

Erika T. Lin

Performance Practice and Theatrical Privilege: Rethinking Weimann's Concepts of *Locus* and *Platea*

In this article, Erika T. Lin explores theatrical performance as a material medium by considering which elements might have been privileged in the dramaturgy of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. After considering the strengths and weaknesses of Robert Weimann's influential concepts of *locus* and *platea*, she offers an alternative model for understanding the authority of performance in early modern England, in which stage geography and actor–audience interactivity, two key components of Weimann's formulation, are less important than the interplay between representation and presentation. Through an analysis of specific scenes from a number of Shakespeare's plays, she argues that the moments most privileged in the early modern playhouse were those that foregrounded the semiotic system through which actions presented onstage came to signify within the represented fiction. Erika T. Lin is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Louisville. She is currently writing a book entitled *Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance*, and is also beginning work on a new project which examines seasonal festivities, folk drama, and professional theatre in early modern England.

IN THE LAST twenty years many historicist and materialist studies have examined early modern forms of representation as cultural production, but little attention has been paid to how the *medium* through which cultural discourses are transmitted affects the meanings disseminated by and constructed in them. Recent scholarship on the 'materiality of the text' has tried to remedy this critical lacuna by suggesting how the physical form of the printed book – its layout, material composition, and processes of production – actively constructed meaning rather than merely transmitting it.¹

But in the case of dramatic texts, the initial physical form was not the printed book. If the plays operated in their own historical moment primarily as performed pieces, then how were they performed, and how did the medium of performance itself affect the cultural attitudes and discourses articulated in them?

Scholars frequently use examples from the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries as evidence of early modern social attitudes and practices, but interpreting these refer-

ences without considering the impact of performance can skew our perceptions of the cultural landscape. In this essay I map out the contours of the medium of performance by considering the elements that might have been privileged in the dramaturgy of early modern public theatres.

Not all moments in plays were created equal. Which ones might have been authorized by the dynamics of performance? Which ones might have been foregrounded in an early modern audience member's playgoing experience? To explore such questions, I take as my starting point Robert Weimann's old but still enormously influential concepts of *locus* and *platea*. I suggest both the ways his formulation is useful and the ways it needs to be revised. Then, focusing, as Weimann does, primarily on Shakespeare's plays, I propose an alternative model for understanding the authority of performance in early modern drama.

Theorizing theatrical privilege lays the groundwork for new modes of interdisciplinary investigation: cultural history and literary criticism could be strengthened by taking

into account the dynamics of the performance medium, and performance scholarship and theatre history could be enriched by considering the circulation of cultural attitudes and practices.

Weimann's View of *Locus* and *Platea*

In his theory first laid out in *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater* Robert Weimann argues that the dramaturgy of the Renaissance public theatre derived from popular traditions of medieval stagecraft.² He identifies two key locations on the stage, each embodying a specific mode of performance and serving as a particular expression of social authority.

The *locus* was 'a scaffold, be it a *domus*, *sedes*, or throne' and was the playing area that was most distant from the audience.³ Associated with it was 'a rudimentary element of verisimilitude' and the representation of 'fixed, symbolic locations'.⁴

By contrast, the *platea* was a 'platform-like acting area' situated closest to the audience. On the *platea* 'the play world continue[d] to be frankly treated as a theatrical dimension of the real world', and this non-illusionistic mode of performance corresponded to 'unlocalized' or 'neutral' space.⁵

Each of these locations was further associated with a particular place in the social hierarchy:

As a rule, it was the more highly ranked persons who sat on the scaffolds: God the father, the 'King' in *The Pride of Life*, Decius (enthroned as in the Fouquet miniature). Significantly, while some high-born members of the audience were also seated on these scaffolds, or at any rate on neighbouring scaffolds, the ordinary public stood crowded below in the *champ*. This was the case in *The Castle of Perseverance*: the noble 'syrys semly' sat at the sides of the scaffolds while the simple 'wytis' were in the 'pleyn place', that is, in the middle of the green or field. It was among these simple folk, or in front of them, that soldiers and serfs, the shouting messenger of 'N-town', and of course the devil, grimacing 'in the most orryble wyse' (465-6), played their parts.⁶

For Weimann, 'the proximity between actor and audience was not only a physical condition, it was at once the foundation and the

expression of a specific artistic endeavour'.⁷ Servants, clowns, and other *platea* characters shared the low social rank of plebeian spectators. Their physical closeness to audience members simultaneously expressed these social affinities and promoted interactivity between playgoers and performers. Kings and other high-born figures in the *locus* were both physically and socially removed from that sphere.

The physical distance and social exclusivity of the *locus* discouraged actor-audience exchanges and led to greater dramatic isolation. The elite, rhetorical knowledge of the *locus* was balanced by the *platea*'s assertion of the plebeian audience's 'collective understanding of the world . . . rooted in the common experience and inherited traditions of the people', a 'viable alternative' or 'counter-perspective' to the 'main or state view of things'.⁸

Particularly striking about Weimann's formulation is the way in which it inverts expectations about theatrical authority. Even though *locus* characters had high social status within the fictional world of the play, the interactivity of the *platea* meant that characters with little social authority were, in fact, more *theatrically* privileged.⁹

The widespread influence of Weimann's work can be seen in the now commonplace assumptions that soliloquies were spoken in the downstage area of the platform and that clowns and Vice figures were popular because of their highly interactive engagement with the audience. A quick look at a number of critical conversations suggests the impact of Weimann's work on a variety of different fields. Introductory texts geared to undergraduates regularly draw on Weimann's concepts. For example, in *Theory/Theatre: an Introduction* Mark Fortier notes that 'upstage is mainly a place for authoritative pronouncements' whereas 'the lip of the stage is a place for characters to become informal and intimate with the lower-class audience'.¹⁰ In *Shakespeare's Theatre* Peter Thomson remarks that:

the distinction between downstage and upstage at the Globe defines the relationship of the actor

and his audience. . . . Whilst King Lear remains regal, he will keep his distance, but the experience of the heath can carry him down to the edges and corners of the platform, where the Fool and Clown will always be at ease.¹¹

Weimann's work has also had an impact on theatre practitioners and performance critics. In his lengthy history of Shakespeare productions in Germany, Wilhelm Hortmann devotes an entire chapter to East German theatre during the 1960s and 1970s. He describes Weimann's *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater* as, 'after Brecht, the greatest single influence on Shakespeare stagings in East Germany at the time'.¹² More recently, in analyzing the 1997 Rylance/Olivier production of *Henry V* at the new Globe, Yu Jin Ko draws on Weimann's theories in order to explain the interplay of subversion and containment in modern performance.¹³ Teachers, students, and all those engaged in producing and critiquing contemporary theatre have alike been affected by Weimann's work.

