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MICHAEL BENTON and SALLY BUTCHER

Introduction: Illustration

Illustration is the reverse of ekphrasis: unlike the poem "speaking out" for a silent picture, paintings that illustrate literature "read silently" the poetry to which they refer; and these "visual readings" remain on view, available as texts to complement that literature. But one cannot overlook the dependency in the origins of illustration. The visual image comes into existence in response to a verbal stimulus, its orientation controlled and its details dictated to a greater or lesser extent by its original in another medium. There is a measure of freedom in the translation; and how painters exercise it is of significant interest to aesthetic education in two ways: first, in illuminating how the two media create their effects; and second, for the pedagogical benefits that flow from using paintings in literature teaching, especially in relation to older texts.

For the best part of two centuries, from Hogarth's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) to Waterhouse's *The Lady of Shalott* (1888), English painting is liberally punctuated with famous images based on literary texts. Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, and Tennyson are perhaps the most popular poets with painters. In comparative art history, these literary subjects hold particular interest when the same text is depicted by different artists. From an educational standpoint, the relationship between word and image is the more productive. It is a problematic one, raising a list of tricky questions: Do paintings extend or close down our readings of literary texts? Are there different modes of "reading" required of the two arts? Is there a type of reading available to us via the visual image, one inexpressible in language, that exists alongside the literary text to which it refers? How does the illustrative painting deal with matters of description and narration in respect of its literary source?

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Nowhere are these questions more starkly posed than in paintings of Shakespearean scenes. As Merchant points out in his account of the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery, a project that was intended as the foundation of a British school of history painting, it was Alderman Boydell himself who, with disarming honesty, put the case against the illustration of Shakespeare: "He (Shakespeare) possessed powers which no pencil can reach. . . . it must not, then, be expected, that the art of the Painter can ever equal the sublimity of our Poet."[1] Charles Lamb was more bluntly critical: "What injury did not Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery do me with Shakespeare. To have Opie's Shakespeare, Northcote's Shakespeare, light-headed Fuseli's Shakespeare, wooden-headed West's Shakespeare, deaf-headed Reynolds's Shakespeare, instead of my and everybody's Shakespeare. To be tied down to an authentic face of Juliet! To have Imogen's portrait! To confine the illimitable!"[2] This intemperate outburst ignores the fact that, far from being a means to confine or tie down, painting a Shakespearean scene is itself an interpretation; at its best, it can open up elements of the literary text and be viewed as a sort of performance that offers a form of understanding akin to that reached through watching a scene in production. The rest of this article sets out to substantiate this claim.

The traditional literary critical argument over Shakespeare has been whether to treat his plays as extended poems or as acting scripts. In educational contexts, this argument resolves itself into a further subdivision between script and performance, since schools and colleges of necessity make clear distinctions between play readings in the classroom and play productions for public view. These distinctions are useful in exploring what sort of understandings are available to the spectator of Shakespearean paintings. Three well-known paintings, representative of poem, script, and performance, respectively, will indicate the variety of insights that a study of such paintings can offer. They are O*phelia* (1852) by John Everett Millais, *Lady Macbeth Seizing the Daggers* (c. 1812) by Henry Fuseli, and *The Play Scene in "Hamlet"* (1842) by Daniel Maclise. The first depicts a scene that is not staged in Shakespeare but evoked with such descriptive power in the poetry that the artist is led to *augment* his image with his own visual rhetoric. Drama is subdued by painterly detail. The second depicts a scene that is staged in Shakespeare but from which the artist *abstracts* the essential theatrical tension and redramatizes it through representing it in this different iconic medium. The third depicts a scene that is not only staged in Shakespeare but is one where the artist is at pains to *document* a notional performance by representing the proscenium arch as a compositional principle and by including references to contemporary styles of acting and production. Of course, these are not discrete categories of illustration; but they do reflect the emphases of a great many pictures and are helpful in teasing out the aesthetic appeal of painting Shakespeare.

