opportunity.

Kino and Teresa disrupts the disavowal on which settler memory depends by placing the spectator amidst a conflict between the Pecos Pueblo and the Spanish settlers of Santa Fe de Nuevo México in the late 17th century, after a dozen years of Indigenous sovereignty born of resistance was again met with Spanish conquest, territorial dispossession, and the imposition of Catholocism.[297] First performed as part of the Native Voices program with a predominantly Indigenous cast at the Autry National Center in Los Angeles, the drama places Kino, son of Pecos Pueblo governor, in the role of Romeo, and Teresa, daughter of the Maestre de Campo de Santa Fe, as the Juliet figure. Lujan thus extends the legacy of what Carla Della Gatta has called the "West Side Story effect," or the "staging of difference of any kind in Shakespeare (familial, cultural, class) as a cultural-linguistic division."[298] While the adaptive choice to make the Montague-Capulet family feud into a larger symbolic clash can risk reinforcing essentialized cultural identities and reducing diverse cultures to monolithic stereotypes, the specific histories of the US / Mexico border complicate any simple division, as the land and its people carry legacies of Indigenous, Spanish, and US presence that render any notion of discrete and bounded cultural identity a fiction. That is not to argue that the play promotes a sort of rapprochement between or fortuitous hybridization of Pecos Pueblo and Spanish culture, as the consequences of colonialism for Native peoples and their resistance to colonizers in *Kino and Teresa* are always at the forefront. The anticolonial interventions of the play rather emerge from its dramatization of specific "Indigenous lifeways" and traditional practices in what is now called the United States and in patterns of active Native resistance to a peace that is

297. In their introduction to the play in the *Bard in the Borderlands*, Gillen, Santos, and Santos note that the Spanish claim on the territory was made by Juan de Oñate in 1598, the year after the first publication of *Romeo and Juliet*. See Gillen, Santos, and Santos, "Introduction," 133. The presence of the P`áḱilâ, or Pecos Pueblo, of course, far predates the Spanish settlement.

298. Carla Della Gatta, *Latinx Shakespeares* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2023), 29.

predicated on dispossession and cultural erasure.[299] Its performance of unsettlement challenges the teleology of European claims on North American territory and by extension US claims on and colonization of Latin American territory.

The play begins with the opposition of the entwined nationalist and evangelical concerns of the Spanish to the spiritual beliefs and practices of the Pecos Pueblo. Vargas, the Prince figure, discusses the reclamation of Native territory "with cross and crown . . . for Mother Spain" and claims to know of prohibited "Indian ceremonies in kivas hidden in the mountains."[300] Vargas's knowledge of the term kiva articulates the manner by which cultural encounters can never fully be defined by colonial domination, as the colonizers learn from those they wish to colonize, yet this Christian-nationalist certainty marks not only ethno-religious hostility but the arrogance of a perspective hindered by its focus on a present landgrab. By contrast, the Medicine Man's prologue follows Shakespearean precedent in foreshadowing the early deaths of the lovers but refuses to forecast the outcome of the larger colonial conflict, stating that the "future can only be seen in the realm of the spirit world where the souls of the departed return to where they started."[301] This simultaneous looking backward and forward, finding the future by way of the past, marks an alternative epistemology to the eschatological certainty of the Spanish Christians and one which aligns with other Indigenous ways of knowing. It also articulates an imaginative politics that runs throughout all the texts discussed in this chapter. Tonawanda Band of Seneca scholar Mishua Goeman writes of the "radical and complete overturning of the nation-state's political formations"

299. Gillen and Santos, "Borderlands Shakespeare The Decolonial Visions of James Lujan's *Kino and Teresa* and Jaime Seres Magaña's *The Tragic Corrido of Romeo and Lupe*," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 38.4 (2020): 555.

300. James Lujan, *Kino and Teresa,* in *The Bard in the Borderlands, Volume 1*, edited by Gillen, Santos, and Santos, 146, 151.

301. Lujan, 147.

in a vision of Indigenous nationhood that "centers our lives around our responsibility to work with the Ancestors and those yet unborn to give birth to a spectacular Nishnaabeg present."[302] The sense of communal care and long view of time in such conceptions of social organization are absent from Lujan's Spanish settlers, but articulated through the character of Kino, who associates the failure of agriculture to the distress of the earth in response to the bloodshed on their lands.[303] Kino's observation not only reflects an attitude toward the nonhuman world based on respect for and acknowledgement of human / nonhuman interconnection but reminds the audience of the damaging and extractive colonial relation to the earth.

While Kino and Teresa fall for each other across the racial and cultural Spanish / Pecos wound that divides them, the play ultimately refuses the "post-racial sensibility" of Teresa, who wishes Romeo could simply become Spanish, remarking that both the red and the white rose remain roses.[304] In opposition to the naïve argument that love—or any person—can see no color, Lujan presents a force of active resistance in the character of Anieri, Kino's mother. Anieri clearly frames the colonizer as the agent of Indigenous dispossession, stating that, "The Spanish have taken away my land, my religion, and my language, but they will not take away my son," and she even plots to murder Teresa to prevent their union.[305] Her role is crucial not only because it provides dramatic conflict but also in her willingness to resort to violence to prevent what she sees as a project of cultural erasure. While Lujan's Shakespearean source concludes with a ceremony of woe and mourning that opens up to potential reconciliation between the Montagues and Capulets, Anieri

302. Mishua Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 10.

303. Lujan, 151.

304. Gillen and Santos, "Borderlands Shakespeare," 557. Lujan, 173.

305. Lujan, 183.

responds to the death of Kino with a call for renewed revolt: "We'll kill the Spaniards and finally take back our land," and then she is left alone onstage "with vengeance still on her mind" before the Medicine Man delivers the epilogue.[306] The rage of Anieri reminds the audience that Spanish—and beyond that, Anglo-American—conquest of Indigenous territories was never inevitable, nor is that territorial possession ever entirely secure.

That disruption of teleological colonial narratives results from the 17th-century setting that predates Manifest Destiny and the spoils of Guadalupe Hidalgo as well as the employment of Spanish as the colonial language. Gillen and Santos point out that the lack of Pueblo language in the play "points to linguistic and cultural oppression," but it also begs the question of audiences how "New Mexico" came to be Spanish, Mexican, and US territory.[307] This is not to suggest that such facts are not widely known and available, but rather that white settler culture tends to distort or sidestep the logical consequences of acknowledging its history. Art, and dramatic art specifically for the purposes of this argument, thus becomes a valuable site for staging imaginative histories in service of alternative futures. As Bruyneel writes, "in the terrain of struggle over memory, facts do not speak for themselves as to their political meaning; rather alternative memories need to be posed to reimagine the meaning of the past so they can be a source for radical and liberating interventions, lessons, and possibilities."[308] Anieri's unwavering resistance to settler colonialism offers one alternative, which carries greater force for making use of the Anglophone world's white "genius" playwright to stage a conflict that is at once about land and memory, and one which remains deeply unsettled and unsettling.

306. Lujan, 216.

307. Gillen and Santos, "Borderlands Shakespeare," 558.

308. Bruyneel, 17.

Jaime Seres Magaña's *Tragic Corrido of Romeo and Lupe* likewise employs the "Westside Story effect," with Romeo, heir to the fortune of the Campbell Irrigation Company, son to a Mexican mother and white American father, and Lupe descended from a family of recent migrants from Mexico. While *Kino and Teresa* places Shakespeare's star-crossed tale in a specific time and place, even to the year, *Tragic Corrido* occurs within a fictional Republic of Texas that smashes together diverse and varied moments of 20th-century cultural history. In Pharr, Texas, which in the present is connected to Reynosa, Tamaulipas, the tale of doomed love plays against a backdrop of territorial dispossession and land exploitation, Mexica memorial recuperation, and activist resistance to corporate domination. While the timeline is jumbled and the Republic of Texas in which it is set is a fabrication of the playwright, the roughly half-and-half English / Spanish bilingual dialogue, with snippets of Nahuatl, Spanglish, and hip-hop influenced slang, speak to the open wound of the present Borderlands. Gillen and Santos write, "Rather than the universalized, cosmopolitan Shakespeare often imposed on marginalized communities, this is a Shakespeare of and for la frontera."[309] As such, it brings questions of Indigenous dispossession and 21st-century migration together in a theater of resistance and reclamation.

