part two:
the unsatisfied

I am dead,
Thou liu'st, report me and my causes right
To the unsatisfied.

Prologue

1) This is not an encyclopedic account of recent adaptations of Shakespeare, not a continuation of the cataloguing begun by Ruby Cohn. It would take many volumes the size of this dissertation to do justice to such a task. This dissertation suffers from lengthiness married to a lack of encyclopedic breadth; this is an effect of writing with an expanded, almost limitless sense of the text. All I am attempting here is a partial discussion of some of the Shakespearean adaptations of Carmelo Bene, Heiner Müller, and Herbert Blau. This choice is arbitrary but not unmotivated: these adaptations seem to me to open themselves to discussion in terms of certain issues which arise in part one of this dissertation.

2) The first of these issues is the relation of theory and practice, the relation between theatre and its theorization. This question presents itself most acutely as the
relation between theory and the specifically nonverbal strategies, the scenography, of theatre. The interplay of theory and practice in these works is also part of a subversion of rigid genrefication of theory against practice.

The second issue is (inter)textu(r)al manipulation: what is Shakespeare, what is/are the text(s) being manipulated, and what are the specific structures of (in)fidelity at work in these adaptations? Once again genre comes into play, for instance in Bene’s criticism as a piece of theatre, or Blau’s “Theatrical Essay on Shakespeare’s Sonnets.”

The third issue is the issue of context, both the context out of which theatre is engendered and the context into which it is disseminated. This is in part the question of theatre and its politics.

The distinctions being made here between theory, practice, intertext, and context are merely heuristic. Intertext and context are not completely different concepts. In order to keep from having to write about everything at once, I have made, for instance, a nonce division between cultural intertext and political context. This is not always felicitous: sometimes a matter is discussed in two different places, sometimes discussion of a matter is artificially delayed till a later point when it is actually
equally relevant at an earlier.)

3) This part of the dissertation is arranged by issue, not by author. It is not primarily an examination of the ouvres of certain authors. However, like adaptation, it is written not as a denial of the author function, but as the refunctioning and rearrangement of that function. One can, for example, extract sections 1.2, 2.2, and 3.2, and read them together as an essay on Heiner Müller. The author function has not been eradicated, but merely removed from a position of dominance.

4) I do not intend to treat the adaptations under study simply as (complete and unified) (literary) texts. The text, as was argued in part one, is not simply verbal. Any theatrical adaptation is not only drama text, but performance text, and also socio-cultural context. The text in the largest sense is the intertext. This means, among other things, that the text of, say, Herbert Blau's Crooked Eclipses, on the simply verbal level, is not merely the drama text, but also Blau's reflections on that text, and the reflections of others on the drama text or on Blau's reflections. Ultimately this text you are reading is part of the text of Crooked Eclipses. We will not be privileging the drama text, the "primary" text, over its secondary reflections. That text is already adhering to its reworkings. Of course neither the scenographic text nor the intertext are
completely available for discussion. Not only is much, or most, of the textual complexity of a past theatrical event lost to us, but also a thorough analysis of the not simply verbal material which comes down to us would be a superhuman undertaking. All I can hope to do is take into (verbal) account some of the relevance of performance text and context, and keep reminding this writing that, in as much as it is no more than writing, its analysis is restricted and restricting.

5) Ultimately this part of the dissertation leads into part three; as such it is not only the illustration of theoretical issues arising in part one, nor a self-contained discussion of authors and their works: it is the beginning of a handbook, a rhetoric (if this word could be opened adequately onto the idea of a rhetoric of the non-verbal, even onto (the idea of) the meaningless), an analysis of the strategies that have been developed in recent adaptations of Shakespeare, strategies which are available for a possible adaptation of The Winter's Tale, strategies which might be taken up for uses unforeseen by this dissertation. If there is a hermeneutics at work it is not primarily either a hermeneutics of the sacred or a hermeneutics of suspicion, but rather a hermeneutics of utility, the hermeneutics of the adapter.
1. Theory and Practice

1.1 Bene/Deleuze

What does it mean for a play to be theoretically informed? What are the relations between theory and practice in such a play?

Let us begin with a title: Superpositions (this is the collective title of Carmelo Bene’s adaptation of Shakespeare, "Richard III, ou l’horrible nuit d’un homme de guerre," and Gilles Deleuze’s commentary on Bene’s play, "Un manifeste de moins"). To super(im)pose is to place one thing over another. In one of its senses the word(s) implies hierarchy and rank: one man, class, race, gender, practice lording it over another. To broaden this sense, super(im)position is the principle of all vertical construction. Super(im)position also implies a geology, an archeology: geological strata are superposed upon one another, as are civilizations. And so super(im)position implies a genealogy, a history. Super(im)position thus implies something primary, something originary, to which something has been added later. A text can have corruptions, or readings, superposed upon it. In this case the hierarchy is reversed and we are made to respect what is at rock bottom. In geometry figures are superposed upon one another to prove equivalence, as if there were no original, history, or
hierarchy to consider. In cinema super(im)position is
double exposure: two simultaneous and different images
without seniority, without history, without hierarchy,
without equivalence. The word superposition is, therefore,
a multiple exposure. Superposition is Superpositions.

In Superpositions what, then, is being superposed upon
what? And is/are the superposition(s) hierarchical,
archeological, exegetical, cinematic?

Theory is superposed upon practice: Deleuze upon Bene;
"Un manifeste de moins" upon "Richard III..." This, for
instance, is how Superpositions is read by Mohammed Kowsar
in "Deleuze on Theatre: A Case Study of Carmelo Bene's
Richard III":

The Deleuzian perspective, its insights, and its
pertinence to a general analysis of theatre is the
chief subject of my own exposition...It is always
on the merits of the Deleuzian point of view that
[Carmelo Bene] will be appraised in my essay.

(19-20)

Deleuze the theoretician and his discourse hold pride of
place over, rise on the ground of, give speech/understanding
to, Bene the playwright and his "case," or his theoretically
mute text (One could relate this to the hermeneutics of, for
example, The Case of Wagner, or The Case of 'Little Hans').
Such is one simple version of the relations between theory
and practice, the simple superposition of the one over the other.

This version can be simply reversed, and theorization, as exegesis, takes a supplicant's position before the text, oracular or parabolic, puzzling and visionary, which is to be made to speak its secrets, its theory, in a more accessible way. This is the tradition of scriptural exegesis and of the hermeneutics of the sacred in literary interpretation: for instance—there is no end of examples—William Kerrigan argues that *Paradise Lost* can be made to reveal "an authentic reshaping of the self that psychoanalysis has yet to recognize adequately" (73). Here the original text is already theoretically rich, and the exegesis is not superposed upon the theoretical poverty of the original, but is supported and sustained by the insights of the original. The theory asks questions of the text, and interprets the answers it receives. And so Deleuze begins by asking questions of Bene's text: how are we to conceive of the relation between theatre and its criticism, between the original play and the derived play? if the theatre has a critical function, what does it criticize? (87) And if the answers are not to be found in a strictly close reading of Bene's text, they are found in a thinking through of Bene's practices, Bene's project. As in so much literary exegesis of this kind, Deleuze derives his title, the name for his
own project, from the text under consideration—or at least from another work by Bene: Un Hamlet de moins becomes "Un manifeste de moins." And so Deleuze takes up, mimics, the voice, the authority, of Bene, reporting on his likes and dislikes, his views and positions: "CB says..." (87); "CB detests..." (91); "CB is not interested in..." (94); "CB is disgusted by..." (103). The minor author is still an author.

But the archeology or genealogy is not so simple; not a case of first Bene and then Deleuze, no matter which hierarchy we wish to impose. Bene, Deleuze tells us, is very interested in the notions of major and minor (94), notions developed in Deleuze and Guattari's Kafka, published three years before Superpositions. Bene's play is already in part encoded with the theorization that Deleuze would superpose upon it. Deleuze argues that although an alliance can be traced between Bene and Artaud, Robert Wilson, Grotowski, and the Living Theatre, it is more important to see that Bene has developed his own method (94). Asked what are the most important events in theatre since World War II, Bene answers, "Il n'a été qu'un projet. Artaud. Un projet" (Bene 1977, 84). And yet Bene's text shows more complex signs of its (theoretical) filiation: references to Poe (9) and [Deleuze's?] Kafka (15), to "[le] stade orale" (39) and fetishism (60).
CB says of his *Romeo and Juliet* that it is a critical essay on Shakespeare, and Deleuze adds, "l’essai critique est lui-même une pièce de théâtre" (87). As Kowsar writes, "Gilles Deleuze meets Carmelo Bene at the crossroads where theory and theatre practice converge" (19). Here the superposition comes to resemble the search for equivalence in geometry: the critical essay is theatre, and theatre is a critical essay. Deleuze’s title, "Un manifeste de moins," can refer to either his own essay or to Bene’s play: the play itself is a manifesto. In the same way Deleuze’s first subheading, "Le théâtre et sa critique" (87), can mean either a critique brought to bear upon theatre or a critique which the theatre itself generates.

The most obvious place where Bene’s theatre generates its own critique is in his lengthy ‘stage directions,’ running commentary and analysis which make up a large part of the drama text (Deleuze says they take up more space than the “text itself” (106)). We read, for instance, "Et je crois qu’ici il faut éclaircir le concept d’obsène...Nous l’appellerons excès du désir" (39). Sometimes this self-critique seems to contradict what Deleuze (and, following him, Kowsar) says of the play: for instance, Deleuze sees the development of the play as the constitution or birth of Richard III in a continuous series of metamorphoses and variations (92); Kowsar writes of Richard’s growth through
transformation (30), and "Bene continues to demonstrate this process in the final stage of his play" (31). Bene's own commentary within the play seems to map a much more tragic, more Shakespearean pattern. While part one deals with Richard's struggles/interchanges with the obscene, the excess of desire, continuous transgression, and euphoria (44), in the second part Richard, abandoned by the feminine, fetishizes himself (10), and perpetrates a "great error" (59), a great masochism and self-mortification (61). This is not to say that Deleuze and Kowsar are simply wrong in the face of (my reading of) Bene's authority. Bene, after all, contradicts himself: on page 24 Richard "begins to understand"; on page 30 we are told that until now he has understood nothing. On page 31 Richard/the actor's comprehension has become, even for Bene, a question: "Et qui peut nous assurer en effect que l'acteur ne sait pas tout? L'acteur, non pas Richard, ou tous les deux." But a moment later Bene is sure of himself again: "et ici Richard l'acteur s'en aperçoit, il commence à commencer à comprendre." Bene's pronouncements elsewhere can be equally contradictory. He tells an interviewer,

You can scandalize [the person who is in the theatre], you can produce in her/him a certain crisis for a moment, but only for a moment. (Bene 1977, 73)
Later, when the interviewer suggests that theatre can create a state of crisis in people's minds, Bene replies, "On ne peut créer que le scandale. Jamais la crise, non" (75).

Artaud writes that "All writing is rubbish" (Artaud, 151). Bene, talking about his theatre, says, "Tout ce qui se dit sur un spectacle n'est que bavardage" (Bene 1977, 84). We need not dismiss as chatter or rubbish the words spilled over Bene's theatre by Deleuze, Kowsar, or Bene himself, or for that matter the commentary superposed upon the action within the play itself; Derrida has already elucidated the contradictions in Artaud between writing and the dismissal of writing, the complicity of theatre and its double ("The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation"). But we need to posit the ambiguous relations between Bene's theatrical project and (theoretical) language, and the ways in which nonverbal systems are superposed upon the verbal, even to the extent that theoretical work comes to be carried out nonverbally.

To what extent is Bene's (and Deleuze's) project an attack on or a turning away from the "bavardage" of theory? "Un manifeste de moins" means one less manifesto. But Deleuze's text is hardly one less manifesto: with its prescriptive and proscriptive declarations, its programmatic succession of headings/topics ("Theatre and its critique," "Theatre and its minorities," "Theatre and its language,"


"Un manifeste de moins" is one manifesto more. It is, however, a manifesto of/concerning less, a manifesto on the theme of amputation (87), of subtraction (89). Among the many things to be subtracted are literature and the text (89), dialogue and diction (103): "parce que le texte est comme la domination de la langue sur la parole, et témoigne encore d'une invariation ou d'une homogénéité." Doctrine, dogma (97), and representation (94) are also to be amputated. These things are forces for normalization (97), domination, and invariation (103). GD is disgusted by equilibrium (90), constancy or eternity (91). He would replace them with process, continuous variation (91), disequilibrium (94), becoming, movement, speed, turbulence, excess (95), a "line of flight" (101), language and speech in continuous variation (105), "a simple amorous potentiality" (131). If there is an idea, the point is not to represent it, but to live it (98); representation is totally different than the rendering of a potentiality present here and now (125): "Il faut que le spectateur non seulement comprenne, mais entende et voie...l'idée devenue visible, sensible" (118). Theatre, according to GD, should surpass the domination of words and attain to a direct perception of action (115). Rather than solutions and interpretations, theatre constitutes a "devenir de la conscience" (131), a consciousness of becoming. This is accomplished not only by
treating words as a musical score (106), so that they "stop making text" (89), by words treated as simply material for variation (105), but by lights, gestures, sounds (130), by the total scenic arrangement: colours, lights, gestures, words, character (92).

It was said earlier that "Un manifeste de moins" could just as well be a label for Bene's play as it is the title of Deleuze's essay, and it was seen how the play is a critical essay, and how it includes commentary not only upon Shakespeare's Richard III but also upon itself. Like Deleuze, Bene, in this commentary, is interested in excess and continuous transgression, which he sets against the fetishism of the proper, the unique, the impossibility of difference (10). Bene denies that his plays are manifestos (Bene 1977, 65), and yet his pronouncements outside the theatre can be made to yield a programme similar to (if somewhat more tragic than) that laid down by Deleuze on CB's behalf.

Bene rejects doctrine (74), aphorism, and rationalization (75). "De toute façon, dans notre communauté démente, la communication est corruption" (73); "la parole est l'ennemie"—Bene quotes Pasolini on Tériesias: "Parler il ne peut plus, mais il peut chanter des paroles incompréhensibles" (78); the liturgy is a "spectacle véritable et authentique," because in church no one understands anything
(62). Although CB is driven by an intellectual hunger and thirst (83), what matters is to live in the immediate, and the immediate is "impensable" (74). He equates all thought with fetishization, the fetish being a thing which, as Marx writes, "transcends sensuousness" (Marx, 163). We must not examine an idea, but live it; in the theatre we must live the spectacle (77). Writing in the theatre is not textual but scenographic (78), a music of images (71). The spectacle is unique each time (CB is not interested in genre (76)), and therefore like the immediate it is non-representable (74). CB is only interested in texts which are impossible to represent (65); he is interested in texts which have no ready access from the page to the stage, which can only be resuscitated in strange new (non-verbal) ways. Theatre is utopian (83), both impossible and necessary (64), an impasse, a paradox (77), a scandal (crisis?). We remain enslaved to ideas (80). If we cannot exist in the immediate, all that can really be done is to produce "la conscience d'avoir mal" (79), consciousness of crisis (80), of the impasse (84).

[Bene's interest in the immediate, in presence over representation, in the mystical (1977, 74), in a theatre which is no longer theatre, is open to the critique made of Artaud by Derrida. There is no escape from representation, from textuality. At the same time such interests are an
important—if overzealous—and strategic response (by the imaginary) to (reversal of) the hegemony of the verbal/symbolic order.]

What are the components of Bene’s ‘scenic writing’ which relate to the theorization of Bene and Deleuze? What are the relations between this theorization and this scenography—"Comment concevoir ce rapport entre le théâtre et sa critique"?

Corrado Augias writes of the profusion of semiological elements in Bene’s mise-en-scène, of a congestion of signs (Bene 1977, 67). Excess, congestion, and disjunctures (Superpositions, 115): signs contradict and obstruct each other (Kowsar, 23); meaning and equilibrium are disrupted again and again, lost in the (apparent) lack of cohesion. But it is not only a general profusion and congestion which are at work, but the particular excesses within each element of the scenography.

To begin with the actor’s speech: the voice is in constant variation, words are never said the same way twice (Superposition, 113); speeches are whispered, or deformed in an expressionist manner (Bene 1977, 69), the actor stammers (Superpositions, 110), is reduced to the articulation of a troglodyte (15), growls like an animal (62). The deformation is augmented by technology: playback offers further occasion for disarticulation (105); recorded speeches and
sounds are hardly perceptible or deafeningly loud (Bene 1977, 69). In these ways the text is reduced to a musical score; logical perception is rendered difficult or impossible (69).

Words and gestures are disjoined (116); gestures are compulsive and yet always different and don't seem to relate to what is going on. (The actor playing) Richard stumbles without warning, loses his balance, falls, rises. Meanwhile the women around him continually lift their dresses, reveal their breasts, disrobe, and dress themselves again, acting "in a truly strange manner" (20). Richard strips his maid servant Buckingham and caresses her obscenely (27). In his stage directions Bene associates the feminine with the obscene (10); with the compulsive baring of bodies on the stage, he inscribes this notion of the obscene of the feminine onto the bodies of real women. Deleuze reports that feminists have attacked CB on this point (112), but GD says that CB isn't interested in conflicts. Without being too conflictual I might point out that Bene and Deleuze here take up the position attacked by Teresa de Lauretis: "the masculine use of woman as instrument of self-assertion" (47), a position which, I might add, partakes of the continuing fetishization of woman, a fetishization which runs against the project of generalized defetishization which Bene wishes to take up.
Another body continually bared (it must be said in a way materially different than the stripping undergone by the women) is the body of the actor, when s/he "steps out of [her/his] role" and "stops playing" (31), and we see his/her "intolerable présence en tant qu’acteur" (11). The actor, unfetishized in his role, is obscene, in excess, transgressive.

The lighting is either weak or blindingly bright (Bene 1977, 69). The set is a superpositioning, an aggregate of designs, periods, and directions: "the coherence of a unitary stage picture has been shattered" (Kowsar, 29). While the scene at times seems excessive and mannered, at other moments it is a manifestation of less: the coronation, "which should be a great ensemble scene," is played out in an absolute poverty of pomp (58).

Finally, Bene’s props are the refuse of the theatre, drawers full of women’s clothing and human prostheses, there to be taken up and discarded (Kowsar, 29) in a continual, compulsive crisis of (de)fetishization, eventually all locked away and replaced by a single white bed sheet (80), (image of) everything and nothing.

In what ways can we speak of the relation between this scenographic profusion and its theorization? We spoke before of the superposition of theory upon practice, of the way that for Kowsar Bene’s theatre is a "case" for Deleuze
to expound upon. Kowsar continues this project when, at the end of his essay, he takes up where he says Deleuze inexplicably leaves off, and continues "the application of Deleuzian principles" to Bene's scenographic work (28). Scenography, nonverbal practice, then become merely the illustration, the representation, of a theory: not one less manifesto, but only an addendum to a manifesto of less, the representation of the meaning of the subtracting of meaning (Kowsar, 24). The unthinkable is at the service of the thinkable, excess is contained by a theoretical project, the music of images is dominated by language. Here we have the descandalization of the scandalous, the delimitation of excess, the superpositioning of a theoretical project, like chaste clothing, upon the obscene. We remain enslaved to ideas, to the old scandal.

On the other hand, we could conceive of a different relation between the unthinkable and the thinkable. Here the scenography would be, as Bene says, the (inevitable) betrayal, on the stage, of the text (Bene 1977, 79). The unthinkable would be in excess of theory, the unthinkable of a theory of the unthinkable, the limit of the thinkable, the crisis of the thinkable, the nonrepresentation, the non-illustration of a theory. Scenography is method, application, praxis in which the thinkable has been amputated: only scenography is fully one less manifesto. Or rather, can
scenography be fully one less manifesto? Can there be such a crisis, even if only for a moment?

On the one hand the old rationalism and rationalization, the hegemony of the verbal, of thought, of 'theory'; on the other hand the unthinkable, the obscene, erratic and erotic praxis. How to decide? In their contradictions, naiveties, and vagaries, Bene and Deleuze seem to hold out both hands; there is no secure way of choosing between them.

What both hands uphold is a demarcation between theory and practice, between the thinkable and the unthinkable. And yet the texts, in certain places, indicate another ground where the demarcation begins to give. Deleuze speaks of "un nouveau devenir de la conscience" (Superposition, 131): a becoming of consciousness, a becoming conscious. Becoming indicates a practice. Artaud says that his project is "not to define thoughts, but to cause thinking" (Artaud, 69): not theory itself, not (only) the fetishization of thoughts, but becoming theory. Theatre is not an opinion to be held, but a "Théâtre-Laboratoire" (Bene 1977, 64) of endless experimentation. What is becoming is consciousness, and if this consciousness overlaps (superposes itself upon) theory, it overlaps an expanded sense of theory: consciousness of not only the thinkable but also the unthinkable. Becoming consciousness is therefore both theory and practice, verbal and nonverbal. "Tout le théâtre de CB doit
être vu, mais aussi lu" (106), writes Deleuze. "Everything remains, but under a new light" (104).

It would be naive to think that a mere sketch or invocation of this becoming, of this new light, brings it into being, or makes its realization any less problematic. Such a becoming relates theory and practice as a crisis of their contradictions as well as their reconciliation; it does not reduce superpositioning to equivalence. Here I would invoke (or do not need to invoke, but only recognize) a play of crisis (Bene 1977, 80), of superpositions, of multiple exposure, in which various relations are played out in continuous variation. The becoming of consciousness that is being sought can only be constituted in the superpositions, profusions, and continuous variations of seeing and reading, which put into play not only various and contradictory signifying systems, not only the agreements and contradictions between Bene and Deleuze, theory and practice, not only the contradictions and agreements within Bene and Deleuze, theory and practice, but the relations and superpositions between these elements. If the becoming of consciousness is a model of generalized defetishization, of the radical destabilizing of privileged meaning, the casting into play of all stable relations between theory and practice, of an impossible theatre, it is a model that we, like Bene and Deleuze, in a rhythm of regression-progression
(Superpositions, 118), only partly accomplish, which we work towards only as we continue to fetishize (it).

1.2 Müller

The relations between theory and practice in the texts of Heiner Müller are manifested in three areas of strategic concern: the limitations of reason; the language of ideas; the importance of the nonverbal and the 'meaningless.'

