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## Front Matter

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## From the Editor

The editorial board of the *Selected Papers of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference* is proud to present the fourth volume of its annual journal. The works included here were first presented at the 2011 conference, entitled “Shakespeare and Ethics,” which convened November 3-5 at Michigan State University in East Lansing. The seven papers published here were selected from the forty-two papers and two plenary talks. The conference was generously supported by the Michigan State University Department of English; The Douglas Peterson Bequest, MSU; The Graduate School, MSU; The Dean’s Office, College of Arts and Letters; The Department of Theater, MSU; The Center for Gender In Global Contexts, MSU; and The American Shakespeare Collective.

The volume's first essay, “Time Served in Prison Shakespeare,” examines the difficult questions that emerge when Shakespeare is performed in situations defined by state control. Niels Herold calls on Zdeněk Stříbrný’s description of “double time”—the sense that the events of a dramatic performance occupy a short time in the present while simultaneously inhabiting a longer-reaching historical expanse of time—to explore how plays like *The Winter’s Tale* intersect with the unique sense of time experienced by prisoners. With the help of Matt Wallace, Herold’s essay explores how inmate actors “express this double time of confinement and performance as a mode of dramatic production that both historicizes and presentizes...*The Winter’s Tale*.” In so doing, Herold’s essay simultaneously addresses scholarly debates regarding the usefulness of character criticism as incorporated in programs like Shakespeare Behind Bars, as well as larger ethical questions of the redemptive power of theater.

In “Hamlet’s Hard-Boiled Ethics,” meanwhile, James A. Lewin argues that “Hamlet’s tragic flaw cannot be separated from the political background of his times and the uncompromising idealism of his ethics.” Reading the play in terms of film noir, the essay calls on a tradition of detectives from Oedipus to Sherlock Holmes to Sam Spade to investigate Hamlet’s reactions to the chaos surrounding him in Elsinore. Lewin uses Spade’s retelling of an unseen character’s existential crisis after a close encounter with a falling steel beam to trace Hamlet’s adjustments to a world where danger seems to drop from the sky without warning. In the

end, Hamlet's ability to accept his destiny and act without ego allows him to fulfill his role without becoming, strictly speaking, a revenger.

David Summers begins "Much Virtue in If": Ethics and Uncertainty in *Hamlet* and *As You Like It* with a related emphasis on the uncertainties in *Hamlet*. "Before embarking on the morally and spiritually dangerous course of executing another human being," Summers argues, "Hamlet wants to make sure he has his facts straight. What could be more reasonable, or more virtuous?" These habits of ethical decision-making suggest that the play advances "something like a recovered Aristotelian ethic" while questioning the moral system of commonplaces embodied in Polonius's character. Summers extends his analysis to incorporate the uncertainties upon which *As You Like It* thrives, concluding that the instability—the "iffness"—at the basis of the comic play illustrates a peacemaking urge, a "posture" that expresses a "willingness to suspend even truth and personal conviction...in favor of peacemaking and gentleness."

Allison Grant focuses in on the sexual politics intertwined in this drive toward peacemaking in *As You Like It*. In "The Dangers of Playing House: Celia's Subversive Role in *As You Like It*," Grant argues that the play creates a space for same sex relationships that threaten the patriarchal order's reproductive imperative. Celia's offer to make Rosalind into Duke Frederick's heir reveals a new depth of emotional, financial, and social commitment in her relationship to Rosalind. This is intensified even further by Celia and Rosalind's setting up housekeeping in Arden, where their financial and emotional partnership is solidified. Expanding upon work by Valerie Traub and Will Fisher, Grant's essay explores the circulation of desire in Arden, reading Celia's sudden marriage at the end of *As You Like It* as an illustration of how far Celia will go to maintain her commitment to Rosalind—that is, to keep her as a part of the family.

In marked contrast to this tone of acceptance and reconciliation, Brandon Polite examines the extreme price that the concept of honor demands in some of *Titus Andronicus*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, and *Othello*. "Tortured Calculations: Body Economies in Shakespeare's Cultures of Honor" traces the effect of talionic law in these works. Calling on Jean Améry and Susan J. Brison in his analysis of *Titus Andronicus*, Polite argues that Titus formulates his torture of Chiron and Demetrius to equal

the pain of Lavinia's rape. In the end, however, the play "ultimately shows us that the consequences...of considering justice a matter of balance or evenness, can be just as gruesome as those resulting from the unprincipled, imprecise barbarism over which it supposedly marks an advance." The talionic system in *Titus*—as well as in *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Othello*—dwells on the masculine control of women's bodies; when these female bodies cannot be controlled, they are "cannibalized by—both consumed by and expelled from—their respective talionic systems and the patriarchies that reinforce them."

The individual's role within the cycles of history is also a central focus of "'How this World is Given to Lying!': Orson Welles's Deconstruction of Traditional Historiographies in *Chimes at Midnight*." Jeffrey Yeager's analysis of Welles's representation of the systematic glorification of war, at the expense of the individuals involved in the fighting, shows *Chimes at Midnight* as interrogating the ethics of the war film. Examining Welles's film alongside Olivier's *Henry V*, and Tillyard's analysis of the Second Tetralogy as the institutionalization of the Great Man school of history, the essay articulates Falstaff's powerless position after his rejection by the king. Yeager concludes that "Hal's immersion within the tavern world, his *locus amoenus*, and friendship with Falstaff is only illusory; power and order must be restored and Falstaff must be punished in order to restore the chronicle history as a convenient fiction over the suppressed truth of the cyclical view." In the end, then, "Prince Hal must reject Falstaff not because he is the ideal king as Tillyard suggested but because Falstaff, unlike any other character, understands the fine veneer shaping the legacy of Hal and the nature of history."

The question of kingliness drives Lindsey Simon-Jones's explorations of language use in "Lexical Dichotomy and Ethics in *Macbeth*." Her statistical analysis of the play's text illustrates changes in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's speech, showing that they gradually come to use more Germanic than Latinate terms as their plans grow bloodier. Simon-Jones reads these shifts in relation to early modern debates regarding the use of the English language in government and education, concluding that "the language of *Macbeth* plays on deep-seated and long-held linguistic prejudices which suggested that, in some cases, the use of a particular kind of English (particularly in its archaic and Germanic forms) might imply one is unsuited for royalty and kingship." As the play moves

toward Act 5, Simon-Jones's analysis shows, the quantity of Latinate terms decreases, placing "greater emphasis on the Germanic derivations" and thus marking his "ethical and moral Otherness through language."

The fine of works of these authors are not only the only contributions that have made this volume possible. Sandra Logan's organizational efforts at Michigan State University provided the first forum for these original papers; Edmund Taft's devotion to the *Selected Papers* established this publication as a means of continuing the conference's projects and conversations. Without them, this issue would not exist. I would also like to thank the members of the editorial board for its dedicated service and thoughtful input, Co-Editor Gabriel Rieger for his commitment to the journal, and Assistant Editor Marlia Fontaine-Weisse for her patience and resourcefulness throughout the publication process.

# **“Shakespeare and Ethics”**

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