

Chapter 8: Towards European Studies of Shakespeare in Performance

The classic text has become and continues to function as a key component of the dialogue as well as the market of theatre across nations.

Maria M. Delgado & Caridad Svich, (“Theatre in Crisis? Performance Manifestos for a New Century: Snapshots of a Time”)¹

Introduction

The fact that this thesis concentrates on a limited number of Shakespearean productions, has a bi-cultural focus and deals with a relatively recent time period inevitably means that any conclusions it draws can only be provisional, localised and open-ended. This concluding chapter does not, therefore, seek to establish any overarching meaning for the work of the thesis. Having said this, several wider questions about contemporary performances of Shakespeare have been raised throughout the work to which I want to return here. Hence, this final chapter retains something of the previous chapters’ “eclectic” attempts to balance the centrifugal and centripetal as well as the highly specific with the more general.

Two main questions have been raised by the project as a whole. One is what might be characteristic of representations of sexual transgression in Portuguese productions of Shakespeare in the 1990’s in the three productions that form the core of this thesis. Given the thesis’ bi-cultural focus, this also extends to areas of overlap and

¹ Maria M. Delgado & Caridad Svich, “Theatre in Crisis? Performance Manifestos for a New Century: Snapshots of a Time”) in Maria M. Delgado & Caridad Svich (eds.), *Theatre in Crisis? Performance Manifestos for a New Century*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) p.12.

of difference with the representation of sexual transgression in the English productions discussed throughout the work.

The second concerns the relationship between dramatic text and performance text and the consequences of this relationship for the representation of sexual transgression. The introductory chapter outlined a hypothesis which suggested that the greater the autonomy of the performance text from the written text, the wider the possibilities for the representation of sexual transgression. The concluding chapter returns to this hypothesis in the light of the productions analysed, in order to examine its overall validity. It establishes three general categories for discussion of the relationship between written text and performance text in the representation of sexual transgression that can be applied more widely within studies of Shakespeare in performance.

After returning to these questions, the chapter posits some basic premises for analysis of Shakespearean performance in a European context. The epigraph to this chapter functions as a guide for this discussion, for it seems evident that any European analysis of Shakespeare in performance is inevitably framed as much by considerations of the international market as by a concern with intercultural dialogue. The chapter explores some of the political implications of cultural exchange and ends by suggesting some areas for further research in the field of European studies of Shakespeare in performance.

I. Characteristics of the Representation of Sexual Transgression in Three Portuguese Productions of Shakespeare in the 1990's

In terms of what might be characteristic of the representation of sexual transgression in the 1990's, it is useful to maintain a distinction between sexual transgression as gender transgression and sexual transgression in terms of sexuality, as well as between

developments concerning men and developments concerning women. In all three productions, for instance, there is a diffuse sense of the urgency of transgressing gender norms for the actresses playing Shakespearean women's roles. This can be seen in Carla Chambel's awareness that Isabella has a sexual energy that is rarely highlighted in performance, or in Micaela Cardoso's enthusiasm to explore 'the other side' of gender through her role as Cesario. It informs Paula Mora's recognition of the need for new performative mechanisms to counteract the demonisation of women characters in Shakespearean tragedy. However, there is an equally strong sense of the difficulties involved in the transgression of gender norms for women, as well as a lack of perceived alternatives to them. As a result, what is left uppermost in these 1990's performances by women is a sense of uneasy containment. This can be seen in Maria Amelia Matta's unsuccessful attempt to render Goneril's anger at the male characters around her physically, or in Lúcia Maria's notion of the role of Cordelia as "thankless" because of the magnitude of the response she has to create in the audience in a short period of time. It is also visible in Carla Chambel's comment that Isabella's anger, when it was allowed to emerge, was "more contained than explosive" because of a directorial decision to emphasise Isabella's innocence in earlier scenes. It is present in Micaela Cardoso's acknowledgment that she had not been able to introduce enough of an effective physical difference between her onstage representations of Viola and Cesario.

This containment of actresses and women characters contrasts with a new sense of possibilities for male actors to explore notions of Shakespearean masculinity during this period. We might counterpoise the clear limits that conditioned the performance of Cristina Cavalinhos as Mistress Overdone, for example, with the seemingly open-ended invitation extended to João Reis to recast the role of Feste. Or the difficulties sensed by Micaela Cardoso in performing masculinity might be contrasted with the relative ease

with which Nuno M. Cardoso introduced recognisable elements of femininity into his performance as Sebastian. A first point to make, therefore, is that men and women continued to occupy unequal positions in Portuguese theatre during the 1990's, even if incipient attempts to change the status of women within theatre and theatrical texts were also beginning to take effect. This serves as a wider reminder that the historical trajectories of actresses do not necessarily run parallel to those of actors. Indeed, as in this decade, they often seem to lead in opposite directions. This point is important in assessing *qualitatively* the significance of a new focus on masculinity. Whilst there is certainly much common ground between actors seeking to deconstruct conventional representations of masculinity and actresses who seek greater diversity in onstage representations of women, the long-standing inequality between men and women in the theatre and in Shakespearean texts means, nevertheless, that such historical imbalances also shape their powers to effect such transformations. Consequently, while these deconstructions of masculinity were very much influenced by the parallel work of women in the deconstruction of femininity, they tended to re-inscribe the existing theatrical dominance of men and male concerns, albeit in new guises.