Müller's position on reason as a source of enlightenment is dialectically engaged with what he takes to be the position of Bertolt Brecht. The literature on the relation of Müller to the work and ideas of Brecht, even in English, is extensive: Innes, Teroaka, Silberman 1986, Girshausen, Fehervary 1976, Bathrick and Huyssen, Case 1983. All are concerned with the degree to which Müller is and/or is not following in the Brechtian tradition, the ways in which Müller's relationship to Brecht is as both successor and parricide (Hamletmachine, 16). There is more to say on Müller's relationship to Brecht, which will be dealt with in the discussion of Müller and intertextu(r)ality; for now it is necessary to note only that Müller questions Brecht's faith in reason and enlightenment, and that this questioning of reason leads him to engage in a new process of what Brecht calls paedagogics (Brecht, 30) and which takes perhaps its most acute form in the "Lehrstück": the teaching
Brecht's Lehrstück is a specific form of epic theatre (Brecht, 79), a political theatre which calls on the spectator to think and to reason. While not rejecting either the political purpose or the need to think, Müller calls for a revision of the political aim and the mode of thinking which the Lehrstück should serve. The mode of thinking called for by Brecht is merely "the adding machine of the revolution," and "The net of Brecht's dramaturgy was too wide-meshed for the microstructure of new problems" ("To Use Brecht," 33). Müller rejects "the alliance of the Left with rationalism" (32), associates radically logical thought with death and concentration camps ("Walls of History," 73) and, echoing Artaud, he calls for a theatre which "does not articulate the fruits of thinking but rather scans the thinking process" ("To Use Brecht," 33). According to Marc Silberman, rather than the acquiescence which is the "dramaturgical goal" of Brecht's Lehrstück, Müller "invites the spectator to share his bewilderment" (Silberman 1986, 20).

Perhaps the paradigmatic moment of this new Lehrstück is at the very end of Carbone-14's production of Hamlet-machine. It is a moment which Gilles Maheu has imposed or superposed upon Müller's text. A stage-manager figure activates a juke box. From the jukebox comes the voice of
John Gielgud reciting "To be or not to be." Gielgud's voice, as if on a scratched record, skips over and over on the phrase, "puzzles the will." So Carbone-14's version ends. The new Lehrstück, rather than leading to rational answers, uses a multitude of verbal and nonverbal devices to "puzzle" us, and leaves us and leads us out of the theatre in a continuing state of puzzlement. Like Herbert Blau's reading of Hamlet—"The density of association is such that it feels, structurally, like brain damage" (Take Up the Bodies, 169)—such puzzlement may hamper and even incapacitate the political will; however, (too easy) rationalization and certainty are seen/experienced to be a radically inadequate guide to that will.

Müller's disillusionment with rationalism leads him to a questioning of rational forms of discourse—what in Hamletmachine is called "BLABLA" (53). For Müller the sounds of words are more important than, come before their sense:

Sometimes if I have a choice to take this word or this word, in all cases the word that sounds good is the right word. Later you see it, but at first you have the feeling for the sound, the right sound, in the context of the sentence, and that's where you make your choice. ("Heiner Müller, Playwright," 97)
"All my texts are made up of words and not of ideas," he writes. "Ideas are in them maybe, but they are secondary" (96). Müller does not write from a unifying concept:

A danger always, especially in German theatre, in European theatre, is that the director has a clear concept and then he breaks the text, you know, and kills the play with his concept. (95)

He tells the following story about the writing of DESCRIPTION OF A PICTURE:

I remember one point when there was no way out, I didn't know what to write next, so I just drank a lot of scotch, and then I wrote something down without thinking. Next day I saw it was okay. (96)

Müller's refusal to answer in a so-called reasonable and serious way to the questions and concerns of his critics can be seen in a number of other places. His explanation for the meaning of the title Hamletmachine, "Hamletmachine = H.M. = Heiner Müller" (Hamletmachine, 51), enrages a rationalist theatre critic such as the Globe and Mail's Ray Conlogue: in a negative (uncomprehending) review of Carbone-14's production of the play, he writes,

It would be a shame if this had been done to a disciplined theatre script, but in Müller's [sic] case one tends to feel little sympathy. After
all, it is Muller who encouraged the rumour that he chose the title Hamlet-Machine because it has the same initials as his name. A writer like that deserves an interpreter like Maheu. ("Enlightenment or pretension?")

The answers Müller gives to seemingly serious questions in "19 Answers by Heiner Müller" are equally an affront to reason. When asked what he would regard as "a central issue in your recent texts," he answers, "How should I know, and if I knew why should I tell you?" (Hamletmachine, 139); when asked his views on the future, he quotes an East German railworker: "'Show me a mousehole and I'll fuck the world'" (140).

There has become apparent in Müller's texts a transgression of genres of discourse. "Reflections on Post-Modernism," an essay delivered as a lecture to the MLA, begins with a (literary) parable concerning Orpheus, and is linked by a series of shared allusions, for example Sartre/Fanon's "under the sun of torture," to Hamletmachine. Dramatic writing and expository or theoretical writing come to resemble each other. This arises in part because of Müller's distrust of prose, which he finds too unequivocal ("Walls of History," 60). He has evolved an elliptical, dramatized form akin to prose poetry and adaptable to a multitude of situations. If we compare the concluding
paragraphs of *Hamletmachine*, which Girshausen says "reads like a manifesto" (406), and "The Wounded Woyzeck," Müller's dramatic 1985 speech on receiving the Georg Büchner Prize, we see a prose style suitable to theatre and theorizing:

This is Electra speaking. In the heart of darkness. Under the sun of torture. To the capitals of the world. In the name of the victims. I eject all the sperm I have received. I turn the milk of my breasts into lethal poison. I take back the world I gave birth to. I choke between my thighs the world I gave birth to. I bury it in my womb. Down with the happiness of submission. Long live hate and contempt, rebellion and death. When she walks through your bedrooms carrying butcher knives you'll know the truth. (*Hamletmachine*, 58);

THE WOUNDED HEINE begins to scar over, crooked; WOYZECK is the open wound. Woyzeck lives where the dog is buried, the dog's name: Woyzeck. We are waiting for his resurrection with fear and/or hope that the dog will return as a wolf. The wolf will come from the South. When the Sun is in its Zenith, he will be one with our shadow and in the hour of white heat History will begin. Not until
History will have happened will our shared destruction in the frost of entropy or, abridged by politics in the nuclear lightning, be worthwhile; the destruction which will be the end of all utopias and the beginning of a reality beyond mankind. ("The Wounded Woyzeck," 74)

Müller makes another distinction between prose and drama: drama is "more body language than prose" ("Walls of History," 69). Müller's most extreme questioning of reason and rational language is in his exploration of the nonverbal elements of the theatre and ultimately in an exploration of what appears to be meaningless. "A play comes alive in the contradiction between intention and material," he writes in a letter to Martin Linzer ("A Letter," 30); and in an interview with Sylvestre Lotringer, he says,

A critic saw in my last plays an attack on history, the linear concept of history. He read in them the rebellion of the body against ideas, or more precisely: the impact of ideas, and of the idea of history, on human bodies. This is indeed my theatrical point: the thrusting on stage of bodies and their conflict with ideas. ("Walls of History," 65)

Not only in his later plays, but in his latest restagings of earlier works, is there a new emphasis on what escapes words
and/as ideas. In a discussion of Müller’s 1988 restaging of 1956’s Der Lohndrucker, Marc Silberman notes how the new production increases silences and gaps in the text:

These pauses have been multiplied and further extended: they are empty spaces which the director fills with striking visual images, with the tableau-like scenes ...or with music, noise, film sequences, and repetitive movement. The structural use of silence makes room for gestic action, and thus it promotes the medium to implement the theatrical means at its disposal against the hegemony of the word. (Silberman 1988, 31)

Müller admits to having been influenced by image theatre such as that of Robert Wilson (Carl Weber, 138), and has come to collaborate with Wilson on a number of pieces. The first production of Hamletmachine (one hesitates to call it the original production, as it came three years after the play was written, in another country and in another language) in Paris in 1979 seems to already have been under the influence of image theatre, if the following disapproving review can be trusted:

La mise en scène est un invraisemblable bazar scénique, une accumulation de gadgets. Il y a pêle-mêle une "Annonciation" de Botticelli...un
magnetophone, une machine à écrire, un appareil qui projette des photos en couleur, des scaphandriers, les portraits de Marx, Lénine, Mao sur lesquels l'acteur—Gérard Desarthe, mal à l'aise dans ce bataclan—projette des œufs comme dans un jeu de massacre. (Sandier, 27)

An exemplary situation can, once again, be found in Carbone-14's Hamletmachine, which takes Muller's play even further into image theatre. There is a dance involving an Ophelia with blonde hair, a white dress, and high heels, a lean, German Hamlet with a shaved head, and a large fan on a castored floor stand. Here is Ray Conlogue's account of the scene:

Take the celebrated set-piece in the middle of the show where the German Hamlet (Rodrigue Proteau) and one of the Ophelia's (Johane Madore) do a terrifying dance using a large electric fan as a prop. It is weighted in such a way that either dancer can sprawl over the fan without crashing ignominiously to the floor, even as the fan is hauled around the stage by the other dancer. To add further visual interest, the fan is plugged in, so that we have billowing skirts and hair as well.

This set piece has become the production's calling card; a
photograph of it appears in Conlogue’s article and twice (2, 5) in the programme for the du Maurier World Stage Festival at which I saw the play. Yet the scene has also become the production’s succès de scandale. Here is Conlogue’s commentary:

There is no denying the effect is drastic and overwhelming. But is it in any way connected to the earlier scene where the Ophelia in delicate white, with smeared, girlish makeup (Pascale Montpetit), enacts the "remembrances" scene with a reasonably intact Shakespearean Hamlet? And is there any way to connect this with John Gielgud’s recorded voice reciting "to be or not to be," with the record deliberately scratched so that the final phrase will be repeated endlessly?

Critics, including this one, tend to start at this point talking about historic resonance, the deconstruction of classic texts, European history consuming itself, and heaven knows what else. But in this case it’s hard, because what you really believe is that Maheu is showing off. Muller’s script seems little more than the inspiration for a Carbone-14 improvisation, in the same way that a jazz pianist might borrow a bar of Beethoven and go on to create a piece that has nothing to do
Similar questions/objections were raised at a round table discussion during the du Maurier festival. Bill Glassco, discussing his use of stage imagery, said that he likes to use one unifying and symbolic image which is inspired by the text and gives visceral punch to the meaning of the drama. He said that although he would never forget the image of the woman on the fan, an image of extraordinary power, he really didn't understand what it was about, or only understood intuitively. Pia Kleber, who had been involved with a more intellectualized Hamletmachine at University College Playhouse, which I had also seen, objected that the images in Maheu's production were not trying to illustrate the text.

Maheu's response to these reservations was to admit that he had taken liberty with Müller's text in the fan dance, that it was not a symbolic or unifying image, but that it was a moment of creation, of freedom more than understanding, or at least of theoretical understanding. His final defense was that even if the dance didn't make sense, it was more important to allow this beautiful scene to take place than to sustain a unified interpretation of the text.

Maheu admits to the scene's meaninglessness, or at least its irrelevance to the meaning of the drama text. But
one could 'read' this imagistic scene quite differently. Although there is no place in the text of Hamletmachine at which it says Hamlet and Ophelia dance with a fan, there is a dance. It is a dance between Hamlet, made up as a woman, and Horatio. One of the stage directions reads, "The dance grows faster and wilder" (55). One could work out the many ways in which Maheu's dance varies from Müller's text, but Conlogue--like Maheu--is wrong to say that the scene has "nothing to do" with Müller. As to the "heaven knows what else" that one might talk about, there are any number of resonances in the images which are not irrelevant to Müller's text. The Ophelia in this scene looks like Marilyn Monroe, who has become a cultural symbol for woman as victim, which is to say a version of Shakespeare's Ophelia. Müller's Ophelia is a strange combination of Shakespeare's Ophelia and Ulrike Meinhoff. Maheu adds Monroe, a torch singer, and a Latin American torture victim to the mix.

As to the German Hamlet, with his powerful physique and his shaved head, he is the cliché Nazi: if women are all Marilyn Monroe, men are all Hitler--which may be oversimplifying, and yet is neither meaningless nor totally irrelevant to Müller's text. The fan itself invokes, at least for me, several associations. I think of Robin Philips's 1986 production of Cymbeline in which two very similar fans were
used as the propellers of a B-17; I think of a giant meat grinder like the infamous one on the cover of an issue of *Hustler*, in which a woman was being ground into hamburger. Finally I think, thanks to Bob Wallace, of the fan dance, that exploitive display/concealment of women's beauty which, like Marilyn Monroe, draws such an ambivalent response from a guilt-ridden heterosexual like myself.

All this may seem like a vain attempt to recoup this scene for traditional literary/dramatic meaning. I don't think that this scene, or perhaps any scene, can fully escape from meaning or from at least a wild relevance to the text. But I would want to set the scene's meanings against its meaninglessness, its specific textures as image, which I believe is also inescapable. (This struggle between scenography as ultimately meaningless and immediate and words as ultimately meaningful and represented has already been mapped out in Bene and Deleuze.) Maheu's imagistic anti-theoretical approach seems to preclude any association with the *Lehrstück*, even in its radically altered form. And yet the puzzling (out) of the complex relations between coherence and dissemination, meanings and meaninglessness, thought and image, which the play demands/allows, cannot be said to have "nothing to do" with the task of the *Lehrstück* as recast by Muller.
1.3 Blau

I begin with an inexpressibility topos, an admission of reductionism. In writing on Bene and Deleuze I produced approximately thirty pages from, for the most part, one short volume and a thirty page article. In writing about Herbert Blau I face more than a thousand difficult pages (Patricia Mellencamp writes that Blau's writing "resembles a moebius strip in its circling density" (141)) to be distilled. One statement by Bene with which Blau would have (next to) no sympathy is that whatever gets said about a spectacle is only idle chatter: Blau, like Richard Schechner, has made a career out of discussing the theatrical productions with which he has been involved. He makes the connection between his theatre work and his theorizing over and over again.

Theatre and theory, Blau reminds us, have a common etymology: "the Greek word theasthai, meaning to watch, contemplate, look at; from thea, a viewing" (Take Up the Bodies, 1). The central experience in both theatre and theory is the activity of reflection (145), the "I saw myself seeing" of Elsinore (78), Blau's adaptation of Hamlet. The ambiguous relation of theatre and theory to the act of perception means that the desire for non-representation, for an escape from (necessary) illusion, for "the illusion that might give an answer" (Elsinore, 77), is the
most powerful motive of both theory and theatre (Eye of Prey, xxix).

Theatre, therefore, is (a kind of) theory: "theory, or a shadow of it" (Take Up the Bodies, 1), "a delicate empiricism which so intimately involves itself with the object that it becomes true theory" (epigram from Goethe to Eye of Prey). Impassioned by the thought, if not the desire, of putting an end to theatre (Eye of Prey xvii), to itself as illusion, theatre becomes inseparable from theory when it insists on its illusions, on its distance from life (7-8). This is a theatre which has its origins not only in myth but in "the rigor and acuteness of a conceptual power" ("Ideology," 442). Theatre is a play of mind (Take Up the Bodies, 7), an act of seeing which is already theory (1), a blooded abstraction (Blooded Thought, xiii), a metaphysics of the flesh (Elsinore, 83). And so Blau's theatre work functions as theory: Elsinore is an analytic scenario (58), "abstract in inquiry" (83). Its structure--images with commentary--is a thought process (70), exploration and investigation (90). Crooked Eclipses, an adaptation of Shakespeare's sonnets, subtitled "A Theatrical Essay," is a "laboratory (or labyrinth) of emotion and thought" (1). Because theatre is blooded abstraction, "The essay is in the performance."

If theatre is theory, theory is theatre. Blau writes of "the masque of theory" (Eye, 203). This is "the radical
theory which thinks of itself as theatre" ("Audition," 66), which thinks of every act of reading as a performance (Blooded Thought, 33). Theory too is blooded thought: it stumbles, is feverish, corporeal, carnal ("Ideology," 441-442), experiences the jolting, visceral power of thought ("Ideology," 442). And so theory like theatre is founded upon an ambiguous self regard: it sees itself as half performative impulse, half antitheatrical prejudice (Eye of Prey, xvii).

The relations between (Blau's) theatre and theory are complex. In The Impossible Theatre in 1964 he sees his own work as documentation for his theory (26)—much like Kowsar's simple version of superposition: the theatre as case. In 1982's Take Up the Bodies, the relation is restated as theater being the means by which we theorize (114). In his most recent work he sees a mutually generative relation between theatre and theory ("Ideology," 444). Although understanding has always interested him more than theatre (in as much as they are conceivable if not actualizable as separate), he realizes that he sees theatrically (Eye of Prey, xvii), that he has been disciplined to thought by theatre (xviii). Theatre has had its effect on the way Blau writes theory (Take Up the Bodies, xvi)—allusively, elliptically—and his essays in consequence are by no means formally theoretical (Eye of Prey, xviii). Complementarily
he finds his theatre work confirmed by new theory (Eye, xxxiii).

To see that theatre is theory and theory is theatre is not to conflate them totally and efface all differences. It is still possible, despite the coming together of theatre and theory, to set them at different places on a (dis)continuum: theatre more of experience, theory more of meditation (Take Up the Bodies, ix). In The Eye of Prey he talks of his latest theorizing as a turning away from the theatre (xxv). In The Impossible Theatre, his first book, he makes the distinction between his theory as the work of an individual and his theatre as the work of collaboration (acknowledgements): for Blau theory is done alone, theatre collectively. Theory is the refuge of the individual, and for Blau the individual is a hard won concept he is unwilling to abandon (Take Up the Bodies, 262). To some extent this plays into the traditional notion of theorist as scientist, independent individual, philosopher, and yet if the subject of theatre is a subject imbricated with others, the theorist is imbricated, blooded, in his own way.

Theatre is "a speculative inquiry by the group" (Crooked Eclipses, ii); theory is theatre you perform alone.

Blau is ultimately more interested in understanding than theatre; he quotes Brecht approvingly: "I believe in the brain" ("Ideology," 444). Blau's theatre is a theatre
of thought and language: his plays are full of words; the major scenographic image of *Crooked Eclipses* is the flashlight carried by the actor as a "metonymy of consciousness" (*Take*, 162). Blau agrees with Stanislavski that the best person to become an actor is "a man [sic] of ideas" ("With Your Permission," 11). He believes that sloppiness of mind is the major scandal of our theatre ("Ideology," 460).

Blau stands for virility of mind over physicality (*Take Up the Bodies*, xxii). He rejects the revolt of the body against ideas, the play of unfettered desire in the deoedipalized body (*Eye of Prey*, xxxiv). He stands for "our oedipal drama" ("Ideology," 441) against the visceral theatre of "liminal bodies never hallowed by an idea" ("Audition," 70). He equates Deleuze and Guattari’s desiring machine with Jarry’s debraining machine (*Eye of Prey*, 190). This is an equation which Deleuze or Bene wouldn’t necessarily reject; Blau’s real critique is of the naivety of visceral theatre: its illusions are not an escape from thought, but merely a negligence of thought (203).

Nothing is more illusory than the illusion of the unmediated (164). Nothing is more coded than the body ("Ideology," 458). The body lies like the mind (*Take Up the Bodies*, 243)—in fact, even in our bodies we "cant [sic] leave mind" (*Crooked Eclipses*, 2). The same is true of language: "In the beginning, I saw the Word" (*Elsinore*, 60). Even when
the text is abandoned, the language of the body is always
ghosted by words (\textit{Take Up the Bodies}, 224). Performance
seems written even when there is no text (\textit{Eye of Prey}, 171).
Besides, even if we could abandon thought and language, what
would be the gain? The story to be told is too complicated
for a body without words (\textit{Take Up the Bodies}, 28): "I cannot
imagine a theatre form of any consequence which does not
hold discourse among the modes of meaning" ("Ideology," 459).

One part of the struggle of/for thought in the theatre
involves the relation of the ear and eye: there is a
"metaphysical abyss between the perceptions of eye and ear"
("Odd, Anonymous," 208). Just as Blau is more interested in
understanding than theatre, word than body, his theatre is
most importantly a theatre of the ear. This sets him
against the "hegemony of the image" ("Audition," 61) in such
work as Wilson's \textit{Hamletmachine}, in which what is heard is
dominated by the visible (68). Blau's work is in part a
critique of specular consciousness (\textit{Eye of Prey}, xi). And
so the first section of \textit{Elsinore} is called "T'HAVE SEEN WHAT
I HAVE SEEN" (58), and in \textit{Crooked Eclipses} there is an
ongoing examination of sight: "O me, what eyes hath Love put
in my head, / Which have no correspondence with true sight"
(9); "My most true mind thus maketh mine eye untrue" (16).
Opposed to specular consciousness with its spectacle and
spectators, Blau—"Called to that audit by advised respects" (Crooked Eclipses, 9)—posits the ear, with its audits, audition, and audience ("Audition," 59). Like Ben Jonson, Blau believes in a spectator who is more importantly an auditor (63). Even his theory he reads aloud as he writes, because the words need to be confirmed in the ear (Eye of Prey, xiii).

Blau positions himself within the tradition of western metaphysics in a way similar to the position of Derrida and deconstruction (Eye of Prey, xxvi): as part of an attempt to "enact the understanding of its own problematic" ("Ideology," 457), as "language freaked on language" (Eye of Prey, xiii). He aligns himself with postmodern thought: performance worrying about itself (xx). If Endgame is an encyclopedia of deconstructionist thought (Blooded Thought, 104), and Hamlet a textbook of Derridean insights avant la lettre (Eye of Prey, xxvi), we can see current theoretical concerns throughout Blau's theatre work:

DEN: 0, there has been much throwing around of brains.

KAR: A document in madness.

JUL: thoughts and remembrance fitted.

JAC: ...O you must wear your rue with a difference. (Elcinore, 92)

What Blau objects to in deconstruction and postmodern
thought is the gratuitous subversion of meaning (Take Up the Bodies, 93). He is suspicious of the apotheosis of play (Eye of Prey, xviii): "If the desire is merely a desire for performance, it seems somehow to run out of truth" ("Ideology," 451). Blau's work insists upon meaning (Take Up the Bodies, 96): "But to the sensual fault I bring sense" (Crooked Eclipses, 4).

