SHAKESPEARE
WITHOUT CLASS

misappropriations of
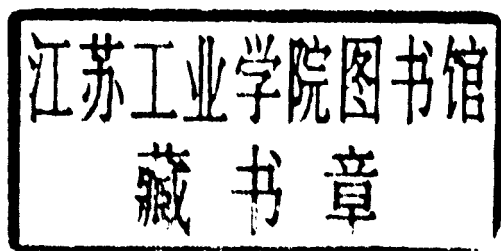cultural capital

Edited by

Donald Hedrick and Bryan Reynolds

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Misappropriations of Cultural Capital

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Shakespace and Transversal Power

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Prefatory Space: The Collection and Its Title

"Shakespace" is our name for the territory within discourses, adaptations, and uses of Shakespeare that is marked by a dynamic of what we call "transversality," a dynamic insufficiently captured by a term now familiar in cultural criticism, "appropriation," as in the appropriation of property. With apologies to our contributors as well as to what we think of as ourselves, for borrowing their essays for our own creative and commercial use, what is assembled here can hardly be thought of as our property, however, particularly since its use will transform over time. The aura of Shakespace is such that, in the immor(t)al words of its progenitor's own transversal slogan, one that might well stand as epigraph to this collection, "Property was thus appalled, / That the Self was not the same" (*The Phoenix and the Turtle,* 37–38).

These essays, chosen to address current issues of class, race, gender, sexual preference, postcoloniality, and pedagogy, were originally solicited so as to distinguish the volume from other treatments of Shakespearean adaptation by an emphasis on "dissident" responses to Shakespeare. Now, however, they seem to us rather more complicated in what they do. As it happens, dissidence, though important to the essays and by no means omitted from the overall ideological picture, constitutes only one type of response in an ensemble of actions, understandings, and affects—a broader field including, to name an area otherwise excluded from more strict usage of the term "dissidence," criminality. To the perennial question of how to do things with and to Shakespeare, the essays now speak less rigidly but more provocatively. The very fact of the difficulty of a sustained catego-

rization of them seemed evidence that we needed a far more nuanced and expansive model of the kind we will theorize here.

Rather than providing reductive, homogenizing, and therefore dispensable summaries of the essays collected, essays that speak delightfully for themselves without benefit of abstract, and rather than giving a polite tip of our editorial hats to their infinite variety, we want to address the question of what is common to the following scenarios we find in them (presented in no particular order here) and in certain questions they provoke:

1. Women romance writers excluded from elite culture "marry" the supposed champion of that culture, William Shakespeare. Will the marriage work out for them? Will it change them both?

2. An Elizabethan actor must somehow assert his own expertise when handed golden words from the moneyed pen of William Shakespeare, a sometime dabbler in acting himself. What happens to either's authority in the process?

3. Risking contempt and even violence from a cultural elite, nineteenth-century African American actors adopt its very trappings and status by way of an alliance with Shakespeare. Does their double-voiced theater compel a new alternative vision of America?

4. A teacher and her students join together to play witches in improvisations of *Macbeth*. What are the new energies, both positive and negative, that get released from this shared transgressive performance, and from where do they come and go?

5. A modern dramatist of the absurd finds in the Senecan underpinnings of Shakespeare an experimental equivalent to his own practices. How does the earlier interrogation of heroism transform the contemporary one, projecting a sense of Shakespeare as contemporary or emergent?

6. A film director adapts *The Tempest* to display through images of the book the earlier era's use of writing and literacy as a powerful cultural weapon. How does it effect his investigation to conduct it with the new technology comparable to the book, namely the screen, the new technology of our age?

7. How is it that gay and lesbian renditions of *Romeo and Juliet*, by imagining a normalized homosexuality, go further than queer theorists do with their valorization of the camp and parodic critiques of "heteronormativity"? What exactly is the "post-queer"

space they thereby create, in which gender may no longer be legible or even matter?

8. A gay film director credits his gay-themed Shakespeare adaptation with an impudent acknowledgment that Shakespeare had a minor hand in the writing. How does this antinostalgia about his "collaborator" combine with a nostalgia for home and family, to form a new, countertradition of home and family for a new sexual era?

