Enrico Scaravelli

The Rise of Bardolatry in the Restoration

Paratexts of Shakespearean
Adaptations and other Texts
1660-1737

This book explores from a new perspective the adaptations of Shakespeare in the Restoration, and how they contributed to the rise of the cult of the National Poet in an age where his reputation was not yet consolidated.

Adaptations are fully independent cultural items, whose paratexts play a crucial role in the development of Bardolatry; their study initially follows seminal works of Bakhtin and Genette, but the main theoretical background is anthropology, with the groundbreaking theories of Mary Douglas.

The many voices that feature the paratexts of the adaptations and the other texts, such as those of John Dryden, Thomas Betterton, William Davenant, Nahum Tate, John Dennis, and many others, create a composite choir where the emerging sacrality of the cult of the Bard was just one of the tunes, in an age when Shakespeare has not yet become Shakespeare.

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Cover illustration: George Romney, The infant Shakespeare attended by Nature and
the Passions, c. 1791–1792.

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Preface

This study is an examination of bardolatry in the "preliminaries" of the Shakespearean texts, placing particular emphasis on the adaptations of the Bard's plays from the Restoration period. By preliminaries, I am referring to what Genette calls *paratext* – the sum of the peritext and epitext.[1] In the analysis of the many voices that have contributed on bardolatry (some from before 1660), I have deemed it useful to refer to studies that were not exclusively literary: for example, I have used concepts such as those articulated by Mary Douglas in her anthropological studies from the second half of the twentieth century.[2]

The first chapter provides the theoretical framework for the key concepts of the book, such as bardolatry, paratext, and adaptation. The second chapter is the analysis of the paratexts of the Shakespearean adaptations themselves, while the third chapter completes the general picture with the discussion of texts that were relevant for the cultural milieu of the period. Finally, the appendix is a catalogue of the Shakespearean adaptations that I have analyzed previously, mainly in their paratextual aspect. In it, I have recorded the main information regarding staging, printed editions, and plot (for which I provide a detailed act-by-act account).

It is always necessary to apply certain limits to the material under consideration, in order to have a field of study that is as homogenous as

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1   This is Genette's definition of paratext, outlining its constituent parts and function: "a title, a subtitle, intertitles; prefaces, postfaces, notices, forewords, etc.; marginal, infrapaginal, terminal notes; epigraphs; illustrations; blurbs, book covers, dust jackets, and many other kinds of secondary signals, whether allographic or authographic. These provide the text with a (variable) setting and sometimes a commentary, official or not, which even the purists among readers, those least inclined to external erudition, cannot always disregard as easily as they would like and as they claim to do." Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997). Originally published as *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré*. (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1982), 3.

2   Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966 [2006]).

possible. The material examined in the present study does not include farces, drolls, or other brief compositions taken from Shakespeare's plays, especially if they were originally composed in the age preceding the Restoration and published after 1660. Nor have I included closet drama, as its public impact is obviously very small.

Finally, a remark concerning chronological restrictions, as these are necessarily arbitrary and must be justified. The period examined here is from 1660 to 1737, although in some cases earlier events and texts are mentioned. The start date can be easily recognized, as it represents the Restoration of Charles II and the reopening of theaters, but the end date does not correspond with any similarly important historical and cultural event. The year chosen is that of the Stage Licensing Act, commissioned by Robert Walpole, which imposed strict censorship on drama and therefore heavily influenced theatrical life.

1 The Theoretical Background

1.1 Bardolatry

1.1.1 George Bernard Shaw and the coinage of the term

In 2015, according to the online edition of the O*xford English Dictionary* (*OED*), bardolatry is the "Worship of the 'Bard of Avon', i.e. Shakespeare." A combination of the words "bard" and "idolatry," it is the term used to define the worship of William Shakespeare, who, at least since the nineteenth century, has been called the "Bard of Avon." Curiously enough, the word was born in a paratext where the author blames Shakespeare: it was, in fact, George Bernard Shaw who coined the term in 1901, when he used it in the preface to his *Three Plays for Puritans*.[3] Here, Shaw employed the term in a negative sense ("So much for Bardolatry!")[4] to criticize Shakespeare for creating works that, unlike his, did not deal properly with social themes. Likewise for adaptation, the use that will be made here of the word Bard is neutral, bearing neither the negative meaning applied by Shaw, nor the positive one attached by bardolators.

