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Negotiations between text and stage in *Romeo and Juliet*

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Romeo and Juliet is a play replete with multiple worlds. Not only are there the worlds of the young lovers, of the young men, of Juliet and her Nurse, of the parents, and of the family retainers, but there are also the worlds the text constructs within the character-parts¹ themselves. For example, Romeo continually questions who he is, flitting from self to self, and Juliet becomes expert at building double worlds—actions and words that mean one thing to her (and the audience) and quite another to her parents. We would like to look at some of the ways that many scenes in *Romeo and Juliet* ask the actors to interact with each other in terms of overhearing and overseeing, drawing on the editorial work we have just completed for the Arden Three edition of the play, and on a number of stage and film productions from the last two decades of the twentieth century. This essay explores the way in which overhearing and overseeing constructs these multiple worlds by offering different possibilities for interaction between and among actors, production details and audiences.² Entrances and exits in the text constitute many moments of overhearing or overseeing that contain the potential for soliloquy, silence, dilation or waiting. On the stage these must be negotiated in terms of the set, and through two case studies this essay looks at the impact of stage design, and particularly the potential of a thrust stage such as that as the London Globe Theatre, on textual possibilities for the multiple worlds of the character-parts. Finally, the essay offers an opening discussion for a better understanding of how the tensions that develop in the temporal and

than frustration, with the final lines addressed in a rather more self-important way to her, changing the characterization available to the audience. With Capulet Mother present there could be more sense of a household, with her absent there is less intimacy but also more existential focus on the way the character-part of Capulet Father is being constructed into identity. Act three scene five also concludes with an ambiguous exit. Juliet tells the Nurse she will marry Paris and to go and tell her mother, to which the Nurse replies "Marry I will, and this is wisely done" (3.5.235), after which she could exit leaving Juliet to her final eight lines alone on stage. Those lines, beginning with a curse directed to the Nurse, "Ancient damnation" (3.5.236), proceed into a complete rejection of the Nurse's counsel, a highly significant action in this play in which giving, receiving and rejecting counsel, are central to the development of the action. Spoken alone on stage, the lines can be reduced to sounding like a child's tantrum (Beier), although of course not necessarily so. Yet spoken with the Nurse still on stage, but not listening, they can acquire a weight that is balanced against the Nurse's presence and contribute to a sense that Juliet is raising the stakes, completing not only her transition into adulthood but into her own discrete world, because the audience is able to compare her directly to the Nurse. Similar moments where the earlier or later exits of other actors allow an actor tasks to work on, to create a variety of effects occur at the end of 2.4 (Romeo), 4.4 (the Nurse), and in a potentially radical manner at the end of 5.1 (Romeo) and the end of the play (5.3.308-09), where the Prince may assume a choric function if he is left alone on stage for his final lines.

Among the many instances of ambiguous entrances is that of the Nurse at 1.5. She speaks first to interrupt Juliet and Romeo while they are kissing (1.5.110) but may have been present for some time. Depending on when a production brings her on stage, the actor will have a different task. For example, she may be present from the entrance of the family and guests and thus may have overseen or overheard Capulet Father calming down Tybalt, and be responding to Juliet and Romeo because of this—possibly allowing their talk with each other because Capulet Father has been so positive about Romeo, or possibly interrupting because Romeo's presence is bound to cause trouble. She may be chaperoning Juliet, but have temporarily gone to speak to Capulet Mother, foregrounding Juliet's sense of chained liberation (2.2.178-81) on meeting Romeo. Or, she may simply enter opportunistically with a message from Capulet Mother. Her spatial and temporal presence or absence may construct the character as a counter-

spatial demands of a theatre, and the ways that a production negotiates them when dealing with overhearing and overseeing, can engage audiences in completely different ways. As we put on the page accounts of processes that happened and can happen in rehearsal and on the stage, we are aware that the writing looks too clean, could give the impression that the relations were not explored but imposed. Our intention here is not to write up a process so that it is a given, but to get the reader to think through a text differently, in conjunction with approaches with which they may here become more familiar.

The study will look at the way entrances and exits construct moments of overhearing and overseeing, which raise issues directly concerned with temporal and spatial interweaving and involve an audience in the construction of the isolated worlds of the young men and in Juliet's double world. The study will conclude with an analysis of two contiguous scenes focusing on how actual productions have dealt with some of these issues through specific choices of set design and staging.

Overhearing, Overseeing and Interacting

Entrances and Exits

Romeo and Juliet is replete with difficult questions related to timing and spatial relations that arise from ambiguous entrances and exits, and that are inextricable from the construction of the multiple worlds of the text.³ Among the ambiguous exits, two involve Capulet Mother. Both 3.4 and 4.2 conclude with speeches by Capulet Father, which start off with instructions to his wife, but may or may not conclude as soliloquies. If in 3.4, as at 1.5, Capulet Father leaves the stage to others, here Paris and Capulet Mother, he might do so after *my lord* (3.4.33). Alternatively, if Capulet Mother leaves after 32 and Paris after *my lord* (3.4.33), Capulet Father may be left on stage either alone or with servants to carry the light, calling *Good night* after them. Either might render 34-35 as an afterthought. However, if Paris and/or Capulet Mother are still on stage, 34-35 may be a more direct farewell. 4.2 is particularly interesting because if Capulet Mother exits after Capulet Father says "let me alone, / I'll play the husband for this once" (4.2.42-43), then he is left alone on stage futilely calling for the servants but sorting out what has to be done, and potentially even addressing the audience with "My heart is wondrous light / Since this same wayward girl is so reclaimed" (4.2.46-47). If, however, Capulet Mother remains on stage, much of this can be played as explanation rather

point to Juliet and Romeo, as a representative of familial control, as a family member worried about Romeo as "the enemy," or simply as a mouthpiece for Capulet Mother. It may present her as part of their alternative world, from which she is later rejected, or she may be excluded from the start.

