

**Kate Adkinson, “Voice, Virtue, Veritas: On Truth and Vocal Feeling in *King Lear*”**

My paper takes the closing lines of *King Lear* as the occasion for its central question: if Edgar’s final ethical appeal is that his audience “[s]peak what we feel, not what we ought to say” (5.3.331), then what, truly, does it feel like to speak? Tracing the threads of this question backwards through *Lear*, I argue that the play is interested not merely in what it feels like to speak emotionally or affectively, and not merely in what it feels like to *hear* or be spoken *to* (as Bruce Smith has incisively explored), but also in what the voice feels like to a speaker as she speaks. Indeed, the play imagines the material voice as a capacity more akin to the five senses, a way of knowing the world into which one is thrown. I contend that the play presents this orientation toward the voice as a kind of ethic or virtue, and one particularly needed in moments when the possibility of speaking truth is politically limited. Drawing on Hannah Arendt’s theory of self-disclosure and Adriana Cavarero’s philosophy of vocal uniqueness, I examine how speaking about the feeling of one’s speech in such moments becomes a method for diagnosing the foreclosure of truth. An attunement to what the voice feels like, thus, becomes a kind of virtue for engaging with the world and with others differently, in ways that might enable further action toward “the good.”

**Sarah Beckwith, “The Fortunes of Faith, Hope, and Love”**

Thomas Aquinas’s extraordinary inheritance of Aristotle’s conception of virtue as habituation and ordered love in the *Secunda Secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae* transforms medieval Christian conceptions of sin as well as modern conceptions of morality. Thomas understood the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love as integral, to be practiced and understood only together, and sequential, for there could be no hope or love without faith, nor love without the perseverance of hope. Luther breaks decisively with the integrity of the theological virtues. *Sola fide* signals the rupture of this unity of the theological virtues, and an assault on the subtle idea of agency at work in the virtue tradition and offers us a rupture between practices now deemed “external” and the inner transformation of the free Christian.

Shakespeare was thus writing in a time when the radical repudiation of the concept of agency in the virtue tradition was well underway. How did this affect his conception of character and agency, his understanding of the relationship between grace and habit? I will argue that one of the most fundamental legacies of the virtue tradition is that it highlights the impoverishment of artificial separations of the individual and society. This entry explores the way in which faith, hope, and love, the theological virtues turn out to be central to Shakespearean recognition for seeing the world as it is. How does the conception of love as a virtue (rather than an emotion) affect our understanding of Shakespearean love? How does love’s relation to the other theological virtues change our understanding of love’s transformative agency? The entry will

treat the last plays in the comic tradition, *Measure for Measure*, as experiment in Calvinist polity, before exploring tragic and post-tragic contexts for the integrity and unity of these virtues and their etiolation.

### **Katie Blankenau, “Virtue and hospitality in early modern dedicatory epistles”**

Nowhere in the discourse of early modern England is the concept of virtue introduced with such frequency and with such doubtful sincerity as it is in book dedications. The rhetoric of these paratexts is replete with the praise of patrons’ or would-be-patrons’ virtues; “honorable” and worshipful” dedicatees are more often than not “vertuous” as well, particularly if said dedicatee is female. Dedications, and the panegyrics they contain, tend to be read as examples of careful authorial self-fashioning, which indeed they are. However, I would like instead to explore whether we can learn anything about virtue from these rhetorically elaborate but often repetitive and generic texts.

For the most part, patrons’ virtue is presented as already accomplished; patrons are putatively exemplars for the rest of us to imitate rather than active agents themselves striving to cultivate virtuous habits. Yet dedications do regularly ask patrons to perform one action, the fundamental transaction of patronage: “sheltering,” “receiving,” or “accepting” the text. Patrons are thus asked to provide the conditions for the text’s flourishing. While calls to shelter, receive, or accept a book are often perfunctory and vague, some dedications assert the virtues of their dedicatees by describing their authors’ hospitable reception. This is particularly the case where female patrons are concerned. In this paper, I will examine texts from a variety of genres – including Gervase Markham’s *The English house-wife* and John Florio’s translation of Montaigne – which are dedicated to patronesses whose virtue is linked to their hospitality. I explore how these dedications imagine the virtuous reception of an author or a book, in order to ask what we might learn about our own engagement with texts. What might virtuous reception entail for readers today?

