"Fantastic Tricks before High Heaven," *Measure for Measure* and Performing Triads

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Abstract: Reading *Measure for Measure* through the logic of substitution has been a long-standing critical tradition; the play seems to invite topical, political, and religious parallels at every turn. What if the logic of substitution in the play goes beyond exchange and seeks out a triadic logic instead? This insistent searching for the triad appears most notably in the performance of *Measure for Measure* by Cheek by Jowl (2013–2019). Cheek By Jowl's strategies of touring, simplicity, movement, and liberation create a dynamic and ever-evolving performance. This article puts Cheek by Jowl's performance of *Measure for Measure* in conversation with C.S. Peirce's (and subsequent theorists) explorations of triadic logic with Puttenham's rhetoric of traductio (repetition with variation, and "tranlacing"), in addition to critical work on substitutions in the play. Tracing the superfluity of substitutions in rhetoric and performance of the play allows us to see how the play refuses binaries, and energizes triadic logic as a means to liveness in performance. Both Shakespeare's play and the Cheek By Jowl production use a triadic structure which suggests the Trinity, foregrounding the body as a site of mediation and liveness.

> I say móre: the just man justices;
> Keeps grace: thát keeps all his goings graces;
> Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is—
> Chríst—for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
> Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
> To the Father through the features of men's faces.
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> <div align="right">Gerard Manley Hopkins, "As Kingfishers Catch Fire."</div>

> Life is mysterious and transcends logic, so the living thing can never be fully analysed, taught or learned. But those things that apparently cut out life or seem to conceal or block it, are not nearly so mysterious as they pretend. These 'things' are bound by logic and may be analysed, isolated and destroyed. The doctor may explain why the patient is dead, but never why the patient is alive.
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> <div align="right">Declan Donnellan, *The Actor and the Target*</div>

Placing these two epigraphs together at the start of this article, I hope to put the infused language of poetry in conversation with the lived experience of the theatrical creators, especially in relation to the sign systems that produce meaning in theatrical performance. Following theatre semioticians like Keir Elam, Patrice Pavis, and Fernando De Toro, I recognize in Cheek By Jowl's production a triadic structure which I will argue evokes the Holy Trinity (Elam 1980; Pavis 1992; de Toro 1995). Comparing Hopkins' poem to Donnellan's advice exposes a potential connection among the Trinity, triadic logic in

performance, and liveness. Hopkins' poem, "As Kingfishers Catch Fire," reveals in its second stanza a theatrical and performative idea of Christ's relationship to humanity. Donnellan's advice to actors unpacks the complicated process of creating or re-creating the live experience. In Hopkins' poem, "the just man" "**Acts** in God's eye what in God's eye he is—Christ—for Christ **plays** in ten thousand places" (emphasis mine). The language of performance provides a way for Hopkins to understand the presence of Christ in humanity. When Donnellan advises actors that removing the "blocks" to human experience enhances the actor's performance and allows the mystery of life to be revealed, he describes a process that shows theatrical creation as a dance between the analytical and the mysterious. Hopkins' affinity for the language of poetry as a way to encounter Christology aligns with his desire that his poems be performed; in a letter to his brother he explains that his poetry, "must be spoken, till it is spoken, it is not performed, it does not perform, it is not itself" (Goss 2011, p. 86). Here Hopkins elides the performer with the text itself. If the poem itself is a performative act, then the interpretation of Christ who "plays in a thousand places,/ lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his," must be an act of transference, of movement. The very nature of performance, for Hopkins, requires a Christological worldview where the performance of God is always present, if a moving target. Deeply connected to Hopkins' idea of performance is the rhythm and rhetorical development of his poetry. Having his poems spoken fans them out to breath and to the body. Speaking and enacting his poetry allows the poem to be closer to "itself."

Declan Donnellan's advice to actors also underscores this idea of closeness. In fact, he argues that when actors are "blocked" they experience "paralysis and isolation—an inner locking and an outer locking. And, at worst, an overwhelming awareness of being alone, a creeping sense of being both responsible and powerless, unworthy and angry, too small, too big, too cautious, too ... me" (Donnellan 2013, p. 6). This feeling of being alone, being too much "me," is counter to being alive. As the epigraph above articulates, the doctor can analyze the dead, but cannot account for life. The theatrical experience depends upon liveness, which, for Hopkins, is "charged with the grandeur of God," but for performance theorists might be described another way. Andrew Quick, in "Taking Place: Encountering the Live," advances a description of Live Art that intersects with the tension between the "blocks" Donnellan describes and the electricity of experience in Hopkins' poetry:

> The live troubles because it cannot be completely tied down. In order to experience its very liveness we are compelled to be open to the moment-by-moment of the live's happening before applying the rules through which we might presume to understand what is taking place around us. Consequently, 'being live' displaces, if only for an instant, the constellations that bind knowledge and representation together to fashion the narratives and structures that presume to describe and organize phenomena into concrete formations. (Quick 2004, p. 93)

Though "Live Art," which Quick is analyzing, has a particular definition of the combined practices of research and performance by artists, his formulation of the way 'liveness' forces the audience to put on hold the organizing principles that it commonly uses to understand the world corresponds to Hopkins' performative approach to poetry and Donnellan's work as a director of the company, Cheek by Jowl. I am interested in bringing together this verse of Hopkins and Donnellan's approach to theatre because it reveals to me an interest in the liveness of performance that theatre and religion share which is manifest in the triadic logic that many see supporting the system of signs in the theatre, and in the Christian understanding of God as the Holy Trinity. I will argue that theatre and Christianity are inextricably bound up in triadic logic and representations through repetition, substitution, and liberation as demonstrated in both Cheek by Jowl's production and Shakespeare's text, *Measure for Measure*.