To insist upon understanding, theory, thought, and word over illusion, theatre, feeling, and image is not to escape from or simply reject the visceral, embodied quality of theatre, theory, or their subjectivities. Thought in theatre and theory is blooded thought. Actors are thinking bodies (Take Up the Bodies, xxiii) engaged in enactable thought (91). Gestures and vision are impossible without each other (123); thought depends upon, is limited by body: the heart beats over the problem of perception (157). Meaning in the theatre occurs as sensations, images, affects, ideograms, or judgements of the muscles ("Ideology," 459). Blau's actors realize this: "I saw my body... and how I couldn't get out of it" (Elsinore, 61); "I saw myself, lying in a pool of blood, being asked a question" (77). The thinking actor wishes it were otherwise: "If the dull substance of my flesh were thought...But, ah, thought kills me that I am not thought" (Crooked Eclipses, 12). The critical self-consciousness (Take Up the Bodies, 174) knows
that "there seems to be no alternative to thinking in the
stream if we're to do any thinking at all" (200), that in
the struggle between spectator and auditor, "perception is
largely determined by the parsing out or oscillation or
synesthesia of eye and ear" ("Audition," 62), that "in the
erotics of theater, words are corporeal" (Crooked Eclipses,
ii).

Blau does not believe in a mystical or divine presence,
but he does believe in the unconscious, which is a text
before words: the "alpha and omega of all process" (the
unconscious may be before words, but it is structured like a
language) ("Ideology," 445). There is a voice before there
is a self (Take Up the Bodies, 164); there is a subterranean
life in plays (Impossible Theatre, 14); there is that which
passeth show (Elsinore, 73), the opacity of experience. The
actor's body is the site of the ego and the unconscious in
struggle (Take Up the Bodies, 137). This struggle Blau
associates with the ghost in Hamlet. The Ghost is the meta-
question (212). Without the Ghost there is no theatre: "I
saw the thing coming, coming again tonight, appear, that
thing" (Elsinore, 93).

If thought is not bloody it is worth nothing; if it
happens only on the page it is not really theatre (Eye of
Prey, xvi). Blau's plays are full of not only thought and
language, but body and the activities of the body:
The actors in KRAKEN were, for all this emphasis on thought, extremely adept with their bodies... The performance was, thus, volatile and verbal, charged in body and mind, like an ideographic charting of the fever in the brain. (Elsinore, 57)

Karen bares her body (65); Tom fucks Margaret "with a gross savage physicality" (B6); in Crooked Eclipses there is breathing in the darkness (1), Karen and Julie become animals, clawing at each other (22), Karen plays with Tom's pubic hair (24). In Blau's theatre work there is little else but thought, words, bodies in action, and the tension between them; scenography is simple, the playing space an image of thought or self (in Elsinore a circle, in Crooked Eclipses a fleur-de-lys), and the few props, like the flashlights in Crooked Eclipses, are metonymies of perception.

The tension between, the thinking through the relations between thought and body, ear and eye, word and image produces subtler distinctions, finer divisions, than these binaries might imply (Take Up the Bodies, 152): from the primordial state to the apotheosis of the word there is "an indeterminate plenum of soundings" ("Audition," 62). Blau distrusts the straight line (Take Up the Bodies, xvii), even, for instance, that which would clearly divide him from
Deleuze. Blau's sensorium takes Deleuze's valorization and writes it, in all its complexity, "the other way around" (70), from essence to excretion: from quick ears to inquiring eyes (63) to the more elemental, somatic, visceral senses of taste, smell, and touch (70). The intraplay of the sensorium, and its interplay with thought, word, image, and the unconscious produces in Crooked Eclipses "myriad divisions" (Take Up the Bodies, 157) and in Elsinore multiple perspective (87):

there has been every inflection of role, character, self, voice, persona, mask in the generation of a collective emotion, as there has been every effort to understand at the personal level, the nature of the offense, the material cause, what prevents the crossing into otherness that is so desired. (97)

Meaning, too, is not simple to generate or understand. To insist upon meaning is not to deproblematize the search for meaning. The search for meaning can only be enacted as a problem. Just as the actor who thinks he is all there is suffering a delusion (Take Up the Bodies, 84), so every attempt at demystification is an illusion (149)—although it would be equally wrong to claim that the actor is entirely not there (the audience must discern the levels of reality in the acting (Elsinore, 88)), or that there is nothing but
total illusion (Impossible Theatre, 297). There is, in a world of tricksters, ghosts, and traces (95), a vertigo of theory (Eye of Prey, xviii), a vertigo of truth in a realm of seeming and passing show (Elsinore, 64). The search for meaning takes place on the ghost's shifting ground (74); the truth seems alternately eclipsed and lit (Crooked Eclipses, 4):

If there is no fixed principle (divinity) or principle of fixity, there is no alternative but the shifting ground...the nothing-at-all which is yet the all-that-is-to-be-seen, the nothing-but-ourselves. (89)

Nothing rests (Elsinore, 83). There is only "A dialogue over the abyss" (Elsinore, 81), the "disfigured body of thought in an infinite chain of representation" (Eye of Prey, 169). The actor, the auditor, is confronted with "the intensity of the disconnections that fill the space" (Elsinore, 97), which is also the space of the self and of all disciplines (Take Up the Bodies, 161): "I do not know, my lord, what I should think" (Elsinore, 88); the search for truth, founded upon a methodological indeterminacy (Take Up the Bodies, 80), is played so fast there is almost no chance to think (Elsinore, 95):

JUL: Question!

JAC: What's the matter?...
"What Brecht gives us in the end is not a position but a way of arriving at a position if a position is possible" (Impossible Theatre, 105). Blau, like Brecht, can only propose a terrible and never-ending labour ("With Your Permission," 8), the unremitting meticulousness of the thinking through of illusion ("Ideology," 460). The task of theatre and theory is to turn the subject over & over (Take Up the Bodies, 90), to tease a thought through an eternity of speculation without closing it off (Take, 165). Our questioning can only be relentless (229), "reason going mad and measuring the extent of its madness" (Elsinore, 85):

JUL: I saw we are explainable and not explained.

PET: I saw we will leave the emptiness as emptiness.

KAR: I saw we will go on craving. (94).
2. Intertextu(r)ality

2.1 Béne/Deleuze

"Comment concevoir ce rapport...entre la pièce originaire et la pièce dérivée?" (Superpositions, 87). First we must ascertain what is meant by "la pièce originaire," and then we can understand what is to be derived from it.

Shakespeare is a major author, and, as Deleuze writes, CB is very interested in the notions of major and minor. What is a major author? A subject, a text, a tradition.

A major literature is "an author's or master's literature" (Deleuze and Guattari, 18); a major author functions as a despot of the invariant (Superpositions, 125), in alliance with the ego (a "tyrant outside of history" (79)), the man of the state (90), the king, the "majority," which is not a real majority (the true majority are women, blacks, Asians, etc. (Superpositions, 124)), but a position of ideological domination. In the theatre of a major author, the actor represents a character, a subject, an ego. Such a role, such an actor, has, like the major author, an ancient complicity with princes and kings (93).

Against this systematic tyranny is to be set "the authority of a perpetual variation" (125). The minor author is the true great author (96), neither ego nor subject, but a becoming; not a becoming major, a becoming master, but a
becoming minor, a becoming woman (129). The minor author is the birth of, the constitution of, a "conscience de minorité" (130). In a minor theatre the actor ceases to be an actor (94); s/he stops playing (31), and becomes an intolerable presence (10). In place of a "king of the theatre" (67), an "I," a subject (Bene 1977, 81), there is "one Hamlet less": the actor becomes a negation of the subject (81), becomes one with the scenographic ensemble (Superpositions, 92), not an ego—which is exposed as a caprice in disguise (88)—but an assemblage, a machine (90).

The major author is a text, and a text is a form of domination and invariation (103). The text speaks the language of the majority, of the state, of the masters: homogenized, centered, invariant, constant, universal (98), and not the language of the minority: a black English, for instance. A text in a major literature, as a force of representation, imposes itself upon the experience of minorities and upon the immediate, which is non-representable (Bene 1977, 74).

In a minor theatre the text is simply material for variation (Superpositions, 105). In a minor theatre the text is rendered minor: just as every major language hides a minor language which is in continuous variation, every text is open to continuous transposition, a line of flight (101). A minor theatre renders the text a stranger in its own
A major author is a tradition. The English tradition, which includes Shakespeare and Marlowe, is a (hi)story of the king, "the monarchy of 'once upon a time'" (Bene 1977, 69). Shakespeare is king of the theatre; Shakespeare's heros are kings; Kemble, Kean, Gielgud, Olivier are kings of the stage: on every level the English tradition is complicitous with the power of the state and the normalization of existing power relations. Within this tradition even a critical representation of power is complicitous with that power (Superpositions, 93). Although not exactly the same, the hegemonic traditions of Italian theatre are also traditions of domination:

The truth is, that here, in Italy, you can do official theatre and nothing else. Engaged, frivolous, and even full of good intentions, but a theatre which is alive and of today: certainly not. (Bene 1977, 65)

Bene was offered the role of Mercutio in Zeffirelli's Romeo and Juliet, but he could not function in "un spectacle préfabriqué et servi à froid" (67).

A minor theatre has no tradition, but only an immediacy, is not (complicitous with) a state, but a becoming. It does not represent the fait accompli of the ego and the king (or of the text), but lives the spectacle, the immediate,
the non-representable, and does not try to "se foutre de l'instant" (Bene 1977, 73). A minor theatre does not represent anything; it presents and constitutes, in the moment of the scene, a minority consciousness (Superpositions, 130).

Deleuze writes that Bene has a great interest in submitting an author considered major to a minor treatment, in order to rediscover the potentialities for becoming in that author: "Shakespeare, for example?" (96) How is this becoming minor of the major author to be effected?

We have already discussed the ways in which Bene's theatre deforms speech and the written text, how the text becomes material for variation. These variations are achieved through the improvisations in as much as sixty days of rehearsal (Bene 1977, 65). Even then Bene does not completely fix his text: he often revises (for example, his Othello and Un Hamlet de moins), and leaves places in the text where the actor must decide what will be done: "It is for the moment totally useless to give details...that will depend on the actors" (Superpositions, 38). Bene has no great respect for Shakespeare's words, although he sometimes uses a speech from Shakespeare as the starting point of a variation: "Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?" (Superpositions, 44), or, grafting from Macbeth, "a tale/ Told by an idiot.../ Signifying nothing" (78). His project is rather
to amputate the text as major literature (and so *One Hamlet* less). He seems most interested in the dynamics of certain relations—Richard and the women, and in certain ritualistic and compulsive scenes: the 'seduction' of Lady Anne; Richard's nightmare before Bosworth Field (one of Bene's pieces is subtitled "a spectacle in two nightmares" (Bene 1977, 71)). We might even say that he is interested in certain Shakespearean themes: the state, the royal ego, the way that "les couronnes volent de tête en tête sans aucune raison féminine" (Superpositions, 48). Although Deleuze writes that CB doesn't parody Shakespeare (87), Bene identifies parody with tragedy—one cannot separate the terms (Bene 1977, 77), and at times explicitly deflates elements of "la pièce originaire": the drawers of the set contain the accessories from which could be drawn—but isn't—"un beau Richard III traditionnel" (Superpositions, 9); the coronation scene should be a great ensemble scene, but is instead "une minable séquence entre les deux complices" (58).

In the instance of "Richard III" the originary play is a work by Shakespeare, but that is not always so. Derivation from an originary work is one of Bene's habitual modes of operation; he has done at least one derivation from each of the following: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, Marlowe's *Edward II*, *Arden of Faversham*, *Don Quixote*,
Lewis's *The Monk*, *Faust*, *Pinocchio*, Wilde's *Salome*, *A rebours*, *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Don Giovanni*, *Ubu Roi*, as well as works by Sade, Majakovsky, and Lorca. What is it about these works which tempts Bene? "Seuls me tentent les textes impossibles à représenter" (Bene 1977, 65). It is not on the level of the written text that Bene becomes interested in these works: each is only one "prêtetxe théâtral" among so many others (Bene 1977, 85). Whereas, in the theatre the public is accustomed to communicate by speech (70), the true language of the theatre is scenic language, "l'écriture est celle de la scène, pas celle des textes" (78). It is on the level of scenography that these works are impossible to represent, or to rephrase (not without contradiction), "tout le monde peut vraiment les représenter--dans le sens que tout le monde peut les récrire scéniquement" (78). Representation in this sense is to "make use" (78) of the text in order to betray it "en scène" (79).

All texts are betrayable on the stage; Bene knows perfectly well that he would be the first to betray a text that he himself had written (79); even Brecht is betrayable (Bene denies this on page 78 and admits it on page 79), but why bother--Brecht's works are already too subject to their own critique (79), a critique which is made too much "sur l'écrit" and not "à la scène" (78). What interests Bene is
the major author whose text is open scenographically to a
minor treatment (critique, recreation, representation: terms
taken up and discarded)—Shakespeare, for example. Deleuze
writes that Bene’s theatre of experimentation holds more
love of Shakespeare than all the textual commentaries (89),
and presumably the traditional productions that those
commentaries are allied with. This love for Shakespeare is
premised upon the openness of Shakespeare, and Shakespeare’s
text, to scenographic experimentation: we love Shakespeare
because he allows us to be unfaithful; we are faithful in
our infidelity.

One thing more on Bene’s (in)fidelity to Shakespeare:
Brecht is too verbal in his critique; CB says that his *Romeo
and Juliet* is a critical essay on Shakespeare; Deleuze says
that the fact is CB doesn’t write on Shakespeare, that CB’s
critical essay is itself a piece of theatre, that although
it has a critical function, its project is not to criticize
Shakespeare; Deleuze wonders: it has a critical function,
but critical of what? Bene says that *Hamlet* is nothing else
but an essay on the impasse, “l’impossibilité de faire du
théâtre qu’est *Hamlet*” (Bene 1977, 76). In *Un Hamlet de
moins* all this is given in a very precise, nonverbal sign:
the tearing of pieces of paper into smaller and smaller
pieces. What interests Bene in Shakespeare is a (latent)
critical essay, written in scenographic language, on theatre
itself. That essay is recreated through (in)fidelity, infidelity to Shakespeare the major, fidelity to Shakespeare the minor.

2.2 Müller

To a large extent, Müller's Shakespeare is Brecht's Shakespeare. Fehervary argues that Müller's work is unthinkable without Brecht (1976, 84). The bourgeois concerns which Brecht draws ironically out of Shakespeare as "'human interest'"—"Othello (my wife is my property), Hamlet (better sleep on it), Macbeth (I'm destined for higher things)" (Brecht, 49)—can be made to reveal all of Müller's thematic interests in Shakespeare: sexuality and exploitation, the paralysis of intellectualism, power and authority. Müller claims that his interpretation of Hamlet is Brecht's:

However, in 1956—and for me even earlier in the fifties—it became evident that Hamlet was becoming a topical character again. Quite as Brecht once defined him: The man between the ages who knows that the old age is obsolete, yet the new age has barbarian features he simply cannot stomach. (qtd. in Carl Weber, 137)

However, Müller here makes a number of changes to Brecht's interpretation.
Brecht's reading is as follows:

Given the dark and bloody period in which I am writing—the criminal ruling classes, the widespread doubt in the power of reason, continually being misused—I think that I can read the story thus: It is an age of warriors...[The events of the play] show the young man...making the most ineffective use of the new approach to Reason which he has picked up at the university of Wittenberg. In the feudal business to which he returns it simply hampers him. Faced with irrational practices, his reason is utterly unpractical. He falls a tragic victim to the discrepancy between such reason and such action.

(Brecht, 201-202)

For Brecht, Hamlet is the new man of reason who fails to negotiate the transition from the old feudal barbarism to the new enlightenment: his failure is not his hesitancy to seek revenge, but his giving in irrationally to such revenge. Muller's Hamlet as well is a man in a transition period; but he is a man of the old reason who cannot deal with the necessary new barbarism: his failure is his intellectual paralysis in the face of the need to act. Just as Brecht's interpretation of Hamlet is, as Eric Bentley has shown, a misprision (Cole, 101), so is Müller's interpreta-
tion of Brecht.

However, to use Brecht without criticizing him is to betray him. Brecht's reading of Shakespeare is openly an interpretation, one way of reading a play, "which can be read in more than one way" (Brecht, 202). For Brecht, and for Müller, works of the past, such as those of Shakespeare (or now Brecht himself), are "like a quarry" (qtd. in Carl Weber, 137), of interest only in as much as they can be made relevant to and useful for our own times (part of Müller's refunctioning of Brecht includes a rejection of the canon of epic masterpieces for the sake of reappropriating so-called marginal works, such as Fatzer ("To Use Brecht," 33)). And so, Müller's Hamlet says, "My drama if it still would happen, would happen in the time of the [1953? 1956? 1968?] uprising" (56).

This, then, is the way in which Müller's Shakespeare is most Brecht's: Shakespeare is not so much a major author, as "pure material" (qtd. in Heinemann, 206). This is not to say that Shakespeare did not have "In his heartbeat the / greed of the epoch" (qtd. in Marranca) or that Hamlet is not part of a repressive cultural tradition--in "The Wounded Woyzeck" "SHAKESPEARE'S PUB" is part of "the barbaric reality of our prehistory" (74) and in "The Walls of History" he associates Hamlet's ghost with the nightmarish past we struggle against (47)--or that Brecht has so
successfully deauthorized Shakespeare as to separate his work from those "masterpieces" which are "the accomplices of power" (qtd. in Carl Weber, 140)—*Hamletmachine* is in part an attempt to destroy the Hamlet that obsesses Müller ("Walls of History," 70); but, because of Brecht's intercession, for Müller *Hamlet* is no longer so much the work of the author Shakespeare (Müller's *Hamlet* says not "I am Hamlet," but "I was Hamlet" (*Hamletmachine*, 53)), as an already intertextualized scene of struggle: in *Hamletmachine* Hamlet finds himself in the university of the dead, where the dead philosophers throw their books at him (55).

This is not to say that Müller is not concerned with the hegemony of the author and his masterpieces: he argues in "Reflections on Post-Modernism" that our literary products must work toward "the expropriation and finally the disappearance of the author" and "Work toward the disappearance of the author is resistance against the disappearance of humankind" (57); it's just that the hegemonic author is no longer Shakespeare. There is a moment in *Hamletmachine* where a picture of the author is ripped in half (57). It is not a picture of Shakespeare. It is not even a picture of Brecht—although the mass of literature, even in English, on Müller's struggles with Brechtian authority make it clear that for Müller Brecht is the author to be reckoned with. It is a picture of Müller himself which is torn.
If Müller's work effects this dismemberment of the authorial principle, if it subverts the limitations imposed by Brecht and Müller himself—"the way one contributes to one's own expropriation is one of the criteria of talent" ("Reflections," 55), it does so by opening onto a multiple and decentered intertextuality. Those who write of Müller's struggles with Brecht invoke his use of Artaud (Girshausen, 406; Innes, 153). Müller also uses Kafka to break away from the constraints of Brecht's influence: he writes,

The landslides of recent history have done less damage to the model of the penal colony than to the ideal construction of the learning plays.

("To Use Brecht," 31)

Teroaka has shown that Müller's understanding of Kafka is filtered through Deleuze and Guattari's work on minor literature (19). It is through the idea of a minor literature that Müller is able to develop that part of Hamletmachine which owes least to Brecht: Ophelia.

For Müller, following Deleuze and Guattari, women are—along with peoples of the third world—the minority in whose hands the fear and hope of the world lies. If Hamlet represents the past, Ophelia represents the emerging future. For Deleuze and Guattari the minorization of the world is equated with a "becoming-female" (Kafka, 87): thus Hamlet tells Ophelia, "I want to be a woman" (Hamletmachine, 55).
Hamlet, the tradition of reason and intellectualism in the West, is a spent force; his only hope/fear is to be subsumed in a generalized movement of the heretofore victimized minority/majority, "FIERCELY ENDURING MILLENIUMS IN THE FEARFUL ARMOR" (58). If Ophelia laughs when Hamlet tells her of his desire to be a woman, it is not only at the desire to exchange the alienation of privilege for the alienation of suffering, not only at the perversity of what Hamlet's idea of a woman must be, it is also because such a metamorphosis will not be joyful, but most likely at the hands of the woman with a butcher knife in the bedroom in the middle of the night.

"I'm always trying to use quotations," Müller says ("Walls of History," 67), which for him is a way of dealing with subjectivity (69), of undermining his own authority. Teroaka speaks of a movement towards "a total openness to other texts and other voices" (179). Even a short list of his citations shows the degree to which no authority, including his own, is allowed hegemony in his texts: Walter Benjamin, Jim Morrison, Susan Atkins of the Manson gang, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, Pink Floyd, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jean Baudrillard, Marx, Hegel, Franz Fanon, Holderlin, Alfred Hitchcock, T.S. Elliot, Conrad, Buchner, Marshall McLuhan, and Shakespeare.