Poem: The Female Muse

Pre-Raphaelite painting was linked with poetry from the time of its inception just four years before Millais's *Ophelia* was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1852. Shakespeare's plays provided the source for what became one of the Pre-Raphaelites' most absorbing interests: women. As Jan Marsh[3] has shown, their fascination took many artistic forms. On the one hand, they elevated women to an instantly recognizable type of goddess—long-necked, with flowing tresses and a soulful expression; on the other, they reduced women to a series of roles that were the constructs of the predominantly male painters—virgins, mothers, fallen women, and femmes fatales. Similarly, though their view of women is idealized and celebratory, it is also invested with Victorian values which were accustomed to promoting the passive, decorative woman as the center of moral and domestic influence within the home. Favorite Shakespearean women painted in this period are Ophelia, Juliet, and Miranda. These three women have much in common; they are all very young, desirable, naive, and essentially powerless. They also all experience deep romantic love. In each case their lives are ordered and their futures decided by an older, male generation. The Pre-Raphaelite painters would have been attracted by them as nubile young women under the influence of romantic love that was to be (in two cases) shattered by death. Moreover, the contemporary model of marriage was moving away from a union determined by considerations of class and property to a relationship that was expected to involve the deepest sexual and romantic feelings of the participants. While similarity of background and interest was seen as desirable, the ideal union—which is in many places enshrined in Victorian literature—was based on a shared romantic commitment. However, it was also a relationship vulnerable to untimely death, most often of the wife in childbirth. Thus from this Victorian pairing of love and death with youth and beauty springs the choice of Shakespearean heroines and the elegiac quality of many contemporary paintings.

Uniquely, in his picture of *Ophelia* Millais expresses these themes in both art and life. The construction of this image is well documented: Millais spent nearly four months, from July to October 1851, painting the background on the bank of the River Hogsmill at Ewell in Surrey. In December he returned with the canvas to London, where he inserted the figure, with Elizabeth Siddal portraying the tragic heroine.

The short career of Elizabeth Siddal as a supermodel—or "stunner," to use the Pre-Raphaelites' term—and her early death are surrounded by an aura of romantic myth that vies with that of the fictional figure she portrays.[4] By re-inventing the Shakespearean woman in these visual terms, Millais was giving form and substance to the Pre-Raphaelites' muse. Painting Shakespeare as poetry could scarcely have had a more propitious narrative
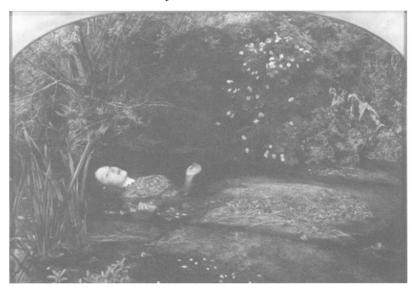
Figure 1. Sir John Everett Millais (British, 1829-1896), *Ophelia* (1851-52). Oil on canvas. Presented by Sir Henry Tate, 1894. Reproduced with permission from The Tate Gallery, London.

in art history from which to spring, for, though frequently chosen by later artists, Ophelia was at this time a highly original subject.

Millais's painting is faithful to Shakespeare's text in providing an imaginative recreation of Gertrude's lines describing Ophelia's death:

> There is a willow grows aslant a brook
> That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
> There with fantastic garlands did she come
> Of crow - flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
> That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
> But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.
> There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
> Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
> When down her weedy trophies and herself
> Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
> And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up;
> Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
> As one incapable of her own distress,
> Or like a creature native and indued
> Unto that element. But long it could not be
> Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
> Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
> To muddy death.
>
> (*Hamlet*, act 4, scene 7, lines 167-84)

The imagery is intensely visual, and Millais's interpretation is correspondingly rich in precise natural detail. The willow grows "aslant" the stream, its branches entwined with a nettle, and a robin is perched on its bough. This recalls the "bonny Sweet Robin" of Ophelia's song in act 4, scene 5. The dog roses on the bank, the one by Ophelia's cheek, a further pink rose by the hem of her dress may refer to Laertes's having called Ophelia the "rose of May." Purple loosestrife in the upper right-hand corner of the painting reflect the "long purples" of Gertrude's speech, while the violets encircling Ophelia's neck recall those which "withered all when my father died." They also carry the meanings of faithfulness, chastity, and death. Other flowers in the painting are introduced by Millais: daisies figure innocence, the poppy symbolizes death, and the forget-me-nots halfway up the figure on the right, and also bottom left, are chosen for their name. The image of woman-as-flower is also one that is pervasive in Pre-Raphaelite painting—woman as fragile, fragrant, and passive. The natural coloring of the picture, blending with the silvery brown of Ophelia's dress and its stylized flower pattern, suggests that she is returning to a fertile, natural element into which she will gradually be absorbed. There is no sense of an individual young woman, despite the well-known account of Elizabeth Siddal's long-suffering role as Millais's model,[5] but rather woman as an example of tragic heroine; a sacrificial victim who is all the more alluring because at the point of death. Her facial expression is empty of all meaning, the eyes unseeing because she has passed beyond any visual awareness of her surroundings. The impact of the painting rests in the poignant contrast between the bright spring flowers and the defenselessness of the drowning girl. There is no sign of the "envious sliver," no dirt under her fingernails, no mud on her dress; she is the sanitized mermaid in her element, belonging to water, not earth, and associated, as her parted lips suggest, with an unearthly music.