1. Triads, Liveness, *Measure for Measure*, and Cheek by Jowl

My first-hand experience as an audience member of *Measure for Measure* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2019 transformed my interpretation of the play because it made me ask these questions:

What happens in performance to the logic of substitution in the play? How does performance interfere with the fulfillment of the sign? Why does *Measure for Measure* (CBJ, 2019) seem to stage an absent presence that is then over-filled? Why would a production that seems so political and secular feel overdetermined in its representation of the Trinity and Christ? Why does this production feel deeply spiritual in a play that has so long been read as a debate among religious factions or about Kingship in a religio-political moment?[1] As an audience member, I felt the "liveness" of performance described by Andrew Quick, in that a "constellation of narratives and structures" were constantly circulating, and my expectations as an audience-member kept changing. Donnellan's techniques for producing a live event, one that always feels new for the actors and for the audience, reside in an attentiveness to the immediacy of Shakespeare's language and to the actor's bodies on the stage. Movement and stillness are balanced in equal measure in the production staging, but every moment is engaged and resonant. Both the actors and the text feel fully present and their concentration demands the audience's concentration.[2] My theatre-going experience, as well as my survey of criticism around the problem of substitution in *Measure for Measure*, spur me to question how the representation of the Trinity through triadic structures could be shaping the theatrical experience. A description of Donnellan's relationship to religion points to this possibility: "Donnellan is no longer religious in the denominational sense of the word, but there is something of the Polish director Jerzy Grotowski's 'Holy Theatre' cult about him, the idea of theatre being a sacramental art where the collusion of actor and audience will spark an event that, rooted in a celebration of shared humanity, might always carry the potential of divinity" (Coveney 2006). The tension in this description between concepts that feel static ("idea of theatre," "sacramental art") with the terminology of combustion—"collusion," "spark," "potential"—points to the very danger that Donnellan works hard to avoid—a dead, empty or disconnected performance. Shakespeare trades on this tension throughout *Measure for Measure*, and Cheek by Jowl capitalizes on this tension in performance.

Images of three appear throughout the performance in a provocative and ostentatious way. Three red boxes dominate the stage, variously opaque, transparent, closed and open. (All photographs are by Johann Persson, and can be located at the CBJ site) https://www.cheekbyjowl.com/productions/measure-for-measure/#imageGallery-216-21.[3] Before turning to the consideration of how the production coalesces around triads and suggests the Trinity, a consideration of the way in which the system of signs in the theatre hinges on triadic logic is important. As Patrice Pavis describes in "Performing Texts," "Performance is the synchronic confrontation of signifying systems, and it is their interaction, not their history, that is offered to the spectator and that produces meaning" (Pavis 1988, p. 86). The interaction of signifying systems in a theatrical production is difficult to capture and re-envision for a reading. Instantly, those who write about performances run the risk of flattening out the experience and disembodying it. Also, retaining the details of an audience member is subject to the unreliability of memory, and the uniqueness of each performance cannot fully be articulated. In the case of CBJ, the effort to write about and analyze the performances of *Measure for Measure* is even more wide-ranging, as the production run spanned six years, 24 venues, and over 11 countries. The production is also in Russian with English subtitles, with a very pared-down script. Fortunately, the company created a professional, theatrical film of the production for educational purposes; however, like many recorded theatrical performances the frisson with the audience is absent. Nevertheless, the recording, coupled

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1　See, for example, (Beckwith 2011; Besteman 2019; Goossen 2012; Smith 2018; Shuger 2001; Schleiner 1982; Knight 2001; Whalen 2014; Bradizza 2018; Rust 2019).

2　I recognize that the description of the theatrical experience above is subjective; however, whether each individual felt the 'engagement' of the performance, does not undermine that the intent of the design and staging was to engage the audience. This was especially true because the house lights were frequently turned on during the production so that the audience was aware of itself as an audience, and the actors stared directly at the audience, as if they were another character in the performance.

3　(Birksted-Breen) Birksted-Breen notes, as do others, that there are five boxes on the stage, but in the production at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, as well as the theatrical film of the production, only three are really visible. The two side boxes are effectively used as walls.

with theatrical photography, and many reviews and critical analyses, allows the researcher to present a fuller picture of the stage interactions.

When interpreting the play, *Measure for Measure*, many critics rely on the moral, religious, or political stances of the characters, but the lived experience of the characters moment-to-moment is elusive. If we consider the way a very fine critic like Anthony Dawson writes about the characters in the play, we can see that there would not be a lot of air in the room for an actor's interpretation. Dawson writes, for example, "Isabella and Angelo are both moral tyrants; both are rigid and cold" (Dawson 1978, p. 110) and later: "The tendency [to abstraction] is reflected in the language of the play, when a recurrent use of the concrete creates a sense of disembodiment, of dissociation of mind and body, feeling and action" (p. 111). In such an appraisal, the characters are flattened out; there is no friction between Isabella and Angelo if they are disembodied. Perhaps part of the problem is what Joshua Daniel describes, in an essay entitled, "The Human Body and the Humility of Christian Ethics," "our bodies are more humble than our narratives" (Daniel 2014, p. 190). The actors' work has to then be incredibly specific and truthful to fill the imaginative space of our stories. Simon Shepherd writes about bodies in the theatre: "theatre is not simply an art of bodies, but an art of bodily possibility" (Shepherd 2006, p. 10). In approaching the work of a theatre company like Cheek by Jowl, it is important to foreground this idea of bodily possibility. However, as Anna Kamaralli brilliantly explains in her essay on performance/criticism of Isabella, there is also a history of bodily and critical violence towards the character of Isabella because she "has the audacity to behave as if she owns her own body" (p. 397). There is a long history of violent stagings of *Measure for Measure* that Kamaralli interrogates, and which Cheek by Jowl's production participates in, and readers should be aware that some of the links to images included in this text depict violent scenes.[4] Kamaralli wonders whether these violent scenes really elicit audience empathy or rather feed into a desire for spectacular violence toward women. This observation is an important critique of this production and is also one of the reasons that reviews of the production called attention to the span of time in which it has been performed. The era between 2013 and 2019 witnessed an incredible shift in America, at least, from a nation that was poised to have its first female president to the #metoo movement. Laura Kolb argues in "The Very Modern Anger of Shakespeare's Women" that *Measure for Measure's* reception in our culture has shifted in just those few years in the rise of productions, and the changing nature of way she teaches and writes about the play (Kolb 2019). For Cheek by Jowl, the performance of the play over this time could leave traces of these political controversies with its audiences. The lived experiences of CBJ as a company inform its performances; the voices, gender, race, identity, and languages inform its performances; its *mise en scene* inform its performances; its varied audiences inform its performances; and the change in historical moments during the company tour inform its performances. Above all the company is actor-focused, while driven by the vision of Declan Donnellan, director, and Nick Ormerod, designer. CBJ tours more than most theatre companies, and they often collaborate with the Pushkin Theatre, Moscow. Declan Donnellan claims that Russian actors who are trained to be more comfortable with movement, provides a different experience than working with their "text-reared British counterparts" (Prescott 2008, p. 192).

