

Jan Kott, Peter Brook, and *King Lear*

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It is by now taken for granted that the views of Jan Kott, as expressed in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, were widely present in British Shakespeare production of the mid-1960s, so much so that the relationship has been subjected to recurring scrutiny. In spite of the fact that such RSC productions as Peter Brook's *King Lear* (1962), Peter Hall and John Barton's *War of the Roses* (1963-64), and Peter Hall's *Hamlet* (1965) received praise from reviewers, disapproval was not far behind. In the 1960s Helen Gardner, for example, felt that Shakespeare was not "our contemporary" but an Elizabethan, and that to argue otherwise was "outrageous arrogance" (Beauman 282). Maynard Mack saw Brook's *Lear* as "altering the effect of Shakespeare's text [in ways] which are quite misleading" (29). The criticism has continued to the present, but the tune has changed. For A.N. Parr "the [Kott-inspired] absurdist reading of *King Lear* now seems heavily dated, an indulgent and partial handling of a tough-minded play which has actually no truck with the fake stoicism and flimsy pathos of Samuel Beckett" (4), and Alan Sinfield concludes, "The politics of [Brook's *Lear*] is nihilist" (163).

The recent refutation of Jan Kott's basic argument in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* has been persuasive (Dollimore and Sinfield 208-11),¹ but it disregards Kott's appeal in the first place. The popularity of *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* is, for a work of criticism, nothing short of phenomenal. The book has gone through two editions and numerous reprintings, has been translated into a number of languages, and has precipitated considerable comment from other critics. It is still in print, widely available, and (according to one book dealer) a "good seller."

Kott's appeal in the 1960s (and to a lesser extent in the present) is a complex phenomenon. It goes hand in hand with the success of the Royal Shakespeare Company in the same period, partly because the "Shakespeare-plus-relevance" formula, a "combination of traditional authority and urgent

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contemporaneity” described by Alan Sinfield (159) proved so potent. But at least some of the success of Kott can be traced directly to Peter Brook. In this essay I would like to explore the relationship between Kott and Brook in order to examine their strategies for the production of meaning on the stage and the contradictions they contain.

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Peter Brook was instrumental in popularizing Jan Kott. Brook and Kott in fact shared a number of views on the relationship of a dramatic text to its performance. Both agreed that a play’s “meaning” is a product of its historical circumstance and that it must be realized on the stage. As early as 1948 Brook had claimed: “A production is only right at a given moment, and anything that it asserts dogmatically today will be wrong fifty years from now” (“Style” 145). That Brook was fascinated by the man as well as his ideas is suggested by the anecdotal preface to *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. And Kott’s essay (“Shakespeare—Cruel and True”) on the successful Eastern European tour in 1957 or *Titus Andronicus* (1955) makes plain that the admiration was mutual.² Even before *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* had been published in English with Brook’s preface, Brook was spreading the word. Peter Hall records in his diaries for 31 January [1974]:

Dashed back to the flat where Peter and Natasha Brook came for dinner. There was the usual hot news from the cultural front. Had I heard of the American Robert Wilson? . . . This always happens to me with Peter. I remember him in 1955 asking me if I knew Francis Bacon. . . . I remember him in 1960 asking me if I had read the work of Antonin Artaud, and in 1963, the work of Jan Kott. I must now look into Robert Wilson! (*Diaries* 80)

Clearly Peter Hall in 1963 had done his homework. His 1963-64 *War of the Roses* with John Barton was said to be the illustration of Kott’s Grand Mechanism. His RSC *Hamlet* in 1965 was similarly “strongly influenced” (Beauman 281-82).³

The presence of Kott in Shakespeare dawned only gradually upon audiences, but program notes, articles, and interviews soon made it plain:

Overnight at Stratford no applauding critic—and practically everyone applauded—fully guessed the genesis of Brook’s production. . . . Gradually, but after the première, we recognized that Brook had directed a Beckettian *Lear*, an endgame of the heath. (Trewin 128-29)

Jan Kott had written an essay entitled “King Lear, or Endgame,” but it was Brook who educated his audience in Kott’s view of the relationship between Shakespeare and Beckett.

