Romana Zacchi

"Enter Shakespeare's Ghost": Shakespearean Adaptations and Appropriations

In real life ghosts serve to make "visible that which has been rendered invisible".[1] They are representational devices for secrets, madness, fears, anxieties and uncertainties. In literature and drama ghosts, spectres, phantoms and spirits represent the invisible and the unsaid, past memories and present distress. They haunt readers and spectators alike both from the printed page and from the stage.

[1] Sladja Blazan, ed., *Ghosts, Stories, Histories. Ghost Stories and Alternative Histories* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 5.

1.

Everyone knows full well that ghosts inhabit Shakespeare's plays: we need only mention the Ghost of old King Hamlet in *Hamlet*, Banquo's Ghost in *Macbeth* or the Ghosts of Queen Anne and the murdered young Princes in *Richard III*. They were those incorporeal beings that came from the past to haunt the present of the dramatis personae, to ask for revenge or to remind them of their own guilty deeds. They were, above all, powerfully effective dramatic devices for creating fully-rounded characters keeping the story running and guiding it to its end. Moreover, the stage effect of a ghost coming up from a trapdoor on the Elizabethan platform stage enhanced the impressiveness of the acted scene.

Shakespeare's ghost, or better Shakespeare's memory, began to hover over English dramatic culture soon after the playwright's death (1616) and the publication of the First Folio (1623), thanks to the editorial format chosen by his fellow actors, a Folio edition, and, above all, to the laudatory lines written by Ben Jonson and other poets appearing in that edition but his very name went unpronounced for a long time thereafter.

As Robert D. Hume maintains, during the last decade of the seventeenth century,

> Extant evidence does not suggest that ordinary playgoers would have associated Shakespeare with such titles as *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Misery of Civil War* [*1 Henry VI*], *Coriolanus*, *Henry V*, *Measure for Measure*, *Merchant of Venice*, Tate's short-lived *Richard II* (suppressed in 1680), *Richard III*, *Winter's Tale*, or any of the comedies. To such a playgoer "Shakespeare" would have been strongly associated with old fashioned blood-and-thunder tragedy of various sorts: passionate, bloody, and pathetic.[2]

[2] Robert D. Hume, "Before the Bard: 'Shakespeare' in Early Eighteenth-Century London", *English Literary History* 64.1 (Spring 1997), 68.

Playgoers, then, were indifferent to authorship in general and Shakespearean authorship in particular, although they fully enjoyed the

hustle of the stage. But of course, literate people of the Restoration period such as John Dryden and Thomas Rymer were well aware of the Shakespearean corpus of plays left behind and their impact on the contemporary scene. Dryden shows mixed feelings towards them, while Rymer is harshly critical due to his devotion to the neoclassical rules imported from abroad. Nonetheless, they both pay homage to Shakespeare's achievement. Theatrical people such as pioneer theatre manager William Davenant and actor Thomas Betterton, well supported by their practical activities and abilities and understanding the way theatre functioned, were also attracted by the variety of plots and characters the Shakespearean corpus had to offer.

In the Restoration period, after the reopening of the theatres, a new generation of playwrights took up dramatic plots and promptbooks from previous times; they were perceived as common, shared 'goods' and adjusted to the new public's inclinations and to the novel introduction of women actresses onto the stage. Manipulating old plays into new ones was a long-standing practice, dating back to mediaeval and Tudor times, and it was meant to adjust the theatrical scene to contemporary tastes, to newly introduced theatrical technologies and even to contemporary events and debates.

The first authors to gain a fresh fortune and reputation on the restored stage were Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher: their plays were revived with relatively few adjustments, since they responded to the tastes of the new audiences quite easily, thanks to their intrigues and the invention of the character of the witty, gentlemanly gallant, so popular in Restoration comedy.[3] Even the revivals of Ben Jonson's plays outscored Shakespeare's during the four decades of the Restoration period.

Shakespeare's corpus was divided into various sections and a royal decree attributed these sections to William Davenant and William Killigrew, the managers of the two patented companies operating at that time.[4] They both held it to be their right to manipulate what had been assigned to them in order to produce a spectacle that could profitably attract their audiences.

Discussing Michael Dobson's study on the making of Shakespeare as the national poet, Robert D. Hume stresses the process of constructing Bardolatry through various rhetorical devices used very early in the last four decades of the seventeenth century, but claims that

> The perception of "Shakespeare" for common readers and playgoers before the 1730s was probably derived from a very small number of "authentic" plays and was seriously skewed by exposure to popular and oft-reprinted adaptations .... The factors which created The Bard came to a head fairly abruptly in the 1730s, before which time there was plenty of Bardolatrous language but hardly any of the practical respect such language ought to express.[5]

[3] See Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1989), 26-32.

[4] See William van Lennep et al., eds., *The London Stage 1660-1800*, vol.I (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), 22 , 151-152.