The Many Debts to Weimann

Literary scholars, especially those engaged in materialist and historicist criticism, have also been drawn to Weimann. Focusing less on his theories of theatre and more on his analysis of cultural authority, these critics foreground the *platea* as a space of resistance to established social hierarchies. In their introduction to *Staging the Renaissance* David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass stress that 'cultures should . . . be seen less as bounded wholes than as articulations of uneven temporalities and contradictory discursive practices'. Citing Weimann's work as an example of this critical approach, they note that 'popular staging practices . . . regularly shift the action between an upstage *locus* and a downstage *platea* [*sic*] and thus continually displace the dominant aristocratic ideology, submitting its postures and assumptions to the interrogation of clowns and commoners'.¹⁴

Anticipating Weimann's own emphasis in *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice*, Richard Helgerson connects these ideological concerns

with issues of orality and literacy: the *platea*, he suggests, 'belongs to the actor' and functions as

a space given over to unauthorized speech and action. In this respect the author's perspective was shared by the state. . . . The unitary voice of the author and the unitary voice of the state would gladly combine to exclude the clown's disruptive and discordant improvisation.¹⁵

Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin find the ideological implications of Weimann's work valuable for feminist interpretations of Shakespeare's plays. In discussing women's roles in *Richard III* they note that 'ennobled' female characters move 'into the privileged *locus* of hegemonic representation', which simultaneously 'subsumes them into the patriarchal project of that representation and distances them from the present theatre audience'.¹⁶

For all these historicist scholars, the *platea* embodies the subversive potential of popular performance. Because of Weimann's engagement with questions of authority, his work has been particularly useful to scholars concerned with the ideological implications of Renaissance drama. As Louis Montrose remarks, 'dialectical, historicist, and materialist work has become central to the study of Shakespeare in the United States and Britain since the publication of *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater*; and such work – including mine – has been enabled by the critical perspective announced and exemplified in Weimann's landmark book'.¹⁷

A major strength of Weimann's work, then, is its ability to bring together performance concerns with literary criticism and cultural history. Many scholars have explored the material and social contexts surrounding early modern theatre as a cultural institution.¹⁸ Others have analyzed the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries from more theoretical or stage-centred perspectives.¹⁹ However, while spectacle and 'theatricality' have been examined in relation to ideology, few materialist and historicist critics have engaged substantively with the work of theatre historians.²⁰

As W. B. Worthen notes, 'actual stage performance' is frequently omitted from new

historicist projects that aim to situate drama 'within the discourses of cultural life': 'whether by design or by default, literary criticism of the drama tends to assign the textualities of performance to the subjective caprice of the actor's freedom'.²¹ Performance criticism, on the other hand, suffers from its own unique blindspots. Stage-centred scholarship on Renaissance drama has traditionally imagined performance as 'a way to recover meanings intrinsic to the text',²² and reconstructions of early modern stagecraft are often intended to illuminate literary 'themes'. Moreover, few historians of early modern theatre regularly incorporate the theoretical insights and challenges to positivist historiography that are such central tenets of new historicism.

Weimann's work very usefully bridges the gap between materialist-historicist literary criticism and performance-oriented critiques and histories. In his initial discussion of *locus* and *platea* in *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater*, Weimann combined 'literary' close-reading techniques with historical inquiry in order to explore the different linguistic registers constituting early English dramaturgy. His more recent book complicates his own earlier emphasis on the verbal aspects of plays and draws more extensively on poststructuralist theory and historicist methodologies.²³

Such an integrated approach has important implications for current and future interdisciplinary scholarship. Most historicist scholars focus primarily on the verbal aspects of plays at the expense of more evanescent aspects of theatre. Attention, therefore, often centres on the fictional worlds represented within plays, rather than on the strategies through which those worlds are created. Limiting investigations in this way emphasizes elite, verbal ways of knowing the world while effacing less textually oriented forms of cultural production. The resulting research may inadvertently reproduce class hierarchies even when intended to critique them.²⁴

Moreover, ignoring the impact of performance practices on the transmission of cultural discourses can lead to fundamental misinterpretations of the original effects of

those discourses. Scholars who examine, say, the discourse of empire, a useful and necessary topic of investigation, might focus on plays that depict travel or racialized 'others'. However, statements by a *locus* character about empire would have had a different impact on early modern playgoers from statements on the same subject by a *platea* character. Focusing on the non-verbal aspects of plays and on the relationship between actors and audience members allows us to take into account not only what occurs within the fictional story but also the means by which that representation was effected. Combining stage-centred criticism with materialist and historicist concerns can yield more nuanced accounts of cultural practices and of the ways in which performance shaped such practices. Weimann's methodology points the way to such fruitful avenues for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Issues of Stage Geography

So far I have focused primarily on the positive values of Weimann's work. I would like to turn now to one of its more problematic aspects. Although Weimann himself has repeatedly emphasized the 'fluidity' of early modern dramaturgy and its capacity to 'sustain . . . both illusionistic and nonillusionistic effects' at the same time,²⁵ scholars who appropriate the concepts of *locus* and *platea* sometimes apply distinctions of stage geography too literally. This critical tendency is especially apparent when Weimann's work is cited only in passing. In such cases the upstage-downstage dichotomy is often presented as central to the definition of *locus* and *platea*.²⁶

But even studies more deeply engaged with Weimann's work tend to reduce his theory to a rather binary schematic. Michael Mooney, for instance, in his 'well-focused study',²⁷ applies Weimann's 'complex idea of *Figurenposition* (or "figural positioning")' to Shakespeare's tragedies.²⁸ Although Mooney admits that 'a character *did not* have to move, literally, in order to create a shift in *Figurenposition*', his investment in 'the "traditional interplay" between a downstage place (or

platea) and an upstage location (or *locus*)²⁹ means that the spatial component of Weimann's formulation still figures very prominently throughout his work.

This tendency to foreground Weimann's upstage–downstage distinction might be attributed in part to the dearth of adequate terminology for describing certain dramaturgical dynamics. In studies of early English drama, spatial metaphors have long been used to describe the phenomenology of theatre. As early as 1944, S. L. Bethell asserted that:

deliberate emphasis upon the unreality of the play world . . . reinforces the double consciousness of play world and real world, and at the same time . . . distances the play as play and produces intimacy with the audience for the actor as actor rather than as character.³⁰

Spatial terminology has often been applied rather loosely; Weimann's use, by contrast, is highly specific. In grounding the immaterial, evanescent dynamics of performance in the concrete terminology of physical space, his use of *locus* and *platea* offers an appealing alternative to such slippery dramaturgical concepts as 'ironic distance' and 'dramatic intimacy'.

Emphasis on the spatial aspect of Weimann's theory might also derive from the centrality of the 'fourth wall' as an interpretive paradigm. When Weimann posits a 'difference between the imaginary landscape inscribed in the story and the physical, tangible site of its production', and argues that drama could 'constitute at best an "indifferent boundary" between them',³¹ he is reinscribing the barrier which separates actors and playgoers even as he is arguing for its permeability. The upstage *locus* is associated with 'Romantic obsession with character', the downstage *platea* with the breaking of theatrical illusion.³²

Weimann's most recent study, co-authored with Douglas Bruster, exhibits similar critical tendencies when it describes prologues as 'interactive, liminal, boundary-breaking entities' that help usher audience members across the 'threshold' between the world of the playhouse and the world of the play.³³ In Weimann's work the *locus* constructs an invi-

sible line separating actors from spectators whereas the *platea* dissolves it, but the ontological status of that line remains unchanged. The stress placed upon the spatial component of Weimann's theory is encouraged by the pervasiveness of this conceptual paradigm.