### **Claire Eager, “Garden-Variety Virtue: Ethics and Environment in Shakespearean Horticulture”**

In Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser defines virtue as a type of plant, carefully cultivated by supernatural beings in a mythical landscape:

Ye sacred imps, that on *Parnasso* well,  
Reuele to me the sacred nursery  
Of vertue, which with you doth there remaine, Where it in siluer bowre does  
hidden ly From view of men, and wicked worlds disdaine. Since it at first  
was by the Gods with paine Planted in earth, being deriu’d at furst From

heavenly seedes of bounty soueraine, And by them long with carefull labour  
nurst, Till it to ripenesse grew, and forth to honour burst. (*FQ* VI.P.2.2, 3)

The “sacred nursery / Of vertue” is here conceived as a seminary or seed-bed, a “siluer bowre” or heavenly garden “Planted” on the mountain of Parnassus by the classical gods. There virtue grows, the grammar of the metaphor allowing it to be envisioned both in the singular as an abstract quality and in collective as a crop. (The following stanza focuses in some botanical detail on the “flower” of courtesy, the personal virtue the book proposes to explore.)

My paper will examine this sort of horticultural virtue as it appears in Shakespeare. As indicated in the seminar description, situating “vertue” in a garden partly evokes the amoral virtue of herbal efficacy. Yet as John Gerard and other contemporary English gardeners announce, botanical knowledge and labor were commonly associated with moral virtue as well. Spenser’s Parnassus nursery suggests an analogue of the Christian Eden, symbol of both humanity’s call to virtuous behavior and its failure to meet that calling. Shakespeare’s garden scenes and metaphors almost always feature similar ethical or typological resonances. I will explore a few examples where “virtue” is most at issue (e.g. *Henry V*, *Othello*, selected sonnets), approaching them by way of both Gerard’s assertion of the “harmlesse treasure of herbes, trees and plants, as the earth frankly without violence offereth vnto our most necessarie vses” (B5v) and recent conceptions of ecological virtue ethics.

### **Mike Gadaletto, “Tender Air and Virtuous Daughters: Chastity, Insularity, and the British Transnation in *Cymbeline*”**

This paper examines the intersections between female “virtue” (i.e., chastity) and national virtue (i.e., force, identity, character) in the highly transnational world of *Cymbeline*. In this late play, Shakespeare stages two very different but interrelated foreign attempts to corrupt British virtue. The first is the Italian Giacomo’s bedroom plot to seduce and then descriptively rape/disgrace Innogen, Cymbeline’s heir—“The piece of tender air thy virtuous daughter” (5.6.446). The second is the Roman Empire’s renewed efforts to invade and conquer Britain, Cymbeline’s realm. While the first effort fails, the second results in the strikingly unpatriotic conclusion of Cymbeline submitting to the Roman yoke. In this self-consciously “British” play, is such a transnational union meant to be a happy ending or an ironic one? At the heart of *Cymbeline* thus lies a tension between the supposed power of purity and the power of hybridity, a tension this paper will explore both in terms of *Cymbeline*’s sexual politics and its representation of nationhood. The word “virtue” and its derivatives occur several times, most often in relation to Innogen’s virginity and wifely fidelity—that central figure fueling the plot that must at all costs be preserved from outside corruption. Yet the word also arises in relation to national character and strength, which is something that *Cymbeline*, in contrast to many of Shakespeare’s earlier plays, seems to represent in positively hybridic and transnational terms. When this play conjures up the patriotic island-nation discourse so familiar from *Richard II*, after all—“Remember, sir, my liege... / The natural bravery of your isle, which stands / As Neptune’s park, ribbed and

paled in / With banks unscalable and roaring waters” (3.1.16–20)—it is telling that the character who does so is not the prophetically wise John of Gaunt but the evil, traitorous Queen. Perhaps in *Cymbeline*, this paper will argue, the “virtue” of the British nation lies less in its supposed insular purity than in the very transnational connections that at first seemed the greatest threat.

### **Laura Hatch, “Courageous Trust in *The Winter’s Tale*”**

Trust isn’t listed in the cardinal virtues (prudence, courage, temperance, justice). Nor is it one of the theological virtues (faith, hope, charity). But trust, as a kind of affirmative virtue, takes part in many of these qualities and quietly shapes the experience of human relationships. Closely related to courage, patience, and hope, trust is an “in-spite-of” word, typically in the face of trauma, absence, and loss. In *Twelfth Night*, Viola describes herself/imaginary sister as sitting like “patience on a monument.” As Julia Lupton has argued, this poesis of art becomes a gesture of comportment. Patience is a form of courage, having hope even when it is difficult to trust in human action, fate, or contingency. In *The Winter’s Tale* the imagery of statues, waiting and patient, reappears, this time with literal art serving to resolve what I will show is a crisis of trust. In this paper, I will define trust as a virtue, and will show how Shakespeare acknowledges the fragile relationship between trust, distrust, and risk in *The Winter’s Tale*. I will bring theories of trust development and betrayal to bear on Leontes’ behavior, pre- and post-Hermione’s faint, and will particularly focus on Hermione’s “preservation” of herself for sixteen years as an act of courage.

