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Making Room, Affording Hospitality: Environments of Entertainment in *Romeo and Juliet*

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Boy meets girl at party hosted by more or less responsible adult: it's one of the oldest setups in the book, from Odysseus and Nausicaa and Cinderella and her prince to Elizabeth Bennett and Mr. Darcy. The motif is not unknown in Shakespeare either. Paternal hospitality, for example, occasions the first encounters between Othello and Desdemona.¹ Act 1 of *Romeo and Juliet* is unusual, however, in spending so much time dramatizing the forms of planning, labor, and greeting that make such meetings possible, including inviting guests, clearing tables and moving furniture, adjusting light, music, and sound, welcoming late arrivals, and saying good-night. In *Romeo and Juliet*, all of this event-planning takes place within inherited scenarios of celebration: if Capulet's "old accustomed feast" (1.2.20) recollects the Christmas setting of Arthur Brooke's poem, Shakespeare has chosen to reset the banquet in July, a "fortnight and odd days" to "Lammas-tide" (1.3.14-15), a harvest festival celebrated on August 1 and coinciding with Juliet's birthday.² In theater and in life, holiday often sets the stage for hospitality, in the form of seasonal festivities and life-cycle events that respond to ecological and biological rhythms of dearth and plenty, increase and decline.

In this essay, I use hospitality as a framework that merges the theatrical and the thematic in Shakespearean drama within dispositions of space that are at once urban, domestic, agrarian, and political-theological. This framework connects community to cosmos through its social and symbolic work. Hospitality embraces both *theatrum* and *theatrum mundi*: because hospitality as a social form involves sumptuary shifts and ceremonial extemporizing in spaces that invite welcoming and display, hospitality also bears immediately upon the theater, drafting dramatic scenarios, lending itself to metadramatic reflections and coincidences, and helping to shape relationships among performers, theater technicians, and audience members. In Shakespearean drama, hospitality has the power to knit the things and

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spaces of the play to the work's narrative and dramatic interests in a single but not seamless network of action, activity, and concern. I say single but not seamless because hospitality reorganizes, often provisionally and with a sense of insufficiency or remainder, a fundamentally mixed company of persons, things, and spaces in a social and natural world striated by the existential vulnerabilities that follow from our affiliations with other people and our needs for food, shelter, clothing, and security. Hospitality manages these multiple dependencies through a signifying arsenal that cultivates linguistic and musical performances alongside a diverse object world composed of special foods, fibers, and tools. The emotional palette of hospitality includes not only anticipation, joy, and good cheer, but also fear, shame, and boredom. We have all suffered (and delivered) the stinging dagger of the snub tucked within the inky cloak of disaffection, whose light-absorbing properties pronounce every witticism comatose upon arrival. It is precisely because hospitality's available resources, present occasion, or current guest list always threaten to render it inadequate to its real and symbolic tasks that hospitality contains such ample opportunities for drama, in the form of conflict and rivalry, theft and rape, the hiding and disclosure of identity, the contingencies of love, and the horror of halitosis.

Hospitality bears on questions of space and its theatricalization insofar as entertaining involves *making room for guests*, both physically (where will they sit, slouch, sleep, eat, dance, or check their e-mail?) and existentially (the guest might be a ghost, or a kidnapper, or allergic to peanuts). The simplest acts of setting the table or strewing rushes on the floor mentally as well as physically prepare the hosting household for the adventure to come by rededicating the space of the *oikos* to the dangers and delights of visitation.³ Hospitality not only requires but also actively summons what I call an *environment of entertainment*, a space of welcoming that is always incipiently theatrical. The special settings of hospitality (hall, stage, courtyard, pavilion, street, lawn, camp site) support discrete instances and genres of convivial performance (banquet and ball, masque and play, potluck and picnic, progress and parade). Hospitality is environmental in a second sense as well: by participating in the liturgical and agrarian calendar of holidays, hospitality events amalgamate heterogeneous ingredients (times and places; animals and vegetables; things, gods, and persons) in multimedia performances oblivious to the nature-culture divide.

Although I am entering territory here that belongs to theater history and performance studies, I am a visitor to these parts. I come equipped with an interest in design, especially the analysis of affordances as they bear on

place-making efforts. My interests are phenomenological, not historical: I want to understand how human appearing as well as the appearing of things unfolds within the special light cast by welcoming. The tools and techniques of such welcoming are certainly bound to specific contexts; in handling these details, however, I am more interested in probing the forms of experience, cognition, and subjective disclosure that we share with Shakespeare than I am in asserting the differences between his world and ours. I am attracted to moments of lyric address and casual interchange that capture the concourse between theatrical activity and dramatic action obliquely: phenomenological transcriptions that belong ultimately to page more than stage. (This essay remains an exercise in literary criticism, not theater history.) Performance itself is a form of phenomenalization that bridges epochs: a making appear anew of words, gestures, movements, and things across time and in new spaces. Each of the dramatic instances I probe here—some stage business with a group of servingmen; Capulet's harried greeting of his guests; and Romeo's decision to play the torchbearer—touches on an element of the real, taken as the site of an impasse, dilemma, or resistance that reveals the vexed and provisional character of hospitable scripts. The servingmen demonstrate the necessity of labor to build and furnish scenes of public appearing as well as the withdrawal of such labor into leftover spaces and times; Capulet's welcoming of the visored Romeo identifies the intrusion of the stranger as the risk that hospitality both courts and wards off; finally, Romeo's torch serves to create a space both within and apart from the merrymaking in which his encounter with Juliet can take place.

Hospitality's affordances

What does hospitality afford? I use the word "afford" here to mean *invite, allow, yield, furnish, make possible*. Although the word itself is old (it occurs with some frequency and in several contexts in Shakespeare), it has gained new currency in design research, where "affordances" designate those physical aspects of an object, including elements of shape, color, layout, and position, that communicate to the human user how a particular thing, be it coffee cup or touch screen, is meant to be handled.⁴ Affordances are thus directly related to interfaces: to the communicative points of contact between objects and users.⁵ The term *affordance* was first coined by ecological psychologist James J. Gibson to describe the way in which animals perceive elements of their environment in relation to the possibilities for action born by specific features of their world:

1 The *affordances* of the environment are what it *offers* the animal,
2 what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill. The verb *to*
3 *afford* is found in the dictionary, but the word *affordance* is not.
4 I have made it up. I mean by it something that refers to both
5 the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term
6 does. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the
7 environment.⁶
8

9 Affordances reside in the environment, and in this sense they are objective,
10 but they function only in relation to particular animals, and in this sense
11 they are relational and transactional, associating organisms with a *niche*,
12 defined by Gibson not as a place but as “a set of affordances.”⁷

13 Affordances begin with the central feature of the terrestrial envi-
14 ronment, namely, the ground or support of the earth itself: “If a terrestrial
15 surface is nearly horizontal (instead of slanted), nearly flat (instead of convex
16 or concave), and sufficiently extended (relative to the size of the animal),
17 then the surface *affords support*.”⁸ The primal affordance of flatness links
18 the space of the stage to the scene of much mammalian action: whether on
19 the field of battle, a public plaza, the boards of the Globe, a great hall, an
20 open plan living room, or a preschool playground, a plateau affords move-
21 ment, visibility, and interaction for quadrupeds and bipeds of a certain size.
22 Gibson’s animals are above all *animate*: they move through space, and their
23 perception largely occurs in locomotion toward a goal or away from a dan-
24 ger, rarely resting in a position of detached contemplation. Gibson’s research
25 began in perception psychology, and he coined the term *ecological optics*
26 to define the way in which animal perception, including the habits of the
27 human animal, is ambient and tangible, a constant multisensory “keeping-
28 in-touch with the world.”⁹