The undermining of authorial control is also achieved
by an opening onto the possibilities in new productions of his plays, productions which in profound ways are other in their intentions. For Müller his finished works are like a corpse ("Walls of History," 62), and he reads his past writings like the works of a dead author (Hamletmachine, 17). The living interpreter comes upon those dead texts of a dead author like an archeologist coming upon unintelligible hieroglyphs from which "something as yet unclear might be discovered" (Betty Nance Weber, 155). Speaking to a critic about his collaboration with Robert Wilson on the CIVIL warS, Müller has said,

This play is a montage of quotations--a collage of texts. This structure takes its time to get a meaning. Two days from now you will have another attitude. Two weeks from now another. And my attitude is changing each time I see the show and hear the text. (qtd. in Holmberg, 456)

In a feminist production of Mauser (Müller's most explicit adaptation of the Brechtian Lehrstück) in Austin, Texas in 1975, an all-woman cast added to the text not only new levels of interpretation, but a prologue, an interlude, and a set of group gestures (150), thus exploding "the limits of the play" (156). Müller provides a set of "guidelines" for productions of Cement ("Author's Note," 67), and spoke with Sue-Ellen Case before she directed the
play at Berkeley in 1979; during those conversations Case was able to make him "reconsider" (Case 1979, 79) some of his pronouncements, and continued to disagree with him on others (77) --Müller argues that "it is the mistakes in works of art which endow them with permanence" ("To Use Brecht," 33); after seeing this production of Cement, which Müller thought the best he had seen, he told Ingrid Eggers,

The playwright cannot do anything against the fact that once the play is written it will be interpreted differently by different people at different places. Everybody is using the aspects he can relate to. A good play can never be fully realized in one production because it always represents the choice of one conception by one director or one group. (Eggers, 83)

We have already seen how Müller himself rethought Der Lohndrucker in the 1988 production in East Berlin. Robert Wilson’s minimalist 1986 production of Hamletmachine, rather than having the "bazar scénique" of the play’s stage directions "literally embodied," had them spoken, or projected as subtitles (Rogoff, 56); this resulted, according to Gordon Rogoff, in "a more clearly defined Müller" (57). [Nicholas Zurbrugg gives quite a different account of this production, at least in its London run: Wilson takes Müller’s "rather tired" text (447) and by "mixing almost
every theatrical and extra-theatrical trick in the Post-
Modern book" (439) creates a dynamic production of "multi-
dimensional realities" (448). Not having seen this produc-
tion in either New York or London, I cannot say which of
these, if either, is a more accurate account; however, it is
clear that Zurbrugg, with his interest in existential values
and his desire to embrace postmodern media (it remains
unclear how these two projects are to be reconciled), is
bound to come up with a different interpretation than I,
with a more political agenda, would have.] Diane Cave,
Cheryl May, and Pia Kleber, in Toronto in 1987, tried to
recreate the Stalinist eastern Europe of 1956, when Muller
first began to work on the piece (Hamletmachine programme,
2). Gilles Maheu who insisted that his production came out
of Montreal, not East Germany, added to images of Stalin,
Hitler, Roosevelt, and Churchill, images of more recent
western leaders: Thatcher, Reagan, Mulroney, Trudeau, and
Bob Barker; he also added sections of the text of Shake-
speare's Hamlet—which in Müller's text is reduced to a few
wryly twisted allusions: "HE WAS A MAN HE TOOK THEM ALL FOR
ALL"; "SOMETHING IS ROTTEN IN THIS AGE OF HOPE" (Hamletma-
chine, 53)—as well as multiplying the verbal languages of
the performance text: Ophelia's "I am Ophelia. The one the
river didn't keep" (54) was delivered in defiant, histrionic
French, a moving, tortured Spanish, and in English as a rock
ballad (once again we can see how Maheu takes his cue for infidelity from Muller's text: Marx, Mao, and Lenin--three women--all speak "each one in his own language" (Hamlet-machine, 58)).

Of course, in all this discussion of transgressions of authorial privilege, we are dealing with intertextuality in a fairly narrow sense. These are all small moments which point toward "the realm of freedom which lies beyond privileges" ("Reflections," 56), the universal becoming minor which, for Müller--white, European, intellectual, male, author--is both his own project and inescapably other: "Literature is an affair of the people. (Kafka)" (55). In the face of "the Marxist vision where art assumes a new function in a society whose members are all artists" (56-57), the works of Shakespeare, Brecht, and Muller, all the "major events" of our culture, and the high culture transgression of these works, "dwindle to symptoms" (56). But this takes us to the point where intertext becomes context and politics.

2.3 Blau

What are the (shifting) grounds upon which Blau and KRAKEN adapt Shakespeare, and what strategies arise on those grounds?
Blau does not think of himself as under any obligation to defer to Shakespeare as author or authorial intention (Blooded Thought, 28). Theory has taught him to reject a standard kind of authorial control (44); the author is never more than a missing person, and no single authority—the director, for instance—can step in to replace him (Take Up the Bodies, 281). Between the author’s intentions and our reenactment are the corrosions of meaning (Take Up the Bodies, 169) that history has effected upon the text; we never work from original intention itself, or even from original text, but from the remembrance of these things (146). Shakespeare’s Globe is no longer available to us (Take Up the Bodies, 88). The Sonnets were never meant to be staged (Crooked Eclipses, 1).

Even before he went missing, the author was of limited utility. Blau, like Peter Brook, is more interested in what comes before Shakespeare than in Shakespeare himself, the things which even Shakespeare didn’t understand (Blooded Thought, 160): Hamlet’s Ghost, the unconscious as alpha and omega of all process. Ultimately the point is to use Shakespeare’s words to gain access to something primal, not to serve the unascertainable intentions of a dead man: the thing must reappear again tonight, the reenactment must be blooded here and now if it is to matter at all. For Carmelo Bene Shakespeare is a pretext for scenographic openness and
recreation, and a source of certain psychopolitical enactments of power and fetishization; for Heiner Müller Shakespeare is a poetic drama with some affinity to his own poetic drama, and narratives and situations which serve as raw material for his own political theatre; for Blau Shakespeare is words and thinking. Blau recreates Shakespeare's blooded thought with a minimalist scenography: actors, words, a space, perhaps an audience; yet if theatre could be contained on the page, it was never really theatre (Eye of Prey, xvi).

This recreation is out of Shakespeare's hands and in our own (which is not to say that Shakespeare has (had) no influence on this process: one of Shakespeare's foremost characteristics as an author is what Keats called his negative capability, and Blau his self-annihilating identity (Take Up the Bodies, 165)). In Blau's theatrical work the reenactment is transferred into the hands of the directed collective.

All of Blau's work with Shakespeare, including King Lear at The Actor's Workshop in San Francisco (Impossible Theatre, 284), has been collaborations. In theatre individual creation--by author, director, actor--is subordinated to collective creation. KRAKEN's Crooked Eclipses is a collaborative act of understanding (Take Up the Bodies, 284); its structure is an act of collective perception (93).
its performance is a speculative inquiry by the group (CE, ii). *Elsinore*, derived not from *Hamlet*, but from the remembrance of *Hamlet* (*Take Up the Bodies*, 146), is structured by play of the actors' thought (120).

The play of the actors' thought takes place in rehearsal. Reading a play by Shakespeare, or even seeing it, is different from living with it (*Impossible Theatre*, 291). In rehearsal the group collides with the text and its corruptions (*Take Up the Bodies*, 169), displacing the content of *Hamlet*, for instance, with its own content, only to be displaced in turn by images from the source play (201); so that the collaborative text that is produced is a strange palimpsest of new on old and old on new (173). This palimpsest is most acutely manifest in the tape that plays throughout *Elsinore*: its words move in and out of the source text (89), taking constant measure of the relation between Shakespeare and KRAKEN; yet, as the actors listen to their own words become, like *Hamlet*, a text from the past, they are forced, like Derrida seeing something he has written or said come back to him, to confront their own intentions and perceptions as remembrance (*Elsinore*, 75).

KRAKEN comes out of the tradition of the chorus (120), and the chorus performs in a dialectic with the individual (actor) (*Elsinore*, 69). KRAKEN is a directed chorus, and the director, the theorist-individual, the author-figure, is
Blau. His job is to take the superfluity of material thrown up in rehearsals and improvisations and write up and shape it (Take Up the Bodies, 169; Elsinore, 57).

Authorial control and textual fidelity are confronted not only by the absence of original intention and the interplay of group and individual, but by the intertextuality in which we live, and move, and have our being. The rights of texts are made questionable by intertextuality (Blooded Thought, 78). Firstly, intertextuality sets the 'original' text in a long chain of prior sources. "To trace the source of a body of work is to be involved in an infinite regression" (Take, 78): behind Hamlet, for instance, is the Ur-Hamlet (Take Up the Bodies, 100), and behind that the source's source, an indeterminate series of prior forms and colours (173). Elsinore is a meditation on such origins (Take, 180), on the infinite recessions of the ghost (203). Secondly, intertextuality casts the fidelity of any interpretation into question. All production is revisionist ("Ideology," 459). We cannot read a text without bringing other texts to bear, any more than we can interpret without bringing our ideology to bear ("Ideology," 447). History lies between us and the text (Take Up the Bodies, 175). Elsinore's memory system is not confined to Hamlet (Take Up the Bodies, 89); the play is derived from the memory of Hamlet in a crossfire of reflexions (Blooded
Thought, 48) (the circular playing space comes from Tai Chi (Take Up the Bodies, 125)). Blau's King Lear was read not only through "internal necessities of our [the Actor's Workshop] own," but through Brecht and Genet (Impossible Theatre, 279). Crooked Eclipses draws upon KRAKEN's work on Kafka's "The Burrow" (Take Up the Bodies, 247; Crooked Eclipses, 17) and the ghosting of Elsinore/Hamlet (Crooked Eclipses, 3). The playing space for the piece was influenced by Freud's discussion of the dream's navel in The Interpretation of Dreams (Take Up the Bodies, 161).

Blau's theoretical and theatrical work carries with it an immense and overt intertext. Besides adaptations of Shakespeare, Blau has been involved with adaptations of Aeschylus and Kafka. Among those, besides Shakespeare, who figure prominently in his thinking, are Derrida, Marx, Freud, Kafka, Artaud, Genet, and Beckett (Endgame is an encyclopedia of deconstructionist thought (Blooded Thought, 104)). Such a pantheon of influence hardly places Blau outside the hegemonic canon. Although Blau has great respect for those traditionally considered great, and rarely mines noncanonical sources, he is willing to enter into a critical dialectic with canonical figures: his attitude to Brecht, for instance, is irreverent, which, given everything Brecht stands for, is not (necessarily) to be unfaithful (Impossible Theatre, 103). With his canonical contemporar-
ries--Grotowski, Deleuze, Müller--Blau is even more prone to unbridled critique. And so, if he shows tremendous respect for the texts of Shakespeare, he distinguishes between scholarship and theatre (286): fidelity to the text is impossible in any case (Blooded Thought, 28), but the theatre is particularly compelling in its call for revision.

It would be impossible to completely distinguish between Shakespeare (an original, a text, an intention which never truly existed) and the superposed corruptions and collisions of meaning. And yet, when Blau and KRAKEN look at Hamlet or The Sonnets or King Lear, what seems to be there? Hamlet is the pièce de résistance of western (anti)metaphysics, the closest thing we (more on this we in part three) have to a collective myth (Take Up the Bodies, 167); it seems to have seen it all. Hamlet is what was already there (166). The endless attraction of Hamlet, the greatest of dramas, comes from the play of thought around a missing identity (Blooded Thought, 33-34); it is devastation of signs (Take Up the Bodies, 146): it deals with what is universal in performance: "the consciousness of performance" (Eye of Prey, 171). More than a play, Hamlet is a state of mind it virtually created (Take Up the Bodies, 169), a state of mind called Elsinore (Elsinore, 57). Elsinore is a metaphysical (shifting) ground (Blooded Thought, 142), the mythical name for a common origin (Take Up the Bodies,
Parsed—read, seen, lived—Hamlet becomes theory (xviii); there is a whole theory of theatre in the words of Hamlet (166), a textbook (Eye of Prey, xxvi): we learn, our thought troubled by thought, the hard truths of hermeneutics (Blooded Thought, 32); all reality is theatre (Take Up the Bodies, 227); on perhaps a more practical level we learn that we can't trust mothers, fathers, or love (Take Up the Bodies, 166). And, even as we tease a thought through eternity, we learn to declare, "I can still tell a hawk from a handsaw" (Eye of Prey, 203). The Sonnets are a virtual manual of acting craft (Blooded Thought, 81) and an ontology of theatre (Take Up the Bodies, 94). As sociocultural critique they know that love is an historical, economic, social, and cultural invention (161). King Lear provides two axioms for all of us: "Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say," and "trust to the clearest gods" (Impossible Theatre, 309). The Tempest is an early draft of Civilization and its Discontents (Take Up the Bodies, 145). If Socrates showed that the unexamined life is not worth living, Shakespeare shows that the same holds true for the uncontested life (Impossible Theatre, 303).

What we seem to see in Shakespeare becomes an initiating pretext of our own thought (Take Up the Bodies, 174); we neither discard nor reconstruct the past, but follow through the implications of Shakespeare's text as they arise.
for us in rehearsal (86). We think through Hamlet, as Hamlet thinks through us (166); in the gravitational field between Hamlet and rehearsal, Hamlet’s critical self-consciousness beats through our brains (174): we trust and distrust (167). “To be or not to be,” “Is there a divinity which shapes our ends?” “Who’s there?”: these questions are asked over and over, but never answered (203), as we tease our thoughts into eternity. Performance becomes a critical, exegetical act (86), a sequence of decipherings (173). Elsinore is “An Analytic Scenario”; Crooked Eclipses is “A Theatrical Essay on Shakespeare’s Sonnets.” As we analyze what happens (to us) in Hamlet, what happens grows more and more untellable (Take Up the Bodies, 201). Each interpretation bottoms out in still another interpretation (213); Hamlet subverts every trace of prior dispositions (167).

All our questioning is only for the nonce: the text would be different for a different group; it is even different from performance to performance (Elsinore, 95). The moment of appropriation is only when the words are apprehended in the playing space (Take Up the Bodies, 91). The tape in Elsinore reminds us of this, distancing the actors from their own words, their own past, their own interpretations (Elsinore, 59), further widening the abyss between the scene and the source (75). KRAKEN’s work is a meditation upon the undecidability generated by everything
that comes between us and the original. Our textual crisis is appropriated by the performance (Take Up the Bodies, 173-174); the actors, for instance, are confronted by the intertextuality of all interpretation: "I saw the history of the theater on my shoulders" (Elsinore, 94).

Blau and KRAKEN use various textual manipulations to tease their thoughts out of Shakespeare. Most are methods of fragmentation and (dis)articulation (Take Up the Bodies, 90), in which the text is not only deconstructed but dismembered (166). The final lyric of Crooked Eclipses is a collage, the Sonnets sounding themselves (Take Up the Bodies, 165)—with a touch of Hamlet:

TOM: the darling buds
(the lights are starting to go out, one by one, varying intervals:)

JACK: vaunt

BRENT: vows

KAREN: no

PETER: in their youthful sap

ELLEN: hours

JULIE: the wide world

DENISE: my

TOM: self

BRENT: choirs

ELLEN: substantial
TOM: prophetic soul

PETER: out

DENISE: Love

JULIE: to the ending

JACK: doom.

(A total eclipse.) (28)

The beginning of the play meditates for half a page on the first two lines of the Sonnet 53: "What is your substance, whereof are you made, / That millions of strange shadows on you tend?" (1) By selecting which words are spoken aloud rather than under the breath, the actors make "The vacant leaves thy mind's..." sound as "cant leave mind" (2). "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought" is spoken "chorally, permutated, words and phrases resonating" (13), with a play between group unity and the syncopations of individual voices (Take Up the Bodies, 160). In Elsinore there is a long choral meditation on "If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come; it will be now" (69). Key words are reversed, so that "the primal eldest curse" becomes "the eldest primal curse" (62). The tape in Elsinore, in which the actors' words are mixed with words from Hamlet, is a particularly complex appropriation:

Each of the lines exists in several dimensions:

relative to the source-play, as an act of confessional self-consciousness, as an intimation of
what is to be performed, and as a reflection upon
the actors' relationships with each other. (61)

In Blau's theorizing, words and phrases are picked out
of Shakespeare—especially Hamlet—and recontextualized as
theoretical terminology: "My thoughts be bloody" and "Take
up the bodies" become the titles of Blau's theoretical
works; "Who's there?" becomes a questioning of the audience
and the self (Blooded Thought, xi); ghosting, shifting
ground, passing show: each becomes a touchstone for Blau's
circling thought.

KRAKEN's adaptations have no plot (Take Up the Bodies,
91), and feel no need to start at the beginning (175). They
are structured by, begin with, the act of reflexion (Crooked
Eclipses, i). The act of reflexion also results in a
dispersal of character. Character is a vitalizing principle
in Shakespeare (Impossible Theatre, 297), but it is charac-
ter sought, not assumed (Take Up the Bodies, 175). King
Lear features a phantasmagoria of identity, behaviour
passing from one character to another (Impossible Theatre,
288). After Hamlet character is the merest fiction (93).
Hamlet's Ghost is a metaphysical conceit, not a character
(Take Up the Bodies, 213). Hamlet is a concept, unplayable
by one actor (218). In Elsinore he disappears into the
structure and becomes the principle of indeterminacy (Elsi-
more, 57). In Elsinore, Tom is not a character, but himself
(Elsinore, 61-62), "tearing-the-self-apart" (62). When the self is contemplated and dismembered, it reveals otherness, signs, a dialectic of genders (Take Up the Bodies, 217), a ghost which comes and goes (Elsinore, 89), suggestions of characters (85). There are proliferating shifts of identities (87), flecks and flashes of character (88): Tom is at once the actor, Claudius, and Hamlet (62); Margaret is Ophelia, Gertrude, and Margaret (86); for a moment Julie becomes Hamlet (Elsinore, 87).

In Crooked Eclipses the actors don't relate as in conventional play, but look together at the insufficiency of the autonomous subject (Take Up the Bodies, 90). There are no roles, only actors (93); there are no characters, only reflections reflecting (Crooked Eclipses, i). But these are blooded reflections: the plays are not less emotional, but, if anything, more, and the emotion is an emotion of structure (Take Up the Bodies, 219), of lived discourse. Just as, on reflection, the author is dispersed into intertextuality, character is dispersed into the discourse of the group. In Elsinore the actors know all of Hamlet, not just their own parts (229); they are the seven corners of a circle (Elsinore, 95).
3. Context

3.1 Bene/Deleuze

Theatre has a critical function, but what is it critical of? This is Deleuze's question (Superpositions, 87). To answer we must put theatre into its context, for the short answer to this question is that the theatre Deleuze and Bene advocate is critical of theatre, power, majority domination, hegemonic language, subjectivity, culture, and life, all of which are seen as interrelated practices. A longer answer will begin to map these interrelations, and to analyze the critical functioning itself as well as the objects of critique. But before such a long answer can be made, there are certain issues which must be explored.

First there is the question of the interpretive context. To some extent my reading of Bene and Deleuze has so far progressed as if interpretation itself were relatively unproblematic: a text is there to be read; a careful reading reveals its meaning(s). But, to begin with, the text is problematic in this case. Superpositions not only has two authors but two languages: it was first published in Italian, Bene's text in the original, Deleuze's in a translation from the French. The next year it was published in French, Bene's text in a translation from the Italian,
Deleuze's in the original. There is no English translation of this text. I know no Italian. I have so far used the French translation/original as if it were unproblematic. Of course it isn't, but would the Italian be less problematic? Would it be better to use the Italian version of Bene and the French version of Deleuze, thus creating, like Hinman's First Folio, an authoritative hodge-podge of a text which has never existed before? I have also heavily relied on "Bene 1977," a French text consisting of a chronology, an introductory essay, an interview, and an excerpt (in translation) from S.A.D.E. This text is obviously highly problematic, and yet it is one of the few critical/theoretical pieces available to me in a language I can understand. This raises the problem of secondary material. There is very little on Bene which is not in Italian. In English there is Kowsar's discussion of Superpositions, and two essays on Bene's Othello, a text which has not been itself translated into English. These two essays on Othello present an extreme paradigm of interpretive indeterminacy: Maurizio Grande's "Carmelo Bene's Othello" (translated from the Italian by George Kazakoff) gives an account with four photographs (one repeated and inverted) of Bene's 1979 adaptation; Gautam Dasgupta's "The Director as Thinker: Carmelo Bene's Otello," gives an account of the revised Otello/Secondo of 1985. We have, therefore, two accounts of
different, yet both unavailable, versions of the same (?) play. The accounts, of course, are at variance. Grande is
witness to a production in which, although there is realized "the conception of theatre as a place of 'non-representa-
tion'" (29), what mostly takes place is story unfolding, plot thickening, plot completed, tragedy concluding (34);
Dasgupta is witness to a production in which the action of Othello has been pared down, although not to the point where we lose sight of the play's narrative strategy (13), and what predominates is "a theatrico-philosophical structure of ideas" (13) carried forth on the "bewildering complexities" (12) of Bene's scenography. To what degree are these variants of description ascribable to changes made in the play by Bene between 1979 and 1985? If Grande and Dasgupta had seen the same production, would there have been more agreement in their accounts? At any rate Othello remains for us available only at second hands. But even if (both) Othello(s) were translated into English, even if the Italian exts were accessible, even if we had seen both the 1979 and 1985 productions, our Othello would remain a reconstruction.

There is a second issue of context that must be addressed. So far, with a few exceptions (moments in which have spoken of contradictions and disagreements, even noticing where Deleuze and Kowsar seem to be 'simply wrong' in their reading of part two of "Richard III"), I have.
written as if Bene and Deleuze speak with one voice, and my own account has paraded, in a totalizing gesture, as a synthesis and harmonization of their views, not only of the two halves of *Superpositions*, but of *Superpositions* with "l'énergie sans cesse renouvelée de l'utopie." However, when we move into the question of context, the variance between Bene and Deleuze is more pronounced and unavoidable. Deleuze's argument seems straightforward, simple, unproblematic, naive, and optimistic in a way quite different from Bene's darker, more utopian, more complex and contradictory vision. Therefore what I propose is to trace (reconstruct) two answers to the question of theatre and its contextual critique, two answers somewhat at variance: Deleuze's, and Bene's.

Deleuze's argument as to the critical function of a minor theatre is relatively simple and straightforward. Major theatre represents and thereby helps to reproduce the relations of power in the dominant state apparatuses. By amputating, varying, and subverting the structures of this theatre/state (the subject, the imperial theme, the 'King's English,' representation itself), minor theatre not only stops representing and reproducing dominant relations of power, but contributes to the becoming of a generalized minor consciousness, to the minorization of the entire world. This is the specific political function of the
There are three elements in Deleuze’s argument with which Bene seems most at variance: the question of how politically efficacious minor theatre can be; the notion of what Deleuze calls a "line," a line of flight, of escape, of variation, "lines of transformation which leap out of the theatre and take another form" (130); finally, the question of the audience, the people, the minorities whose consciousness this theatre helps into becoming.

Deleuze quotes CB who says that theatre will not change the world or make a revolution (120). How are we to reconcile this with the idea of a "universal becoming minor" which this theatre helps effect? Is this not changing the world and making a revolution? Is it not a revolutionary change to help dismantle the apparatuses of power the theatre has heretofore represented? Elsewhere Deleuze and Guattari have no trouble equating a minor literature with a revolutionary literature (Kafka, 28). If Deleuze does not seem totally convinced that theatre will not change the world, or at least function as part of an alliance (128) that will do so, Bene is much more tragic and darkly utopian in the firmness of his scepticism.