### **Jesse Lander, “Shakespearean Constancy”**

I plan to explore the Stoic theme of constancy as adumbrated in Shakespeare’s *All’s Well* and *Cymbeline*. My approach will involve both a consideration of the modern turn toward virtue ethics and a very compressed intellectual history of the English reception of Justus Lipsius’s *De constantia*. I am especially interested in attending to the complications presented by religion both in the early modern attempt to formulate a Neostoic philosophy that could be reconciled with orthodox Christian ideas of redemption and revelation and also in the modern attempt to define virtue ethics as an alternative to both deontology and consequentialism. After a brief introduction to these issues, I will turn to an examination of John Stradling’s English translation, *Two Bookes of Constancie* (1594), and its definition of constancy as “a right and immovable strength of the mind, neither lifted up nor pressed down with external or casual accidents” (9). Stradling’s translation adds: “By strength, I understand a steadfastness not from opinion, but from judgment and sound reason. For I would in any case exclude obstinacy (or as I may more fitly term it, frowardness) which is a certain hardness of a stubborn mind, proceeding from pride or vainglory” (9). In a familiar dynamic frequently found in accounts of virtue, specific virtues are invariably found to be adjacent to particular vices from which they must be carefully distinguished. Throughout the treatise, constancy is presented as a privileged instance and often appears as simply synonymous with virtue itself. In the final section of my paper, rather than take up the Roman plays, I will instead consider constancy in *All’s Well That Ends Well* and

*Cymbeline*. The constancy exhibited by Helena and Imogen is not, I will suggest, an abject (and gendered) fidelity to an errant spouse, but a display of “judgment and sound reason” that allows both women to ultimately triumph over the pride and frowardness exhibited by Bertram and Posthumous.

### **Kent Lehnhof, “Sweet Fooling: The Virtue of Humor in *Lear* and Levinas”**

Discussions of virtue in *King Lear* often focus on the characters of Cordelia (who is said to embody the Christian virtues of love and forgiveness), Kent (who is said to exemplify classical virtues like loyalty, service, and stoicism), and Edgar (who is said to represent the virtues of the imagination and the theater itself). In this paper, I wish to take this discussion of virtue in a different direction by concentrating on the character of the Fool. By focusing on the Fool's role in Shakespeare's grand tragedy--and by using the ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas to reflect on this role--I aim to explore the virtues of humor and laughter.

Such an approach might seem odd at first, for few people would associate the tragedy of *King Lear* or the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas with anything funny. To the contrary, these works feel somber, weighty, and serious. In the past couple of years, however, a number of scholars have attempted to find a place for humor in Levinas's ethics and applying their work to *Lear* can be quite illuminating. In particular, this work can help us see the Fool and his humor as highly virtuous, prompting and provoking the King to laugh--both at himself (in a self-critical act of abdication) and with others (in a generative opening toward interrelation). The King may or may not accept these invitations, but the Fool relentlessly pushes the play in ethical directions by using humor to place himself before the other in a posture of vulnerability and exposure that Levinas sees as the foundation for all ethics. In this way, the Fool powerfully enacts and expresses the virtues of humor, laughter, and theatrical fooling.

### **Laura Levine, “By ‘Virtue; of Death”**

Savador Dali's prints of *Romeo and Juliet* pose a set of questions about the lover's wedding and ultimately about the relation of their wedding to their deaths. In the image depicting II vi, of the play where Friar Lawrence offers to make “short work “ of making “two in one” by the orders of holy church., Dali presents Romeo as faceless, crouched at Juliet's side on the ground as the Friar gestures out towards what appears to be a wilderness invisible to the viewer. The ‘scene’ takes place outside, not inside Friar Lawrence's cell and the Friar's gesture suggests more of an expulsion than a marriage. What logic lies behind such a depiction? My paper “By “Virtue” of Death” will look at both visual sources and passages within Shakespeare's play to try to answer this question. It seeks to explore the “virtue” of death both in the sense of virtue as “through the force of” and in the sense of “a commendable quality or trait”