In terms of sexuality, related but distinct tendencies are at work, most notably in the obstacles to representing the sexual transgression of women. Nevertheless, they seem far less homogenous or even identifiable. Longer-standing tendencies towards the absence of explicit representations of sexuality onstage intersect in the period with more recent attempts to commodify sexualities of all kinds, whether normative or non-normative. Anglo-American critical work on sexuality in Shakespeare finds its way into some theatre production programmes, yet Portuguese theatre critics generally continue to ignore questions of sexuality in their reviews. Such contradictory movements create a particular cartography for the representation of sexual transgression in the 1990's,

where sexuality appears to be, paradoxically, both invisible and very present. In this scenario, sexuality and sexual difference figure often in discussions *outside* the production, but are not seen to have influenced performances *within* the production itself. This is perhaps most evident in the TNSJ *Noite de Reis*, where the excess of offstage discussion of sexuality contrasted with its apparent absence in the performance. Yet it is also noticeable in a certain onstage prudishness in the representation of *Mistress Overdone* within Comuna's *Medida por Medida*, in contradistinction to a deliberate focus on contemporary sexual hypocrisy in the director's public pronouncements. It manifests itself in a slightly different form in the very obvious attempts of the TNDM production to frame Diogo Infante's sexual appeal for audiences, as against the complete absence of any critical reviewing of his performance in these terms. These examples indicate the continuing theatrical marginalisation of sexuality during this period, yet its haunting presence on the fringes of theatrical activity also suggests a new pressure on these processes of marginalisation. Different, often contradictory, factors contributed to create this. Market directives to sell productions in the cultural marketplace and state demands to increase audiences tended to encourage the adoption of superficial representations of sexuality as a quick response to such demands. Portugal's desire to be seen as an equal to its European partners prompted at least a verbal commitment to sexual diversity. However, the pressure of sexuality on the fringes of theatrical production was also evidence of social and political transformations, such as the greater visibility of gay men in the wake of the AIDS pandemic or recurring demands from women for control over their sexuality.

The effects of such contradictory developments can be seen with most force in two areas. The first is that of the sexual thrill created around the newly central figure of the male sexual outsider. This sexual thrill is indivisible from developments in other

media like television or advertising and their overt commodification of male as well as female sexuality. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the actors who played such roles, like João Reis and Diogo Infante, were both television/film actors as well as theatre actors. For this reason also, it cannot be said that this development was internal to theatre or specific to it. Yet like the new focus on masculinity, the sexualisation of the male outsider represented quite a substantial break with a past where sexuality tended to be concentrated exclusively around female performers. Reis' performance also gave a particularly theatrical angle to the construction of this sexual thrill by connecting the oppression of the paid performer with sexual oppression.

The second area is the new visibility of queerness. This can be related to wider social and cultural changes that saw the formation of ILGA-Portugal, the first *Curso Livre* in GLQ Studies, the publishing of a gay guide to Lisbon for tourists by Lisbon local council and the performance of several Anglo-American queer plays. The representation of queer desires in the TNSJ production, for example, was linked with notions of (post)modernity and of Europeanness which, I would argue, is a distinctly 1990's configuration for the representation of sexual transgression. Nevertheless, this appropriation of queerness by mainstream theatres was also kept within clear limits. Ricardo Pais' conception of the parameters to queer representation, for instance, illustrates a very 1990's negotiation of a desire to represent alternative forms of sexual desire onstage without alienating mainstream theatre audiences.

Such tendencies point to a tension over to what extent alternatives to the sexually normative could be made visible in performance. In the productions analysed, for example, when queerness was located in a more central dramatic figure like that of Olivia in *Noite de Reis*, there tended to be less of a direct focus on the body of the sexual transgressor. In these cases, queerness was conveyed more abstractedly through

elements of the staging. It was invariably introduced through extra-textual moments in the production. This tendency towards abstraction may also go some way towards explaining why queerness now seems to be disappearing from Portuguese theatrical productions of Shakespeare, for the failure to effectively *embody* queerness has meant that it has had little lasting theatrical presence.

It is no coincidence that this move away from the body is specifically a move away from the *female* body. Such a movement can be located at a complex intersection of different tendencies in the representation of female sexuality during this decade. On the one hand, the continuing influence of Catholicism and the years of political censorship still proscribed stage representations of female sexuality. This combined with notions of stage 'decorum', which are specific to productions of Shakespeare, to contain representations of female sexuality within notions of its appropriate representation. Ironically, this move away from the *female* body runs counter to representations of the *male* body, which were noticeable for their increased sexual objectification during this decade.

In brief, analysis of the representation of sexual transgression in the three productions has suggested *the emergence of significant changes against a backdrop of essential continuities*. Some of these changes, like concerns with the types of roles for actresses, seem set to be long-term transformations which will slowly begin to transform theatrical practice. Others, like the suggestion of queerness, appear to have been more ephemeral, contingent developments whose continuing presence in the new millennium seems in doubt.

II. A Comparison with Representations of Sexual Transgression in English Productions of Shakespeare

Comparison of English and Portuguese productions of Shakespeare during this period suggests *a continuing differentiation in their representations of sexual transgression combined with nascent homogenisation.*

A major difference has to do with approaches to the Shakespearean text. The rewriting of *King Lear* from the perspective of the three daughters in *Lear's Daughters*, for example, or the experiment with cross-gender casting where Kathryn Hunter played Lear, seem to have had but an intermittent echo in Portuguese theatre work. This might have been because fewer challenges to the status of the Shakespearean text were contemplated in a theatrical context where performance of Shakespeare formed part of a political strategy to promote Portuguese theatrical culture on national and international stages. Having said this, it is also true that translation of the text can rewrite the Shakespearean text in a way that is just as far-reaching as these English experiments with the text. António M. Feijó's translation of *Noite de Reis*, for example, was invaluable in helping João Reis rework the sexual charge of Feste's songs in the TNSJ production of the play. Moreover, when a direct connection is established between a particular translation and a particular production, this also enables an approach to sexual transgression that encompasses text and performance simultaneously.

