

Hugh Macrae Richmond, "The UCB Shakespeare Program" *Chronicle of the University of California V* (2004), 116-28.



Plantagenet Women: The end of Richard III, with HR as the Earl of Richmond. Since the time of Plato's *Republic* and the *Poetics* of his pupil Aristotle, art has been identified as an imitation of life. Compared to the normally two-dimensional art of painting, or even the mostly static three-dimensional art of sculpture, drama (and to a much lesser extent its later permutations in film and video) uses forms of artifice more closely corresponding to the actual conditions of life of its audience: with live human bodies in three dimensional physical spaces. These spaces may approximate to the settings of actual experience, or even utilize surviving historical settings of actions when these are recreated on location - as with any performances of Shakespeare's divorce trial in *Henry VIII* in the Blackfriars theatre, which occupied the identical space where Queen Catherine of Aragon originally confronted her judges. What has become fully explicit in modern training programs ranging from language skills to jet piloting, is that such imitation of reality can provide an intrinsic part of effective learning, using artificial situations and mechanical

"mock-ups" to approximate and anticipate the challenges of "the real thing." Modern sociology typically invites neophytes to imagine themselves in hypothetical situations in which to learn by experiment through acting out their options. Moreover, the celebrated psychologist Erving Goffman (once a faculty member at U.C.B.) has asserted that all social interaction is acting, in his seminal work, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. His avowed precedents for detailing this intersection of daily experience and dramatic artifice lie in such famous assertions by Shakespeare as are found in Jaques's speech in *As You Like It*:

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts. (2.7.139-42)

Similarly the tragedy of *Hamlet* invites the hero and his audiences to explore the distinction between the harmless acting in a feigned reality and those fatally irreversible actions taken in earnest. My ultimate point is simply that education and theatre are not just complementary, they are deeply interrelated, even interdependent. The very role of teacher in any discipline necessarily involves the planning and staging of learning experiences. Perhaps all teachers should take an introductory course in acting (or in Shakespeare, at least).

The Shakespeare Program, specifically, was developed in response to the vast size and impersonality of an undergraduate lecture course in the major plays of Shakespeare, in which dynamic individual interaction by students with the material or the instructor seemed impossible, not least because of the almost total absence at that time of usable theatres and even of film-projection facilities on campus, to provide direct theatrical experience to students. In 1964 I taught this class to 400 students and it became clear that procedures for such huge courses needed drastic rethinking to ensure the appropriate educational outcome of a significant student appreciation of the Fine Arts in general, and particularly of those involving performance. Our use of new, more authentically theatrical procedures was incremental and financially modest, as it was initially necessary for these attempts to be largely self-supporting.

For it was soon apparent that any use of performance for intensified understanding of Shakespeare's texts required diverse procedures for which only minimal facilities and funding then existed. We had to develop means for the rental and projection of major feature films of Shakespeare productions; the co-ordination of course schedules and activities with local professional productions; the recruitment of professional actors and directors from such distinguished resources as the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, A.C.T., and the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival; the use and even creation of video documentaries of performances, etc. Modest student fees and then tiny administration grants helped to institute these innovations. Additionally, presentations were diversified by a series of prominent actors such as Mark Rylance and Mel Gibson. Demonstrations and workshops were also given by professionals: R.S.C. actors including Susan Fleetwood and Mike Gwilym; and stage directors Patrick Tucker (R.S.C.), Dakin Matthews (Calif. Shakespeare Festival), William Glover (Oregon Shakespeare), and Louis Fantasia (Shakespeare's Globe, U.S.A). Such approaches were further diversified by a range of distinguished lecturers from various departments of U.C.B. itself, such as Louise Clubb, Stephen Greenblatt, and Norman Rabkin, and scholarly visitors such as John

Wilders of Oxford University (consultant for the B.B.C. TV Shakespeare series), Laurence Ryan (Professor of English at Stanford University), and Stanley Wells (Director, Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-upon-Avon).

However, such exposure to the professional theatre and to researchers into its nature did not provide the full interactive experience offered by direct participation. A more active mode for undergraduates was introduced which used dynamic options to replace minor mid-terms and quizzes - such as writing a Shakespeare sonnet, or staging Shakespeare scenes. The first of these options proved so successful that several collections of sonnets were published (see the fourth of the Appendices for examples). Later, on the model of a traveling Elizabethan company of players adapting to circumstances, many experimental performances were given to the public on Wheeler Hall Steps, at the Faculty Glade, in the Fife Room, at the Lawrence Hall of Science, and even (appropriately, if ambitiously) at the Greek Theatre, which now seems suitable mostly for pop music.