For Bene his own theatre is utopian (Bene 1977, 83)—which is to say, impossible (62). Bene doesn’t believe that his work has served to make things different (76). Theatre
has no usefulness (75). It is political, but its political function is in a total refusal to accept life in any foreseeable society (72-73). Bene finds revolution in our demystified and industrialized world unamusing (63).

Deleuze speaks continually of a line of flight/escape, or of variation and transformation. In Kafka Deleuze and Guattari make it clear that the line of flight has no end (55), and is not simply a question of passing into liberty (6); and yet the idea of the line cannot help but entail "un but" (129), a sense of direction--leaping out of the theatre, for instance--and even a sense of time and a future, if only of endless becoming.

Bene does not speak of lines, directions and processes, but of isolated moments, the immediate (Bene 1977, 74): theatre, the human, can never "se foutre de l'instant" (73). Theatre can precipitate a crisis, but only for a moment. Whatever happens on the stage is finished forever the moment the curtain drops (76). If Bene believes that there are fundamental identities between theatre, culture, society, and life (72-73), he no longer speaks of processes of moving from one to the others: if once he hoped to move from theatre life to "la vie-vie" (66), now he only feels alive when he's acting (73). Unlike the avant-garde (76) and the "cretins of the extreme left" (73) Bene does not believe in or work towards a future. To work for the future is to deny
the present. Rather than a revolutionary life Bene prefers to work with the model of the saint and mystic: when we are not living in the immediate we are no longer in a state of grace (74).

For Deleuze and Guattari a minor literature is closely tied to the people, to actual minorities, to possible communities. Minor literature subsumes, among others, the categories of popular literature and proletarian literature (Kafka, 18). They quote Kafka's dictum, "literature is the people's concern." Deleuze distinguishes between two senses of minority: those existing minorities who comprise in actuality the majority, and the concept of becoming minor which is "un but" for the whole world (129). The possibility of the latter seems grounded upon the "fact" of the former. When Deleuze quotes Bene, therefore, "c'est le peuple qui manque" (127), he doesn't mean that the people don't exist, but only that they are missing, have been excluded, that history hasn't taken account of them.

When Bene says, "c'est le peuple qui manque," he means something much bleaker: it is the people who fail. They have failed to be the people. They are an inadequate audience for a truly popular theatre, what Bene calls an ethnic theatre, because they have lost "le fait ethnique" (Bene 1977, 83). Playing before the public disgusts Bene (75). He has no interest in the worker, who is a slave,
never a man (81-82). In fact, all forms of consciousness
are slavery (80), and Bene has no interest in the elite
(78). The entire public, rich and poor, is a public of
slaves (84). The only thing Bene can do for such an
audience is scandalize them, give them a bad conscience
(79)--if only for a moment. In the theatre he will be
misunderstood; he foresees that there will be applause where
it is unwarranted: in "Richard III" he writes, "Si dans la
salle on applaudit, c'est tant pis pour moi" (Superposi-
tions, 11). If in his native Puglia he has seen utopian
moments, destructive and revolutionary activity of the
masses (Bene 1977, 62-63), in which there was the courage to
live a sense of the tragic, to risk suicide and madness
(82), he sees no hope of sustaining such activity.

[This unholy alliance between the naïve and the
nihilistic resembles in some ways the complicitousness of
Robert Wilson and Heiner Müller which Herbert Blau describes
in the New York production of Hamletmachine. However, if
Wilson is too dumb to see his differences from Müller and
Müller sinister enough to "forget" them, it is not clear in
this case to what degree Deleuze or Bene are aware of the
political discrepancies in their collaboration.]

3.2 Muller

Müller's sense of context is complex. For instance,
his understanding of Berlin is mapped along several axes.
First there is the axis that runs with the wall that separates East and West. For Müller it is important to understand the differences between East and West, and equally important to understand what binds them together.

Müller marks out strong differences between East and West. Life in the East is easier ("The Walls of History," 44): social security is better (44); the division between life and work no longer exists in the East (42); people in the East are still able to hope for another society (37); in the West people are inundated with indigestible information (67); there is too much talking in the West (75). And yet, living so close to the West, East Berliners are schizophrenic, especially on the level of their economic and consumerist fantasies (45). One of the things which all Berliners share is the advertising on Western television ("The Walls of History," 42-44)—the "Hail Coca Cola" of Hamletmachine (57) signifies on both sides of the Wall, even if in the East it serves as a distancing and safeguarding longing, while in the West it is a way of life (Maheu's production, from the heart of North America, multiplies the advertising images: the erotic women of Seven-Up, Diet Coke, and Nutrisweet). Ultimately the schizophrenic fantasy of the East is "to go to the West from time to time and to come back" (44).

It is also important for Müller to place Berlin on the
North-South axis. Berlin is a first world city, a German
city, a Prussian city (45). And yet East and West find	themselves in different relations with the third world. The
East, as part of a bloc with the USSR, which is much more a	third world country than the United States, is "in some sort
of osmosis with the Third World" (39). The West exploits	the third world: "West Germany couldn't function if foreign-
ers, people from the south, from poor countries didn't do	the dirty work" (39). And yet in the West there are places
where North and South are in confrontation: the alternative
countries in the West seek "to establish in its midst
islands of the Third World" (50); West Berlin is now "the
third biggest Turkish city in the world" (50), a place, like
New York, where third world minorities "occupy an area" in
the heart of first world capitalism ("Reflections on Post-
Modernism," 56).

Finally, there is a temporal axis which runs through
Berlin, splitting its pasts from its presents and its
presents from its futures. People in East and West live,
like Hamlet, in a transition period. All of Berlin shares a
common Nazi past, and a Prussian past of rationalism and
militarism--"German audiences understand only military
language" (52). While the West now once again prides itself
on traditional Prussian virtues, the East exposes the links
between those virtues and the Third Reich, perhaps thereby
losing touch with whatever is good in the common past (47). Both Berlins face a similar future: the inevitable onslaught of the wolf from the South ("Woyzeck," 74), the triumph of the third world: "The European concept of history is over" ("Walls of History," 39). While for the West there is only the fear that comes at the end of the myth of progress, when the only hope is to "hold on and not lose what we already have" (39), in the East there can be the hope of "becoming minor," the hope that the end of the first world will be "the beginning of a reality beyond mankind" ("Woyzeck," 74).

Not only does Müller have a complex sense of context, but also a complex sense of his own place in that context. He is aware of the walls that run through him. "The split goes through the author" ("Reflections," 55)—like the picture of Müller ripped in Hamletmachine, and "The collision of epochs reaches deeply, and painfully, into the individual who is still an author and yet can no longer be one" ("A Letter," 32).

Müller's situation (of privilege (55)) allows him to live out the schizophrenic fantasy of the East: "I like to stand with one leg on each side of the wall. Maybe this is a schizophrenic position, but none other seems to me real enough" ("Walls of History," 51). Even in the East literature is in the hands of specialists ("Reflections," 55), authors like Müller, and not an affair of the people, not a
third world or minor literature. A minor literature is not written by major authors, by privileged white men. And in the West he finds places—the proletarian art of the subway or the theatre of Robert Wilson, "as naive as it is elitist" ("Reflections," 56), where the hegemony of the specialist, the author, is being struggled against.

At a certain point Müller no longer places himself on an East-West axis, but in a more global context. In "The Wounded Woyzeck," which is "for Nelson Mandela," he speaks of "our planet" (74); in "Reflections on Post-Modernism" he speaks of "the sun of torture, the only one which illuminates all continents of this planet" (57). It illuminates the Europe of Women, the subways of Harlem, the Central Prison of Pretoria.

Müller's position in a transition period is transitional. "Writing under conditions in which the consciousness of the asocial character of writing can no longer be repressed" ("Reflections," 55), he, as author, as major author, whose privilege is the alienation as self-affirmation Marx writes of in "Estranged Labour," works "toward the expropriation and finally the disappearance of the author" (57).

If the context is complex, and Müller's place in that context is complex, so is the place of his work in that context. In 1974, in the introduction to an article on Muller by Wolfgang Schivelbusch, Helen Fehervary was able to
write,

The subject matter of Müller's work is the dialectical nature of social and individual processes within the GDR in their relation to historical materialism. (Schivelbusch, 104)

Since then Müller's work, like the words of Ophelia, like Müller himself, have gone out "To the capitals of the world" (Hamletmachine, 58). Like Müller himself, his plays straddle East and West. If writing is so much more important in the East ("Walls of History," 39), if in the East theatre is "a more efficient instrument of social impact" (Hamletmachine, 140), still Müller can—with only so much facetiousness—answer the question, "Where would you prefer to direct, and to watch, your plays on stage?" "I would like to stage MACBETH on top of the World Trade Center for an audience in helicopters" (140).

Each prospective audience calls for different strategies (Hamletmachine, 17). In the United States, where East German history is virtually unknown (Eggers, 80), Müller's work has been given a feminist slant: Mauser in Texas. In Paris Hamletmachine had something to do with Glucksmann and la philosophie nouvelle (Carl Weber, 138). In Toronto the play was like a little touch of Germany in the night. As to Hamletmachine in the United States, Müller has said,

In an American production the main character here
could rather be Ophelia than Hamlet. I wouldn’t consider this to be a disadvantage...it was my intention to make Ophelia a character of equal importance. That could become an interesting aspect in the U.S. *(Hamletmachine, 51)*

And so, Rogoff writes that Wilson’s production might better be called *OPHELIAMACHINE* (57). In Toronto Montreal’s Carbone 14, with its theatre of the image, ran up against the opposition of English Canada’s more textual and traditional approach. In "To Use Brecht," Müller speculates on how Brecht’s *Turandot* might be adjusted for the Third World (33).

What is the political point of Müller’s theatre, and what end does it serve?

Brecht’s work is politically based upon the "great truth" of historical materialism: the barbarism of property relations and the need for socialist revolution to change those relations (qtd. in Fehervary, 80). In large measure Müller ascribes to Brecht’s great truth. Communism is the only hope *(Weber in Hamletmachine, 14)*. His championing of life in the East and of the third world speaks of his unwavering political commitment. What role can theatre play in political struggle?

Müller, praising Jean Genet (more intertext), has said, "The only thing a work of art can achieve is to create the
theatre is most likely over (*Eve of Prey*, xvi).

"'In the fight between you and the world,' says Kafka, 'back the world'" (*Take Up the Bodies*, 269). Blau's career in theatre has been marked by defeat and marginalization. In the face of Broadway and Ronald Reagan he has found himself in that situation described by Flaubert: "Rien n'est humiliant comme de voir les sots réussir dans les entreprises où l'on échoue" (83). To a large extent Blau's marginalization is an inevitable consequence of being in the avant-garde and on the left in (North) America—I think of my own situation, having never, for instance, voted for a candidate or a party that has won an election. Blau's theoretical work has charted the horrors of (theatrical) life in America, from the Cold War (*Impossible Theater*, 21) to "the ethos of postmodernism and the preemptive capacity of bourgeois culture" (*Take Up the Bodies*, 255). We ((North) Americans/Westerners?) live in an era of non-ideas (*Impossible Theater*, 6), under "the totalitarianism of the mediocre, half-educated and uncommitted" (20), "the tyranny of 'the intense inane'" (17). We have no radical critique, and never did (*Blooded Thought*, 72). Likewise we are without a substantial theatre tradition, and unlikely to ever have one (120). Theatre is for us "a quite minor, belated, or secondary form" ("With Your Permission," 8), "an elitist, minority, or marginal form" ("Odd, Anonymous," 38).
In whatever theatre there has been, the intellect has rarely been respected (Impossible Theater, 309).

Blau's marginalization in theatre has tainted his theorizing with a certain defeatism, or a recognition of what he would call impossibility. In Blooded Thought Blau aligns his critical project with a phrase in a letter from Karl Marx to Arnold Ruge: "the 'ruthless criticism of everything existing'" (58). This project in some ways resembles the categorical imperative quoted by Heiner Muller in Hamletmachine: "TO OVERTHROW ALL EXISTING CONDITIONS." However, while Muller's Marx leads to political action and a liberated future, if we turn to Marx's letter to Ruge, we see that Blau has quoted from a passage in which the connection between critique and action is particularly problematic. Marx is writing in a situation in which none of the reformers "has an exact view as to what the future should be" (Letters, 30). "If the construction and preparation of the future is not our business," it is because we no longer believe in "the solution of all riddles." The imperative is that "we do not anticipate the world dogmatically but that we first try to discover the new world from a critique of the old one." For Blau, if not for Marx, the step from the critique of the old to the establishment of the new is questionable.

It is symptomatic of Blau to quote Marx at his most
teleologically hesitant. Elsewhere in *Bloodyed Thought*, Blau cites from the "Theses on Feuerbach": philosophers must come to change the world, not just understand it. Blau has problems with this that he doesn't have with the letter to Ruge: "they [sic] have started to argue again about what exactly Marx meant, and long before Marx, and despite Brecht, about the degree to which consciousness does change the world" (xx).

For Blau, therefore, the role of theatre (and theory) is predominantly critical. Its power for edification, while ghosted with a residual urgency and passion, is besieged and impoverished. Blau sees himself as a spoilsport (*Eye of Prey*, 183), a naysayer, a "Socratic gadfly" (*Impossible Theater*, 17) who believes, like the Shakespeare of *Hamlet* (*Take Up the Bodies*, 94), in "the ethos of suspicion as a heuristic strategy" (*Eye of Prey*, 176), and "takes the measure of all promise" ("Audition," 68). Everybody and everything is suspect (*Take Up the Bodies*, 231). "I am more and more determined that nobody be able to take shelter in our theater" (*Impossible Theater*, 302). Blau's chosen procedure is to incessantly turn things over, to give no last word (*Take Up the Bodies*, 76), to take all cases one by one (74). A play like *King Lear* is important because it forces you to reexamine everything (*Impossible Theater*, 291), and if it was a revolutionary drive which brought Blau
to produce Lear in San Francisco, the production only succeeded in "suspend[ing] us in a finer doubt" (293). Blau thinks American politics too complicated for Brecht's logistics (93): the affiliation of the intellectual and the proletariat remains a dream (Eye of Prey, 205). There is a "a virtually irremediable split between art and politics" ("Audition," 68). Proceeding, therefore, "virtually without hope" (Impossible Theater, 307), all he can do is, like Euripides, tell people "that they [are] essentially a bunch of barbarians."

One target of Blau's continuing critique is inane, suicidal solutions (Impossible Theater, 305), for, in our present precarious situation, the first task is "to keep Man [sic 1964] from being obliterated" (298). At its most relentless, this critique takes the form of a radical critique of radicalism, a critique of the left from the left: Blau is drawn to Danton's Death because it is a "revolutionary play with reservations about the Revolution" (Take Up the Bodies, 73); similarly Blau's own theatre work combines radicalization with counterrevolutionary tendencies (231). Sartre's endorsement of violence in his introduction to Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth (much admired by Heiner Muller)--"the dumbfounding solution which is, not merely part of, the problem" (Eye of Prey, 196), John Cage's blithe acceptance of suffering in the world (Take Up the Bodies,
83), Deleuze and Guattari's (Bene's and Müller's?) endorsement of the debrained body (Eye of Prey, 190), the excesses of gay discourse, which neglect "an appraisal of the relationship of pleasure, power, and repression" (Take Up the Bodies, 263), the postmodern hubris of surface ("Audition," 67), the black actor who claims that after five minutes the audience forgets that he's black (Take Up the Bodies, 64): all these are the subject of Blau's hostility or suspicion. The degree to which Blau refuses to let thoughtful critique be anaesthetized by political righteousness can be seen in a story he tells about the Eichmann trial. Eichmann is asked by the prosecutor whether or not he is guilty. Eichmann begins to distinguish between moral and legal guilt. The prosecutor interrupts him, thundering, "Answer yes or no!" Blau's response:

I don't know to what perverse instinct I may be testifying, but at that moment loyalties were annihilated for me, and I was with Eichmann.

(Impossible Theater, 306)

That moment was the trial's "most valuable experience."

Even if theatre plays a very minor role in our world, we live, as the Eichmann trial shows, in a highly theatricalized society:

Never before in history...have appearance and show dominated so surreptitiously on so global a scale,
and with such mind-shattering means and consequences as in the atomic age. (Take Up the Bodies, 253)

The world has begun to look like theatre (Impossible Theater, 7) "in politics, in fashion, in therapy, and in the histrionic emphasis on lifestyle" (Take Up the Bodies, 252). Business is the theatre in which the drama of capitalism takes place (9-10). Everything, including history, has been subsumed by spectacle as a universal category ("Odd, Anonymous," 200).

What Blau’s critique calls for, therefore, on the widest level, is—to borrow a phrase from Foucault—a generalized phantasmaphysics (Eye of Prey, xvii), a theatricopathology of everyday life, a critique of illusion in the world at large. On the political level Blau calls for a critique of the power of illusion, the dematerialization of the political ("Odd, Anonymous," 205). Ronald Reagan, the "Great Communicator" (200), is the most urgent example of politics as popular entertainment and demagogy. Blau questions this politics of simulation (Eye of Prey, 190), of the preference for the eye over the ear ("Audition, 63), for spectacle over audition. Blau’s theatre, by its emphasis on the word and the ear, is an explicit reaction to the specular thoughtlessness of American public life. Blau is not arguing that the world can escape theatrical illusion,
only that politics can be more self-discerning: "If all the world does approach being a stage, I'd rather wear some masks than others and choose the moments when I put them on" (Eye of Prey, 203); Blau would ask the same reflexivity and care of his politicians.

Such a critique of power and illusion does not stop with politics in the narrow sense, but includes a critique of applications of such powerful ideas as that of a continuous self (Take Up the Bodies, 162) and the system of mastery and domination in that cultural invention we call love (161). This critique is taken up in the opening lines of Crooked Eclipses: "What is your substance, whereof are you made, / That millions of strange shadows on you tend?" (1)
The refraction and reflection of character, self, and passion in this play and Elsinore are aspects of an ongoing critique of the subject and its ideology in their service to the powers that be.

Blau proceeds virtually without hope. There is something in the very nature of power which incriminates (Take Up the Bodies, 72): "All men are bad and in their badness reign" (Crooked Eclipses, 19). Blau has grave doubts about the authorization of any power (Eye of Prey, xxiv). In his theatre, these doubts find their most acute manifestation at the end of Seeds of Atreus, KRAKEN's adaptation of the Oresteia:
Is the social order, then, necessarily repressive, even cruel, reflecting some essential denial in the human order?...

Was it possible in *Seeds of Atreus* to justify to ourselves anything like the celebration at the end of the source play?...the celebration seemed--to me at least--shocking, insupportable, unreal. Some of the actors, however, younger than I, conditioned by the risen hopes of the period, argued vociferously for the celebration, regardless.

We concluded with a vigil...Nobody denied it, but not everybody among us was convinced. It wasn't really a conclusion. (*Take Up the Bodies*, 102).

The taped litany of visions in *Elsinore* includes this:

I saw the King.

And saw in his hands the power that wields my life.

And saw the strength in that body and what it meant.

I saw I was afraid. (60)

The play ends with a section called "THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER," which exposes the political realities and suicidal solutions behind *Hamlet*:

JAC: I saw Claudius, King of Denmark, dead.
MAR: I saw Gertrude, Queen of Denmark, dead.
DEN: Hamlet I saw, Prince of Denmark, dead.
PET: I saw Polonius, the old counsellor, dead.
JUL: I saw Laertes, son of Polonius, dead.
KAR: I saw the nymph Ophelia, dead.
TOM: I saw Horatio among the living-dead.
DEN: I saw Fortinbras, with rights of memory in this kingdom, king. (97-98)

Blau's critique of theatre is equally grim. Theatre truly is Plato's cave (Take Up the Bodies, 246), where thought is always undermined by seeming. Theatre is always the site of ontological and political delusions (80), and this is especially so in America: "our theater remains a stronghold of non-ideas" (Impossible Theater, 7). In American theatre there is no theoretical continuity or dialectical exchange ("Ideology," 449); little in American theater is in touch with what really counts (Impossible Theater, 19). The success of Ronald Reagan, his effectiveness in theatrical persuasion without ideas, is symptomatic and tells us something we might not want to hear about the nature of theatre: the built-in simplemindedness of the system ("Odd, Anonymous," 200). This explains why the Moral Majority is better at tapping the sources of desire than radical thinkers ("Ideology," 451).

Not only is there a built-in prejudice against serious
thinking, but everything in the structural reality of
theatre--ticket prices, the attitude of the ushers, the size
of the candy bars--is effected by (the dominant) ideology
("Ideology," 447). There is a class interest in all meaning
(Take Up the Bodies, 241), and theatre is always "implicated
in the politics of signification" ("Ideology," 457).
Theatre is an "art made tongue-tied by authority" (Crooked
Eclipses, 27); the abyss between theatre and politics is
particularly acute--perhaps only acute--on the left: the
Hamletmachine of Müller and Wilson, for example, is no more
than "a politics of spectacle" ("Audition," 69), "the babble
of a defeated politics, its solipsism" (70), "an art
mutilated by politics" (69).

The second major aspect of Blau's critique of (Ameri-
can) theatre is his critique of the audience. The question
is, "Does the audience exist?" or, as in Hamlet, "Who's
there?" (Blooded Thought, xi) The answer is, "Yes and no":
there is an audience, but not a real audience.

It would be foolish to deny that the entertainment
industry, for instance, doesn't have an audience ("Odd,
Anonymous," 202), but this audience is nothing like a
community of free assent (208). It is the "facsimile of a
remembered community" (199), the body politic as nostalgic
fantasy (202). It is not, at least etymologically, a true
audience: it doesn't listen, doesn't audit. With its
"sentimental gaze" (203), it can appreciate only aestheti-
cized high finance (209). It can be moved, by fire, sports, sermons, hatred, destruction, but not by theatre (36-37). "I saw a knavish speech sleep in a foolish ear," says Margaret in Elsinore (60); "I saw the guilty creatures sitting at a play," says Peter (79). In Crooked Eclipses "A flashlight plays impudently on the audience" (Crooked Eclipses, 19) and their "false adulterate eyes": "'Tis better to be vile than vile esteemed"; "mad slanders by mad ears believed be" (21).