Another rather different ambiguity occurs at Juliet's entrance in 2.6. The original stage directions indicate that she enters, an entrance that precipitates the Friar's brief eulogy (Q1 with 3 lines, Q2 with 5), which she does not appear to hear. She then "arrives" with her first line (2.6.21). The entrance is potentially drawn out, for it is clear that the Friar "sees" her but that she does not "see" him in the same way. His description of her will be in tension with how the actor actually walks or runs on, and this can be highly significant for the audience. Indeed if the Friar speaks while she is entering, his lines can work as a chorus for the audience, implicating them in the marriage that is to come. In one alternative, if she is not actually visible to the audience, the Friar's description may come across as something entirely in his own head, a fantasy that leeches the entrance of any tension with Juliet, and could display his words as part of a private plot radically shift the plotting of the play. Other ambiguous entrances include those of Romeo (1.1 and 3.3) of Tybalt (3.1.123), of Juliet (4.1) and of the Musicians (4.5).

Another important ambiguous entrance is Romeo's in 2.4. Again, both Q1 and Q2 specify that he enters well before his first line when Benvolio says, "Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo" (2.4.36), followed by an extensive piece of wordplay from Mercutio about Romeo's lovesick Petrarchan behavior, only acknowledging Romeo after five prose lines. Romeo does presumably enter where directed, but does he overhear Mercutio's playful invective, or only catch up with them on the salutation "Signior Romeo, bon jour" (2.4.43)? Mercutio uses the third person until the salutation, but this may be part of the parody. Yet if Romeo overhears, he chooses not to pursue the comments afterwards. In Michael Boyd's production, Benvolio rushes up to Romeo while Mercutio speaks his lines as if in an aside, possibly to purposefully delay acknowledging Romeo although the acting is unclear. Most other recent productions have been similar to Adrian Noble's 1995 RSC production in which Mercutio and Benvolio are nursing a hangover and they initially see Romeo before the audience does, playing the overlap as casual waiting during his entrance rather than waiting-for-a-reason. Either way, Romeo's presence on

stage will have the function of counterpoint for example, his excitement at meeting Juliet juxtaposed with Mercutio's cynicism. Romeo's presence also prepares the audience for what does not happen in this scene. Despite his excitement, Romeo never gets around to telling his two best friends about Juliet, although his wordplay with Mercutio can be played as an attempt to start doing so.

Overhearing and Overseeing

A moment where ambiguous entrance begins to move more certainly into overlap is when Romeo enters during Friar Lawrence's long opening speech in 2.3. The entrance is specifically marked as just before the line "Within the infant rind of this weak flower" (2.3.19) which many commentators have interpreted as a reference to Romeo. But whether Romeo hears the next eight lines is unclear. The actor may play the Friar "seeing" Romeo and slyly referring to him as the "sweet flower," which would also anchor the previous part of his speech to a specific person present in the space of the speaker, making the words potentially more compelling—although the actor would have to mock-act "*Benedicite*" (2.3.27). Or neither Friar nor Romeo may see each other, but Romeo's entrance would anchor the Friar's words in a different manner, his presence on stage at the same time as the Friar being an illustration of the humoral type the Friar is describing. Or the Friar's eight lines may be a soliloquy that Romeo does not overhear, but which competes with his presence for attention and conveys the Friar's intense self-absorption.

On the other hand, the Friar may be overseen by a Romeo who is wrapped up in his own happiness and therefore not hearing the Friar, simply interrupting him when he pauses. Or he may be overheard by Romeo, who later asks for the Friar's "remedy" for his wound (2.3.47-48), setting up the possibility for the actor to work on the echo of the balance of "poison" and "medicine" (2.3.20) in Romeo's exonerating of the Apothecary by exchanging "poison" for "cordial" (5.1.85). Whether the actor plays Romeo overhearing or overseeing or not, his entrance may provide a focus for the Friar's speech, so that the audience can listen more attentively, or it may compete with the speech. Either way, part of the function of the different spatial and temporal overlaps is to establish the quality of their relationship—whatever that may be—and the difference between the two worlds they inhabit.

Overseeing and overhearing dominate the action of 1.5, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, and begin with a highly ambiguous entrance that plays radically with

space and time. The masking scene (1.5) begins with Romeo still on stage from the previous scene, which ends with the stage direction, "They march about the stage and serving-men come forth with napkins." All the early editions (Q1-4 and F) contain this direction, but Q2 reminds us of Romeo's entrance into the new action of 1.5 with the stage direction "Enter Romeo." This has caused some editors problems, partly because it has become unusual in Shakespearean texts to mark a new scene if the characters remain on stage. Many stage productions leave out the servants' banter, just as does Q1, and editors have proposed several solutions. McKerrow suggests that there is a stage direction for Romeo's entrance to indicate that the maskers have already arrived; Jowett says it represents a "false start" in the manuscript and an intention to have the maskers leave so that the servants "march about" followed by Romeo's entry.⁴ A further staging could have Romeo leave the maskers as a logical development from his statement that he wants to be a torchbearer and "look on" (1.4.36). The 2000 Oxford World Classics edition does not break the scene here, but continues with 1.4 "to emphasise the original fluidity of staging" (Levenson).

