

The Director as Shakespeare Editor

Alan C. Dessen

[*Shakespeare Survey* 59 (2006): 182-92.]

To discuss directors and their productions in relation to editors and their editions is at first glance to mix (or conflate) apples and oranges, cuts and emendations. To the scholar, the differences may far outweigh any similarities, but the essential problem facing both groups remains the same: when putting quill to paper, Shakespeare was fashioning his plays for players, playgoers, playhouses, and (perhaps) play readers that no longer exist. How does or should an editor or theatrical professional factor in the gap between the 1590s-early 1600s and the 1990s-early 2000s? To focus on the preparation of early modern English plays for presentation in today's theatre is to bring into focus the problems and choices involved in a species of 'editing' geared to a larger arena and a less predictable audience.¹

When mounting a production of a Shakespeare play, today's theatrical professionals take a wide range of approaches in choosing which words, speeches, and scenes to perform. Occasionally a textual adviser or dramaturg will be on hand to sort through the various options; some actors and directors deal directly with the Quarto or First Folio texts; others rely on a particular series as their chosen authority (e.g., the Arden, Oxford, or Cambridge editions). One director told me that, after various paperbacks fell apart during the rigors of the rehearsal process, he chose a particular edition for its durable binding. During the rehearsal process some directors encourage their actors to use as many different editions as possible so as to highlight choices and anomalies, whereas others hand their personnel a playscript that contains pre-established cuts and transpositions, so that some cast members may never consult a full text of the play in question.

The problems in for-the-stage text work are comparable to yet different from those facing the on-the-page editor. One major difference is the question of length, for editors dealing with *Hamlet* or *Richard III* are not under pressure to reduce the number of lines in their texts, whereas directors must worry about running time and playgoers' staying power. Issues central to scholarly introductions (textual history, sources, style, performance history) are not irrelevant to the thinking that lies behind a good production (and such material regularly turns up in program notes), but, unless a theatrical company is prepared to resort to opera supertitles, no onstage equivalent is

available for textual glosses on hard words, mythological or historical allusions, and difficult syntax. To hold the attention of playgoers (and, in commercial theatre, to keep bums in seats) a director must find an onstage vocabulary that is shared by actors and audience.

And thereby hangs my tale. The spectrum of choices I have witnessed in my playgoing does not lend itself to easy summary (and much of this playgoing took place before the recent scholarly arguments that postulate 'maximal' Shakespeare scripts that do not correspond to what would actually have been played at the Globe or Blackfriars).² At one extreme is a director such as Deborah Warner who has provided strong productions with few if any cuts from the received text. At the other extreme are those productions that for a variety of reasons (e.g., theatrical exigency, a directorial 'concept') exhibit substantive, even radical changes (what I term *rewriting*). In between these two poles lie most current productions.

The most common form of directorial editing is the omission of lines, speeches, and even entire scenes in order to reduce the running time of long scripts. Examples are plentiful and will be evident in the accounts that follow. Next in line are the many adjustments generated by a director's fear that auditors will be mystified by the words spoken by the actors. Will a significant number of playgoers unaccustomed to blank verse, early modern English, and difficult syntax and accustomed to processing information through the eye rather than through the ear give up when confronted with a daunting line or passage and assume that they cannot follow what is happening onstage? This assessment is reinforced by the familiar sight during a performance of audience members turning to their programmes or a copy of the play in the hope of relocating themselves in the plot.

Easiest to categorize are changes to individual words and phrases that are deemed opaque, politically incorrect, or otherwise troublesome (as when they conflict with a play's casting or design). Exactly what is deemed daunting or unpalatable to the consumer can vary widely. Typical is Leon Rubin's *Measure for Measure* (Stratford Festival Canada 2005) where *stock-fishes* became *codfish* (3.2.109) and *gyves* became *chains* (4.2.11).³ To heighten the comedy generated by the mechanicals in his *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Globe 2002) Mike Alfreds had his actors say *turtle pigeon*, not *sucking dove* (1.2.82-3); *prolapse*, not *prologue* (3.1.17); *transcommunicated*, not *translated* (3.1.119); and *parasite*, not *paramour* (4.2.12). In his *Antony and Cleopatra* (RSC 2002) Michael Attenborough had Enobarbus say 'And for his *nourishment* pays his heart', not *ordinary*,

and 'Mine honesty and I begin to *cross*', not *square* (2.2.225, 3.13.41); had Antony say 'Like boys unto a *game*', not *muss* (3.13.91); and, most strikingly, had Cleopatra say 'Then put my *robes and sandals* on him', not *tires and mantles* (2.5.22).