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By the time I saw Brook’s *Lear*, on its World Tour in 1964, I was able to buy my copy of *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*⁴ in the lobby of the theatre. It

contained the essay which, I never doubted once I'd read it, had inspired Brook's production. Kott's book, which had just appeared in English, was exciting to me then as a graduate student, because it brought Shakespeare into direct relation with the political agonies of the twentieth century and invoked an international avant-garde in the arts that responded to and expressed them. As Agnes Heller has said of her "favorite book on Shakespeare": It is concerned with "history and man. [Kott] does not take refuge in professional objectivity; he never separates apprehension from evaluation" (16).

Kott's work appealed for other reasons. For one thing it was a direct assault on the Shakespeare establishment. It removed the exclusive power to interpret Shakespeare from the institutions that had claimed him—the universities and their scholar critics—and returned him to readers and spectators, whoever they might happen to be. For another thing Kott's book placed a reader's experience at the centre of the interpretive process. Kott's method invited egotism ("Shakespeare is like the world, or life itself. Every historical period finds in him what it is looking for and what it wants to see"—3), but it also invited altruism ("One must find in [*Richard III*] the night of Nazi occupation, concentration camps, mass-murders"—38). It was a combination that could appeal to a generation that was thought to believe it could save the world by dropping out. It also made an important point. Our experiences do mark us; the holocaust has marked us. We cannot pretend that it makes no difference to who we are—or to how we read.

Kott quite properly treats his own historical moment as a textual field within which Shakespeare's work lives. He frankly argues that we can only encounter Shakespeare—or any author, for that matter—from within the context in which we find ourselves. However Kott's Shakespeare is not in dialogue with a reader's experiences but subservient to them. The experiences of a European in the aftermath of the Second World War have created certain expectations:

And that is why [the reader/spectator] is not terrified—or rather, not amazed—at Shakespeare's cruelty. . . . He views the struggle for power and the mutual slaughter of the characters far more calmly than did many generations of spectators and critics in the nineteenth century. . . . Cruel Death, suffered by most *dramatis personae*, is not regarded today as an aesthetic necessity. . . . The violent deaths of the principal characters are now regarded rather as historical necessity or as something altogether natural. (3)

In fact these expectations have generated a view of history that is unhistorical. The cruelty and terror that are givens of one's daily life under Nazi occupation and Soviet domination lead Kott's readers/viewers of Shakespeare to perceive violent deaths as historical necessity or as "something altogether natural." The image of history attributed to Shakespeare is static, all-powerful, absolute, what Kott calls the "Grand Mechanism": "For Shakespeare history stands still. Every chapter opens and closes at the same point. . . . Every great Shakespearean act is merely a repetition" (4, 7).

For Kott's Shakespeare history is perpetrated by individuals—"power has names, eyes, mouth and hands" (5)—but not altered by them. There are "no

gods in Shakespeare . . . , only kings" (15), but there are also "no bad kings, or good kings, . . . only the king's situation, and the system." It is a system that "leaves no room for freedom of choice" (13).

Individuals have power but no choice. History is a Grand Mechanism but "has no meaning and stands still" (31). History becomes a protagonist, tragic in its meaninglessness (30). It is not that there is no moral order but rather that, confronted with the "order of history" (35), the moral order has no force; it cannot win.⁵ Thus, though Kott recognizes that Shakespeare himself used Roman materials to explore Elizabethan issues, he imposes on Shakespeare his own view of the Grand Mechanism at work: For example, in *Coriolanus* "a seventeenth-century London street has suddenly in our eyes been transformed into a great scene of popular revolution. . . . Shakespeare was the first to throw the Roman toga of defenders of liberty and the republic over the shoulders of two stinking and noisy London artisans" (167). However Kott concludes, "Fate is represented here by the class struggle" (147).

Kott's implied notion of representation here is literal and one-dimensional. Once his philosophical view has been defined, it is there to be found in works of art which become a metaphor for the conclusions he has drawn from his own experience, regardless of their own history and contexts of creation. Art becomes analogy or even equation, a form of argument reflected in the polarity of the chapter headings in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*: "Macbeth, or Death-Infected"; "King Lear, or Endgame"; "Coriolanus, or Shakespearean Contradictions." The "or" implies not alternative options of interpretation but alternative ways of expressing the same thing. It is the equivalent of "in other words," conjunctive rather than disjunctive. The habit of thought that sees one thing in terms of another—whether an object or a phrase, and conflates contradictions is also seen in such headings as "Titania and the Ass's Head," "Troilus and Cressida—Amazing and Modern," "Shakespeare—Cruel and True."