29 Although the ground affords locomotion, and is thus a key element
30 in the environment of land animals, Gibson’s terra firma is not empty: “The
31 environment is generally cluttered. . . . The *furniture* of the earth, like the
32 furnishings of a room, is what makes it livable.”¹⁰ This originary clutter
33 includes *objects* (attached, such as trees, and detached, such as boulders, peb-
34 bles, and sticks, the first stuff of tools), *enclosures* (caves, bowers, huts, and
35 other forms of sheltering), *convexities* (hills, mountains, and outcroppings of
36 rock, providing vantage points), *concavities* (holes, pits, culvers, ravines, and
37 valleys, affording refuge), and *apertures* (breaks in the undergrowth or the
38 cloud cover, cracks and peepholes, doors and windows, affording visibility,
39 ingress and egress, or opportunities for surveillance).¹¹ Deliberately compar-

ing the “furniture of the earth” to the more familiar fittings of a kitchen, parlor, or classroom, Gibson reads these ecological features for their affordances, that is, for the distinctive opportunities for action that they provide to particular organisms. The hole affords the snake a dwelling, but it may offer the pirate a hiding place for treasure; the tree affords shelter for the squirrel, but provides wood for the woodsman; the fallen log offers a vantage point for the chipmunk, and a nest for the field mouse; the stick can become a poking tool for the chimpanzee, or building material for the bird.

Gibson presents affordances as an alternative to two-worlds theories that would divide the world of matter from the world of mind: “There is only one environment, although it contains many observers with limitless opportunities for them to live in it.” Gibson insists, however, that affordances exist in the world independently of their use or observation: “The observer may or may not perceive or attend to the affordance, according to his needs, but the affordance, being invariant, is always there to be perceived.”¹² This occupation of the middle ground between subjects and objects makes affordances a fruitful concept for humanistic analyses that would like to attend to the alluring itselfness of things in biotechnical assemblages while remaining focused on the distinctive ways in which the world stands forth for human beings.

Although affordance theory has proceeded quantitatively, toward the measurement of discrete affordances such as stair climbing, it has also flowered in a more qualitative mode that emphasizes the sociocultural dimensions of affordances. Thus ecological psychologist Harry Heft emphasizes the affinities between affordance theory, phenomenology, and pragmatism in order to explore human place-making and our navigation of parks and playgrounds.¹³ In anthropology, Tim Ingold uses Gibson to theorize what he calls *taskscape*s, ecological and social systems bound to each other through the actions they support and the organisms they host.¹⁴ In philosophy, Eric Rietveld, who is also a practicing landscape architect, has blended affordance theory with both phenomenology and neuroscience in order to capture “the self-organized nature of skillful coping,” that is, the unreflective way in which we conduct most of our life with objects.¹⁵

What, then, does hospitality afford, and how do those affordances bear on the space of the theater? This question requires that we begin on the ground floor, by addressing those objects and environmental features of domestic space (cups, platters, floors, shiny fabrics) whose modest functions (holding and pouring liquids, supporting platters of sweets, providing a plateau for dancing bodies, or enhancing candlelight) help erect and maintain

the special environments of entertainment. Considered sociosymbolically, hospitality also affords acts of charity and gift-giving, the establishment of prestige, and the marking of seasonal and biographical time, transactions that draw on the material techniques of entertainment while unfolding resolutely on the social stage constituted by the encounter of human beings. Considerably more is at stake in my face-to-face encounter with my guest than in the foods that I present to him, which is perhaps why I prefer to busy myself in the kitchen than to mingle with my company. Yet without some minimal act of making room, the visitor is not really a guest, and some other form of interaction (an exchange of gossip, artificial sweetener, children, or insults) is taking place instead.

A third dimension might help us connect the macro- and micro-dimensions of hospitality as human event and as household art without reducing the symbolic to the material or vice versa. This valence concerns the extent to which the language of hospitality is itself insinuated into the theory of affordances, and thus displays if not a constitutive, then certainly a nonincidental role, in both the analytical exposition and the actual unfolding of affordances. To afford is to “give of what one has, to furnish, bestow, grant, yield”; when used of things, it means “to be capable of yielding, to have for one who asks or seeks.”¹⁶ One of Gibson’s sources is the organizational psychologist Kurt Lewin, who addressed what he called the *Aufforderungscharakter* or invitation character of objects, the way in which they communicate through their color, smell, or tactile properties, “Eat me,” “Hurl me,” or “Stack me.”¹⁷ In phenomenology, objects are said to “present” themselves, to reveal themselves to us as “datives of manifestation.”¹⁸ In his study of the skillful body, Rietveld writes, “The craftsman in his habitual world is surrounded by many objects that touch him and invite him to act.”¹⁹ These usages concern a primal proffering, a making evident that solicits without requiring certain responses—a kind of middle voice causality in which agency is shared by object and user.²⁰ Bruno Latour, citing Gibson, uses the word *actant* to designate the way in which things “might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on.”²¹ Affordances offer a way into the environments of use staged by hospitality in part because affordances draw on hospitality imagery in its own philological and conceptual development. Hospitality might be classed among what Hans Blumenberg calls “absolute metaphors”: “*foundational elements* of philosophical language, ‘translations’ that resist being converted back into authenticity and logicity.”²² Hospitality’s habitation within the very concepts through which we try to grasp the affordances of objects dis-

covers the nimble architecture of nascent thought within the succor pledged by the pillow and the security assured by the saucer. We can pose a theory of the spoon because the spoon is *already theoretical*, its slender stem and shallow bowl mumbling mutely of extension and transport, containment and flow, via the proprioceptive promises of hand-love and mouth-feel.

Affordances have begun to make their way into Shakespeare and Renaissance studies, thanks to work by Evelyn Tribble, Ellen Spolsky, and W. B. Worthen. Tribble situates affordances within the field of cognitive ecology, “which posits that a complex human activity such as theater must be understood across the entire system,” including such elements as “psychological mechanisms underpinning the task dynamics; the physical environment(s), including the relationships between playing and audience space; cognitive artifacts such as parts, plots, and playbooks; technologies such as sound or lighting; and, most importantly, the social systems underpinning the company, including the mechanisms for enskillment and training.”²³ Ellen Spolsky uses affordances to disclose the way in which situations are “created by the co-occurrence of specific local conditions both animate and inanimate, both biological and material, and may be quite intentionally constructed by teachers, priests and poets, artists and playwrights.”²⁴ W. B. Worthen, bringing together the work of Gibson and Donald Norman with Kenneth Burke, focuses on the affordances of the dramatic text considered as agency rather than object of interpretation. Worthen argues that writing solicits performances that in turn redefine the scope of the play text by putting it to new use.²⁵ Following Tribble, Spolsky, and Worthen, my project is to test the appropriateness of affordances to the study of Shakespearean drama. Hospitality, in its phenomenological and philosophical dimensions, orients my travels in this zone, not only as theme and practice, but as a way of thinking about the primal character of such elements as entry, exit, ostension, offering, and encounter in the theaters of drama and life.

