

## Shakespeare and Voice Abstracts

Katie Adkison

"On Using the Voice: The Sense of Speech in *Lingua*"

In Thomas Tomkis's university comedy, *Lingua: Or, the Combat of the Tongue and the Five Senses for Superiority* (1607), the sense of speech is thrown into question. Or, put another way, speech throws the use of sense – the sense of sense itself – into question. This essay seeks to build on crucial scholarship by Carla Mazzio and Jennifer Richards about the play's relationship to the history of sensation by showing how the play's depiction of the voice's place within the sensorium also resembles a founding moment in political theory: the Aristotelian claim that mankind is a political animal because he removes "mere voice" from the political realm. But even as the play eventually excludes its title character, making her the tragi-comic butt of its cruel jokes, I want to insist that *Lingua*'s own advocacy for her inclusion in the sensorium, her appeal to "make the senses six," offers us a way of reimagining the voice's relationship to political community. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's theorization of "the uses of use," I argue that *Lingua* not only positions spoken language as a capacity that can be used like sensation, but that she offers us a way to reconceptualize use as a political and embodied concept. To use the voice in the imaginative, inventive manner that *Lingua* proposes is to expand the capacities not merely of spoken language, but of all embodied sensation, to feel with and through the voice itself. To use the voice in this way, finally, may offer us a path for rethinking the exceptional structures that often inflect political thought, a way of conceptualizing excess without excluding it from the community of political meaning.

Jennifer Black

"'It Was the Nightingale, and Not the Lark': Voice and Identity in *Romeo and Juliet*"

Many of Shakespeare's plays center on the concept of mistaken identity, as characters are misrecognized or misjudged by others, often to comedic effect but sometimes to tragic. This perception of identity is often disconnected from the voices of the characters, as those watching or listening either do not hear or do not recognize the voices that they hear. Their inability to correctly match others with their voices or to accurately interpret the messages those voices are sending can lead to comic misunderstandings (as in *The Comedy of Errors* or *Twelfth Night*) or to tragic misjudgments (as in *Much Ado About Nothing*). In this paper, I want to look at the ways that characters in *Romeo and Juliet* engage in this kind of misidentification in recognizing to other characters' voices but also in interpreting the messages those voices are sending. My paper will look closely at the scene of *Romeo and Juliet*'s first meeting, where Tybalt immediately recognizes Romeo's voice but Juliet does not. I want to also explore the parallels between this scene and the scene in the middle of the play when Juliet misidentifies the bird that is singing, whether sincerely or willfully. My argument is that a close reading of these two scenes not only shows the difficulty of using voices to determine identity, but also suggests a larger pattern in the play of misunderstanding characters' voices, whether it be Juliet's apparent consent to her marriage with Paris or Romeo's desperate response to the report of Juliet's death.

Sheila Cavanagh

"'Didst Thou Not Hear a Noise?': Shakespeare with Headphones"

This essay will explore two recent productions of *Macbeth*. The first, produced by Knock at the Gate (KATG), is designed to be listened to in the dark, wearing headphones. The second, Max Webster's 2023-2024 presentation at the Donmar Warehouse (featuring David Tennant and Cush Jumbo) provided a set of headphones at the seat of each patron. Audience members were advised that they would not be able to hear the performance if they were not wearing the headphones. While this production was a big hit in London, with tickets sold out months in advance, some reviewers objected strongly to the incorporation of headphones. The KATG production, in contrast, designed as a solo, immersive experience, received laudatory responses from my two sets of Emory students who have listened to the production thus far. In this piece, I will explore the rationale for incorporating such technologies into stage or audio performances and will consider potential future iterations of such sound designs. KATG has produced other Shakespeare presentations using similar methods, but here I will focus upon how well this technique works specifically with *Macbeth*.