However, scene division is largely a later eighteenth-century editorial issue that would not have concerned an early modern production, and in any event what constitutes "scene division" is different in different places with different customs.⁵ Contemporary productions often go for the flow of action implied by the early stage direction whether or not they are using texts with a printed scene break. Because space on a thrust stage permits the location of the scene to follow the actor, Romeo may simply detach himself from the maskers and include himself as an observer to the servants' conversation. The Arden Three edition retains the stage direction, "They march about the stage and serving-men come forth with napkins," and offers the conventional scene break on the basis of taking change of location as a convenient scene break. The location of 1.5 is a space inside the Capulet's house and beside the great chamber, which places this opening part of the scene not only as a transition between Romeo with his friends alone in 1.4 and the Capulet's feast, but as a spatial transition between "outside" and "the great chamber," and given the move just prior to the 1590s of the Elizabethan great chamber to the upstairs, literally and metaphorically between downstairs and upstairs. This opening also overlaps in time with the entrance of Capulet Father and guests at 1.5.13. Peter says that the servants are called for in the great chamber (1.5.13) and Capulet Father calls for servants to rearrange the furniture for the impromptu dance (1.5.26-28). The opening lines appear to be in pro-

leptic or flash forward response to Capulet Father's order. Peter swiftly concludes his orders for the clearing of the feast before he goes back to rearrange the hall.

Whether or not the young men are literally wearing masks, once the servants leave the actors on stage divide between those who are "masked" and those who are not. It is Mercutio, Benvolio, Romeo and the others who are dressed as maskers, hence the guests who have had supper go over "to the Maskers" as indicated by the stage direction. The action marks the transition from the periphery of the servants' quarters to the center of the great chamber. But the stage convention inverts spatial relationship: literally, the maskers enter the great chamber where the feast has just finished, but theatrically the guests move toward the maskers as if they are already there. The convention stresses the way that the guests enter into the spirit of the maskers' revelry, so Capulet Father's speech and the whole scene become an improvising of a maskers' dance: "this unlooked-for sport" (1.5.29). At 1.4.3-8 Benvolio says they will not address their audience with speeches, but "we'll measure them a measure and be gone," so here the young men may even be beginning to dance and so starting the revelry. The spatial dynamics foreground this scene as the only point of convergence between the worlds of the young men and that of the adult social world they are soon expected to join, and that convergence emphasizes the unusual challenge to the authority of the latter made by the convention of amorous masking.⁶

Romeo's first lines do not occur until well into the scene (1.5.43), and they reveal that he is still observing or "overseeing," but this time in the grip of romantic clichés that trade on voyeurism. The entire scene is a set of overseeings and overhearings: Juliet is overseen by Romeo, who is in turn overseen or overheard by Tybalt, who is in turn overseen or overheard by Capulet Father, who is in turn possibly overseen or overheard by Nurse. The discrepancies between the different perspectives will be apparent to the audience and intensify the sense of isolated lives that pervades the play. The characters all act on what they think they see, and acting on what people think they see is fundamental to the rest of the play—particularly what the older people think they see of the younger people, and of course what Romeo thinks he sees when he looks at the sleeping body of Juliet. Depending on how a production stages the interactions in 1.5, the actors are making use of different kinds of power, which the audience may constitute into interpretations that vary from surveillance to voyeurism to admiration.

Analogous issues are raised when Romeo overhears Mercutio and Ben-volio in 2.1. Although the text simply says that he "retires," echoes of Mercutio's lines are heard throughout the beginning of 2.2 at 2.2.4-9 (echoes 2.1.7-16), 2.2.11 (2.1.37), 2.2.25 (2.1.10), 2.2.26-32 (2.1.12), 2.2.45 (2.1.6), 2.2.49-50 (2.1.10), 2.2.94 (2.1.10). In fact, Romeo only stops echoing Mercutio when Juliet tells him to stop using Petrarchan clichés. These echoes may be used to remind the audience that Romeo was present during Mercutio's savage if not pornographic anatomizing of Rosaline, and to emphasize that he is in trouble if he persists in using Petrarchan love vocabulary. For part of the time during which Romeo echoes Mercutio, he overhears Juliet speak (2.2.33-36, 38-49), and she is not using the conventional images of Petrarchan love, so their discourses pointedly clash even before she repeats "swear not by the moon" (109), "Do not swear at all" (112) and "do not swear" (116). The weakness of Romeo's discursive field undermines the potential power he has as an unseen auditor, and could be played to make their relationship more reciprocal.

Soliloquies, Silences and Dilations

One curious overhearing that prepares us for the Nurse's ambiguous exit in 3.5 is Juliet's long speech after she has heard of Romeo's murder of Tybalt, and the Prince's banishment order (3.2.97-127). The first and last lines are addressed directly to the Nurse, but the material in between is apparently spoken to herself and is full of self-questioning. There are many soliloquies in *Romeo and Juliet*, and the part of Juliet has some of the most substantial—most of which were added to Q2 presumably because the company found a good actor of women, for the soliloquies are complex and demanding. But any soliloquy poses its own problems. The actor has to find words in the air, outside him or herself and not from any other actor. It is one thing to think something and quite another to say it out loud in words, for when you speak out loud there is a commitment to what is being said, what is said requires density in the words. Memory, dream, and thought become allied to something concrete outside of the body, the spoken word (Berry, 105).

The soliloquy pushes language out to connect the body of the individual actor with the social, for while Shakespeare writes the soliloquy for a lone actor, the actor must choose the words within the specific context of the stage. Soliloquy also allows the actor to act the character being personal in a public space, sometimes colluding with the audience and sometimes not. Yet whether or not they collude, the audience has to be included

(Barton, 94). At 3.2.97-127, Juliet is poised between inviting the Nurse into the new adult world of her married state and excluding her from it, a balance that will come down to the rejection of the Nurse at 3.5.236-43. If the Nurse is present during these speeches, her silence has to be acted. Other potentially significant silences on her part occur during 4.2 and 4.3 in which this character, who has always been highly talkative especially with Juliet, becomes completely silent when Juliet is on the stage. This is foregrounded by the fact that in the first Quarto (Q1) she is allowed dialogue that seems deliberately excised from Q2.

