

## SHAKESPEAREAN HORIZONS

### Abstracts

Devin Byker

Boston University

#### **“*Pericles on the Shores of Mortality*”**

After *Pericles*' Thaisa is pronounced dead, and then quickly revived on the shores of Ephesus, she implores upon awakening, “What world is this?” (3.2.121). My essay explores how, on the thin border of land and sea, *Pericles* examines the event of dying (the words and actions of those who die or come near to death) as a means of scrutinizing the conditions, boundaries, and horizons of worldly experience. Emerging from her coffin and her abortive death, Thaisa draws on the rubric of “world” in order to comprehend and to cohere the unrecognizable forms of life that she now finds herself amidst, and, in response to her unanswered inquiry, she must rediscover and rearticulate her relation to the world. These events unfold within a hostile oceanic environment that both separates and relates the shores of distinct cities and regions. I hope to show how the play's itinerant gravitation to the shoreline--rooting its characters on the meeting place of land and sea--both materializes the horizon of life and death and visualizes an inquiry into the conditions of worldhood.

Sarah Crover

University of British Columbia

#### **Dissolving Boundaries: the King, the Cockpit and the “Vasty Fields of France”**

In *Henry V*, when Bates tells Henry (unknowingly) on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt that, whatever courage the King may appear to show, he believes the King “could wish himself in the Thames up to the neck. And so I would he were, and I by him... so we were quit here”(4.1.109-12), he is vocalizing a fantasy of equality. His fantasy, where the king and himself are in exactly the same predicament, and have the same hopes and fears, suggests a dissolution of boundaries between the body of the king and the body of a regular man like himself. This fantasy of interchangeability between king and subject echoes a larger theme in the play: its preoccupation with the dissolution of all horizons and boundaries – between land and sea, France and England, and stage and battlefield. In this paper, I argue that Shakespeare employs persistently shifting borders and horizons in *Henry V* to advance, and then undercut, instances of transformation effected by nationalist dissolutions of horizons.

Alexandra Ferretti

Hudson Strode Program in Renaissance Studies, University of Alabama

#### **“I turn my back”: Coriolanus and the Rejection of Place**

In the phenomenological understanding of place, articulated by Yi-Fu Tuan, J.E. Malpas, Edward Casey, and Michel de Certeau, a person's experiences inscribe an undifferentiated area (space) to make it a place. The early modern English audience in the Globe Theatre was

composed of individuals who created place through their ferry journeys across the Thames or their walks across London Bridge to Southwark. This audience likely included people who had moved to London from elsewhere in England; these migrants also experienced places on their journeys to London for employment. During *Coriolanus*, they watched as Shakespeare's character similarly travels and experiences a multitude of places: Rome, Corioles, Antium, and Aufidius' house. Since he is a character frequently on the move, Coriolanus' identity is an aggregate of these places.

Many of Shakespeare's tragic characters have places subordinated to their names (Hamlet, Prince of Denmark), but Coriolanus is solely defined by place. Renamed for "what he did at Corioles," Coriolanus embraces a place-based name that defines him as conqueror of Corioles on behalf of Rome (1.9.61). Since he has few moments alone onstage, Coriolanus's relationship to places provide the audience with some of the only insights into his identity. When he "turn[s] [his] back" on Rome, his identity within the play becomes disjointed and displaced (3.3.133). *Coriolanus* demonstrates how place is more important than the individual; through his rejection of Rome, Coriolanus becomes disconnected from other people as well as other physical places. This rejection explains why Volumnia convinces Coriolanus not to destroy Rome; she identifies him with Corioles, a place defined by defeat. The consequences of rejecting place were not as dire for early modern audience members as they were for Coriolanus, but Shakespeare captures the necessity of respecting place in early modern London.