This "fantasy of a public" has to be disarticulated before a real audience could be constructed (205); if we look behind this fantasy audience we find that the real audience does not exist: we have only a non-existent or disempowered community with dispossessed ritual occasions (Blooded Thought, 92). We no longer know carnival ("Odd, Anonymous," 210), and it is foolish to think that we do. There is no sense of community in our society which would allow us to construct something like a chorus in our theatre (40). There has been a "thinning out of the public sphere," a "dispersion" of the audience (199). Needless to say, theatre of consequence has trouble finding an audience in this country (Blooded Thought, xi).

Following Victor Turner, Blau argues that communitas cannot be constructed by theatre alone, but needs prior grounding in social and cultural institutions (209). In our
society the interests of power and profit which control our social and cultural institutions block the development of any adequate ground for community (209). However, it is not just the sentimentalization of the capitalized American "public," that must be seen passed, but the very idea of a unified community:

While it is conventional to say that members of an audience perceive differently, conventional expectancy is that there will be something like uniform response. But it is precisely that, conventional expectancy, which also blocks perception. ("Audition," 63)

There never has been uniform response, not even among the Greeks: "any audience is a network of noise, static, feedback, overtones, and phasings-out; synapses, blank spaces" (62). An adequate audience can only arise as a community upon the grounds of separation, of dispersion and solitude. Blau has never been able to believe in the unity of audience and performer; for him the performer always remains in some way cut off from the audience. In Elsinore the audience (who's there?) sits around the outside of the playing space, a "perfect circle" (59): image of the unified self, the unified community. The actors constantly move in and out of that circle, but never into the audience. In Crooked Eclipses the audience sits in the centre, but now it is not
a perfect circle but a fleur-de-lys, so that the actors play between and around the audience (Letter to the author): yet the separation between audience and actors is maintained, if in a more complex pattern.

In *The Impossible Theater* (1964) Blau talks of being "messianic about the theater,...in it to create the possibility of a valid public life, to save the world in fact" (294). He has returned to these words on at least two later occasions (*Blooded Thought*, xx; *Take Up the Bodies*, 31), both times to reaffirm his commitment to them. After what we have seen of Blau's vision of theatre in America, we may wonder what there is in theatre that could make such a project anything but unabashedly naive. What are the elements of a positive role for theatre? For Blau, although theatre is always illusion, the most important aspect of a positive role for theatre is the "power of theatre as thought" (*Blooded Thought*, xiv). Theatre is in conflict with itself; the most powerful tradition of theatre is to resist its own powers (77). Theatre is capable of a powerful, thoughtful critique of its own power of illusion, turning its own blindesses over and over in the mind. "I think I'm afraid there were times. I'm afraid there were times when I was too busy to see," says Julie in *Elsinore* (61); and later, "Mostly I saw what I wanted to see" (94). At these moments the will to truth becomes conscious of
itself as a problem (Blooded Thought, 160), and is replaced by a refusal to be false (Take Up the Bodies, 240). Theatre contributes to a "critique of moral value" (299), a continuous testing of values (Blooded Thought, 27); Hamlet's Ghost, who stands for so much about theatre, subverts all systems of value (Take Up the Bodies, 204).

Theatre has the potential to be the "Public Art of Crisis" (Impossible Theater, 302): "The purpose of this book is to talk up a revolution...I intend to be incendiary and subversive, maybe even un-American" (3). Performance is divisive, solitary, alien, and apart (Eve of Prey, 184), and yet in the crisis of alienation the theatre becomes the locus for desire for political being (Take Up the Bodies, x), the desire to find the grounds of a conceivable meeting ("Odd, Anonymous," 206), the possible grounds for community in a reality of fractures (207). Beyond the disarticulation of nostalgia and fantasy lies "the potentiality of collective power without cautionary limit" (Impossible Theater, 6). Without presence or truth we can learn to think ideologically in performance, to think treading water ("Ideology," 449), and enter into the act of "resurrecting value" (Impossible Theater, 288).

Blau rejects Genet's illusion of total illusion, of intimidating nihilism (Impossible Theater, 297). He stands for "the humane against all forms of dehumanization" (22),
pays tribute to "what is essentially human" (305), wants "to remain human" (306), continues to confess to humanistic sentiments (Take Up the Bodies, 191). If, given the ruthless suspicion that informs Blau's critique of all values, all that exists, we see in this humanism—as Blau himself does—utopian illusion ("Ideology," 460), his answer is, "When has reality or the real ever impeded us from working for change?" (Eye of Prey, 205) Theatre is "the illusion of what appears to be left of life" (Blooded Thought, 166), and the only option open to us is to "Commit to these waste blanks" [Blau's emphasis] (Take Up the Bodies, 163). Blau reinscribes Hamlet's "Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?" in the political space marked out by the superposition of passionate longing over ruthless criticism (245-246). Blau's utopian faith in theatre and performance finds its most blatant expression in Crooked Eclipses: Ellen, "kneeling, speaking simply to somebody in the audience," recites, "Let me not to the marriage of true minds / Admit impediments" (26).

What is questionable in all this? Some criticisms are easily transferred from elsewhere: how do we reconcile, for example, the assertions of Bene and Muller that there is too much reason and thought in the world with Blau's assertion that there is way too little? Blau himself sets out a critique of the hopelessness implied by his assertion of the
split between art and politics:

Brecht might have said that if our politics were surer we'd not be so unreliably shifting. Maybe he is right. But the only reliable politics we have is the politics of performance...
The politics inevitably came to the solipsistic dilemma which we didn't escape... and which remains the recurrent liability of the work. (Take Up the Bodies, 237)

To Blau's categorical assertion of the irremediable split between art and politics we might answer that there are many ways to insert art into politics and many of them are ineffectual.

This leads to a questioning of the play of specificity in Blau's work. There is a strange way in which he is either too specific or not specific enough.

*Hamlet* is "the closest thing we have to a collective myth" (Take Up the Bodies, 167). Who is we? There is a lack of precision, a slippage from the we as euphemism for Blau, to the royal we of the theorist/(anti)metaphysician to the members of Kraken, to the readers of books on theatre and theory to Americans to Westerners to everybody. A valid appraisal of the extent to which *Hamlet* is the closest thing we have to a collective myth would have to determine separately for each we.
There is in Blau a tendency to include everybody under the rubric of a westernized we. In The Impossible Theater, he speaks of putting "America First" (302), which means seeing things from a particularly American point of view. We have seen that Blau is quite capable of particularizing about America, of defining his society as a specific historical phenomenon; and yet for Blau there is something universal about America, and "The theater is nothing if not universal" (306). Americans are existentialists by nature, in touch with a basic human situation. Blau cannot believe that things are really different elsewhere, not in East Berlin" ("Odd, Anonymous," 39), not, despite the assertions of Artaud, in Balinese theatre (Blooded Thought, 98).

Blau is committed to abstraction (Take Up the Bodies, 276). If we look at a play like Elsinore we see first off a critique of the kingdom and the power so abstract and vague that it seems impossible to attach it to anything specific in the world. Similarly, though Blau espouses--to some extent--feminist sentiments ("Ideology," 453; Take Up the Bodies, 102), there is much more that is concrete for feminisms to respond to in Hamletmachine than in Elsinore.

On the other hand, Blau's critique of character in theatre--"What continues to pass for character doesn't, sad to say, have very much to tell us" (Take Up the Bodies, 281)---brings him to reject roles for his actors and to
assign the lines to the actual historical subjects involved in KRAKEN: rather than Hamlet, Gertrude, or Ophelia, we get Julie, Peter, and Tom. And yet given names like Julie, Tom, and Peter seem to arrest these "characters" in an essentialist, universalist, western notion of the self--elsewhere Blau writes, "Being oneself on stage may be more artificial than being a character" (Take Up the Bodies, 275). For Blau, the individual is a hard won concept, and he is unwilling to give it up (Take Up the Bodies, 262). Granted Blau does give their last names at one point: Julie Augenstein, Peter Ferry, Tom Henry (Elsinore, 58), but this does little to tell us who these subjects are and how they are specifically grounded in culture and history. When Blau reflects on these characters he resorts to essentialism and universalism:

TOM: ...unwilling to thaw, melt, resolve into a dew (cf. Jack, who can & does, more neutral to will & matter); so can't take on the feminine principle, though he might mimic or allude to it. (Take Up the Bodies, 212)

Blau asserts that "there is some good reason, as recent theory goes, to "insert the subject" in the discourse" (Eye of Prey, xii), and so talks of his mother's death and the birth of his daughter--experiences we can "all" relate to. It might be more appropriate for him to insert his subjec-
tivity as a set of questions: how have I come to be specifically who I am, and what in me leads me to assert myself as a paradigm for humanity?
Envoi: romance in Toronto

The history of this dissertation more or less begins with the University College production of *Hamletmachine* which I saw in Toronto in January 1987. The following two pieces are further moments in that history. Having decided to write on adaptations of Shakespeare, I was fortunate enough to see two adaptations produced for the first time in my own city: "Pericles, Prince of Tyre," by William Shakespeare in April 1987, and *Goodnight Desdemona (Goodmorning Juliet)* in March 1988. My two pieces were 'originally' written for *Canadian Theatre Review* (although I had vague plans to discuss the two works in this dissertation).

Rather than efface that context and the way it shaped the text, I have chosen to reconstruct them as they were (there are, of course, changes). Like Derrida reading his own words come back to him, or the actors of KRAKEN listening to their past lines on tape in *Elsinore*, I see in these pieces my own voice departed and come back as other.

The first piece is limited by my lack of access to the author and the history of the production, and by the limitations of my understanding of adaptation in October 1987: its approach is textual in the narrow sense, albeit with an occasional gesture towards the languages of the stage, and even rarer gestures towards context. Much of it is a meditation on, or dialogue with, Dubois' text using
Dubois' language. And yet it does, unwittingly, touch upon what I would now see as key and recurrent issues: textual manipulation; scenography; in the spirit of Brook and Blau a search for/fidelity to something more primal than Shakespeare's text; an attack on traditional Shakespearean productions as being more unfaithful than adaptation; a sense that Shakespeare is part of a distant past; an interest in exploring and wrenching the psychostructures that Shakespeare reveals. I didn't then, and still couldn't, work out all the relations between these issues.

The next piece, informed by some knowledge of the production as it developed and an interview with the author, is more interested in cultural politics and intentions. With its sympathetic impersonation it reminds me of Deleuze's "Un manifeste de moins": "MacD. thinks"; "MacD. says." My understanding of adaptation was much more advanced when I wrote this in the Summer of 1988: in addition to some of the same issues addressed in the Dubois piece, there is here an overt discussion of parody, the author, and genre. Yet somehow theory took a back seat to apology. It seemed politically appropriate to do it that way.

I have added commentary in square brackets wherever the texts' rootedness in past context seemed to make them particularly problematic in their new context. In their new
context they serve as a bridge to part three: an introduction to adaptation of Shakespeare in a time and place more closely approaching my own. That they are romances, that they are concerned with the loss of traditional familial and romantic structures and the discovery of new patterns in which we may love those closest to us, is particularly important for me and my work.

This is, and is not, Shakespeare:

*Pericles* self-destructs in Toronto

René-Daniel Dubois's "*Pericles, Prince of Tyre,*" by William Shakespeare takes place after a catastrophe.

Outside Theatre Passe Muraille a sign hangs by one corner: it announces the opening of Shakespeare's *Pericles* on April 8 (1987). On April 9 and following evenings the audience enters a shattered theatrical space, up the stairs into what is more like an abandoned warehouse than any even quasi-traditional space for playing Shakespeare. We sit behind industrial wire fencing on four sides of a harshly lit stage. The stage itself erupts in places at strange angles, as if it has been buckled by an earthquake. All around, where it should meet the wire fencing, is a narrow abyss, into which the actors will sometimes partly slip, from which will come great, hollow echoes, and by which we
seem irrevocably separated from the persons on stage. [Note
the awkward juxtaposition of the ahistorical, literary
present and the specified real past time: April 8, 1987. In
this piece I still write from the literary bias: nonverbal
elements are appropriated as if they were literary text.]

At first they stare at us and we stare back. There are
eight of them, six men and two women. Four men and one
woman wear rather shoddy attempts at Elizabethan costume;
the others wear something contemporary yet out of the
ordinary: a woman in a slip and black suit jacket, a
shirtless man in tuxedo and running shoes, a man in fatigues
and headband, like Rambo. They sit on chairs and it is a
long time before they speak.

Anyone who has come expecting Shakespeare’s *Pericles* is
by now disconcerted. But even those who are open to
adaptation and distortion begin to wonder how this will
relate to Shakespeare. When the actors begin to speak, one
of the first things we are told is "to be patient": "We are
aware even more than you are that this story is awkward." 1
Dubois’s play is the narration of this awkward story, the
story of a *Pericles* which came apart at the seams. Dubois’s

1All quotations are from a manuscript of "Pericles,
Prince of Tyre," by William Shakespeare, which was provided
by Theatre Passe Muraille with the permission of René-Daniel
Dubois. I express my thanks to Susan Feldman at Passe
Muraille and to René-Daniel Dubois.
play is the story of what happened to the *Pericles* we might have expected.

[In an interview with Robert Wallace in 1987, Dubois speaks of recent pressure in Quebec theatre to replace new indigenous plays with an "international repertory" (1), or canon. Dubois's *Pericles* may have been a subversive capitulation to this trend. On the other hand, in the same interview Dubois says that his theatre is much more personal than nationalist (2). At any rate, for an adaptation of Shakespeare by a French Canadian to be put on in English in Toronto, is a particularly loaded situation.]

For all its strangeness, then, what follows is a piece of straightforward narration, in which the actors tell us what has happened to them before the play we get to see began. A fantastic story it is: a director, with a reputation as a "weirdo," undertakes a production of *Pericles* "to prove I can do something else than weird stuff"; on opening night the actor playing Gower becomes possessed by Gower, and speaks strange, unexpected things; the theatre is invaded by black cavaliers on huge black horses who trample the audience, killing many; the actors, the director, the stage manager, and an usherette are transported to "dream-land" where they are faced with love, wonderful yet fleeting reconciliation, and horrible death. Now they find themselves back on this limbo of a stage, more dead than alive,
except for one, Lou the usherette, who has "managed to come back alive and stronger than before from the hopeless dreamland of our days."

What is to be made of such a fantastic and catastrophic story? The play traces the source of the disaster in a number of directions, sometimes contradictory, often intertwining. At the root of them all is the need to take up an impossible task.

"I was playing Gower," says Witworth:

It's the name of a real poet who lived a long time before Shakespeare himself. A little bit like... like if today, a writer was to use a play from Shakespeare, or even just his name, or the title of one of his plays, and make a statement about today using very old means...But who would be crazy enough to try any such a thing, today?

Al, the director, raises his hand.

Al sees his task as "to fight death": "I couldn't become a doctor. I had to find my own way of fighting for life." He plans a production which would bring Shakespeare to life again in our age:

For the first act, the characters were being dressed up in Elizabethan costumes. Then in the second one, in late seventeenth century costumes, and so on until in the last act, the fifth one,
they were to be characters of our time.

Al wants to show that "we are not different from our ancestors." But the truth is more complex than that, and what happens is not what Al expects. When Gower himself comes to inhabit the actor Witworth it is as if Al has underestimated the life giving quality of his art, and the poet that he brings to life is "not at all the one expected." Not Shakespeare, not Shakespeare's Gower, quaint and benign, but an older poetic spirit, ravaged and exhausted, racked between dream and nightmare, life and death, a poetic power which not only gives life but destroys it.

Can any good come when such magic is unloosed on a world unused to it? Which underestimates the limits of joy and pain? We have forgotten the dark forces on which our life depends:


It is hidden in our nightmares, one of which has just been unleashed.

[I have slipped, somewhere in here, from a "we" which designates those who saw the play in its Toronto run, to a "we" which seems to designate everybody, or at least everybody in the urban west. This in the face of heterogen-
ealous cultural, temporal, and sexual differences: the Québécois Dubois, the Toronto audience, Shakespeare, Gower, gay, lesbian, straight. To some extent this "we" is my (naive? simplistic? imperialist?) translation of Gower's "you."}

Our world is also a world without poetry, a world out of touch with everything but power and technology. We have so many words and we say so little. We have heard it all. We are too tired to hear the truth, the tired truth. Gower wonders what he can say for us, what his old, dead words can mean to us. He cannot give us our voices. If all the words have been killed, "Then invent new ones. Say: 'Problok ertob ty yartetinoye.'" We must not ask the old poet for his dead words, we must "Allow him to speak his heart," allow him to "Grow again, fresh and green, as in the first morning." We must make the oldest things young again.

If there is one word which could rekindle poetry in our age, the word is love, but it is a word which "is not going to be said tonight." If we are in search of an impossible poetry we are also in search of an impossible love:

If you have ever loved. If ever you have met a being whom you loved more than yourself but whom you could not get in touch with. If ever it happened that from far, from deep deep far in the eyes of someone, you have been struck by the flash
of a light that came not from his or her will but from a life nobody in our lifetime has ever told us about. If you still carry, hidden in the darkest corner of your soul, on its most remote shelf, the light memory of a soul met yet never embraced, please try to understand.

If we were ever to succeed in this quest, what we would find is a "sister soul," but in the hopeless dreamland of our age, the two sister souls, Princess Lou and Princess Jane, come together only for a moment, before the monstrous beings in that land rip them apart. At the end of the play, Lou and Pericles, "the bearer of impossible love," can only wait, wait for words "that cannot be fought for nor discovered by means of force," words that open onto dreams where we can "look into the eyes of love without fear." In the meantime we have two choices: we can live in death, in limbo; or one of us "can find the courage to speak his or her nightmares."

In nightmares we face our own deaths, the loss of our selves. Tom, the actor who is to play Pericles, undergoes his worst nightmare: he loses himself in his part. His constant fear as an actor is that his inside will be invaded, and he is always shielding himself in order to stay himself. What happens on April 8 is that, like Witworth possessed by Gower, he becomes, fantastic actor though he
is, a better actor than he had ever been before: he becomes Pericles. As a result, Tom is dead, trapped in an empty theatre. But this nightmare contains the smallest grain of light, for in the loss of self, in the becoming Pericles, Tom becomes the bearer of an impossible love. He has lived his nightmare; now he must find the courage to speak it.

The infidelities of Dubois's *Pericles* to Shakespeare's are manifest and manifold, and Dubois has anticipated the "purists" who come to the opening, "their pockets filled with rocks and tomatoes." Of course Dubois's *Pericles* is about the catastrophic failure in trying to be faithful to Shakespeare's *Pericles*, and to some extent it does not even claim to be based on Shakespeare's play, but on an "old, very very old play," which is more Gower's than Shakespeare's. In this sense Dubois calls on Gower just as Shakespeare had before him—even if, because of changing times, he gets quite a different Gower. This leads to perhaps a more interesting question than that of the degree of infidelity involved: that is, in what ways is Dubois strangely faithful to Shakespeare? It will be an impossible fidelity, a wild fidelity, akin to what Derrida refers to as hysterical or oneiric translation,² a fidelity in which

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²Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other* (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), p. 108. Derrida is talking about Freud at this point, about the way the hysteric translates psychic discourse into a discourse of bodily symptoms and
something in Shakespeare is preserved by being almost wholly transformed.

Dubois's play ignores Shakespeare's poetry—all we hear are a few halting lines of Gower's prelude (hardly Shakespeare at his best) and seminal lines from *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear* reduced to cacaphony when shouted over top of each other in several languages at once. Are we hearing in this cacaphony the death of poetry in our unpoetic age where words are tired and too many? But there is, nonetheless, poetry in Dubois's *Pericles*.

Dubois, like Shakespeare, relies on song, or at least on chanting, repetition, harmonizing. We hear an "Oming session," we hear a song called "Run, my horses, run," we hear strange echoes and odd phrasing, dialogue marked by beats and rhythms. If words fail, then perhaps sounds, if they come more spontaneously and unacculturated from the body and the soul, will speak the truth about us.

The strongest piece of poetry in Shakespeare's *Pericles* is the simplest and most "unpoetic": Pericles, having found all he had lost, happy beyond all hope, says "No more, you

the dreamer translates waking thought through the dreamwork into the manifest content of the dream—both of which would be relevant to Dubois's work: the moments of aphasia and rhythmic compulsions of the body; the long odyssey into "dreamland."
Gods!"³ He does not want any more, cannot take any more, asks for nothing more, begs that nothing more be forced into his bursting heart. Dubois's *Pericles* searches out similar moments in the poetry of everyday life. When the soul finds her sister, she asks over and over, "Where were you?" The sister soul answers, "Here. Just here. Waiting for you." These lines spill over with emotions: relief, joy, resentment, love, anxiety, reconciliation, and a sad irony: that the answer could be so simple; that so much time and pain could be spent in finding it. It is poetry that has been refound as well: that it could come from such simple words; that it could have escaped us for so long.

In the meeting of the sister souls Dubois most completely captures and transforms the spirit of Shakespearean romance. In Shakespeare the daughter and the wife are lost and after a long time found—as Dubois's Gower says, "Awful stories. Gentle endings." Running across all this are questions of family, incest, self, sexuality, and love. Dubois stages this loss and retrieval as the fleeting meeting of the sister souls, Princess Jane and Princess Lou, in dreamland. Two actresses circle each other, find each other, fall into joy and tears. They kneel together, kiss,

embrace, touch, then rise and exchange clothing, before the enemy forces them to flee. Jane, captured, is killed by a snake thrust between her legs.

The love between sister souls calls into play, questions, transforms notions of incest, sexuality, self, and family at work in Shakespeare's text. Love in this family is not between child and parent or husband and wife, not hierarchical, but between brothers and sisters, not heterosexual but homosexual, not a love with the other but with the self. It is also not a love which can abide in the world we know: if Shakespeare's story is love lost and then found, Dubois's is "The sister soul found. Lost."4

Not a love with the other but with the self, or with an other which is the self. Dubois, like Shakespeare, is interested in the interchanging of personalities, in the way we can lose ourselves in loving others, in becoming others, in the way actors become or don't become the characters they play, in the way otherness invades us, in the way our dreams are filled with others and other selves. Like Shakespeare

4The impossibility of sustaining such a love is also at the heart of Being at Home with Claude (Canadian Theatre Review 50 (Spring, 1987): 37-58). As Him (Yves) confesses, after his taste of absolute climax, "Nothing else seemed real. Nothing. But we couldn't stay locked up, like monks, with the blinds down, living the love of our lives. And we couldn't relive what was happening then, just a few minutes a month, and spend the rest of the time dealing with everything else" (p. 57).
Dubois finds it convenient to cast all this in the metaphor of the stage, and to send the audience out of the theatre believing that what happens to actors happens also to the world at large. For better and for worse.