Although I have come to affordances from a design perspective, I bounce affordances back against their origins in ecology in order to keep the environmental view in play. Like Gibson’s environments for two-legged and four-legged creatures (to which we might add three- and four-legged stools), theater is defined above all by a flat plateau that affords standing and strutting. Its several doors afford ingress, egress, and acts of framing, seclusion, and discovery; the elevation of the stage in tandem with lighting affords visibility to the assembled audience; and its modest clutter of furniture (chairs, stools, tables, beds) affords not only routinized behaviors like sitting or lying down, but also dramatic repurposings such as tipping, hurling, mounting,

1 stacking, and smothering. Theater has long engaged design in its modes of
2 production: set, costume, lighting, and sound design are crafts with their
3 roots in much older performance practices. More broadly, theater is an art
4 of disposition and arrangement, a way of organizing actors and objects on
5 the surface of the stage and in the real time of performance within a net-
6 worked setting maintained by the collective attention of everyone present.
7 Conceived in this way, “stage management” describes not only the techni-
8 cal supervision of theatrical production, but the deeper protocols, existential
9 and intuitive as well as learned, that link the physical resources of the stage
10 to the traffic of actors across it.

11 Gibson’s original conception of affordances was environmental
12 insofar as it engaged the self-organizing complexities of a world in which
13 natural and artificial objects, as well as human and nonhuman creatures,
14 coexist and interact. The theater constitutes an environment in the sense
15 that it is a setting composed of objects and persons whose activities are both
16 rehearsed and improvisational, their interactions embedded in broader arti-
17 sanal, urban, and courtly infrastructures and populated by a variety of things
18 and species, from microbes and marzipan to painted arrases and dancing
19 bears. The taskscape consists of affordances in action, affordances actualized
20 through the microdrama of their use and hence bringing to life the virtues
21 of a particular space as simultaneously, and without division, physical and
22 social. A theater of affordances is *an environmental and phenomenological the-*
23 *ater*, a space in which things, persons, settings, and forms of life are solicited
24 to appear in their choreographed and their autopoietic complexity.
25

26 **Staging the taskscape**

27
28 In what editors have come to mark as the break between scenes 4 and 5 of
29 act 1 in *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo’s gang and Capulet’s servingmen momen-
30 tarily share the stage:

31 *They march about the stage, and Servingmen come forth with*
32 *napkins.*

33 *First Ser.:* Where’s Potpan that he helps not to take away? He shift
34 a trencher! He scrape a trencher!

35 *Second Ser.:* When good manners shall lie all in one or two men’s
36 hands, and they unwashed too, ’tis a foul thing.

37 *First Ser.:* Away with the joint-stools, remove the court-cupboard,
38 look to the plate. Good thou, save me a piece of marchpane,
39

1 and as thou loves me, let the porter let in Susan Grindstone and
 2 Nell—Anthony and Potpan!
 3 *Third Ser.:* Ay boy, ready.
 4 *First Ser.:* You are looked for and called for, asked for and sought
 5 for, in the great chamber.
 6 *Fourth Ser.:* We cannot be here and there too. Cheerly, boys! Be
 7 brisk awhile, and the longer liver take all. (1.5.1-15)

8
 9 These lines rezone the stage from the streets of Verona to the interior of the
 10 Capulet house as the servingmen prepare for the party.²⁶ The servants, who
 11 are also stage hands, are engaged in the act of *making room*: clearing the
 12 domestic space of the Capulet house for dancing, while redistricting the
 13 space of the stage from city street to domestic interior. Hospitality provides
 14 the social script for these acts of making room: diagetically, the servingmen
 15 are arranging for the party in which the visored Romeo will first encounter
 16 the fêted Juliet, domestic preparations that momentarily merge with theater-
 17 making itself as a process that involves the movement of persons and things
 18 in a space defined by on- and off-stage flows of labor, performance, encoun-
 19 ter, and display. In Worthen's terms, the scene reflects on "the agency of
 20 dramatic writing in charting the space of performance."²⁷

21 The passage is laden with objects, including most immediately nap-
 22 kins (from the stage direction), trenchers, joint-stools, a court cupboard, plate,
 23 and marchpane (marzipan). A few of these items most likely appeared on stage
 24 as properties (certainly the napkins, maybe the joint stools, plus the drum
 25 and torches of the maskers). Others are more likely present only virtually (the
 26 court cupboard with its precious collection of plate), with the trenchers and
 27 marchpane as optional accessories. To this list we might also add the objects
 28 that appear in the names of characters—Potpan, Susan Grindstone—
 29 indicating the affinity between the servant class and the world of utilitar-
 30 ian things. Unlike some other object scenes in Shakespeare, however—the
 31 dowry detailed by Gremio in *Taming of the Shrew* (2.1.346-56) or the basket
 32 of baubles hawked by Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* (4.4.204-10), or the
 33 scanning of Imogen's bedroom by Iachimo in *Cymbeline* (2.2 and 2.4)—this
 34 passage does not unfold as an inventory.²⁸ We see the servingmen navigat-
 35 ing a taskscape, "the entire ensemble of tasks, in their mutual interlocking"
 36 that compose an environment in active use, a scene that is "qualitative and
 37 heterogeneous" and "essentially social."²⁹ The tasks at hand involve *clearing*
 38 *the table* ("shift a trencher . . . scrape a trencher") and *moving the furniture*
 39 ("Away with the joint-stools, remove the court-cupboard, look to the plate"),

Figure 1.
Jacobean joint stool, from auction photograph. The Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles (71.P.1). Courtesy of the Getty Research Institute.

both forms of making room. Insofar as objects appear on stage, they appear in movement, in the act of being taken away, in order to complete the act of clearing that makes hospitality possible.

The joint-stool (see fig. 1), one of the household's most minimal and movable forms of seating, manifests the transitivity of furnishings on the stage and in Renaissance domestic spaces. Such stools would be moved constantly throughout the day, used for eating, labor, or resting, as well as doing double duty as makeshift tables or stepladders. The stool stands in some opposition here with the chair. Chairs were costly to make and uncomfortable to sit in; there might be one or two in a household, reserved for the patriarch, perhaps his wife, and honored guests. Stools, however, abounded, thanks to their cheaper construction, lighter weight, and multiple affordances.

Figure 2.

Court cupboard, early seventeenth century, from auction photograph. The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (71.P.1.). Courtesy of the Getty Research Institute.

The court cupboard, on the other hand, standing at the end of the great hall to display and store the master's plate along with wines and fruits, would only be moved on major occasions like this one, to clear space for the dancing and perhaps protect the valuables within.³⁰ By the mid-seventeenth century, cupboards had become massive architectural constructions, often rivaling the chimney pieces in their size and decorative detailing.³¹ A "court cup-board," however, could simply be a table used as a buffet—certainly more amenable to removal.³² Consider the Stuart piece in figure 2, with its stagelike play between open and closed spaces. Such a cupboard does not simply store things. It stores, and stages, their virtues and capacities. The

cabinet can become a figure for the mind because in its own way it knows things, becoming a miniature memory theater in which the house recollects itself through its objects. The court cupboard is at once a hard drive and a monitor, a storage device and an interface, what Rebeca Helfer calls an edifice for edification.³³ The court cupboard is a “worldly possession” not only because it belongs *to* the world, but also because it helps *build and sustain a world*, harboring, organizing and sharing the precious instruments of service and sustenance that, according to Hannah Arendt, “guarantee the permanence and durability without which a world would not be possible at all.”³⁴

The genre of the inventory, writes Janette Dillon in her study of theatrical space, “highlights the lack of any inherent connection between items,” underscoring “the independent, fragmentary presence of the commodity.”³⁵ The taskscape, on the other hand, comes into play through the routine movement of objects across it—through their organization or management, itineraries enabled by the social interactions, domestic competencies, and libidinal urges of the stage hand/servingmen. In Ingold’s terms, the taskscape “comes into being through movement”; it exists “only insofar as people are actually engaged in the activities of dwelling.”³⁶ The taskscape, moreover, unlike the inventory, directly engages affordances: the joint-stool affords sitting as well as easy transport, whereas the court cupboard affords storage, service, and display, as well as the breakage of valuables and perhaps the spilling of beverages under the pressure of extreme partying. The human proportions of the court cupboard, like a barrel-chested steward or a massive matron (think here of Juliet’s able nurse), at once secure and authorize the functions of conservation and display that the cabinet affords. Proffering fruit and cordials along with plate, the cupboard is not only the first museum; it is also the first museum café.