Given the painstaking, botanical fidelity, the presentation of the figure, and the deliberate exclusion of any details suggesting a stage, this example of "painting Shakespeare as poem" has a curiously ambiguous effect. The spectator is faced with an image in which the background is in danger of overwhelming the subject in a way that is impossible when a Shakespearean text is considered as either script or performance. Paradoxically, in pursuing a portrayal of the poetic description, Millais has achieved a strangely theatrical performance. If one covers the hands, bosom, and head of the figure, the remaining nine tenths of the picture is a display of technical virtuosity—a brilliant rendering of botanical detail, an almost two-dimensional flatness in the spatial organization, aqueous effects, and subtle lighting. This prolixity is neither present nor needed in Shakespeare. The weight of detail "stills" Millais's image, whereas in Gertrude's lines the natural scene is infiltrated by the sequence of actions describing Ophelia's last moments.

Moreover, the figure, on the visible evidence of her head and hands, appears healthy and serene, not deranged as the play describes. The spectator might well feel that there is more of the actual Elizabeth Siddal than of the poetic Ophelia. Here, too, the attempt to illustrate the poetry is subverted by the artifice of the different iconic medium. As a result, the spectator is left with the sense that this image says more about Millais's construction of Victorian womanhood than it does about Shakespeare's Ophelia.

Millais's *Ophelia* must stand as the representative of the many other nineteenth-century painted Ophelias; and she exists, too, along with Dante Gabriel Rossetti's multiple images of Elizabeth Siddal, as the female ideal that can be found and reconstructed in the real world. Together, fictional Ophelia and actual Lizzie become the icon for the myth of womanhood that the Pre-Raphaelite painters especially pursued. Women inspired them, in particular the young and always beautiful women of Shakespearean and Romantic poetry. In one sense this was the ordinary desire of male painters to paint decorative women; but, as indicated above, "woman" became a dominating metaphor for their creative psyche, a blend of muse, cultural ideal, and spiritual icon. It is rewarding to examine the extent to which a character is granted autonomy, something which Shakespeare had no trouble in assigning to his women, and the extent to which subjects remain simply that—prisoners of the artist. A comparison of these areas shows Shakespeare vigorously reclaiming the wider spectrum of human behavior. By contrast, Millais and his fellow Pre-Raphaelites had little time for Benedict's Beatrice, Petruchio's Kate, Portia, or Lady Macbeth—difficult characters, to a woman. For their representative, we need to look elsewhere.

Script: The "Painted Devil"

With Fuseli's *Lady Macbeth Seizing the Daggers* illustration takes a step nearer to the stage. Fuseli concentrates on the visual representation of an episode of heightened psychological tension. Whereas Millais's picture "lives off" its original text, presenting a richly jeweled surface that is essentially parasitic upon Shakespeare's words, Fuseli's picture interprets and expresses the obsessive and perverted relationship between the protagonists that drives the whole of *Macbeth*.