Darlene Farabee

"Hearing and mishearing tone in *Much Ado About Nothing*"

Scholars have frequently commented upon and explored the ways in which failure in *Much Ado About Nothing* "is the result of clumsy insistence on literal readings of surface alone," as Travis Williams puts it. In addition to the misunderstandings created by these literal readings, the play offers many instances of mis-readings, such as Benedick's mistaken close reading of Beatrice's "Against my will I am sent to bid you come to dinner" (2.3.238-9). Audiences similarly experience difficulties accurately hearing the tone of the play; for example, Beatrice's "Kill Claudio" line often becomes a litmus test of a "production's tenor" (as Claire McEachern points out). In this paper, I suggest that attentiveness to the tonal paradoxes and the dramatic ironies created by them can show how *Much Ado About Nothing* encourages audiences to reexamine their own understandings of tone.

Sylvia Chi-hua Korman

"'My Traffic is Sheets': Fool and Boy Performance in Song"

Owing, perhaps, to company clown Robert Armin's naturally gifted singing voice, in Shakespeare plays, the fools do most of the singing. Armin's roles aside, most of Shakespeare's musical figures are given to parts for boy actors, performers who in the children's companies were closely associated with music and song. This essay examines this shared skill that fools and boys were so often called upon to perform, exploring their singing voices and their sung material. Dymphna Callaghan, following Wayne Koestenbaum, has asserted that, "Embodied rather than prosthetic, the voice accords presence. This is why it is on the vocal rather than the visual register that the spectacle of femininity on the English stage reaches its breaking point" (*Shakespeare Without Women*, 52). If, however, the spectacle of femininity threatens to break with every crack of the boy actor's voice, why, then, do early modern playwrights insist on testing that breaking point through song, the mode of voice that requires such particular control? And why are boy actors' songs so often embedded within their biggest, most moving scenes—scenes particularly vulnerable to disruption by vocal disorder? In addition, if the voice is "embodied rather than prosthetic," what suits it so fundamentally to the highly artificial performances of the fool? Looking at songs performed by Ophelia, Desdemona, and Autolycus, this essay examines the often-similar vocal stylings of boys and clowns, their voices' many potential disruptions, and the labor they exert to control and manage their performances.

Pierre Hecker

"'Wrongs unspeakable': Lavinia's Voice in *Titus Andronicus*"

My paper will explore the question of Lavinia's voice and Shakespeare's interest in the paradox of expressing in a verbal medium feelings and ideas that are beyond the reaches of language. As the late Emrys Jones noted, referring to tongueless, handless, mute Lavinia, "...at the centre of this rhetorically sonorous play there is *silence*" (*Scenic Form in Shakespeare*, 11). The story Shakespeare tells already had the tension between voice and silence built in: after Tereus rapes Philomela in Book VI of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the principal source for the Lavinia plot, she promises not to be silent:

Yea I my selfe rejecting shame thy doings will bewray.  
And if I may have power to come abrode, them blase I will  
In open face of all the world: or if thou keepe me still  
As prisoner in these woods, my voyce the verie woods shall fill,  
And make the stones to understand.... (Arthur Golding translation, 694-98)

Deprived of her voice, Philomela must find a new way to communicate. Shakespeare, himself the "craftier Tereus," deprives her of the myth's ekphrastic solution, condemning her, it might at first seem, to an even more absolute voicelessness. And yet...*is* Lavinia silent? In no other Shakespeare play is the gap between what the play is as a text and what it is as performance greater. Unable to speak does not mean unable to vocalize, and the paper will turn here to questions theater artists face, and the consequences and implications of their answers, in how to present Lavinia onstage.

