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The Anti-Performance Prejudice of Shakespeare's Eighteenth-Century Editors

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On bookshelves, in ephemera, drama exists on the page. On bodies, in spaces filled with actors and spectators, drama exists on the stage. These two spheres, page and stage, are too easily distinguished and kept separate when we write about the literature of the theatre (Berger 139-40). The English roots of this division, which continues to structure some academic work today, go back to the eighteenth century at least, when several of Shakespeare's earliest editors attempted to produce what they took to be the best possible versions of his work. In so doing, they had to confront the problem of stage and page, which is to say the inability of each medium to mirror the experience of the other. The result of this confrontation was a new, hostile understanding of performance as a process which tainted the work of art, as opposed to the careful preservation undertaken by the printing of an edition. Such a conclusion was deeply anti-theatrical in that it was anti-performance, severing stage and page not so much on moral grounds as on aesthetic ones. In what follows, I build upon the work of Vanessa Cunningham and others to describe how such a situation came about by analyzing the tensions between the methods of Shakespeare's eighteenth-century editors and their *a priori* assumptions about their chosen subject.[1] I then conclude with a brief sketch of how such anti-theatrical forces remained at the heart of Romantic responses to England's most celebrated dramatist, and so continue to influence us today.

1. Cunningham's *Shakespeare and Garrick* (2008) argues, as I do, that stage and page separate in the course of the eighteenth century. She is more concerned, however, with how Garrick was able to preserve a connection between them than, as I am here, with the forces that pushed them apart.

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Stage and Page from the First Folio to the Early Eighteenth Century

Shakespeare died in 1616. Seven years later, John Hemmings and Henry Condell published the First Folio, presenting, in their preface, the texts of his plays "as he conceived them," and urging its readership to "Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe" (A3r). These works, they argue, had been through the crucible of the stage, and found to be good in their own right: they have "had their triall alreadie, and stood out all Appeales" so "now come forth quitted rather by a Decree of Court, then any purchased letters of commendation" (A3r). Stage and page are thus part of a process in the First Folio: the printed page crowns and commemorates the playwright's achievement in the theatre, preserving his intentions in a form that can be repeatedly experienced. The page, it would appear here, is a definitive legacy. Yet in 1632, nine years after the First Folio, the Second came out with hundreds of changes to the text. This in turn was followed by the Third Folio in 1663, and the Fourth in 1685, again with changes both to the text of individual works and the choice of plays included. *Pericles*, for instance, is first incorporated in the Third Folio (Grazia and Stallybrass 257-66; Massai 180-93). These four editions cover the seventeenth-century printings of Shakespeare. Four more editions appeared in the first half of the eighteenth century: Nicholas Rowe's in 1709, Alexander Pope's in 1725, Lewis Theobald's in 1733, and William Warburton's in 1747. Each new version of Shakespeare's writing makes the words of the First Folio preface seem naive: the printing of these plays remains a testament to Shakespeare's greatness, but the possibility that the texts appear as "he conceived them" can now only be more of an aim than an attribute. The plays may have made it out of the frying pan of the theatre, but they were now in the fires of textual ambiguity.

That this aim of presenting Shakespeare's texts "as he conceived them" existed in the eighteenth century is clear from the many prefaces and other texts these editors have left us. Aware of the problems with seventeenth-century editions of Shakespeare's works, they drew on two connected traditions of textual scholarship as they worked to "restore" the text. The first of these was found in editions of ancient Greek and Latin texts, made famous by Richard Bentley's versions of Cicero, Aristophanes, Menander, Philemon, and—in the choice of a vernacular author—Milton. The second tradition of textual scholarship used by these editors was biblical exegesis (Walsh 117-18). The details of both these approaches have been examined in great detail by recent scholars, and will not be reviewed here.[2] Rather, an