The idea that Russian actors have a greater comfort with movement and gesture than actors who focus more on text may be part of the reason that this production drew so heavily on triadic structures that theatre semioticians have long acknowledged as underpinning the theatrical experience. C.S. Peirce's triadic logic has greatly influenced the study of theatrical semiotics. For Peirce, the world is a system of signs in three parts, which he explains as the object, the representamen, and the interpretant, and the sign of the object itself has three modes: the index, the icon, and the symbol. Peirce argues that signs and the creation of meaning are triadic, not binary (Chapman and Routledge 2009, p. 207). Peirce's complex and recursive descriptions of triadic relationships in language and thought are fertile

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[4]   See also (Aebischer 2008).

concepts to apply to theatrical representation. Ann Berthoff, in a chapter called "Triadic Remedies," explains Peirce's further articulation of triadic logic as "Firstness is Quality, Secondness is Event, and Thirdness is Mediation" (Berthoff 1999, p. 66). Berthoff explains that for Peirce thirdness is "the bridge" to meaning making, the method of interpretation, the idea that other meanings can make meaning (Berthoff 1999, p. 60). Fernando de Toro explains the significance of Peirce's triadic logic, arguing that binary models are an insufficient way to think about the theatre: "in theatre, unlike literary discourse, objects do have a real existence, a real presence, although in the end it only takes the form of the presence of the voice and body of the actor" (de Toro 1995, p. 65). As soon as de Toro articulates the idea of a real presence, however, he replaces it with the "form of the presence," and Umberto Eco also beautifully reveals the ephemeral nature of the sign, describing it in a reading of Peirce as akin to a "dynamic object," and that "Semiosis dies at every moment. But as soon as it dies it arises again like the Phoenix" (Eco 1976, p. 1467). Eco's revelation that the sign and its interpretation are constantly in flux corresponds to the way he interprets Peirce as being "interested in objects, not so much as ontological properties of being, but as occasions and results of active experience" (Eco 1976, p. 1465). The activity and energy present in Peirce's triadic structures is perfectly suited to Cheek by Jowl's performance of *Measure for Measure*.[5] The constant shifting of meaning, the use of one sign in relation to another to create meaning, the necessary absent presence of the dynamic object on the stage, and the critical role of the audience as interpretant coalesce in this production.

Reviewers of the production mainly conceived of it as a response to authoritarian rule and oppressive regimes. Russian critics saw the production as "a shattering portrait of contemporary Russia" *(Novaya Gazeta)*. Most UK reviewers mentioned the topical reference to Putin's government, but according to Noah Birksted-Breen, the Russian reviewers did not make direct reference to Putin (Birksted-Breen 2016, p. 88). By the time this production alighted at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2018, the #MeToo movement association was relevant. Laura Collins-Hughes' review in the *New York Times* recognizes the association: "this production had its premiere in Moscow in 2013, long before the #MeToo movement emerged as a cultural force. But in a play that examines the vicious abuse of power that people commit when they think nobody's watching, the timeless impossibility of Isabella's position could hardly be more sympathetic, or more central" (Collins-Hughes 2018). The unusually long touring cycle for this production, allows for the permeability of meaning. Like Eco's phoenix of semiotics, the production's resonance with a Russian government "with a regressive law on treason, censorship which bans swearing in the arts, anti-LGBT laws and so on" (Birksted-Breen 2016, p. 90) gained momentum in the wake of its tour during the #MeToo movement and Brett Kavanaugh's senate confirmation hearing. Keir Elam masterfully describes how this transaction occurs in the theatre, "The performance text, to summarize, is characterized by its semiotic thickness or density, by its heterogeneity and by the spatial and temporal discontinuity of its levels" (Elam 1980, p. 41). Elam describes how spectators come into the theatre in tacit agreement with a number of different codes, theatrical and interpretive, but audience members also bring a system of signs derived from their own experiences and context to apply to the performance (Elam 1980, p. 47).

The political and cultural backdrop of the CBJ production skews in a decidedly secular way, from critiques of oppressive regimes to highlights of a violent patriarchal culture. Donnellan's own statement on the play, while indicating the heterogeneity of meaning that Elam discusses, nevertheless marries personal and political themes: "*Measure for Measure* is about many different things; it always strikes me as a very modern play. It's a play about control and how one of the ways that we are controlled, by not only governments, but by churches and other institutions that seek to control us, is shame. We are controlled by shame. It starts with parents and it develops, and it is an extremely good way of controlling people" (https://www.cheekbyjowl.com/productions/measure-for-measure/). Donnellan sees a larger emotional mechanism driving the play that is wielded by institutions and

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[5] See also (Burkhardt 1995) for Peirce's triadic logic in a reading of *Measure for Measure*.

interpersonal relations, as well. However, the design of the production, the performances of the actors, the *mise en scene* (which for Cheek by Jowl usually involves the audience directly), coupled with Shakespeare's text, which revolves around religious questions of sin, forgiveness, and redemption, uses triads in a way that insistently evokes the Trinity.

2. Triadic Viewing

In watching the production, I was struck by how often the visual images land on three distinct characters or dimensions of the stage. Using the three red boxes to indicate three different kinds of "cells" the prison, the cloister and the brothel, Nick Ormerod visually supplies the triad that underlies the play. In this first image, the audience can distinctly see the three red boxes that dominate the stage. https://www.cheekbyjowl.com/productions/measure-for-measure/#imageGallery-216-24.

This second image depicts the three boxes in a more obvious allusion to what they are. Claudio sits in an electric chair, awaiting execution on the left; Isabella stands transfixed in a kind of cloister; and Pompey shags a prostitute in the brothel. That the brothel and the prison bookend the cloister is a powerful commentary on the institutionalized way culture polices and encounters sexuality: https://www.cheekbyjowl.com/productions/measure-for-measure/#imageGallery-216-25. The production radiates energy and movement. It begins with the ensemble standing between two of the boxes, a tight group. They all look out at the audience with trained intensity, looking to catch the audience's eye. Their gaze stays trained on the audience for an uncomfortable amount of time. Their facial expressions were unwavering, defiant. By training their gaze on the audience, and using partial house lights on the audience, the actors seem to implicate or invite the audience in whatever journey they are taking. These are not historical bodies, representing a past or some kind of literary tradition; they are in the moment of a lived experience that seems to be happening at that particular moment. As a group, the actors quickly walk around the stage, encircling the boxes; gradually one breaks off, stands too long looking up at a light into the wings of the theater as if staring at the sun, and the others leave him. This is the Duke, not a confident, control-freak, but an introverted, confused man. When we meet Claudio, he is framed by three officers and three boxes loom behind him. The title "Fornicator" hangs on a placard around his neck. https://www.cheekbyjowl.com/productions/measure-for-measure/#imageGallery-216-3 As the brothel and the prison frame the ends of the stage, we realize that Claudio's crime of sleeping with his fiancée will cost him his life.