Again, the genesis of the picture is helpful in understanding the nature of the image. From the 1760s onward, Fuseli was, in Lucy Oakley's words, "England's most prolific and influential eighteenth-century artist-interpreter of Shakespeare,"[6] and *Macbeth* was the play to which he returned most frequently. Two particular theatrical interpretations, together with many depictions of episodes from the play over a forty-year period, appear to have influenced this final painting. The immediate inspiration may well have been Mrs. Siddons's last performance in her celebrated role as Lady

Macbeth on June 29th, 1812, the year in which Fuseli's picture was first exhibited. Years before, however, Fuseli had watched David Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard in the leading parts and produced a watercolor of this same scene. Comparison of this early drawing with the later oil painting is instructive. Although the concentration upon the figures is essentially similar, the treatment is dramatically different. Against a more realistically painted stage set with paved floor, screens, and curtains, the two figures are elaborately clothed—Macbeth in buckled shoes, knee breeches, shirt, and long jacket; Lady Macbeth in shoes, underskirt, a voluminous farthingale, and adorned with a light shawl and various items of jewelry. Macbeth's stance and face express a melodramatic stage horror which, no doubt, reflected Garrick's performance, as he points the daggers toward his wife. She, in turn, leans slightly backward, her left index finger to her lips to quieten her husband and her right hand, open-palmed, extended toward him in the manner of a reproving mother dealing with a naughty boy.

The final painting strips the image of this stagey naturalism: the curtain to the right is reduced to a dark shape tied back; the door jambs to the left function more as a psychological cage pressing in claustrophobically on Macbeth than as an actual door frame. Fuseli has no other interest in the

Figure 2. Henri Fuseli (Johann Heinrich Füssli, Swiss-born, 1741-1825), *Lady Macbeth Seizing the Daggers* (exhibited 1812). Reproduced with permission from The Tate Gallery, London.

stage set. His attention is upon the walking, haunted ghost that Macbeth has become and the intensity that he is greeted with by his wife.

> "Infirm of purpose!
> Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead
> Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood
> That fears a painted devil."

(*Macbeth*, act 2, scene 2, lines 53-56)

Fuseli gives us Macbeth as "a painted devil": the bloodied daggers are now angled toward himself, the naked evil of his crime exposed in his portrayal as a tense, inhuman skeleton. The overall atmosphere achieves its intensity also through areas of black and dark brown contrasted with the use of a ghastly white. We know that the murder of Duncan takes place at night, but here Fuseli creates a Stygian darkness that effectively conveys appropriately mythological intimations of hell. In Fuseli's interpretation of the scene, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are both living within a nightmare of their own creation and are already fatefully depicted as the lost souls they are destined to become.

As is typical of Fuseli's more mature painting, he does not extend his picture to the borders of the canvas, thereby attaining a heightened concentration on its central focus. The two protagonists confront each other, but there is little doubt as to where the balance of power lies. Conspirators in action, they are irrevocably connected and psychologically divided. Macbeth, a skeletal, stooping figure, stumbles through a doorway transfixed by the horrific evidence of his crime. As Fuseli's depiction suggests, he has already become a hollow shell of a man, manipulated by his ruthless wife. The Greek mask of terror which his face resembles is noted by Jean Hagstrum as Fuseli's "regular symbol of oppression and tyranny."[7] The blood that covers his dagger and hands, and that can also be seen on Macbeth's torso, indicates the extent of his moral compromise with evil, suggesting a cancerous process that cannot now be reversed. Lady Macbeth's stance is contrastingly bold and vigorous; her strong movement emphasizes Macbeth's paralysis—it conveys the body language of power. Unlike her stance in the early drawing, she now leans energetically forward, the angularities of her form clad only in the ghostly drapery of an evening dress. She now gestures silence with her right index finger, allowing Fuseli both to balance the two figures by extending her left arm along the same line as Macbeth's and to infuse Lady Macbeth with the urgency of dramatic movement that Shakespeare's scene demands of her: within two lines she has left to incriminate the grooms.

What does the foregoing account imply about "painting Shakespeare as script"? Clearly, Fuseli's painting depends in a fundamental sense on Shakespeare's play, and yet it has the ability to encapsulate theatrical and

dramatic meanings that lead both from the stage and the page. Fuseli's work inhabits the area between a theatrical production and a literary reading, since it develops from both art forms to establish its own independent dimension. This dimension is achieved by going beyond mere theatricality and introducing surrealistic elements that are either unacceptable or unworkable on stage. The spectator is drawn into the interior, psychological world of *Macbeth*, not by the painterly elaboration of details, but by the rigorous exclusion of naturalism in favor of an expressionist image of the play's central conflict. Such illustration is far removed from being a decorative response; it is an interpretive act of critical insight.