2. For example, Simon Jarvis and Marcus Walsh, in books cited at the end of this article.

often ignored aspect of these editorial traditions should be noted: the fact that neither biblical exegesis nor classical editing offers adequate tools for dealing with vernacular plays. This is because plays, more so than poems or other texts, have the possibility of plural instantiation: they can be read *or watched* "againe, and againe." The First Folio editors avoid this problem by arguing that the printed text represents Shakespeare's original intention, the words "as he conceived them," and that the stage was no more than a purgatorial space they passed through on the way to it. Eighteenth-century editors, however, faced with what they took to be the clear corruption of the earliest printed texts, did not have this luxury: there were so many errors that even the First Folio was clearly unable to reproduce Shakespeare's original intentions. Rather, this ideal text was now buried, and had to be retrieved. On top of this, they could not ignore the role that the Folio accorded to performance, even if it seemed to raise a host of attendant difficulties: what if Shakespeare wrote to be acted as much as published? What if the actors, in the process of performance, were as responsible for errors of transmission as the printers? How would an editorial method based on classical scholarship and biblical exegesis deal with this?

Two editions in particular wrestle with these questions: Alexander Pope's edition, published in 1725, and William Warburton's, appearing in 1747. Both are important in the history of literary editing. Pope was the first editor of Shakespeare to give a preface detailing both his opinion of the plays and his methods for editing them. This preface was then reprinted throughout the eighteenth century, its premise an important point of reference even for Edmond Malone's landmark edition of Shakespeare's plays and poems in the 1790s. Warburton's work was also heavily influenced by Pope, not least because, by the 1740s, Warburton had positioned himself as the poet's literary executor, in spite of a brief collaboration with his rival, Theobald, in the 1720s. If Pope's work as an editor had a long legacy, Warburton's did not: many of his conjectures and emendations, although powerfully argued at the time, were later deemed ridiculous by his successors, and his lasting influence was at best a model of an approach to be avoided. Despite his shortcomings, pairing Warburton with Pope does, however, allow a particularly rich exploration of editorial anti-theatricality in the period. This is not a new topic, but recent research has focused on demonstrating what Edmund King calls "dramatically-informed anti-theatricalism" (9), the way certain editors, such as Theobald or Edward Capell, used their knowledge of the theatre to identify damage to Shakespeare's texts that was apparently due to performance, such as the use of actors' names in speech headings or ill-advised cuts made in an effort to accelerate certain scenes (Shakespeare, ed. Theobald 3: 353, 5: 183; Capell

1: 173). Neither Pope nor Warburton had extensive links to the theatre of their time, but rather show a specific kind of anti-theatrical prejudice, arising from the tensions between their methods and the dramatic qualities of Shakespeare's texts.

A work of drama exists in at least two forms, on the stage and on the page. Editorial methods based on biblical exegesis and classical scholarship, traditions unsuited for the discussion of performance, must favor the latter rather than the former. Nevertheless, other aspects of both editors' methodology, namely what Marcus Walsh calls their "orientation," pull in the other direction. Walsh takes his term from Peter Shillingsburg, who uses "orientation" to distinguish between the various locations for authority in literary editing: a "sociological orientation" (alien to the eighteenth century) locates authority, for instance, in the institutional unit of author and publisher; a "historical orientation" prefers to do so in documentation from the past (Walsh 5-9). In the cases of Pope and Warburton, Walsh identifies them both as showing the signs of an "aesthetic orientation" (9), which assumes that authority is located "in a concept of artistic forms" (7), but it seems equally appropriate to give Warburton as an example of Shillingsburg's "authorial orientation" too, since he often appeals to authority in the figure of the author himself. Of course, Warburton also makes aesthetic judgments about Shakespeare's writing, and Pope evokes the author's intention, but—for now—these general outlines suffice. Both orientations do, with Shakespeare, open the door to questions of performance. If an editorial approach locates all authority in the figure of the author, it must recognize that Shakespeare himself is believed to have acted, and to have written his works with the stage in mind. Equally, an emphasis on aesthetic judgment cannot ignore the fact that these plays have been and will be performed as well as read, and what pleases in the study may not do so well in the theatre. Because of the consequences of such orientations, these editors of Shakespeare, for all they draw on non-theatrical editorial traditions, cannot escape the performance dimension of these works of drama: such tensions result, for Warburton and Pope, in an influential anti-theatrical aspect to eighteenth-century Shakespeare criticism, and lead to far larger questions about how we think of the relation between stage and page.