Kott sees one text in terms of another, not in the spirit of the recent critical recognition of the intertextuality of all discourse, but by seeing in those texts of which he speaks (which speak to him) the embodiment of his philosophical assumptions. His criticism in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* becomes a private hermeneutics in which interpretation fulfills expectation. The contemporary becomes timeless when, throughout the ages, artists can be seen to express current views or, more precisely, his own views.

Thus one of Kott's favorite terms is "parable." The word appears no fewer than eleven times in the essay on *King Lear*. Initially it refers to the scene in which the blind Gloucester, accompanied by a disguised Edgar, engages in mock suicide. But, Kott confesses, "the meaning of this parable is not easy to define" (116). Kott then reaches for other texts in order to define it: "Gloucester . . . plays a scene from a great morality play. He . . . is Everyman" (118). "A biblical parable is now enacted: the one about the rich man who becomes a beggar, and the blind man who recovered his inner sight when he lost his eyes" (118). Gloucester is also the protagonist in Beckett's *Act Without Words*: "All that remains here is a situation which is a parable of

universal human fate" (119). "This parable . . . is also a new *Book of Job*, or new Dantean *Inferno*" (118). Kott alludes to some fifteen to twenty authors and titles to explicate *King Lear*, all of them offered as different ways of saying the same thing. What they say is that existence is meaningless and human beings are powerless. Kott's reading of Sophocles, Dante, and the *Book of Job* coincides with his reading of Sartre, Ionesco, Dürrenmatt, and Beckett, collapsing the differences between them.⁶ But as Herbert Lindenberger has pointed out, "The self-consciousness we have developed in recent years about interpretation . . . encourage[s] us to understand the historicity of all interpretation, to arouse our suspicions, for instance, toward the way we read contemporary concerns into earlier works and periods" (20-21).

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Interpretation on the stage is no exception. The stage (and *King Lear* on the stage) has its own history, and any production takes its place in that history.⁷ Many reviewers of Brook's 1962 production alluded to other *Lears* they had seen or heard about. They also invoked other dramatists. Comparisons with Beckett and theatre of the Absurd were most numerous, but there were allusions as well to Brecht and oriental theatre. Even Ibsen and Racine got mentioned. However Associate Director Charles Marowitz, in his *Log* of the production, confirmed that "In discussing the work of rehearsals our frame of reference was always Beckettian" (21).⁸

Brook's production⁹ showed its awareness of the theatrical tradition by refusing to assent to it. He rejected traditional readings which made Lear a Titan raging against the storm or a "foolish, fond old man," and resisted the usual moral alignments. Lear was "a man more sinned against than sinning," but he was also impetuous, stubborn and exasperating. Goneril and Regan were "tigers, not daughters." Nevertheless, according to the *Times* critic (and others agreed), "for much of the way one [was] kept wholeheartedly in sympathy with the sisters" ("Heartbreaking Intensity" 13 Dec. 1962). Kent was a loyal servant, but he was also an "unreflecting bully." Kenneth Tynan described this as "the alienation effect in full operation: a beloved character seen from a strange and unlovely angle" (*Observer* 11 Nov. 1962). It added up to a "moral neutrality . . . The characters were neither 'bad' nor 'good' but equally entitled to . . . attentive concern" (*Observer* 16 Dec. 1962).

Brecht and Beckett. The pairing of these unlikely bedfellows, in Brook's *Lear* as in Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, suggests the contradictions in both Brook and Kott. On the one hand they recognize that Shakespeare is produced in time and changes over time. On the other hand they imply that a Shakespeare that can be made to speak (albeit differently) in many times transcends all time. A "contemporary" Shakespeare, some would argue, is proof of his universality although, as we have seen, it may only be proof of Shakespeare's ability to be made to speak for others. A *Lear* seen through the eyes of Samuel Beckett is no more eternal than a *Lear* seen through the eyes of Nahum Tate. Indeed in his conclusion to *The Empty Space* Brook stresses that as soon as something is given form it dies, even though an artifact in the theatre may, in different times and places, be given many forms:

As you read this book, it is already moving out of date. It is for me an exercise frozen on the page. But unlike a book, the theatre has one special characteristic. It is always possible to start again. In theatre the slate is wiped clean all the time. (157)

But Brook's disavowal at the end of his book is disingenuous. To offer a reader a book that "is already moving out of date . . . , an exercise frozen on the page," is to evade responsibility for the form that book has been given.