In addition to the looming red boxes, both transparent and opaque, Donnellan and Ormerod deploy the actors to create the setting of the performance. In his book-length study of Cheek by Jowl's productions, Peter Kirwan uses this production of *Measure for Measure* as his final example because it exemplifies Donnellan's philosophy that "everyone is human, and that change—and theatre—come from the understanding that other people are different to me . . . .Cheek by Jowl's concept... is to treat characters as humans with stakes, and thus to allow something 'alive' to emerge" (Kirwan 2020, p. 156). Not only does this production attend to the moral and emotional life of the characters, but all of the actors also function as a mob, a crowd, the walls of a prison, etc. As Noah Birksted-Breen observes, "At the centre of this production was the human body as an element of stage design" (Birksted-Breen 2016, p. 88). The actors are onstage almost throughout the entire production, witnessing and judging the actions of the other players. The audience is also implicated in the production, as the characters often gesture to the audience as if it were "the people." The transformability of the actor's body is emphasized in a way that resonates with de Toro's explanation of the theatre sign (which rests on Peirce's triadic logic): "The transformability of the theatre sign is at the very essence of theatricality: in theatre, any sign has the potential of losing its own substance and acquiring another without losing its effectiveness in the process" (p. 71). The very nature of this transformability is at the heart of Peirce's triadic logic. As Umberto Eco and Ann Berthoff both point to in Peirce's work, it is the idea of transmission, process and interpretation that is not static, but evolving that corresponds so well to thinking about the theatrical sign.

3. The Logic of Substitution and Figures of Repetition

It is not surprising, given all the work on semiotics in the theatre using Peirce's triadic logic, that a modern production of *Measure for Measure*, would resonate with the process of transformability of the sign in the way I have described above. But I think that the play is uniquely responsive to triadic logic and lends itself ultimately to Trinitarian and religious iconography in a deep structural way that Cheek by Jowl, with its emphasis on "liveness" and the transformability of the human experience, could hardly avoid. Before turning to the moments in the CBJ production that most dynamically enact the rejection of the binary, the lure of the triad and the resolution of the Trinity, I argue that the critical reception of the play text corresponds to this move as well. Using a play that has long been featured in critical analyses as an example of substitution (from G. Wilson Knight and William Empson on), I interrogate the varied critical responses to the play's logic of substitution and displacement, and offer as an alternative reading that the rhetorical figures of repetition and substitution in the play point to a triadic rendering of these forms that eschews traditional binary formations the play tries to set up in favor a strident call for more, just as Hopkins begins the last stanza of his Kingfisher poem: "I say more." Encoded in the smallest rhetorical figures in the play is a demand for excess, for replacement that never satisfies.

As Debra Shuger points out in her book on the political theologies of *Measure for Measure*, it is the only play with an overtly Biblical title, referencing the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:2, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Tyndale). The repetition in the Bible passage, which Shakespeare simplified, is itself a figure of repetition that George Puttenham identifies in *The Art of English Poesy*. He calls it traductio or the "tranlacer," writing:

> Then haue ye a figure which the Latines call Traductio, and I the
> tranlacer: which is when ye turne and tranlace a word into many sundry
> shapes as the Tailor doth his garment, & after that sort do play with him
> in your dittie.

> *The Art of English Poesy: A Critical Edition* 2007, p. 304.

The repetition of terms with slight syntactical changes shows the poet, like a tailor, stitching together language to create something new.[6] "Play" with language is a key feature of Puttenham's description of repetition. In the title of his play, Shakespeare takes the Sermon on the Mount and streamlines the repetition to create a balanced syntax. This title represents the beginning of Shakespeare's engagement with repetition in the text. In the title of the play, we can read a simple exchange and repetition, but as the drama unfolds, that repetition is anything but simple. In fact, the play is more likely to "turn" and "tranlace" a word, in spite of the way it asserts the opposite.

As many critics have observed, *Measure for Measure* begins with an attempted erasure of power. Duke Vincentio decides to step down in favor of his deputy, Angelo. But Vincentio's self-imposed exile hardly mirrors a retirement from public life; instead Vincentio plans to return in disguise to survey his deputy's performance. In turning over the keys to his kingdom, he surmises to Escalus, "What **figure** of us think you he will bear?" (1.1.16).[7] Duke Vincentio already imagines Angelo replacing him—"supply (ing)" his "absence." A measure for measure; a Vincentio for an Angelo. By using the language of rhetoric and art, "figure," Vincentio foregrounds the idea of representation, and this is, in many ways, a false representation because Angelo's governance is temporary. The Duke imagines him enforcing the laws that the Duke has failed to uphold, and then the Duke believes that he will eventually reassert his own power. Critics have seen in this the play's debate over contemporary

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6　Many critics have written on Shakespeare and the use of repetition, see (Brown 1999; Sears 1973; Hoy and Hibbard 1984; Rauh 2013; Culler 2015).
7　All references to *Measure for Measure* are from (Shakespeare 2016).

religious debates between the Puritan and Anglican assertion of civil government and authority.[8] Also, the binary between private morals and public justice is often asserted in criticism of the play. However, through the figures of repetition in the play, these binaries are constantly challenged, and the language of over-fulfillment is asserted.

Consider that while the characters of government—Angelo, Escalus and the Duke—construct a "balanced" transfer of power, the comic characters—Lucio, Pompey, and Elbow—exert a verbal wordplay of repetition and misdirection that quickly leaves the "balance" of "measure for measure" behind. When we first meet Lucio (described as a "fantastic"), he debates with two gentlemen about the nature of Grace. After tossing the word about as the prayer before the meal, Lucio declares, "Grace is grace, despite all controversy: as, for example thou thyself art a wicked villain, despite of all grace" (1.2.24–26). Like Puttenham's tranlacer, Shakespeare plays with "grace." The controversy is over one kind of grace (by divine appointment), with another (by good works), and yet Lucio inserts a third kind of grace, which the gentlemen is surely lacking. This kind of repetition with a difference is often merged with a third term in *Measure for Measure*. Shakespeare often sets his clowns to do this work; much like Dogberry, the constable in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Elbow misplaces his words through repetition and a malefactor becomes a benefactor. Pompey, a bawd and a tapster, uses repetition to assert authority, especially speaking to Escalus and Angelo:

> Pompey: And I beseech you look into Master Froth here, sir, a man of fourscore
> pound a year, whose father died at Hallowmas. Was't not at Hallowmas,
> Master Froth?
> Froth: All Hallow Eve.
> Pompey: Why, very well: I hope here be truths.
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> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　2.1.117–121

After the repetition that confirms his error, Pompey searches for truth, as if the initial incorrect repetition is fully supplied and corrected by the right one. This is a comic turn of the tricolon, where the third term in the repetition bears the humor through deflation, confusion, irony or rejection.