As to political correctness, the best known passage deemed potentially offensive is Portia's comment on the departing Morocco 'Let all of his complexion choose me so' (*The Merchant of Venice*, 2.7.79) which is regularly omitted, as is the third witch's 'Liver of blaspheming Jew' (*Macbeth*, 4.1.26). Harder to cut, because it is the climax to a comic sequence, is Benedick's 'if I do not love her, I am a Jew' (*Much Ado About Nothing*, 2.3.263), so that Gregory Doran (RSC 2002) changed *Jew* to *jack* (other alternatives have been *knave*, *fool*, and even *jerk*). To avoid any semblance of a racial slur, the director of a 1995 *Macbeth* (Shakespeare Theatre, Washington, D.C.) changed Macduff's 'Be not a *niggard* of your speech' (4.3.180) to *miser*; and the director of a 1989 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (San Francisco Shakespeare Festival), which featured an Asian-American actor as Snout-Wall, changed references to the *chink* in the wall (e.g., 'Show me thy *chink*' - 5.1.177) to *hole*.⁴

Other comparable editing of words, phrases, and stage directions can best be classified as pragmatic. If *Henry V* is to be presented in modern dress with modern weaponry, the apology for 'four or five most vile and ragged foils / (Right ill dispos'd, in brawl ridiculous)' (Chorus to Act 4, 50-1) is a likely casualty, as in Nicholas Hytner's 2003 National Theatre production. To avoid an unwanted laugh at what may seem initially an incongruous image, the same director had Paulina in *The Winter's Tale* (National Theatre 2001) say not 'I, an old *turtle*, will wing me to some wither'd bough' (5.3.132-3) but *turtledove*. In Steven Pimlott's *Hamlet* (RSC 2001) references to 'young Osric' (5.2.196, 259) were omitted because the same older actor who had played the Ghost doubled as Osric (who therefore was definitely not a junior Polonius in the making). Jupiter's descent '*sitting upon an eagle*' (*Cymbeline*, 5.4.92.s.d) is a perennial problem when staging this script, but that problem was compounded for Rachel Kavanaugh outdoors in Regents Park in 2005 with no acting area above. Her solution: she eliminated Jupiter completely so that one of the ghosts produced and then delivered the tablet with the prophecy. In Rubin's Stratford Festival Canada modern dress *Measure for Measure* the clerical figures wore dark suits with no hoods, so that all references to *friar* were changed to *father*. In an action-related adjustment, Mariana, pleading with Isabella to speak in

behalf of Angelo, may say 'O Isabel! will you not lend a knee?' (5.1.442), but in this show the *knee* reference was gone so that this Isabella did not have to kneel.

Along with running time, obscurity, and pragmatism, another factor in preparing a script for the stage as opposed to an edition for a reader is theatrical exigency, most commonly a shortage of personnel. A director in 2005 presenting *As You Like It* or *The Tempest* at the Festival Theatre in Stratford, Ontario need not economize on actors (especially given the availability in the same theatre of singers and dancers from *Hello Dolly*), so that the Act 4 masque in *The Tempest* could have ten nymphs and reapers - as opposed to other productions I have seen where Ferdinand and Miranda had to be enlisted in the dance. Smaller companies, however, must confront significant logistical problems that in turn lead to editing of the script.

Changes linked to exigency are most common in productions of non-Shakespeare items, as seen regularly in London Fringe shows. The 2002 Southwark Playhouse production of *The Changeling* with a cast of nine had some actors play a single role (Beatrice, Alsemero, De Flores, Lollo) but doubled Diaphanta-Isabella, Antonio-Tomazo, Vermandero-Alibius, and Jasperino-Franciscus. Given such recycling of figures in the two plots, various adjustments followed: the first two madhouse scenes (1.2, 3.3) were combined; Vermandero and Tomazo spoke with Isabella, not Alibius in 5.2 (so that Vermandero-Alibius need not talk to himself); and to avoid the coming together of figures from the two plots in the same scene the final forty lines were cut, so that this show ended with Beatrice's dying words. At the same venue the 2005 production of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, also with a cast of nine, omitted Bergetto, Philotis, Richardetto, and Grimaldi (in 1.2 Vasques fought with Donado, not Grimaldi) with the same actor playing Donado and the Cardinal. The result was a gain in intensity and pace (the show including interval lasted less than two-and-a-half hours), but at a price (gone were the unintended death of Bergetto and the Cardinal's shielding of Grimaldi), and in the final moments the Cardinal was literally the only figure left standing. The Landor Theatre production of *Women Beware Women* (2002) with a cast of ten cut Sordido (so that the Ward's role was much diminished), had the same actor play Fabritio and the Cardinal (so that the former disappeared from the final third of the script), and made a series of adjustments to the climactic masque-within-the-play (in addition to the limited cast, this pub theatre had no above for Livia-Juno and no trap door for the caltrop).

Comparable adjustments were provided by David Lan in his *Doctor Faustus* (Young Vic 2002) presented with seven actors (six men, including Jude Law, and one woman) and incorporating elements from both the A and B texts along with many omissions. The two major casualties were Helen of Troy and the Old Man. The display of Helen to the scholars was offstage, a lighting effect rather than an actress, so that she was not seen by the playgoer. Her subsequent appearance to Faustus was represented by a mirror on a chair; Faustus therefore could not exit with her, and the full resonance of his big speech (e.g., 'Her lips suck forth my soul, see where it flies' - A-1360, B-1877)⁵ was diminished. To omit the Old Man is to eliminate the trigger for Mephistophiles offering the dagger to Faustus (a moment that therefore seemed abrupt) and to lose the speech describing an angel with 'a vial full of precious grace' hovering over Faustus (A-1320-3, B-1835-8), a major statement in this final sequence of the alternative or Up.