The English strategy of working against the grain of the text to resignify sexual transgression in performance has not been a strategy adopted in the Portuguese context. This is particularly the case with characters who are demonised in the Shakespearean text. While *Lear's Daughters*, for example, sought to humanise Goneril and Regan to a certain extent, the TNDM production maintained their aggression and malice. Álvaro Cunhal's greater attention to the role of Edgar than to Edmund in his translation *O Rei*

Lear and Eduarda Dionísio's reworking of Juliet in *Antes que a Noite Venha* also suggest that the Portuguese concern has been to remain within, rather than challenge, the affective and moral framework of the plays. Precisely because of this, such a strategy can be a highly effective one as audiences do not feel that they must align themselves with evil if they instinctively empathise with those characters who challenge the status quo. However, this also means that the mechanisms by which the Shakespearean text demonises and marginalises certain characters on the basis of their gender or sexuality have tended to remain unchallenged in Portuguese productions.

Another important difference between the two theatrical cultures has its roots in contrasting acting styles. In terms of the representation of sexual transgression, this is reflected in the difference between a more naturalistic, psychological approach in the English productions as against a more obviously theatrical approach in the Portuguese examples. The use of stylisation in the TNSJ production, for instance, created an approach to sexual transgression which helped to displace conventional assumptions about displays of queer affection, but the representations were also less individualised. The naturalism of Stella Gonet's performance as Isabella, on the other hand, enabled the audience to draw parallels between the character of Isabella and recognisable women in the contemporary world, although the disadvantage of this was that Isabella's *difference* from the conventional trajectory for women was downplayed. This distinction between acting styles was not, however, as stable during the 1990's as it had been previously. The beginnings of a more naturalistic acting style can be seen in the linkage of such an approach with modernity in the Comuna production and the contrast drawn with a more old-fashioned, declamatory style of acting. The invitation to Richard Cottrell to direct *Rei Lear* also seems to have imported elements of a more naturalistic approach into the

TNDM production, although the extent to which this occurred was limited by the rigidity of company structure.

The two theatrical cultures reveal differences in terms of the links they make between sexual transgression and wider political questions. In the English productions, sexuality was often used explicitly to exemplify the political. Indeed, Peter Lichtenfels and Lynette Hunter argue that one of the ways in which English theatre in the 1990's differed from the theatre of the 1970's was in its increased concentration on sexuality:

From political plays in which sexuality is a sub-plot to illuminate or extend the political, the focus has shifted to plays about sexuality, in which politics is a subplot to illuminate or extend our understanding of the regulation of sexuality.²

For the English productions of Shakespeare analysed here, this affirmation seems to hold true. Although the prostitutes had walk-on parts in the 1978 RSC production of the play, they were little more than a visual presence. In the RSC's 1994 production, however, the presence of the prostitutes was given more significance and explicit parallels were drawn with the sex scandals involving Conservative politicians. Stella Gonet's *Isabella* also complemented this increased focus on prostitution by showing how control of women's sexuality was central to the upholding of patriarchal power. The final act, with its assembly of male citizens who jeered and sniggered throughout *Isabella's* plea to the Duke, emphasised how patriarchal power meant that all women in Vienna were potentially subject to being treated like prostitutes.

In Portugal, however, this tendency is less homogenous. The discussion of Júlia Correia's 1977 *Isabella* suggests that a concern with "political plays in which sexuality

² Peter Lichtenfels & Lynette Hunter, "Seeing Through the National and Global Stereotypes: British Theatre in Crisis" in Maria M. Delgado & Caridad Svich, (eds.), *Theatre in Crisis? Performance Manifestos for a New Century*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 38.

is a sub-plot to illuminate or extend the political” did indeed inform her interpretation of the role. It is especially evident in the way Correia represented Isabella’s relationship to power and in her exploration of Isabella’s sublimation of desire in religion. However, twenty years later, although the Comuna production drew comparisons between sexual transgression and abuses of political power, the focus on sexual transgression remained subordinated to a focus on political transgression. Indeed, the stress on Isabella’s purity and innocence even indicates something of a *retreat* from sexuality, which is also evident in Mota’s grouping together of promiscuity and sexual hypocrisy as evidence of social ills. On the other hand, the Portuguese production of *Noite de Reis*, which gave much attention to various forms of sexual transgression, did not make connections between these gender and sexual transgressions and wider political questions, except in the more politicised figure of Feste. The 2002 Lisbon Players production does seem to have maintained something of a connection between sexuality and power without subordinating one to the other. I would argue that such choices can be related directly to the intercultural positioning of the Lisbon Players, for such a location complicated national tendencies in the representation of sexual transgression.

Nevertheless, if major differences between the two cultures remained in terms of their representation of sexual transgression, there were also signs of nascent homogenisation during the 1990’s. These can be traced to the entry of Portugal into the EEC in 1986 and the consequent increase in theatre festivals and exchanges. Such exchanges enabled theatrical information about performing Shakespeare to travel more easily between cultures. It is also connected with internal political developments during the late 1980’s and early 1990’s which sought to present Portugal as a modern democracy with a cultural heritage on a par with that of other European countries. Such homogenisation can be seen, for instance, in the often uneasy mixture of the essentialist

and the performative that characterises representations of gender and sexuality in both English and Portuguese productions of *Twelfth Night*. The Globe's all-male production emphasised the performative construction of femininity even if it also suggested there were tangible forms of movement, thought and emotion that could be identified as essentially 'feminine'. António M. Feijó, the translator of *Noite de Reis*, elevated the "feminine principle" of comedy, but the production located this principle not only in the "healthily feminine" nature of Viola, but also in the cross-dressed body of Feste and in the 'new age' masculinity of Sebastian. However, whereas the transgression of sexual norms was cast as effortless and comic in the Globe production, the TNSJ production rendered it closer to an imposition. Both productions, though, carried a certain 'transvestite presence' beyond the marriages that close the written play.