Though Shakespeare's clowns rely heavily on figures of repetition, so too do his more serious characters, Isabella, Angelo, and the Duke. At the beginning of the play, Isabella, a novice of St. Clare's, encounters Angelo and immediately resorts to the kind of repetitive structures we see in the comic character's banter. Pleading for her brother's life to Angelo, who is carrying out a sentence of death on all fornicators (Claudio, Isabella's brother, has impregnated his fiancee, Juliet), Isabella frames her pleas like the tranlacer of Puttenham's *Poesy*:

> There is a vice that most I do abhor,
> And most desire should meet the blow of justice,
> For which I would not plead, but that I must,
> For which I must not plead, but that I am
> At war 'twixt will and will not.
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> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　2.2.29–33.

Isabella, like the clowns, plays with repetition and language in a way that makes puns available to Angelo's ears. The doubleness of language kindles in her speech: abhor/abwhore, blow (to strike)/blow (to breathe). Throughout this scene, as Isabella begs for her brother's life and Angelo suddenly finds himself attracted to her, they repeat each other, bouncing back and forth the words, "honor," "fault," "forfeit," "brother," "pity," "sense." Angelo, too, structures his thoughts through repetition, "What's this? What's this? Is this her fault or mine?/The tempter or the tempted, who sins most, ha?/ Not she, nor doth she tempt; but it is I? (2.2.161–164). Not only does he play with these different iterations of

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tempt, but he is picking up Isabella's language from a few lines above, "temporal" and "temptation." Across characters, the poet turns the words, their roots and extensions around in the aural space of the scene.

In a final example, out of the many repetitions and "tranlacings" that happen in the play, when Isabella accuses Angelo in front of the Duke of trying to barter her virginity for her brother's life, she does so with a double repetition that resolves in a third repetition of superfluity:

> Angelo: And she will speak most bitterly and strange.
> Isabella: Most strange, but yet most truly, will I speak:
> That Angelo's forsworn; is it not strange?
> That Angelo's a murderer; is 't not strange?
> That Angelo is an adulterous thief,
> An hypocrite, a virgin-violator;
> Is it not strange and strange?
> Vincentio: Nay, it is ten times strange.
> Isabella: It is not truer he is Angelo
> Than this is all as true as it is strange:
> Nay, it is ten times true; for truth is truth
> To the end of reckoning.
>
> <div align="right">5.1.37–47.</div>

In the middle of this speech, Isabella accumulates the evidence against Angelo, and in the third repetition, the exhibition of his crime overflows. Shakespeare uses repetition for humor and emphasis, but also to demonstrate excess. Rarely do we find in the text a single repetition, more often there is always a third term, as in this moment that overflows and is overdone (signified even in Mistress Overdone, herself). On the level of the word, Shakespeare heightens the drama and the stakes by investing the language with repetitive structures, and his use of the third level of repetition suggests that the play's initial negotiation of "measure for measure" may not be the whole story.

4. *Measure for Measure* and the Attraction to Substitution

Stitching together variant word forms may be what Shakespeare does all the time as a poet; his ability to play with words is not singular to *Measure for Measure* by any means; however, he is investing a lot into those repetitive structures in the play on the micro-level, and when we couple that with the logic of substitution that dominates the play and criticism about the play, the draw to substitution seems inevitable. There are really two kinds of substitution happening, one within the context of the play and one without. In the context of the play, the first substitution is Angelo for the Duke, the second is Isabella's chastity for her brother's freedom, the third is Mariana for Isabella in the bed trick that lures Angelo to sleep with his rightful bride and tricks him into thinking he's violated Isabella.[9] The fourth major substitution within the play is the triple swap of Claudio for Barnardine for Ragozine. Perhaps the most influential essay on the substitution is Alexander Leggatt's 1988 piece in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, which argued that there is a kind of "gremlin of substitution" that haunts the play. Leggatt articulates more thoroughly than any critic the substitutions happening within the play, spending the most time on the substitution of Mariana for Isabella, as the only successful substitution in the play in the sense that it at least "rights the wrong" committed by Angelo when he broke off his engagement to Mariana. However, Leggatt ultimately concludes that all the substitutions are inadequate, and he resolves that Shakespeare's comic turn in *Measure for Measure* was to write an imperfect play. He writes that Shakespeare "faced the gap between conception and embodiment, his imagination generated

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9 See especially Aebischer and Kamaralli who argue that Angelo is the one character in the play who is "technically raped" (Kamaralli 2016, p. 401).

image after image of representations that are vivid, but not quite adequate" ([Leggatt 1988](#), p. 359), and earlier in the essay he claims that scholars have a hard time rendering the play as anything more than a morality drama ([Leggatt 1988](#), p. 357). Leggatt's essay is important because it articulates the discomfort with a simple binary substitution.

The play has long invited this kind of analogical thinking, especially in terms of finding God in the play. In 1974, Richard Levin published an essay in PMLA on *Measure for Measure* entitled, "On Fluellen's Figures, Christ Figures, and James Figures." Aligning the character traits from a character in *Henry V* with scholarship on *Measure for Measure*, Levin uses Fluellen's penchant for seeing comparisons and figures in all things to flog fellow critics for looking for Christ Figures in the play. Levin, grumpily, fails to acknowledge in any conventional way the critics who attempt to find Biblical parallels in the play. He simply enumerates, critic # 1, # 2 and so on—in doing so, of course Levin de-values the work of many admirable critics: G Wilson Knight, who saw the Duke as a figure of God; Roy Battenhouse, who read the play as a commenting on the Christian idea of atonement and anticipated a criticism of Lousie Schleiner's reading of the play in the context of the parables.[10] The problem with Levin's biting criticism is that it corrals and dismisses the deeply complicated work of analyzing Shakespeare's plays; of course they are never simply correlative constructions. Shakespeare was generating work to be read and appreciated on the stage by an audience with living, breathing actors whose very embodiment would change the nature of the productions and performances every single time. However, the limitation of Levin's criticism, and the reason even more essays have been generated trying to locate Shakespeare's religious iconography and underpinnings of the play is that *Measure* as we have seen in the proliferation of repetitive rhetorical structures, and in the multiplicity of substitutions always seems to be generative and repetitive at the same time. Levin's frustration suggests something deeper about the religious iconography in the play, and by refusing to name these critics he accumulates more repetitive structures.