Some productions evade the problem by having the Nurse leave during these speeches, but her presence, and how the actor handles its silence, is critical to how the actor playing Juliet works on the task of developing the words.

As with Capulet Father in 3.1 who has previously proved a dominating speaker and is there exceptionally silent even when called upon by his wife to speak (3.1.148), the audience will probably register the Nurse's silence and become attentive to what it might mean. It is quite possible that a sixteenth-century audience would understand the silence to be due to Juliet's rejection of the Nurse's "counsel" at the end of 3.5, but the actor has to work on finding ways to choose why she is silent. The Nurse may react physically to the fact that Juliet is now carrying herself with more physical maturity. Or perhaps the character of Juliet is no longer allowing the habitual expression of her relationship with the Nurse, so the Nurse is confused, blocked from her conventional interaction, and recognizes that her best strategy may be caution.

The Nurse's silence in 4.2 and 4.3 is foregrounded by her talkativeness at other times. Although the "Nurse's delay" in *Romeo and Juliet* is usually discussed in terms of 2.5, she delays in nearly every scene except 3.5. Nurse's "delay" generally takes the form of dilation—she speaks at far greater length than one might think necessary before getting to the point. The character that is constructed by the actor and audience will be specific to the society, the historical time and the production. It may be that the Nurse is read as garrulous and irritating, as a licensed comic interlude, as a tease, or as someone socially inferior testing the waters before making decisive statements or agreements. Recent productions have included most of these representations and have added the cool, calculating servant (Boyd), the fussy and irritating gossip (Luhmann), the alcoholic and flirtatious nanny (Bogdanov), the fat, comic "low" type (Hands), the sexy servant-cum-mother (Noble) and the young woman as a social tragedy

(Beier). But apart from the German production, which was translated from English, each actor works on roughly the same verbal text, and each has to engage with the way the text allows the Nurse frequently to attempt to control the tempo of the dialogue while she dilates temporal, and potentially spatial relations.

The first scene in which the audience meets the character is 1.3. The Nurse is played alongside Capulet Mother and Juliet, Capulet Mother saying at the start that she wants to talk in secret with Juliet but then changing her mind, and in the process alerting the Nurse to some important decision. The two parts effectively tussle over control for the first 15 lines before the Nurse takes over with a series of stories about her own life and about the young Juliet. Q2 allows the Nurse to twice tell the story of Juliet's falling over as a child, each time rather differently. The first time the story is shaped by way of apostrophes of a religious kind, which can be played not simply as garrulous interjections, but as if to give her time to think of how to shape the narration. The result is circular, jerky and with lots of gaps and pauses. The second time round the story is far better constructed, to the point and shorter, the Nurse is in control of it and has deduced Capulet Mother's reason for speaking to Juliet, arriving at the line "I might live to see thee married once" (63) at the end of the storytelling.

The repetition may be present as a way for the Nurse to control Capulet Mother; it may work gently to introduce the issue of sexuality to Juliet; it may be perceived as a device the Nurse is using to cope with her own anticipation of the sadness she will experience on losing Juliet, just as she lost her own daughter to death; it may have reminded the early modern audience that marriage was often a question of status and security, since the natural children of wet nurses frequently suffered when their mothers were hired to breastfeed the children of the wealthy; it may foreground for an audience of today the situation of women defining their sense of worth only as mothers and wives; or it may foreground the difficult decisions made by a working mother. Yet for the actor, working on the dilution is the most important task. An actor playing the part of the Nurse will have to choose a particular action to play—such as "control Capulet Mother," but how this is interpreted is impossible to pin down. It is as critically problematical for an audience to say "the Nurse is trying to control Capulet Mother," as to impute intention to an author. To underline this gap between the actor's task, which is a response to what the text is asking the actor to do, and the audience's interpretation, we focus on the effect of the task, which is here dilation and pace. A rather different dem-

onstration of the Nurse's attempts to control the pace of dialogue through dilation occurs in 2.4, when she arrives among the young men to deliver to Romeo Juliet's message. The young men completely control the dialogue until Mercutio and Benvolio leave, at which point the Nurse's part stutters into life. The attempt to deflect anger onto the servant Peter fails, as he humiliates her even more and another dilation is introduced: "What she [Juliet] bid me say, I will keep to myself" (2.4.155). The pace of the long speeches the actor now has to work with is abrupt, full of short clauses and rough language, stops and starts, as if the only mode of control is just to keep talking. When Romeo attempts to "protest," the Nurse's response can be played as an interruption, but why does she interrupt? The audience may think that it is because she wants to turn his protest into a proposition, or because she is being sarcastic, or because she thinks he has finished has made a "protest." Certainly the interruption ends with "which, as I take it, is a gentlemanlike offer" (2.4.167-68) as if she is trying to guide the destination of the protest.

But the Nurse's dilation is not the only kind in the play. There is also dilation that is difficult to attribute to a character. In particular, Romeo's actions are dilated on several occasions, including this scene in which he "protests." He dilates or extenuates in his speech when he tells Juliet that he loves her (2.2.107-15), he dilates when he tells the Nurse that he wants to marry Juliet (2.4.161-71), and there is a fatal dilation in the communication of his marriage to Juliet to his family. Romeo is also given a passage of exceptional detail when he searches for the Apothecary (presumably to heighten the enormity of the decision to commit suicide), as well as an extended speech preceding his death. While searching for the Apothecary, the actor has to realize the lengthy descriptive action in a way that conveys to the audience the character's constitution, most likely of fear. Hence the action is played through dilation and the hesitation in the words. The text offers the actor tools to do this in the lists of words that accrete around the Apothecary, and around his shop, which work as a device for control. Again, the actor may choose to turn them into a specific "task" such as "will this man sell me drugs?" and the audience may have a number of interpretations of that action, but whatever significance the specific performance constitutes, dilation during this search and before the suicide, gives an actor an opportunity to control the pace.