Aesthetic Orientations and the Stage

Pope begins the preface to his 1725 edition by praising his subject's "excellencies" before accepting the presence of "almost as great defects" (1: iii). Such a set of aesthetic judgments is one of the clearest proofs of this editor's particular orientation. The connection to performance is imme-

diate, since Shakespeare's "great defects" are explained by the fact that he wrote plays, or, to use Pope's term, "stage-poetry" (1: v). This peculiar portmanteau word for what I have called a "work of drama" both indicates the editor's textual heritage and his authority—as a poet himself—over the material in hand. For Pope, the defining quality of "stage-poetry" is its being "more particularly levell'd to please the general populace, and its success more immediately depending upon the *Common Suffrage*" than any other kind of literature (1: v). This is claimed as a universal quality of all writing for the theatre, albeit one that leads to particular problems for Shakespeare. It is alleged that this writer, working at a time when the "Audience was generally composed of the meaner sort of people" (1: v), thus unavoidably wrote badly, at least until "the encouragement of the Court" gave him more financial stability (1: vi). According to this logic, the "stage-" part of Shakespeare's "stage-poetry" was a limit to his genius, resulting in "great defects." This is the core of Pope's anti-theatricality as an editor: those passages that are not up to his high aesthetic standards are claimed as either sops to an uneducated public or, worse, the product of a mind whose own judgment has been corrupted by association with the players, who "live by the majority" and "know no rule but that of pleasing the present humour" (1: vii). Recognizing the double existence of a work of drama on stage and page, the former is castigated as an environment that exposes the poet to the dictates of a depraved taste, even to the point that when the plays come to be printed, they reproduce the undesirable results of that association.

Pope makes it easy to find such defects, choosing either to relegate inferior passages to the bottom of the page or—when a whole scene is judged wanting – to place three obeli at its head. As well as the detrimental effect of performance on Shakespeare himself, there are other ways Pope recognizes and deplores the nature of the "stage-poetry" before him. If we class "defects" due to Shakespeare's social position as corruption occurring at the source, then Pope also argues for the impact of performance on these works once they are out of the author's hands. The First Folio editors Hemmings and Condell are accused, for instance, of making many errors in the preparing of their edition, almost all of them attributable to the fact that these first editors were in fact no more than "players" (1: xiv), whose efforts are marred by the "ignorance" and "impertinence" that characterizes those who perform "stage-poetry" (1: xiv). As well as during the preparation of the text, Pope also suspects that "defects" were introduced in the heat of performance. A footnote to *Henry VI part 1*, on Bedford's apparently defective line at the end of the first scene (now read as an interruption), examines this possibility.

> BEDFORD … A far more glorious start thy soul will make
> Than Julius Caesar, or bright—
> -----
> I can't guess the occasion of the Hemystic, and imperfect sense, in this place; 'tis not impossible it might have been fill'd up with—Francis Drake—tho' that were a terrible anachronism (as bad as Hector's quoting Aristotle in *Troil. and Cress.*) yet perhaps, at the time that brave Englishman was in his glory, to an English-hearted audience, and pronounced by some favourite Actor, the thing might be popular, though not judicious; and therefore by some Critic, in favour of the author, afterwards struck out. But this is a mere slight conjecture. (4: 7)

Simon Jarvis remarks that this footnote represents a rare moment of editorial conjecture for Pope ("Alexander Pope" 90), but the real interest of these lines lies in their capturing in miniature Pope's own method with respect to the stage. The anonymous "Critic" has apparently recognized both the same dangerous connection between "stage-poetry" and the same desire to please that Pope describes in his preface. By excising the line, the "Critic" has accomplished, "in favour of the author," a more extreme version of Pope's own typographical markings and displacements. The problem of the missing line end is thus not so much Shakespeare's fault but the actor's, with whose interpolation the hypothetical "Critic" has dealt as best he could.