Taking the idea of proliferating or generating substitutions, Huston Diehl suggests that the play's flaws are actually part of a strategy to represent the religious controversies of the time. Diehl finds that the play leans towards the Calvinist sentiments that were defining James' church, arguing with those who find more in common in the play with Catholic notions of atonement and with the somewhat positive representations of monks and nuns. But he pushes his analysis of the play in a direction that I think is very helpful in terms of recognizing the play's investment in substitution and embodiment. For Diehl, the play constructs a thematic understanding of these substitutions that corresponds to Calvinist distrust of idolatry, and the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Diehl reframes Angelo's succumbing to desire for Isabella from a lapse into sin, but rather a confusion of loving virtue and the divine with carnal, idolatrous love. Diehl writes, "The bed-trick does not only trap Angelo in his own perverse lust, hypocrisy, and betrayal; it also reveals his central epistemological error, an error that he is in danger of repeating endlessly: mistaking his limited power for absolute power and confusing his asceticism with perfection, as well as desiring Isabella in place of God" ([Diehl 1998](#), p. 401). Diehl's historicist reading of the play leads him to conclude that the unsatisfactory substitutions are a fault of not knowing. However, this reading portrays Angelo's response to Isabella as a theological problem that seems disembodied, and potentially leaving Isabella unfairly responsible for Angelo's behavior. It also leaves Isabella playing a substitute for God, which Diehl acknowledges she avoids, when she refuses to sacrifice her maidenhead for her brother's life.

Recent readings of the theological/political arguments in the play acknowledge the overflowing nature of the significations in the play. In Matthew Smith's search for a common example of religious experience in the play as a "world-making or socializing institution," he finds that religion in the play is both "within and beyond the law" and that Isabella seeks a "moral identity beyond the law" ([Smith 2018](#), p. 16). Bethany Besteman's analysis of the play also demonstrates the collapse of a binary

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10　([Levin 1974](#); [Schleiner 1982](#); [Knight 2001](#); [Battenhouse 1946](#)).

system, explaining, "Reformed belief in the limitations of the human will point to the collapse of the theory of the King's two bodies," (Besteman 2019, p. 1). Perhaps the most relevant analysis for the way I am thinking about how the Cheek by Jowl performance interacts with the play text of *Measure for Measure* is an article by Devin Byker on the intercessory language of the play. Like so many critics, Byker's analysis is driven by a dissatisfaction with substitution in the play; "In *Measure for Measure*, the conceptual tool of substitution alone fails to elucidate the complex extension and retention of self upon which intercessory speech and action hinge" (Byker 2016, p. 406). Byker argues that the play is structured on intercessory speech (one character pleads for another), and Byker's reading of the play ultimately addresses the difference between Catholic and Protestant approaches to intercession and posits Angelo and Isabella on competing sides of substitutionary logic. By claiming a mode of speech for the play that uses triadic logic—the first person pleads on behalf of the second to the third—Byker exposes that substitutions in the play always invite a third term that is not always directly present, but hovers over the exchange.[11]

The other strain of "substitution" criticism on the play looks to correlatives outside the context of the play. When Debra Shuger wrote *Political Theologies* on *Measure for Measure*, Linda Tripp was wiretapping Monica Lewinsky, and more recently when Brett Kavanaugh was confronted by Christine Blasey Ford, Twitter recognized the way Angelo and Isabella's story fits squarely in the #Metoo movement. https://twitter.com/MaeSChaplin/status/1079295162533072896 https://twitter.com/wtsfan/status/1053964110432333824.

When Angelo presents his diabolical plan to Isabella that he will free her brother in exchange for her chastity, she responds:

> Isabella: Little honor to be much believed,
> And most pernicious purpose! Seeming, seeming!
> I will proclaim thee, Angelo, look for't.
> Sign me a present pardon for my brother,
> Or with an outstretched throat, I'll tell the world aloud
> What man thou art.
> Angelo: Who will believe thee Isabel?
> My unsoiled name, th'austereness of my life,
> My vouch against you, and my place I'the state
> Will so your accusation overweigh,
> That you shall stifle in your own report
> And smell of calumny.

3.1.146–156.

The series of threats and exchanges:—Isabella's chastity for her brother's life, Claudio's pardon for Isabella's silence—are perverse scales of justice. In tweets about the Brett Kavanaugh hearing, "Who will believe thee, Isabel?" became a kind of rallying cry. The idea that the psychosexual power dynamics of four hundred years ago would be unfurling in the Congress in 2018 drew people to the play. But the play also always invites comparisons; I believe the logic of the substitutions is that the repetitive structures spill over in excess in the play. This kind of energy imbues the play with a power that sustains it beyond its own historical moment and speaks to the kind of combustion discussed earlier.

At the beginning of my discussion of substitutions, I mentioned the first one which really inaugurates the triadic logic in the play: Angelo for the Duke. That first substitution is carefully constructed by Shakespeare not to be an even exchange, but a triumvirate. The Duke's first lines are not to the man replacing him, but to Escalus, explaining that he knows Escalus is so well-versed in government that he can give no advice. The Duke tells Escalus: "Then no more remains/But that

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[11]　Though I am thinking primarily of exchange and substitution in relation to triads and the Trinity, many critics have looked at the play in terms of other exchanges, gendered, legal, and economic. See for example, (Gillen 2017) and (Meyler 2019)