That double-movement is evident from the prologue, which includes not only the beginning of the titular *corrido* but a rap delivered by Ramón, Juliet's cousin. In the *corrido*, the balladeer presents the Campbell family as rapacious capitalists with open disregard for land and life. The singer introduces them to the audience as follows: "ambitious dreamers, nothing can stop their visions, as they build their dreams through refugees, as they build their dreams through people's homes."[310] Magaña here deftly upends the common connotations of ambition and dreams in the US context as

309. Gillen and Santos, "Borderlands Shakespeare," 560.

310. Magaña, Jaime Seres, *The Tragic Corrido of Romeo and Lupe*, In *The Bard in the Borderlands, Volume 1* (Tempe: ACMRS Press, 2023), 228.

intrinsically beneficial and the prevalent fiction of the "American dream." As a specifically Borderlands riff on Shakespeare, it also calls to mind the "Dream Act" of 2012, officially known as "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals." What happens to dreams deferred in Magaña's portrait of Pharr, Texas thus comes not only with the accompaniment of the dramatic ballad of the *corrido*, but also through the political energies of rap, where systemic oppression is channeled into a poetry of resistance. In the opening scene, Ramón raps the following lines: "Aztec Tejano flow my life is so supreme / like a young Cuauhtemoc destined to be the king . . . So let me tell you the deal: I bare culture, I bare pain both Turtle Island / and Spain / I'm like the smell of the earth after a summer rain."[311] These lines align the resistant strains of a musical genre inherited from Black artists to a specifically Tejano relation to cultural identity. With reference to the last Aztec ruler of Tenochtitlan and the name for the North American continent used by some Indigenous groups, Ramón connects his lineage—which he *bears,* and which is also laid *bare* in his homophonic pun—to before European contact, while also claiming Spain in acknowledgement of prior colonial projects.

This awareness of colonial history suffuses *Romeo and Lupe* with a greater specificity, even within its temporally syncretic framing, than the cultural and religious traditions referenced in *Kino and Teresa.* Lupe, who usually speaks in Spanish, addresses Romeo in English in her digression on the names of flowers: "whether we call these poinsettias or nochebuenas, they would still be as red."[312] Whether or not Lupe is meant to know the colonial history of the flower, Magaña here offers the audience a natural history of a colonial agricultural product. As Gillen and Santos point out in a chapter on the play, the poinsettia, or cuitlaxochitl in Nahautl, was used by Indigenous communities in dye and medicine, acquired its Spanish name in the 16th century for its relation to the imposed Christian holiday of Christmas Eve, is known in English by a name taken from Joel Roberts

311. Magaña, 229.

312. Magaña, 260.

Poinsett, the first US minister to Mexico, and the industry in the US, as with so many industries, prospered by exploiting the labor of Latin Americans.[313] While Juliet's rose is largely a metaphoric thought experiment designed to minimize the significance of Romeo's surname, Lupe, whose name itself indicates the hybridization of Christian and Mexica beliefs in the Virgin of Guadalupe, unwittingly reminds us how much names matter. As in Ramón's line, "tried to tear us down like weeds / didn't realize we was seeds," Lupe's well-worn analogy takes on new connotations and greater resonance in the context of the Rio Grande Valley and this specific Tejano drama fueled by the Campbell family's exploitation of agricultural resources and Mexican labor.[314] The earth after summer rain gives way to growth. Though corporate domination is often in the background to *Romeo and Lupe*, it is a consistent throughline that articulates the politics of resistance in the play.

Rather than an evening masque at the Capulet home, the party scene in *Romeo and Lupe* is a birthday for the region itself, which Mr. Campbell calls "Magic Valley" and the predominantly migrant workers call "RGV." As Mr. Campbell presides over the festivities, he stresses that the occasion is not merely to mark time but to celebrate the agricultural productivity of the land. A fashion show ensues, with models dressed as varied fruits, but when the irrigation impresario expects a banal congratulation for the influx of capital, he is met instead with the disruption of activism. A model dressed as grapes tells a brief vignette with a biblical resonance: "I was hungry and wandering, when I saw a woman eating grapes. I told her, 'Please give me one for my child.' She said, 'Go away. Your feet are muddy, and I despise your stare.'"[315] The tale hits like a parable, bridging the gap between the political and the ethical and indicting the greed of Mr. Campbell.

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313. Katherine Gillen and Adrianna M. Santos, "The Power of Borderlands Shakespeare," in *Shakespeare and Latinidad*, edited by Trevor Boffone and Carla Della Gatta (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 68.

314. Magaña, 229.

315. Magaña, 250.

Echoing Dolores Huerta and César Chávez and the United Farm Worker Delano grape strike of the 1960s, the scene highlights "the inequality of labor relations that permit a worker to produce food that she herself cannot afford to buy."[316] Magaña's costumed activists perform resistance, drawing from rich legacies of Latinx campaigns against corporate exploitation of agricultural labor and putting the audience in a position to consider the labor history of the food they consume.[317] The more directly ethical reading recalls Levinas and the centrality of hunger to his philosophy. As David Goldstein reads Levinas, "to eat without acknowledging the hunger of the other is a profoundly unethical act, while to acknowledge and respond to that hunger is the ethical act par excellence."[318] While this scene soon gives way to the primary plot of the risky love between Romeo and Lupe, it marks a critical theatrical intervention that refashions Shakespearean legacy into the acknowledgement and repudiation of economic injustice in the present day.

At a performance of the play at the Pharr Community Theater, Gillen and Santos overheard a conversation between two of the actors: "One of them casually inquired, 'How's the audience, mostly *bolillos*?' The other replied, 'Nah, mostly *raza*.'"[319] For those scholars of Borderlands Shakespeare, the question itself reflects the inextricable association of Shakespeare and whiteness, demarcating the limitations of using his canonical plays as vehicles for addressing Latinx communities on the *frontera* and the rest of the nation. Yet focusing on the response of the second actor yields a different reading. If the audience for this bilingual and localized appropriation of *Romeo and Juliet* consists mostly of the Latinx community of the Rio Grande Valley, then the unbearable

316. Gillen and Santos, "The Power of Borderlands Shakespeare," 64.

317. For a more recent narrative of predominantly Latinx farmworker activism, see the documentary *Food Chains*, directed by Sanjay Rawal (Screen Media, 2014), YouTube.

318. David Goldstein, "Emmanuel Levinas and the Ontology of Eating," *Gastronomica* 10, no. 4 (2010): 42.

319. Gillen and Santos, "The Power of Borderlands Shakespeare," 70.

whiteness of Shakespeare might not be an instrument to perpetuate notions of white cultural excellence but rather a generative frame for staging dramas that speak to the multiply colonized *frontera* and communities defined by, as Ramón says, Turtle Island and Spain, as well as the colonial power of the United States.

The scholars of Borderlands Shakespeares who have shepherded me through the argument of this section have opened up an inquiry in Shakespeare studies that refuses its colonial and conservative inheritance but continues to find potential in the plays for adaptation and appropriation.[320] In the following section of this chapter, I expand this analysis of migration and colonialism in relation to Shakespearean legacies by focusing on Mohegan theater maker Madeline Sayet's *Where We Belong*, a powerful dramatic work that challenges both the inheritance of Shakespeare as well as the totalizing operations of borders. While Sayet's play is not a response to *The Tempest*, it grapples with the legacy of Caliban, who continues to signify as Indigenous even as he signifies varied and contradictory forces. Jodi Byrd even locates his relation to the colonial in this very multiplicity, noting that if he can be read as Black, Native, African, Caribbean, Irish, and even as a US settler, then he articulates the complex and violent machinery of the settler colonialist project itself:

> If Caliban contains all of these identities and histories collapsed within the interpretable body of *The Tempest*, one could argue that he presents in microcosm the forces at work in settler colonialism, which are marked by colonization, racialization, and slavery that serve to multiply worldings that occur *all at the same time* . . . He embodies within the space of what is interpreted as "Caliban" all the contradictions and subject positions produced by conquest, slavery, and genocide.[321]

Following this insight, I argue in the following sections of this essay that *The Tempest* as a contradictory colonial ur-text remains valuable for considering projects of settlement and the reality

320. See also www.latinxshakespeares.org, an online archive curated by Carla Della Gatta.

321. Byrd, 66.

of, as Caro Pirri argues, "colonial unsettlement" in the lands of the Americas and the Caribbean.[322] While it would be as foolish and irresponsible to view *The Tempest* as the sole Shakespeare play invested in colonial initiatives as reading *Othello*, *Merchant of Venice*, or *Titus Andronicus* as the only dramas in that canon engaged with the construction of race and systemic prejudice, the "Calibanic genealogy" that includes Octave Mannoni and Frantz Fanon's critical response, George Lamming, Aimé Césaire, Roberto Fernández Retamar, and a slew of postcolonial readings in the late 20th century from scholars such as Rob Nixon and Peter Hulme continues to offer possibilities for imaginative projects in the colonial present.[323]

Reimagining Language and Land in Madeline Sayet's *Where We Belong*

"What happens when the poet takes over the cartographer's tools?" asks Goeman in *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*.[324] The question she poses in relation to the work of Muscogee Creek poet Joy Harjo illuminates a core pattern in Mohegan theater maker Madeline Sayet's *Where We Belong,* which reimagines land and language as dual pillars of her artistic project. In the play, Sayet employs Shakespearean references and *The Tempest* as a specific intertext to address

322. Pirri, 82.

323. Chantal Zabus, *Tempests After Shakespeare* (New York: Palgrave, 2002) 9. See also (but not only): Octave Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990); Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 2008); George Lamming, *Water with Berries* (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2016); Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2002); Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Caliban and Other Essays* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); Rob Nixon, "Caribbean and African Appropriations of *The Tempest*, *Critical Inquiry* 13, no. 3 (1987): 557–578; and The Tempest *and its Travels*, edited by Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman (London: Reaktion, 2000). See also Ruben Espinosa's "Beyond *The Tempest*: Language, Legitimacy, and *La Frontera*," in Valerie M. Fazel and Louise Geddes, *The Shakespeare User: Critical and Creative Appropriations in a Networked Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 41–61.