1.1.2 Early Attestations, Dryden, 1769 Shakespeare Jubilee

Although the term was coined at the very beginning of the twentieth century, the mental attitude defined as bardolatry began to develop a few years after Shakespeare's death, if not earlier, as Francis Meres attests as early as 1598. Since 1610, when the newly founded Bodleian Library "entered into an agreement which entitled it to a copy of every book registered with the Stationers' Company, … the intervening 200 years

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3   George Bernard Shaw, *Three Plays for Puritans* (London: Grant Richards, 1901).
4   Ibid., xxxi.

mark a steady but incomplete evolution of Shakespeare's reputation to-
wards the preeminence we now take for granted."[5] In fact, Samuel Holt
Monk's opening statement of his essay on "Dryden and the Beginnings
of Shakespeare Criticism in the Augustan Age"[6] is probably true: the
main line, or rather lines, of critical thought about Shakespeare had been
formulated before 1660.

In the middle of the first half of the seventeenth century Shake-
speare's supremacy had not yet been consolidated. According to Graham
Holderness, Beaumont, who died a month and a half before the Bard, was
thought to deserve a place in Westminster; Jonson, who died in 1637, had
crowds following his corpse to the Abbey; on the other hand, "Shake-
speare had been laid to rest in 1616 in a relatively little, obscure grave in
the chancel of Stratford church."[7]

Despite this, soon after the Bard's death, the tide had started to
change. In the paratext of the 1623 *First Folio*, in the poem in memory
of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson writes "He was not of an age, but for all
time!"[8] paving the way for those in the seventeenth and eighteenth cen-
turies (and beyond) to praise the eternity of the Elizabethan playwright.
He also fosters the link between the Bard and nature, thus beginning to
qualify his genius as natural and eternal; finally he also raises the vexed
question of Shakespeare's learning, another crucial point that scholars
have much debated. Leaving aside Milton, and Dryden's ambivalence
towards Shakespeare, which did not prevent him from conveying the
idea that the Bard was a universal and foundational figure in the Eng-
lish culture, the ratification of bardolatry is set at the end of the second
decade of the second half of the eighteenth century with David Garrick's
1769 Shakespeare Jubilee, during whose celebrations he composed an
ode to commemorate the great playwright, proclaiming him "the god of

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5   Claude Rawson, ed., *Great Shakespeareans*, vol. 1 (London: Continuum, 2010), 1.
6   In Herbert M. Schueller, ed., *The Persistence of Shakespeare Idolatry* (Detroit:
     Wayne State University Press, 1964), 49.
7   Graham Holderness, "Bardolatry: or, The Cultural Materialist's Guide to Stratford-
     upon-Avon," in Graham Holderness (ed.), *The Shakespeare Myth* (Manchester:
     Manchester University Press, 1988), 3.
8   Ben Jonson, "To the memory of my beloued, The author Mr. William Shakespeare:
     and what he hath left us," in William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Comedies, His-
     tories, and Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London,
     1623).

our idolatry."[9] The year 1769 is the great formal inauguration of bardolatry as a national religion, which "marks the point at which Shakespeare stopped being regarded as an increasingly popular and admirable dramatist, and became a god."[10] And before the end of the century, another critical landmark was set by Samuel Johnson's pronouncement that Shakespeare is a "mighty genius"[11] and that "his works may be considered a map of life."[12]

Before reaching these peaks of adoration, during the course of the eighteenth century, the Bard's reputation had steadily improved, mainly due to Dryden's influence as critics "were to see Shakespeare pretty much as [he] had taught them to do."[13] In fact, "although still attacked occasionally, Shakespeare's work was [now] used as a standard of excellence by … critics":[14] Joseph Addison in the *Spectator*, and Richard Steele in the *Tatler* quite frequently praised and recommended the Bard to their readers, which had a direct and positive effect on the popularity of, and the attendance at, theaters, as Colley Cibber remarks in his *Apology* (1740).