9. A teacher of Shakespeare responding to the renewed interest in the moral questions of literature is caught within the dilemma of either presenting moral certainties under canonical authoritarianism of a master, or treating teaching Shakespeare as show business without moral import. What Shakespeare would resolve this problem?

10. A dramatist adapts the text of Shakespeare to promote a Marxist ideology. How do parallel historical circumstances transform the text, without any adaptation, into a critique of class, through the medium of theatrical performance?

In each case, the encounter, or collision, or union with Shakespeare takes one, or one's interpretive community, outside oneself or that community, and outside the officially assigned space of one's subjectivity. Like dialogism, there may be collision or clash, but unlike dialogism, there is shared space for repositionings and transformations of more than voice alone. The family resemblance between these scenarios, therefore, is that the teachers, students, adapters, directors, and actors experience the encounter with Shakespeare in a collective, creative space not fully limited by their own interests, conceptions, or affects, and one in which new social arrangements are, if not actually produced or produced in miniature, at least become capable of being imagined. The particular scenarios we have included here thus constitute transversal cases that we have for the presentation of our book's contents provisionally catalogued as follows: acting out from under some authority; adapting historical ideologies by way of tactical contingencies; loving "otherwise" outside assigned subjective territory; "disfilming" or visually exhibiting and challenging hegemonic power; and teaching transversally or transgressively, as it were without a net—all with a view toward achieving salutary social and civic effects from certain theaterlike experiments in "being what you aren't."

Why "without class"? Here, we mean to be suggestive and exploratory rather than analytic and definitive. Like the infamous *Shakespeare Without*

Tears (Webster 1942), our title would at first seem to mark a naive ideal for customary ideological criticism, namely, the ignoring or bracketing of the pervasive factor of class in Shakespeare's England made somehow invisible in the plays. Or, equally, it might mark the removal of Shakespeare's high cultural status, the legacy of the highbrow/lowbrow split of the modern era, with a democratizing potential for the split's erasure (Levine 1988). Whether or not any such ideals may be approached, to imagine classlessness in such cases through the very movement itself across or through classes is what an encounter in Shakespace may in fact do. If so, the title operates in other, related senses as well, since "without class" might also refer to tastelessness and possibilities of transgression or disruption, as in some of the cases our contributors discuss. Even more broadly, however, our title points to the theoretical possibility of what is "without classification," the deterritorialization of conceptual spaces that may also occur in strong encounters with Shakespeare.

Why the keywords, "misappropriations of cultural capital"? The metaphor for literary and artistic value, and by extension for Shakespeare, as cultural capital is rapidly becoming commonplace. Thus, Shakespeare is regarded as a "banknote" (Holderness 1988, xi), or Shakespearean adaptation is seen in terms of the "costs as well as benefits in women's appropriations" (Novy 1993, 3). Yet, the theoretical mechanisms of adaptation are less often explored, and the term "appropriation" tends to enforce a neutralizing sense of the transformation, or one that implies some "normal" function of the Shakespearean text in typical acts of cultural domination. The transcendence of what we call "subjectivity territory" (to be explained below), however, will often involve transgression, insofar as that subjectivity is state-imposed or regulated. Thus, the now ubiquitous and somewhat neutral term "appropriation" does not sufficiently capture the transversal spirit whereby criminality, for instance, becomes a conduit for other actions against the state-imposed subjectivity, and thus how what is in effect a criminal subjectivity may be adopted, even without criminal behavior itself, for the transgressive, antistate effects ordinarily produced by criminality. For an image embodying this, we might take that of a picture of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., with a SWAT team on its roof. Suggesting at first a range of criminal possibilities—from dissident Shakespearean scholars in a palace revolt inside, to alien terrorists holding Shakespeareans hostage—the actual event, the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to the library in May 1991, nevertheless suggests a space in which state power collides with whatever opposes it, and where transgressions thus become imaginable.