As the Tim Supple television production of the play makes clear, a new interest in multiculturalism and integrated casting meant that *intracultural* differences were often as important as *intercultural* differences during this period. Indeed, Supple's *Twelfth Night* seems closer to the TNSJ production than to the Globe in its unease about contemporary society's ability to deal with difference. Yet the use of multiracial casting gave a social and political context to this malaise which was not present in either the TNSJ or the Globe productions. The TNSJ production included an African actor as Fabian (Alberto Magassela) and ethnic music as part of the score. Yet it is revealing that Magassela's more energetic acting style seemed out of place within the production as a whole, and the ethnic music was not credited in the production programme. This suggests that such intercultural differences were only just beginning to make an appearance during this period in Portuguese productions of Shakespeare.

What is perhaps most common to both Portuguese and English productions, however, is a sense of the constraints on the representation of sexual transgression when

it is Shakespeare being performed. These constraints are expressed differently – in Portugal they tend to be focused around notions of decorum and status, while in England they are more focused around notions of theatrical tradition, but both exerted a strong influence over the representation of sexual transgression during this period. Perhaps the best examples are once more the TNSJ and Globe productions of *Twelfth Night* and the ways in which they established limits to queerness. In the former, this was evident in the concern about possible camp readings of the production, while in the latter, it was expressed in the strong control over audience and performance space exercised by performers and staff at the Globe.

III. The Relationship between Dramatic Text and Performance Text in the Representation of Sexual Transgression

Analysis of the representation of sexual transgression has raised several points about the relationship between dramatic and performance text in the 1990's. Perhaps the major one is the central role of the actor/actress' body in mediating between them. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, a focus on the body has been seen as characteristic of Portuguese theatre work in the 1980's. This represented something of a 'return of the repressed', in that the body had previously been greatly subordinated to the text. In the 1990's, the 1980's focus on the body remains present in theatre work. Carla Chambel's silent response to the Duke's proposal, for instance, was negotiated through facial expressions and gestures, in a way that suggested a concern with the textualities of the body. However, the focus on the body in the 1990's also exhibited new priorities. During the decade, the actor/actress' body became a more complex site of interaction, which is seen particularly in a link with *hybridisation* as a form of sexual

transgression.³ Examples here would include João Reis, who made Feste's cross-dressed body a potent physical metaphor of social and sexual oppression. Also, unlike theatre work in the 1980's when text and body were more often separated, theatre work in the 1990's sought to re-establish connections between body and text. Much of this reconnection of the body to the word was effected through the actor/actress' voice. It can be seen, for example, in the onstage experiments with voice scrambling and song in the TNSJ *Noite de Reis*. The engagement of vocal coach Luís Madureira to work with the actors in the production is evidence of a commitment to training them in an approach to the dramatic text that worked *with* rather than *against* the body. In the Comuna production of *Medida por Medida* too, both the translation and the production style promoted a more natural connection between body and text. The TNDM production represents something of an exception here, for there was little sense of an organic link between body and text. Indeed, the vocal deficiencies of both Paula Mora and Maria Amélia Matta can be explained to a great extent, by a *lack* of such a connection between body and text.

A second point concerns the importance of proxemics and creative uses of stage space during this decade in representing sexual transgression in a specifically performative register. They seem to have been particularly connected with *demonisation* and *inversion* as forms of sexual transgression.⁴ This can be seen, for instance, in the

³ Peter Stallybrass and Allon White accord a privileged position to hybridisation as a form of transgression which “produces new combinations and strange instabilities in a given semiotic system. It therefore generates the possibility of shifting the very terms of the system itself, by erasing and interrogating the relationships which constitute it”. C.f. Peter Stallybrass & Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, (London: Methuen, 1986), p. 58.

⁴ Stallybrass and White attribute less far-reaching consequences to inversion and demonisation as forms of sexual transgression. They argue that “for all its political potential, inversion, at least in most forms, shares with demonization the acceptance of the existing binary categories of high and low, although where demonization depended upon strategies of exclusion, inversion celebrated excluded elements and the lower terms of a diacritical pairing”. *Ibid.*, p. 57. In a performative context, their distinction between hybridisation on the one hand and demonisation and inversion on the other is generally, though not universally, applicable. I would argue that performative demonisation, for instance, can often be more unsettling on stage than performative hybridisation.

TNDM production moment when the two actresses playing Goneril and Regan circled the actor playing Lear to illustrate an inversion of familial and gender norms. In the same production, a moment of proxemic tension between the theatre actor playing Lear and the media celebrity playing Edmund became emblematic of the challenge to company structure represented by the theatrical freelancer. In the TNSJ production, however, the disruption of a coherent stage space was an important element in the production's focus on the multiple possibilities of sexual identity and was thus more connected with *hybridisation* as a form of sexual transgression.

A final point concerns areas of non-transfer between dramatic and performance text. Patterns of textual imagery, for instance, often do not make the transition to the stage. In *King Lear*, the animalesque and demonic imagery that is the basis for the demonisation of Goneril and Regan, tends to be cut in performance as it is not seen to be essential to the narrative. The two TNDM actresses transferred such imagery to a different register through the creation of a physical narrative background for the two sisters. Similarly, the Footsbarn production transferred it to the visual and physical registers through the use of animalesque masks. In *Measure for Measure*, Isabella's religious imagery contributes greatly to the temporary inversion of gender norms that places her in the position of being a "woman on top" in her first encounter with Angelo. Yet such imagery transfers with difficulty to the stage, especially for a contemporary audience. It is also difficult to cut, because it develops in such a logical way. This may explain why it is Isabella's stage response to the Duke at the end of the play that has increasingly become a specifically *performative* site for the representation of her sexual transgression as a woman, rather than the words she speaks to Angelo in this first encounter. Finally, as Chapter Six has argued, the *marginalisation* of the sexual

transgressor can also be difficult to represent onstage.⁵ Either the textual marginalisation is extended to spatial marginalisation in performance, which runs the risk of the audience paying little attention to those who are marginalised. Or the textual marginalisation is counterpointed by greater spatial centrality in performance, which runs the risk of removing the transgressive charge associated with their marginalisation. Cristina Cavalinhos' notion of Mistress Overdone's transgressive role as wife, mother *and* prostitute, for instance, is difficult to convey onstage unless there is seen to be some physical interaction between the worlds of the wives and mothers and those of the prostitutes. In the Comuna production, such spatial transgression was, as Cristina Cavalinhos recognised, not acceptable. It is precisely for this reason, however, that the image of a young girl arriving at the brothel in the RSC production of the play was a supremely effective performance moment.