Jessie Gurd

University of Wisconsin-Madison

### **Oceans Mastered by Books and Captured in Buckets: *The Tempest* and the Size of the Sea**

In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare infuses the bounded Mediterranean with elements of other seas, creating a new marine world that is "some space" in breadth, as Sebastian says (2.1.258). The result is something between finite inland sea and all but infinite expanse. In Neil Gaiman's *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, we encounter a duck pond that is somehow actually an ocean, a more dramatic version of a sea surrounded by land and yet part of global waters. This ocean "stretches from forever to forever and is still small enough to fit inside a bucket" (144). Gaiman's duck pond ocean resembles *The Tempest's* sea in its contained infinity and inhuman power, but ultimately underscores the point at which the marine can feel and show human influence in Shakespeare's play. This moment reveals something of the degree to which the human impact on marine ecology was understood in the early seventeenth century.

Lloyd Kermode

California State University, Long Beach, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies

### **"Space-time in *Macbeth*"**

When Lady Macbeth tells her husband to "screw your courage to the sticking place," she has not (yet) worked out that time and place never "adhere"; masculine steadfastness is constantly undercut by currents of the degen(d)erate environment—winds and witches, singing martlets and cannibalistic horses—that convert the space of action such that "nothing is but what is not"

(1.3.155). Simultaneously witnessed yet incompatible experiences; locations that are and are not present; time that is past but has not come to fruition; spaces that convert in front of our eyes from one place to another: these are all phenomena that motivate Shakespeare's version of the Marlovian individual will to power, an impossibly "modern" masculine drive to separate an imagined autonomous self from the ravages of the world. The tragedies revel in an aporia: a recognition of the impossibility of sticking to a physical or psychological place rubs up against the conviction that such a personal, self-confirming location is necessary to maintain human sanity, faith, and even life itself. Shakespeare's scenes of conver(sation) attempt to limn a horizon over which lies the fantasy of promised stability—a sticking place for restless minds and bodies. The very short seminar paper can only begin to cover this material, so it concentrates on geographies of space and defers this abstract's implied discussions of gender, animal place, and conversion, as well as the central "time" speech ("Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow") of 5.5.

Stephen Mead  
St. Martin's University

### **'Real' and Imagined Cliffs, Solid and Permeable Stage Floors: The Globe As Its Own Prop**

*Hamlet* and *King Lear* construct metaphysical space through poetic and theatrical devices. Both tragedies invoke cliffs that signal the cosmologies of their worlds. Elsinore's cliff gives way to a deeper Purgatory; Edgar's fabrication of Dover Cliff flattens both *King Lear*'s world and the theatre experience at The Globe. As each cliff scene is followed by a pronounced use of the stage floor, the plays' "bottom" serves to complete the worldview begun by the description of the space-filled cliffs.

*Hamlet* suggests metaphysical possibilities of verticality and mobility, places beyond physical surroundings of the characters; *King Lear* baffles attempts move vertically or to confirm outside presences. *Lear* deliberately concludes in a vanishing point, an *illusion* of space. The physical structure of the Globe itself serves to represent both the transformational eternity of the open sky and the circularity of being stuck in a horizontal plane. How far these effects of stage and text extend to the audience's own metaphysical condition remains a lively question. Does the Wooden O offer vertical escape? Does the tiered audience space suggest endless, horizontal repetition? Either way, it seems clear that Shakespeare actively used his theatre space to engage and implicate both character and audience.

Ineke Murakami  
University at Albany, SUNY

### **The Dread Nought: Mapping the Anarchic Feminine between Ortelius and Spenser**

Days into his perilous sea quest, Sir Guyon, *The Faerie Queene*'s Knight of Temperance, disembarks on Acrasia's floating island and marches "fayrly forth, of nought ydred." The narrator's repeated denials of the dread of "nought," articulate a nexus of anxieties about gendered space newly exacerbated by overseas trafficking, and materialized as unknown regions in the ever more accurate, widely circulating maps of the late sixteenth century. This paper

focuses on a framing strategy that employs humanist temporality to subdue anarchic feminine space. The primary example is the triumphal arch from the frontispiece of Ortelius's first world atlas, *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1570), which hails a paradoxically middling, imperial European subject. In contrast, Spenser's narrative frame to the episode of the Bower of Bliss employs the arch strategy to complicate the Ortelian subject by discovering both "nought" and fortitude within.