To take one instance of what we regard as a more limiting theoretical stance regarding appropriation, we find that the editor of the collection *The Appropriation of Shakespeare,* while acknowledging the key term's link to "usurpation," describes the encounter as "making sense of a literary artefact by fitting it into our own parameters" (Marsden 1991, 1). Through a rhetoric of "making it ours," "controlling," "possessing," and "fitting," Marsden's approach leaves us with the picture of a collision of autonomous and fixed entities or spaces, a binary separateness exacerbated all the more in the case of the traditional deification of Shakespeare, but in any case a picture systematically distorting certain aspects of subjective and artistic possibility.[1] We find instead that in what we are terming Shakespace, what may happen is a far more creative change, not a "making sense" of this literary artefact but indeed going outside *someone's* sense. Misappropriation, moreover, does not necessarily entail misuse, but rather that a real value was accrued over time and in the investments of others (Shakespeare as only one of the investors in his art); and that one who takes this value, even if a kind of thief of value, can be transformed by the taking itself. Not a negation of "appropriation," therefore, it does not entail a becoming-sequence of what should have been "yours" is now "mine," but suggests something far more complex and even indeterminate: what only seemed to be yours is now equally not mine, its new value apart from what may no longer be "me." Like another of Shakespeare's transversal slogans this time placed in the mouth of Viola: "what is yours to bestow is not yours to reserve" (*Twelfth Night* 168). Appropriation, on the other hand, is what Jean-Luc Nancy describes is the mode of self-love as the "love of possession . . . the love of the self as property" (Nancy 1991, 95); misappropriation is technically therefore more, as we will see in what follows, like love.

One might be surprised to find as a strong exemplar of American misappropriation of Shakespearean capital the writer William Burroughs, who manages, furthermore, to represent a form of what we will explain as "transversality"; his misappropriation is a deliberate program against state-imposed subjective control. The early Beat experiences of Burroughs, who continued to cite Shakespeare with great frequency late into life, included Greenwich Village apartment performances of Shakespeare with Kerouac and others, and much banter with Allen Ginsberg over Shakespearean allusions. The experimental technique Burroughs developed with Bryon Gysin in the early sixties, the text-collage technique of the "cut-up," combines lines or words from the text of one author with that of another, as Burroughs himself does in cut-ups with Shakespeare's text. In effect, what his technique manages is the experimental alterity we call "transversality,"

using Shakespeare and one's own writing to create a subjectivity both out-side the self and, as Burroughs also believed, beyond the power of the state in forming such subjectivity, which is another of our understandings about the power of the transversal. In a letter to Gysin in February 1964, Bur-roughs suggests that one form of the technique would be to set authors' writings in newspaper-columns: "Set up Shakespeare, Conrad, Rimbaud in newspaper format," or to write novels in this way, to appropriate the power that newspaper columns have "to mold thought feeling and subsequent events" (Burroughs MSS). One could even do this with one's own writing (unpublished manuscripts of Burroughs sometimes involve his cutting up, say, of a letter to the *London Sunday Times* editor, rearranging its pieces, or even, as Burroughs also did, rearranging pieces of different dreams he recorded into a nonlinear narrative of sorts), in effect transcending one's own subjectivity by means of self-fragmentation and rearrangement. A fantasy scene from a draft of *The Wild Boys,* moreover, imagines a montage of juxtaposed images along the theme of "BEING MYSELF" and "BEING OTH-ERS": "You can do any number of takes along that line, first of course a pleasurable image of 'being myself' and then a very unpleasurable image of being others. And of course you can reverse this too. That is, 'To be Myself' can show starving or unfortunate people, and 'To be others' can show happy and prosperous people."[2] Arguably unreadable, Burrough's experi-ments nevertheless constitute a writing unpossessed, an image of the social creativity of the transversal.

Introducing Shakespace

As the instance of Burroughs' use of Shakespeare, more typical than one might first imagine, would indicate, the historical spaces through which Shakespeare has passed as an icon have been extraordinarily diverse and numerous. Shakespeare has stimulated, occupied, and affected countless commercial, political, social, and cultural spaces. These Shakespearean or Shakespeare-influenced spaces, however conventional, alternative, or some-times both, we refer to as "Shakespace," a term that accounts for these par-ticular spaces and the time or speed, the "pace," at which they move from generation to generation and from era to era. This volume of critical essays on adaptations of Shakespeare's work from the early modern period to the twentieth century is most concerned with the roles Shakespace has played at different moments in Anglo-American history. It is specifically interested in the uses and (mis)appropriations of Shakespeare, indeed the cultural constructions of Shakespace, that have produced the social creativity we