Objects like the stool and cupboard are “inanimate” in the sense that they do not move of their own accord, since they lack the sentient soul or *anima* that Aristotle restricts to animals.³⁷ Yet a drawer, designed to slide in and out of its casing to reveal dead butterflies, old coins, rayon thongs, or a collection of combs and ointments for the removal of lice from juvenile heads, is not fully inanimate. And a joint-stool, though remarkably steady on its four stubby, stalwart legs, affords not only scooting under the table or placing against the wall, but also, under circumstances of shame or rage, hurling across the room. The height of the joint-stool, the flatness of its upper surface, the stability and lift promised by its foot rail, and the elegance of the joint itself, in which mortise and tenon accomplish their own union without nails or glue (the Romeo and Juliet of carpentry), all invite sitting by

1 promising a measure of both convenience and security. When Shakespeare
2 calls his joiner “Snug” in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, he captures these
3 comforting virtues of the stool and its joints. Meanwhile, the stool’s legs
4 are also handles, an affordance that make it easy to carry about for multiple
5 uses. The taskscape is precisely that environment in which *objects move* and
6 *move us*, in which the invitations to use that they bear in their beings and
7 wear on their sleeves are accepted, taken up in and through the performance
8 of a task.

9 What this scene affords *Romeo and Juliet* as a whole is the rezoning
10 of the space of the stage from exterior to interior, from the streets of Verona
11 to the great hall of Capulet. The young men *clear the stage* as a speaker might
12 clear his throat: with an amplified phatic noisiness that signals a change.
13 Although the scene is often broken here, the stage direction is continuous:
14 “They [Romeo’s crew] march about the Stage, and Servingmen come forth
15 with their Napkins.” The connective fold in the Folio’s text’s single sentence
16 bids us to imagine a moment, perhaps merely a virtual one, in which the
17 paths of the two groups, one carrying torches and the other bearing house-
18 hold goods, might cross, swirl, marble, and then separate, in a choreography
19 of bodies and things, as well as lights and sounds, that renders through its
20 own economy of actants the dissolve function of modern cinema. Hospi-
21 tality is at stake not only as the event for which the men are preparing the
22 house, but more deeply, as the way in which things and persons interact in a
23 scenario not fully governed by the opposition of active and passive or agent
24 and object. By performing these dependencies on stage, the simple activity of
25 making room becomes, more phenomenologically, a making-room-appear, a
26 process of clearing that summons the blank *space* of the stage to take shape
27 as the *place* of the great hall and its service antechambers. In a moment like
28 this, theater at its most mundane flashes its world-making magic.

29 The invitation that is accepted, moreover, is not always identi-
30 cal with the invitation that is offered or intended. The marchpane that
31 establishes this moment in the party as a banquet of desserts is designed to
32 delight and entice the wealthy young people gathered to celebrate Juliet’s
33 coming birthday. Yet the servingmen aim to commandeer some of this con-
34 fection for their own party, planning an informal festival of leftovers to take
35 place after hours. Shaped, colored, sugared, and even gilded for maximum
36 visual appeal, marzipan was the occasion for virtuoso confectionary in the
37 highly theatricalized dessert course that composed either the final course
38 or the main event in Renaissance banquets.³⁸ The marzipan also points
39 inward, to the backstage areas of house and stage that support the fanfare of

entertainment. The scene's fleeting reference to leftover times and occluded service zones recalls the way in which the actors and stagehands will create their own scene when the theater closes, or an architect might insert a closet or a close stool in the space behind the stairs, or a rodent might establish his quarters beneath the stage. The environments of entertainment emerge here not as a single bounded space of pure representation, but as an open floor plan composed of variegated areas dedicated to different kinds of labor, their partitions perforated by those apertures or "chinks in the wall" that afford slivers of visibility and unexpected access in Gibson's ecology of engaged perception.

By opening service economies and representational economies to each other, the scene becomes an instance of the kind of dynamic rehearsed by Alice Rayner in her landmark essay, "Rude Mechanicals and the *Specters of Marx*." There she shows how "very concrete labor might participate in and reiterate the phantasm of the theatrical double, the visible and the invisible," an exercise she executes under the sign of Shakespeare.³⁹ *Romeo and Juliet*, of course, is not "about" furniture, or leftovers, or even theater. Although the cupboard does not disappear without a trace (its curatorial affordances blossom into inventory in the extraordinary accounting of the Apothecary's shop [5.1.37-48]), it is of the essence of these *mobilier* that they *not matter*, that they pass immediately from view. Instead, Shakespeare lets the autopoiesis or self-organizing complexity of the taskscape appear and disappear before our eyes, rehearsing the continuity between stage management and household management. Each requires the zoning and rezoning of space. Each directs traffic among a variety of actants (persons, tools, fabrics, furnishings) in an ensemble of undertakings that disperses and distributes agency, cognition, and knowledge. Each is sensitive to the sumptuary and seasonal shifts signaled by holiday: "rites, feasts and ceremonies . . . are as integral to the taskscape as are boundary markers such as walls or fences to the landscape."⁴⁰ Each sports a deep relationship to hospitality, not only as the suite of customs by which people manage their enmities, but also as one of the ways in which environmental dependencies are managed and signified. Moreover, this set of comparisons institutes more than an analogy insofar as the theater *is* a taskscape (an environment composed of affordances), and the taskscape *is* a theater (a setting for the performance of several kinds of action by multiple actors).

Shakespeare's manifestation of the taskscape is just barely representational, insofar as the activity of the servingmen merges with the lightly choreographed business of stage hands. I hesitate to call the scene "metathe-

atrical,” which implies more self-consciousness, and less phenomenological insight, than what is actually delivered. These servingmen will take on new life as the Rude Mechanicals in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, but here the emphasis is on the forms of disappearance that accompany the appearance of labor. In *Phenomenal Shakespeare*, Bruce Smith speaks of the “ambient swoon” that melts Venus and Adonis into a landscape of affective responses.⁴¹ This scene in *Romeo and Juliet* manifests something like an “ambient theatricality” — Shakespeare suddenly renders tangible and audible the techniques of theater-making. The scene is easily cut because it advances so little. Yet the insistent minor note of its key is, I contend, precisely what makes this interchange such a precious document of how we live with things. The servingmen’s rough music makes us suddenly privy to the labors that run behind the scenes of theater and hospitality as the self-erasing yet incessantly operating conditions of the main event to come.

Capulet, host

At the other end of the servants’ exchange comes Capulet’s entry and speech:

Welcome, gentlemen, ladies that have their toes
Unplagu’d with corns will have a bout with you.
Ah my mistresses, which of you all
Will now deny to dance? She that makes dainty,
She I’ll swear hath corns. Am I come near ye now?
Welcome, gentlemen. I have seen the day
That I have worn a visor and could tell
A whispering tale in a fair lady’s ear,
Such as would please. ’Tis gone, ’tis gone, ’tis gone,
You are welcome, gentlemen: come, musicians, play.
A hall, a hall, give room! And foot it girls!