Performance: "The Play's the Thing"

In a fascinating essay titled "Shakespeare and the Theatre of Illustration," Cary Mazer describes the idiom in which nineteenth-century productions of Shakespeare were staged as "pictorial realism."[8] He goes on to explain how this "theatre of illusion, of spectacle, of picture, of geographical and historical specificity" shared an aesthetic kinship with the art of the easel painter and the book illustrator. This idiom was at odds with the theater for which Shakespeare wrote his plays, where the players and the poetry set the scene. In contrast, the theater of pictorial realism set out to create an illusion of an actual place and time. Mazer comments: "The proscenium arch, behind which the action took place, was like a picture frame setting off a pictorial composition, or a window through which the audience viewed an illusionary world."[9] Yet this was not another variation on the theme of the sister arts with, in this instance, theatrical productions and Shakespearean paintings imitating each other. For, despite the abundance of portraits of actors in their roles and depictions of scenes from their performances, "the vast majority of paintings on Shakespearean subjects were not based on the Shakespeare of the theatre, but on the Shakespeare of the study."[10] Mazer argues that the theater of pictorial realism was a theater of illustration. Stage performance was a way of elaborating upon the literary text, of telling the Shakespearean stories "in the language of living pictures." He concludes: "The features that Shakespearean painting and Shakespearean performance of the nineteenth century have in common, then, are not so much the product of their interrelationship as of their parallel relationship to literary, rather than theatrical, sources."[11]

Against this background, when we look at Maclise's painting of *The Play Scene in "Hamlet"*, how much do we read "backwards" to Shakespeare's text and how much "sideways" to contemporary theatrical practices?

Maclise's picture is a history painting on the grand scale; it is a huge canvas (60" x 108"). Yet despite its size, there is a firmly controlled compositional scheme to organize the host of characters and to depict the play-
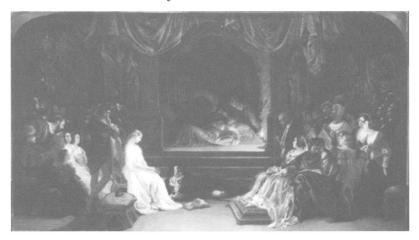
Figure 3. Daniel Maclise (Irish, 1806-70), *The Play Scene in "Hamlet"* (exhibited 1842). Reproduced with permission from The Tate Gallery, London.

within-a-play. The frame of the painting—with the aid of two curved re- minders of the actual theater in the top corners—creates a proscenium; "and the play-within-a-play is staged on a proscenium-within-a-prosceni- um."[12] The spectator views the action from the best seat in the house, slightly raised above stage level and centrally placed. The dramatic mo- ment that the painting depicts is at the climax of the play scene, just before Claudius's departure, when Lucianus pours poison in Gonzago's ear. Yet when originally exhibited, Maclise chose Hamlet's lines to Horatio before the start of the play-within-a-play with which to accompany the painting:

> "There is a play tonight before the king;
> One scene of it comes near to the circumstance
> Which I have told thee of my father's death;
> I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
> Even with the very comment of thy soul
> Observe my uncle . . .
>   Give him heedful note,
> For I mine eyes will rivet to his face."

> (*Hamlet*, act 3, scene 2, lines 80-85; 89-90)

The reason for this is clear: the caption quotation clearly directs us to the narrative performance of the play-within-a-play and, particularly, to its ef- fect on the spectators. The meaning of the painting lies in the intelligibility of the internal gazes of the characters. Maclise translates the final lines of the caption quotation into visual terms: observation is the theme. Courtiers, guards, ladies-in-waiting, and children form the outer audience watching the action with a variety of emotions: to the left, one apprehensive lady, hands clasped together, receives an explanation from the man behind her;