Kate Myers  
University of Oregon

### **"Is not the truth the truth?": Transgressing Truth and Lie in *Henry IV, Part I***

What if Falstaff tells the truth? More precisely, what if Falstaff says something true by lying? These questions drive my analysis of Shakespeare's second *Henriad*. In this essay, I am interested in disrupting the critical tendency to trust Hal and suspect Falstaff in *Henry IV, Part I*. I intend to show that Falstaff transgresses the boundary between truth and lie in ways that suggest a different kind of honor, one that finds strength despite weakness. Falstaff may be a lying rogue or he may be something else altogether: "the strangest fellow" for whom Hal will vouch when he covers another of Falstaff's lies, offering to "guild it with the happiest terms I have" (5.5.153). This strangeness that Hal sees in Falstaff in their final scene of this play draws me to question the critical expectation that Falstaff's lies are only ever lies. This essay traces one of Falstaff's elaborate and "incomprehensible lies" that reveal a truth about Hal" (1.2.172-3, 174).

Jamie Paris  
University of British Columbia

### **Lear's Two Maps: On Cartography and Political Theology in Shakespeare's King Lear**

In "Lear's Two Maps: On Cartography and Political Theology in Shakespeare's King Lear," I re-chart the relationship between "new geography" or cartography in King Lear and political theology. While paying attention to the radical transformations, and potential secularization, of early modern cartography, I nevertheless argue that King Lear can be understood as a religious critique of James I's plan to bring together independent nations with differing political and religious systems.

Kay Stanton  
California State University, Fullerton

### **"A *Midsummer Night's Dream* and a Quantum Physics 'Event Horizon'**

Although Shakespeare uses the word *horizon* only once, in *3 Henry VI*—"when the morning sun shall raise his car / Above the border of this horizon" (IV. vii. 80-81), he so profoundly understands and utilizes the horizon concept that even the most scientifically advanced version of it, the "event horizon" of quantum physics, is consistent with his treatments, such as in his comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The young Athenian couples and laborer-actors enter what they believe to be a simple forest and never consciously recognize that they have interacted with another dimension, the fairy realm. By referencing theories from quantum physics, this

paper will argue that the play's fairy realm can be interpreted as a "parallel universe," accessed by passing through the surface of a black hole, which is called the "event horizon." Their return to Theseus' court shows that the play additionally includes a "white hole," which means that they have traversed through a *wormhole* (a word used twice by Shakespeare), with the wormhole symbolically represented by the chink in Pyramus and Thisbe's Wall and as Bottom's bottomless dream.

Bronwen Wilson

Sainsbury Institute for Art, University of East Anglia

### **"Marco Boschini's Island Navigations"**

Marco Boschini's maritime metaphors are familiar from his *Carta del navegar pitoresco* (1660), a dialogue in which Venetian painters are assigned roles building parts of a ship, and in which artworks are navigated by gondola. This paper turns to pictorial navigation in his engravings of islands. *L'arcipelago con tutte le isole* (1658), one of numerous *isolarii* published in Venice, exemplifies what was by then a familiar genre of map and text wrought at the intersections of geography and chorography. Each island is presented as a separate entity. *Il regno tutto di Candia* (1651), by contrast, inverts the genre, breaking apart the island of Crete and opening up its landscape to distant vistas. Close-up bird's-eye views of terrain compete with horizon lines for the viewer's eye in the same prints. This dynamic of sea and land challenges orientation, prompting consideration of technologies for depicting coastlines and of how time could be rendered in visual forms.

Myra Wright

Queens College, City University of New York

### **"we'll to the river": Angling at *Antony and Cleopatra's* Riparian Zones**

This essay explores the riverbanks of *Antony and Cleopatra*, paying special attention to the representation of angling in the play. If the lovers at the centre of the action are anglers, their sport is just one of many things that make the riverbank an important geographical and rhetorical topos for Shakespeare. Although angling is only explicitly mentioned twice in the dialogue of the play, the increasing popularity of freshwater fishing (and of writing about it) would have allowed early modern audiences to hear the familiar vocabulary of angling that runs through the action, and to contemplate the physical and political features of riparian zones closer to home. By reading the play's sportfishing imagery closely and relating it to popular angling literature, we can begin to see this sport more clearly—not only as an especially common metaphor, but also as a source of meaning in itself and a recognizable feature of the early modern riverbank.