Something of the same is true of the Beckettian world that Brook was felt to have produced in his *King Lear* of 1962. The image of an absurd universe was created, it was felt, by a lack of definition in the stage environment. The set, designed by Brook himself, consisted of off-white oblong screens and abstract rusty shapes on an almost bare stage. Furnishings were minimal and functional and brought on only when absolutely necessary. The leather costumes, too, were neutral in cut and colour and without ornamentation. Though some saw in this a specific place and time—a "bleak, gray, abstract Britain" ("Changed Minds," *Times Educational Supplement* 22 Dec. 1962), according to one reviewer, a "stark Saxon production" (Nathan, *Daily Herald* 13 Dec. 1962) according to another, others saw it without locale as "primitive" ("Heartbreaking Intensity," *Times* 13 Dec. 1962), "prehistoric" (Speaght, *Tablet* 22 Dec. 1962), and "primeval" (Trewin, *Birmingham Post* 4 Nov. 1962), a "harsh, brutal, unlovely early morning of the world" (Worsley, *Financial Times* 13 Dec. 1962). For most, it "seem[ed] to belong to no particular period" (Wilson, *Scotsman* 17 Dec. 1962). And it also seemed to belong to no particular place: an "Ancient Anywhere in an abstract modern setting" (Price, *Topic* 17 Nov. 1962), "an eerie world somewhere between an antiseptic operating theatre and a concrete segment of nowhere" (Shulman, *Evening Standard* 7 Nov. 1962).

In these descriptions Somewhere has become Anywhere or, for that matter, Nowhere. But the stage, however bare, is never neutral. Like a decorated stage, it makes a statement: "[The production] is set in an amoral universe. . . . It is an ungoverned world: for the first time in tragedy a world without gods, with no possibility of hopeful resolution" (Tynan, *Observer* 16 Dec. 1962). The privileging of meaninglessness raises issues of the production of meaning.¹⁰

And Brook's *King Lear*, for all its seeming "absurdity," drew attention to the processes whereby meaning was produced. This was accomplished by the rooting of the production in the minutia of daily existence. As Harold Hobson wrote, "In the end, in this production as in no other I have seen, Lear becomes the representation of all humanity. . . . But this Lear is not Humanity: he is only human" (*Sunday Times* 16 Dec. 1962). Lear's humanness was seen in his petulance, arrogance and vulnerability. These were depicted not through big gestures but through small, in precise collisions between potential grandeur and physical necessity, so that meaning was not immanent and given but a product of human activity.

For example, the division of the kingdom in the opening scene took place in a "court" which was chiefly a function of the people present. The few sticks of furniture were there to make possible the activities that characters were engaged in: the stage business of everyday life. Thus Lear's throne was crude,

a chair on a low platform backed by a rusty elliptical shield. Before Lear entered, Kent was helped by a servant to his robe, a mirror, his boots. Edmund similarly helped Gloucester to a cloak, handed him his gloves, and polished his boots. One dressed for the "presence," not as an actor prepares for a role, but as one prepares for the day. Similarly, one took a drink, not to stall for time, not to offer a toast, not as a social or ceremonial gesture, but because one was thirsty. For example, in 1:2 Edmund filled a goblet while Gloucester read Edgar's forged letter. Gloucester picked up the tankard after "Abhorred villain!" and drank between "Unnatural, detested, brutish villain" and "Worse than brutish," deflating an intense emotional moment with a routine action. Thus while the set created no sustaining environment, the insistence on physical need was uncompromising. The staging similarly conceded to necessity. Because it was required, a door in Cornwall's house in 3:3 became the entrance to the hovel in 3:4.

Lear's dinner in 1:4 was the demand of a hungry, old man. Exhilarated and exhausted by the stimulation of the hunt, he threw his whip and his gloves (which he later used to strike Oswald) down on the table. His shouts for dinner and for his fool were echoed by his retinue. In rehearsal much work went into "creating the reality of Lear's knights; the dusty outdoors, the feel of hard saddle-leather and hunters returning after a long, sweaty ride" (Marowitz 28). The table needed to accommodate a "hundred" knights who filled the stage, and the knights—companions of a lifetime more than servants—reacted verbally and without discipline to everything. Silence was achieved only by banging the table, and anger expressed by upending it.