Such severe compression owing to a shortage of actors is not as common with Shakespeare's scripts; nonetheless, the merging of less than central figures is standard practice, particularly in the history plays. Tim Carroll made a variety of such adjustments in his *Richard II* (Globe 2003) where several smaller roles were curtailed or telescoped together. For example, Berkeley in 2.3 became Salisbury, so that the same figure interacted with Bolingbroke in 2.3, the Welsh Captain in 2.4, and Richard in 3.2; the Willoughby and Ross lines were gone from 2.3; the Abbot was gone from 4.1 along with the three-figure coda to that scene involving the Abbot, Carlisle, and Aumerle that echoes the end of 2.1 with Northumberland, Willoughby, and Ross. Far more extreme (and hence atypical) was the Riverside Studio's *Measure for Measure Malaya* (2002) adapted for seven actors. Gone were such figures as Escalus, the Provost, Elbow, Froth, and Friar Peter-Thomas; Barnadine was renamed Pompey and absorbed some of the latter's lines about other inmates (4.3.1-19). Key speeches from Escalus and the Provost were given to Lucio so that this composite figure spoke both Escalus' praise of the Duke (3.2.232-7) and Lucio's own denigrations (3.2.116-140, 4.3.156-66).

To economise on the number of actors can generate new problems. In his 2005 *Measure for Measure* Leon Rubin chose in 2.1 (the comic display of 'justice' at work that involves Escalus, Pompey, Froth, and Elbow) to eliminate an anonymous justice in the script with whom Escalus converses about Claudio's fate after Elbow's departure. These closing lines, in which Escalus invites the justice to dinner and the latter says 'Lord Angelo is severe' (2.1.276-86), were still included, but

Escalus' lines were addressed not to a fellow justice but to Elbow (the bumbling constable addicted to malapropisms). Since both the situation (why would Escalus confide in Elbow?) and the language were totally inappropriate, I found this choice jarring.

Several recent productions can demonstrate the range of adjustments linked to running time and exigency. Consider first the 2003 RSC and Globe productions of *Richard III*, a long script that places heavy demands on a theatrical company and its audience. For the RSC, Sean Holmes did much eliding but cut no scenes, so that included were 2.2 (even some of the children's lines that are almost always omitted), 2.3 (for two rather than three citizens), and the Stanley-Urswick 4.5 (with the latter part pared back), while atypically Richmond kept many of his lines in Act 5. At the Globe, Barry Kyle cut the citizens (2.3) and the children in 2.2 and moved some key 4.5 lines to 5.3. Both directors factored lines from Richard's soliloquies in *3 Henry VI* into the opening of 1.1; both (to save on personnel and costumes) created a composite clergyman who combined the Cardinal of 3.1 and Bishop Ely of 3.4 (at the Globe this same figure figured in 2.4 as well). In Stratford, Ratcliff rather than Brackenbury refused the women entry to the Tower in 4.1 (the goal was to create more of a through-line and set up a greater threat to the two boys).

Not all directors follow the same paths. In his *Coriolanus* (RSC 2002) David Farr did not make various adjustments I have come to expect (e.g., having the boy play silently during the women's dialogue in 1.3; cutting the servants at the end of 4.5; rescripting the elements of the final scene) though he did cut 4.3, the Roman traitor scene. Rather, he made his own distinctive moves - for example, cutting most of 4.1 and 4.2 and moving the women's attack on the tribunes in 4.2 to 4.6. Most unusual was his omitting Valeria from 5.3 so as to change the classic story that attributes the saving of Rome to three women and a child, not solely to the mother figure. Also atypical were the choices in the 2005 West End *As You Like It* where David Lan cut 5.1 (the only scripted appearance of William) and also Touchstone's discourse on the degrees of the lie (often a show-stopping tour de force, as with Stephen Ouimette's rendition in Stratford Festival Canada 2005) and, in a highly unusual choice, repositioned Jaques' famous speech on the seven ages of man *after* the arrival of Orlando and Adam. In this production, Jaques' final disparaging lines on old age ('second

childishness, and mere oblivion / Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing' - 2.7.165-6) were not juxtaposed with Adam being borne in by a caring Orlando.

A director's editing linked to obscurity, exigency, or running time calls attention to the gap between the 'real world' of commercial theatre (where saving one actor's salary, I was told by a U.S. artistic director, can pay for a set) and the more rarefied world of editing on-the-page. Of even greater interest are directorial changes to solve or resolve perceived problems. Editors may deal with apparent anomalies in terms of the faulty transmission of a text or unrevised first thoughts in an authorial manuscript (and may suggest alternatives), whereas a director can actually rescript the scene or omit it entirely. For example, readers who puzzle over the presence of Christopher Sly in the first two scenes of the First Folio's *The Taming of the Shrew* would have found no 'solutions' at the Globe or in Stratford-upon-Avon in 2003, for those scenes were gone from both productions. Similarly, I have seen several productions of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* where directors have sought to 'improve' the underwritten sub-plot in Act 4 that involves horses, Germans, and revenge on the Host by Doctor Caius and Parson Hugh, but in her rendition (RSC 2002) Rachel Kavanaugh took the Gordian knot approach and omitted this material entirely. She also cut the 4.1 language lesson, thereby sidestepping the need to recruit a child actor to play William Page.