Sean Lawrence

"'Et tu, Brute?': The Voice of the Other in *Julius Caesar*"

Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is haunted not only by signs in the heavens, nor by the ghost of Caesar, but also by hermeneutical crisis. Nobody knows what the hauntings mean and, indeed, the meaning of practically everything seems up for grabs. In the first scene, Flavius and Murellus try to fix the identities of the plebeians, insisting that they wear "the sign / Of your profession." Casca, Cassius and Cinna all interpret the meaning of the storm, and all ignore the calmer counsel of Cicero: "men may construe things after their fashion, / Clean from the purpose of the things themselves." Indeed, many of the characters show themselves murderously bent on construing "things after their fashion." Decius Brutus lures Caesar to his death by re-interpreting Calpurnia's dream. Brutus misinterprets the battlefield, attacking too soon. Out-of-control hermeneuts pervert even the voices of the gods: Caesar reinterpreted an obvious omen as a sign that he must go to the capitol. In their first scene, Brutus and Cassius must speculate about the meaning of the cries of the people offstage. Similarly, the greeting of Titinius is misunderstood by Pindarus as his capture. He hears the horsemen "shout for joy," without realizing that they are joyful in greeting Titinius, not in capturing him. In this play, voices can mean potentially anything, and can be made to mean anything useful.

In the face of such indeterminacy, Brutus takes comfort in stoic integrity, in being true to his word. Unfortunately, his attempt at self-mastery --- that philosophy which Cassius says he makes no use of --- leaves him deaf to the voice of the Other. Portia mounts desperate, selfharming attempts to communicate with him, but then Brutus takes her death as an occasion to show off his self-mastery to Cassius, and then again to Messala. The only line of Latin in the play---Caesar's "*Et tu, Brute?*"---provides a weird instant in which temporal distance seems to collapse as Caesar, in the shock of death, reverts to the language of his historical homologue. This, I shall argue, provides an aesthetic parallel to the voice of the Other, cutting through the hermeneutical indeterminacy by which the play appears cursed. I shall

draw on the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas to argue that the voice, in the sense of an extraordinary appeal by the other, interrupts the voice, in the sense of an object of interpretation.

Kent Lehnhof

"Listening to Tears, Sighs, and Groans"

This essay looks at two Shakespearean scenes in which women try to talk themselves out of sexual assault: Lucrece's unsuccessful effort in *The Rape of Lucrece* and Marina's successful bid in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*. Both of these scenes, I believe, draw attention to the non-semantic aspects of the women's appeals, whether explicitly (in the case of Lucrece) or implicitly (in the case of Marina). To think through this, I draw on the philosophical writings of Adriana Cavarero (b. 1947), who claims that the sound of the voice--what she refers to as "the vibrating throat of flesh"--always already expresses an ethical summons, irrespective of what is said. I propose that Shakespeare's staging of these two scenes anticipates Cavarero in the way it explores the ethical efficacy of human speech, which it connects as much to its non-semantic sonorous textures as to its verbal content or rhetorical strategies.

Ian Munro

"Wit and Voice in *As You Like It*"

This essay approaches *As You Like It* and the sonic terrain of the Forest of Arden through the lens of the Italian philosopher Paolo Virno's analysis of wit and joke-making in *Multitude: Between Innovation and Negation* (2008). For Virno, witty praxis amounts to an insurrection against established norms, political and otherwise, and involves a return to a fundamental human condition: "The joke...applies a rule in an unusual fashion because--in the application of the rule, in order to apply it--it returns for a moment to that acumen, or sense of orientation, that precedes the rules" (105). That preliminary or preliminal moment, experience as yet unbounded by rules, lies at the heart of what Virno is exploring: the borderland of articulation where "linguistic games" meet "nonlinguistic drives." As he comments: "What is common to every life, above all, is the passage from the cry of pain to the phrases in which one expresses one's own suffering; the passage from silent sexual desire to its articulation in clausal form; the passage from perceptive-motor imagination to the metaphors and to the metonymies that mould it from top to bottom. The 'normal everyday frame of life' is, above all, this threshold: not simply that which follows it. And it is to this threshold that jokes retrace their steps" (121).