324. Goeman, 119.

catastrophic colonial legacies that reach violently into the present, articulating a form of wisdom rooted in welcome, recovery, and repair. While Shakespeare's play has long served as a metaphor for the European colonial project, Sayet diverges from modes of adaptation that maintain the dramatic architecture of Shakespearean precedent or reproduce the drama as a colonial allegory. She instead deploys Shakespearean references strategically while charting a vexed relation to Shakespearean inheritance in which the early modern dramatist becomes an emblem of settler colonialism, as his English tongue sought to supplant Indigenous languages in North America and his English compatriots sought to possess Native territory. Against a colonial project premised on exclusion and erasure, the play poses the question of how communities might form a place, anticolonial and deeply welcoming, where we belong.

Where We Belong responds to the dual dispossessions of land and language that subtend colonial practices and imaginings by dramatizing anticolonial conceptions of places and the names by which they are called. Addressing how colonized Mohegan and other Indigenous peoples were forced to "speak Shakespeare" as political subjects of the US, the play rejects both the inheritance of statist political structures and the presumed dominance of the English language, denaturalizing the exclusionary border as a legitimate form of political organization and staging language reclamation in opposition to a linguistic inheritance grounded in colonial and white supremacist projects.[325] Yet the work refuses to be contained within a mode of responsive critique, and ultimately enacts an alternative ethic in which theater itself becomes a vehicle for collective healing. While Sayet does not explicitly frame the play in terms of wisdom and is indeed skeptical of such claims, her work expands an inquiry into relations between dramatic art and ethical ways of being and forming

325. Madeline Sayet, *Where We Belong* (London: Methuen Drama, 2022), 38.

community.[326] I here consider *Where We Belong*—including its conversation with the inheritance of Shakespeare—as a mode of performance that refuses the prevailing logic of 21st-century global racial capitalism, instead centering language and land reclamation in an expansive theater of care. The play rejects systems of thought based on exclusion and replaces them with communal belonging, going beyond critique to depict and enact the experiential wisdom of welcome.

Where We Belong, first read as a full play on the set of Larissa Fasthorse's *Thanksgiving Play* at Playwrights Horizons in 2018 and later staged at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse in London in 2019 and recorded at the Wooly Mammoth Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. in association with the Folger Shakespeare Library in 2021, is an autobiographical, one-person show in which Sayet dramatizes how she "became a bird."[327] That avian metamorphosis occurs as she leaves the Mohegan lands and travels to London to pursue a Ph.D. at the Shakespeare Institute of the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. The core of the plot centers the tension between Sayet's deep and abiding connection to Mohegan community and her ostensibly conflicting desire to take flight, boarding planes and seeking forms of belonging away from her Mohegan home. The play expresses that tension in part by way of Shakespeare, as Sayet's interest in the study and performance of Shakespearean drama is juxtaposed against an attention to the attempted cultural erasure of settler colonialism. Inhabiting a multitude of voices and tones, Sayet moves the audience through a narrative arc in depictions of non-exploitative and attentive relations to land and language that culminate in the communal experience of belonging.

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326. See my interview with Sayet in the forthcoming *Shakespeare and Wisdom*, edited by Julia Reinhard Lupton and Unhae Park Langis (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), for her thoughts on the concept of wisdom and theater as a place of possibility.

327. Sayet, *Where We Belong,* 6. This analysis responds to the published text, but the work continues in performance, and is playing at Seattle Rep and the Public Theater in New York in fall of 2022.

Where We Belong begins at a border, a stark demarcation of unbelonging and emblem of exclusion.[328] Sayet recounts traveling from the UK to Sweden and back shortly after the Brexit referendum. The first characters besides Sayet to speak are enforcers of the increasingly militarized divisions between nations, introducing themes of geopolitical exclusion and gesturing toward Indigenous dispossession by reference to statist conceptions of territory. As she returns to the United Kingdom, she tells the border guard that she is studying Shakespeare, but not that her study involves the relationship of Shakespeare to settler colonialism because, "Most people don't like talking about colonialism as much as they like talking about Shakespeare."[329] Placing Shakespeare alongside colonialism, the play asks the audience to ask themselves why "people"—here, predominantly white, Anglophone publics—prefer to discuss one over the other.

That preference for celebrating Shakespeare while ignoring the imperial arc that extends from his time into the present is rooted in settler memory, which "serves to reaffirm the settler claim of belonging to, appropriation of, and authority over lands on the one hand, and the disavowal of the genocide, dispossession, and alienation of Indigenous peoples, on the other hand."[330] *Where We Belong* not only foregrounds that disavowal, upon which the acceptance of the United States as a legitimately recognized political entity depends, but highlights what Anglophone societies choose to remember in lieu of colonial violence—the inheritance of the most esteemed writer of their language. The name "Shakespeare" too often enables settler memory by reinforcing the assumed cultural excellence of a white, European author at the expense of other traditions, which fuels the

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328. Each performance starts with a prologue that is specific to the location and time it is taking place, which further reinforces the value of place to the theatrical project of the work. What I refer to as the beginning is "Borders," the first section of the play following that prologue.

329. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 5.

330. Bruyneel, 4.

pervasive bardolatry that Sayet has elsewhere called the "Shakespeare missionary complex."[331] The unquestioned presumption of Shakespeare's universality not only obscures Native and other non-Anglophone cultures and knowledge traditions but disavows the role of Shakespeare's language and work in settler colonial projects and the attempted erasure of Indigenous languages, lands, and ways of knowing.

When the border guard responds by quoting *Macbeth* and gesturing as if cradling Yorick's skull, his comic conflation underscores the ubiquitous, if often spectral, presence of Shakespeare in Anglophone culture and education, while also introducing imagistic patterns of blood, conquest, and death. The enthusiasm of the guard and other travelers in response to Sayet, traveling on an American passport and studying Shakespeare in the UK, articulates a legacy of Shakespearean uses for projects of language erasure through education. Leah Marcus writes that in the English colonial imagination, the capacity of Shakespeare to "reach into the hearts and minds of conquered nations across the globe" depends upon an ironic claim to Shakespearean "innocence": "The more Shakespeare's texts became immersed in the project of civilizing conquered peoples, the less he was imagined as even incipiently complicit in the colonial project."[332] Marcus's reference to civilizing projects, which can only exist conceptually by way of an acceptance of the civilized / barbaric binary, centers Shakespeare in colonial work, including the purported bestowal of imagined values as well the systemic erasure of Indigenous languages. The border guard defends Shakespearean and colonial innocence while mounting a more stolid defense of the "lines drawn in the sand by petulant children with guns," as Sayet puts it, that divide nations and naturalize political entities that emerge

331. Sayet, "Interrogating."

332. Leah S. Marcus, *How Shakespeare Became Colonial: Editorial Tradition and the British Empire* (London: Routledge, 2017), 3–4.

from historically specific acts of violence.[333] *Where We Belong* not only highlights the irony of a 21st-century moment in which imperialist states such as the US and UK are shoring up their borders—that 2016 double-whammy of Brexit and Trump—but calls attention to the ephemeral and contingent nature of borders themselves. Lines in sand drawn by human actors inevitably shift over time, and nationhood based primarily on territorial holdings can only be maintained through the continual presence of implicit and explicit violence. The Shakespeare-quoting border guard does not see a dagger before him, but his presence alone is an emblem of the razor-edged violence of the present nation-state.