Over and over again potentially emblematic moments were transformed by stage business that insisted on necessity if not triviality. The Fool unpacked food which he shared with Kent in the stocks. In the middle of the speech beginning "The king would speak with Cornwall, the dear father/ Would with his daughter speak", Lear stopped to take a drink. When Regan did enter, Lear was so busy laughing at one of the Fool's jokes that he didn't notice her.

The blinding of Gloucester was similarly intensified, agonizingly explicit but embedded in domestic routine. Its uncompromising brutality was stressed by the elimination of the lines of the second and third servants who denounce the violence and offer to help Gloucester.¹¹ In addition, Cornwall's "Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot" was literalized when Gloucester was tilted back in the chair to which he was tied and Cornwall put the spur of his boot in Gloucester's eye. The blind Gloucester, a rag thrown over his head, was then left to grope his way off the stage while servants clearing the set were too busy to help him. Marowitz makes it clear that Brook's intention in the scene was to remove the possibility of catharsis which, if it leaves spectators shaken, also leaves them reassured:

As [Gloucester] is groping about pathetically, the house-lights come up—the action continuing in full light for several seconds afterwards. If this works, it should jar the audience into a new kind of adjustment to Gloucester and his tragedy. The house-lights remove all possibility of aesthetic shelter, and the act of blinding is seen in a colder light than would be possible otherwise. (28-29)

The aesthetic distance Marowitz and Brook were seeking is of course Brechtian, and in numerous ways the production drew attention to itself as a

representation. For example the stage lights were kept consistently and artificially bright: "Lighting . . . is no longer a thing of shadows and shafts, a trail of brightness across a canvas of darkness. It is a constant source of illumination, like the daylight at the Globe Theatre, through which the actors carry their evening torches and midnight lanterns unlit and for which, when the script calls for a night as black as thunder, the brightness is dark enough" (Chapman, *Oxford Mail* 7 Nov. 1962).

The storm was similarly "un-naturalistic." It was conveyed by three huge vibrating thundersheets, which were lowered from the flies and operated by a small motor while the actors mimed their struggle against a non-existent wind. One of the thundersheets fell the first time they were used in rehearsal, nearly hitting several people. In Marowitz's view, the fear of another such fall lent genuine apprehension to the scene, even though the thundersheets drew attention to the fact that the storm was represented rather than "real."

Kott has said, speaking of the "suicide" of Gloucester:

Shakespeare shows the paradox of pure theatre. In the naturalistic theatre one can perform a murder scene, or a scene of terror. The shot may be fired from a revolver or a toy pistol. But in mime there is no difference between a revolver and a toy pistol: in fact neither exist. Death is only a performance, a parable, a symbol. (117)

In Brook's treatment of the storm, in a strategy that was more Brechtian than Beckettian, the scene could become, not a supposed image of reality (i.e. the human condition: man helpless against storm), but a version of reality, created by the play itself.

Brook's *Lear*, dynamic and independent in its relation to Kott, may be contrasted with Peter Hall's RSC *Hamlet* in 1965 where the tendency was to map Kott's view of the impotence of the individual onto the play. Hall invoked Kott as a "theatrical prophet" who had, like Hamlet himself, "lived in Eastern Europe the life of an intellectual amid violent politics":

Hamlet has been trapped into a compulsory situation he does not want but which has been forced upon him. He has been looking for inner freedom and does not want to commit himself. At last he accepts the choice imposed on him: but only in the sphere of action. He is committed, but only in what he does, not in what he thinks. He knows that all action is clear-cut but he refuses to let his thought be thus limited. He does not want practice to be equated with theory. (*Observer* 15 Aug. 1965)

As Alan Sinfield comments, "[This view] offers no hope for humanity and no analysis of the sources and structures of injustice" (162).