Before Garrick's Jubilee, however, there was another relevant step in the path of bardolatry. It happened in 1709, when Nicholas Rowe published the first critical edition of the works of Shakespeare. This was the first seed of three centuries of Shakespeare studies, still ongoing. Graham Holderness observes that, in the Restoration, "both the unassailable Shakespearean reputation, and the stable Shakespearean text, were yet to be consolidated (the first edition of Shakespeare's works – other than simple reprints of the 1623 Folio – that of Nicholas Rowe, was not published until 1709)."[15] As decades passed, "with the consolidation

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9   Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 6.
10   Christian Deelman, *The Great Shakespeare Jubilee* (London: Michael Joseph, 1964), 7.
11   Samuel Johnson, "To the Right Hon. John Earl of Orrery," in *The Works of Samuel Johnson*, vol. 14 (London, 1788), 479. No editor for this book.
12   Ibid., 480.
13   Samuel Holt Monk, "Dryden and the Beginnings of Shakespeare Criticism in the Augustan Age," in Herbert M. Schueller (ed.), *The Persistence of Shakespeare Idolatry*, 66.
14   Louis Marder, *His Exits and His Entrances* (Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1963), 53.
15   Graham Holderness, *Textual Shakespeare* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2003), p. 125.

of Shakespeare's prominence as Britain's national dramatist, the Shake-spearean text became accepted as the only fictionalized version of the 'Lear' story to retain any enduring artistic value";[16] what happened to the story of King Lear, also happened to many other stories adapted by Shakespeare from previous sources.

When dealing with Shakespearean adaptations there is a point that is often underestimated, if not forgotten: Shakespeare himself was an adaptor. He adapted both within the same literary genre (drama to drama) and from one genre to another (prose or poetry to drama), as the numerous and detailed studies on his sources have shown. He drew from the Classics, from the Italians, from the English: Ovid, Bandello, Holinshed, and many more. With the rise of bardolatry, his plots, his versions of the stories, have eclipsed all other plots, all other versions to become a master narrative; but it has not always been so. In the early decades of the Restoration, when Shakespeare had not yet achieved the status of National Poet, his works had not yet become detached from the continuity of the tradition, so others still drew upon this material with relative freedom. Today, when we judge the adaptations inferior to the "original" we are looking at them under the influence of bardolatry; it is very easy to do so, as the cult of Shakespeare is a strong cultural process that started centuries ago.

1.1.3 Victorian Age, Twentieth Century, and Beyond

As Robert Sawyer has recently argued,[17] in the Victorian Age the ex-citement surrounding the Bard reached a point where his work was put in close connection with the Bible. Mary Cowden Clark and Henry Morley, churchmen like William Rolfe and Dean Frederic Farrar, and atheists like Robert Ingersoll, all united in praising the Bard. Many writers spoke of the work of Shakespeare as a secular equivalent of the Bible; but the such worship was obviously the fruit of seeds planted in previous centuries. One of these seeds produced buds in 1841 when, in *On Heroes*, *Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, Thomas Carlyle

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16   Ibid.
17   Robert Sawyer, *Victorian Appropriations of Shakespeare* (Madison NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003), 113.

posed a rhetorical question, "This King Shakspeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty, over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying-signs; indestructible …?"[18] before fearlessly plunging into adulation of the Bard:

> Of this Shakspeare of ours, perhaps the opinion one sometimes hears a little idolatrously expressed is, in fact, the right one; I think the best judgment not of this country only, but of Europe at large, is slowly pointing to the conclusion, that Shakspeare is the chief of all Poets hitherto; the greatest intellect who, in our recorded world, has left record of himself in the way of Literature. On the whole, I know not such a power of vision, such a faculty of thought, if we take all the characters of it, in any other man. Such a calmness of depth; placid joyous strength; all things imaged in that great soul of his so true and clear, as in a tranquil unfathomable sea![19]

One of the defining points of bardolatry is that Shakespeare is presented not only as the greatest author, but also as the absolute genius, the supreme intellect, the finest psychologist, and as the one who describes the human condition most faithfully. In other words, bardolatry views Shakespeare as the master of all human experience and of its intellectual inquiry. It also embraces the concept of realism of the characters of the Bard, pushing it as far as to regard them as "real people," for they have changed the consciousness and ways of perceiving human nature on a large scale in Western culture.

An authoritative mouthpiece of the above idea is Harold Bloom, whose bardolatry finds its highest expression in the paratext of his *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (1998), which analyzes thirty-five plays by the Bard. In the preface addressed to the reader, Bloom's cult of Shakespeare impels him to assert, "He wrote the best poetry and the best prose in English, or perhaps in any Western language."[20]

The characters of the plays are also the subject of praise. In 1725 Alexander Pope asserted that Shakespeare had "look'd thro human nature at one glance,"[21] and from this had created the characters of his plays: "every single character in Shakespear is as much an individual,

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18   Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1900), 125.

19   Ibid.

20   Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998), xviii.

21   Alexander Pope, preface to *The Works of Shakespear*, (London, 1725), iv.

as those in life itself."[22] Bloom occupies a position that loudly echoes Pope, despite the passage of more than two-and-a-half centuries: in his view the greatest characters of the Bard's plays are not simple but rather human modes of consciousness and awareness *tout-court*:

> The dominant Shakesperean characters – Falstaff, Hamlet, Rosalind, Iago, Lear, Macbeth, Cleopatra among them – are extraordinary instances not only of how meaning gets started, rather than repeated, but also of how new modes of consciousness come into being.[23]

In line with one of the tenets of the cult of Shakespeare that proclaim his proximity to the divine, the sacrum, and religion, Bloom states that bardolatry "ought to be even more a secular religion than it already is."[24] Sheer religious worship blends with the worship of the character through a common mode of transmission: the written text.

> A substantial number of Americans who believe they worship God actually worship three major literary characters: the Yahweh of the J writer …, the Jesus of the Gospel of Mark, and Allah of the Koran. I do not suggest that we substitute the worship of Hamlet, but Hamlet is the only secular rival to his greatest precursors in personality. Like them, he seems not to be just a literary or dramatic character. His total effect upon the world's culture is incalculable. After Jesus, Hamlet is the most cited figure in Western consciousness; no one prays to him, but no one evades him for long either.[25]

The book's closing essay titled "Coda: The Shakesperean Difference" (again, a paratext, like the opening essay), is the place for bardolatry without compromise. The praise for Shakespeare is absolute: he is "the best and central writer in English, already is the only universal author, staged and read everywhere."[26] Shakespeare's influence surpasses that of Homer or Plato, investing the very life of mankind, and is likely to rival the sacred scriptures:

> Shakespeare's influence, overwhelming on literature, has been even larger on life, and thus has become incalculable, and seems recently only to be growing.

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22   Ibid., iii.
23   Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, xviii.
24   Ibid., xvii.
25   Ibid., xviii–xix.
26   Ibid., 718.