Waiting

Closely related to the acting of dilation are many of Juliet's soliloquies

that are involved in playing "waiting," a condition that could exemplify the constraints on her actions, as in 2.2, 2.5 and 3.2. The last example, her prothalamium or song before consummating the marriage, demonstrates the difficulty of acting this condition. Fundamentally, "waiting" is about time, and the long speech invoking Night and Romeo, works as a temporal shift from the hot afternoon of the killings, to the evening, which is simultaneously a shift in atmosphere. The condensed movement the speech enables begins the turbulence of despair and hope, of tragedy and comedy that structures the rest of the play. Yet while this is happening the audience knows something that Juliet does not, and our knowledge becomes the counterpoint to the soliloquy. In effect this also happens in her waiting soliloquies at 2.2.33-36 and 38-49 (we know Romeo is there listening to her) and 2.5.1-16 (we know Romeo has arranged to marry her), yet by her short soliloquy at the end of 3.5 (3.5.236-43), we no longer have the power of additional knowledge different from Juliet, but rather there is knowledge that only she and the audience share. Her next soliloquy is not a soliloquy of waiting but of dilation (4.3.14-58) and from that moment on, the audience is involved in, taken up into, a perspective on the action that becomes one with Juliet's dead but alive body.

When Romeo soliloquizes at the start of 5.1, in another action of waiting that extends time and changes the atmosphere, the audience is positioned much like Juliet: we know she is not dead but cannot tell him so. Besides, that soliloquy provides him with the clue to her still beautiful body in 5.3, in which the dead man in the dream can still think and is revived by kisses (5.1.7-8), so the audience's knowledge makes Romeo's waiting for good news from the Friar intensely pathetic. Yet several occurrences of waiting, while they are not about narrative or character, are about plotting and giving the audience new information. The opening of 2.4 has Mercutio and Benvolio waiting for Romeo. Their wordplay may give the impression of being "filler," but the characters do tell us a lot: that Tybalt has been to the Capulets' house and left a letter, presumably a challenge, that Romeo has not been home, and that Tybalt is a keen fighter. Since Romeo has not returned home, he does not know about Tybalt's letter, yet neither of his close friends mentions it in the following scene. And the reintroduction of the character of Tybalt can cast an ominous shadow over the Friar's immediately preceding agreement to help Romeo marry Juliet.

Subtly different, the beginning of 3.1 again has Mercutio and Benvolio waiting, approximately three hours later, during which time Romeo has got married. This time they are not waiting for Romeo but for a brawl or

a quarrel. As with 2.4, the audience is told what the characters are waiting for in the opening lines, which are then elaborated. But this time the elaboration is not into plot but into a dense texture of vocabulary to do with quarrelling that makes it clear that Mercutio is looking for a fight. There are several larger issues addressed by this focus: it deflects from a sense of "good" and "bad" characters, by making it clear that however sympathetic Mercutio is, he is also a trouble-maker ambiguates the following actions, but also diminishes sympathy for the two people who die, for both of them were looking for a fight. More important, the beginning of both 2.4 and 3.1 become choric in function. They capture the audience's ear with a verbal rhythm completely different from the preceding scene, one that floats in and out of iambic pentameter, and involves the audience in knowledge of and in preparation for action that places it outside Romeo's world, looking in.

Two Case Studies

These moments of overhearing and overseeing on stage are mediated not only by the chronological time implied by the text but also by set and design, among other elements. We offer here two case studies, drawn in detail from some recent productions of *Romeo and Juliet* on proscenium arch stages and from workshops conducted with the Winter Players of the Shakespeare's Globe, London on its thrust stage. Each of the case studies demonstrates an instance in the difficulty of reading the text, and follows production processes that tried to resolve that interpretive difficulty. The proscenium arch stage, with or without furniture on set, produces a picture frame that initially implies that every member of an audience sees the same thing. This kind of production can control what is seen more tightly than on a bare thrust stage where different audience perspectives are inevitable. Furthermore, despite the actors' more restricted movement on a proscenium arch stage, they can more easily command the whole house. Not only is it easier for the actors to make clear the narrative of the play, but the narrative becomes more clear because it is told partly by the set.

Case Study One: Act Three Scene Four

The first case study focuses on 3.4, during which Capulet Father and Capulet Mother are negotiating with Paris over his proposal of marriage to Juliet. In the time scheme of the play it is probable that this is going

on at precisely the same time as Romeo is visiting Juliet in her rooms, presumably to consummate their marriage. However, not many readers seem aware of the overlap in time, partly because of the complex time scheme of the text, but also because it is not foregrounded by the written text. Contemporary performances may handle the temporal and spatial issues by producing scenes that are "not in the text," but a more generative way of thinking about such scenography is that the added staging becomes part of the set: a visual interpretation that generates tensions between the written text and the unwritten contexts in which it is embedded. The Beier (1994) production worked with a sparse set with a few pieces of furniture directly tying 3.4 into 3.5, although 3.4 was prefaced by an adapted scene in which Paris showers Juliet with presents. The production reminded the audience of the overlap by placing a large bed centre back of stage, on which a naked Juliet and Romeo have consummated their marriage, while the negotiations are going on "downstairs" at centre front.