As I will argue, this liminal "no-man's land" that witty praxis diagrams is also the location of the Forest of Arden--as illustrated by Jaques' progression through the seven ages of humanity, which shows a remarkable affinity for Virno's exploration of wit's linguistic liminality. The country coupling of the linguistic and nonlinguistic is pervasive to the play: Arden is where fainting transforms into feigning, and vice versa; where books are found in the bubbling brooks and tongues in trees; where the death of a deer is moralized "into a thousand similes"; where one lying under the greenwood tree may "turn his merry note / Unto the sweet bird's throat," marking the articulative threshold between the cry of an animal and human music. Most particularly, it is the location where the unschooled Orlando, who literally could not speak his desires, can instantly be made poetical, and fill the trees with odes to his "unexpressive she."

Robert Pierce

"Adapting Performance Techniques to Teaching Shakespeare"

Most of us are trained in literary analysis, but in recent years more and more Shakespeare studies have emphasized the existence of his plays as scripts for performance, with the corollary that we should approach them as such, but much of this approach on our part has been based on writings and models of techniques for preparing for theatrical (and film and TV) production, for the business of theater and education for that business. Our seminar topic of voice lends itself to modification of such techniques for our purposes. After all the classroom is full of voices, ours and our students plus whatever scenes and whole plays that we choose to show and discuss. I want to raise the question of how we adapt theatrical techniques to our classrooms. I want to focus on the use of warmup exercises in our classes; the raising of theatrical questions among our mostly literary approaches; and the use of actual performances whole or bits and pieces, in class, whether recorded or done by our students (or occasionally ourselves). I will use as an example *The Winter's Tale*, one of the more difficult plays of the canon to interpret. I will focus upon the issue of voice, first how we can get at the ways Shakespeare reveals his characters by establishing their individual voices and then how he creates a voice of the play itself behind the chorus of individual voices of the characters.

Amanda Ruud

"A Voice From Below: Echo, Allusion, and Authority in the Subaltern Voice"

This essay explores Shakespeare's imagination of the subaltern voice through the Ovidian myth of Echo and Narcissus. In Ovid's myth, which would have featured prominently in Shakespeare's education, the nymph Echo is reduced to a bodiless figure who can only repeat the words of others. And yet, Echo maintains the capacity to express both desire and lament. My argument is that the myth of Echo shapes Shakespeare's self-reflexive wrestling with the capacities of poetry and drama to give voice to women and others who are subject to authority. For Shakespeare's subjects, the act of quoting, citing, or alluding "from below" becomes not only a mode of complaint but also a means of examining speech as a ground of authority. After offering a brief, framing reading of Ovid's myth, I turn to a few of the proliferating examples of Shakespearean subjects who employ allusion, quotation, or pastiche to articulate interiority, desire, and discontent from positions of weakness (Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Caliban in *The Tempest*). Though these examples rarely result in material change, they nevertheless imagine a form of speech in which allusion or citation—a kind of speech borrowed from another imagination—authorizes an expression of complaint or desire that might otherwise be silenced. In short, allusive speech authorizes the voice of the subaltern. One repercussion of this reading is a chance to revisit the critical feminist insight that in early modern poetry the fantasy of a male poetic voice often comes at the expense of the female body.

Stephanie Shirilan

"Shylock's Bated Breath"

When Shylock is approached by his erstwhile and unapologetic tormentor Antonio for his fateful loan, Shylock intuits that this seeming reversal of fortune in fact requires his further abasement, and one that is performed as vocal and respiratory lack – "Shall I bend low and in a bondsman's key, With bated breath and a whispering humbleness, Say / ... you spit on me on Wednesday; / You spurn'd me on such a day; ... You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies/ I'll lend you thus much moneys?"

Shylock's "bated breath" is the first recorded instance of this expression, but it registers a complex association between breath and faith in Shakespeare's plays that I explore at length in my current book

project. Expanding upon such analyses, this paper considers the implications of Shylock's "bated breath" both as a feature of his idiosyncratic (under-examined and thereby implicitly essentialized) Jewish voice and as a kind of vocal prosthesis performed to exaggerate his racialized abjection. I pose some preliminary questions about such a performance and its perceived authenticity in representing Jewish affective, kinetic, and speaking styles by analyzing conversations about these among actors/directors, especially in the 1984 debate between Patrick Stewart and David Suchet in an episode of John Barton's *Playing Shakespeare*.