Literary essays remained central to the Shakespeare Program since it remained imbedded in the English major, but writing now included use of diverse and professional formats such as theatre reviews, actors' notes, script writing, etc. However, the deeper student involvement in the presentation of course materials fostered a marked increase in effective writing skills generally because criticism was based on experience not theory. As student interest in performance evolved, satellite courses were attached to the main lecture course, offering formal credit for study of Renaissance analogues and source materials (Rabelais, Erasmus, Machiavelli, Cervantez, Lope da Vega, etc.) and for the staging of full-length student productions. The latter even won international recognition because the productions ultimately included useful video recordings of rarely staged plays: *King Henry VI*, *King Henry VIII*, *Pericles*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, etc. These performance options were successfully extended to related texts in the other courses, in comparative literature, medieval studies: *La Celestina* of Rojas and *The Second Shepherds' Play*; and even to (supposedly) non-dramatic literature such as Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. Some of these productions were so unusual that they are now cited in scholarly works (e.g. the Oxford University Press edition of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*; the Lang performance script of *Paradise Lost*; and the Manchester University Press performance study of *King Henry VIII*).



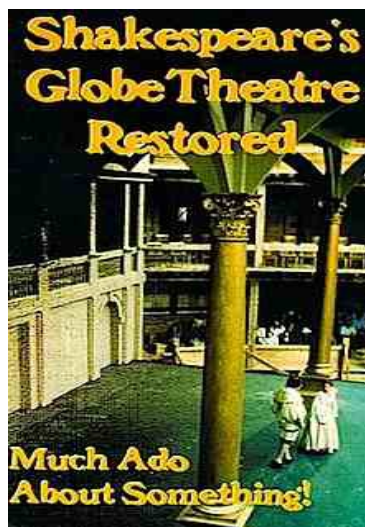
Satan meets Sin and Death (*Paradise Lost*, II.648-80).

Students become so deeply involved that, as a direct consequence of the Program, many are now distinguished university teachers and producers of Shakespeare (e.g. Eric Nicholson, at SUNY and Syracuse University in Florence); others founded repertory theatres (e.g. James Reber: the San Jose Repertory theatre) or performing companies (Jess Borgeson - now Jess Winfield - a founding member of the internationally-famed Reduced Shakespeare Company). Three winners of Distinguished Teaching Awards are among those faculty who have been involved in supervising or applying materials from the Program: English Professors Janet Adelman, Stephen Booth, Jackson Burgess, William Nestruck, Hugh Richmond; in Dramatic Art, Warren Travis, Barbara Bush. Dr. Paul Shepard (of Media Services) won a Distinguished U.C.B. Staff Award for his directorial work on stage and video with the Program.

Such outcomes are less crucial than the vitalization of Shakespeare studies for large numbers of undergraduates. Coupled with associated courses, the Program has affected 250-400 students per year. It has received very favorable approval ratings from around 90% of students enrolled, which is close to the best ratings of even small classes of 30 students or less on campus. This level of appreciation remained consistent for twenty years, as verified by research surveys funded by the U.C.B. Council for Educational Development, which also indicate high memory retention and sustained interest in Shakespeare by ex-students ten years after the courses. Once firmly established, the Program received numerous grants from many sources, on and off campus, including \$102,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to make its methods and materials available in video programs such as *Shakespeare and the Globe* now in national

distribution by Films for the Humanities (Princeton, NJ). Graduates from the Program regularly send financial contributions to U.C.B. to ensure the continuation of its operations and initiatives.

As a result of the Program's twenty-year association with Sam Wanamaker's project to rebuild Shakespeare's Globe Theatre near its original site in Southwark, London, the Program's staff helped to set up a new summer course in 1997 at the Globe for American Shakespeare students, scholars, teachers, and performers, but the precedent for this course had already been established in 1996 when a student production of *Much Ado* was transferred from U.C.B. to the stage of the rebuilt Globe in London. A performance was recorded, and it provided the core of a video documentary about the use of the rebuilt stage called *Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Restored* (distributed by T.M.W. Media, Venice, CA).