The comic potential is obvious, and the staging makes direct allusions to *commedia dell'arte* sources for the play. The original Italian script for *Love is a Drug*, which may have provided a source text for *Romeo and Juliet*, also shows the young woman with her lover while her father is negotiating over her marriage to someone else. The Oxford Playhouse production (1996) directed by Antonio Fava, presented just this staging to considerable comic effect, and it may be that an Elizabethan theatre-goer did not need to be reminded of the overlap because they were familiar with the *commedia* source. Yet while sustaining the comedy past the deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt, 3.4 also displays Capulet Father's desperation (3.4.12) and may give the actor material to use in 3.5, so there is an additional tension between the comedy and despair. The Beier production moved continuously into 3.5, leaving Juliet and Romeo on the bed for the start of this scene. Romeo simply leaves and manages to get out just before Capulet Mother enters. Since the bed is now centre stage there is no need for Juliet to "descend" as directed in Q2, or to "enter the main stage," for she is already there. This production added the stage business that just before the entrance of Capulet Father, Capulet Mother finds traces of either blood or semen on the bed-sheets, so that the following exchange with Juliet in 3.5 is conducted with the mother knowing that Juliet has lost her virginity, a detail that completely changes the dynamics of the dialogue.

A similar staging solution with quite different results was offered by Lichtenfels's production of 1998. The set ran a steel bridge across the back

of the stage at a height of 8 feet, with various smaller platforms descending by stairs to the main stage. 3.4 took place on the central platform of the scaffolding, with a bed on which a clothed Juliet and Romeo lay on the main stage. The inversion of space allowed Juliet's rooms to be main stage throughout, the spatial relations making the work for the actors of 3.4 rather different from the German production since the character-parts of Capulet Mother and Father, and Paris, would have to relate their negotiations to the audience through the personal space of Juliet and Romeo, not in front of it. 3.5 simply moved away from the scaffolding to centre stage with Romeo leaving through the audience and Capulet Mother entering down one stairway.

The temporal and spatial dynamics of these two similar settings pose quite different tasks for the actors, and at the same time as they both foreground the overlap in time through a visual setting. In the Beier production, Paris staged a spectacular entrance, a display of wealth and magnanimity with a touch of foolish overkill. The occupied bed was overshadowed by the colour and almost clownish confidence of the speaking actors, and the beginning of 3.5 was vulnerable in its intimacy. In the Lichtenfels production, the centrality of the bed balanced the personal with the public space more evenly, implying different kinds of power at work and indicating vulnerability in both places, allowing the "desperate tender" (12) embedded in Capulet Father's text to produce a focus for performance that recalled the audience to fear. Partly because the occupied bed was downstage centre immediately in front of the audience, the beginning of 3.5 was more established, allowing the actors an energy not quite so threatened by the public display of power in 3.4. The remainder of the scene in the Lichtenfels production developed in contradictory ways as the actors worked not from the vulnerability or magnanimity of the German production, but from more equitable positions of personal and familial power in their arguments and manipulations.

Case Study Two: Act Three Scene Five

If these two visual overlaps offered spatial solutions to temporal issues by way of the set, at times it is the stage space itself that causes the reading difficulty. Scene 3.5, which starts with Juliet and Romeo saying goodbye after spending the night together, poses a number of temporal and spatial issues which productions solve in various ways,⁷ sometimes by linking the scene to the preceding one as with the Beier and Lichtenfels stagings described immediately above. We workshopped this scene with the

Winter Players on the stage of Shakespeare's Globe, London, which may be similar to some of the early modern settings for *Romeo and Juliet*. The workshop looked at a number of questions about the staging of the scene, and raised an issue specific to this particular thrust stage and set:⁸ if Juliet and Romeo are "at the window" in the gallery above the main stage, the window presumably looking out over the orchard as in 2.2, Romeo has to "descend" from the window to leave through the orchard or main stage at the same time that Capulet Mother is entering the main stage as Juliet's chambers.⁹ Also, when Capulet Mother calls Juliet (3.5.64), Juliet then has 3 lines but must descend to the main stage immediately to talk to her mother.

In Q1 the Nurse enters to warn Juliet of her mother's approach, just as or just after Romeo leaves, at 59. Immediately afterwards Capulet Mother enters. But in Q2-3 the Nurse enters before their final farewell exchange (at 3.5.37), and with a stage direction that indicates she enters with "Madame," presumably Capulet Mother. Although there are good bibliographic reasons to suggest that the early entrance of Capulet Mother is an error, not the least the later stage direction for her "entrance" at 64, a production needs to think through the possibilities of her presence on stage. In a theatre such as the reconstructed Globe, the workshop found it entirely possible that the character enter "below" and occupy a space that the audience recognised as different from that of the "window" above. Indeed the character could occupy a space different from that of the Nurse, even though both were on the main stage at the same time. The problem is that if the actor playing Capulet Mother enters at line 37 and does not exit, they have to occupy the stage in such a way to make the opening line "Holla, are you up" (67) necessary, despite the long time the character is onstage beforehand. No productions that we have seen choose to play this action, but it does raise the possibility of a long session of overhearing—or indeed even if not overhearing, of ominous presence that might increase dramatic tension. In any event, for neither the Nurse nor Capulet Mother is an exit marked, yet the Nurse clearly leaves at some point in order to get Capulet Father, with whom she returns at 126. How long does she remain on stage? How much, if anything, does she overhear?

When Capulet Mother "re-enters," or enters for the first time as interpreted by most productions, at 64 according to the text, the area of the stage she is on becomes the central space for the rest of this long scene. The personal and intimate space by the "window," inhabited by Juliet and Romeo, is replaced by the larger domestic setting for the manipulative and

abusive actions that follow. During the late sixteenth century a daughter of the gentry would have been likely to have not just a bedroom but "chambers," with at least one other room adjoining hers. So it is possible that the audience of the period would understand that Juliet and Romeo are in the bedroom, while Capulet Mother is entering the adjoining room, thus solving one issue about space for an early modern audience. But a number of others remain, and historical context cannot necessarily resolve issues for a production today.