The play's extended engagement with Shakespearean legacy as a tool of settler colonialism and language erasure is most direct in the sections that recount Sayet's fraught relationship to *The Tempest* and the colonial dynamic between Prospero and Caliban. Dismayed by the dehumanized figure of Caliban as Prospero's enslaved "savage"—that pernicious binary rooted in arrogant notions of "civilization" again—Sayet is spurred to direct a production of *The Tempest* centered on the restoration of both his language and his land, a vision of the play in which Caliban is allowed to belong. She narrates her earlier attempt to reconcile her interest in Shakespearean drama and her Indigenous identity:

> I stare madly at another portrayal of Caliban who babbles like a fool onstage. As if he never spoke at all. As if his language wasn't more complex than his colonizers . . . What would happen if Caliban could get his language back? If as he moved toward freedom his language came back too, replacing that of the oppressor. If Ariel, the airy spirit, too was of here, was blackbirds like me, a flock of blackbirds . . . if their language was my language. And this was a story of something that happened here long ago. After all, in the play, the settlers leave in the end. Maybe I can prove Shakespeare wanted the colonists to leave too.[334]

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333. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 6.

334. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 17. The concept of Ariel as a flock of blackbirds alludes to the meaning Sayet's Mohegan name, Acokayis, and extends the play's thematic pattern of exploring the contrast of staying at home or leaving home through the figures of the wolf and the bird.

Centering a Caliban who speaks Mohegan and the would-be colonist return to Europe, Sayet navigates the complexity of using Shakespeare's significance to address legacies of colonial violence, shifting from the "as if" that refers to settler assumptions about Native languages and cultures to the theatrical possibility in the "if," and finally to the textual fact that the colonists are set to leave the island at the end of the drama. The focus on Prospero teaching Caliban a European tongue—not *language*, but *Prospero's* language—would not carry the same punch it does in modern performance if not for its echo of historical attempts to erase Indigenous languages and Anglocentric educational campaigns, foundational for projects of Native family separation as well as institutions of US higher education that continue to thrive in the present.[335]

While Sayet's production of *The Tempest* aligns with other Indigenous Shakespeare performances of the early 2000s, *Where We Belong* questions the utility of indigenizing Shakespeare at all. Those productions, she tells the audience: "come out of reclamation movements. You don't have a language reclamation movement until after a language removal process . . . So you learn to speak English to survive . . . That's part of the legacy of how we came to speak Shakespeare."[336] The term "removal" echoes the Indian Removal Act, gesturing toward interrelated colonial projects of territorial dispossession and educational systems designed to divide families and eradicate Native languages and knowledge traditions.[337] Education enables the colonial land grab to expand into a

335. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 37.

336. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 38.

337. As Valeria Luiselli points out in *Tell Me How it Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions* (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2017), "removal" is also a common term in reference to the deportation of undocumented immigrants, marking the continuity of settler projects to erase Indigenous cultures and expel certain migrant groups, 17.

broad project of cultural erasure. As member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Robin Wall Kimmerer writes, Indian Removal succeeded in displacing countless people from their homelands but failed to "extinguish identity," so the government placed Indigenous children in distant schools "to make them forget who they were."[338] Both Kimmerer and Sayet illustrate how this colonial attempt at assimilation through forgetting depends on education as violence and theft—the play points out that Harvard and Dartmouth were both founded to educate Indigenous students—but also that the settler effort to eradicate Native identity was a failure. Settler disavowal refuses to recognize Indigenous identity in the present, preferring a world, as Sayet puts it, with a "*last* of the Mohegans."[339] The play depicts the continuity of Indigenous cultures despite colonial attempts to eradicate and replace them with an Anglocentric inheritance that perpetuates white supremacy through territorial and material relations as well as ways of knowledge and collective life.

Sayet highlights the failures of that inheritance by addressing Shakespearean—and by extension, settler colonial—ignorance of Indigenous cultural identity in relation to geography and language. She says, "He never met us. Never heard our stories. Our language. He didn't know we didn't use curses . . . then. And wouldn't have claimed the island 'mine' . . . We have our own way of seeing the world they can't define . . . But could open their minds."[340] The reference to seeing *the world* is more than shorthand for a specific perspective, as it suggests an attentive relation to the earth, modeling forms of wisdom and care in which the nonhuman world is not viewed in extractive, exploitative terms, but where culture and ecology are entwined in service of the health of both the

338. Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013), 16–17.

339. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 50. The italics are in Sayet's published play.

340. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 36.

land and the community. Just as lack of cursing marks a concept of language that Shakespeare would not have understood, Sayet implies that Caliban would not have thought of the island in terms of ownership because that would conflict with traditional relations with the earth. Kimmerer writes:

> In the settler mind, land was property, real estate, capital, or natural resources. But to our people, it was everything: identity, the connection to our ancestors, the home of our nonhuman kinfolk, our pharmacy, our library, the source of all that sustained us. Our lands were where our responsibility to the world was enacted, sacred ground. It belonged to itself; it was a gift, not a commodity, so it could never be bought or sold.[341]

While it is crucial to avoid suggesting that Native perspectives and ways of knowing are identical—there are always key distinctions and wide variations both within and between cultures—Sayet suggests a similar ethic of interrelation to the nonhuman world as Kimmerer. In a scene that takes place at TED Global, where her character is barraged with clumsy and offensive questions about both Shakespeare and Indigeneity, she responds to a talk on the shared nature of the global commons with, "Ask literally any Native person ever and they coulda told you this."[342] *Where We Belong* emphasizes that land as private property is inimical to inclusive and reciprocal Mohegan conceptions of geography as communal and political space, further dramatizing white settler disavowal as the speaker's imagined epiphany depends on the refusal to acknowledge the existence of alternatives to European colonial traditions. Only the mind that presupposes that land exists as a commodity to be exploited can be surprised or enlightened by a perspective that emphasizes the commons; only the mind that already assumes a radical separation between the human and nonhuman worlds can be awakened to an alternative relation to the earth.

The inquiry into land in the play suggests human / nonhuman interdependence and forms of nationhood that, in the words of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson,

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341. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 17.

342. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 30.

are founded on "a series of radiating responsibilities" rather than ownership and resource extraction.[343] Those radiating responsibilities Simpson mentions promote a vision that extends beyond a critique of the European settler colonial relation to the earth and its legacy in modern forms of global political organization, ultimately problematizing the concept of the nation-state itself. Just as Simpson's "radiating responsibilities" extend outward, crossing the artificial borders of the earth rather than hermetically sealing land into discrete political identities, Sayet's personal journeys and ancestral Mohegan narratives ultimately denaturalize the border itself as a form of political organization. As she is handed her passport by another border guard on returning to the US, she says: "You'd think they can't keep Native Americans out. But try telling that to the Indigenous nations whose territories fall on both sides of the border to Mexico. They predate the US constitution."[344] Referencing the lands of North America before European contact serves to remind Sayet's audience, especially white descendants of settlers, of histories they would often prefer to forget—as Sayet notes in the play, they would rather talk about Shakespeare than colonialism, after all. While the Shakespeare-talk of popular culture does not engage deeply with the plays themselves, the persistence of Shakespeare in collective cultural memory provides an opportunity to interrogate what we claim and what we disavow from the past, which is especially crucial when considering the Indigenous nations that precede settler colonialism. Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson writes of the Iroquois across the US / Canada border:

> [T[hey remind nation states such as the United States and Canada that they possess this very history [of territorial conquest], and within that history and seized space, they possess a precarious assumption that their boundaries are permanent, uncontestable, and entrenched.

343. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 8–9.

344. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 47.

> They possess a precarious assumption about their own (just) origins. And by extension, they possess a precarious assumption about themselves.[345]

Sayet performs what Simpson argues—that the presence of Indigenous nations troubles the presumed legitimacy of the settler nation-state. If the border regimes of the modern nation-state depend upon exclusion, the play asks what form of communal life might arise from the wisdom of welcome. Whether through Sayet's performance or Simpson's anthropological research, that reminder of Indigenous nationhood not only troubles specific borders but larger, exclusionary statist political formations. As in the common axiom in migrant justice movements that remind us of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo—"We didn't cross the border; the border crossed us"—Indigenous nationhood articulates the historical contingency of political geography. Centering an ethic of welcome, the play poses an implicit demand to reimagine sovereign nationhood beyond the frame of borders that cross, cut, and divide communities.

While not proposing a specific alternative to the modern nation-state or programmatic outline of language restoration, *Where We Belong* presents a contrast between spaces of belonging and unbelonging through two different museums, gesturing toward a vision of communities of care. In the section "Indians in Boxes," Sayet narrates a visit to the British Museum, where a chipper British academic tells her that their collection includes the remains of 12,000 people.[346] The refusal to repatriate them and allow a proper burial marks the proprietary nature of colonial logic, where even the bodies of the dead are viewed as possessions that the colonizers have the right to hold in perpetuity. By contrast, Sayet shares with the audience her memory of the Tantaquidgeon Indian Museum, where Gladys Tantiquidgeon and her brother "protected [Mohegan] stories and other

345. Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 22.

346. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 42.

sacred relations, like pipes and baskets" and where "it was warm and dusty and always smelled like good medicine."[347] The British Museum refuses to treat even the stolen bones of the dead with reverence, while the Tantiquidgeon museum extends an appreciation of the sacred nature of cultural artifacts to pipes and baskets. While the British Museum expropriates, the Tantiquidgeon Museum protects. The "good medicine" of the museum is that of home, of belonging, and a communal ethic of care.

In its final sections, *Where We Belong* articulates forms of language reclamation, repair, and welcome that structure the theater itself, much like that museum, as a space of communal healing. Madeline Fielding Sayet was given her English name for Fidelia Fielding / Flying Bird / Jeets Bodernasha, the last fluent speaker of Mohegan. While the epilogue varies slightly depending on the time and place of performance, in the published version of the work, Sayet returns in the end to language, moving from ancestral inheritance to future generations. Noting that Fielding's journals, long held by Cornell University, had been repatriated to the Mohegan Tribe, Sayet says: "Our language came home / To teach our children / Our grandchildren / So that one day / My descendants will write plays, / tell stories / Carry their names / Speak to the ancestors / In our language once more."[348] Language and homeland, past and future, and narrative art and communal life here coalesce in a vision of repair after the ongoing trauma of settler colonialism.

That gesture of restoration serves as a broader metaphor for decolonial and non-proprietary possibilities through an ethic of communal responsibility. With Cornell standing in for continued legacies of colonialism in settler states, Sayet writes:

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347. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 11.

348. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 58. Sayet's rider for the play calls also for theaters to collaborate with local Indigenous communities to support local Native languages and donate to language revitalization project.

The institution let her come home.
They always can.
You just have to decide it's okay to let go.
To hold on less tightly, release what isn't yours
To listen
To care
Our planet is so small.
When will we learn that we're all responsible for each other?[349]

This ethical vision suggests Simpson's "radiating responsibilities" to human and nonhuman alike, and past and future lives, that imagine alternatives to the prevailing structures of domination.[350] What those alternatives may be is uncertain, and the decolonial work of the imagination must extend to material change in the world, but the last moments of *Where We Belong* offer radical collective possibility. Sayet sings the final words of the play in Mohegan: "Wigwomun, wigwomun wami skeetôpák, oh hai, oh hai, heyuh, heyuh, weyuh hey."[351] In that Welcoming Song, which voices "welcome to all the people" in Mohegan, Sayet enacts the power of language and the collective experience of theater to forge communal bonds. Against the many and varied legacies of settler colonialism, the present dispossessions enabled by the nation-state, and the centering of English at the expense of Indigenous tongues, Sayet's play fosters community and articulates an active hope for a future beyond the colonial frame.

That ethic responds to the dual nationalisms illustrated by the rise of Trump and the success of Brexit at the time of the play's composition. As I was in the process of drafting this section of the chapter, the UK instated Prime Minister Liz Truss, a character afflicted with a nostalgia for empire, hundreds of Trumpian candidates were campaigning in the US mid-terms, and a leading figure of

349. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 58.

350. Betasamosake Simpson, 8–10.

351. Sayet, *Where We Belong*, 58. The Mohegan Welcoming Song was created by the Unity of Nations drum group.

the anti-migrant right tricked Venezuelan asylum seekers into boarding planes in service of a cynical political stunt. European nationalists—most recently, Giorgia Meloni, who has proposed a naval blockade to keep Mediterranean asylum seekers from Italian shores—were thriving. Imperialism through territorial expansion likewise was at work in Vladimir Putin's ongoing violent attempt to annex Ukraine, a war effort that adds daily to the tens of millions of globally displaced people. The tools of the dominant cartographers are weaponry and capital; the former restricts the mobility of human beings, while the latter is free to cross borders. Such is our modern union of empire, nationalism, and global capitalism, which descends from the European imperial project and an ensuing global order based on sovereign nation-states, border controls, and the free transnational flow of wealth between those states. Goeman asks,

> What might the poet say when she sees the detriments of colonial and imperial mapping—containment, restriction, restructuring, and erasure of cultures—continue and live in the buzz of a city or stream of nightly news in short sound bites ordering the people of the world through language and metaphors, the very tools of poets?[352]

Sayet responds to that legacy by reminding audiences that we might imagine language and land relations in other ways than the failed models inherited from violent campaigns of empire, an inheritance that replaces the varied spiritual and knowledge traditions of the world with modes of extraction and the privileging of wealth and power over community. Dramatizing an alternative, expansive ethic of collective reclamation and repair, *Where We Belong* transforms theatrical space into a cartography of possibility, a site of necessary wisdom and radical welcome.

Islas

Poetry and history, land and language, Shakespeare and its discontents—these threads are woven throughout the fabric of this chapter, where structures of domination restrict or compel

352. Goeman, 119.

movement, and where art is fashioned as a weapon against those mechanisms of control. Before more poetry, a bit of history: On November 1, 1950, Griselio Torresola and Oscar Collazo attempted to assassinate President Harry S. Truman. Their motive was to call attention to the independence movement of the territory of Puerto Rico, colonial spoils of the 1898 Spanish-American war. Four years later, Lolita Lebrón, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Andres Figueroa Cordero, and Irvin Flores Rodríguez walked into the legislative assembly of the US Capitol, dropped a Puerto Rican flag, and fired thirty rounds at the representatives of the 83rd Congress. I study migration and early modern literature, which inevitably is to study history, and in twelve years of public school, four years of university, and nearly nine years of graduate education, I never once learned those facts in a classroom. Colonial disavowal depends on avoiding realities that might spur tricky questions. The student who learns of those mid-century events might inquire as to motive and might discover or acknowledge more directly that Puerto Rico remains a US territory and consider the ramifications of that. While drafting this chapter, I walked by Puerto Rico's own Capitol building, just outside the walls of Old San Juan and a few feet from the Caribbean. Etched in English into the stone façade are the final words from the Gettysburg Address: "Government of the people, for the people, by the people, shall not perish from this earth."[353] The irony does not require elucidation.

Raquel Salas Rivera's bilingual poetry collection *antes que isla es volcán / before island is volcano* engages visions of Puerto Rican independence that arise in part from the "Calibanic genealogy" of Prospero's "savage and deformed slave" as a colonial subject.[354] The section "island" / "isla" begins

353. Abraham Lincoln, "The Gettysburg Address," November 19, 1863, Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.24404500/?st=text. Like Puerto Rico, the territory of Guantánamo Bay was also seized from the Spanish occupiers by the US in 1898.

354. I am indebted to a talk Rebecca Foote gave at UCLA in 2023 that introduced me to this collection and its Shakespearean references.

with an epigraph of Caliban's indictment of Prospero and contains six poems from the imagined perspective of Caliban. These relatively spare, short, uncapitalized poems, centered on the page as if a small island of text surrounded by blank space, read almost as haiku. The elaborate English verse of *The Tempest* is cooked down to a stark rejection of present colonialism. While the multiply signifying Caliban, as Byrd points out, is capacious enough to contain varied and contradictory elements of colonial violence, Rivera, like Césaire, maintains the hierarchical allegory of the colonial reading, while linguistically doubling it through translation, calling attention to overlapping Spanish and US colonial projects on the island of Puerto Rico. The colonial framing of this section introduces linguistic and conceptual patterns which are taken up in a later section titled "the independence (of puerto rico)" / "la independencia (de puerto rico)." While the poems that directly talk back to Shakespeare work within the allegory, Rivera calls the later section "a multiverse!" / "¡un multiverso!" The colonial present speaks to Shakespeare, while the decolonial future speaks to possibilities that remain unknown, gesturing, like Goeman's vision of Indigenous nationhood, to relations to land and community that may exist outside of the nation-state.

In the poem "caliban to his friends" / "calibán a sus amigos," Rivera writes: "don't be afraid. / those aren't noises, / they are songs"; "no tengan miedo. / no son ruidos, / son canciones."[355] Drawing from Caliban's speech on the sounds of the forest—"Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises / Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not"—the poet imagines an audience not of the bumbling sots Trinculo and Stephano, but of friends (3.2.135–136).[356] In this reading, Caliban's knowledge of his island and deep affinity for its natural music is transposed to Puerto Rico

355. Raquel Salas Rivera, *Antes que isla es volcán / Before island is volcano* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2022), 31.