The implications of this footnote, and other such passages, which imagine the way choices made in performance could have broken into the text, are very broad indeed. Pope sees his sources not—as the First Folio editors did—as tending to a single instantiation of Shakespeare's conception, but rather as a deeply problematic composite in which both errors of the page and of the stage have been encapsulated. However much this is to be regretted (and Pope regrets at length that "all these Contingencies should unite" [1: iv]), such a state of affairs is also extremely empowering for the editor. If all the sources Pope is to work from have a theatrical element, and if that "stage" element is the conduit by which defects occur, then the aesthetically-orientated editor has free reign to change whatever he wishes: everything he finds defective can be labeled as something "interpolated by the players" (1: 157) and so opened to emendation. The stage becomes the excuse for both Shakespeare's faults and his editor's corrections of them. As Jarvis puts it, this makes for a "flexible weapon" (*Scholars* 53), forged from the tensions I have identified above between stage and editorial method. It is also, however, something of a

double-edged sword: the evocation of performance gives Pope free reign to emend, but it also obliges the editor to recognize performance everywhere. For all that the "stage" element of "stage-poetry" is problematic, he can never rid himself of it.

Strikingly, Pope's position, bound to find and use the very thing he deplores, replicates a feature of anti-theatrical writing that Jonas Barish finds in certain texts of the late seventeenth century. Writing of Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the English Stage* (1698), he observes that this author belongs to a broader group of anti-theatrical writers who "betray in their very rhetoric the fact that the theatre exerts a primitive and powerful pull on them" (227). Just as Collier both attacks and relishes the potential of the theatre, so Pope laments and uses it, to the extent, for example, of making a rare piece of editorial conjecture in his note to *Henry VI part 1*. Anti-theatre needs theatre. This is not to say that Pope harbored secret ambitions as a playwright—although one might point to the theatrical conclusion of the *Dunciad*—but rather that his anti-theatrical stance, born from an aesthetically-orientated attempt to integrate stage-elements into established processes of textual editing, involves both recognition and repudiation of the possibilities of performance.

Much of what has been discussed in Pope—Shakespeare's weakness in the face of the demands of play-writing to meet a popular, inferior standard; the idea that players and player-editors during or under the influence of performance broke from Shakespeare's original intention—is also found in Warburton. Twenty years later, though, this edition makes its points at a higher pitch. While Pope rarely mentions actors and the theatre in his notes, Warburton frequently evokes the theatrical life of a work of drama, and the damage it might cause. He does this most clearly with respect to actors. Even when contributing notes to Theobald's edition of 1733, Warburton had already suspected that lines in *Henry VI part 3* were "certainly introduced by some shallow-pated conceited fellow of the scene" (3: 395). This Popean strain of blaming apparent defects on the tastes of performers grows even stronger in 1747, where there are many more uncomplimentary mentions of "some" actor or other. The phrase "caught the water, tho' not the fish" (now accepted by modern editors) in *The Winter's Tale* is, for example, "a most stupid interpolation of some player"(3: 376); while a gap in a speech in *Henry IV part I* has been caused by "some player" who, "thinking the speech too long, struck it out" (4: 119); and, in *Henry V*, the King of France's memory of the Black Prince "up in the air crown'd with the golden sun" is dismissed as "a nonsensical line of some player" (4: 353). The formula is also varied into "some senseless player" (found in a note to *As You Like It*) (2: 386), "some foolish conceited player" (*All's Well that Ends Well*)

(3: 10), "some profligate player" (*Winter's Tale*) (3: 287), "some foolish player" (*Henry IV part 2*) (4: 291), and "some simple conceited player" (*Henry VI part 3*) (5: 206). All these examples may be read as variations on Pope's own anti-theatrical attitudes, but this repeated adjectival use of "some," by denying any specificity to the performer, actually extends Pope's critique. If Pope points out the particular problems of writing "stage-poetry" when Shakespeare was alive, he also points (with greater or lesser precision) to the specific theatrical conditions and performers of that time. Warburton, on the other hand, keeps his players faceless: they are interchangeable, all vain, all ignorant, and so always—whatever the time or place, whatever the prevailing taste—likely to fail at rendering Shakespeare's work. The prejudice here is thus much stronger: the staged element is not just a potentially dangerous connection to contemporary tastes, but always an invitation to corruption of the text and with it, Shakespeare's own intentions. There will always be, to quote a Shakespearean use of "some," "some squeaking Cleopatra" to ruin the author's intended effect.