To return to the Nurse's interruption to warn Juliet and Romeo that Capulet Mother is coming (37): the actor may enter by appearing with them in the central gallery, by speaking to them from either of the side galleries, or from "below" the window. One rehearsal solution arrived at was to have the Nurse enter from a side door and call up. The action recalled the last time the audience had seen this spatial relation (2.2) and established the main stage as the "outdoors," the orchard through which Romeo would leave. It also changed the audience's concentration, shifting it from the gallery to the main stage, giving the extended farewell (41-59) a second wind or focus. The Nurse's entrance and exit main-stage also prepared the audience for Capulet Mother's entrance at that level, though the actor playing this latter part chose to enter at line 64 through the central door, to indicate that it was domestic space at centre stage rather than the "outdoors." When she is warning them, the spatial position the Nurse occupies with regard to Juliet and Romeo also has a significant effect on her potential overhearing. If the actor was present in the central or side galleries, the character took on an intimate or collusive relation to the young people; if the actor was at a main-stage side door, the overhearing became more sly, with potential for comedy; and if the actor occupied the central stage space, the Nurse became subtly aligned with the family and the parents, and was in a good position to begin to recognize the implications of what she had set in motion. Since the Nurse may well know by this point that the Capulets have arranged to marry Juliet to Paris, she may be horrified to hear Romeo refer to getting "one kiss" before he departs (42).

Between the Nurse's warning (37) and Romeo's exit on "Adieu, adieu" (59), the text indicates that Romeo descends the cord ladder, probably at line 42 since Juliet says "Art thou gone so" at 43. During the following 17 lines there are frequent references to not being able to see each other, of having failing eyesight, and of having to hear from one another instead. Whether or not the two actors can in fact see each other can infect the

exchange in radically different ways. If they cannot see each other, then the scene echoes the overhearing at the beginning of 2.2, and—in this play that continually questions Neo-Platonism—reminds the audience of the dangers of the separation between voice and vision, between the word and the eye. Juliet's vision of "pale" Romeo as "one dead in the bottom of a tomb" (56), and Romeo's reply that "Dry sorrow drinks our blood" (59), making both of them pale, can be the result of looking at each other in the dawn grey, or it can conjure up the clashing worlds of misconception and nebulous definition that inform the temporal and spatial overlaps, dilations and waitings of the text elsewhere. But central to the spatial demands of the Globe stage is the fact that Juliet "at the window" in the upper gallery will always be able to "see" the actor playing Romeo until he exits. What the workshop demonstrated was that the verbal text generates the sense that they are getting further and further apart, even if this is not the literal, naturalistic truth. The words allow the actors to play the farewell as if Romeo and Juliet are becoming ever dimmer in one another's eyes. The audience sees one thing, the literal and close presence of Romeo, while it hears the textual reality of farewell.

In practical terms, Q2 indicates that the actor playing Romeo exits Juliet's room and "descends" (Q2) using the cord ladder. If he does so from the central gallery, the workshop found that the space the actor inhabited tended to dominate centre stage and make it difficult to understand how Capulet Mother, no matter where that actor entered, could fail to see Romeo departing. But when the actor left from one of the side galleries, the set made it possible either to leave immediately by a side door, or to walk around the edge of the stage space, between the pillars and the audience to the other side door: both exits leaving centre stage as a space to be inhabited by the actor playing Capulet Mother. The latter choice, of walking around the edge of the stage, which could also be adapted by an actor leaving from the central gallery, made it possible for the actor to perform "travelling," so that by the time the exit is made through the other side door, the character is already "far away."

The text has a four line soliloquy from Juliet to allow Romeo to exit before Capulet Mother's "Ho daughter, are you up?" but Juliet then continues with a further three-line soliloquy. Capulet Mother's interruption of these seven lines can be played with the actor on stage, which raises the issue of the effect of her presence on either part of Juliet's soliloquy. It seems unlikely from the following text that she is listening to the words, and it is more likely that her presence introduces dramatic tension. But the

staging problem focuses on how the actor playing Juliet can deliver the final three lines and descend to the main stage area from the central gallery immediately afterward. The inner staircase at the Globe is steep and high. To get from gallery to main stage takes at least 10 seconds and the actor must descend during Capulet Mother's short second line (3.5.68). In the workshop, the most successful solution to the problem was for the actor playing Capulet Mother to enter during the final three lines of Juliet's speech. The actor pointed out that the long rather elaborate dresses that the part would have called for would also have slowed the mother's entrance, making Juliet's arrival more feasible; and her first line, "Ho daughter, are you up" (3.5.64), was spoken from behind the central door, giving the actor playing Juliet time to say the rest of her lines (65-7) at the central gallery, beginning to exit on her third line, and (with some speed) arrive following Capulet Mother just as she says "How now Juliet" (3.5.68).¹⁰

On the other hand, Juliet may take some time to arrive, which will provide the actor playing the part of Capulet Mother with the task of waiting. During the workshop this actor experimented variously with waiting impatiently, anxiously and with growing anger. However, the waiting distracted not only from Juliet's lines, but also from Romeo's departure. This is not to say that another actor or production would not be able to find a way of playing the "waiting," but in this workshop the solution was to stage the scene by answering the temporal and spatial demands in a different way.

Discussion

These workshop production details aside, the key to understanding a stage like the Globe is that the space follows the actors' performance. The actor's interaction with the set constructs the place they are in temporally and spatially and this has an effect on the perception of entrance and exit, and the potential for overhearing and overseeing. Naturalistic sets superficially work against this construction in much the same way that focusing on private experience can reduce the actors' playing of character to uninteresting essentialist representation.¹¹ However, there is no necessary link between naturalistic sets and essentialist representation, rather a different kind of temporal and spatial relation.