It surpasses the effect of Homer and of Plato, and challenges the scriptures of the West and East alike in the modification of human character and personality. Scholars who wish to confine Shakespeare to his context – historical, social, political, economic, rational, theatrical – may illuminate particular aspects of the plays, but are unable to explain the Shakesperean influence on us, which is unique, and which cannot be reduced to Shakespeare's own situation, in his time and place.[27]

In the above citation, just as in others that will follow, the work of the Bard is regarded as something sacred and is placed in the realm of the absolute, of eternity, of timelessness. They contrast with those recent historicist and relativist criticisms that consider the preeminence of Shakespeare as an exclusive product of the sociocultural context of Elizabethan England. According to these views, the above praises are strictly the result of an English nationalism that also exerts its influence on literature and literary criticism.

One may think that Bloom is the peak of bardolatry, but he somehow restricted the immense influence of Shakespeare to the Western world. In the early 1960s, in the wild blooming of life and culture of the decade, Louis Marder pushed even further. The conclusion of *His Exits and His Entrances* set the scale on planetary level:

Certainly the existence of this book and the history it contains is evidence enough that the universal admiration and reverence for the works of Shakespeare are among the few emotional and intellectual responses around which all the literate people of the world can unite.[28]

Then, in the very last paragraph of the book, he jumps into interstellar space, with the works of Shakespeare and the Bible as the highest expression of human culture, the first two books that would best testify our civilization to another life form in the universe:

On this planet the reputation of Shakespeare is secure. When life is discovered elsewhere in the universe and some interplanetary traveler brings to this new world the fruits of our terrestrial culture, who can imagine anything but that among the first books carried to the curious strangers will be a Bible and the works of William Shakespeare.[29]

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27   Ibid., 717.
28   Louis Marder, *His Exits and His Entrances*, p. 361.
29   Ibid., p. 362.

Some contributions from the twenty-first century by other eminent Shakespeare scholars should also be noted for the various perspectives adopted to elevate the Bard at the highest peak of British culture such as Stanley Wells' *Shakespeare for all Times*;[30] Marjorie Garber's *Shakespeare After All*;[31] and Jonathan Bate's *Soul of the Age: The Life, Mind and World of William Shakespeare*.[32]

1.2 Paratext

1.2.1 Origin and Relevance of the Term

The word "paratext," a merging of the Greek *para* (near, similar, but also opposing), and the Latin *textus* (material, textile from the verb *texere*, which means to spin, to weave), is associated with the French literary critic Gérard Genette. The term arises from his reflections in *Palimpsestes: la littérature au second degré*[33] and from his work up to *Seuils*.[34]

Its significance is evidenced by Genette's statement that "a text without a paratext does not exist and never has existed" and that "paradoxically, paratexts without texts do exist, if only by accident: there are certainly works – lost or aborted – about which we know nothing except their titles."[35] In the field of Shakespeare studies, suffice it to remember *Love Labour's Won* and *Cardenio*.

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30   Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare: For All Time* (London: Macmillan, 2002).
31   Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004).
32   Jonathan Bate, *Soul of the Age: The Life, Mind and World of William Shakespeare* (London: Viking, 2008).
33   Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*.
34   Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Originally published as *Seuils* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987).
35   Genette, *Paratexts*, 3–4.

1.2.2 Definition

The text "is rarely presented in an unadorned state,"[36] that is, without the paratext, the second of the five subcategories of transtextuality[37] identified by Genette in *Palimpsests*. Here, he outlines most of the constituent parts the paratext and their influence:

> a title, a subtitle, intertitles; prefaces, postfaces, notices, forewords, etc.; marginal, infrapaginal, terminal notes; epigraphs; illustrations; blurbs, book covers, dust jackets, and many other kinds of secondary signals, whether allographic or authographic. These provide the text with a (variable) setting and sometimes a commentary, official or not, which even the purists among readers, those least inclined to external erudition, cannot always disregard as easily as they would like and as they claim to do.[38]

It also specifies that the paratext is "one of the privileged fields of operation of the pragmatic dimension of the work – i.e., of its impact upon the reader."[39] Five years later, in *Paratexts*, Genette reiterates this fundamental dimension of the paratext insofar as it is

> a zone not only of transition but also of transaction: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that – whether well or poorly understood and achieved – is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it (more pertinent, of course, in the eyes of the author and his allies).[40]