Authorial Orientations and the Stage

So far, Shillingsburg's editorial orientations have been evoked to indicate Pope's aesthetic tendency and Warburton's authorial emphasis. In the last section, however, the aesthetic concerns of both editors have dominated our exploration of anti-theatrical prejudice: Pope finds "defects" and Warburton accuses players of inserting ugly moments, a "nonsensical line" or a "stupid interpolation." This section will focus more on the "authorial" part of the equation, which tends to look toward Warburton more than Pope, and is most clear in the appropriation of what Shakespeare wrote for his *characters* in order to suggest the *author's* own view of the theatre. In other words, this interpretive method might take a line like "some squeaking Cleopatra" and suggest how this shows Shakespeare's own distaste for the convention of using boy actors in women's parts. Neither Pope nor Warburton use this specific example (it comes instead from the notes to Capell's 1768 edition [1: 31-2]), but the same process is discernible in both. Pope's preface, for example, makes reference to Hamlet's words to the players, especially the prince's description of audiences, "who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumbshows and noise" (Shakespeare, ed. Pope 6: 404), and of clowns who interpolate by speaking "more than is set down for them" to show that the "poet … himself complained" of "the additions of trifling and bombast passages" (1: xvi). Here, with a deliberate confusion between Shakespeare's sentiments and those of his melancholy Dane, editorial prejudice against the stage is justified. In this way, even if an authorial orientation—thanks to the mere facts of

Shakespeare's biography—demands a consideration of the theatre's influence, that influence, so disturbing to editorial procedure based on biblical exegesis and classical scholarship, can be minimized by claiming that Shakespeare himself was hostile to the environment in which he worked. An approach that locates authority in the author's intentions then, even when that author is a playwright, need not unduly concern itself with asking to what extent these works were created with theatrical, rather than printed, instantiation in mind.

Warburton, as before, offers a variation on Pope's position. When Othello hesitates on the threshold of Desdemona's chamber, he speaks the line, "Put out the Light, and then put out the Light". I take my punctuation here from the First Folio (vv4r). Warburton prints the line as "Put out the light, and then—put out the light?—" in an attempt to clarify a passage whose repetitions only work on the stage or in the mind of a reader able to picture Othello's agony (8: 390). An exclusive focus on the printed words is not enough, and so dashes and question marks must be added to render Shakespeare's character. Further, though, Warburton feels the need to explain the line and his punctuation of it:

> The meaning is, I will put out the light, and *then* proceed to the execution of my purpose. But the expression of *putting out the light*, bringing to mind the effects of the extinction of the light of life, he breaks short, and questions himself about the effects of this metaphorical extinction, introduced by a repetition of his first words, as much as to say, But hold, let me first weigh the reflections which this expression so naturally excites. (8: 390)

The interpretation here, which grounds Warburton's emendation, is guided by a claim to know the "meaning" of the line. Such knowledge intimates the proximity of editor to author, something which is further reinforced by the way the note slips into first-person paraphrase. This sentence, "But hold, let me first weigh the reflections which this expression so naturally excites" is, oddly, both a paraphrase of what Warburton takes Othello to be thinking, and of what Shakespeare himself may have thought when composing the line, with his author's interest in the "expression" and what it "naturally excites." While Pope is content with taking Hamlet's speech as proof that Shakespeare supports his own low view (as editor) of actors, Warburton, when confronted with the explanation of a particularly theatrical moment in *Othello*, adopts a turn of phrase that verges on the ventriloquism of both character and playwright. The performance dimensions of the moment are thus kept at bay by insisting on what is being thought: the intention of

the author embedded here is therefore not—in Warburton's eyes—a playwright's intention, but rather a poet's, interested in "metaphorical extinction" and the choice of "expression."

It might be said that Warburton's commentary to Othello's lines is anti-theatrical in that it is non-theatrical, an evacuation of the dimension of performance from a work of drama. This is possible because Shakespeare is not writing explicitly about performance at this moment, and so a focus on the author's intention in this scene need not raise questions about his attitude toward its staging. This, of course, is different from those scenes with the players in *Hamlet*, where the theatrical subject matter means that the editor is led to address performance and Shakespeare's feelings about it directly. Like Pope, Warburton is drawn to these scenes too, but once more goes far beyond his predecessor. This time, the focus is not on Hamlet's advice to the player, but rather on an earlier episode: the First Player's emotional rendition of Pyrrhus' attack on Priam.