## Naomi Liebler, “Much If in Virtue”

A quick skip through Spevack’s *Concordance* reveals a range of uses in Shakespeare’s plays for the word “virtue” that extends rather than restricts its applications, but in every case, embracing the term “virtue” suggests a social, communal, or physiological positive charge, a capacity for both individual and collective “good.” Notable exceptions opens announce a counter-intention (in the Aristotelian sense of capability or leaning: *De Anima*), as in Iago’s “Virtue? A fig!” (1.3.319. If the *Concordance* is a good guide, *Hamlet* offers the greatest number of instances (13), with *Othello* running a close second at 10, and both of these together seem to cover a wide range of possibilities for the word’s coverage. But it falls to *As You Like It* to examine, in deceptively simple terms, an open-ended set of possibilities for a creative examination of the word’s manifold implications. Touchstone’s sidebar about avoiding a quarrel (or a war, or a crisis), “Much virtue in ‘If’ (*AYLI* 5.4.103), suggests that there may be, likewise, much “If” in virtue. Played out, Virtue is open to debate, to alternative beliefs and behavioral codes, actions that can allow human beings to live in the world without reciprocal and thus total annihilation. In my paper I want to explore the possibilities that Shakespeare presents for the idea of virtue in acts of reciprocity, which seems in so many of the plays to be the springboard to either tragic erasure or comic resolution, and a turn from virtue in theory to morality in practice, and to focus on those characters who seem most often to represent such possibilities: “good old men” (as they are named) such as Adam (*AYLI*), Gonzalo (*Tmp*), Kent (*KL*). For my purposes, it is no accident that these figures are *old* men, whose portrayal acknowledges a long record of experience, error, and survival.

## Maria McNair, “Character or Consequences”

Our seminar guidelines refer to two kinds of virtue: virtue as *arête*, excellence, a being’s capacity to achieve its end, and virtue as a moral code of behavior, generally characterized by regard for others and adherence to moral principles (roughly, virtue as effectiveness and virtue as goodness). What is the relationship between these kinds of virtue? Aristotle and Aquinas see a symbiosis between them, insofar as intellectual virtue requires moral virtue and vice versa. Machiavelli sees an opposition: effectiveness often requires sacrificing goodness. I ask what Shakespeare takes to be the relationship between these ideas of virtue and what we can learn from his take.

To address this question, I examine characters who could be seen as effective but not good (Octavius, Henry V), good but ineffective (Brutus, Cordelia), and neither good nor effective (Saturninus). Shakespeare, on some readings, invites suspicion of the first group and sympathy for the second. Sympathy suggests that, if effectiveness requires sacrificing moral principles, it is better to maintain goodness and sacrifice effectiveness. But this attitude neglects the possibility, suggested by Bernard Williams, that sometimes what goodness requires is that we be effective.

This possibility is raised by the sweeping, tumultuous political landscapes found in Shakespeare’s histories and tragedies and in the neo-Shakespearean epic *Game of Thrones*. But it

is also raised by Shakespeare's contemporaries in their comedies. Their protagonists derive what morality they have from their effectiveness. They use their intellectual virtues of wit and resource to successfully help others (and often, admittedly, themselves). But Shakespearean figures who follow this pattern—Petruccio, Helena, Duke Vincentio, Portia—are represented, or read, as some of Shakespeare's most troubling characters. Should we prioritize integrity and suspect success in this way? What kind of moral virtue might effectiveness confer or enable, and if you are ineffective, what kind of moral virtue might you lose?

### **Thomas Moretti, “How goes the world, sir, now?": Virtue Ethics and Temporality in *Macbeth*”**

In this paper, I consider Macbeth's obsession over time in terms of virtue-ethics. I argue that Macbeth's determination to act as a “master of his time” (3.1.40), and his expectation that others do the same, is itself the result of his virtue-ethics—a (re)making of one's character to accommodate and to nourish particular traits suitable for a pivotal situation. Macbeth thinks he faces the coming of the End. Macbeth's virtue-ethics therefore has as its goal to master all forms of time, even to outpace (rather than simply prepare for) the eschaton. Macbeth engages in the process of his virtue-ethics through interpretive acts. His interpretive acts not only spur Macbeth in his slipshod efforts to master time—chronologically, phenomenologically, and eschatologically. They also push and pull Macbeth between two poles of belief: fate, providence, and Christian eschatology on one side, materialism, nihilism, and individualism on the other. His tragedy therefore represents a fundamental, yet ultimately unachievable ambition of any virtue-ethics: first, to oversee the conditions that define one's phenomenological status as an interpreting being in an interpretable and terminable world; and second, to act virtuously upon whatever is observed, despite any limitations.