Reading the *locus* as 'upstage' and the *platea* as 'downstage' is also particularly appealing because it transposes alien, medieval notions of space onto architectural forms more familiar to modern playgoers. The *OED*'s first recorded use of the word *upstage* is from 1870, and *downstage* does not emerge until 1898. These terms grew out of the architectural specificities of proscenium-arch theatres. The rear, elevated portion of a raked platform stage might appropriately be referred to as 'upstage', but this same word cannot be applied with any degree of rigour to early modern playhouses.

The Changing Visual Paradigms

We might imagine that 'upstage' in the Renaissance public theatre was closer to the façade and that to move 'downstage' was to walk between the posts to the 'front' edge of the platform closest to the standing spectators in the yard. However, such an imaginary reconstruction is based on our own visual paradigms and conceptions of theatre. Modern theatres are constructed around sightlines. Audience members with the best vantage points for viewing a performance – that is, those in box seats or in the centre stalls – are charged the highest prices. Early modern playhouses functioned under a very different set of cultural assumptions.

At the reconstructed Globe today, seats are 'priced according to visibility'.³⁴ Tickets for the front row of the lowest gallery across the yard from the stage are £29 each – the most expensive category of seats in the house. In the Renaissance those seats were sometimes 'associated rather with the standers in the yard'³⁵ and were much less desirable than the 'Lords' Rooms', which are priced at only £25 today. The fact that the Lords' Rooms in the original Globe should now be considered less desirable than the 'twopenny galleries' suggests something of the gap

between modern and early modern conceptions of theatre. If we take such differences into account, dispensing with the upstage-downstage aspect of Weimann's formulation seems more and more appropriate.

Andrew Gurr has attempted to revise the spatial component of Weimann's theory by rearticulating *locus* and *platea* in terms of centre and periphery: 'The official speakers stood in the centre, while the commentators and clowns prowled around the flanks.' In *Richard III*, he argues, the title character, 'crouching at the stage edge and speaking in soliloquy to the crowd at his feet' at the beginning of the play, eventually moves 'to occupy the centre of the stage' when he becomes king.³⁶

However, replacing the upstage-downstage binary with a centre-periphery model does little to address the problem of physical proximity. Given the shape and layout of Renaissance amphitheatres, it is difficult to know how to define 'proximity' at all. In the early modern playhouse, where there was seating in the galleries as well as in the yard, the 'above' portion of the stage and area of the main platform closest to the façade would have been closer to some audience members than the so-called 'downstage' area traditionally assigned to the *platea*. Audience members were also distributed horizontally, surrounding the thrust stage on three – or sometimes even four – sides.

The stage at the Fortune was about 43 feet wide, and the dimensions at the Globe were probably similar. The stage at the Rose was just a bit smaller – 36 feet 9 inches at its widest, tapering to about 26 feet 10 inches at the front.³⁷ Given both the horizontal and the vertical distribution of playgoers, being closer to some audience members meant being significantly farther from others. Actors located in what we might describe today as 'downstage left' would be significantly 'upstage' when seen from the perspective of spectators at 'stage right'. Even if one might make a sociological argument for the overall dramaturgical unity of the audience's response, one cannot make a very convincing case for the unity of their literal physical locations. Defining *locus* and *platea* in terms

of the distance between performers and spectators becomes very problematic.

Shakespeare's Use of Space

I have been focusing here on stage geography not because Weimann's theory can be reduced merely to its spatial component, but because exploring this aspect of his work suggests useful avenues for reconceptualizing the performance medium. I would like to turn now to an examination of some specific examples from Shakespeare's plays. In analyzing these scenes, I will begin with the use of stage space and its implications for *locus* and *platea*. My ultimate goal, however, is to map out an alternative model for theorizing theatrical performance. A fresh consideration of Weimann's formulation can, I hope, yield a more precise understanding of the elements that might have been privileged by the medium of performance in early modern England.

In Act IV, Scene v of *King Lear*, when Edgar leads the blind Gloucester to the cliffs of Dover, Edgar speaks to the audience directly in numerous asides but Gloucester does not. Weimann argues that the *platea* is the site of actor-audience interaction, so his theory must assign Edgar to the *platea* and Gloucester to the *locus*. However, is Edgar actually physically closer to the audience? The scene requires him to be right next to Gloucester as he leads him – perhaps they are physically touching. At one point, Gloucester says to Edgar, 'Set me where you stand' (TLN 2460; IV, v, 24),³⁸ suggesting that at this particular moment Gloucester will quite literally stand in the same location on the stage as Edgar. Although Gloucester is 'in' the *locus* and Edgar is 'in' the *platea*, both occupy the same space on the platform stage.

In *All's Well That Ends Well*, when Parolles is 'ambushed' by his fellow soldiers and made to think he has been captured by the enemy, the spatial aspect of *locus* and *platea* also fails in interesting ways. Upon entering the scene (TLN 1936; IV, i, 22), Parolles speaks directly to the audience in soliloquy – which, according to Weimann's formulation, should bring him closer to the audience both in his

stage location and in his connection with the audience.

However, Parolles's soliloquy is continually interrupted by the Second Lord's asides. These asides might be addressed either to the audience or to the other soldiers. If addressed to the audience, we might interpret the Second Lord and Parolles as dramaturgically parallel. Both share the same degree of intimacy with playgoers since both speak directly to audience. Both are therefore located in the theatrically privileged *platea*. But the scene requires that Parolles be unable to see the Second Lord. His back must be towards the Second Lord and the other soldiers, and his face must be towards the audience. The most obvious way to stage this scene is to place the Second Lord next to the playhouse façade and Parolles next to the edge of the stage.

In this scene from *All's Well That Ends Well*, two characters residing in the *platea* are situated in different locations on the stage. In the episode from *King Lear*, Edgar and Gloucester, two characters with differing degrees of theatrical authority, are positioned in the same location on the stage. Not only is there no correlation between theatrical authority and stage geography in these two scenes, but the dynamics of performance run directly counter to Weimann's theory.

Of course, there is another way to imagine the scene from *All's Well That Ends Well*. All the actors could be located near the edges of the stage. Parolles might be, say, 'downstage left', facing the audience on that side of the playhouse. The Second Lord and his soldiers would be located on the opposite end of the platform – what we might call 'downstage right'. Such a configuration would support Weimann's formulation: both Parolles and the Second Lord are in the *platea*, and both are equidistant from the audience.

However, when Parolles is blindfolded by the other soldiers (TLN 1980; IV, i, 61), he seems to move out of the *platea* and into the *locus*. This shift takes place both dramaturgically (he no longer speaks directly to the audience) and physically (because his back need not be facing the others, he may now be placed farther away from the edge of the

stage). Yet, at least initially, one of the soldiers must be physically touching Parolles in order to blindfold him. As in the scene with Edgar and Gloucester, even though the location of the two characters onstage is essentially the same, their dramaturgical dynamics are not equivalent. When the soldiers return again with Parolles in Act IV, Scene iii, Parolles is blindfolded. Regardless of where he stands, he cannot see the other characters. Both he and the other characters may now be situated anywhere on the stage, and there are no further textual clues about these locations. In both these scenes spatial distinctions between *locus* and *platea* are complicated by the dynamics of spectatorship.