Some of these adjustments or 'improvements' have become commonplace, even standard practice. In Sam Mendes' *Twelfth Night* (Donmar 2002) Malvolio, when reacting to the letter supposedly from Olivia, did not say 'She did commend my yellow stockings of late, she did praise my leg being cross-garter'd' (2.5.166-7). Yes, these lines are contradicted by Maria's subsequent comment ('He will come to her in yellow stockings, and 'tis a color she abhors, and cross-garter'd, a fashion she detests' - 198-200) so that actors and directors often eliminate the apparent anomaly. However, I am not the only reader of the scene who believes that, as with the crushing of MOAI, this contradiction is at the heart of the sequence (here, to reassure myself, I sounded out a series of actors including several who had played Malvolio). How far will Malvolio go to hold onto his dream, his 'what you will' approach to reality? Is an invented memory so alien to early twenty-first-century playgoers?

To present the two parts of *Henry IV* as back to back productions with the same personnel can lead to some exciting theatre, as with the English Shakespeare Company (1988), the RSC

(2000), and the National Theatre (2005), but to offer the two items as a unit generates problems that can lead to editing of Part One. At the National Theatre in 2005, Nicholas Hytner's acting script for *1 Henry IV* contained various elisions I have come to expect; for example, gone were Prince Hal's list of the words learned from the drawers (2.4.15-20), Falstaff's invocation of the camomile (2.4.400-2), and much of Worcester's politic speech to Hotspur (3.1.175-87). The only surprise was the omission of Hotspur's pre-battle speech (5.2.81-8) which can be a stirring, charismatic moment that also reinforces the issue of 'time'. Often cut elsewhere but included here were the carriers discussing fleas in 2.1, the practical joke involving Francis in 2.4, and the Archbishop-Michael scene (4.4) which looks forward to Part Two and is therefore often a casualty when Part One is presented alone.

To present the two parts in sequence, however, is to confront a problem: how do you move from Prince Hal's triumph in various senses at Shrewsbury at the end of Part One to his backsliding in his next appearance, what I think of as the 'small beer' scene with Poins (*2 Henry IV*, 2.2)? In the final moments of Michael Bogdanov's *1 Henry IV* (English Shakespeare Company 1988) Falstaff, after wounding Hotspur in the thigh, exited with the body (5.4.129), at which point the action shifted to the fate of Worcester and the ransom of Douglas in 5.5. With Henry IV still onstage, Falstaff re-entered with his claim that he, not Hal, had killed Hotspur, so that the king, overhearing most of this exchange (5.4.138-153), could depart no longer believing in his son. A stunned Hal, again estranged from his father, threw down his sword, and Falstaff had the final lines in the production (5.4.162-5), so that the playgoer was prepared for a diminished view of Hal when next seen in Part Two.

Hytner's choices were comparable albeit less extensive. The actions involving Hal, Falstaff, and Hotspur's body in 5.4 were not changed, but 5.5 (not a memorable scene for most readers) was rescripted. First, the King's opening speech (5.5.1-10) was directed not at two figures, Worcester and Vernon, but at three, for Douglas was included here among those sentenced to death. Prince Hal's subsequent two speeches and Prince John's response (17-33) were gone, so that that not only the account of Douglas' flight and capture was eliminated but, more significant, so was the example (in John's words) of Hal's 'high courtesy' (32) in awarding the ransom of Douglas and the honours of the day to Prince John in keeping with his earlier praise (5.4.17-20). Rather than publicly giving credit to both his brother and Douglas, Prince Hal had no role in the closure of this production - and

the final image was of the Falstaff Hal had promised to help 'if a lie may do thee grace' (5.4.157) rifling the onstage corpses. Any sense of a 'new' Hal in the final moments was thereby repressed.

Some problems can be resolved by inserting stage business. Readers of *Henry V* have wondered about the absence in the received text of the Dauphin from the negotiations in the final scene (one director told me that he and his cast had puzzled at length over this absence). In his 1988 English Shakespeare Company production Michael Bogdanov did include the Dauphin here and had him nonplus both the English and French figures by storming off the stage just as the treaty was being announced and celebrated. In contrast, Nicholas Hytner (National Theatre 2003) 'solved' the problem by having a fleeing Dauphin shot after the killing of the boys in Act 4.

Sometimes stage business can complete actions left unresolved in the script. In *Romeo and Juliet* a belligerent Tybalt, after overhearing Romeo, calls for his rapier before his confrontation with father Capulet (1.5.55) - a request left unfulfilled in the script. But in a 2002 production (Mercury Theatre, Colchester) a Peter relishing the prospect of violence hurried back with the weapons just as Capulet finished his demolition of a chastened Tybalt. Similarly, at the outset of 2.3 in *Much Ado About Nothing* Benedick sends off his boy to fetch a book from his study, but the Quarto provides no completion to this action. In both the Actors from the London Stage Fall 2002 five-actor production and Gregory Doran's RSC 2002 rendition the boy returned with the book while Benedick was trying to remain invisible to Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato - and in the latter this returnee created an even greater degree of comic awkwardness by refusing to leave until given a tip.