Since his first theoretical formulation, therefore, the paratext is seen as a powerful yet subtle element that guides and directs the use of the text with a force of intervention that is greater when the reader is least suspecting of it. Genette, indeed, notably concludes *Paratexts* with an observation that is very explicit about this action:

> the effect of the paratext lies very often in the realm of influence – indeed, manipulation – experienced subconsciously. This mode of operation is doubtless in the author's interest, though not always in the reader's.[41]

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36 Ibid., 1.
37 That is, intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, and architextuality.
38 Genette, *Palimpsests*, 3.
39 Ibid.
40 Genette, *Paratexts*, 2.
41 Ibid., 409.

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From a materialistic standpoint, Genette's second type of transtextuality is the set of a series of distinct textual and graphic elements that outline a text and extend it in time and space. This peripheral position, which does not always have defined limits, is strictly connected with an onto-logical dimension: the paratext is primarily added to the text "to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world."[42] After the paratext has highlighted the existence of the text, the paratexts strictly connect the text with the distribution, the "reception and consumption in the form (nowadays at least) of a book."[43]

The elements of the paratext necessarily occupy a spatial physical location, and, thus, can be classified on a positional basis: if they are near the text, they are peritext; if they are further from it, they are epitext. Peritext and epitext are mainly detectable in written texts.

Paratextuality, therefore, establishes a relationship between the text and those "accessory signals" that can be considered as belonging to the text as either autographs or allographs, which provide the text with a (protean) outline and, at times, with a formal or informal commentary. This relationship has a strong impact on the recipient, be it on a reader of written texts, a listener of oral texts, or a spectator of dramatic texts.

Genette's second type of intertextuality is an element that is gen-erally ignored by the public, which is often subjected to it without knowledge, and overlooked by specialists who usually avoid consid-ering particulars that are seemingly marginal. The paratext is not an element that is always strictly connected to the text, nor does it have a function that is merely auxiliary. Indeed, it anticipates the text, en-suring its reception, functions as a *threshold*, a vestibule, "it is an undefined zone between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard and fast boundary."[44] It becomes a sort of suggestion for the way the text is to be read and establishes an initial agreement with the ad-dressee, inviting him or her to assume a determined interpretative atti-tude. From the paratext, the addressee gathers information pertaining to the literary genre, begins to form a range of expectations, assesses the type of communicative act suggested by the text and, at the same

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42   Ibid., 1.
43   Ibid.
44   Ibid., 2.

time, identifies previously similar textual experiences that the reader is invited to engage with before proceeding with the interpretation of the same text.

Philippe Lejeune states that this *peripheral component* of the text actually directs and drives the reading and understanding of the same whole work.[45] As we have seen, it constitutes "a zone not only of transition but also of transaction: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public,"[46] that is, of the authorial instance. It is here that the author, directly or indirectly, manifests his or her "authority" towards the text and its interpretation whose aim is a "better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it (more pertinent, of course, in the eyes of the author and his allies)."[47]

Genette summarizes by stating that

> The paratext, then, is empirically made up of a heterogeneous group of practices and discourses of all kinds and dating from all periods which I federate under the term "paratext" in the name of a common interest, or a convergence of effects, that seems to me more important than their diversity of aspects.[48]

A comprehensive study of Genette's second type of the transtextuality that investigates both its two constituent elements is hoped for by the same author given that so far literary criticism has chiefly concentrated on the epitext at the expense of the peritext:

> whereas on many occasions we have noted the relative neglect accorded to the peritext by the literary world (including specialists), the situation of the epitext is obviously very different. Critics and literary historians have long made extensive use of the epitext in commenting on works.[49]

The final sentence of *Paratexts* envisions the paratext as a metaphorical threshold, and "a threshold exists to be crossed."[50] With Genette's