Indeed, the issue of sight throws quite a wrench into the works. In scenes such as the ones I have just been discussing, in order to watch the *locus* character without being seen, the *platea* character must be either *literally* 'upstage' (that is, closer to the façade) or *effectively* 'upstage' for part of the audience (that is, the *platea* character will be farthest from playgoers who are directly in front of the *locus* character). Furthermore, in scenes where one character is blind, the need for that character to be touched (here, led or blindfolded) means that *locus-platea* spatial distinctions cannot be literalized since two characters will, at least momentarily, inhabit the same part of the stage.³⁹

The Dynamics of Sight and Sound

Although it is clear that we cannot correlate dramaturgical authority with Weimann's ideas about stage space, scenes that contradict Weimann's theory in these ways also suggest some useful directions for revising the concepts of *locus* and *platea*. I want to turn now to a closer examination of the dynamics of spectatorship. From hereon in, I will use the terms *locus* and *platea* without implying any spatial considerations but rather as shorthand to indicate the dramaturgical dynamics that Weimann associates with each term.

In *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater*, when Weimann discusses Act V, Scene ii of *Troilus and Cressida*, he seems to admit that spectatorship is an important fac-

tor in *locus* and *platea*. In this scene 'Cressida's meeting with Diomedes is watched from a distance by Troilus and Ulysses, who likewise are being watched by Thersites'.⁴⁰ Thersites, Weimann argues, is more in the *platea* than the other characters because he 'acts from a more nearly neutralized place where he can watch and hear the others but cannot be watched or heard by them'.⁴¹ In his more recent work Weimann again points to the importance of the visual for the dramaturgy of this scene:

In the performed event, certain characters, such as Cressida and Diomed [sic], represent a fairly self-contained action, presumably in front of the *locus* provided by Calchas's tent. At the same time, there is at least one performer who, not being 'lost' in the representation, presents it and, through the 'abuse of distance' (*Henry V*, II, o, 32), views it in perspective. In doing so, the player playing Thersites remains unobserved and is not overheard by these characters or, for that matter, those intermediate personages, Troilus and Ulysses, who hide and watch.⁴²

Both in his earlier and in his more recent book Weimann's reading of this scene highlights certain implicit aspects of his formulation. Stage geography, social legitimacy, and actor-audience interactivity are not the only important factors; *locus* and *platea* are also determined by whether a character is watching or being watched.

In *King Lear*, then, Edgar is more in the *platea* than Gloucester not only because Edgar interacts more with the audience but also because Gloucester is blind, and Edgar can see. Edgar can observe Gloucester but cannot, in turn, be seen by him. In *All's Well That Ends Well* the Second Lord is more in the *platea* because he sees Parolles but cannot be seen himself. In both of these episodes the dramaturgical implications of spectatorship are literalized through the presentation of blind or blindfolded characters. However, the same dynamics apply in scenes that do not involve physically impaired vision – in *Twelfth Night*, for instance, when Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian spy on Malvolio reading the letter (Act II, Scene v), and in *Love's Labour's Lost*, when each of the four lords betrays his love for one of the ladies of France

and then hides to observe the next confession (Act IV, Scene iii).

Weimann's discussion of the scene from *Troilus and Cressida* suggests that sound also contributes to the *locus-platea* dynamic: it is important that Thersites can neither be seen nor heard. In *King Lear*, because Edgar's asides cannot be heard by Gloucester, he does indeed seem to be more situated in the *platea*. In *All's Well That Ends Well*, even if the Second Lord's asides are addressed to the other onstage characters and not directly to the audience, he can hear Parolles but cannot be heard himself and is, therefore, located in the *platea*. Likewise, the comments of Toby, Andrew, and Fabian to one another from the box tree and Berowne, the King, and Longaville's asides to the audience all situate them more in the *platea* than the object of their observations.

A Different Kind of Privileging

What is particularly interesting is that, in all these cases, the dynamics of sight and sound seem to take precedence not only over upstage-downstage distinctions, but also over the privileges granted to actor-audience interactivity. In other words, even if the character being watched and heard communicates directly with the audience in the tradition of the *platea* – as does Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, each successive lord in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and Parolles in *All's Well That Ends Well* – that character still functions as a *locus* character. Being watched and heard apparently puts one in the *locus*. In the dynamics of sight and sound, it seems that *platea* characters are the active doers of the action, and *locus* characters are the passive receivers of the action. The difference between *platea* and *locus* in theatrical practice is the difference between subject and object.

Or is it? Act II, Scene iii of *Much Ado About Nothing* raises some interesting questions. Here, the gulling of Benedick positions him as the one who watches and hears the other men. In the corresponding women's scene (Act III, Scene i), the same dynamics apply to Beatrice. On the surface these two scenes appear to be the reverse of the others I have

been discussing: the person being gulled is the one who hides and watches. Beatrice and Benedick are the active 'subjects'; the characters on whom they eavesdrop are the passive 'objects'. However, in both scenes the people being scrutinized are not only well aware of their secret observers but have, in fact, manufactured the situations for the express purpose of being overseen and overheard. Benedick may spy on the Prince, Claudio, and Leonato, and Beatrice may eavesdrop on Hero and Ursula, but their obliviousness to the fact that they, too, are being observed situates them more firmly in the *locus*.

Awareness of 'the Gaze'

Modern theories of 'the gaze' contend that the object of the gaze is disempowered; the privileged subject is the one who is doing the watching. In the Renaissance theatre, however, being the object of observation was, in fact, a powerful position. During spectacles and pageants, monarchs consolidated their authority by exposing themselves to the gaze of their subjects. Status-conscious gallants sought out the envious glances of those too poor to afford their finery. In early modern England being the subject of the gaze was not necessarily better than being its object. Merely being watched or heard does not situate one in the *locus*; rather, being watched or heard *unawares* does.⁴³

So far I have been grouping sight and sound together as I explore their theatrical ramifications, and it does seem that in many cases sound contributes to the dynamics of *locus* and *platea* in precisely the same ways as sight. In *All's Well That Ends Well* Parolles is situated in the *locus* as a result of not being able to 'look back', but his *locus*-like orientation is compounded by his inability to, shall we say, 'hear back'. His fellow soldiers speak an imaginary foreign language to make Parolles believe they are 'some band of strangers i'th aduersaries entertainment' (TLN 1926–7; IV, i, 13–14).

Indeed, before the Second Lord allows one of the soldiers to serve as 'Interpreter' (TLN 1918; IV, i, 5), he asks whether Parolles

will recognize the soldier's voice: 'Art not acquainted with him? knowes he not thy voice?' (TLN 1920–1; 4 IV, i, 7–8). It is only when the answer comes back in the negative that the Second Lord agrees to let him serve as translator. From the *locus*, Parolles can be heard, but he does not properly 'hear back'. In the scene from *King Lear*, Gloucester's inability to 'hear back' also situates him in the *locus*. After Gloucester has supposedly fallen down the precipice, Edgar pretends to be a passer-by who happens upon the older man's body at the base of the cliffs.