In his *Much Ado* Doran made another distinctive move linked to stage business. Scholars have speculated about a supposed missing scene mid way in this play which in turn directors have supplied, so playgoers should not be surprised to see a dumb show wherein Claudio and Don Pedro are seen observing Margaret in the guise of Hero being wooed by a man. Doran, however, went a step further by placing that man not below but above embracing a female figure. This interpretation was presumably linked to Don John's claim: 'Go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window ent'red' (3.2.112-13) rather than Claudio's query: 'What man was he talk'd with you yesternight / Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?' or Don Pedro's subsequent 'Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window' (4.1.83-4, 91).

Two related passages in *Measure for Measure* pose a problem that has led to adjustments in the theatre: the Duke's soliloquy in tetrameter couplets (3.2.261-82) and his subsequent soliloquy during the brief conference between Mariana and Isabella (4.1.59-64). A long note in the New Variorum edition⁶ records dissatisfaction going back to the eighteenth century with the latter passage, a meditation on how 'place and greatness' are vulnerable to 'millions of false eyes' (4.1.59). Why does the Duke express these sentiments at this point? Moreover, in practical terms is this speech long enough to allow for the Isabella-Mariana conference that takes place offstage? Similarly, does the tetrameter couplet speech, which starts 'He who the sword of heaven will bear / Should be as holy as severe' and moves to a plan of action in 'Craft against vice I must apply' (3.2.261-2, 277), make sense in its Folio position? In defense of the 4.1 speech Katherine Lever notes: 'The time has obviously been foreshortened, but this was permitted by the theatrical convention that time could be presumed to elapse during a soliloquy', but many directors agree with A. P. Rossiter that the earlier speech in couplets 'could equally well go in here - providing a necessary explanation and at a point where the Duke must be alone'.

To deal with this perceived problem directors have resorted to a variety of solutions. Steven Pimlott (RSC 1994) chose to omit the Duke's 4.1 Folio soliloquy but not to replace it with a section of the 3.2 speech; rather, his choice was elegant in its simplicity - the Duke stood silent onstage and looked impatiently at his watch. Jim Edmondson's solution (Oregon Shakespeare Festival 1986) was more elaborate than most: he repositioned the 4.1 speech as the Prologue and broke up the 3.2 speech so that one part was placed at the end of 3.1 just before his interval and the remainder replaced the original soliloquy in 4.1 - and no lines were left at the speech's original placement at the end of 3.2. Simon McBurney (National Theatre 2004) went a step further by switching from the mid scene *exeunt* of the two women to the beginning of 4.2 (the segment involving the Provost, Pompey, and Abhorson), then returning to the remainder of 4.1, then back to 4.2. Leon Rubin (Stratford Festival Canada 2005) omitted almost all of the 3.2 speech (because, I was told, of the odd rhythm generated by the metre and couplets) and also cut the final section of 4.1, so that an *exeunt* of the Duke, Mariana, and Isabella before the Duke's soliloquy concluded the scene. As a result, two speeches that help to define the Duke were missing from this show as well as the closing segment of 4.1 that helps to set up the Isabella-Mariana 'sisterhood'.

Such resolution of perceived problems or anomalies falls under the larger category of 'improvements' that theatrical professionals deem necessary or advisable. Here, moreover, is where directors can achieve what scholars can only dream of: correct apparent errors; supply what is seen as missing; and enhance a particular effect. Such adjustments or improvements take many forms. For example, in the received text of *Measure for Measure* Mistress Overdone reveals that Lucio's bastard child by Kate Keepdown 'is a year and a quarter old come Philip and Jacob' (3.2.201-2) but in Rubin's Stratford Festival Canada production that age was changed to thirteen so that in the final moments not only Kate Keepdown but also an actress playing a teen-aged girl emerged to corral Lucio.

The most extensive editing or rescripting is generated not by obscurity, exigency, or perceived problems but by a director's overriding thesis or 'concept'. An extreme example is Phil Willmott's *Measure for Measure Malaya* (Riverside Studios 2002) where (as noted in the program) the action took place 'In and around the prison headquarters of the newly appointed District Officer for an isolated British Colony in 1930s Malaya', with the Duke 'the Malayan High Commissioner', Angelo 'recently instated as the first District Officer of an isolated Malayan province', Lucio 'A British soldier assigned to the prison', Juliet 'A disgraced young English woman', Claudio 'A Eurasian civil servant working for the British', Overdone a Eurasian prostitute, and Isabella and Mariana also Eurasian. To summarize briefly the wholesale rewriting, the show opened not with 1.1 but with material from the Duke's speeches in 1.3 reshaped into an expository soliloquy (but gone was a key couplet: 'hence shall we see / If power change purpose: what our seemers be' - 1.3.53-4). In the action that followed, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 remained intact, but speeches elsewhere were cut, transposed, or reassigned. Race was a constant unspoken issue, given the three British men (the Duke, Angelo, and Lucio) and three Eurasian women (Isabella, Mariana, and Overdone). Most transformed was Act 5, for in this version Lucio, Mariana, and Isabella were aware of the Duke being Friar Lodowick from the outset (many of the revelations therefore were repositioned earlier before Angelo was involved); with no Escalus and no Friar Peter, the Duke never left the stage, Angelo did not exit with Mariana to be married and then return, and the testing of various figures was much diminished.