356. All references are from *The Tempest*, edited by Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan (London: Arden Bloomsbury, 2011).

in the present day, where an imagined community of Caliban and friends are brought together by sound. Shakespeare's Caliban reads the island as both a vibrant nonhuman space—freshets and berries, scamels and marmosets—and as stolen political territory. Rivera likewise introduces the notion of fear, specifically fear of the island itself, which he takes up more explicitly in the section on independence. In a poem titled, "the independence (of puerto rico)" / "la independencia (de puerto rico)," as all the poems in that section are called, he writes:

don't fear what you already know.	no temas lo que ya conoces.
we've spent a lifetime fearing ourselves	llevamos una vida temiéndonos
while getting robbed by strangers.	mientras nos roban extraños.
look at us. look closely.	míranos bien.
don't you see we are	no ves que somos
beauty?	hermosura?[357]

The minor differences in the two versions suggest the possibility of different audiences for this disquisition on the current unfreedom and possible future liberation of the island. The Spanish version is a second-person address, perhaps to oneself, the island, or to a friend; the English version could be addressed to a single person or a collective. The Spanish version needs no preface to the imperative "míranos bien," while the English admonishes the audience first, "look at us," then "look closely," illustrating a dynamic where the English-speaker is not paying attention to begin with, as a figure of the colonizer who can neither see nor hear the colonized.

The poem "caliban to shakespeare" / "calibán a shakespeare" is likewise linguistically marked by Puerto Rico as natural and colonized political space. Drawing from Caliban's curse to Prospero, "All the charms / Of Sycorax – toads, beetles, bats – light on you" (1.2.340–341), Rivera writes in Spanish, "de sycorax, coquíes, cucabanos, y luciérnagas / que llamaste sapos, escarabajos y luces."[358] The coquí is a frog endemic to the island of Puerto Rico, and the name derives from its

357. Rivera, 55.

358. Rivera, 32.

call—the noises of the isle. The cucubano beetle is likewise native to the island and emits light like the fireflies for which it is often mistaken. Excising the bat from the list and reading "light" as another charm rather than a verb, Rivera's rendering is a feast of sound and brightness. It is also one specific to his island: the English version reads: "by sycorax, coquíes, cucubanos, and fireflies / which you called frogs, beetles, and lights."[359] The coquí and cucubano refuse translation. Caliban's curse on Prospero transforms into a lesson on Shakespearean ignorance, akin to Sayet's reminder to the audience in *Where We Belong*: "He never met us." The point is, of course, not to somehow place blame on a dead author for not knowing what he did not know—the coquí and cucubano, and the Indigenous peoples of the lands now known as the Americas. Yet Rivera here, following Caliban's sense of his own island and the charms of his inheritance, punctures the myth of Shakespearean universality. What Shakespeare, ventriloquizing the "savage" Caliban, calls toads and beetles are not toads and beetles, and that failure of language and recognition, in this allegory, stands in for the larger racial and colonial unknowing of power.

That power here is clearly the United States. To break the colonial allegory, these poems must move beyond the reach of both Shakespeare and US power. The final poem in the section "isla" / "island" is "caliban to himself" / "calibán a sí mismo," which is a mere six words in Spanish, five in English: "cambiar de dueño / no te liberó," or "changing masters / didn't free you."[360] In terms of the play, Rivera references when Caliban vows to serve Stephano, and even his freedom song is under the aegis of "a new master" (2.2.180). The colonial reading is apparently straightforward: the transition from Spanish colonial rule to US colonial rule did not liberate Puerto

359. Rivera, 32. See also Raquel Salas Rivera, "A Note on Translation," *Waxwing Literary Journal 10* (2016): https://waxwingmag.org/items/issue10/49_Salas-Rivera-A-Note-on-Translation.php, where the poet writes: "Even though *adoquines* are *cobblestones*, my *adoquines*, the ones I stumbled over and my way to and from the water, could never bear the word *cobblestone* . . . I call these untranslated words *knots*."

360. Rivera, 36.

Rico. Rivera's calibán here is synonymous with the island itself, an island that stretches from US to Spanish colonial rule, back to the Indigenous Taíno land of Borikén, and before that a volcano submerged in the sea. While *antes que isla es volcán / before island is volcano* exploits an inherited allegory from Shakespeare, and speaks in the tongues of its major colonizers, these poems too find political possibility by way of time and imagination, looking backward and forward and denaturalizing a political present that remains defined by colonial dynamics. It is necessary to view globalization historically as bound up with overlapping projects of empire, settler colonialism, and racialized enslavement; it is also possible to view it imaginatively as a set of global relations that may be conditioned by greater freedom and equality in the future.

Rivera dedicates the volume as follows: "para los futuros que alguna vez me soñaron / y para nuestra capacidad imaginativa exponencial" / "for the futures that once dreamt me / and for our exponential imaginative capacity." The grammar places the future in a past dreaming and aligns the imagination with a volcanic creative and political potential. Dreamer and dreamed, before and after, fuse together like Caliban waking and longing to dream again. Yet Caliban's island is, of course, a fictional creation, nominally set in the Mediterranean but stretching in its theatrical legacy as far as the Caribbean and Virginia, expanding and contracting between the nascent colonialism of the Stuart court to the current ravages of a 21st-century colonial world. Only one poem in the volume remains only in Spanish, and it is printed twice, like the coquís and the cucubanos. It is dedicated to the Cuban poet, journalist, essayist, translator, and radical José Martí. With a nod to Martí's collection *Versos sencillos*, Rivera titles the poem "versos complejos." The poet follows the straightforward meter and rhyme and the even quatrains of Martí's *versos*, but the simplicity of form carries the complexity of literary and political inheritance: Spain and the US, Shakespeare and Martí, liberation and detention, imagination and physical struggle, future and past. It is from this poem that the collection takes its title. Perhaps Rivera chose not to translate it because its music and its content

would never hit the same in English; perhaps it is a nod to Martí's own broadly pan Latin American sensibilities. These are some of its words: "todo es hermoso y violento / todo se angustia por pan, / y todo, como la tierra, / antes que isla es volcán."[361] There is much possibility in *antes*.

In *Transit of Empire*, Byrd outlines the complex geopolitics of the Americas in the 21st century and characterizes how questions of racial identity, capitalism, colonialism, and migration intersect:

> As metropolitan multiculturalism and dominant postcolonialism promise the United States as a postracial asylum for the world, the diminishing returns of that asylum meet exactly at the point where diaspora collides with settler colonialism. Of particular concern is to theorize the degrees to which indigenous peoples, settlers, and arrivants—a term I borrow from African Caribbean poet Kamau Braithwaite to signify those people forced into the Americas through the violence of European and Anglo-American colonialism and imperialism around the globe—have functioned within and have resisted the historical project of the colonization of the "New World."[362]

This chapter is likewise engaged with how those groups have made use of Shakespeare to question and contest past and present forms of colonialism. If the works discussed so far have focused mostly on the Indigenous and settler communities and their lineage, the final two poems I will consider here are more explicitly concerned with arrivants and the legacies of enslavement in the "New World" that Byrd wraps in scare quotes. Braithwaite's term of arrivants facilitates readings of the colonial violence in the Americas (a term that I admit is also deserving of scare quotes but have used in this chapter for lack of a more appropriate concept) that are attentive to the ways in which the experiences of all have been shaped by empire but not in an identical manner. Braithwaite, born Edward but given the name Kamau, Kikuyu for "quiet warrior," by the grandmother of Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, used the term as a title to a trilogy written in the late 1960s consisting of *Rights of Passage*, *Masks*, and *Islands*.[363] The poem "Caliban," in which the speaker is a Caribbean

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361. Rivera, 65.

362. Byrd, xix.

363. Jayne Lewis, "'limbo like me': A Reading of Kamau Braithwaite's 'Caliban'," Humanities Core Research Blog, https://sites.uci.edu/humcoreblog/2018/03/01/limbo-like-me-a-reading-of-kamau-brathwaites-caliban/

reincarnation of Shakespeare's islander, appears in that final volume. Braithwaite himself was born on the island of Barbados, which was colonized by the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the English, used as a plantation economy for the cultivation of sugar by enslaved Africans, and transitioned from a Commonwealth realm to a republic within the Commonwealth in 2021. It is in homage to both Rivera and Braithwaite that this final section of the chapter is titled *Islas*.