Edgar's speech patterns here – at least as they are represented in the playtext – do not differ noticeably from those earlier in the scene. Although these lines might have been inflected differently in performance, such differences in tone are usually recorded orthographically in published early modern playtexts.⁴⁴ When Edgar speaks to Oswald towards the end of this same scene, the text registers a change in his voice as he slips into and out of 'peasant' dialect.

There is no indication that Gloucester notices any of these inconsistencies. His hearing appears to be just as impaired as his vision, and this obliviousness positions him more firmly in the *locus*. Edgar can look at Gloucester, but the older man cannot, in turn, 'look back'. Edgar hears everything that Gloucester says, but his father cannot accurately 'hear back'.

Voice and Identity

But what does it mean, not to 'hear back'? Sound envelops the listener. Rather than emanating from one particular fixed point, it comes to the listener from multiple and indeterminate directions. Whereas the ability to see is primarily dependent on direction, the ability to hear is primarily dependent on distance. 'Hearing back' *per se* is not actually possible.⁴⁵ In the scenes from *King Lear* and *All's Well That Ends Well*, the problem is really one of mistaken identity: Parolles imagines he has been kidnapped by the enemy; Gloucester believes that Edgar is poor, mad Tom. 'Hearing back', then, might more appropriately be described as the ability to determine

accurately the relationship between someone's voice and that person's identity.

In the episode from *King Lear*, however, Gloucester not only misidentifies Edgar, but also mistakenly thinks he is at the cliffs of Dover. At the beginning of the scene Edgar asks Gloucester, 'Hearke, do you heare the Sea?' (TLN 2435; IV, v, 4). Not more than sixteen lines later, Edgar contradicts himself, saying 'The murmuring Surge, / That on th' vnnumbred idle Pebble chafes / Cannot be heard so high' (TLN 2455-7; IV, v, 20-2). Gloucester lets this inconsistency go unremarked and blindly trusts (or should I say 'deafly trusts?') the beggar who is leading him.

The gulling scenes from *Much Ado About Nothing* function in a similar way. Benedick can easily and accurately identify the Prince, Claudio, and Leonato, while Beatrice has no trouble recognizing Hero and Ursula, but in a different sense both characters are unable to 'hear back'. Beatrice and Benedick believe the conversations they overhear are genuine. They are unable to perceive them for what they 'truly' are – key elements in an elaborate prank.

To 'hear back', then, not only requires the ability to determine characters' identities correctly, but also rests upon being able to interpret aural signifiers properly. A consideration of sight and sound has allowed us to revise how we define *locus* and *platea*: the more accurately characters can relate what is presented visually or aurally on the stage to what that presentational element 'really' signifies within the theatrical representation, the more those characters are in the *platea*.

Constructing Imaginary Space

I return now to the scene from *King Lear* in order further to nuance this model of theatrical authority. In the episode at the cliffs of Dover, Edgar misleads Gloucester into thinking they are near the precipice by describing at length what Gloucester cannot see:

Come on Sir,
Heere's the place: stand still: how fearefull
And dizie 'tis, to cast ones eyes so low,

The Crowes and Choughes, that wing the
midway ayre
Shew scarce so grosse as Beetles. Halfe way
downe
Hangs one that gathers Sampire: dreadfull
Trade:
Methinkes he seemes no bigger then his head.
The Fishermen, that walk'd vpon the beach
Appeare like Mice: and yond tall Anchoring
Barke,
Diminish'd to her Cocke: her Cocke, a Buoy
Almost too small for sight. The murmuring
Surge,
That on th'vnnumbred idle Pebble chafes
Cannot be heard so high. Ile looke no more,
Least my braine turne, and the deficient sight
Topple downe headlong.
(TLN 2445-59; IV, v, 11-23)⁴⁶

Here, the *platea*-like Edgar uses the same technique to deceive Gloucester that early modern actors used to create the world of the play. He constructs imaginary space by describing it through words. Gloucester, unaware of imagined space, seems likewise unaware of the actual space of the theatre. His obliviousness both to the actual performance event and to the representational strategies of real-life actors is here contrasted with Edgar's canny awareness and adept deployment of theatrical conventions. In foregrounding these differences, the play grants Edgar more dramaturgical authority; it situates him in the *platea*.

Theatrical privilege, then, is not only about the accurate interpretation of aural and visual signifiers, but is also a function of the way verbal cues construct imaginary space. We might, then, revise our model as follows: the more characters are aware of the playhouse conventions through which visual, aural, and verbal cues onstage come to signify within the represented fiction, the more they are in the *platea*.

But what should we make of the end of this scene? When Lear appears at the cliffs of Dover, Gloucester demonstrates truly remarkable hearing abilities. Upon the king's entrance, he first declares, 'I know that voice' (TLN 2542; IV, v, 94), and then adds 'The tricke of that voyce, I do well remember: / Is't not the King?' (TLN 2552-3; IV, v, 103-4). His astuteness is surprising: Lear, as far as we can tell from the playtext, sounds nothing

like himself at all. The King now sounds mad, significantly madder than when Gloucester left him at the end of Act III, Scene vi. This episode resonates with the beginning of the scene. When Gloucester declares that he does not hear the sea, Edgar insists that the older man's hearing must be impaired:

Edg. . . . Hearke, do you heare the Sea?
Glou. No truly.
Edg. Why then your other Senses grow imperfect
 By your eyes anguish.
Glou. So may it be indeed.
 Me thinks thy voyce is alter'd, and thou speak'st
 In better phrase, and matter then thou did'st.
Edg. Y'are much deceiu'd: In nothing am I chang'd
 But in my Garments.
Glou. Me thinks y'are better spoken.
 (TLN 2435–44; IV, v, 4–10)

Edgar's dismissal of his father's perceptual abilities only emphasizes the fact that, here at least, Gloucester hears quite accurately. The actor playing Edgar no longer adopts the discontinuous exclamations of Poor Tom; he *does*, in fact, speak 'in better phrase, and matter'.