to your sufficiency, as your worth is able,/And let them work. The nature of our people,/our city's institutions and the terms/For common justice, you're as pregnant in/ As art and practice hath enriched any/That we remember" (1.1.7–13). From the audience's perspective it seems that Escalus is being handed control of the government. The question that follows about Angelo must come as a surprise to Escalus and to Angelo; if Escalus has already been given the commission to govern and is "pregnant" with his knowledge and understanding of Vienna and common justice—what do we need Angelo for? The Duke explains to Escalus: "For you must know, we have with special soul/Elected him our absence to supply,/Lent him our terror, dressed him with our love/And given his deputation all the organs/Of own power" (1.1.17–21). The slipperiness of the substitutions begins from the first lines of the play. Who is really "replacing" the Duke and why does there seem to be a kind of false equivalency—Escalus is already "sufficient" and Angelo is being "lent" terror and being "dressed in love"? Angelo is supplying an absence, but he seems to be lacking himself. This is clearly a triumvirate of leadership. Angelo is being put to the test more than he is functioning as a substitute. He is not in the place of the Duke; rather, he is being tested to be in the role of the Duke. This three-headed government constructed by the Duke also mirrors the structure of the theatrical performance of the play. At the end of the introduction to the play in the *Norton Shakespeare*, Brett Gamboa adds a performance note, "Productions of *Measure for Measure* can convince audiences that any of the play's three leads—the Duke of Vienna, Isabella, or Angelo—occupies its central position and each role can be played so as to deserve sympathy or condemnation, so performances can feel revelatory even to those who know the play" (Shakespeare 2016, p. 276). In a performance that pull of the triad is felt, with different balances depending on the performance. In an essay on *Twelfth Night*, Paul Dean argues that Shakespeare uses triads to reveal the Trinity, responding to both Plato and Augustine. Dean demonstrates that many critics have looked to his poetry to convey a triadic and ultimately Trinitarian reading of love (Dean 2001, pp. 501–2). The love triangles in *Twelfth Night* always resolve two into one, as do triadic renderings in the poetry.

At the end of Isabella's first scene of pleading her case to Angelo to save her brother, she explicitly invokes the Trinity:

> Alas, alas,
> Why all the souls that were were forfeit once,
> And he that might the vantage best have took
> Found out the remedy. How would you be
> If he, which is the top of judgment should
> But judge you as you are? Oh, think on that
> And then mercy then will breath within your lips,
> Like man-new made.
>
> 2.2.75.

The language here of "forfeit" or debt of remedy or healing, of judgment, of mercy, of breath and of a man "new made" opens up the play to seeing the Trinity. The judgement of the Father—which Angelo is called upon to rise to, but at which he will fail; the sacrificial nature of atonement by Christ, the Spirit breathing life into the newly created man. Isabella is asking him to imagine himself relationally like the Trinity. This moment corresponds to the way Augustine describes the Trinity as a relationship, not a substance. Augustine writes that God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are known and understood in relation to each other (Augustine and McKenna 2002, p. 236). In Book 9 of his treatise on the Trinity, Augustine teases out the metaphor of three gold rings, made of the same substance, but individual in characteristics, writing, "It is just as if you were to make three similar rings from one and the same gold, yet they are related to one another in that they are similar, for *everything similar is similar to something*" (Augustine and McKenna 2002, p. 277, emphasis mine). Here Augustine anticipates C.S. Peirce's description of a triadic sign system where the sign requires interpretation and that we can only understand the system by means of mediating structures of signification. Angelo explicitly rejects Isabella's claim to the Trinity, asking him to imagine himself in a triadic relationship where he might

be able to look inward to interrogate his cruelty towards Claudio. He says, "Be you content, Fair maid. It is the law, not I" (2.2.79–80) and there, Angelo sidesteps the role she wants him to adopt. It is the law, not I. Isabella always complicates the substitutions that Angelo would like to make when she almost anticipates his bargain: "We cannot weigh our brother with ourself" (2.2.126).[12] Isabella rejects any false equivalence to judge others, whereas Angelo seems comfortable in that role.

While Isabella rejects this philosophical exchange early on in the play, she accepts the morally questionable bed trick later, allowing Mariana to stand in for her with Angelo, and this is ultimately an unsatisfying exchange because Angelo does not stop her brother's execution but only hastens it. In Philip Lorenz's reading of the play, the issue of the bed-trick is put in the context of the trope of bodily exchange. Lorenz's interpretation of the play links these bodily exchanges to the ideas of transplantation and transfer. He writes that the play works as "a representational paradigm of theologico-political sovereignty in which the 'absence' created by the departed sign creates an institutional desire that can only be satisfied by the substitution of another sign" (p. 65). Lorenz argues that the play depends on the movement of metaphor from "the proper to something else" (p. 74). His articulation of the way substitutions work in the play as creating an institutional desire corresponds to the way I see the logic of the Trinity working on the play, and which Cheek by Jowl's production incorporates.

5. The Lure of Three

In Cheek by Jowl's production, the character of Barnardine, played by Igor Teplov surfaces in an extra-textual way as he haunts the Duke (Alexander Arsentyev) dressed as a convict. In this image from the performance, he hangs on the Duke in a parasitical clasp. https://www.cheekbyjowl. com/productions/measure-for-measure/#imageGallery-216-16. Donnellan's use of Barnardine in this production responds to Shakespeare's creation of important triads in the play, the three heads, three deaths, and three executions. When the exchange of Mariana's body (as Isabella) fails to elicit the release of Claudio, the Duke has to supply another head to satisfy Angelo's order. The sacrifice of these three "convicts" (Claudio, Barnardine, and Ragozine) recalls the three crucifixions on Mount Golgotha, with Christ flanked by two thieves. To complicate this simple substitution of one convict's head for another, Shakespeare presents us with the comic moment of Barnardine—a convicted murderer too drunk to agree to die. Barnardine has been languishing in the prison for nine years, spending most of it in a stupor, with very little interest in ever leaving the confines of the prison. The Provost describes Barnardine in a comic way reminiscent of Puttenham's tranlacer, "A man that apprehends death no more dreadfully but as a drunken sleep: careless, reckless, and fearless of what's past, present, or to come; insensible of mortality and desperately mortal" (4.2.140–144). When the Duke tells Barnardine that he will hear his last confession, Barnardine cannot stomach it: "I have been drinking all night—I am not fitted for it" (4.3.42–43). Surprisingly, the Duke agrees: "A creature unprepared, unmeet for death;/And to transport him in the mind he is were damnable" (pp. 66–68). To save Claudio, the Provost of the prison comes up with a third head—one Ragozine who happened to have died that morning of a fever. They agree that Ragozine even bears a closer resemblance to Claudio. The storyline of Barnardine is completely superfluous as it turns out, and critics are divided as to why Shakespeare included it, many arriving at the comedy of the moment as its true instigator. Stephen Greenblatt, in *Shakespeare's Freedom*, sees Barnardine as an emblem of autonomy—his willful refusal to be directed into death symbolizes, for Greenblatt, Shakespeare's desire for artistic freedom (Greenblatt 2012, pp. 7–16). However, I see more echoes in the story of Barrabas and narratives of releasing a prisoner or even more importantly in the drive of the play to have three substitutions. Like the triumvirate of the Duke, Escalus and Angelo at the beginning of the play, Shakespeare gives us the three convicts—Claudio, Ragozine and Barnardine. In his essay on substitutions, Leggatt points out that "God acts on humanity

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12 Byker describes Angelo's position as an "anti-representational stance" (Byker 2016, p. 419).

through a series of substitutions: the Incarnation, the Eucharist, and the Priesthood" (p. 340), but Leggatt ultimately does not see the Trinity as a driving force in the play.