In a long note, appended to the end of the play and filling several pages, Warburton argues against Pope and Dryden's opinion that "Shakespeare produced this long passage with design to ridicule and expose the bombast of the play, from whence it was taken" by proposing instead that "it was given to upbraid the false taste of the audience of the time, which would not suffer them to do justice to the simplicity and sublime of this production" (8: 267). To make his case, Warburton discusses Hamlet's description of the play from which the speech is taken, the "intrinsic merit" of the lines, and "the effect it had on the audience" (8: 267-68). By this last point, Warburton means only the effect the lines are shown to have on Hamlet and Polonius, and so his analysis remains entirely within the world of the play. It is perhaps for this reason that Warburton, so frequent elsewhere in his attacks on "some player," paints at this point a sympathetic portrait of how "an intelligent player, whose business habituates him to enter immediately and deeply into the characters of men and manners" is powerfully touched by "a fine description of nature" (8: 270). This is no ordinary player, but rather Shakespeare's vision of one, used—in this editor's view—as an example of the power inherent in the lines about Priam and Pyrrhus. As Warburton sees it, contemporary actors are not up to such a standard, and would do well to remember that they "in their representation of this play, may learn how this speech ought to be spoken, and what appearance *Hamlet* ought to assume during the recital" (8: 270-71).

This last suggestion, that a study of Shakespeare might teach actors something, takes Warburton off-topic, and shows the extent to which the flexibility of a footnote allows departures from a general editorial stance. This is, however, not the end of Warburton's commentary, since, not con-

tent with showing how good this speech is, the editor then makes the larger claim that it was drawn from a now lost play on a Greek model written by Shakespeare himself:

> He was desirous, as soon as he had found his strength, of restoring the chasteness and regularity of the ancient Stage; and therefore composed this tragedy on the model of the *Greek* Drama, as may be seen by throwing so much *action* into *relation*. But his attempt proved fruitless; and the raw unnatural taste, then prevalent, forced him back into his old Gothic manner. For which he took this revenge upon his Audience. (8: 272)

This ambitious biographical reading represents Warburton at his most extreme. Over the course of the note, Pope's original points about how *Hamlet* gave Shakespeare a way of voicing his dissatisfaction with the stage of his time have mutated into the suggestion that Shakespeare is, in these scenes, taking "his revenge upon his audience," by using the action to force them into a recognition of the power of his own (aborted) drama on a Greek model. What began as proof of Shakespeare's hostility to his own stage, now borders on a biographical narrative.

Warburton's conjectures are silently abandoned by subsequent editors. Yet they remain useful as proof of a further aspect of editorial activity in this period, and one that contributes to anti-theatrical prejudice amongst many of the editors. This is the capacity for each editor to see themselves in Shakespeare: by claiming that Shakespeare was a closet classicist, Warburton portrays Shakespeare in his own image as someone deeply steeped in classical knowledge, and by extension, hostile to all the untidiness and error to be found in popular performance. The same point might be made of Pope. Jarvis has shown the extent to which Pope regulated and relineated Shakespeare's lines, performing the service of a fellow poet ("Alexander Pope" 81). Indeed, in Pope's case (as in Nicholas Rowe's before him, and Samuel Johnson's after him), the contract for editing Shakespeare was awarded in the hope that the name of the editor, the editor's personal take on his subject, would prove an additional selling point (Hamm 191). In both cases, the ability for each of these two editors to make Shakespeare into their simulacrum is—as much as their efforts to discern Shakespeare's own intention—something that tends to the anti-theatrical. Neither Pope nor Warburton had the direct experience of the stage that other editors of this period, like Rowe, Theobald, or Capell, possessed, and so their Shakespeare takes more often the form of a poet than a playwright.