to the right, two women stare at the stage, seemingly transfixed by the simulated murder. The inner audience comprises Horatio and Ophelia to the left, Claudius, Gertrude, and Polonius to the right, and a recumbent Hamlet between them below the recessed stage. It provides, simultaneously, both a crosscurrent of gazes to capture the psychological tension and a strong compositional framework to encapsulate the dramatic climax. Of the six principals, only Gertrude appears to be watching the play; the rest are watching each other. Horatio thoughtfully observes the King, Ophelia's eyes are cast down sadly toward Hamlet, while her father stands, head bowed, watching his daughter. But the core of the tension is inscribed in the triangulation that connects the murder of Gonzago happening on stage at its apex, with Hamlet watching Claudius, and Claudius, turned away, staring into his own soul. Neither Hamlet nor Claudius needs to watch the play at this point; they know what is happening. The tension that flows along the lines of this central triangle scarcely needs the dramatic chiaroscuro on the clothes and faces, nor the touch of melodrama in the shadow of the hooded Lucianus, the poisoner, which rears up across the back wall. Also consistent with the idea that the theater of pictorial realism was a theater of illustration is Maclise's introduction of visual symbolism to add the moral weight of historical precedent to the drama. Hence, in the background are ranged a series of allegorical emblems: Ophelia sits beneath a figure whose hands are in an attitude of prayer; the statue of Justice with sword and scales stands over Claudius. The tapestries are similarly balanced. That on the left wall depicts the temptation and expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden; that on the right wall shows "The Sacrifice of Abel" and "Cain Murdering Abel": all refer to the play's themes of murder and disinheritance. Such visual representations of Biblical stories add an intertextual layer of meaning to the picture.

"Painting Shakespeare as performance" is clearly more complicated than the straight translation from theater to canvas. While the stage and the spectator's angle of gaze may provide the schema, the substance of the image is likely to derive from various literary and visual sources and to reflect the artistic conventions of more than one medium. Shakespeare's text, contemporary productions of *Hamlet* that Maclise attended, other pictures of the play with which he was familiar such as those by the German artist Moritz Retzsch[13]—all contribute to the final image. Visual representations of stage performances, whether notional or actual, are constructs that may beguile by their seemingly innocent appearance as theatrical documentary. In fact, they are doubly representational, affecting to represent on canvas what has already been represented on stage with the illusion of verisimilitude that is neither possible when painting Shakespeare as poem, nor sought after when painting Shakespeare as script.

Cross-curricular Implications

Implicit in the examples we have discussed is the triangular relationship between Shakespeare's texts, stage performances, and the painter's visual representations. The substantive words and images, constantly open to our inspection, are joined by the ghosts of past performances. The aesthetic problems that this series of relationships sets the spectator/reader are not only complex in themselves, as we have tried to show, but also pose issues of classroom methodology. The "double status" of the text—as script and as poem—complicates the study of Shakespeare for scholars, painters, and teachers alike. This was why, when we came to look at the range of Shakespearean paintings, we chose to discriminate further between the "visual script" such as Fuseli's that constitutes a psychological metaphor, and the "visualization" offered by Maclise that, for all its tension, reflects the conventions of the theater of illustration, whose purpose was to tell tales from Shakespeare in the idiom of living pictures.

In respect of classroom methodology, the exploration of various aesthetic relationships is opened up by such cross-curricular study. For example, Millais's *Ophelia* is one among many. Students' own visualizations of the scene can be compared with those of a range of artists where the contrasts in the representation of her character, the precise moment of her death scene that is depicted, and the relationship between the figure and the setting offer a variety of interpolations that serve to direct the spectator back to the poetry of Gertrude's lines. To Millais's tragic heroine might be added Arthur Hughes's elfin-faced, Madonna-like girl and any of John Waterhouse's three Ophelias.[14] Waterhouse's first image is of a tousled and provocative girl lying in an abandoned attitude in the grass, a seductive Ophelia whose innocence has been corrupted. The second is an enchanting, medieval damsel from the age of romance and Arthurian quests, dressed in period costume, with the look of a tragic princess waiting to be rescued by her knight. The third reflects the Edwardian preference for a more statuesque figure, and this full-bosomed girl appears both pensive and sensuously beautiful. Whether lying down, sitting, or standing—at whatever the supposed moment in the scene—Waterhouse's Ophelia gives no sense of a deranged mind. The comparative deconstruction of such images in relation to Shakespeare's text offers insights into how description and narration operate in the two media. Their integration in Shakespeare's poetry exposes the delimiting effects of illustrating unstaged scenes, as the painter is driven to compensate for the narrative restrictions of the medium, either by increasing specificity of detail or by portraying his subject as a sort of costume drama in ancient or modern dress.