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45 Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography* trans. Katherine Leary (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988). Originally published as *Le pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Seuil, 1975).
46 Genette, *Paratexts* 2.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
49 Genette, *Paratexts*, 346.
50 Ibid., 404.

theoretical contribution, this threshold can be studied with the due critical awareness. A little earlier, the paratexts is assimilated to another image, which is equally significant: the lock, be it for water of for air, sluice, or clearing house. The second kind of transtextuality,

> the paratext provides a kind of canal lock between the ideal and relatively immutable identity of the text and the empirical (sociohistorical) reality of the text's public … the lock permitting the two to remain "level." Or if you prefer, the paratext provides an airlock that helps the reader pass without too much respiratory difficulty from one world to the other, a sometimes delicate operation, especially when the second world is a fictional one.[51]

In Genette's vision, the text is unchanging "being immutable, text in itself is incapable of adapting to changes in its public in space and over time."[52] What is changing is the paratext. The paratext is, thus, a lock, a sort of membrane that turns such granitic textual harshness into something less rigid for the addressee: "the paratext – more flexible, more versatile, always transitory because transitive – is, as it were, an instrument of adaptation."[53] It seems therefore appropriate to use this category as a tool to reveal how Shakespeare was adapted to the culture of the succeeding centuries, and understand how over time he was not forgotten but remembered, and then praised, until he became the supreme literate.

Genette's second category of transtextuality of an *alteration* of a Shakespearean play will thus be an adaptation of an adaptation, an adaptation "in the second degree"; the paratext, an instrument of adaptation, of an adaptation of Shakespeare, can therefore be an instrument to study Shakespeare and his cult, bardolatry.

1.2.3 Parts of the Paratext: Peritext and Epitext

The main criterion to categorize the paratext is spatial. Genette defines the paratext with a mathematical formula: "for those who are keen on formulae, paratext = peritext + epitext";[54] it is an almost geometrical

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51   Ibid., 407–8.
52   Ibid., 402.
53   Ibid., 408.
54   Ibid., 5.

continuum, a space without gaps: "peritext and epitext completely and entirely share the spatial field of the paratext."[55]

The first spatial category is *peritext*, "the more typical one,"[56] the area that mostly characterizes the paratext. It is the area in which the paratextual elements that are closest to the text are gathered, either around the text or in the parts of the entire work, with a function that is almost exclusively one of presentation, address, and commentary on the text. It is the main and hard core of the paratext;[57] it possesses a form and its elements usually occupy fixed, nearly canonical positions: at the beginning of the text (e.g., title page, title, dedication, epigraph, preface, etc.), in the margins (e.g., notes, glosses, etc.), and following the text (e.g., afterword, tables, appendix, etc.). Finally, the format of the work, its graphic arrangement, and similar elements, are also part of the peritext.[58]

Genette calls *epitext* the more "distanced elements … that, at least originally, are located outside the book":[59]

> the epitext is any paratextual element not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating, as it were, freely, in a virtually limitless physical and social space. The location of the epitext is therefore anywhere outside the book – but of course nothing precludes its later admission to the peritext.[60]

The epitext, which can also precede the text in its temporal function,[61] does not have a precise paratextual function. With the epitext, the commentary of the work expands indefinitely into a biographical discourse,

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55   Ibid.

56   Ibid.

57   In *Paratexts* Genette devotes 11 chapters to the elements of peritext, 2 to the elements of epitext.

58   The categories identified by Genette are the publisher's peritext, the name of the author, titles, the please-insert, dedications and inscriptions, epigraphs, prefaces (various types), intertitles, and notes.

59   Genette, *Paratexts* 7.

60   Ibid., 344.

61   "For example, prospectuses, announcements of forthcoming publications, or elements that are connected to prepublication in a newspaper or magazine and will sometimes disappear with publication in book form, like the famous Homeric chapter-titles of *Ulysses*, whose official existence proved to be (if I may put it this way) entirely prenatal." Genette, *Paratexts*, 5.