The work of this thesis has tested the hypothesis that the greater the autonomy of the performance text from the dramatic text, the wider the possibilities for the representation of sexual transgression. The productions discussed in this thesis tend to reinforce the general validity of this hypothesis and I have identified three general categories for the relationship between written text and performance text which have particular implications for the representation of sexual transgression.

The first category concerns productions of Shakespeare which merely transpose a reductive reading of the written text to the stage. As such, the first category is that of *literalisation*. Productions in this category tend to have excessively reverential attitudes to the Shakespearean text and to construct their audiences as passive observers rather than active creators of meaning. An example from within this category is the TNDM production of *Rei Lear*, which aimed to sell an uncontroversial, 'universal'

⁵ I am introducing the notion of marginalisation as a form of sexual transgression here. Its binary relationship with the centre creates the sexual transgressor as both peripheral and central to the reproduction of sexual norms.

Shakespearean product that would give it prestige as a national theatre and celebrate the career of one of its principal actors. The invitation to an English director was used to further unexamined notions of 'an' English theatrical method that would guarantee the reproduction of an 'authentic' Shakespeare. This approach to the staging of the text tends to render sexual transgression non-existent, for it suggests that any challenge to the status quo results from individual moral flaws rather than the contradictions of social and political positioning. This view permeates not only the performance text, but the production's construction of the written text itself. Indeed, productions in this category often participate in a somewhat perverse loop between dramatic text and performance text, whereby their conception of an absence of sexual transgression in the written text is transferred to the stage in the name of 'fidelity' to Shakespeare, and this staged absence of sexual transgression then itself becomes a justification for a view that sexual transgression is absent from the written play. The difficulties encountered by the three actresses playing the roles of Goneril, Regan and Cordelia thus resulted not only from the misogyny of the text itself, but also from the production's positioning of itself within this vicious circle.

The RSC production of *Measure for Measure* comes somewhere between this category and the next. Performance revealed a tension between a mere literalisation of the Shakespearean text and performative moments that sought to convey an alternative narrative of the oppression of women and the regulation of sexual outsiders. However, the extended representation of the prostitutes, particularly, did not make use of these moments of performative autonomy to promote a sexually transgressive reading of their roles. Rather, it combined their temporary press notoriety with clichéd representations of female sexuality precisely to contain such a reading.

The second category seeks to balance written text and performance text. It is thus, a category of *mutual constitution*, where written and performance text work together to construct performance. The attitude to the Shakespearean text is respectful rather than reverential and the performance text has a certain degree of autonomy from it. An example from within this category is the Comuna production of *Medida por Medida*. Despite the fact that great importance was given to the Shakespearean text, for instance, the new translation's primary concern was accessibility and performability. If this meant altering the text, this was seen by those guiding the production to be acceptable. There were also other elements that indicated a certain degree of autonomy for the performance text. The use of an almost bare stage, for example, placed the emphasis on the expressive power of the actors rather than just using scenography as a realistic backdrop for the text. Carla Chambel's negotiation of the Duke's proposal through the performative mechanisms of facial gesture and body movement is axiomatic of the limited but important space for sexual transgression opened up by these moments of autonomy of the performance text.

The Globe production of *Twelfth Night* can also be placed in this category. Mark Rylance's Olivia made use of the distance between male actor and female character to emphasise the comedy inherent in the assumption of femininity. Similarly, the alternate movements of attraction and repulsion made possible by the simple stage device of altering two actors' proximity to each other opened up a homoerotic reading of the attraction between Orsino and Cesario. Moreover, the moments of continuing confusion in relation to the twins on the part of Orsino shaped at least the possibility that heterosexual closure was not as finite as the written text might imply.

The Lisbon Players production of *Measure for Measure* comes somewhere between this category and the next. It introduced some quite substantial changes to the

Shakespearean text, ironically by including passages from another Shakespearean text. It also introduced several extra-textual scenes involving the prostitutes that connected the buying and selling of women as prostitutes with Angelo's proposal to Isabella. Nevertheless, the autonomy of the performance text and the representation of sexual transgression were not quite as far-reaching as productions in the third category.

What tends to characterise the representation of sexual transgression in productions within this second category is the use of the performance text to create isolated moments of sexual transgression, without, however, this constituting an extended focus throughout the production. They are also characterised by a focus of one form of sexual transgression which does not, however, promote a corresponding focus on other forms of sexual transgression. In the Globe production, for instance, an extended focus on gender transgression was not complemented by a similar focus on sexual transgression in terms of sexuality.

The third category has much respect for the text, but concedes a far greater autonomy to the performance text. It is a category of *autonomous recreation* of which The TNSJ production of *Noite de Reis* is an example. Although it made use of moments of sexual transgression contemplated within the text, much of its representation of sexual transgression was extra-textual. The use of space in the production, for example, the gauze curtains, the semi-circular objects of the setting, costume and music helped create a further dimension of sexual transgression to that already in the text and opened up the production to multiple readings of sexual identity as a result.