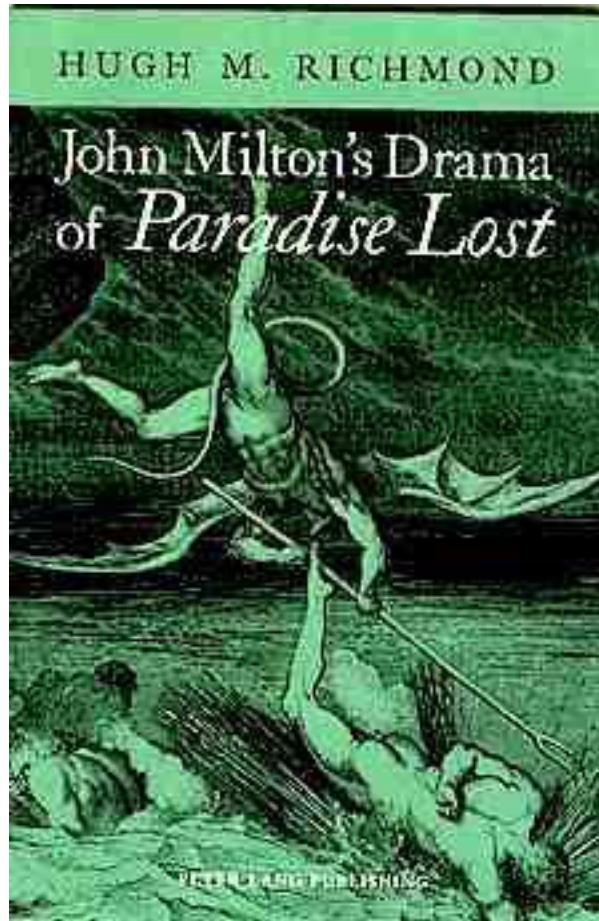
This documentary provides a key resource for the annual courses now operating for American Shakespeareans who wish to work on the Globe stage. The Globe course initially included, and has since been partially staffed by U.C. faculty and doctoral students, who have used this activity in their research about the significance of the restored Globe stage. The initial opportunity to participate in a full Elizabethan-style performance of a Shakespeare play before a large invited audience at the Globe marked the high-point of the Shakespeare Program's artistic achievement for the undergraduates involved. They will not readily forget the lessons learned under these circumstances. Moreover, the U.C.B. Office for Educational Development has funded a project (2007) to digitize the visual records of the Globe Theatre reconstruction and its subsequent use in such projects as our production of *Much Ado*. Some 550 of these images have since been added in Gallery 8 of this web-site, for student and scholarly use.

The academic strength of the program as part of the English major (if not more broadly) remains its diversification of academic methods, such as the kinetic use of performance for instruction by professionals and the students themselves. But this approach leads to better writing, because it involves the most intense preparation and thoughtful awareness: the obligation to present one's understanding of a text to a live audience of 200 people is a unique reinforcement for study. Moreover, this reinforcement is not confined to

Shakespeare scripts or even texts originally written in English. The methods have been applied to foreign drama such as Rojas' *La Celestina*, Molière's *Misanthrope*, and Racine's *Phèdre*, and it has proved rewarding with speeches from Plato and St. Paul, Erasmus and Cervantes. The value of the approach reaches far beyond English studies and can be used equally well to heighten student participation in the teaching of foreign language and literatures. One of the Program's assistant directors, Linda Lees, staged Menander's *The Girl of Samos* for the U.C.B. Classics Department, before going on after her Ph.D. to become a theatre director in New York.

The Program has thus provided a model for the current structure of the revised UCB drama program by encouraging joint productions with the Drama Department with such foreign language disciplines as Classics, Spanish, Italian, German, and French. The Program has sponsored performances in foreign languages (e.g. a Spanish performance from *La Celestina* and a Tagalog version of Milton's *Paradise Lost*). Thereby, it demonstrated that the student staging of literary material can be as dynamic a factor in foreign language instruction as it has been in English courses. This is currently being applied to work with the Hispanic population which will soon become the majority in modern California, using the Program's previous experience with Spanish cultures in two conferences (in Los Angeles and Oakland) called "Shakespeare, California, and the Spanish Connection."

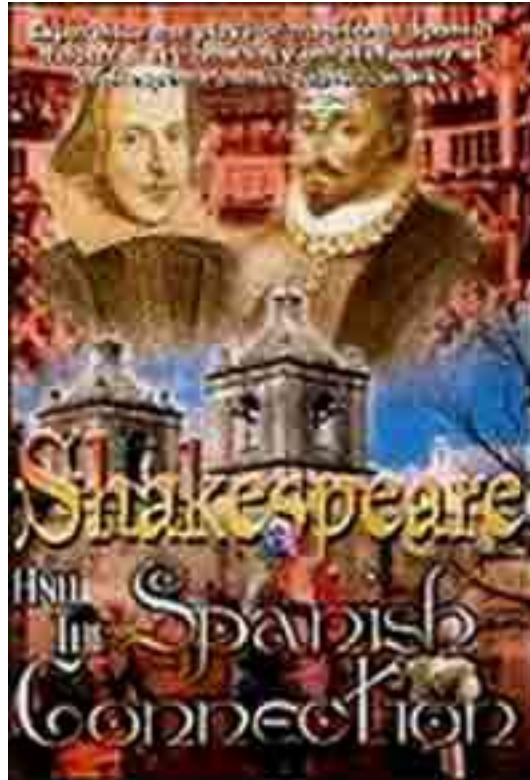
The Program's numerous performances of Shakespeare have been both live and edited for video, with many of the latter being broadcast on public television, while four are in national distribution, the two on Shakespeare and one each on Chaucer and Milton. The Program staged the first production ever in California of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (the last play associated directly with Shakespeare), and the first fully staged production ever of *Paradise Lost* in its originally intended play format. It also made an educational video documentary about the historical recreations of Tudor costume, music, and dance, attempted in the Renaissance Fair of Northern California. Many of the videotapes produced are unique and unprecedented, such as a performance of the surviving music of Milton's *Comus*, the video version of the Spanish classic, *La Celestina*, and a modern dress version of John Webster's *The White Devil*. These videos are all available from a variety of sources and are used in instruction and in scholarly research throughout the U.S.A. and abroad (some copies are in the Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Centre). The U.C.B. production of Shakespeare's *King Henry VIII* led to a stage history of the play published by the Manchester University Press, while the script for the performances of *Paradise Lost* was published in 1992 by Peter Lang.