"Caliban. Romeo. Macbeth. Prospero. Juliet. Come. Come see what is being done in your names." In his own impossible way, Dubois makes claims to being more true to Shakespeare than the "purists" who fail to bring him to life. That is another aspect of Shakespearean romance: the return of the dead to life. And when the dead come back, they don't always come back the way we expected—we're usually surprised that they've come back at all. Surprised and not necessarily pleased. For those who prefer their Shakespeare to stay dead—and we all have our experience of dead productions—then Dubois's Pericles is an unpleasant surprise; for when Shakespeare comes back to life he doesn't look at all like that pleasant, chubby man in the Droeshout portrait of the First Folio. Every time we succeed in invoking him he looks different and unsettling.

Why then this faith in "the first morning," in a green Eden which never was and never will be? The world we live in is as bad as Pericles makes out. Worse. The spectre of destruction goes far beyond men on black horses. But what good are naive nostalgia or the patience to wait, to wait for a return of the pristine which will never take place?
There is work to be done in this always already fallen world; there are dreams, nightmares, poetry. Dubois underestimates the poetry in used words, words covered with the fingerprints of history. That is where Shakespeare's poetry comes from and that is where our poetry will arise if it is to arise at all. Shakespeare too lived in a great city, and great cities are places where people "have lost touch with mysteries and goddesses," at least in part. But Eden was a city in ovo.

"I can't give you what you need from me," says Princess Lou.

"Then I shall die," answers Pericles.

"No, then you shall live."

There is no going back to the green world. But we can look around. If our dreams are filled with enemies, if love has become impossible, if this is what lies beneath and behind the floors and walls of our forever perfect world, then we can enter into acts of ever more radical transformation, toward a future which has never been before."

"The discussion of Dubois's other theatre pieces by Hélène Beauchamp and Thierry Hentsch ("René-Daniel Dubois: The Generous Word," Canadian Theatre Review 50 (Spring, 1987): 29-36) casts my final quibbles into a larger context. They see Dubois's works as offering a "mosaic" of possible human reactions to the "urge to lay hold of life, to grasp the ungraspable" (p. 29). The critique I make of Pericles is to a large extent made by Dubois himself in Another Two of the Many Tales for a Lost Tribe, "the most political of Dubois's works for the theatre" (p. 35), in which there is a
Shakespeare with a difference:  
genderbending and genrebending in Goodnight Desdemona

Imagine Ann-Marie MacDonald on tour with Nightwood Theatre’s This is for You, Anna, a play which presents a woman with the strength and will to exact the most violent revenge against a man who submits her young daughter to sexual victimization, a victimization unto death. Set this play and this woman against Othello and the pale Desdemona who dares ask for no revenge. Then imagine MacDonald, in grim jest, passing amongst the touring company, from bed to bed, pillow in hand: she feigns the smothering of each woman, each time saying, "Goodnight, Desdemona!" Such is the germination of a feminist adaptation of Shakespeare.¹

What MacDonald found missing in Shakespearean tragedy were truly tragic women, women of strength and will. In Goodnight Desdemona (Good morning Juliet), the scenes from Shakespeare (parts of Othello 3.3 and 4.1, and Romeo and

¹My reconstruction of the history of Goodnight Desdemona and of 'authorial intention' is based on a conversation with Ann-Marie MacDonald, May 16, 1986. I thank her for this conversation and for providing me, via G. B. Shand, with a copy of the manuscript. My quotations are from that manuscript.
Juliet 3.1) which are played verbatim if not straight, are scenes in which there are no women, turning points in the action where the fate of the characters, both male and female, is decided by men, and by fortune as destructive caprice. Shakespearean tragedy is the scene of the victimization of weak and helpless women, or women made to feel or seem weak and helpless. Unfortunately, our own time is the scene of a similar victimization. And so Goodnight Desdemona opens with a tripartite dumbshow. Downstage are enacted two scenes from Shakespeare: Othello smothers Desdemona; Juliet kills herself over the body of Romeo. Upstage, meanwhile, mousy Constance Ledbelly, a contemporary academic, is about to resign herself to her own victimization.

Constance, at thirty-something, has spent a decade on two hopeless causes: she loves chastely Professor Claude Night, who exploits her affection and sets her to work writing articles which he publishes under his name; her unfinished thesis proposes that the indecipherable "Gustav Manuscript" contains suppressed, early versions of Othello and Romeo and Juliet, which Shakespeare meddled with in making his own unsatisfying versions. One day Connie's little world collapses around her, and at the moment of her greatest despair she finds herself mystically transported into the world of the Gustav text, discovering for and in
herself those elements which Shakespeare, in his rewriting, has suppressed. Paradoxically, the recovery of the 'original' versions in Connie's head serves on the stage as a transformation, or set of transformations, of the Shakespearean versions.

The first transformation which Goodnight Desdemona effects, is to raise its heroines into women of stature. In the "missing versions," which Constance, the "unknown author," discovers in her psyche, Desdemona, the "doomed and helpless victim," becomes "a tragic lioness," "mistress of her [tragic] fate." In the rediscovered 'source text,' Desdemona, Desdemona takes Othello's place in scenes with Iago—or Asiago as the source would have it: it is she whose gullibility and impetuosity are played upon; it is Constance who is the innocent victim of her suspicion. As for Juliet, in a lubricious Verona where no one 'sails straight,' she is the most enthusiastic and polymorphously perverse of the bunch; she, in lines once Romeo's, pursues the boy/woman Constance:

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

It is the East, and Constantine the sun!

And when she thinks Constance dead, it is Juliet who now proclaims, "Then I defy you, stars!"

But are we here then just to witness the destruction of
two powerful *femmes fatales*? The second transformation which the play effects is to wrench "comedy from forth the fatal hearts of Desdemona and Juliet," to save them from themselves, and "undermine two of Shakespeare's foremost tragedies."

The agent of this transformation is "the meddling fool," "mouthpiece of the author," "master of parody," who "makes a motley of the mighty, and / profanes the sacred": Constance Ledbelly.

"Meddling fool." If MacDonald rewrites Desdemona and Juliet as tragic heroines, it is her own heroine who nips their Shakespearean tragedies in the bud: exposing Iago's fraudulence, bringing to light the union of Capulet and Montague, and then tackling over and over the "tragic tunnel vision" around her. In the face of Desdemona and Juliet she sees herself as "just a little wimp," a mouse; and yet only a meddling fool could "turn Shakespeare's 'Othello' to a farce."

"Mouthpiece of the author." Adaptation always involves at least two authors: the 'original' and the rewriter/meddler. MacDonald's fable boldly puts the rewriter in the place of the original: Shakespeare's versions are reworkings of the reworkings of Shakespeare in Constance's psyche. Notions of the original and independent author are called into question: like Peter Brook and René-Daniel Dubois
before her, MacDonald posits something more originary than Shakespeare's text, something Shakespeare, like all the rest of us, was serving and distorting.

*Goodnight Desdemona* comes out of a tradition of collective creation. Beverley Cooper, who played Juliet, is MacDonald's frequent writing partner. MacDonald herself had originally planned to play Constance Ledbelly. Tanya Jacobs, however, brought dimensions to the role which no one else could have provided. It was Banuta Rubess, the play's director, who suggested to MacDonald that there was a script in the "Goodnight Desdemona!* jest. And yet *Goodnight Desdemona* is MacDonald's first solo work, her debut as an author in the traditional sense. There is something to be said for authorship, for authority, especially when they are wielded by those who have been denied them. Authorship is empowering. We can rewrite ourselves just as we can rewrite a text, meddling with the patterns already set in place (by others). As Constance says to Desdemona and Juliet, "Let's swear to resist fate; to be the authors of our own destinies." To be *femmes non-fatales*. The power to be such an author arises on the ground of collectivity and community, a comic ground.

"Master of parody." The parody in *Goodnight Desdemona* is manifold. Individual lines of Shakespeare recur in twisted versions, as in Juliet's call to suicide, "past
hope, past care, past help, past tense." Lines, situations, and scenes are replayed with interchanged characters; so it is Desdemona who says to Constance, "I do love thee! And when I love thee not, / chaos is come again." 'Shakespearean' style is pastiched throughout, as in Juliet's account of her wandering libido: "love's first keen edge grows dull with use and craves / another grinding." There is much parody of Shakespeare's comic conventions of reversal, cross-dressing, and mistaken identity: Asiago, having failed to turn Othello against the wife, turns the wife against Othello; Tybalt (or Toubylt), happening upon Romeo in drag, enters into an unwitting homoerotic encounter. On the broadest scale, Goodnight Desdemona is a multiple parody and reworking of Shakespeare's genres, "a comical Shakespearean romance." And while Shakespearean tragedy explodes with the tricks of Shakespearean comedy, Shakespeare explodes with the tricks of our own popular culture.

"Profanes the sacred." Goodnight Desdemona arises out of the tradition of alternative theatre, a tradition set against hegemonic Shakespeare (in Canada). A month before Goodnight Desdemona opened in Toronto, underfunded and with too short a rehearsal period, in a quasi-theatrical space which was technically barely adequate, Christopher Plummer and Glenda Jackson played to sellout crowds at the O'Keefe
Centre in a lifeless production of *Macbeth*. While *Macbeth* was lavish, sumptuous, stiff, and humourless, *Goodnight Desdemona* was carnivalesque in its poor extravagance, a motley mise-en-scène. O'Keefe Centre or Stratford Shakespeare--Shakespeare as 'serious,' dour, correct, homogenized--is of interest to MacDonald only as food for powder. As research she attended the 1987 Stratford productions of *Othello* (deadly theatre) and Robin Phillips' hom(m)osexual *Romeo and Juliet*. Constance is thinking of the latter production when she comments upon the male lewdness she encounters in Verona:

> This reminds me of the Stratford shows I've seen, where each production has a Roman bath:
> The scene might be a conference of state, but steam will rise and billow from the wings, while full-grown men in velcro loin-cloths speak, while snapping towels at each other. Strange. Why is it, Juliet's scenes with her Nurse, are never in a sauna?*

MacDonald, like Shakespeare, is in love with popular entertainment: Nancy Drew mysteries, fish out of water stories, Bob Hope/Bing Crosby "road" movies. Here are the jokes (in iambic pentameter) given to the Ghost (of Yorick or Hamlet Senior):

> A man told me he hadn't had a bite
in three days, so I bit him. I awoke today and shot an elephant in my pajamas. How he got there, I know not. I just flew in from Padua, and zounds, are my arms tired!

MacDonald thinks of her play not as an adaptation but as a 'spin-off,' as television shows are spun off from one another. As dense and literate as her text may be, it is accompanied in performance by all sorts of popular 'shtick'; the trick is in the juggling, in keeping everything in the air at once.

But if the transformation into comedy, the saving of Desdemona and Juliet from themselves, is accomplished, it is not enough. Goodnight Desdemona is ultimately a romance; ultimately it effects the "re-birthday" of Constance Ledbelly.

MacDonald's only experience playing Shakespeare 'straight' was as Marina in a National Theatre School production of Pericles. Like René-Daniel Dubois' Pericles, which played Toronto in 1987 (and featured Beverley Cooper in a prominent role), Goodnight Desdemona is about the loss of traditional romantic alliances (the nuclear family; exploitative heterosexuality) and the discovery of new, if tentative, coalitions. The play begins with Constance at the "nadir of her passage on this earth," a patient Griselda
in a world where men make no restitution. The journey into the "missing versions" is a quest for a restitution that would not come from the absent generosity of men, but from the transformed self, and from the communion of women. MacDonald's interest in Jung (Constance enters singing, "Fairy-tales can come true, / It can happen to you, / If you're [Jung] at heart"), impels her to cast the quest as a discovery of the trinity within, the tripartite woman: Desdemona's courage; Juliet's sensuality; Constance's intellect (Throughout the play, in keeping with a long tradition of women playing the Prince of Denmark, Constance is associated with Hamlet: her tombstone is to read, "Oh what a noble mind is here o'erthrown"; she is given a long parody of Hamlet's "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!"; she is visited by a ghost who comes to "whet [her] almost blunted purpose."). This homoerotic "marriage of true minds," this magical, alchemical transformation of "grey matter into precious gold," sends Constance back into the 'real' world with a power and authority that she has never known.

At the very end of the play Claude Night, Constance's beloved tormenter, is given the opportunity to undertake a similar quest. MacDonald is uncomfortable thinking of Goodnight Desdemona as a feminist work; she prefers to think of it as humanism through a woman's point of view, or
through feminist language. Although MacDonald considers herself a feminist, the strongest impulses in her theatre are popular and populist, and she seems to feel that labeling her work as feminist or lesbian would jeopardize the pluralist audience that she is seeking. If her work is feminist, it is feminism as part of a pluralist humanism. Similarly, if her play has a "message," MacDonald insists that it be sugar-coated with entertainment value: if Groucho Marx wanted his work to "play in Peoria," MacDonald wants hers to play in Downsview. [MacDonald is dealing here with the problem of the audience: how does one address radical concerns to a North American audience which may be popular but is not radical. Unlike Herbert Blau, MacDonald aligns the audience for her work with the audience for popular entertainment: rather than confront, ignore, or alienate that audience, she tries to feed it a sugar-coated pill. Is she naive to believe that a general audience in North America will accept radical ideas in even the most moderated form, or that, if she hasn't already compromised them, those ideas will not be appropriated by the popular audience in a way which robs them of all radical use? For the grounds of an objection to MacDonald's strategy one could look, for instance, to Carmelo Bene's claim that the people are no longer a worthy audience: any attempt to play to them and to their values is worse than silence. Deleuze's idea of the
people as (real) minorities would reflect less negatively on MacDonald's choice.] The dual imperatives of politics and entertainment sometimes leave MacDonald only very ambivalent spaces to manoeuvre in. And so, the ending of the play is a gesture of generosity, of reconciliation with men—although not a reconciliation that will restore old ways. Claude Night's journey of self-discovery, if he has the eyes to see, will be much more horrible than the one we have witnessed, a dark 'Night' of the soul.

In her reworking of romance MacDonald also retrieves a rapport with Shakespeare which was lost for her in tragedy. We have already seen how MacDonald's reappropriation of Othello and Romeo and Juliet is effected through Shakespearean means: Shakespearean language, Shakespearean comic devices. She also argues that her characterizations of Desdemona and Juliet are extrapolations of possibilities in Shakespeare's texts: Desdemona's fascination with Othello's accounts of his exploits; Juliet's ability to throw herself into love. Goodnight Desdemona is an attempt to retrieve the popularism of the Elizabethan, and the extravagance—in the face of deadly theatre—of the Jacobean stage. MacDonald also cherishes Shakespeare's multivalency and ability to challenge a heterogeneous audience—that's why she wants her work to appeal to men as well as women. Finally on the level of gender and reconciliation, MacDonald sees herself
as giving Shakespeare the benefit of the doubt, not expec-
ting him to have himself written like a woman, but instead
taking upon herself the task of rewriting these plays as
they would be if Shakespeare were a woman, with a woman's
experience.

How did *Goodnight Desdemona* fare on the stage? The
script is long, literary, and densely allusive. In perfor-
mance it has the potential to prove cumbersome. It became
progressively shorter and more playable throughout rehear-
sals and into the run. And yet a perhaps inevitable (and
not necessarily unhealthy) tension remained between drama
text and the circus-like performance. [If Dubois's play
comes out of image theatre, Grotowski, and Artaud, MacDon-
ald's work seems more closely related to the political,
rationalist cabaret—mere cabaret, Bene would say (1977,
78)—of Brecht.] The play premiered in Toronto at the
Bathurst Street Annex Theatre, March 31, 1988. The Annex is
a poorly equipped, makeshift playing space with intractable
problems. I saw a dress rehearsal two nights before opening
and the production was still ragged and in need of work. I
have heard at least one bad report of opening night. One
Sunday later in the run I saw a performance which took off
with a rare energy: the audience was the right mixture of
feminists, lesbians, Shakespeareans, and "everyman"; the
performers were uplifted by the audience's enthusiasm; I was
given a wonderful sense of living, indigenous Shakespeare.

Ann-Marie MacDonald looks forward to another mounting of the work. She would like to spend more time on the script, tightening and fine tuning connections in the dense network of comic reversals. She would also like to work on Constance's final speech to Desdemona and Juliet, which strikes her as a patchwork, and on the final scene—a scene which has already undergone the most rewriting, strengthening in some way the relations between Constance and the 'real' world eminences of Shakespeare's heroines, Ramona the Rhodes warrior and Jill "the little flirt." MacDonald would like to see a production more adequately funded with a longer rehearsal time—to allow the actors to grow comfortable with the vast amounts of 'Shakespearean' dialogue—in a bigger theatre with an elaborate set, so that more emphasis could be put on spectacle and special effects. She is adamant that this is not a movie script; there is too much emphasis on the spoken word. And yet there are moments which call for filmic extravagance if a fuller effect is to be achieved.

Goodnight Desdemona by no means forecloses on the possibility of further adaptations of Othello and Romeo and Juliet. It leaves much work to be done, and many struggles to be undertaken. Although it opens up homoerotic possibilities, I wonder if gay men would not find its treatment of
their concerns a bit too cavalier. The play completely elides the issue of race, which has been the point of other adaptations of *Othello*, such as that by Marowitz. MacDonald does this quite consciously, however, acknowledging that someone else could, for instance, broach the issue of a black Desdemona. There is little in the play about class, a perspective which is always potentially useful when brought to Shakespeare. None of this is necessarily to fault MacDonald's work: her task has been to express humanism with a woman's face, and that's what she has accomplished.

[To assert that MacDonald has accomplished "humanism with a woman's face" is probably the most problematic assertion in this piece. Despite all the disclaimers, MacDonald's text necessarily remains ethno-culturally limited in a way that is not fully discussed. MacDonald's work is open to a critique similar to that which the literary critic is subjected by Gayatri Spivak: "if the literary critic [or playwright] in the U.S. [or Canada] today decides to ask the question of Value only within the frame allowed by an unacknowledged 'nationalist' [or western] view of 'productivity' [or the feminine], she cannot be expected to be taken seriously everywhere" (167). In MacDonald's defense I would say that the right to be taken seriously everywhere is one which probably no one--certainly not Shakespeare--has ever earned, although it must
remain, in Herbert Blau's phrase, as the measure of all promise. I should also ask myself why I don't raise similar objections about the scope of Dubois's vision.
part three:

(in)conclusion:

utopia in process/utopia on trial

"The act of reading, we know, has become a performance" (Blooded Thought, 33).

"Everything that takes place during the process of writing for the stage belongs to the text" (Heiner Müller qtd. in Holmberg, 456).

This is, and is not, my adaptation of The Winter's Tale. In as much as it happens only on the page, it is not really theatre, but a prolegomenon to a theatre work which might never take place. But also, though happening (only) on the page, it is a verbal reconstruction of a lived discourse, a performance, a solo work: for the next two months (January and February 1989) I will be reading, rehearsing, performing The Winter's Tale. Like any theatre work, my adaptation will run its 'natural' or contractually limited course, and then just stop, uncompleted. These words will be all that remains of that performance.

???
"A scrupulous declaration of 'interest'" (or at least its beginning):

When I proposed to myself the task of working through The Winter's Tale, I still hoped that I could borrow its happy ending. Now my relation to its promise is bleaker and much more problematic. My marriage seems to be ending. My father was here last Friday and, knowing nothing of this, he said, as usual, that family is all you've got, that it's the only thing that counts. Meanwhile he can't bear to retire because he'll die without his job and he has to keep drinking to get through a day with the family. I can't tell myself his lies anymore. Brazier says all she wants is a happy family, something she has always desired but been denied. I'm hurting her, in a way that only I could. This writing is part of the hurting.

Better to have loved and lost than to have spent your whole damn life with him.

???

A scrupulous declaration of interest, continued:

"Being oneself on stage may be more artificial than being a character" (Take Up the Bodies, 275).

"Reading the play, even seeing it, is not the same as doing it, living with it" (Impossible Theater, 291).

Heiner Müller: "I had a very strange experience while I was writing a short prose text dealing with the suicide of
my former wife. (She killed herself in 1966). First I wrote in the third person: 'He came home and he saw...'. Then I realized that this was the attitude of a coward, so I switched to the 'I': 'I came home and saw her...'. ("Walls of History," 60-61) Graziela is not dead. She is embarrassed that strangers will read this. I write it anyway.

???

I went to watch the BBC video of The Winter's Tale hoping to gain insights only accessible through performance. My only insight was a deeper understanding of why Shakespeare needs adapting. As I watched this deadly theatre, I wondered who could ever be moved by this, who could ever feel that this was important, or relevant? Something needs to be violently different.

I also realized that this traditional presentation of the verbal text sacrifices resonant meaning to the development of character and plot. "Boy eternal," "It is a bawdy planet": they passed by emptied of their richness. Blau's choral effects, splicing, repetition with variation are all ways of making Shakespeare's words sing anew with significance.

What might resonate is lost among all the words that for the moment don't say anything living. When I spoke with
him in Toronto, Jonathan Goldberg said that Tom Stoppard's
*Fifteen Minute Hamlet* contained all the *Hamlet* he ever
needed to hear. Radical cutting is a way of reemphasizing
what seems important, even if this is always done for the
nonce.

What Blau does is tease endless thought out of Shake-
speare's words. What would begin to happen if we rehearsed
a few key phrases?

"A jealous tyrant." *The Winter's Tale* is theatre of
domestic cruelty (jealousy) superposed upon a theatre of
public cruelty (tyranny). The first three acts play out the
horrors of gender and class relations, the worst scenario:

O thou thing!
Which I'll not call a creature of thy place,
Lest barbarism (making me the precedent)
Should a like language use to all degrees,
And mannerly distinction leave out
Betwixt the prince and beggar.
The only check on unbridled misogyny is a sense of class
privilege.