Beyond Pope and Warburton

Having examined the way these editors betray anti-theatrical prejudices as they incorporate into their work both the impact of the stage upon Shakespeare and their own sense of Shakespeare's attitudes to that stage, several larger ideas emerge. First, it is important to note that much of what has been analyzed here in Pope and Warburton depends on the assumption of a perfect or ideal form of drama. The ideal form as a target toward which emendation strives is inherited from the traditions of textual scholarship, and it is defined—according to the particular location of authority—as either the one Shakespeare intended (an authorial orientation) or one which appears the most pleasing (aesthetic orientation). This concept is, however, complicated by performance in that the ideal form for a playwright's work might conceivably be found as much upon the stage as upon the page. As a result of this, it is not surprising to find the shadows of what might be called a concept of ideal performance in these two editors' work as well. As we have seen, Pope hypothesizes that actors may have produced a less-than-ideal performance by inserting mention of "Francis Drake" into *Henry VI part 1*. In a similarly negative vein, Warburton points out that he has known players to commit "a great blunder" in *Richard III* by making Richard "say, instead of O *coward* conscience, O *tyrant* conscience!" (5: 329). In both of these cases, and just as an ideal text ultimately serves as a weapon against a theatrical environment deemed unsuitable for its transmission, so too does the concept of an ideal performance only ever occur as a standard that the stage cannot possibly meet. This is prejudice, anti-theatrical prejudice, in the simplest sense of the term, a biased, hostile refusal to recognize what might be the strengths of performance. Nowhere do either of these editors suggest that, as was said of David Garrick, an actor's action had the capacity to be "The speaking Comment of his Shakespear's Page" (Lloyd 65).

In sketching the concepts of ideal performance or an ideal text, the twin instantiations of a play, it is clear that this analysis of Pope and Warburton's editions has unearthed a particularly aesthetic anti-theatricality. This is unusual: from as far back as Plato, anti-theatricality has, as Barish points out, been a primarily moral concern (4). The work of neither editor here engages in such matters. It is true that Warburton's portraits of "some player" contain a set of moral judgments against the vanity of performers, and Pope too disparages actors who, following the majority, are "such judges of what is *right* as Taylors are of what is *graceful*" (1: vii). Neither editor, however, goes beyond such comments. Instead, they manifest what can only be called artistic or aesthetic anti-theatricality as part of their belief in the goal of an ideal form for a play. They give thus the prejudiced

view that performance does not offer an adequate means of appreciating the work of drama, of meeting its ideal instantiation, whether you measure it in terms of an author's own intentions or against more personal criteria of approbation.

Does this anti-performance prejudice continue? The next major edition following Warburton's was that of Samuel Johnson in 1765, and while there is no space to discuss his preface at length here, one line of it both illuminates this editor's general stance and suggests an alternate way of discussing the material covered so far. This is Johnson's assertion that "a play read affects the mind like a play acted" (1: xxix). This view is anti-theatrical in that it at best equates and at worst subordinates the stage to the page, since it implies that a reader's experience will contain the entirety of a spectator's responses and perhaps even more. Yet to move from the anti-theatrical ideas of Pope and Warburton to Johnson's position requires a reconsideration of drama itself. For the earlier editors, the work of the playwright is instantiated—problematically—as either text or performance, each of which are measured according to a variously-constructed ideal version, with far more attention paid to the page than the stage. In Johnson's phrase, a third possibility appears clearly for the first time: the version of the play that exists in the mind.

What if both page and stage, however perfected, were but means to access—through sympathetic and imaginative responses—the true work of dramatic art? *Othello* is thus no more present on the page than on the stage, but rather lives in the mind, be it that of Shakespeare or his appreciators. This leads us to what is, to a certain extent, the central tenet of a position developed at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, by such writers as Charles Lamb or William Hazlitt, yet even here the stage continues to suffer in comparison to the page. The printed Shakespeare is minimal and leaves its readers free to let their imagination run wild as they, like John Keats, sit down and "burn through" *King Lear* once again (l66). With a performance, however, the experience is different, for, as Lamb put it, "On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage" (1: 101): the actor's physical presence stops us from appreciating the real content of *King Lear*, from being "sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms" (1: 101). Such arguments as these, fundamental to the Romantic understanding of Shakespeare, make for a fitting terminus to this analysis, for they have—like our own facility to separate stage from page—their roots, running back through Johnson, in an anti-performance prejudice that begins in the labors of Pope, Warburton, and others, and that may still endure today.

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