Indeed, such performances have led to numerous other scholarly and critical publications and to the founding of two University facilities: the Shakespeare Film Library, a teaching collection based on the Extension Media Centre of U.C.B. which served all eight campuses from 1979 until video cassettes made it redundant; and a Multi-campus Research Group with over a hundred active participants: the University of California Shakespeare Forum, which has organised annual conferences and frequent research and pedagogical training sessions statewide and year-round from 1980 to 1999. Some of these meetings have involved many hundreds of expert Shakespeare teachers, noted scholars, committed students, and famous performers, such as our international congress on *Hamlet*, honored by the participation of Mel Gibson, the star of Zeffirelli's film of the tragedy. Members of the Forum such as Reginald Foakes and Hugh Richmond also worked closely with the International Globe Centre on the rebuilding of Shakespeare's original Globe Theatre near its original site in Southwark; on creation of the California Shakespeare Festival's new theatre at Orinda; in restoring the Joseph Wood Krutch Theatre on the Kerr campus of U.C. Berkeley; and with many other cultural organizations. During its twenty years of operation the Program has encouraged the development of analogous groups across the U.S.A., for example, at Cal Poly at San Louis Obispo, at the University of California Santa Cruz, and in SUNY. Most recently the teaching resources of the UCB Program have been devoted to Shakespeare courses at the Osher Life Long Learning Institute at U. C. Berkeley, including lectures on audience impact on many Shakespeare plays which have been attached as epilogues to the single-play bibliographies of major

scripts on this site.

The Program has earned recognition in numerous journals, including favorable notices in professional publications and such national organs as *The New York Times*. Staffing, facilities, and resources are sustained by skillful interaction with routine campus scheduling and by co-operation with other units with relevant resources. Thereby the university acquired a major pedagogic and research facility for a very modest budget. Indeed, the sales of its four video documentaries, about Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, and the restored Globe Theatre in London have reached a combined total approaching 10,000 cassettes, grossing an income of \$820,000, of which \$200,000 has accrued in royalties to the UCB Shakespeare Program. As the original N.E.H. grant stipulated, these royalties have been applied to further analogous projects, which continue to evolve, such as the recent programs in Los Angeles and Oakland, "Shakespeare, California, and the Spanish Connection." This latter topic led to a key-note presentation of Shakespeare Program documentaries to the national conference of the Association for Spanish Golden Age Theatre at the Chamizal Festival of Spanish Drama in El Paso (February, 2000). A further joint program about such projects drew on the discoverers of the surviving Renaissance Spanish Theatres in Madrid, as presented at the International Shakespeare Conference in Valencia in 2001. Program publications about such Anglo-Spanish interaction demonstrated the affinities of Shakespeare and such great Spanish artists as Lope de Vega, Calderon de la Barca, and even Velázquez. This material has now been consolidated into a new video documentary called *Shakespeare and the Spanish Connection*, distributed by TMW Media, and regularly appearing on UCTV. A version of it will be found under this site's Home via the rubric: *Videos*, and on our site on YouTube. Interactive relations have also been established with other international Shakespeare websites, such as Internet Shakespeare Editions at the University of Victoria, B.C., Canada, and Open Shakespeare at Cambridge, U.K. (see other connections under User Input). Introductions have been added recently to the website's single-play bibliographies, as well as supplementary essays after several of them, concerning modern audience input in performance of the tragedies. After the success of the Shakespeare website a comparable Milton one called *Milton Revealed* has been undertaken, to be found at <http://townsendlab.berkeley.edu/milton-revealed>. Much of the Program's teaching has recently been conducted with the U.C. Berkeley's Osher Life-Long Learning Institute (see the relevant dates in Joint Projects). So the interaction of the Shakespeare Program with the Fine Arts in general and with the strengthening of language and literary skills in particular continues well into the new century.



DVD of *Shakespeare and the Spanish Connection* Distributed by TMW Media.