The Tim Supple television production of the play is also included in this category for its multiculturalism consistently reworked the written text to create an autonomous narrative interweaving various forms of racial, class and sexual difference. The category also includes *The King is Alive*, for its creative experiment with film, text

and performance emphasised how porous the boundaries between these forms currently are. This porosity enabled some of the textual discontinuity of Edmund to be maintained in a different artistic form and in a different social and political context. Finally, *Lear's Daughters* also has a place in this section. It completely rewrote the Shakespearean text out of a perceived sense that it was unrecoverable for women performers and audiences and, as such, pointed to the ways in which the women characters are demonised in the Shakespearean text.

This ability to use the performance text in order to prompt further questions about sexual transgression in the dramatic text is characteristic of productions in this category. They also tend to construct a simultaneous focus on sexual transgression in terms of both gender and sexuality. It is worth pointing out that the category includes films, theatre productions, television productions and new texts for performance. This suggests the degree to which such extended opportunities for the representation of sexual transgression can currently be found in a variety of artistic and media fields.⁶

The Footsbarn production of *King Lear* represents something of an exception to the general tendency identified in the hypothesis. It accorded substantial autonomy to the performance text by reducing the amount of the Shakespearean text used in performance and then replacing it with the other theatrical languages of the physical and the visual. Therefore, it most properly belongs in this final category. However, I do not believe that the greater autonomy of the performance text in this case promoted sexual transgression or prompted questions about sexual transgression in the written text. This may well be, as I have argued in Chapter Seven, because its use of physical theatre archetypes kept it within quite a rigid moral framework that limited the possibilities for the representation of sexual transgression.

⁶ It has to be observed, however, that none of these productions are of *Measure for Measure*.

IV. The Politics of Cultural Exchange

The bi-cultural focus of this thesis raises the question of to what extent it might be possible or even desirable to create a wider focus for studies of Shakespeare in performance than that of the national context. There have been an increasing number of studies of the ways in which Shakespeare has been adapted by different cultures, but these studies have tended to focus on textual rather than performative adaptation and to remain within one national setting.⁷ From my own perspective, I am more interested in the ways in which cultures interact with each other in their representations of sexual transgression and how both national and international politics construct these interactions. Evidently this must, however, be based on knowledge of the ways in which national cultures resemble or differ from each other and a recognition of national culture(s) in the plural rather than in the singular.

This section concentrates on the European context because the doctoral thesis has been concerned with English and Portuguese productions of the plays. However, it would be equally productive to analyse productions of Shakespeare in Portugal in relation to other cultures that have historical links with it, such as Brazil. Moreover, I am aware that the concept of the ‘European’ invoked here is open to criticism as, at best, an “imagined community”, at worst, an artificially created and politically reactionary construction. Nevertheless, as the existing supra-national political and cultural framework for cultural exchange between England and Portugal, the questions the chapter wishes to raise cannot bypass this current configuration of the “European”.

⁷ Exceptions include Erika Fischer-Lichter *et al* (eds.), *The Dramatic Touch of Difference: Theatre, Own and Foreign*, (Tubingen: Gunter Narr, 1990) and Erika Fische-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective*, (Iowa: Iowa University Press, 1997) as well as Michael Hattaway *et al* (eds.), *Shakespeare and the New Europe*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). It is revealing, for instance, that because the essays in Hattaway’s collection are centred on Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall, there is a much greater sense of dialogue between them than in other European collections.

A first question has to do with the much-vaunted differences between English theatrical culture and Continental European cultures like the Portuguese. Peter Lichtenfels and Lynette Hunter's short article "Seeing Through the National and Global Stereotypes: British Theatre in Crisis" (2002) deals specifically with this. Their primary focus is on British theatre and they tend to treat Continental Europe as a monolithic whole. However, they do illustrate how major differences in terms of funding, company structure and performance traditions not only make initiatives such as co-productions difficult, but also mean that the response of British audiences to foreign-language performances is invariably one of estrangement:

Nothing about drama is 'hardwired' into our nervous system, we have to experience and learn a vocabulary for cultural difference whether it is social, ethnic or religious, before we can respond to it enough to value it.⁸

This emphasis on a necessary process of learning in order to be able to value theatre work from a different cultural context is important. It is especially important when the imbalance between Portuguese and English travelling productions of Shakespeare is taken into account, for this inevitably conditions the abilities of cultures to learn about each other in this way.⁹ Whilst there is a long history of English productions of Shakespeare travelling to Portugal, the history of Portuguese productions travelling to England is almost non-existent. Theatrical exchange and influence, therefore, tend to work only in one direction, in this case from England to Portugal. The actress Carla Chambel noted how a Notts. Playhouse travelling production of *Measure for Measure* performed at a Porto theatre festival helped her to rethink her own earlier performance

⁸ Peter Lichtenfels & Lynette Hunter (2002), *Op. Cit.*, p. 44.

⁹ I am reminded here of the reaction of my landlady at Stratford-upon-Avon when I told her I was working on Portuguese productions of Shakespeare. She is someone who regularly attends RSC performances of Shakespeare and who knows a great deal about the plays. However, her reaction to this information was genuine amazement. Her actual words were "Oh, do they have Shakespeare in Portugal?"

as Isabella. Yet Júlia Correia and Carla Chambel's own important performances of Isabella are unlikely to be known by English theatre practitioners and audiences. Such imbalances suggest that any wider focus on the European must take into account and seek to counteract the *differing relative strengths of the theatrical cultures involved and the impact of this on the possibilities for exchange*. João Reis' staging of the final song in *Noite de Reis*, for instance, where the excellent Portuguese translation slid into an English version of Bowie's 'Time', illustrated in a particularly powerful way the difficulties for Portuguese theatre in making its voice heard against current Anglo-American cultural dominance. It also indicated, however, the very creative solutions adopted to highlight such cultural dominance.