Few productions in major venues take the editing or rescripting process this far. Nonetheless, significant cuts and changes are to be found in such productions, so that an account of several recent examples can serve as the final section of this essay.

Extensive changes were evident in Edward Hall's *Julius Caesar* (RSC 2001). The Folio's first scene involving Flavius, Marullus, and the cobbler (a scene not prized by many theatrical professionals with whom I have talked) was gone completely to be replaced by the singing of a Fascist hymn ('We bring forth the new world from the ashes of the old . . . The republic makes us strong') by an ensemble that included a host of black-shirted figures. A strong Forum scene (3.2) started with those same black-shirted figures scattered throughout the theatre; during Antony's oration they made their way onto the stage so as to be unleashed on Rome (and maul Cinna the poet). I missed the display of the power of oratory by Flavius and Marullus to sway a crowd (an early demonstration of real 'Romans' in action), but Hall's opening was theatrically exciting, and the mob in 3.2 was as strong an onstage presence for this moment as I have seen.

Hall's severe streamlining of Acts 4 and 5 was less successful. Other directors have omitted the second account of Portia's death by Messala, an omission supported by a scholarly argument⁷ (albeit one with which I disagree), but Hall also eliminated other features of this scene (gone completely were Messala, Titinius, Varrus, and Claudio). Brutus directed at Cassius a few lines about Cicero and other dead senators, but the playgoer did not hear Messala's assessment of Brutus' reaction to Portia's death ('Even so great men great losses should endure') or Cassius' comment: 'I have as much of this in art as you, / But yet my nature could not bear it so' (193-5). In addition, in the Folio Brutus accuses Cassius of having 'an itching palm' (4.3.10) and later notes that 'I did send to you / For certain sums of gold, which you denied me' (69-70), but most of this latter speech (69-82) was cut, including: 'For I can raise no money by vile means. / By heaven, I had rather coin my heart / And drop my blood for drachmaes than to wring / From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash / By any indirection' (71-5). At several points in this scene the script choices therefore increased the pace and economized on personnel at the expense of a more nuanced portrait of Brutus. How is Cassius (or a playgoer) to react to a Brutus who is apparently playing the part of the great (Stoic) man or who criticizes the fund-raising methods used by Cassius but still demands money from his ally?

To pare back Act 5, particularly the 5.4 action with Cato and Lucilius, may be standard practice, but Hall took out far more. Not only was the brief 5.2 gone, but also 5.3.9-35 where Cassius announces 'my sight was ever thick' (21), sends Pindarus above, and gets a false report of the capture of Titinius. Hall's dialogue started up again with the Cassius speech to Pindarus and Cassius' death (36-50), but the remainder of the scene was gone (the Titinius-Messala reaction, Titinius' suicide, Brutus' finding of the two bodies). A key death was therefore included, but much of the logic behind that death was eliminated. Similarly, Clitus, Dardanius, Volumnius, and Strato were gone from 5.5, so that Brutus' suicide was set up as a series of appeals to the same figure, Lucilius, a change that yielded a sequence with a very different theatrical rhythm. Antony then spoke his epitaph for Brutus, but Messala did not question Lucilius-Strato about the manner of Brutus' death nor did Octavius offer to 'entertain' those that had served Brutus (5.5.60) - and during this abbreviated final sequence Caesar appeared upstage with his wounds visible. The story-telling here was very effective, but the story told in the last two acts was a diminished version of the full narrative found in the Folio.

Less extensive but also of interest are the changes, omissions, and transpositions in Michael Attenborough's *Antony and Cleopatra* (RSC 2002). To streamline this long script the director eliminated some scenes (2.1, 2.4, 3.1, 3.5) and pared back others. The show started not with Philo's speech (as in the Folio) but with an exchange between the two title figures (1.1.14-17); gone from the final scene were Seleucus and the Romans' piecing out how Cleopatra died. Gone too were Pompey and Menas, so, in addition to 2.1, large chunks of 2.6 and 2.7 disappeared (some of Menas' lines were given to other figures), and Enobarbus' famous speech on Cleopatra (2.2.191-239) was moved to 2.6 which was combined with 2.7. The raucous and entertaining galley or party scene (2.7) featured in lieu of the scripted song an all-male African dance led by Eros and some drunken sword fights wherein a macho Antony embarrassed a standoffish Caesar, but without Pompey's refusal of Menas' proposition ('Wilt thou be lord of all the world?' - 2.7.61) the meat of the scene disappeared.