Music plays and they dance.

More light, you knaves, and turn the tables up.
And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.
Ah sirrah, this unlook’d-for sport comes well.
Nay sit, nay sit, good cousin Capulet,
For you and I are past our dancing days:
How long is’t now since last yourself and I
Were in a mask? (1.5.1-33)

1 Welcoming the young maskers, Capulet also acknowledges the ladies, gives
2 direction to the musicians, and continues to make room for the dancing.
3 “A hall, a hall, give room!” he shouts, “More light, you knaves, and turn the
4 tables up.” The tables here are the trestle tables that populated medieval and
5 early Renaissance halls, chosen because they afforded easy set up and disas-
6 sembly for different uses throughout the day. Temporary stages designed for
7 theatrical performances in great halls and banqueting houses were also built
8 on trestles, and trestle tables would also have been used as props on stage.⁴²
9 The trestle table is to the joint stool as the “standing” or “dormant” table is to
10 the chair. The trestle and joint stool are light, mobile, modestly ornamented,
11 and host to multiple affordances; the standing table and chair are higher in
12 status, more dramatic in presentation, and less amenable to removal and
13 repurposing. In a setting still largely populated by stools and trestles, “hall”
14 becomes a verb more than a noun (“A hall, a hall, give room!”). The host
15 not only greets his guests, but organizes the flow of sound, light, heat, and
16 traffic—another exercise in ambience.

17 Capulet, too, is *making room appear*. Or, in his own hospitable
18 phrase, he is *giving room*, arranging a welcoming space for his guests. When
19 later Capulet busies himself with planning Juliet’s wedding (“Look to the
20 baked meats, good Angelica: / Spare not for cost”), the Nurse will mock him
21 as a “cot-quean,” a man who concerns himself too much with household
22 matters (4.4.5-6).⁴³ Branding the *senex* as host becomes Shakespeare’s suc-
23 cinct means of characterizing this minor yet compelling tragicomic creature
24 of the hospitable function.

25 Exhausted by all this greeting, Capulet eventually takes his seat
26 with his aged peer, “Good cousin Capulet.” The two elders most likely
27 command chairs, not stools; they may even settle down in chairs of state,
28 upholstered seats tucked beneath a canopy designed to shelter and outline
29 patriarchal privilege. The chair, like the stool, supports the buttocks, but
30 it also stretches upward to outline the more noble elements of trunk, head,
31 and arms (see fig. 3). Whereas the stool lends itself to repurposing as a travel-
32 ing table, step ladder, and perch for task work, the Renaissance chair is less
33 mobile in both its footprint and its uses. Affording rest and spectatorship,
34 the noble chair supports, frames, and projects a sense of dignity through its
35 bodily architecture. Capulet will become Brabantio, and Shylock, and even-
36 tually Lear, all of them “men with chairs,” patriarchs suffering the fragility
37 of their dignity in a world that belongs to the stools.

38 Above and beyond, or perhaps within and below, the labor of mak-
39 ing room, dangers to the *oikos* lurk, at once introduced and regulated by

Figure 3.
 Yorkshire chair, seventeenth century, from auction photograph.
 The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (71.P.1).
 Courtesy of the Getty Research Institute.

hospitality. Hospitality takes the *activities* of daily life (clearing the table, moving the furniture) and raises them to the level of *action* by incorporating the uncertainty associated with guests. Like the stage itself, the scene of hospitality is defined by entries and exits.⁴⁴ In both theater and life, doorways are always magical, portals of metamorphosis and special delivery whose porches, cornices, canopies, *mezuzot*, welcome mats, and garden gnomes frame and soften the terror produced by the linkage of unlike spaces.⁴⁵ In the scene chez Capulet, the visored Romeo is, of course, the flaming torchbearer of all these risks. His visor indicates his status as an uninvited guest, in the tradition of mummings in which bands of neighbors in disguise “would enter a house without ceremony . . . knocking at the door as if they were strangers.”⁴⁶ Such masked encounters dramatize the element of risk resident in every hospitable act. Here the risk is real: it is Romeo who will upset Capulet’s well-made marriage plans for Juliet while also killing off one of the house’s only remaining heirs. Capulet’s greeting is pressurized, rendered just a little more than conventional, by coinciding with the risk of real intrusion that hospitality both invites and attempts to ward off. Suddenly the serving-man’s simple warning, “remove the cupboard, look to the plate,” resonates with Shylock’s later cry, “my daughter, my ducats.” Every designer knows: child-proofing only works for little monsters under ten.

And yet Capulet welcomes this errant roamer into the household, and allows him to stay even after Tybalt has blown Romeo’s cover. In this greeting, a routine welcome (“You are welcome, gentlemen”) assumes the status of an act insofar as Capulet places *hosting above household*, laying bear the tension between the *oikos* and its others whose management comprises hospitality’s actuarial and existential portfolio. In Paul Kottman’s analysis of the play, “Although Capulet is under no compulsion, and even though some members of the family (Tybalt) find the act galling, Romeo is *freely* recognized and ‘endured’ as the family’s own guest.” And, Kottman continues, “because Romeo does not therefore appear at the feast as an external enemy, his presence bears witness to openness *within* the ancient family—an aperture in the very structure of the ancient family that, like the chink in the wall between the houses of Pyramus and Thisbe, had been there all along and had simply remained unnoticed.”⁴⁷ Hospitality frames and regulates, but also keeps open, the chink in the wall of the *oikos*, the entry through which genuine strangers occasionally manage to pass. In this instance, Capulet lets chance itself into the house: love, too, it turns out, is a form of autopoiesis. In greeting Romeo as a ghost of his own youth (“Welcome, gentlemen. I

1 have seen the day / That I have worn a visor”), the good host becomes for an
2 instant a very bad father. In this transaction, hospitality gathers up the mun-
3 dane *res* of the taskscape with the *res gestae* of dramatic action into a singular
4 appointment between custom and catastrophe. No wonder Capulet ends the
5 speech out of breath and seeking his chair.

Romeo, guest

6
7
8
9 Urged by Benvolio to crash the party, Romeo agrees to join his friends, but
10 only as a torchbearer: “Give me a torch, I am not for this ambling” (1.4.11).
11 When Benvolio rehearses the drama of their entry, “Come, knock and enter,
12 and no sooner in / But every man betake him to his legs” (1.4.33-34), Romeo
13 repeats his earlier declaration: “A torch for me. . . I’ll be a candle-holder and
14 look on” (1.4.35-38). Romeo’s assumption of the role of torchbearer stands
15 at the center of a complex of images, stage properties, theatrical effects, and
16 social scripts that ultimately allow him to make his own room in the space
17 of hospitality supervised by Capulet. In the tradition of masking, the torch-
18 bearer is he who attends rather than participates.⁴⁸ The bearing capacities of
19 the person and the illuminative virtues of the torch supplement each other,
20 together affording the ambulatory illumination required by midnight mask-
21 ers.⁴⁹ “Being but heavy,” Romeo quips, “I will bear the light” (1.4.12): the
22 word “heavy” describes Romeo’s emotional mood, his melancholic *gravitas*,
23 but it also identifies him as the physical support of the torch; the composite
24 figure, half-man, half-tool, makes room for the revelers as they edge through
25 the darkened urban space, the roving pool of radiance cast by the upright
26 utensil orienting the group in an environment deprived of way-finding
27 markers.⁵⁰

28 When Romeo first observes Juliet, he does so from the vantage
29 point of attendant spectatorship defined (not unlike Capulet on his chair)
30 by the torch he bears:

31 *Romeo:* What lady’s that which doth enrich the hand Of yonder
32 knight?