call "transversal movements" out of "subjective territory" and into "transversal territory, " as we have suggested in the family resemblances among the essays noted earlier. This set of concepts, to be elaborated in the discussion to follow, is not specific to Shakespace. But for historical reasons Shakespace is an especially strong exemplar of them, since within it are multiplied the epochal forces and transformations wrought by a multiplicity of forces: by early capitalism, by the great experiment of the new public entertainment industry in early modern England, by the interrogation of socially-prescribed gender roles, by aristocratic and legitimation crises, by the desacralization of absolutist sovereignty, by cross-cultural collisions and relativizations deriving from exploration and colonization, by the scientific revolution and its confounding of official knowledge, and—to take this space into our own time—by the recursive force of the canonical tradition itself on Shakespeare's work. It is no accident that all these constitute the sea changes explored in the early modern period and beyond.

The accumulation of such interacting forces gives additional transformative power to Shakespace, whether radical or conservative,[3] and hence produces what is often read as the ideological "complexity" of any object of critical and political scrutiny (Hedrick 1997). It is the argument of this introduction that both despite and because of the contradictory nature of Shakespace throughout history—from reactionary to complacent to radical—Shakespace has continued to expand into the twentieth century as simultaneously the manifestation of and the inspiration for transversal movements across convention's borders and outside of dominant sociopolitical parameters. It is through these transversal movements that Shakespace emerges as a culturally-imaginable space where Shakespeare may function without class in both the socioeconomic and aesthetic senses of the word. This is because Shakespace's cultural power, or Shakespeare-effect, resists and sometimes transcends all classification that is either reductive or totalizing. Shakespace becomes, as it were, a socially and historically determined playground on which class differentiation and class conflict sometimes slip transversally into an ambiguous space that makes possible and in fact encourages alternative opportunities for thought, expression, and development. Whereas Shakespace has certainly been, and frequently still manifests itself as, what we call an "official territory," and thus has worked to promote various organizational social structures that are discriminatory, hierarchical, or repressive (including structures in academia itself), it is perhaps most powerfully a transversal territory. That is, it has radiated territorially as a transportive, transformative space in which dreams have been made, pursued, virtualized, and realized.

Following a theoretical explication of transversality in terms of its resistance to state-power, our discussion of Shakespace and transversal theory will engage with Stephen Greenblatt's noted February 6, 1999 *New York Times* op-ed article on this year's Academy Award winning film, *Shakespeare in Love* (dir., John Madden 1998). Using his essay as a vehicle for exploring ideas of transformation in a particular context, we want to explicate three dimensions of transversality: the transcending of boundaries into different territory (such as from academia to the popular, from commerce to love, from one subjectivity to another); the possibility of transformation through space and/or time (Greenblatt's essay's juggling of era and location in order to produce something new); and love itself as a model and image of the transversal.

For the best parallel to the transformative power we speak of, we must turn to love. Love, as it happens, is not only the chief marker or signature of Shakespeare in the popular imaginary, but also the marker of resistance to a state-imposed subjectivity. Recognizing the critical importance of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to contemporary Shakespace, for which the recent cinematic adaptations *Shakespeare in Love, William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (dir. Baz Luhrmann 1996), and *Tromeo and Juliet* (dir. Lloyd Kaufman 1996) are indicative, we want to outline a network of Shakespearean influences spatiotemporally distributed between academia, Hollywood, New Jersey, and early modern England. Throughout this distribution, Shakespace progresses substantially in transversal territory, with love at its heart, even when, or especially when, the ethos of capitalism pumps through its arteries—as in the present historical moment.

Transversal Theory[4]

The state machinery of all societies is an assembly of sociopolitical conductors: mental and physical movers, orchestrators, and transmitters. These include the educational, juridical, and religious structures, as well as the institutions of marriage and family. In agreement with its investment in cultural, social, political, and economic fluctuations and determinations, this organizing machinery functions over time and space, sometimes consciously and sometimes unintentionally, to consolidate social and state powers in order to construct society and "the state": the totalized state machinery. By referring to this conductorial assembly as "state machinery," a term that simultaneously connotes singularity and plurality, we are adapting Louis Althusser's conception of what he calls the "(Repressive) State apparatus" and fusing it with his subsidiary "Ideological State Apparatuses"

to emphasize that the overall drive for totalization is fueled by diverse conductors of organizational power that are at different times and to varying degrees always both repressive and ideological.[5] This is a dynamic in which various conductors work, sometimes individually and sometimes in conjunction with other conductors, to substantiate their own positions of power within the sociopolitical field and, in the process, inadvertently or otherwise, advance the development and image of the totalized state. Hence, our use of the term "state machinery" should make explicit the multifarious and discursive nature of state power, and thus prevent the misperception of this dynamic as resultant from a conspiracy led by a monolithic state.[6] In fact, the monolithic, Leviathan, or absolute state can only ever be a fantasy-goal whose realization would preclude this dynamic.