Three small adjustments to the dialogue are worth noting. First, omitted from 1.2 was Enobarbus' 'Hush, here comes Antony' (79) spoken at Cleopatra's entrance, a line apparently deemed confusing or anomalous rather than suggestive or metaphoric. In Antony's death scene Cleopatra's

'we must draw thee *up*' (4.15.30) became *down*, for the director solved a notoriously difficult staging problem by having Antony lowered to Cleopatra below rather than raised to her above. Also of interest was the omission of the final line of 4.9, 'Come on then, he may recover yet' (33), spoken by one of Caesar's watch over the body of Enobarbus. The Folio provides no specific signal for how this remorseful figure is to die (other than perhaps a suggestion of a broken heart), but this Enobarbus stripped off his shirt to reveal many self-inflicted wounds. In the final sequence Iras did die with no such specified cause (in the past I have seen Iras sneak an asp in advance of Cleopatra), but in this production, with the genesis of Enobarbus' death made clear, no connection existed between the two events - a potential link that I, for one, find meaningful as a window into the distinctive appeal or stature of the two title figures.

The two 2004 productions of *Hamlet*, directed by Trevor Nunn (Old Vic) and Michael Boyd (RSC) also provided many items of interest. Both shows included Barnardo not solely as scripted in 1.1 and the end of 1.2 (the report to Hamlet of the ghost's appearance) but also along with Horatio and Marcellus in 1.4 and 1.5, again to fashion a larger through-line for the actor. Both directors moved 'to be, or not to be' earlier, although not to the same position. Boyd spliced both the soliloquy and the subsequent nunnery scene into 2.2 after Polonius' report to the king and queen, then reverted to the fishmonger exchange and the remainder of 2.2, then the beginning of 3.1. Nunn chose an even earlier placement. After Hamlet's 'The time is out of joint' lines that end Act 1 (1.5.188-90), the playgoers saw Ophelia regarding herself in an imaginary mirror and dancing to music only she could hear, at which point Hamlet entered as later described by her in 2.1; this dumb show was followed by 'to be, or not to be' delivered by Hamlet seated on a bench with a dagger on one side and pills and water on the other.

Overall, both directors did much cutting and reshuffling. Nunn moved Ophelia's 'O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!' speech (3.1.150-61) from the end of the nunnery exchange to the end of the next scene after Hamlet's 'Now could I drink hot blood' soliloquy (3.2.388-99) where he ignored her entrance, so that her lament became a response to the Hamlet of the play-within. In 5.2 Nunn included Claudius' aside ('It is the pois'ned cup, it is too late' - 292) but omitted Laertes' 'And yet it is almost against my conscience' (296), whereas Boyd cut the former and kept the latter. Boyd used a full text in his first half (the interval was taken after 3.2), but did considerable streamlining

thereafter so that 3.3 through the end took only 1:15. The Second Quarto-Folio's 4.6 (Horatio and the sailors) was replaced by the First Quarto's Horatio-Gertrude scene, so that Q1's compressed exposition of events replaced much of the material at the beginning of 5.2; also heavily pared back was the beginning of 4.7 (Claudius-Laertes). Nunn also did much streamlining, though this show including the interval still ran around 3:45 compared to the RSC's 3:30. Horatio lost many lines starting in 1.1 where Marcellus was often the beneficiary (so the latter spoke 'So I have heard, and do in part believe it' - 165). Much of the Hamlet-Horatio dialogue in 5.2 was gone, so that this Horatio was not a key building block (e.g., the playgoer did not witness his reaction to the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern), in decided contrast to a militant and active Horatio in Stratford who was quick to draw his sword in 1.1 and 5.2 and was a forceful presence throughout.

For my final example I turn to what I found to be a highly successful piece of directorial editing, Gregory Doran's RSC 2005 rendition of Ben Jonson's *Sejanus His Fall*. I had never expected to see this script staged, for I am surely not the only reader to have concluded that what has survived in the 1605 Quarto and the 1616 Folio is not a play but rather a poem in dramatic form. That Doran and his cast at the Swan found a stageable play in this script with strong in-the-theatre moments (including some racy and very funny bits) represents for me a remarkable achievement. Over 800 lines from the received text were streamlined from the acting script, but the scene structure remained intact (much of the omitted material came from long speeches) and the personae and issues came across forcefully. As expected, less than central figures were telescoped together (e.g., Gallus was folded into Sabinus, Pomponius into Afer). A series of onstage adjustments added significantly to the impact of the narrative. Providing a dumb show of Drusus' death was a gift to the playgoer; having a visible Tiberius read his Act 5 letter (the turning point in the downfall of Sejanus) turned a good on-the-page moment into an even stronger theatrical one, especially with Caligula standing behind him.

Of particular interest are the adjustments made to a key Tiberius-Sejanus encounter in Act 2. The usual interpretation of this sequence is that Tiberius, who throughout the play appears to be consistently a step ahead of Sejanus, is here testing his protege, but that was not the approach here. The alternative presented forcefully at the Swan is therefore worth exploring.

To establish the Tiberius to be displayed to the playgoers, Doran made two related choices (I am ignoring the eliding of several long speeches). First, to start the scene Doran inserted a nightmare vision so as to set up a shaken Tiberius who could then be instructed by Sejanus on how to proceed against Agrippina and other potential threats. The second key choice was to cut two lines from the passage cited below, a speech that conditions our view of the Tiberius-Sejanus relationship. The words in bold type were omitted from the original, whereas *We are* was added for continuity:

We can no longer
 Keep on our mask to thee, our dear Sejanus.
**[Thy thoughts are ours in all, and we but proved
 Their voice, in our designs, which by assenting]**
 {We are} **[Hath]** more confirmed **[us]** than if heart'ning Jove
 Had, from his hundred statues, bid us strike . . .