33 *Ser.:* I know not, sir.

34 *Romeo:* O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright.

35 It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night

36 As a rich jewel in an Ethiop’s ear—

37 Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear. (1.5.41-46)

Romeo's comparison of Juliet to a jewel may seem of a piece with his earlier clichés for Rosalind ("too fair, too wise, wisely too fair," etc. [1.1.220]). Yet it is the jewel's specifically light-reflective affordances that Romeo's image catches here; like the shimmering fabrics that draped not only warm dancing bodies but also walls, tables, and chairs of state in the Renaissance softscape, jewels were worn not simply as lovely ornaments or signs of status, but as tiny agents of reflective illumination.⁵¹ The reference to the Ethiop's ear, jarring to modern readers, evokes the pleasing contrast between glossy highlights and a dark matte background, a *mise-en-scène* exploited to this day in the display of diamonds on velvet. The premodern lighting systems used in great halls and other spaces of entertainment included not only candles, tapers, torches, and their many holders, but also gold-threaded arrases, metal candle plates, and mobile bling, whose reflective capacities amplified the precious effects of candle light.⁵²

According to Gibson, it is reflected or ambient light, not the radiant light cast directly by the sun or other sources, that accounts for most animal perception: "Radiant light comes from atoms and returns to atoms; ambient light depends upon an environment of surfaces. Radiant light is energy; ambient light can be information."⁵³ The light-reflective capacities of surfaces, in other words, afford the visibility that helps communicate the more particular capacities of objects to animal actors. And premodern lighting systems, perhaps more than electrified ones, consciously and unconsciously worked that environment of surfaces in order to enhance the precious effects of ambient light. If the torchbearer Romeo manages one source of radiant light in the scene, the jewel-like Juliet is imagined to reflect back that light, becoming a second source of luminescence rendered more enchanting by virtue of *not producing* its own rays.

Romeo's torch, of course, is immediately caught up and signified in a web of emblematic images and meanings; never simply a tool, it is always also an iconographic attribute associating Romeo with the torches of love and fidelity carried by angels, putti, watchmen, and Hymen in Renaissance poetry and prints, but also on tapestries, plates, mantelpieces, and furniture, as well as bodied forth in the design of candlesticks both great and small.⁵⁴ Such objects visualize the composite form created by torch and torchbearer, often couched in postures of supplication, service, and attendance that stage their framing relationship to the scenes they flank and the spaces they illuminate, whether it is altar piece or dinner table.

What is important here, I think, is the heterogeneous character of the torchbearer assemblage that incorporates Romeo into its mixed composi-

tion, including bits of print culture, home furnishings, festive custom, poetic conceits, old proverbs, and lighting techniques. I would like to resist placing the “real” torch and its material affordances at the center of a complex that becomes increasingly ideational. What the torch affords is phenomenal appearing: not only the emergence of visible figures out of the glooming dusk of indistinction, but also the reflective effects that link *shine* to *Schein* (semblance, appearance). What is fascinating here is the extent to which affordances, so tightly bound to use, actually exist in close proximity to aesthetics in that each concerns forms of appearing and the “environment of surfaces” in which appearing can take place. Modern design as practice and theory attempts to give an account of this secret affinity between beauty and function. In the public theaters, moreover, torches and tapers, whether or not they were actually lit, were properties that communicated “night-time” in a space not conducive to artificial dimming.⁵⁵ Their affordances are semiotic as well as practical. It is ultimately words that must light the torch; Romeo’s luminous comparison of Juliet to the jewel, which draws the Aeolian attractions of language into the mote-thick orbit of ambient light, is itself a consummately poetic achievement that also makes unexpectedly compelling theatrical and dramatic sense.

If the torch enters the play in part from love poetry’s Petrarchan platitudes, Romeo manages to wake up these sleeping beauties from the coma of their commodification, using the torch and the language it inspires to create a clearing—what Heidegger calls a *Lichtung*—in the field of conventional language. Romeo’s decision to play the torchbearer is itself an act of partial protest against the society of spectacle in which he first glimpses Juliet. Torchbearing affords Romeo an act of exit within the momentum of entry, allowing him to become a kind of embodied, extended aside, to secrete and inhabit a *Lichtung* all his own. Designers would speak here of proxemics, the invisible envelope of personal space that we carry about with us and whose invasion can spark fist fights and sexual panic.⁵⁶ Candor is the virtue that belongs to that clearing: the shining ability to speak freely within a region defined by convention and spectatorship.⁵⁷ What Romeo shares with Hamlet is the desire *not* to subscribe completely to celebratory spectacle, thus reserving some element of purse and person from full disclosure. His resistance to décor, including the decorative resonances of his own torchbearing posture, becomes the source of its own special illumination.

The circle of light cast by Romeo’s ardent torch, then, not only contributes to the glamour of the happenings, but also signs his partial withdrawal from them, and thus makes a new kind of room for the two lov-

ers. Ultimately, Romeo must draw Juliet aside—draw her, that is, into the clearing of *his aside*—in order to find and found an intimate space on stage that is theirs and theirs alone, a space nested both within and beyond the environment of entertainment supervised by Capulet. In Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (20th Century Fox, 1996), the lovers escape into a glass elevator, a dizzying embodiment of this translucent silo of proximate space. It is the work of the “little room” of the sonnet form itself to block such a locus out of language and gesture. When Romeo, addressing Juliet for the first time, speaks of “profaning” “this holy shrine” with his hands, he places Juliet in a kind of metaphorical alcove, their own virtual discovery space; the conceit of the sonnet as well as its distribution between the two speakers spins a kind of virtual shell around them. The word *profane* refers etymologically to that which lies before or outside the temple (*fanum*).⁵⁸ At once porch and alcove, the little room of roaming space that the two lovers build together draws on the affordances of the Catholic multimedia sensorium and its ritual choreography (pilgrimage, palmers' kiss). Yet their incipient idolatry is also iconoclastic: “profane is the term for something that was once sacred or religious and is returned to the use and property of men.”⁵⁹ It is a moment of advent and annunciation, occurring, however, on a purely human plane whose summer heat holds the teenagers in the lambent *kairos* of the kiss.⁶⁰ Their coy language of saints and pilgrimage fashions a setting for the birth of love, which is also, as Paul Kottman has argued, the birth of their own freedom as human actors from out of inherited social scenarios.⁶¹ This profane niche becomes their chink in the wall, their sweet spot for communication and acknowledgment. At some point, Romeo must put down his torch. Bearing that torch, however, has helped light up the zone in which he and Juliet first kiss with the palms of their hands, and the rhymes of their words, and finally with their lips, tapping the proprioceptive capacities of bodies in language in order to touch one another.