Braithwaite's "Caliban" begins in a mode of pessimism and political failure in the ongoing ruptures of colonization and racialized enslavement: "Ninety-five percent of my people poor / ninety-five percent of my people black / ninety-five percent of my people dead / you have heard it all before O Leviticus O Jeremiah O Jean Paul Sartre."[364] The grammar creates an equivalence between poverty, Blackness, and death, but rather than build toward a gesture of refusal or triumph over the past, instead history plays out as cyclic violence and corruption, whatever past or more recent prophets and scribes may say or hope. The first stanza offers the failures of language against history but begins with people rather than place; Braithwaite's "my people" are defined by their state of poverty and death, while the following stanzas illustrate a clear sense of place. "Caliban," as the title would suggest, places us on an island where the nonhuman environment suffers under the same historical forces as the speaker's people: "out of the living stone, out of the living bone / of coral, these dead / towers . . . this death of sons, of songs, of sunshine; / out of this dearth of coo ru coos, home- / less pigeons, this perturbation that does not signal health."[365] Channeling T.S. Eliot's "The Wasteland" as well as *The Tempest* through coral and bone, again there is death and dearth, the lack that comes from a blight over the island's human and nonhuman life in simultaneous social and ecological decay. Dearth and death share letters with health, make an off rhyme, yet there is no

364. Kamau Braithwaite, "Caliban," *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy: Rights of Passage: Masks: Islands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 191.

365. Braithwaite, "Caliban," 191.

health to be found in this ecology. In the powerful recording of the poem at New York's Bowery Poetry Club in 2004, Braithwaite repeats the final line of the stanza.[366]

As the first section of the poem continues, the island space first becomes more specific—we move to Cuba on the edge of revolution. "In Havana that morning, as every morning / the police toured the gambling houses / wearing their dark glasses / and collected tribute."[367] The US-backed Bautista regime, playground of capitalism and organized crime, continues apace, unaware that Castro is set to upend a rickety system constructed out of the dual legacies of Spanish and US colonial power. Once the Havana scene is firmly established, however, the poem begins skipping to new geographies: "Vieux Fort and Andros Island; the isle of Pines," suggesting historical repetition across analogous environmental and political spaces. The first section of "Caliban" follows the allegorical reading of Shakespeare's play, as the mechanisms of colonization are alike, with European or Anglo-American power exploiting island space for projects of extraction and racialized enslavement. The result is the foreclosure of liberatory possibility; the result is death. The stanza concludes: "It was December second, nineteen fifty-six. It was the first of August eighteen thirty-eight / It was the twelfth October fourteen ninety-two . . . How many bangs how many revolutions?"[368] From Castro to the abolition of slavery in the British colonies, and to Columbus's arrival on a Caribbean island, history is both repeating and moving backward. In the recitation of dates, the speaker begins dropping punctuation and then prepositions, concluding with an unanswerable question. Violence has not led to peace and revolution has not led to liberation.

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366. Kamau Braithwaite, "Caliban," Segue Reading at the Bower Poetry Club, May 1, 2004, PennSound, University of Pennsylvania, https://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Brathwaite.php

367. Braithwaite, "Caliban," 191.

368. Braithwaite, "Caliban," 192.

The second section of the poem introduces its title character in song: "And Ban / Ban / Cal - / iban / like to play / pan / at the Car - / nival."[369] The failures of language suggested in the first stanza have transformed into short and playful monosyllables. Caliban's freedom song in *The Tempest* is merely the substitution of oppressors, as Salas notes in "caliban to himself": "Ban' Ban' Ca-caliban / Has a new master, get a new man" (3.2.179–180). Braithwaite's Caliban, however, comes into the poem in a moment of festivity that refuses submission, not the roughly anagrammatized "Cannibal" but here grammatically aligned with "Carnival" and its pan drum. Leading into the section where the titular Caliban does the limbo and the poem echoes a popular song with the lines "limbo like me," Braithwaite explains to the Bowery audience the origins of the ritual as a "strange residual memorial of the slave trade."[370] The bending backward beneath the stick replicates the crowding of the slave ship. Braithwaite rapidly reads the lines that illustrate the dance as greater than a metaphor and something more akin to spiritual reenactment of enslavement and freedom, as the third section places us in the ship: "stick is the whip / and the dark deck is slavery / stick is the whip and the dark deck is slavery . . . drum stick knock / and the darkness is over me"[371] Caliban's playful tapping on the pan has led us to the threat of death, as the hard monosyllables lead to the equivalence of meter and rhyme in "slavery" and "over me," just as "Caliban" echoed "Carnival" in the earlier section.

Yet at the end of the poem, Caliban is not alone. Braithwaite tells the Bowery audience that the dancers "negotiate a passage" under the limbo stick and "eventually they rise on the other side."[372] Just as the poem begins in reference to the speaker's people, it concludes with Caliban's

369. Braitwhaite, "Caliban," 192.

370. Braithwaite, "Caliban," PennSound.

371. Braithwaite, "Caliban," 192.

372. Braithwaite, "Caliban," PennSound.

rising with the assistance of others: "sun coming up / and the drummers are praising me / out of the dark / and the dumb gods are raising me / up / up / up / and the music is saving me / hot / slow / step / on the burning ground."[373] In another metrical and grammatical equivalence, the "drummers" and "dumb gods" allow Caliban to rise on the other side, symbolically emerging from the Middle Passage in dance. Kela Nnarka Francis suggests that the reference to the "dumb gods" Caliban meets in the "limbo gateway between Africa and the Caribbean" may be Ogun, the Orisha of iron and creativity, which Braithwaite gives us by way of both Caliban's drum and the poem itself.[374] The journey of the poem marks a spiritual exercise in replicating the horrifying conditions of the Middle Passage to enact resilience amidst community. Braithwaite's Caliban emerges alive.

That emergence in Braithwaite's reading is beautiful. Yet on the level of geopolitics, we in the 21st century remain in the first section of the poem, with historical repetitions and structural inequities that modify past hierarchies rather than dismantle them. If *The Tempest* remains viable as a colonial allegory, it is due to its preoccupation with hierarchy. Pirri notes: "Shipwrecks in early modern representations were contested spaces. They were often allegories for the disintegration of the social fabric, leading to the horizontalization of formerly hierarchical roles."[375] It is thus unsurprising that in the first scene of *The Tempest*, the sailors repeatedly signal the significance of hierarchy, with variations on "master" appearing four times during the shipwreck in the first dozen lines, as the Boatswain asks, "What cares these roarers for the name of king?" (11.2, 11.7, 1.1.9, 1.112., 1.1.16). Yet rather than dissipating after the wreck, the vertical relations and their reinforcement remains the core concern of the play. Prospero must be at the top. The text makes

373. Braithwaite, "Caliban," 195.

374. Kela Nnarka Francis, "From Old World Gods to New World Ritual: Kamau Braithwaite's 'Islands,'" *CLA Journal* 56, no. 2 (2012): 142.

375. Pirri, 89.

clear that his placement in the hierarchy is related to his possession over Caliban's physical body and labor. Before Caliban appears onstage, Prospero says: "We cannot miss him; he does make our fire, / Fetch in our wood, and serve in offices / That profit us. – What ho, slave!" (1.2.312–314). The position of Prospero and Miranda on the island is predicated on enslaved labor and dispossession of Caliban. Braithwaite's Caliban emerges on the other side, but Shakespeare's does not.

At the end of Shakespeare's play, when the Europeans are set to leave the isle, Caliban's status remains at the bottom of the hierarchy, even as his future remains uncertain. Prospero's famous claim, "This thing of darkness I / acknowledge mine," suggests not just racialization but the continuation of ownership (5.1.275–276). While the play is more interested in securing the restored noble status of Prospero, now set by his matrimonial machinations to be grandfather to future kings, than it is in giving us any clear sense of what will happen to Caliban, there is evidence in Prospero's grammar of ownership and Antonio's recognition that Caliban is "no doubt marketable" that he will continue to be exploited for profit (5.1.266). In its construction of Caliban as a commodity to generate wealth for his oppressors in the European marketplace, the final scene replicates his initial encounter with Trinculo. Byrd writes,

> In this meeting, Trinculo takes great pains to characterize Caliban, naming him first as a fish, then as a poor-John or dried hake, and in the course of the scene constructs a taxonomy that classifies Caliban as a dead Indian, and finally as an islander within a generic family. From the beginning of this passage, Caliban exists in a liminal space between man and beast, food and cannibal, alive and dead Indian. This indeterminacy of Trinculo's first encounter is mediated further by his thoughts of using Caliban to make money on the streets of London. Whatever else he may be, Caliban is profit.[376]

The encounters between the Europeans and Caliban reproduce scenes of contact in which his primary characteristic is his usability for their potential gain. Perhaps the author of *The Tempest* was thinking of the two Powhatan Natives (of what is now Virginia) who had been to England and who

376. Byrd, 55.

were written about in Sir Thomas Gates's account of the wreck of the *Sea Venture* in Bermuda in 1609.[377] Ten years later, the first enslaved Africans would arrive in the colony of Jamestown. The colonial allegory of *The Tempest* persists in the Americas and the Caribbean because the operations of colonization and the structural oppression of certain groups for the financial gain of others persists. In the United States, going beyond Shakespeare and finally escaping the allegory would mean looking back to look forward instead of disavowing collective history. It would mean, as the works in this chapter do, envisioning human mobility outside of structures of historical violence, perhaps, as the works here do, through flight, dance, labor, and liberatory unsettlement. It would mean imagining otherwise, which has been one driving objective of this study.