Beyond the visual representation of threes in the CBJ production, the textual creation of triads in the play, and the substitutions that always seem unsatisfying, there is finally an inescapable draw in the production to triads that the audience can see in the movement of the characters. The resolution of three in the performance often reveals itself in the way the company constitutes presence on the stage. Cormac Power's book on presence in the theatre provides a useful way to think about how Cheek by Jowl's approach to the playtext invites triadic logic and the Trinity. Power explains that "Theatre affirms *its* presence by making its 'presence' enigmatic" ([Power 2008](), p. 14). In the performance of *Measure for Measure* by CBJ, there are several moments when presence is made enigmatic in a way that signals the compensatory logic of the triad. First, in Isabella's first scene with Angelo, the Provost hovers on the edges of the scene, ostensibly involved in paperwork. When Angelo tells her "Your brother dies tomorrow. Be content," Isabella falls to her knees, facing the audience, saying the "Our Father." Angelo, discomfited, but attracted to her faith and/or her innocence or an inexplicable pull, drops to his knees next to her. The Provost slightly shifts standing above them; Angelo looks to him, and in a comic moment, the Provost slowly descends to his knees until the three of them stare out silently praying in front of the audience. This pull of the Provost to join the prayer seems inescapable, and is also a turning point for Angelo, as his attention to Isabella shifts at that point. He had barely noticed her, prior to this moment. There is an enigmatic presence that pulls the actors into three. When Isabella returns to plead for her brother's life, the production enacts another moment of an absent presence that demonstrates again how the logic of the triad—not just substitution—fuels the sense of liveness and tension in the play. Prior to Isabella's entrance to their next scene together, Angelo prowls agitatedly around the stage. Isabella, ignorant of his change in tone and energy, kisses his hand to beg for her brother's life, and it is as if she ignites a powder keg. He pushes her back to the table and gropes her. In this image you can see her anguish as he asserts power over her both physically violent, and chillingly abusive. https://www.cheekbyjowl.com/productions/measure-for-measure/#imageGallery-216-11. Just after this moment, he takes off her shoes and sucks on her toes. Part of her body stands in for the whole, as he possesses and caresses her foot while gazing under her skirt. He grabs her to force himself on her, but she bites him, stopping the attack. He leaves her with the unholy bargain that she rejects. When she leaves, Angelo sniffs and caresses her chair in a haunting, possessive way that signals the surging desire for the absent presence that courses through the play. The chair becomes a representation of Isabella, and the kind of shifting signifying from actor's bodies, to set pieces and back again is energized. Later, when Isabella tells Claudio of the bargain, and he tentatively suggests that she might agree to it, Donnellan and the company choose to stage an attempted assault on Isabella by her own brother, recalling, as Birksted-Breen notes, an enactment of Isabella's suggestion that this is a kind of incest on his part. These two images show the way the production stages substitutions in a triadic way. In the first image, the company holds Claudio (Petr Rykov) aloft over Isabella. https://www.cheekbyjowl.com/productions/measure-for-measure/#imageGallery-216-23. And when this assault is disrupted by the company, Claudio turns violently to play the bass fiddle, replacing the body with the instrument, https://www.cheekbyjowl.com/productions/measure-for-measure/#imageGallery-216-18. These moments trade on the triadic logic of the theatre's signifying system that reveal the danger in the instability of the substitutions. The chair and the bass fiddle as the erotic substitutions for Isabella in the production demonstrate the objectification and dehumanization of Isabella. The constant use of substitutions and exchanges, coupled with the repeated gesturing to the audience inviting them into the performance, as mob, as the people, as witnesses, and as judges gives the production its dynamism and its terror.

Finally, I come to the most striking moment of all which draws us into the Christology of the play in a decidedly secular production. Barnardine, the prisoner who is too drunk to die, who is, as I have mentioned, the doppelganger of this Duke, stalks the Duke, and he dances a dance of death with him. The bare-chested, thin, dirt-covered Barnardine is almost a stand-in for

the Duke, physically. They are similar in height and stature, but Barnardine is the completely unaccommodated man. Shorn of his hair and most of his clothing, he is the most basic of human beings. When the Duke pardons him, after a tense waltz/drunken dance, Barnardine collapses onto the lap of the Duke. For a moment, the two freeze under a spotlight and they become a framed, theatrical pieta. Barnardine is draped across the Duke, cradled by the him like Christ, in Mary's arms. https://www.cheekbyjowl.com/productions/measure-for-measure/#imageGallery-216-38.

In the fifth act of the production, the Duke strolls forward with Angelo and Escalus on the red carpet; they cross the single red carpet and join at the singular microphone, but the image of the three politicians is backlit so that three shadows loom forward. https://www.cheekbyjowl.com/productions/measure-for-measure/#imageGallery-216-36.

This image brings together what the play sets out in the beginning, the triad of male leaders. I want to suggest that even in a production that seeks the explicitly political themes in the play, the Christian imagery, and especially the iconography of the Trinity finds a way in because it really is underpinning the logic of the play through the signifying system of triadic logic. Theresa Coletti, in her book, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of Saints: Theater, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval England* writes that Christian Drama in the West begins with the recognition of a lost body.... accounts of the Marys who seek, but do not find, the body of Christ at the tomb" (Coletti et al. 2004, p. 190). That Barnardine becomes an image of Christ in this production is disconcerting, but also on some level absolutely right. If the play hinges on the logic that repetition (and therefore, performance) cannot be about a dead imitation, but a lively variation, then taking Barnardine, synonymous with one of the thieves on Golgotha, and transforming him into a Christ figure upends and fulfills the triad. In an essay on mercy and the creative process in the play, Dayton Haskin articulates the ethical implications of the way the play invites the Trinity in: "To imagine the needy brother as an *Alter Christus* presupposes a basic respect for and gratitude to Christ himself" (Haskin 1977, p. 358). Though not a theatre company invested in Christian iconography, Cheek by Jowl, in its articulation of empathy, the ability to imagine another person's perspective, allows Barnardine to "act in God's eye what in God's eye he is—Christ," as Hopkins wrote.

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