Envoi

Renaissance hospitality fashioned what modern marketers call an experience economy, an improvised yet deliberate orchestration of confits, fabrics, and pheromones.⁶² Drama in its literary dimension brings to the table the possibility of infelicitous performances and unexpected repurposings of hospitable conventions. What distinguishes both tragedy and comedy from the masque, the dance, or the fashion show is the deliberate element of risk that they borrow from hospitality and install at the center of dramatic

action, as well as the burden they place on dramatic poetry to contribute to spatial and atmospheric imagining. In *Romeo and Juliet*, I've argued, Shakespeare tests the scripts of hospitality for the risks and resistances they harbor, the leftover times and spaces they generate, and the chance for unexpected encounters that they court. Do we need the theory of affordances in order to demonstrate how joint-stools, marzipan, and torches make different kinds of room on Shakespeare's stage and in his worlds? We might arrive at similar conclusions through any number of approaches, including material culture, theater history, actant-network theory (ANT), or even simply a serious session of close-reading. What the theory of affordances gains for us is a genuinely interdisciplinary handle that draws on psychology, ecology, phenomenology, and semiotics through the contemporary template offered by design. It is not affordance's separation from other approaches so much as its ability to integrate them that makes the concept a promising contributor to Shakespeare studies today. Affordances, moreover, have the power not only to illuminate Shakespeare's world but also to link his to ours. Take the case of stools and chairs: if chairs, once the mark of privilege and sickness, now verge on being a universal type of furniture, it is because they have incorporated the proletarian pragmatism of stools into their stacked, portable, mass-produced frames.

Affordances belong to design, a discourse capable of drawing together the interests in cognition, domesticity, decorative style, and environmental complexity that are attracting so much good work in Shakespeare studies today. When I say "design," I do not mean a commodified and purely instrumental tool thinking, but rather the revelatory passages between arts of place-making and acts of thinking—between ways of rezoning space through objects, movement, and light and the formations of affective and cognitive life whose tending is so important to Shakespearean drama. What I am ultimately trying to gauge through the concept of affordances is the relationship between the virtues and constraints of objects (joint-stools, chairs, torches, and the spaces they configure) and *what those affordances afford* for dramatic poetry, the intricate topologies of consciousness, care, and acknowledgment they disclose. My goal is not to bind the plays to a historical inventory of objects, but rather to try to understand the kinds of thinking that their homely usages solicit. At the end of act 1, scene 3 in *Romeo and Juliet*, a servant tells Lady Capulet, "Madam, the guests are come, supper served up, you called, my young lady asked for, the Nurse cursed in the pantry, and everything in extremity. I must hence to wait, I beseech you follow straight" (1.3.100-103). Act 1, scene 5 delivers to us the "everything

in extremity” that characterizes hospitality as a taskscape of affordances in process: the dispersal and reorganization of things, persons, and spaces in the moment of the feast, and the dangers, distresses, and creative opportunities that hospitality oversees with such bravado, and occasionally with real candor.

Notes

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- 1 On hospitality and Renaissance theater, see Daryl W. Palmer, *Hospitable Performances: Dramatic Genre and Cultural Practices in Early Modern England* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1992), 3–4. The classic historical study of hospitality in the Tudor-Stuart period is Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). On hospitality and literature more broadly, see Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007). See also new work by David Goldstein, including “Emmanuel Levinas and the Ontology of Eating,” *Gastronomica* 10, no. 3 (2010): 34–44; and “Woolley’s Mouse: Early Modern Recipe Books and the Uses of Nature,” in *Ecofeminist Approaches to Early Modernity*, ed. Jennifer Munroe and Rebecca Laroche (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 105–28.
- 2 All citations from *Romeo and Juliet* are from the Arden edition, ed. Brian Gibbons (London: Methuen, 1980).
- 3 Julia Reinhard Lupton, “Hospitality and Risk in *The Winter’s Tale*,” in *Thinking with Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 161–85.
- 4 See Donald Norman’s landmark study *The Design of Everyday Things* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), first published in 1988 under the title *The Psychology of Everyday Things*.
- 5 See the classic study by Jef Raskin, *The Humane Interface: New Directions for Designing Interactive Systems* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 2000), who uses “interface” as shorthand for “human-machine interface,” “human-computer interface,” and “user interface.” He defines interface as “the way that you accomplish tasks with a product—what you do and how it responds” (2).
- 6 James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1986), 127, original emphasis.
- 7 Gibson states that a niche “refers more to *how* an animal lives than to *where* it lives” (ibid., 128). In 1927, Charles Sutherland Elton defined *niche* as “the animal’s place in

- 1 the community to which it belongs.” *Animal Ecology*, reprinted with new introduction
2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 64.
- 3 8 Gibson, *Ecological Approach*, 127.
- 4 9 Ibid., 239.
- 5 10 Ibid., 78.
- 6 11 Ibid., 78.
- 7 12 Ibid., 138–39.
- 8 13 Harry Heft, “Affordances, Dynamic Experience, and the Challenge of Reification,”
9 *Ecological Psychology* 15, no. 2 (2003): 149–80. See also his book-length study of Gib-
10 son, which approaches affordances from a genealogical, historical, and philosophi-
11 cal (humanistic) vantage: *Ecological Psychology in Context: James Gibson, Roger Barker,*
12 *and the Legacy of William James’s Radical Empiricism* (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erl-
13 baum Associates, 2001). On place-making, see Heft, “A Psychologically Meaningful
14 Description of Environments Requires a Relational Approach,” *Housing, Theory and*
15 *Society* 23, no. 4 (2006): 210–13; and “Affordances and the Perception of Landscape:
16 An Inquiry into Environmental Perception and Aesthetics,” in *Innovative Approaches*
17 *to Researching Landscape and Health*, ed. Catherine Ward Thompson (London: Taylor
18 and Frances, 2010), 9–24.
- 19 14 Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling, and*
20 *Skill* (London: Routledge, 2000).
- 21 15 Eric Reitveld, “The Skillful Body as a Concernful System of Possible Actions: Phe-
22 nomena and Neurodynamics,” *Theory and Psychology* 18, no. 3 (2008): 341–63; and
23 “Situated Normativity: The Normative Aspect of Embodied Cognition in Unreflec-
24 tive Action,” *Mind* 117, no. 468 (2008): 973–1001. On tacit knowledge in artisanal
25 work considered philosophically, see also Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New
26 Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008). For another philosophical account of
27 affordances, see Andrea Scarantino, “Affordances Explained,” *Philosophy of Science* 70,
28 no. 5 (2003): 949–61.
- 29 16 *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (1989), s.v. *afford*, v. 5 and 6.
- 30 17 Gibson, *Ecological Approach*, 138.
- 31 18 “Evidence is the successful presentation of an intelligible object, the successful presen-
32 tation of something whose truth becomes manifest in the evidencing itself. . . .
33 [W]e are active when things present themselves.” Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to*
34 *Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 161.
- 35 19 Rietveld, “Skillful Body,” 346.
- 36 20 On the middle voice in phenomenology, see Bruce R. Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare*
37 (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 65–66.
- 38 21 Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*
39 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 72.
- 22 Hans Blumenberg, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, trans. Robert Savage (Ithaca, N.Y.:
Cornell University Press, 2010), 3.
- 23 Evelyn Tribble, paper for the panel “Shakespeare and the Extended Mind,” Shake-
speare Association of America, Chicago, April, 2010. See also Tribble, *Cognition in the*
Globe: Attention and Memory in Shakespeare’s Theatre (New York: Palgrave, 2011).
- 24 Ellen Spolsky, “Distributed Cognition (Cog Sci Talk) Copes with the Unsaturat-