Questions of Costuming

The dynamics of voice here intersect with questions of costuming. When Gloucester notices the change in Edgar's voice, and Edgar responds, 'Y'are much deceiu'd: In nothing am I chang'd / But in my Garments' (TLN 2442–3; IV, v, 8–9), Gloucester's awareness of Edgar's vocal shift initially moves the older man into the *platea*; but Edgar then trumps his father by calling attention to his change in clothing.⁴⁷ In a theatre that makes extensive use of doubling, switching costumes is the same as switching characters. In fact, Edgar has already done so prior to this scene – and has played on the audience's uncertainty about it. Jean MacIntyre and Garrett Epp argue that such ambiguity rarely occurs in early modern drama:

When a play's clothing cues are not accurate . . . the audience can follow the play's action only if it is told that already familiar characters wear

changed costumes. . . . Edgar announces his plan to disguise himself as Poor Tom (in II, iii) several scenes before he actually appears in his new costume, feigning madness (III, iv); he maintains this disguise throughout that scene and well into the next before speaking as Edgar in one brief 'aside' and the soliloquy that closes the scene (III, vi). Few characters ever maintain so radical a disguise for more than one full scene . . . before somehow reminding the audience that they are indeed in disguise.⁴⁸

In drawing attention to Edgar's costume changes and in connecting them with his multiple identities, the play reaffirms his *platea* status. The references to Edgar's vocal shifts serve a similar purpose. On the early modern stage both costume and voice could constitute identity. In the anonymous play *Look About You* (c. 1599) characters repeatedly disguise themselves by adopting both the clothing and the speech impediments of other characters.⁴⁹ In *Twelfth Night* Feste's change in voice fools Malvolio into thinking he is conversing with Sir Topas. In the scene at the cliffs of Dover, then, Edgar's reference to his own 'chang'd . . . Garments' draws on a performance tradition where clothing and voice functioned as theatrical signifiers. Edgar's skilful description of the non-existent ocean vista and his ironic allusions to costume and voice work together to align him more closely with the playhouse audience.

Of all the characters in this scene, Edgar is the one who most often deploys the performance conventions that playgoers themselves used to interpret the play. The 'proximity' to the audience that Weimann sees as the hallmark of *platea* characters might be better understood in terms of theatrical signifiers: the more a character is aware of the playhouse conventions upon which audience members relied and the more he or she can manipulate them within the represented fiction, the more that character is in the *platea*.

Knowing What 'Really' Happened

In order to nuance our ideas about *locus* and *platea* further, I turn now to a moment from *Henry IV, Part One*. The references to costume in the scene from *King Lear* suggest that, in

reformulating Weimann's concepts, the theatrical signifiers at stake include not only visual, aural, and verbal cues but also material objects. An episode towards the end of *Henry IV, Part One* suggests that theatrical signifiers also include material *subjects* – that is, the bodies of actors. In Act V, Scene iv, when Prince Hal is locked in battle with Henry 'Hotspur' Percy, the two men are interrupted by the entrance of Douglas. Falstaff, who has been watching Hal and Hotspur while trying to keep out of the conflict, is reluctantly forced into combat. The stage direction reads: '*Enter Dowglas, he fights with Falstaffe, who fals down as if he were dead. The Prince killeth Percie*' (TLN 3040–1; V, iv, 75). Immediately after the fight, Hal gazes upon the 'dead' bodies of Hotspur and Falstaff and delivers a soliloquy. Both actions position the Prince in the *platea* – he addresses the audience directly, and he looks upon bodies that are unable to 'look back'.

However, shortly after Hal exits the stage, Falstaff '*riseth vp*' (TLN 3076; V, iv, 109), revealing that he was not, in fact, dead but was merely feigning death. Although earlier confined to the *locus*, Falstaff's revelation now situates him in the *platea*. Because he possesses a more accurate picture than Hal of what 'really' happened during the fight, Falstaff's dramatic authority supersedes that of the Prince.

Falstaff's speech also highlights another convention of early modern theatre. When he speaks directly to the audience, he confides his fear that Hotspur might not really be dead:

I am affraide of this Gun-powder Percy though he be dead. How if hee should counterfeit too, and rise? I am afraid hee would proue the better counterfeit: therefore Ile make him sure: yea, and Ile sweare I kill'd him. Why may not hee rise as well as I?

(TLN 3086–91; V, iv, 118–23)

Falstaff's lines draw attention to the fact that, in the early modern playhouses, *all* 'dead' people were, in fact, counterfeiting. Cadavers could not be literally presented on stage, and the body of the actor stood in for the corpse.⁵⁰ Prince Hal may speak directly with

the audience, and he may gaze upon bodies that cannot gaze back, but Falstaff's articulation of how bodies signify in theatre situates him more firmly in the *platea*.

An Alternative Authority of Performance

And now we can reformulate Weimann's theory more completely. Rather than seeing *locus* and *platea* as functions of stage geography, social legitimacy, or actor–audience interactivity, it seems most useful to reconceptualize them in terms of the way presentational elements in performance come to signify within the represented fiction. Regardless of their status within the represented fiction of the play, those characters who are most aware of this theatrical 'semiotics' and who showcase their ability to manipulate such signifiers are privileged by the performance medium. Because this theatrical semiotics *is* the system by which playgoers create meaning in the Renaissance playhouse, Weimann is right that what is privileged in performance is a function of the actor–audience relationship. However, Weimann is wrong in suggesting that certain figures might be understood specifically as *platea* characters.⁵¹ Certain scenes or parts of scenes can also foreground theatrical conventions, even if characters within them do not.

The feigned storm scene in Act IV, Scene i of *Two Noble Kinsmen*, for example, draws attention to the phenomenological impossibility of distinguishing between a fake storm and a 'real' storm on the bare platform stage. It emphasizes the necessity of verbal cues, actors' movements, and props in signifying what cannot be literally presented on the stage. So while certain characters utilize the *platea* techniques more often, the terms *locus* and *platea* inherently describe presentational dynamics of performance, not characters.

A theory of what is privileged in early modern theatrical performance might best be formulated, then, as follows: regardless of *who* is socially privileged within the world of the play and regardless of *what* is privileged, thematically or otherwise, in a text-based analysis, moments in these plays that foregrounded the process by which elements

presented onstage came to signify within the represented fiction were *theatrically privileged*.

If embedded in the signifying practices of the early modern theatre was a system of social relations and cultural understandings specific to that time, then theorizing the relationship between the presentational and the representational is a necessary first step to enriching both our ideas about Shakespeare's theatre and our interpretations of early modern history and culture.

Notes and References

For their feedback on earlier versions of this essay, many thanks to the Medieval-Renaissance Seminar at the University of Pennsylvania, especially Cary Mazer, Phyllis Rackin, and Peter Stallybrass. I am also grateful to Nels Christensen, John Gillies, Katherine Rowe, Bruce Smith, and Robert Weimann for their comments and suggestions.

1. See, for example, Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995); Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, 'The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, LIV (1993), p. 255–83; and Randall McLeod (writing as 'Random Cloud'), 'The very names of the Persons': Editing and the Invention of Dramatic Character', *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, ed. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 88–96.

2. Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function*, ed. Robert Schwartz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); German edition published in Berlin, 1967. Weimann further develops the concepts of *locus* and *platea* in 'Bifold Authority in Shakespeare's Theatre', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XXXIX (1988), p. 401–17, and *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre*, ed. Helen Higbee and William West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

3. Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*, p. 74.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 74–6. In *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice* Weimann describes the *locus* as embodying 'localized, that is, spatially self-coherent representations. In Shakespeare's playhouse, there are a good many scenes that have a distinct, unmistakable setting (such as Macbeth's castle, Portia's Belmont, Gertrude's closet, Desdemona's chamber, Timon's cave, and so forth). They designate either a particular locality or a given place, such as a garden, bridge, court, gateway, or prison' (p. 190).

5. Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*, p. 74, 76, 80.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 212–13.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 237, 228.

9. Although engaged in a very different kind of project, David Schalkwyk highlights this aspect of Weimann's

work when he asserts that the 'massive authority' of theatrical performance lies in its power to 'represent, transform, and limit the authority of a class who are also patrons and the pre-eminent audience of the theatre'. See his *Speech and Performance in Shakespeare's Sonnets and Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 34.

10. Mark Fortier, *Theory/Theatre: an Introduction*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 161.

11. Peter Thomson, *Shakespeare's Theatre*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 57. For further examples, see Colin Counsell, *Signs of Performance: an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Theatre* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 17–20; Penny Gay, 'Twelfth Night: "The Babbling Gossip of the Air"', *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works*, Vol. III, ed. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p. 439–43; John Gillies, 'Place and Space in Three Late Plays', *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works*, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 186; and Arthur F. Kinney, *Shakespeare by Stages: an Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p. 15–16.

12. Wilhelm Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage: the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 394.

13. Yu Jin Ko, 'A Little Touch of Harry in the Light: Henry V at the New Globe', *Shakespeare Survey*, LII (1999), p. 107–19. For additional instances, see Elaine Aston, *Feminist Theatre Practice: a Handbook* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 95–6; Peter Donaldson, *Shakespearean Films, Shakespearean Directors* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 5; Lorraine Helms, 'Acts of Resistance: the Feminist Player', *The Weyward Sisters: Shakespeare and Feminist Politics*, ed. Dymna C. Callaghan, Lorraine Helms, and Jyotsna Singh (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), p. 102–56; Dennis Kennedy, 'Shakespeare without His Language', *Shakespeare, Theory, and Performance*, ed. James C. Bulman (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 133–48; Loren Kruger, *Post-Imperial Brecht: Politics and Performance, East and South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 281–336; Jonna Mackin, 'Raising Life to a Kind of Art: Eliot and Music Hall', *T. S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music*, ed. John Xiros Cooper (New York: Garland, 2000), p. 49–64; and William Paul, 'Space, Gender, Performance: the Three Dimensions of *Kiss Me Kate*', paper presented at the Society for Cinema Studies Conference, Washington, D.C., 1990.

14. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass, ed., *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 7.

15. Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: the Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 224.

16. Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: a Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 105.

17. Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 209.

18. In addition to scholars already mentioned above, see also Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1994); Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); and Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: the Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

19. See, for example, Bernard Beckerman, *Shakespeare at the Globe, 1599–1609* (New York: Macmillan, 1962); James C. Bulman, ed., *Shakespeare, Theory, and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1996); Alan C. Dessen, *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); *Recovering Shakespeare's Theatrical Vocabulary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and *Rescripting Shakespeare: the Text, the Director, and Modern Productions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Michael Goldman, *Shakespeare and the Energies of Drama* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Philip C. McGuire and David A. Samuelson, ed., *Shakespeare: the Theatrical Dimension* (New York: AMS, 1979); J. L. Styan, *Shakespeare's Stagecraft* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); and Marvin Thompson and Ruth Thompson, ed., *Shakespeare and the Sense of Performance: Essays in the Tradition of Performance Criticism in Honor of Bernard Beckerman* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989).
20. On spectacle and ideology, see Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975) and Roy Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals, 1450–1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). For interesting work in theatre history that has often been ignored by historicist scholars – and which has itself de-emphasized the theoretical insights and methodologies growing out of cultural materialism and new historicism – see, for example, R. B. Graves, *Lighting the Shakespearean Stage, 1567–1642* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999); Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company, 1594–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Roslyn Lander Knutson, *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company, 1594–1613* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1991), and *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Suzanne R. Westfall, *Patrons and Performance: Early Tudor Household Revels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Paul Whitfield White and Suzanne R. Westfall, *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
21. W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 154–5.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 155–6. For a salient example, see Philip C. McGuire's introduction to *Shakespeare: the Theatrical Dimension*. McGuire describes theatrical performance as a way of 'making physically present (of realizing) possibilities of perception and feelings that lie attenuated and frozen in the script' (p. xx; original emphasis).
23. See, in particular, Weimann's theoretically informed introduction to *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice* (p. 1–17) as well as his new historicist discussion of Italian architecture and linear perspective (p. 185–91).
24. Although Tessa Watt, Adam Fox, and others have recently argued that literacy rates were much higher in early modern England than has traditionally been assumed, class distinctions still played a significant role in textual production. See Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).
25. Weimann, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice*, p. 12, and *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*, p. 216.
26. Kent Cartwright, for example, referring to Weimann's work on 'blocking', defines the *locus* as 'the geographically specific middle and rear region of the Elizabethan stage' and the *platea* as 'the generalized no-man's-land proximate to, and shared psychically with, the audience': see *Shakespearean Tragedy and Its Double: the Rhythms of Audience Response* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1991), p. 39. For other similar instances, see Ruth Lunney, *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition: Innovation in the English Drama Before 1595* (Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 171, and Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 58. Although both Lunney and Lopez concede that the upstage–downstage distinction cannot be taken too literally, the spatial aspect of Weimann's formulation is, nevertheless, understood to be central to his work.
27. The quotation is Weimann's (*Author's Pen and Actor's Voice*, p. 193).
28. Michael Mooney, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Trans-actions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), p. xii.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 19, xii; original emphasis.
30. S. L. Bethell, *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1944), p. 37–8. For other early work on 'dual consciousness' in English drama, see Maynard Mack, 'Engagement and Detachment in Shakespeare's Plays', *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama in Honor of Hardin Craig*, ed. Richard Hosley (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1962), p. 275–96; and Anne Righter [Barton], *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962). Jackson I. Cope's *The Theater and the Dream: from Metaphor to Form in Renaissance Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973) was published after the German edition of Weimann's *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition* but was included when the text was revised and translated into English. See also Bernard Beckerman's *Shakespeare at the Globe*, especially his accounts of 'localized' space (p. 64–9) and stage illusion (p. 157–68). Although not cited in *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*, Beckerman's work seems to play a significant role in *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice*. For an account of 'dual consciousness' contemporary with the English-language version of Weimann's earlier book, see Stephen Booth, 'Doubling in Shakespeare's Plays', in McGuire and Samuelson, p. 103–31.
31. Weimann, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice*, p. 180.
32. Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*, p. 251. In considering the social implications of 'illusionistic' and 'nonillusionistic' forms of theatre, he also draws on Brecht's dichotomy of the 'dramatic theatre' and the 'epic theatre,' the former romantic and politically passive and the latter socially informed and politically active. Although Weimann critiques Brecht's valorization of 'convention and stylization', which he sees as 'fall[ing] short of a sense of the complexity of Shakespearean dramaturgy' (p. 250–1), his work resonates notably with Brecht's emphasis on the epic theatre's ability to deconstruct dramatic illusion. See Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*, p. 249–52, and Bertolt Brecht, 'The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre', *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), p. 33–42.
33. Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in*

Early Modern Drama (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 2. See the discussions of liminality (à la Victor Turner and Arnold van Gennep) in Chapter 2 of this volume, 'Prologue as Threshold and Usher', esp. p. 37–41, and in Chapter 8 of *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice*, 'Shakespeare's Endings: Commodious Thresholds', esp. p. 235–6 and 240–5. In *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice* Weimann also uses the term 'threshold' when he associates the carnivalesque and marginalized place of the stage with the 'spatial semantics in this threshold function of the *platea*' and with the 'threshold functions' of characters located in 'the downstage position of Launce and his dog... Falstaff, Parolles, Thersites, Lucio, Autolycus, and others' (p. 195). The term appears in Weimann's earlier work as well, as in his statement that 'between nonrepresentational speech and psychological realism there is a vast and often misunderstood threshold where the traditional and the modern mix rather freely' (*Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*, p. 233–4).