In as much as this adaptation is a reduction, it
ignores the cruelties of class. This is not about Charles
and Di, or Fergie and What's-his-name, but rather those whose bond of love affliction has altered. The relations of class between Graziela, the daughter of a small landowner become immigrant and janitor, and myself, descendant of farmers and factory workers and born into the ubiquitous North American "middle class," are something I can't really deal with right now. This adaptation reduces The Winter's Tale to a family romance.

In "Shakespeare and the 'Author-Function'" Peter Erickson quotes Adrienne Rich from Diving into the Wreck: "a world masculinity made / unfit for women or men" (246).

In my family women are materially oppressed, but men are alcoholic, manic depressive, skittish or emotionally catatonic, self-destructive. In my family men cause the problems. When I lectured on The Winter's Tale, I began with the entrance of Leontes, Hermione (pregnant with Perdita) and Mamillius at the beginning of act one, scene two. Here the perfect nuclear family is about to be born, and yet it disintegrates before it can even be fully manifest. In Shakespeare, as in my own family, that disintegration is brought about by men. I want to understand why, to understand what it is in patriarchy, or at
least what it is in my phallocentric family, that "stabs the centre."

One of the questions of interpretation which haunt performances of The Winter's Tale concerns the onslaught of Leontes' jealousy. Is it there from the beginning or does it come without cause at 1.2.108? In the introduction to the Arden edition, J. H. P. Pafford writes, "Shakespeare was concerned to show jealousy in action, not to make a study of its causes or development" (lvii). Is this so? Need it be so? I think jealousy has an etiology, no matter how violent and unexpected its irruption, and we can discern elements of this etiology in The Winter's Tale.

???

Start with the eldest son.

In The Winter's Tale the father's insecurity is what wrecks the family, but the eldest son is the one who in the end finds no place in it—this in the heyday of patriarchy and primogeniture. What gives?

"So much like you, 'tis the worse." The Winter's Tale is about the reproduction of familial pathologies. We don't see much of Mamillius, or know much about him. But what we do see is a prologue to the pathology of the father.

"Will you take eggs for money?"
"No, my lord, I'll fight."

Already there is concern with property, possessiveness, insecurity and the hoarding instinct Marx claims comes from it, self-righteousness, and an obstinate pride that would rather go down fighting than yield to heart ease.

"Boy eternal." Polixenes believes that there was a time before the boy was obsessed with the woman, but in his heart Mamillius knows differently.

"Take the boy to you," says the mother; "he so troubles me / Tis past enduring." And a little while later, "Come, sir, now / I am for you again." Replay that enough times and you've got Fort Da!—the working through of renunciation and hopeless longing unto death.

His mother sends him into the arms of (the) waiting women. Proud, listless, and abandoned, he treats them with self-defense and solicitous coldness. They turn away. He turns back to his mother, with a sad, winter's tale for her. But it is too late. She's already gone.

In "Family Romances" Freud writes of the child who imagines his mother having affairs as part of the process of his (necessary) estrangement from the parents. Mamillius believes in his mother's shame. His father tells him what he already expected. Like Hamlet with his prophetic soul, Mamillius lives a life which seems to confirm his deepest suspicions.
If, one by one, you wedded all the world,
Or, from the all that are, took something good
To make a perfect woman, she you kill'd
Would be unparallel'd.

This is the structure of mourning, mourning for the
lost mother, the one who, through abjection, I killed. It
is also the structure of my (male) desire/jealousy. Once,
touching Graziela's body, high on LSD, I thought that I
wanted all women to be one woman and one woman to be all
women, and one and all mine: wedding all the world and
making a perfect woman. With wants like that, you haven't
got a chance.

Polixenes--another first born son?--thinks he remembers
a hom(m)osexual Eden before woman held sway in the psyche,
in which the presence of woman as the object of desire was
not primal, but superposed, a late corruption. He is,
symptomatically, mistaken on two accounts. The boy eternal
was always already mamma's boy. And now Polixenes thinks
you can't be boy eternal. But Mamillius, in death, is boy
eternal. And Leontes, in as much as his jealousy, his
intractable obsessions, are rooted in his singular history as eldest son, is also boy eternal.

In imagining your mother's infidelity you recast your paternity. Abandoned by the mother, the son is pitted against the father, must escape the father too. There is another eldest son in the play:

One being dead,

I shall have more than you can dream of.

The son is victor in the father's death. But in the death of the father the son comes to his victory no longer as the subject of his desire, but as the no of the father.

???

Marx traces the etiology of hoarding and asceticism:

insecurity breeds accumulation breeds more insecurity.

Meanwhile the hoarder "sacrifices the lust of his flesh to the fetish of possession."

Start with the eldest son and you end up with the father. The father is the boy eternal: megalomaniacal and despondent, privileged and demanding, guilt-ridden and resentful, anguished, miserable, suspicious, unsettled, a hard one to love. Left holding the reins. The one who says no.
There is a map of the world, attributed to the surrealist Yves Tanguy, in which the size of places is proportional to their surrealist importance. In Canada the largest places are Labrador, Hudson Bay, and the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Imagine the body of the actor playing le corps-du-père: he is all head and penis. These are also his trouble spots. Last year I used to say that all I needed was castration and a lobotomy and I would be perfectly happy.

And the body of the mother/wife/daughter: in The Winter’s Tale it exists in the masculine imagination, the cock-eyed male gaze. It is a fetish object, a face “made with a pen,” a male fantasy, the boy actor, ultimately me in drag. It is a body of desire, what Bene would call the obscene, an excess of desire. There is the slippery cunt, which no man can ever possess: “It will let in and out the enemy.” The hand, the cheek, the inside lip: organs of adultery. The Latin word for breast is mamilla: Mamillius is so caught up in desire that his whole identity is his longing for the mother’s body.
There is no sense of pleasure in this text. That is not surprising. It is symptomatic. In its stead is just the non-du-père saying no to itself.

Sheila's favourite part in *The Winter's Tale*—the only part she ever talks about—is "When you dance, I wish you a wave of the sea," etc., etc. I don't relate to this. It speaks of untroubled pleasure.

And yet jealousy has no sufficient cause or necessary form. Leontes's "affection" is founded upon nothing, but Howard Felperin has shown that Hermione's credibility is founded upon nothing as well. Jealousy, affection arise in the space between action and dreams, in what Blau calls the audition of dream and event. The forms of jealousy vary: jealousy, like love, is a cultural product. My own jealousy doesn't so much take the form of a desire to own one woman—although I'm more than capable of that too—as it does a desire to fuck them all: the hoarding drive, the "greediness of affection" is boundless in its nature. Nor can we be justified in our loves. The forms of (in)fidelity vary too. In 1989 we live in a world where extramarital affairs are
commonplace. And so, if we are to love, we love through adulteries and can only set up our affections in the space of this new (in)fidelity.

The split runs through the father. Neither the simple voice of absolute patriarchy nor its absolute overthrowing, but the voice of one "in rebellion with himself."

Between the residual desires of the son and le non-du-père: le trop-du-père.

Who performs this? Is it a solo work? How many actors are needed? Is all this played out in one head? Is everyone in this midwinter dream me?

Or is it played out by the performance group known as The Nuclear Family? When I gave a lecture on The Winter's Tale, I began with the entrance of Leontes, Hermione (pregnant with Perdita) and Mamillius at the beginning of act one, scene two. Here the perfect nuclear family is about to be born, and yet it disintegrates before it can even be fully manifest. The communitas of theatre, says Blau, arises in the space between the memory of original
unity and the separation and dispersal which always already is. So too with the family.

But the family does not enter or disintegrate unattended. The Winter's Tale has many characters, so that we see not only the family, but the world at large, the world the family supports/is supported by and denies. "O brave new world / That has such people in't!" These are the words of the child escaping the family for the first time. They could also be the cry of the adulterer. It is a bawdy planet.

So: one actor, a family of actors, or a cast of thousands?

This adaptation needs three sets, superposed variously: the inside of a man's skull, as in Endgame; the home; the world. Shakespeare would have had all these in his potential space, the distracted Globe.

One of the important props in the adaptations of Carmelo Bene is the bed, the site of birth, copulation, and death. In Henry V and The Winter's Tale Shakespeare refers
to the bed and its events but does not bring them on stage, although this is not true of Othello.

There's a lot of fucking in the adaptations I've looked at: Bene, Blau, Müller, the lesbian moments in Dubois and MacDonald. In The Winter's Tale all the fucking is the fucking not done: between Polixenes and Hermione; the 16 years of celibacy. In Marowitz' Othello there is a scene in which everyone fucks Desdemona, as everyone fucks her in Othello's head: the fucking not done done. In this adaptation there is all the fucking done and all the fucking not done. All the fucking that I've ever heard about or seen represented or dreamed about or feared, all the fucking on the bawdy planet.

Judy Chicago's The Birth Project should haunt this adaptation.

Looking through The Birth Project yesterday I remembered when Charlotte was born. That is, and may always be, the most wonderful moment of my life. I remember feeling that no one belonged together more than Graziela, Charlotte, and I, that nothing but death was strong enough to come between us.
"To die upon the bed my father died." This is family life at its most stable, family life beyond/before the pleasure principle, the closed family, le mort-du-père. This is the family in an adventureless time. Each family, each father, is, and is not, bound by the narrowness of this ambition.

My youngest daughter cannot (yet) conceive of any good life outside the family. The most reassuring words for her are "the whole family" and her favourite time of the day is when she comes home from day care. I imagine she could only conceive of any desire to get away from the family as coming from the heart of darkness.

Silverly,

Silverly,

Over the Trees

The moon drifts

By on a Runaway Breeze.
There is incest in *Pericles*, and the threat of incest in *Pandosto*, the source for *The Winter's Tale*, and a hint of incest in *The Winter's Tale* itself. When I search my fat black heart I like to believe I would never let myself act out or even think incestuous thoughts with my daughters. But I realize that when they enter into sexual relations, my universal jealousy, my universal sexual possessiveness, will turn even on them. I don't want that to happen. Part of my heart wants them to have everything rewarding and exciting in their sexual lives, and I don't want my jealousy to taint that. I have to escape this jealousy. I don't believe I can do that while staying in the family.
"Take the boy to you; he so troubles me, / 'Tis past enduring." Last night I watched a film called *The Good Father* on video. The good father, who has separated from his wife and child, lashes out at his wife, but toward the end of the film he realizes that it was the child he left, the child who demanded too much of him, who drained him and made him feel like he was suffocating. But that hardly tells the whole story either.

In *The Powers of Horror* Julia Kristeva writes about abjection, that midnight, midwinter state we first experience when we rip our mothers out of our souls and send ourselves reeling into the blackness towards death or renewal. Kristeva says that abjection is at the heart of writing in our century. A sad tale's best for winter, for the year's and the day's deep midnight: there should be a place in this adaptation for abjection, for the despair that shrouds Leontes for sixteen years, the sorrow and horror so strong in Mamillius that it kills him. I am writing this on the evening of January 3. The day has been bitterly cold. I feel ripped up inside and almost hopeless. I write on.
"Dispute it like a man," says Malcolm.

MY DREAMS SHATTER LIKE GLASS

"I shall do so," answers Macduff. "But first I must feel it as a man."

Blau cites Artaud who writes of actors who don't know how to scream. This adaptation takes "Howl, howl, howl" as a stage direction. Listen to the scream of the mother as the baby rips out of her. Listen to the scream of the newborn child as its head arches toward the breast. Listen to the scream of the man as he tears the family and himself apart. Imagine the howl of the bear who gnaws away his own paw to free himself from the teeth of the trap.

Much of the music for this adaptation, this (anti)romance, is by John Lennon. For the jealousy play "Jealous Guy" and "Run For Your Life." For the abjection play "Mother" and "God" and "Yer Blues." For utopia on trial play "Imagine," especially the version on Live in New York City.
This is a solo work. I am its author. This is le mot-du-père. Yet other voices haunt this work. Infinite voices haunt it from the outside, all those voices that are not mine, not white, not the eldest son, not the father, not the husband, not privileged in the ways I have been. I wish those voices could break into this text and have their way with it. I make a small attempt to open this adaptation to that chorus. Maybe I appropriate them, exploit them. No doubt. But I want them here, whispering, howling, laughing, nonetheless.

Imagine the patriarchal sets: the head, the home, the public world. Imagine them written over with graffiti: here, "Don't be the problem. Don't be the solution. Be the destroyer"; here, "The truth is always changing. Only the lies remain the same"; here, "Our daughters could be people instead of psychological slaves. And there is still a chance for us."

One of the drawings of Keith Haring, the New York graffiti artist, is of a child emerging from a vagina.

You should feel free to write your own graffiti over this set, this text.
This is Perdita speaking. Under the sun of torture.

She speaks to me:

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,
In the picture I have of you,
A cleft in your chin instead of your foot
But no less a devil for that, no not
Any less the black man who

Bit my pretty red heart in two.
I was ten when they buried you.
At twenty I tried to die
And get back, back, back to you.
I thought even the bones would do.

But they pulled me out of the sack,
And they stuck me together with glue.
And then I knew what to do.
I made a model of you,
A man in black with a Meinkampf look

And a love of the rack and the screw.
And I said I do, I do.
So daddy, I'm finally through.
The black telephone's off at the root,
The voices just can't worm through.

If I've killed one man, I've killed two--
The vampire who said he was you
And drank my blood for a year,
Seven years, if you want to know.
Daddy, you can lie back now.

There's a stake in your fat black heart
And the villagers never liked you.
They are dancing and stamping on you.
They always knew it was you.
Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.

"So like you, 'tis the worse."

The argument of The Winter's Tale is the argument of Time. Guy Debord distinguishes between the repetitive time of work and everyday life, the time of adventure which is
experienced by the privileged individual, the millenarian time of class struggle, and the commodified time of spectacular capitalism. The argument of Time would entail all of these.

The repetitive, adventureless time: to die upon the bed my father died. It has its good side: spring follows winter, you can count on that.

The time of adventure is solo time, self-serving time, time to feel sorry for yourself, megalomaniacal time. And yet, as Paul Smith says, we all bring a singular history to our subjectivity. This is why 16 years are so important. Sixteen years are nothing in the turning of the seasons, nothing in the history of humankind. But in a singular history their loss is heartbreaking.

I don't know if I could take an interest in something that had no time of adventure in it. "To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores." "It is a bawdy planet."

The history of humankind is a collective adventure. Romance is one representation of that adventure. According to Fredric Jameson, romance posits imaginary solutions to real historical problems. And so, according to Walter Cohen, Shakespeare's romances give nostalgic, neofeudal solutions to new, protocapitalist problems. In our day Terry Eagleton writes of using residual humanist values to combat late capitalist fragmentation. This would be the
power of resistance in romantic nostalgia. On the other hand, the family seems part and parcel of the ideology of the new right. René-Daniel Dubois and Ann-Marie MacDonald have no trouble abandoning the family for the sake of a wild dedication to "unpath'd waters, undream'd shores," to a time of individual and cultural adventure. Why, then, am I so bound to a traditional model of the domestic? Why does leaving the family feel like ripping out half my heart?

Time tries all. The misdirected trial of act three opens onto a more general trial, what Marx and Blau would call "the ruthless criticism of all that exists." This is a trial of Daddy, and ultimately of marriage, family, and utopia. But it is also a trial of ruthlessness: "does not the stone rebuke me / For being more stone than it?"

Time also promises to be therapeutic, but only for some.

In the Oresteia, in Oedipus the King, in Medea, in Hamlet, in King Lear the family is fate. Family is what structures our lives before we know what hit us. No one
where I come from, where I am coming from, thinks of the
family as anything but a given, or of the dismantling of the
family as anything but tragic. In "Family Romances" Freud
maps out the complex movement by which we escape and never
escape the family. The Winter's Tale engages in the
struggle to think of the family otherwise, even if in the
end it can only make the unsatisfying, dizzying, wrenching
proposal that we do the same thing somehow differently.

At the end of Alcestis, Admetus says, "For now we shall
make our life again, and it will be / a better one."

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As a child, when I thought about life in heaven, I
always imagined I would be there with my mother and father
and brothers. The Winter's Tale plays out that fantasy of
resurrection: when the dead arise they arise in families.

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"Go Together, / You precious winners all; your exalta-
tion / Partake to everyone."

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In heaven, in The Winter's Tale, a time will come when I won't be guilty anymore.

When my friend Peter read The Winter's Tale, he liked the first part, but he found the ending facile and unconvincing. In The Origin of German Tragic Drama Walter Benjamin writes that the final turn of allegory, of death, is the allegory of rebirth: "the intention does not faithfully rest in the contemplation of bones, but faithlessly leaps forward to the idea of resurrection" (233). When the statue comes to life it is an ending in keeping with what has come before: first our fears are confirmed, then our hopes.

But, Peter, you're right. The adapter adapts because s/he is unsatisfied, and what is unsatisfying in The Winter's Tale is the ending. But it's the mistakes in works of art which endow them with permanence, isn't it?

This stumps me most, this statue brought to life. It's the coup de theatre, the resurrection and the life, the utopian gesture, the radiant symbol. What is The Winter's Tale without the statue scene? And yet it seems now the
quintessence of dust. I don't know what to do with it, how to stage it, what to think of it.

Today I was in the Bob Miller Bookroom and I looked at the new cover for The Winter's Tale in the Arden edition. Two women: one middle-aged, strong, emotional, wise, enigmatic; one young, forthright, examining the older one from behind. It is a moment from the statue scene. A work of photographic realism, the illustration is an attempt to put real women of our day into this scene. I grant all reservations about real and realism; and yet this illustration seems to me right in its attempt to put real women in place of the statues, mannequins, images, that "women" become in the male gaze.

The statue scene does not happen at the behest of the patriarch, or at a time he designates. It happens when women decide to make themselves known to him again. Of course in the Globe Hermione was a boy actor and the words Paulina speaks are a man's words, and men have been making women enact this scene for hundreds of years. But if it has the potential to be done differently, like the Arden picture conceives of it, if the office does become a woman best, then it can only be done with the active collaboration of women, women who have become convinced that they can trust men enough to show themselves as they are.

Graziela and I have an unfinished novel we've worked on
together over the years. The point of the collaboration was to let us each show ourselves as we are in the hope that the pages would be richer for it. That collaboration is quite up in the air now. I looked at old photographs the other night. Photographs of Graziela when I'd tried to make her look the way I thought (still think?) a beautiful woman should look. I thought looking at old pictures might help make things different, the way they used to be. But the image in the photographs was haunted by the real woman asleep in the next room, older, sadder, no longer "belonging" to me.

I'm in no position right now to stage the resurrection of anybody's wife.

"Our Perdita is found." I don't know if I'll ever hear words like that. Or see my wife come alive for me again.

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"Pandosto, calling to mind how first he betrayed his friend Egistus, how his jealousy was the cause of Bellaria's death, that contrary to the law of nature he had lusted after his own daughter, moved with these desperate thoughts, he fell into a melancholy fit, and, to close up the comedy with a tragical stratagem, he slew himself."

That is not the way The Winter's Tale ends the story.
But let this ending haunt Shakespeare's ending, question it, like the ghost of Mamillius, its abjection, the measure of its promise.

[The strategy of returning to Pandosto for something to haunt The Winter's Tale comes from Peter Zadek (113-115).]

In a telegram to Robert Wilson Heiner Müller speaks of the day when "the theatre of resurrection will have found its stage."

In the mean time, in that wide gap, the theatre destroys things.

"Howl! Howl! Howl! O you are men of stones!" This comes near the end of King Lear. In The Winter's Tale it is "be stone no more." But I add, "How? How? How?"

Even if the family came back to us, what makes us think we would be any better at it?

Remember what Jesus said to the adulteress: "Go and sin no more." Who could manage that?
"To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores, most certain / To miseries enough."

"I never wished to see you sorry; now / I trust I shall."

"And may the issue be gracious."

There is much talk of issue in The Winter's Tale: outcome, escape, children. I don't know if there is a way out for me, or a way back. Maybe like Macbeth I am too far stepted in blood. Part of the argument of time, the argument of 16 years, is the inextricability of a singular history. Maybe the escape is (always) in another generation.

"They look'd as they had heard of a world ransom'd, or one destroy'd...the wisest beholder...could not say if th'importance were joy or sorrow; but in the extremity of
the one, it must needs be."

Shakespeare forecloses on this question. I can't.

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And so what good has this done? This anguish and inconclusion, this self-laceration which hurts others more than it hurts me? "So much like you, 'tis the worse": this tried not to be Shakespeare, not to be patriarchal, and yet maybe it just repeats all that. I run and I run and I run and I'll still die upon the bed my father died, with all his anguish and misery, having only succeeded in sowing the seed for another generation too much like me.

Blau writes of a public art of crisis. I seem to have reduced The Winter's Tale to a private art of crisis. Crisis, or is this just scandalous? Would it have been better if this had never been written? Should the pages be torn out and scattered on the wind, who should have to listen to this howling? I had an argument recently about Last Tango in Paris. If a baring like that doesn't serve any purpose, then neither does this.

The Winter's Tale believes in oracular truth. Without that what can get said? "Speak what we feel and not what we ought to say"? But what if what you feel is onerous? When Leontes speaks his heart he butchers his family. Like me?
Things do come back, but not the way they were.

A year ago I was writing about La Ronde and the Wooster Group's _L.S.D._ In the last few weeks I got to see these works performed. But they fit in differently now. _La Ronde_ was an adaptation, updated to Toronto 1989. The updating didn't always work, and the play was haunted every now and then by Vienna 1900. It made me wonder how intractable _The Winter's Tale_ remains for my adaptation, how difficult it is to make it speak for "what is now receiu'd." Its own old voice continues to sound in strange and jarring ways.

_La Ronde_, a meditation on the bawdy planet, reinforced my desire to escape the family, or to cast a wider net for my jealousy. And yet, like _L.S.D._, it takes a sceptical view of utopia, of the escapist utopia, of sexual utopia, of the utopia of dreams.

"I can't give you what you need from me."

"Then I shall die."

"No, then you shall live."
I imagine Judy Collins' "My Father" playing somewhere in the future, when the pain's all gone, just about now.

It probably won't happen that way.

It is Monday, February 13, 1989. Two days after Julia's birthday, a week before my own. Valentine's day is tomorrow. It is time to put a stop to this. To fix it on paper. There is so much left untalked about. Nothing is resolved, but I stop.