Brook's commitment to a view of performance as a strategy for the creation of meaning goes back at least as far as his *Orpheus* piece (1948): "One of the greatest possible errors that a producer can make is to believe that a script can speak for itself. No play can speak for itself" (141). It was confirmed in his involvement in the 1963-64 RSC-sponsored Theatre of Cruelty season at the LAMDA studio theatre. Among the experiments was one designed to demonstrate that words in isolation do not create meaning: "The mutability of words [was] demonstrated by a sketch in which the same dialogue between a

murderer and a policeman [was] repeated over and over again with constantly varying relationships between the participants" (Young, *Financial Times* 17 Jan. 1964). Another, a playlet devised by Brook called *The Public Bath*, explored the way in which words, in conjunction with such things as tone of voice, facial expression, gesture, costume, and music, produce meanings which themselves are expressive of attitudes and values. In it the same words, taken from the *Times* account of the Christine Keeler trial, were spoken to refer first to the figure of Keeler in the prison ritual of stripping to be bathed and dressed in regulation wear, and then to the figure of a mourning Jacqueline Kennedy. Both were played by the same actress. In a rehearsal interview Brook described the piece ". . . as an experiment in attitudes showing how the public can, in the same way, make a scapegoat of one woman and a saint of another. An experiment in words—the same words spoken by the same person, can have entirely opposite meanings when applied to different people" (Norman, *Daily Mail* 10 Jan. 1964).

As in the Theatre of Cruelty experiments, Brook in *King Lear* contextualized Shakespeare's words. The strength of his production lay not in its illustration of metaphors of meaninglessness, but in its generating an everyday context for the play's language. Thus it would be an oversimplification to say that Jan Kott "influenced" Peter Brook. Rather, their views in the early 1960s converged. Kott described a Beckettian *Lear* which contained the potential for a Brechtian one. Brook's *Lear* explored theatrical strategies which suggested that meaning was a product not of the (absent) gods but of human choice and action.

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Notes

1. For a general discussion of criticism as a reflection of the "contemporary" concern of the critic, see Lever.

2. Brook's attraction to Eastern Europe has been traced to his Russian ancestry, and he has compared western audiences, especially American ones, very unfavorably to those of Eastern Europe. For example, the best performances of *King Lear*, he felt, "lay between Budapest and Moscow" (*Empty Space* 25).

3. Other productions for which a debt to Kott has been claimed include William Gaskill's production of *Macbeth* for the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre in 1966 and John Dexter's all-male production of *As You Like It* for the National Theatre at the Old Vic in 1967. [I am indebted to Marion O'Connor, University of Kent at Canterbury, for the references to these productions.]

4. In this essay I cite the first edition as the one available during the period under discussion (before 1965). A second edition, containing two additional essays, appeared in 1967.

5. Kott's description of Shakespearean monarchy does not differ significantly from that of Moretti. However, the imposition of his own perspective leads him to conclude that this indicates not the disintegration of absolutism but the meaninglessness of history.

6. In fairness it should be pointed out that the absurdist Existentialism that emerges as Kott's philosophical view in the essay on *King Lear* and elsewhere in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* is seen to be much more complex in his *Theatre Notebook*.

7. In *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (101-103) Kott provides a brief discussion of the history of *King Lear* on the stage. A more thorough discussion of the history of *Lear*'s staging can be found in Rosenberg, which studies in detail major productions from the eighteenth century to the present in relation to the play's interpretation by critics.

8. On the other hand Scofield claims that he never considered Kott's conception in his interpretation of *Lear*'s character (Rosenberg 24).

9. Reconstruction of the production is based on copies of reviews, photographs, designs, etc., and the prompt book for the 1962 production in Stratford and London. Where the prompt

book is unclear, I have consulted the prompt book for the 1964 world tour, a production which was very close to the original. It was the touring production that I saw in New York City. I am grateful to Dr. Levi Fox and to Mrs. Marian Pringle and the staff of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust who facilitated my access to this and other material on Brook's production. I also wish to thank the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research of McGill University for their support.

10. Edward Bond has rewritten *Lear* explicitly to repudiate that aspect of Shakespeare that makes it too easy for us to "maintain a fascination with the personal at the expense of the political, with the individual at the expense of the social," as a result of which "modern drama has devolved into absurdity" (Bulman 61).

11. Several reviewers objected to the omission. They saw it as an instance of Brook tampering with the text in order to reinforce an idiosyncratically bleak vision of the play. However the deleted lines in fact occur only in the Quarto, and Urkowitz (50-51) argues for the coherence of the Folio text in this passage as elsewhere.

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