### **Robert Pierce, “Is Virtue Stupid?”**

Plato's Socrates argues that ethics is a matter of right thinking, whereas Charles Kingsley says, “Be good, sweet maid, and let who can be clever.” If behaving virtuously is conditioned on thinking rationally and well, then it would seem that being virtuous ought to be a major support for making good judgments, including one's judgments of other people. On the other hand, the idea of innocence is often seen as suggesting that good people are not very bright in judging the rest of us: the Angel in the House is no match for the Machiavel. A number of Shakespeare's plays show people misjudging other people, and one of the subtlest and most powerful of those plays is *Othello*. Of course other elements like age, experience, similarity of background, time spent together, and luck play a role in how reliable people's judgments of one another are, but looking carefully at how they judge one another and where they go wrong may help us to choose between Plato's approach and that of John Henry Newman's opponent, the author of *Water Babies*. We usually divide virtues into the intellectual and the moral, and pretty obviously having the former would increase the likelihood of making a rational judgment that is more probably true, so the real issue is whether moral virtue contributes to judging people well. Does it seem

that the virtuous characters in *Othello* are more or less likely to misjudge others, and how does their virtue shape their judgments?

### **Carolyn Sale, “Cordelia’s Fire”**

The single most important kind of virtue we require in the face of anthropogenic ecological crisis is that which orients us to non-exploitative relationships not just between humans, but between humans and other sentient beings. We need not the *poiesis* of Aristotle’s *Politics*, which allows for the exploitation of some by others, but, as Donna Haraway has argued, *sympoiesis*, or joint forms of making that support the flourishing of life. This in turn “may require us,” as Amitav Ghosh suggests, “to abandon some of our most treasured ideas about political virtue.” “What we need,” he writes, “is to find our way out of the individualizing imaginary in which we are trapped” (135). *Autopoiesis*, as Haraway argues, simply will not do. Reading Shakespeare through this lens — that is, for how the Shakespearean drama may contribute to the shaping of a kind of virtue that meets the demands of climate emergency — I am struck by how regularly the plays appeal to us to think in the kind of terms that much contemporary theory around ecological crisis promotes, especially kin-making not limited to kinship between humans. The Shakespearean drama is *elemental*: it triangulates relationships between humans with other forms of matter, and with what Cordelia refers to as the “unpublish’d virtues of the earth.” Attending to the elemental character of *Lear*, my paper will argue for the politics of virtue that Cordelia may offer us, in a play in which Lear imagines himself “bound | Upon a wheel of fire,” in her own talk of that element. The paper’s broader aim is to think of the theatre’s virtue in terms of the fire in which it trades.

### **Emily Shortslef, “The Virtue in Complaining”**

This paper explores Shakespearean stagings of an action that might initially seem to have little to do with virtue, one more likely, in fact, to be considered a vice: complaining. (An action characteristic, Plutarch tells us, of women, children, and “barbarians,” and unbecoming of “great men.”) Against a background of ancient, early modern, and contemporary commonplaces about the impotence and counter-productiveness of complaining and the deficiencies of character ostensibly evident in the complainer, I want to use Shakespeare to consider the extent to which there can be virtue in complaining. I will take a few selected scenes of Shakespearean complaint (likely from *Measure for Measure*, *Richard III*, and *King Lear*) as vignettes that provoke thought about the power of complaining to achieve its end; the particular virtues exercised in complaining (courage, prudence, hope); complaining as a pursuit of happiness and the good life; and the affordances of complaint as a form of speech that creates the conditions for action. I will argue that for Shakespeare the virtue in complaining lies in the complainer’s capacity to *make a scene*.

### **Richard Strier, “Freedom as Virtue in Shakespeare”**

Shakespeare often uses the term in a way that is different from how we use it. He can use it in our sense -- where it is a condition within a polity, having to do with political rights, etc. -- but Shakespeare sometimes, and at key moments, uses the term in a different and more distinctive way, where the word truly is the name of a virtue. In *Twelfth Night*, Olivia gives Malvolio a lesson in what it means to be of a "free disposition," and this is what I want to try to explicate. What does the term mean when used in this way? Why does Shakespeare consider it a virtue, and what are the full implications in this? Why is this particular virtue so important in that play? I will then turn to the use of the term in the tragedies, especially in *Othello*. I will examine the way the term functions in that play, and ask how the term functions differently in comedies and tragedies. I will try to show that while the term supports comic resolutions it also, paradoxically, leads very directly to tragic ones. This term, properly understood, leads to the heart of Shakespeare's ethics.