The two types of stage have a specific impact on space and place. If actors walking on a thrust stage define the space they are in, when actors walk from the back to the front of a proscenium arch stage, space is un-

folded. Just so, actors walking from the front to the back collapses space. Because of the unified viewpoint of the audience, a proscenium space re-acts in a different manner: for example, actors moving from the back to the front of the stage take on assertiveness, whereas if they move sideways across the stage it appears funny. Someone up against the back wall of a proscenium arch stage looks quite small; there is a loss of clarity of the individual that encourages other dynamics to take over. Yet at stage front of such a space, actors appear large and dominating as well as exceptionally human because the detail of their body and clothing is closer to the audience.

The stage-audience dynamic is particularly affected if there is furniture on the proscenium arch stage, because its physicality automatically breaks up the space so that the audience is guided to watch from different angles. This is simultaneously controlling and releasing, for each angle identifies a point of potential dislocation. On this kind of stage watching or waiting, overhearing and overseeing, can be portrayed as such, whereas on a thrust stage such as the Globe, an audience tends to forget about the process of watching until attention is called to it. If a proscenium arch stage can use asymmetry to generate interaction with the audience, a stage such as the Globe has to construct a balance in the use of the stage because of the audience being on three sides. Take for example the ending of the final scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, which occurs around the tomb, and which we work-shopped on another occasion at the London Globe. A renaissance stage may have had a trapdoor around which to play the tomb (*Des-sen, Recovering*). Or, as listed in *The Documents of the Rose Playhouse*, they may have used a "hellmouth" as prop, which could have resonated with Romeo's invocation (5.3.45-47) and been used for the entrance to a trapdoor.¹² But the text clearly also asks for Romeo to open the tomb with a crowbar, which suggests that the actor work with the idea of opening something covered with a stone. A naturalistic stone is of course not needed, but the actor will need to work on opening something, be it doors or trapdoor or nothing at all.

The Globe Theatre's Winter Players Company experimented with different locations for the tomb, and found that centre stage back, in front of the central doors produced a challenging dynamic. This staging established an intimate space despite the fact that the assembled company is between that space and the audience. The actors were ranged facing the centre stage backdoors, roughly fanning out into a "u" shape between the doors and the audience. A contradictory response to the actors both pro-

tecting the tomb and forming an obstruction between it and the audience, left audience viewers with a sense of poignancy rather than empathy. At the same time, this staging made possible the inclusion of the audience in the social space because whenever an actor spoke, and this part of the play is filled with re-narrations of the story, all the other actors would turn toward them and hence include the audience beyond/behind. This was heightened by the fact that there was no lighting differentiation between stage and audience, so the movement toward a narrating actor included those standing in the pit. The spatial work the actors rehearsed resulted in a performance that encouraged the audience to understand that its own response to the story was included in the protective/obstructive contradiction played out by the spatial dynamic.

In all case studies here the actors and the productions are dealing with radically different sets and designs. Yet they are all negotiating with those immediate spatial contexts and with the temporal relations indicated by the text. In each case, the subtlety of temporal interrelations with the staging asks for quite specific decisions to be made about what becomes available for the actors to work on in their character-parts. At the same time, the audience is included into these temporal and spatial interrelations in its own right, so that textual potential extends beyond the edge of the stage. The interaction that results generates quite different thematic possibilities for the double worlds with which the text invites reader, actor and audience to engage.

Notes

¹We use "character-part" as a technical term that has been developed over the past ten years in various articles, and indicates the learned skills used by actors when taking on and inhabiting textually conveyed characters. For a discussion of "character-part" in relation to *Romeo and Juliet*, see L. Hunter and Peter Lichtenfels.

²For practical rehearsal exercises relevant to this section, see especially chapter nine "Dialogue and Resistance" in Berry.

³For additional commentary see Sryan, 103-11.

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⁶See Twycross and Carpenter.

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⁸Globe 2001. We were able to carry out this work with the Winter Players in January 2001 organised by Mary McNulty; see also note 10 below.

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⁹K. Irace implies that the actor playing Romeo does not have the time to leave before Capulet Mother arrives, (Irace 87).

¹⁰The actor playing Capulet Mother pointed out that the long rather elaborate dresses that the part would have called for would also have slowed the entrance, making Juliet's arrival more feasible.

¹¹See A. Dessen, "Q1 *Romeo and Juliet* and Elizabethan Theatrical Vocabulary," 107-22, for comments on naturalistic expectations of players with "1990s assumptions."

¹²See Meredith for details of how the "hellmouth" might function on stage.

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That Old S Early Modern Acting and the Infinite Regr

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Speak the speech, I pray you," Hamlet tells the player, "trippingly the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I as lief the town cryer spoke my lines" (3.2.1-2).¹ Turning from elocution to execution, Hamlet continues, "Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus" (1.4). Most editors girdle "thus" in commas, a typographical hiccup indicating that, here, an action suits the word. For 400 years this moment of textual apnea has guaranteed the play's modernity by turning towards an archaic playing style:

BURBAGE: "thus"
 BETTERTON: "thus"
 GARRICK: "thus"
 KEMBLE: "thus"
 KEAN: "thus"
 BOOTH: "thus"
 BERNHARDT: "thus"
 BARRYMORE: "thus"

Gielgud, Olivier, Kline, Fiennes: "thus, thus, thus, thus," *ad Branagh, infinium*. If it is true, as Tyrone Guthrie claimed, that "*Hamlet* is always going on somewhere," then in accent variable and gesture indeterminate somewhere a player is always offering a kinetic description of what constitutes precisely too much air sawing (72).

Richard Burbage's unrecoverable semaphore at "thus" signifies the stubborn invisibility of the actors who gave William Shakespeare's words flesh. Act 3, scene 2 of *Hamlet*—a scene sufficiently memorable to earn its own shorthand, "The Advice to the Players"—has been many things