As a result of this continuing imbalance, Portuguese theatre practitioners have also tended to look to developments in English performances of Shakespeare rather than productions in Portugal itself or other countries in Continental Europe.¹⁰ Carla Chambel was encouraged by João Mota's story of how an English actress had negotiated Isabella's response to the Duke's proposal to consider her own performance of this moment. Yet the earlier performance of Júlia Correia in the role, which would have been a highly useful resource for Chambel, was not considered part of the theatrical history of the role upon which the actress could draw. Nevertheless, this is an area which saw substantial changes in the 1990's that also look set to stay in the new millennium. During this decade, Portuguese theatre practitioners looked as much towards other Continental European performances of Shakespeare in France and Italy as to England. The way in which Corsetti's production of *La Dodicesima Notte* influenced Ricardo Pais' *Noite de Reis* is an example of this. Moreover, I have suggested in

¹⁰ This is not to ignore the importance of French influence, in particular, on Portuguese theatrical culture. It has not, however, had the same degree of influence over productions of Shakespeare as it has had in other areas. Brecht has also exercised a considerable influence over Portuguese theatre work, but curiously less over productions of Shakespeare.

Chapter Seven that the increased use of surtitling may enable more Continental European productions to travel to England so that English audiences and theatre practitioners can learn more about their traditions of performing Shakespeare and, consequently, also value them more.

Erika Fischer-Lichte has suggested that when a culture adapts a dramatic text from another culture, the reasons for doing so and the conditions in which it is produced have more to do with the 'own' culture where the play is performed than the 'foreign' culture of the original text. Research undertaken for this thesis shows that this is invariably the case with Portuguese productions of Shakespeare. This may seem to contradict what I have just said about a greater tendency to look to productions of Shakespeare in other countries, but it is also true that *the uses made of these productions* tend to be culturally specific. This can be seen in the reverential TNDM production of *Rei Lear*, which appropriated the status of the Shakespearean text to enhance its own status as a national theatre. It is true in a different way for the TNSJ production of *Noite de Reis*. They, too, sought to come to terms with the same problem of how a contemporary Portuguese national theatre might stage plays from an international repertoire, but found more imaginative solutions to it by highlighting the best in contemporary Portuguese theatrical practice. Comuna's *Medida por Medida* took Peter Brook's "Bouffes du Nord" production of the play as its model. Yet the defining features of the production owed more to the company's own sense of its 'coming of age' in the national context and continuing need to define themselves against the mainstream, than to external features outside Portugal. This primacy of the 'own' culture could represent a major problem for a European focus, for it would suggest that there is *little effective interaction* between the culture that adapts the text and the culture from which the text has emerged. However, I would argue that productions of

Shakespeare in Portugal tend, of necessity, to incorporate some element of cultural exchange. They have, for instance, to come to terms with the Shakespearean text through translation and to adapt it for Portuguese audiences. This inevitably involves a particular construction not only of who and what constitute that Portuguese audience, but also of Shakespeare and 'Englishness'. These will be different from English conceptions of Englishness or conceptions of the Portuguese audience for Portuguese dramatic texts. Moreover, Portuguese productions of Shakespeare must also construct a particular relationship between 'Englishness' and 'Portugueseness' which depends upon specific social, political and theatrical conditions.

The focus on gender transgression and transgression in terms of sexuality has raised particular concerns about a European focus. The current structure of European exchanges tends to privilege male directors or actors and to marginalise women directors or actresses. Rather than promoting wider diversity, therefore, a focus on the European might actually exacerbate the national tendency in Portugal for companies to be formed around one central charismatic male figure and for that figure to define the company's orientation. This is not to say that some of those male practitioners are not interested in exploring questions of gender and sexuality. Nuno M. Cardoso and João Reis in *Noite de Reis* worked towards redefining Western notions of masculinity with the full support of Ricardo Pais, for example. However, this thesis has consistently pointed out how much of a structural imbalance exists between actresses redefining representations of women characters in Shakespeare and actors redefining representations of male characters. It has also stressed the ways in which female sexuality tends to be rendered invisible or packaged in a reductive, commodified form, while certain forms of male sexuality have been increasingly foregrounded. The ways in which 'the European' is conventionally defined in terms of hegemonic male concerns

must, therefore, be highlighted and challenged if a wider focus on the European is to be a progressive rather than retrograde move. However, it should be pointed out that the wider focus on the European could also be beneficial in such processes of redefinition, especially in terms of promoting the representation of sexual difference, for it can provide a counterweight to the tendency towards the absence or containment of sexual difference in the Portuguese setting. This is not, however, a straightforward process. The questions of gender and sexuality that Portuguese theatre might wish to highlight will differ from those of other European countries like England. The connections between representations of sexuality and Catholicism, for instance, or how notions of decorum tend to militate against more overt representations of sexuality are two areas that immediately come to mind. Yet other Continental European theatrical cultures have similar questions to explore and wider cultural exchange could greatly stimulate such processes of exploration and experimentation.