34. This quotation, as well as the ticket prices I mention below, can be found in printed brochures put out by the Globe Theatre as well as on its website (www.shakespeares-globe.org, accessed 4 Jan. 2006).

35. Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 24.

36. Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company*, p. 47–8.

37. John Orrell, 'The Theaters', *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 106–7, 109.

38. All quotations from Shakespeare's plays are from Charlton Hinman, ed., *The First Folio of Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1996), with through-line numbers (TLN), followed by act, scene, and line numbers from Stephen Greenblatt et al., eds., *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 1997).

39. The dynamics in Act II, Scene ii of *Merchant of Venice*, when Lancelot first meets his blind father Old Gobbo, are very similar to the scenes I have been discussing. In particular, the two characters must be located in the same part of the stage when the blind Gobbo uses his fingers to explore his son's head and exclaims 'Lord worshipt might he be, what a beard hast thou got' (TLN 655; II, ii, 82).

40. Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*, p. 227.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Weimann, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice*, p. 67 (original emphasis). For other accounts of the staging of this scene, see Douglas C. Sprigg, 'Shakespeare's Visual Stagecraft: the Seduction of Cressida', in McGuire and Samuelson, p. 149–63, and Michael W. Shurgot, *Stages of Play: Shakespeare's Theatrical Energies in Elizabethan Performance* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), p. 183–98. Both Sprigg and Shurgot analyze the dynamics of spectatorship in this scene in order to bring certain thematic features of the play into sharper relief. Sprigg follows Styan in placing Thersites in one 'downstage' corner and argues that rapid changes in the audience's visual focus reflect the play's contradictory imaginings of Cressida's character. Shurgot locates Thersites in one of the 'upstage' corners and takes issue with Sprigg's privileging of Thersites. Shurgot posits that audience members would have identified with the visual perspectives of those actors situated closest to them onstage and that, therefore, playgoers in the 'side

audience' would have responded differently from those in the 'central audience' (p. 176). Weimann argues that 'while both studies persuasively underline the demanding multiplicity of perspectives, they ignore or underestimate the localizing force of both tent and "torch" (V, ii, 5) as well as Thersites' presentational *gestus*' (*Author's Pen and Actor's Voice*, p. 256, n. 11).

43. For accounts of pageantry, spectacle, and the consolidation of royal power, see Orgel and Strong. Regarding gallants in the playhouses, see Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 34–7, as well as Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Sallibrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 188. For essays challenging modern interpretations of subject and object, see Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Sallibrass, ed., *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

44. I am thinking, for example, of *Love's Labour's Lost*, when the lords attempt to impersonate Muscovites, and of *Twelfth Night*, when Feste stages a conversation between himself and Sir Topas. In early modern England printed books attempted to approximate spoken language as best they could. See Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 107–29.

45. For a more detailed examination of such phenomenological issues, see Smith, p. 6–10.

46. For other discussions of this speech, see James Black, 'King Lear: Art Upside Down', *Shakespeare Survey*, XXXIII (1980), p. 35–42; Stephen Booth, *King Lear, Macbeth, Indefinition, and Tragedy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 165, n. 25; Alan C. Dessen, 'Two Falls and a Trap', *English Literary Renaissance*, V (1975), p. 291–307; Alvin B. Kernan, 'Formalism and Realism in Elizabethan Drama: the Miracles in *King Lear*', *Renaissance Drama*, IX (1966), p. 59–66; Harry Levin, 'The Heights and the Depths: a Scene from *King Lear*', *Shakespeare and the Revolution of the Times: Perspectives and Commentaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 162–86; Michael Mooney, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Transactions*, p. 140–4, and "'Edgar I Nothing Am": Figureposition in *King Lear*', *Shakespeare Survey*, XXXVIII (1985), p. 153–66; and Derek Peat, "'And that's True too": *King Lear* and the Tension of Uncertainty', *Shakespeare Survey*, XXXIII (1980), p. 43–53. See also Alan C. Dessen, 'Theatrical Metaphor: Seeing and Not-seeing', *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters*, p. 130–55, for a more general consideration of related issues.

47. Michael Mooney argues that both this line and Edgar's vocal changes 'mark stages in his attempt to regain his true identity' (*Shakespeare's Dramatic Transactions*, p. 142–3). He contends that Edgar's sharing of privileged knowledge with the audience situates him in the *platea*. Mooney's argument here complements mine, though our emphases are quite different. He focuses primarily on the audience's knowledge of events represented within the play; my argument centres on the scene's foregrounding of early modern theatre's own representational strategies.

48. Jean MacIntyre and Garrett P. J. Epp, "'Clothes worth all the rest": Costumes and Properties', *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 273–4. (Edgar's soliloquy in Act III, Scene vi, appears only in the quarto version of the play.)

49. The play is available in the Early English Books Online (EEBO) database as well as in W. W. Greg, ed., *Look About You* (London: Malone Society Reprints, 1913).

50. Jody Enders discusses popular myths about supposedly real deaths onstage in *Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). For a discussion of early modern anatomy theatres and the spectacular display of corpses, see Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995).

51. In his earlier book, Weimann's list of *platea* characters includes 'Launce and his friend Speed, most of the other Shakespearean clowns, the porters in *Macbeth* and *Henry VIII*, the gravediggers in *Hamlet*, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, Richard Gloucester, Iago, the Fool, and, partly, Edmund in *King Lear*, Falstaff, Thersites, Apemantus, and – with some reservations – Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, the Bastard

Falconbridge in *King John*, and Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*. Also belonging to this group are characters whose status within court groupings is temporarily changed or weakened as a result of real or feigned madness (Edgar, Lear, Hamlet, and, to a lesser extent, Ophelia).' See *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*, p. 224.

His more recent book also includes the murderers in *Richard III*, the 'rural fellow' in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Parolles, Lucio, and both 'Launce and his dog' (*Author's Pen and Actor's Voice*, p. 195). Michael Mooney follows Weimann's lead in applying *locus* and *platea* to 'the ways Shakespeare presented his tragic protagonists' (*Shakespeare's Dramatic Transactions*, p. 22). Emily C. Bartels also echoes Weimann's emphasis on *locus* and *platea* as applying specifically to characters: her 'Breaking the Illusion of Being: Shakespeare and the Performance of Self', *Theatre Journal*, XLVI (1994), p. 171–85, argues that *platea* characters are, in fact, more coherent in their subjectivity than *locus* characters.