Megan Snell

"Sounds of Silence: Voice and Dumb Shows"

A "dumb show" in early modern drama is defined by its relative lack of sound. Music or external narration may accompany these emblematic visuals, but generally their performances of meaning through silent gesture rather than voice differentiate these theatrics from their plays. Within this shared characteristic of silence, however, dumb shows can have vastly different relationships to voice. In this paper, I want to examine contrasting performances of vocal absence in the two dumb shows of John Webster's *The White Devil*. Both of these pantomimes have been understood as "plot" dumb shows that depict for Brachiano his desired murders of his wife Isabella and his mistress's husband, Camillo. Assisted by the "strong commanding art" of a conjuror and a charmed nightcap, Brachiano magically watches these two murders unfold with the audience. The dumb show death of Camillo draws attention to its performance of absent vocal sounds, yet Isabella's death suggests little missing voice in its dumb show form, remaining a silent tableau. This contrast, I posit, forms an important part of the soundscape of *The White Devil*, a play highly concerned with vocal volume. I end the paper by starting to consider the role of voice in Shakespeare's dumb shows, specifically in the introduction of the play-within-a-play in both *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Suzanne Tanner

"Attachment and Resonance: The Interface of Voice in Shakespeare Reading Experiences"

This paper argues that given the read-aloud culture predominant from the early modern period through the nineteenth century, the medium of voice structured early readers' (listeners') experience with Shakespeare's texts and facilitated the first possibility of attunement, attachment, and understanding. Using Rita Felski's work on attachment and Rosa Hartmut's theories on resonance as a framework, this paper will explore historical and fictional accounts of Shakespearean reading experiences, along with evidence from Shakespeare's plays, to explore how the voice of a reader (reading aloud) functions as a mediating interface between the listeners and the text. The visual and aural modes of paint and music are often prominently considered in analyzing consumers' phenomenological experiences with other artistic genres, but when it comes to literature, many assume that readers connect to the *meaning* of the words and not necessarily the mode through which the words are delivered. However, proponents of the stage over the page have argued for decades that with drama, mode matters, and Shakespeare was meant to be experienced through the fully embodied visual and aural modes of a theater setting. However, even in less theatrical reading experiences of Shakespeare, this paper argues that mode still matters. For early readers experiencing Shakespeare through the widespread practice of listening to his plays or poems be read aloud, the medium of the voice constituted the primary mode through which

these readers encountered Shakespeare, and this medium was important for structuring readers' understanding and connection with the text.

David Higbee Williams  
"Ned Alleyn's Protean Voice"

This paper focuses on one of the voices that would have been most familiar to Elizabethan playgoers: that of Edward Alleyn, the leading actor of the Lord Admiral's Men. In addition to his tall stature and commanding stage presence, Alleyn was known for having a powerful voice, one capable of projecting many lines of "thunderous threats" when playing characters such as Tamburlaine. Beyond being loud, commanding, and distinctive, little else can be learned about Alleyn's voice from contemporary descriptions of it. The roles written for Alleyn, however, indicate a range of expectations that playwrights had for the actor's voice: they knew he could achieve great volumes, put on different accents, and imitate vocal instability and failure.

In addition to communicating language and affect, voice is an important part of the assemblage of sensory data that enables recognition. Most playgoers would have been able to recognize Alleyn's voice, even when he was modifying it to suit a particular character. This recognizability became especially important when the Lord Admiral's Men experimented with increasingly complicated plots, such as in *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* and *Look About You*, whose elaborate disguise narratives relied upon the audience's familiarity with Alleyn's appearance, movements, and voice. These plays also depended upon Alleyn's protean abilities in order to differentiate between the various characters and disguises. Although the auditory components of early modern theatrical disguises are notoriously difficult to recover, this paper examines the evidence for Alleyn's range in order to get a better understanding of what these vocal disguises may have entailed.