V. Towards European Studies of Shakespeare in Performance: Suggestions for Further Research

The previous section has indicated some of the problems with current European structures of theatrical exchange. Rather than helping to generalise what is best in theatrical practice, they may just generalise the lowest common denominator in performances of Shakespeare. They are likely to be determined as much by the market between nations as a concern for dialogue. They may also institutionalise, rather than counteract, inequalities of gender, and prioritise notions of sexual transgression which privilege only certain forms of male sexuality. However, this seems to me where European studies of Shakespeare in performance then become important. Such studies can build the case for better performance practice through foregrounding what is

positive in different cultural settings and promoting negative critique of what does not seem useful. The focus on gender and sexuality in the thesis, for instance, was meant to highlight one of the stronger areas of contemporary English criticism of performances of Shakespeare. Conversely, the emphasis on representation rather than text aimed to take advantage of what I consider to be one of the most positive areas of Portuguese theatre criticism, in other words a concern with how systems of staging create theatrical meaning. To take two ends of the spectrum, Portuguese theatre academics could usefully explore some of the issues of gender and sexuality raised by critics like Lizbeth Goodman, while English theatre academics could learn much from the work of Paulo Eduardo Carvalho's critical writing on the productions of Ricardo Pais. At the negative end of the spectrum, decisions such as that to invite Richard Cottrell to direct *Rei Lear* as representative of 'English' styles of directing Shakespeare demand critique. This critique would take as its starting point how *un*representative he may be of current developments in English theatre. The RSC's introduction of a shallow psychological sub-text to emphasise the moments in which Isabella's rhetorical efficacy breaks down suggests a similar need for critique. Such a critique would foreground the lack of specifically theatrical resources like proxemics and kinesics to indicate changes in mood and emotion. It is in such rich, but still relatively poorly cultivated territory that European studies of Shakespeare in performance can find their terrain.

As to what questions such work will raise, different writers will find different areas to interest them. Personally, I feel that existing intercultural performance criticism will function as an invaluable resource for work in a European context. It is especially useful as a basis for analysing the politics of theatrical exchange between unequal partners. One of the things that I find striking about this stimulating theoretical area, for instance, and that I would be interested in analysing in the European context, is the

extent of the divergence between theatre practitioners and critics on the question of cultural exchange. Critics such as Rustom Bhuracha and Patrice Pavis tend to be far more negative about such exchanges than theatre practitioners such as Peter Brook or Ariane Mnouchkine, who more often emphasise their positive features. Nevertheless, this apparent chasm between the more positive valuation of cultural exchange by theatre practitioners and the criticisms made of it by theatre theorists, tends to be nuanced differently in the work of critics dealing specifically with questions of gender and sexuality. In their book on women's intercultural performance, for instance, Joanne Tompkins and Julie Holledge note how the intercultural transfer of classic texts can open up "new identity spaces" for women in the adapting cultures. Moreover, in their discussion of the relationship between the actor's body and the performing body, they put forward a complex notion of cultural inscription that is not necessarily bound by the "own" culture:

This doubling (of actor's body/performing body) is perceived as a binary like those of sex and gender, and race and culture: the body of the performer is the natural element while the performing body is the artificial or imposed term. But where does the performing body begin and the body of the performer end? How clearly does the audience's body read this doubling in a foreign body? *Can an actor acquire multiple performing bodies that represent different cultures?* (my emphasis)¹¹

The work of Portuguese critics also seems less dismissive of the processes of cultural exchange. Although he is not writing about the theatrical context, Miguel Vale de Almeida notes how the ambiguous process of coming out for male homosexuals within the Portuguese context invariably promotes reflection on other cultural influences. This male homosexual finds himself caught between:

¹¹ Julie Holledge & Joanne Tompkins, *Women's Intercultural Performance*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 110.

(...) on the one hand, the deep cultural parameters which have defined him as passive and hidden and, on the other hand, the desire for self-affirmation, personal happiness and engagement with a group of peers *which he finds only in discourses constructed outside Portugal* (my emphasis).¹²

In a subsequent discussion on the possibility of creating a gay movement in Portugal, Vale de Almeida notes how such a movement would have to negotiate both the “own” and the “foreign” culture:

As far as I’m concerned, I have no qualms about opting for a perspective that incorporates the best of the gay movement outside: a sense of community, the promotion of legal rights, mutual personal support, cultural diffusion of gay art and literature, movements that cut across class and party lines. (...) However, I also believe that such a movement should be cautious of certain “external” cultural elements which could turn homosexuals into little more than a target group for advertising and marketing, lead to political favouritism or to anti-heterosexual separatism. Finally, such a movement would need to incorporate elements of Portuguese culture. There is much research to be done on this, whether in terms of practices or even in terms of high culture.¹³

These critical views of the politics of cultural exchange might seem to be more closely aligned with those of theatrical practitioners, for whilst they recognise the value of cultural exchange, they are not uncritical of it. They also tend to destabilise rather than reinstate notions of the national. For my own part, I am interested in exploring further Holledge and Tompkins’ notion of multiple performing bodies and their ability to

¹² “(...) num pólo a matriz cultural profunda com que foi feito passivo e oculto, por outro a vontade de afirmação individual, de felicidade pessoal e de engajamento em grupos de iguais, que só lhe é dada por discursos feitos no exterior”. Miguel Vale de Almeida, “As Setas de São Sebastião. Sexualidade, SIDA e Movimentos Sociais” in *Outros Destinos: Ensaios de Antropologia e Cidadania*, (Porto: Campo das Letras, 2004), p. 249.

¹³ “Pela parte que me toca não tenho dúvidas em optar por uma perspectiva que incorpore o que de melhor há no movimento *gay* lá fora: associativismo, promoção de direitos legais, apoio pessoal mútuo, divulgação cultural de literatura e artes *gay*, movimentos que cortem através das classes e dos partidos. (...) Mas creio que há de ter cuidado com os elementos culturais “externos” que podem levar os homossexuais a tornarem-se em pouco mais do que um grupo-alvo para o marketing publicitário e o clientelismo político, ou que se dediquem a um separatismo anti-heterossexual. Finalmente, há que saber incorporar elementos culturais portugueses: há muita pesquisa a fazer sobre isso, ao nível das práticas e ao nível até da cultura erudita”. *Ibid*, p. 250.

destabilise the binaries of sexual and gender norms. I am also interested in taking up Vale de Almeida's challenge to look at the interactions between the "own" and the "foreign" in the construction of Portuguese queer theatrical representations. Such analyses will form part of the invigorating and open-ended domain of European studies of Shakespeare in performance.