2.278-83⁸

My understanding of 'we but proved [i.e., *tested*] / Their voice' is that the scene up to this point had been a testing of Sejanus, to see if he would come up with the strategy at which Tiberius (the grand master always several moves ahead) had already arrived. Doran's shaken, troubled Tiberius, however, is more theatrical (and perhaps more faithful to the historical records), albeit not as sly and therefore less insidious. For the two actors and many auditors the rescripted speech made excellent sense in terms of psychological realism (a basic part of the vocabulary shared by players and playgoers in 2005) - and I suspect only the occasional old school Jonsonian noticed any difference. I found the scene as staged telling, so I leave the verdict about possible pluses and minuses to other readers.

This last example brings into focus several key issues linked to editing for the theatre. Unlike the on-the-page editor, whose goal is to offer readers a text that preserves and clarifies the original, the director's goal is to make that text comprehensible so that it can come alive for playgoers who are both viewers of onstage activity and auditors of verse in early modern English. Moreover, the director must achieve this goal without exceeding the limits imposed by the available resources, an imperative not faced by the editor. A director will not stay a director for very long if he or she misjudges the capacity and tastes of that targeted audience or the practicalities of the

situation. The various in-the-theatre changes I have noted, even the most extreme ones, would not have been made had those mounting the production not perceived gains to be achieved, whether practical (to reduce obscurity, to conserve time and personnel, to solve apparent problems) or conceptual (to enhance a particular interpretation). To edit for the theatre is often to cut the Gordian knot so as to save on running time, economize on personnel, and make Elizabethan-Jacobean language, culture, and onstage conventions more accessible to today's playgoers. The process can also involve translation into our idiom, as witnessed by Doran's adjustment to the Tiberius-Sejanus scene so as to establish clearly a psychological progression in a pivotal moment.

Some years ago a RSC director, reacting to what he interpreted as implied criticism in one of my questions, stated with some force: "We are not vandals!" I confess that as a theatre historian my purist gene is never recessive, but I retain a healthy respect for the challenges facing theatrical professionals staging Shakespeare today. Choices must be made, choices that inevitably carry with them a price tag, for to gain X one may end up sacrificing Y. I therefore keep returning to the same questions. Wherein lie the trade-offs? What, if anything, is lost or blurred in this process? Given a gap of four hundred years, is directorial editing inevitable? When is the price tag too high? Since the director has far more latitude than the editor, the most challenging questions are generated by real or supposed improvements, for here is where the theatrical professional can move beyond the role of interpreter and closer to the role of translator or playwright. To streamline, massage, or reconceive the editor's text is to chart a smoother journey for today's playgoer at the risk of eliminating something integral to the play. Such editing or rescripting may be inevitable in the 'real world' of commercial theatre, but are there lines to be drawn? Whose play is it, anyhow?

Notes

1. I do not claim any special credentials for writing this essay, for in both arenas my role has been that of consumer rather than practitioner. I have never edited a play, but as teacher and scholar I have made extensive use of editions of English Renaissance drama for over four decades. Similarly, I have no rehearsal room experience, but over that same period I have sat through more productions of the plays of Shakespeare than is healthy or fruitful. In the comments that follow I

draw upon that playgoing experience, the many conversations I have had with theatrical professionals in the United Kingdom and North America, and terms and distinctions found in my *Rescripting Shakespeare: The Text, the Director, and Modern Productions* (Cambridge, 2002). To avoid merely recycling material, I have concentrated largely upon post-2000 productions not covered in that book. With one exception (see note 4) I have limited myself to productions I have seen.

2. See Andrew Gurr, 'Maximal and Minimal Texts: Shakespeare v. The Globe', *Shakespeare Survey*, 52 (1999), 68-87; and Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge, 2003).

3. Citations from Shakespeare are from the revised Riverside edition, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston and New York, 1997).

4. For this example I am indebted to Michael P. Jensen.

5. Citations from *Doctor Faustus* are from *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus 1604-1616*, ed. W. W. Greg (Oxford, 1950). I have modernized the spelling.

6. See *Measure for Measure*, ed. Mark Eccles, New Variorum (New York, 1980), p. 190 from which I have taken the Lever and Rossiter quotes. Similar questions have been raised about the 3.1 positioning of the 'to be, or not to be' soliloquy in the Second Quarto and the Folio.

7. In a long note in his Arden 2 edition (London, 1955) T. S. Dorsch accepts the traditional view 'that the copy from which the Folio was printed contained two versions of the account of Portia's death, of which one was a revision, and that both were printed by mistake', so that the second account provided by Messala is the original and the first provided by Brutus himself is the revision (pp. 106-7). In recent years directors, who no longer hold an idealized vision of Brutus, usually keep both accounts of Portia's death, so that Hall's adjustment is the exception, not the norm.

8. Citations from *Sejanus* are from the Yale edition, ed. Jonas A. Barish (New Haven and London, 1965).