Despite all inconsistencies or fissures in the "conduction," the dissemination, or the management of any social order, the state's organizing machinery needs to maintain its colonization of the range of thought or "conceptual territory" of the populace. The machinery needs continually to reestablish the range of personal experience and perception, or "subjective territory," of the populace so that notions of identity cease to be arbitrary and transitory, and acquire temporal constancy and spatial range for the subsistence of what is perceived to be a healthy individual and, by extension, a cohesive social body. It needs to imbue the subject population, however heterogeneous in actuality, with a common state-serving subjectivity, indeed an ideology, that would at the same time give this social body the assurance of homogeneity and universality.

Our term "subjective territory" schematizes personal conceptualization in spatial terms. It is related to Immanuel Kant's notion that it is our intuited acknowledgment of ourselves (as mental beings) as objects to ourselves within space and time that allows for both internal and external experience; our experiences are predicated on the understanding of ourselves as objects existing in space and time (Kant 1990, esp. 35–43). In regard to conceptualization, like Kant, but to a greater extent, we are privileging here the spatial over the temporal aspect of experience; hence our use of the word "territory" and our coinage "Shakespace." We are merging Kant's notion of space with that of Henri Lefebvre, who sees space as a mental, physical, and social determinant that is primary to personal experience. (See Lefebvre 1993, esp. introductory chapter). In this view, conceptualization encompasses space, and thus allows for expansion of, overlap with, trespass against, and flight from the conceptual territory of others. It is territory that permits occupation by subjects and objects. We posit subjective territory as a corrective to the idea of subjectivity as wholly individ-

ual, hermetic, or static, an idea that, as suggested earlier in different terms, may prop up the more limited "property" and "appropriation" models of the use of Shakespeare in adaptation.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding what within this viewpoint may in fact be liberatory in potential, subjective territory usually refers to the scope of the conceptual and emotional experience within any hegemonic society or subsociety (the university or criminal organizations, for example),[7] as well as to the subjectification by state machinery. It refers to those whose subjectivity has developed under the influence and auspices of what Pierre Bourdieu calls the "symbolic power" of a particular organizational social structure, whether mainstream, subcultural, or countercultural (Bourdieu 1991, 170). Subjective territory is delineated by conceptual and emotional boundaries that are normally defined by the prevailing science, morality, and ideology. These boundaries bestow a spatiotemporal dimension, or common ground, to an aggregate of individuals or subjects, and work to ensure and monitor the cohesiveness of this social body or, more precisely, as Benedict Anderson puts it, this "imagined community"—"imagined" because there are usually no actual social relationships or communal experiences connecting most of its members (Anderson 1983, 15–16). The boundaries demarcate the specific coordinates for the interaction of sociocultural and ideological centers and conductors. These conductors are usually the same evaluative assemblages that define the state machinery, such as the educational, juridical, and religious structures, that were implemented or appropriated by the state machinery to institute the conceptual and emotional boundaries in the first place. In short, subjective territory is the existential and experiential realm in and from which a given subject of a given hierarchical society perceives and relates to the universe and his or her place in it, working against the ability to imagine himself or herself as anything other than what he or she may already be.

To maintain their privileged status, the state's machinic constituents need to exercise their sociopolitical power carefully and strategically. Their power movements must play a state-serving role in the—much discussed of late—overall circulation of power and social energy within what Michel Foucault describes as the often clustering but ultimately acentered network of discursive "power-knowledge relations" within the sociopolitical field (Foucault 1979, 27–28). Every sociopolitical field is necessarily dominated by a particular ideology, such that its discursive ideological system controls significant conceptual territory. To this end, the state machinery supports and is supported by the dominant culture, so that this particular culture becomes "official" culture. However, since official culture is not always