Other questions were raised at the outset having to do with "reading" the two arts. Fuseli's reading of *Macbeth* as seen in the particular painting

discussed could be extended to include other drawings, sketches, and paint-
ings he produced of scenes from the play, notably *Lady Macbeth* (1784), *The
Weird Sisters* (c. 1785), two versions of Macbeth and Banquo meeting the
witches on the heath (1798 and 1817), and his *Shakespeare Cycle: Macbeth*
(1777-78), a set of six ink sketches on paper of different scenes.[15] More sig-
nificantly in the light of the questions we originally raised, this long preoc-
cupation with the play appears to deepen both his aesthetic appreciation of
its meaning and his capacity to express it on canvas. His late great painting
does possess the quality to stand alongside Shakespeare's lines and commu-
nicate the evil intensity and existential horror of the scene in a visual lan-
guage unavailable to the playwright. Shakespeare gives us a narrative of
evil; Fuseli paints evil itself. Word and image complement each other in a
unique relationship.

If studying painted Ophelias can deepen our understanding of
Shakespearean poetry and Fuseli's *Macbeth* pictures can widen our concept
of reading, the pictorial realism exemplified by Maclise and others offers
different benefits. In particular, the parallel relationship between theatrical
practices and visual illustrations, on canvas or in books, gives ready access
into how nineteenth-century aesthetic principles interpreted early seven-
teenth-century dramas. Maclise's painting is less important for the details it
documents about the staging of Victorian productions of Shakespeare than
it is for what this documentation signifies about these principles. To read
the positioning of the characters, the symbolic areas of light and shadow,
the allegories on the walls is to read the Victorian mind and how it interpreted
a canonical text in the light of contemporary values.

Paintings of Shakespearean scenes thus offer singular sorts of "per-
formances." They are not to be viewed as mere "stills," as it were, from an
ongoing production, but as representations that have distilled influences
and ideas from far beyond the confines of the particular image and from
outside the medium in which they are made. Conversely, such concentra-
tions of meanings into a single image lead to paintings of Shakespeare—
whether of poem, script, or performance—that offer rich insights into the
plays themselves.

NOTES

1.   Preface to the Catalogue of the Shakespeare Gallery (1789), quoted in M. Mer-
      chant, *Shakespeare and the Artist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 67.
2.   Ibid.
3.   J. Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Women* (London: Guild Publishing, 1987).
4.   See J. Marsh, *Elizabeth Siddal, Pre-Raphaelite Artist. 1829-1862* (Sheffield: Ruskin
      Gallery, 1991); and V. Surtees, *Rossetti's Portraits of Elizabeth Siddal* (Oxford:
      Scolar Press in association with the Ashmolean Museum, 1991).

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5.   The account of Elizabeth Siddal's illness, following Millais's requirement that she pose for long periods in a bath full of water, appears in many places. See, for example, S. Wilson, *Tate Gallery: An Illustrated Companion* (London: Tate Gallery, 1990), p. 83.
6.   L. Oakley, "Words into Pictures: Shakespeare in British Art, 1760-1900," in *A Brush with Shakespeare. The Bard in Painting: 1780-1910*, ed. R. Anderson (Montgomery, Ala.: Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, 1986), p. 5. This publication also includes a reproduction of Fuseli's 1766 drawing discussed below.
7.   J. Hagstrum, *William Blake, Poet and Painter* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964; Phoenix edition, 1978), p. 27.
8.   C. Mazer, "Shakespeare and the Theatre of Illustration," in *A Brush with Shakespeare*, p. 24.
9.   Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 27.
11. Ibid., p. 28.
12. Ibid., p. 26.
13. M. L. Ausfield, catalogue entry, in *A Brush with Shakespeare*, p. 71.
14. A. Hughes, *Ophelia* (1852), and J. Waterhouse's three versions of this subject, dated 1889, 1894, and 1910. For a fuller discussion of these and other Shakespearean paintings, see S. Butcher, "Painting Shakespeare" (unpublished MA(Ed.) dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Southampton, 1995).
15.   See Merchant, *Shakespeare and the Artist.*, pp. 79-80; and D. H. Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations by and after Henry Fuseli* (London: Scolar Press, 1994).