Coda: Notes on the State

Thomas Jefferson wrote of an "empire of liberty" that would include (then Spanish) Florida, Cuba, and Spanish territories west of the Mississippi, and advocated for the US to support other Spanish colonies only until the population was "sufficiently advanced" to annex the continent from them "piece by piece."[378] While Jefferson as an enslaver, one who owned hundreds of human beings as property, is well known, his advocacy of US empire in Latin America and the Caribbean is less spoken of. Yet colonization in the Americas and racialized enslavement have always been intertwined. The history of the state of Virginia includes both the dispossession of the Powhatan and other Indigenous nations and the enslaved labor that brought wealth to the state from tobacco plantations and built the White House, Monticello, and the University of Virginia, founded by

377. Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, "Introduction," *The Tempest (*London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 140.

378. Quoted in Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, The United States, and the Making of an Imperial Republic* (New York: Picador, 2021), 2, 6.

Jefferson in 1819, roughly equidistant temporally from the arrival of the first enslaved Africans and the 2017 white supremacist rally in Charlottesville fueled by the rhetoric of former president Donald Trump. As I write these words in late March of 2023, that same former president, on the verge of indictment, is officially launching his campaign to return to the White House. My mother's family traces their Virginian lineage back to the 17th century, and according to some ancestral sleuthing by a relative, my maternal line reaches back to both Jefferson and Matoaka, better known as Pocahontas. If you have read this far, you know that fact brings me no pride or peace.

In the collection *Cannibal*, Jamaican-born poet Safiya Sinclair, who received her MFA from the University of Virginia, takes on legacies of the Caribbean, Shakespeare, and Jefferson, another white man who had a way with words. In the first of a series of prose poems that are titled after Jefferson's treatise on his home state, "Notes on the State of Virginia, I," Sinclair's speaker and the figure of Jefferson shuttle violently between the Caribbean and North America, past and present, the racialized colonial subject and the racist statesman wielding a feather quill and iron gall ink. It begins in an address to an unknown second person: "Child of the colonies. Carrying the swift waves of oceans inside of you. The wide dark of centuries, the whole world plunged down, sewn through the needle's eye, the old crow's glisten in your gullet. Eye's beetling through black."[379] The "child of the colonies" who carries oceans could be a speaker akin to Sinclair herself and the journey from Jamaica to Virginia. The plunge into the "wide dark of centuries" suggests Braithwaite's "Caliban" and the Middle Passage, and the glistening in the gullet continues the collection's focus on colonization as consumption. In a collection that has already quoted Caliban, the eye's "beetling through black" recall that character's charms of Sycorax, while the motion through "black" is at

379. Sinclair, 31.

once the darkness of sea and night, Prospero's "dark backward and abysm of time," and the racialized categorization and hierarchical placement of human beings (1.2.50).

As the poem moves forward, the second person remains unaddressed by name, as details from Jefferson, Sinclair, and Shakespeare. She writes, "Dull wretch, slack-jaw orphan, you always feel sorry for yourself. And swallow each capsule like the last pearl your grandfather pressed into your palm. How he had dived three whole days for it."[380] Like the coral in "Caliban," the pearl echoes Ariel's song and its image of the king's death by drowning: "Full fathom five thy father lies, / Of his bones is coral made; / Those are pearls that were his eyes" (1.2.397–399). The reference to being an orphan lights on a chain of associations from Jefferson's loss of his father when only fourteen to Sinclair's attempts to escape the strict control of her own father over her sexuality and independence, to how patriarchy operates in the Prospero / Miranda dynamic. In the collection, Sinclair's speakers take on the personas of both daughter Miranda and enslaved Caliban.

The connection to Sinclair's past, under the stifling control of the father, becomes clearer when the poem moves into the first person. She writes,

> Jamaica, old fur sticking to the roof of my mouth, the one long dream that holds me underwater, black centipede I still teethe on. Ruined train clattering through my track. Here I could come up for air. Here, I could wake with a name I can answer to.[381]

Being held underwater is not only the threat of death but the inability to make language, to speak. The fur in the mouth hinders communication; the mouth can teethe on bugs that remind us of the beetle in the earlier line, but it cannot produce words. But "here" the speaker can breathe and regain a name. That "here," the following line suggests, is Charlottesville, Virginia: "Here where Thomas

380. Sinclair, 31. For more on the upbringing Sinclair refers to obliquely in this collection, see the forthcoming memoir by Safiya Sinclair, *How to Say Babylon: A Memoir* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2023).

381. Sinclair, 31.

Jefferson learned how to belittle a thing. How to own it. He created the word and wanted my mouth to own it." The near rhyme of beetle and belittle continues the nonhuman imagery and crashing of analogous but different things, while also referencing that the word "belittle" was coined by Jefferson. He invented a word whose sole purpose is to diminish, and he wants the speaker's mouth to take ownership over her own belittlement.

The final lines of the poem call back to Shakespeare, that other wordmaker and worldmaker, and his creation of Caliban, ever seen as fish, slave, profit. With the speaker and Jefferson set in Virginia and marking broader patterns of colonization and enslavement through their biographies, Sinclair evokes violence done to the body and the body's refusal to give in, as well as the force of words to diminish and their use as a vehicle in the demand for survival. She writes, "He wanted the whole world pulled through me on a fishing string. Where I will find my fingers in the muscle of my throat, here I will marvel at the body asking to live."[382] The place of "word" in the prior line leans to "world" as Jefferson's projects of language-making and worlding intersect. In this formulation, the speaker's body is merely the vessel that brings the world's people and its wealth to Virginia. Yet that is also precisely "where" the speaker will find her fingers in the muscle of her throat. What seems a reference to purging, perhaps the ridding of all those overlapping pasts, may also be read as the connection of speaking and writing. Words become actions through the muscle of the throat and the fingers on a keyboard or holding a pen. The speaker's body, wanted by Jefferson as a commodity, a thing to be exploited, belittled, and used, instead becomes an emblem of life. Yet unlike the Caliban figure in Braithwaite's poem, Sinclair's speaker does not fully emerge on the other side of the stick. She remains alive but still asking to live. The poem itself, however, enacts survival through language.

382. Sinclair, 31.

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This four-chapter study of Shakespearean drama and its afterlives in relation to mobility and migration has attempted to sketch some possibilities in language and performance that extend beyond the scholarly realm to reach the social world. In the years I have been researching and writing this work, my sense of the value of the humanities as a vital space for imagining otherwise has not diminished, and I am heartened by many exciting projects in research, performance, and activism, only some of which I have been able to address in these pages. In the fog and slog of pandemic and rising authoritarianism, I have also found many powerful texts and performances that articulate the discipline of hope and the refusal to accept the reification of present structural violence. Those works weave the creation of politics with that of art and stage human mobility outside of the frame of state domination.

The origins of my interests here might be found in my own childhood the US state just south of Virginia, my time in Spain, my work with refugees and migrants, and my revulsion at border control and surveillance mechanisms where the technologies of repression proliferate globally at the expense of the planet's most vulnerable populations. The demand for security presupposes a threat; those constructed as the threat have little recourse. This is a world, where, as Lucy Mayblin and Joe Turner point out:

> Techniques crafted for control and urban warfare in Palestine are used in border security elsewhere (and vice versa). Palestine becomes one source of policing and bordering technologies that migrate and connect up with, through international chains of capital and production, other global border sites: for example, in urban policing projects, from the destruction of favelas to the spatialization of Indian reservations, from the histories of plantation economies to border surveillance systems, to integration and social engineering strategies.[383]

Against such forces of violence, I do not always have clear and viable alternatives at the ready. But the state of things from the vantage point of the present moment is not just a political and ethical failure but it is also unsustainable. There is no technology that can fully control mobility, and the nation-state, like all political formations, has a past origin and a future that will look different than today. Change is as necessary as it is inevitable, and hope demands both focus and labor. As a scholar, educator, and writer, the tools I have at hand are what they are, and they are limited. But this study is only the first product of a broader project of scholarship and activism that entwines a hard look at ongoing legacies of past violence and the rich possibilities that abound in the art of theater and performance. The work continues.

383. Mayblin and Turner, 153.

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