### **Matthew Thiele, “‘Some by virtue fall’: Sin and Virtue in Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*”**

This essay examines the internal working definitions of virtue that are established in *Measure for Measure* and the role that sin, in a secular context, has in complicating and critiquing those definitions. Although they flirt with various notions of virtue, Shakespeare's characters, and not just the obvious villains, often flout standards of virtue for the sake of desire, expediency, and individual autonomy. *Measure for Measure* offers some extraordinary commentary on the relationship between sin and virtue, and most of the characters in the play struggle to articulate and uphold a standard of virtue. For example, the character Escalus comments on Angelo's determination to execute Claudio by saying, "Well, heaven forgive him, and forgive us all! / Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall" (2.1.37-8). Escalus postulates sin as the opposite of virtue, and he suggests that the world is somehow out of order. He seems to regret that people do not consistently rise by virtue and fall by sin. In Escalus's worldview, rising by sin is a sad paradox generated by living by a definition of virtue that is not shared by all, and, in fact, can be exploited by malicious people. Although Angelo's progress through the play initially confirms the truth of Escalus's maxim, the conclusion of the play asserts a more orthodox outcome for Angelo's sins. On the other hand, Duke Vincentio and Isabella both escape didactic reckonings for their various sins and crimes; they both exercise a specific kind of prerogative based on who they are that licenses their sins and exempts them from falling because of them.

### **Kristina Sutherland, “Masculine *Virtù* and Feminine Virtue in *Much Ado About Nothing*”**

While the crux of *Much Ado About Nothing* revolves around misreporting and misunderstanding one’s own observations, the issue of honor is at the heart of the problem. The play’s mixture of victory celebrations and ruined nuptials make it a particularly apt work for exploring the contrast between two Renaissance codes of conduct: feminine virtue based on chastity and masculine *virtù*, an Italian term which combines physical and mental aspects of capability. The military success of Don Pedro and his companions establishes their *virtù* before they even enter Messina, and their reputation is further enhanced by Don Pedro’s sincere dealings with Claudio regarding the betrothal with Hero. For her part, this bride demonstrates the qualities associated with feminine virtue – the willingness to comply with her father’s wishes, a quiet demeanor, concern for her cousin Beatrice’s well-being. Yet while Don Pedro and Claudio keep, for the most part, their good public reputation following the public denouncement of Hero, hers is destroyed, even if one might argue that it is only temporarily so. The actions of the men does not seem to impact the way that they are perceived, while the mere accusation without proof of action is enough to undo Hero. This paper will examine the ways in which the relationship formed between Benedick and Beatrice challenge this double standard of *virtù* and virtue. Her strength, wit, and sense of honor “engage” him, not only binding him to her in a betrothal but obliging him to cross swords with Claudio in order to literally combat the wrong done to Hero.

### **Paul Yachnin, “Kindness: Animal Virtue in *The Tempest*”**

“Kindness” is gentleness, consideration, care for others. It is related to “kinship”—the genetic and affective bonds among parents, children, brothers, and sisters. By way of “kind,” meaning “species” or “breed,” it expands the reach of the bonds of kinship to our connectedness to the whole of humankind. *The Tempest* is a key text for thinking about kindness. For one thing, Prospero turns from a killing rage to forgiveness of those who sought his and his daughter’s death, not primarily because he has thought things through, but rather because he, “one of their kind,” feels their afflictions as sharply as they do (5.1.20-24). Since “kind” is also what Montaigne calls (in Florio’s translation) “the general throng” (all the animals including the human animals), the expanding resonance of “kindness” in *The Tempest* is particularly important at this dire moment in the history of the planet. The word “kindness” incites us to think about how human virtues, which usually stand apart from the natural world, might be rooted in our kinship with all the other animals. “Kindness” is the virtue that bridges the ethical and the zoological in the most immediate way and that attends the necessary cultivation of a new “thronging” polity. Caliban, denominated “a savage and deformed slave” in the Folio text (likely by the scrivener Crane rather than by Shakespeare) and called by Miranda a member of a “vile race,” summons us to kinship even with those creatures we might have thought vicious, repellant

“things of darkness” (to quote Prospero). The interpretive and performance history of the play, and of Caliban especially, shows us how, of all the arts, theatre is best able to foster kindness, which here is the imaginative and also feeling and embodied acknowledgement of Caliban as our beastly brother.