- able Context (Poststructuralist Talk),” 11; paper delivered for the Workshop “Current Trends in Narrative Theory: International Perspectives,” Ohio State University, Apr. 28, 2008; <http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/herman145/Spolsky.pdf> (accessed Aug. 15, 2011). See also Ellen Spolsky, *Word vs. Image: Cognitive Hunger in Shakespeare’s England* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); and “The Affordances of Images: Religious Imagery and Iconoclasm from a Cognitive Perspective,” in *Tradition, Heterodoxy, and Religious Culture: Judaism and Christianity in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Chanita Goodman and Howard Kreisel (Beer Sheva, Isr.: Ben-Gurion of the Negev Press, 2006), 353–66. Major works in Renaissance object studies include Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass, eds., *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); and Julian Yates, *Error, Misuse, Failure: Object Lessons from the English Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).
- 25 W. B. Worthen, *Drama: Between Poetry and Performance* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).
- 26 This exchange does not appear in the First Quarto of 1597 and is often cut from modern performances. Brian Gibbons speculates that the First Quarto was streamlined to accommodate a smaller cast (introduction to Arden Edition of *Romeo and Juliet*, 2 n.). In his new study of Shakespearean staging, David Bevington notes that the stage direction “bridges the two scenes with a continuous action; no scene break is to be found in the early printed texts of this play”; *The Wide and Universal Theater: Shakespeare in Performance Then and Now* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 131. See also Mariko Ichikawa, *Shakespearean Entrances* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 65–66.
- 27 Worthen, *Poetry and Performance*, 196.
- 28 Citations from plays other than *Romeo and Juliet* are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).
- 29 Tim Ingold, “The Temporality of the Landscape,” *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 (1993): 152–74, at 158.
- 30 See Brian Gibbons’s note, *Romeo and Juliet*, 114.
- 31 Citing seventeenth-century Flemish interiors, Mario Praz writes, “The two focal points of the room are always the fireplace and the credenza: both these and the door frames are richly ornamented”; *An Illustrated History of Furnishing: From the Renaissance to the 20th Century* (New York: George Brazillier, 1964), 115.
- 32 Peter Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France, and Holland* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978), 237.
- 33 Rebeca Helfer, *Spenser’s Ruins and the Art of Recollection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).
- 34 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 94.
- 35 Janette Dillon, *Theatre, Court, and City, 1595–1610: Drama and Social Space in London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13.
- 36 Ingold, “Temporality of Landscape,” 161.

- 37 On Aristotle, animals, and anima in Shakespeare, see Laurie Shannon, "The Eight Animals in Shakespeare; or, Before the Human," *PMLA* 124, no. 2 (2009): 472–79. Plants lack a sensitive soul for Aristotle, but they possess a nutritive soul. Only humans have a rational soul.
- 38 Sir Hugh Plat, in his cookbook *Delights for Ladies to Adorn their Persons, Tables, Closets, and Dilatories, with Beauties, Banquets, Perfumes and Waters* (London, 1654), takes pleasure in the idea of molding fowl out of almond paste: "By this means a Banquet may be presented in the form of a Supper being a very rare and strange device" (sig. B4r). *Banquet*, from *banquette* or bench, first meant dessert party, and was only secondarily extended to name the feast as a whole. The word *dessert* itself comes from *desservi*, and refers to the course that occurs after the table has been fully cleared. Pierre Flandrin, *Arranging the Meal: A History of Table Service in France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 103–4.
- 39 Alice Rayner, "Rude Mechanicals and the *Specters of Marx*," *Theatre Journal* 54, no. 4 (2002): 535–54, at 536.
- 40 Ingold, "Temporality of Landscape," 159.
- 41 Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare*, 125.
- 42 On temporary stages built on trestles, see John Astington, *English Court Theatre, 1558–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 93–94. On trestle tables used to represent banquets on stage, see Chris Meads, *Banquets Set Forth: Banqueting in English Renaissance Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 44.
- 43 Natasha Korda notes that the phrase "play to the cot-quean" was a proverbial disparagement of domestic husbands; *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 132.
- 44 Rayner, "Rude Mechanicals," epigraph, 535, and passim. I am also indebted to the collaborative research project on theatrical entries and exits supervised by Christopher Wild and Juliane Vogel at the University of Konstanz. On thresholds as physical articulations of heterogeneous spatial orders, see Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt, 1959), 24.
- 45 The Touchstone animated film *Gnomeo and Juliet* (2011) exploits this particular threshold-marking convention.
- 46 Thomas A. Greene, *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music, and Art* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 1997), 566.
- 47 Paul Kottman, "Defying the Stars: Tragic Love as the Struggle for Freedom in *Romeo and Juliet*," unpublished manuscript, cited by permission of the author.
- 48 Early in the editorial tradition, George Steevens cited *Westward Ho!* ("He is just like a torch bearer to maskers: he wears good cloaths, and is ranked in good company, but he does nothing") and suggested that "a torch-bearer seems to have been a constant attendant on every person masked." *The Plays of William Shakespeare, Vol. X*, with notes by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens (London, 1773), 27 n.
- 49 Ann Pasternak Slater argues for the predominance of light effects in the party scene: "When Romeo meets Juliet, it is on a stage crowded with lights. 'Torchbearers' (Q2 SD) accompany Romeo to the Capulets' ball, where Capulet constantly fusses about the lights. . . . Shakespeare's dialogue makes it clear that Romeo should himself be a

- torchbearer, and that their first hushed, intimate encounter should be illuminated by the torch whose light encloses them both." See "Petrarchanism Come True in *Romeo and Juliet*," in *Images of Shakespeare*, ed. Werner Habicht et al. (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1988), 129–50, at 140.
- 50 Allen Dessen and Leslie Thomson note that *torch* is sometimes used as a metonym for *torchbearer*, and confirm the supporting role played by torchbearers in masking; *Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 233–34.
- 51 On the Renaissance softscape, or environment of fabrics, see my essay, "Soft Res Publica: On the Assembly and Disassembly of Courtly Space," *Republics of Letters: A Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics, and the Arts* 2, no. 2 (2011), at http://arcade.stanford.edu/journals/rofl/files/article_pdfs/roflv02i02_Lupton_060111.pdf.
- 52 R. B. Graves uses the term *lighting system* to describe the lighting arrangements of the Elizabethan stage; *Lighting the Shakespearean Stage, 1567–1642* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 26–64.
- 53 Gibson, *Ecological Approach*, 51.
- 54 On the interplay between print culture and the decorative arts in Renaissance England, see Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Influence of Continental Prints, 1558–1625* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997). For caryatids on candlesticks, see examples reprinted by Peter Thornton in *The Italian Renaissance Décor, 1400–1600* (New York: Abrams, 1991), 280–81. Thornton also describes the lighting constraints of premodern rooms and the role of reflective surfaces in heightening the effects of ambient light (276).
- 55 Bevington writes, "The torch, as always, signals nighttime" (*This Wide and Universal Theater*, 133).
- 56 The inventor of proxemics is anthropologist Edward T. Hall in *The Hidden Dimension* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966). Evelyn Tribble considers proxemics in the context of theatrical space, *Cognition in the Globe*, 31.
- 57 On the political virtue of candor, which belongs to the *candidatus* in Roman politics, see Jeffrey Edward Green, *The Eyes of the People: Democracy in the Age of Spectatorship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 134–36.
- 58 Helen Wilcox and Richard Todd, eds., *George Herbert: Sacred and Profane* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1995), vii.
- 59 The quotation is from the jurist Trebatius, cited by Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations*, trans. Jeff Fort (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 73.
- 60 On Messianic time in *Romeo and Juliet*, see Jonathan Gil Harris, "Mechanical Turks, Mammet Tricks, and Messianic Time," *postmedieval* 1, nos. 1–2 (2010): 80–87.
- 61 On the cognitive affordances of religious objects, see Ellen Spolsky, *Word vs. Image*. On *Romeo and Juliet* as the tragedy of freedom, see Kottman, "Defying the Stars."
- 62 B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre and Every Business a Stage* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999).