[5] Hume, "Before the Bard", 57. The study discussed by Hume is Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet. Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship, 1660-1769* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

In short, the scholar writes that since Tudor times, due to old printing practices and a disregard for authorship in such a domain as theatrical activities, the names of the playwrights had not always been acknowledged in the title pages of the printed quartos (only the Folios of Ben Jonson, Fletcher and Shakespeare bore the names of their authors), while more emphasis was given to the company of actors and the venue of the performance (explicitly printed under the title of the play).

It is not until the year 1700 that we meet with full acknowledgement of the source: in *The Tragical History of King Richard III*, by Colley Cibber (printed 1700), the typographical device of italics is introduced to distinguish Shakespeare's lines from the adaptor's. Similarly, *The Jew of Venice* by George Granville (printed 1701) uses quotation marks to distinguish his own additions from the textual excerpts drawn from the original Shakespeare, although neither the name of the original author nor that of the adaptor is mentioned in any way on the title page. The same applies to *Love Betray'd, or, The Agreeable Disappointment* by William Burnaby (an adaptation of *Twelfth Night*, printed 1703): although there is no reference to Shakespeare in the prologue or the epilogue, the preface acknowledges the borrowing of "about fifty of the lines", marking it with inverted commas. These are the first lines of his Preface:

> Part of the Tale of this Play, I took from *Shakespear*, and about Fifty of the Lines; Those that are his, I have mark'd with inverted Comma's, to distinguish 'em from what are mine. I endeavour'd where I had occasion to introduce any of 'em, to make 'em look as little Strangers as possible, but am affraid (tho' a Military Critick did me the honour to say I had plunder'd all from *Shakespear*) that they would easily be known without my Note of distinction.[6]

[6] William Burnaby, *Love Betray'd, or, The Agreeable Disappointment* (London: D. Brown, 1703), 2. All quotations from Shakespeare's adaptations are drawn from *EAS, Editions and Adaptations of Shakespeare*, LION Literature Online database, Chadwick-Healey, <http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk>, 1 July 2007.

The typographical convention of flagging words when they originated elsewhere, from another speaker or another text, is relatively recent, but in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries it meant quite a different thing: it was used to mark "a passage as authoritative and therefore noteworthy", to be distinguished from the rest of the sentence/period.[7] Therefore, the introduction of inverted commas to isolate passages originating elsewhere was used to underline the authority and validity of the source text. Thus a weird paradox is generated, that is, the ambiguity of manipulating texts while at the same time signalling validity and proper duplication of the bracketed passages taken *verbatim* from their originals. Ambivalence and paradoxically mixed feelings seem to be the leading attitude of adaptors, as we shall see later.

[7] Margreta De Grazia, "Shakespeare in Quotation Marks", in Jean I. Marsden, ed., *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Post-Renaissance Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991), 60.

The next step in British culture was the Copyright Act issued in 1709: the law enabled authors to reproduce their own books and gain royalties from sales, whereas previously printers had had a perpetual monopoly

on the printing of works once they had bought them for a printing house.[8]

From the 1730s onwards, Shakespeare's authority became widely accepted and his authorship of the plays was no longer questioned: Shakespeare was placed at the very core of English national culture. The Shakespearean Jubilee planned by David Garrick in 1769 was a natural end to the whole process, as Dobson rightly demonstrates.[9]

[8] The importance of the Statute of 1709 with reference to Shakespeare's plays is discussed in Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 190-192.

[9] Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, passim.

2.

The entrance of the Ghost of Shakespeare in the late seventeenth-century adaptations, evoked first as a name, then as a character embodied in an actor's voice and gesture, and finally invoked as an authority, traces the path for the canonization of Shakespeare's corpus.

In the late seventeenth century the name of Shakespeare is mainly to be found in para-textual apparatuses attached to Shakespearean adaptations and appropriations; that is, in title pages, epistles dedicatory, prefaces, prologues and epilogues. An analysis of these elements can reveal a lot about the attitude of playwrights towards their own source texts, although they are extremely difficult to handle today, since they are mainly addressed to the contemporary audience/readership, and therefore crowded with veiled references, allusions and topical comments. They are also to be seen as rhetorical devices in the context of the rhetorical practices that were widely common in the late seventeenth century. In this article I will be analyzing some exemplary materials as study cases, namely Dryden's Prologue to *Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found too Late* (1679); Charles Gildon's Epilogue to *Measure for Measure, or Beauty the Best Advocate* (1700); and George Granville's Prologue to *The Jew of Venice* (1701). But let me start with another case-study: Tate's rewriting of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*.

Nahum Tate's ghost of Shakespeare is simply evoked as an immaterial name having a certain power to rule from elsewhere over both the business of the theatres and the business of the political scene.

Tate's revision of *Coriolanus* was acted in December 1681, and then published in 1682 under the title of *The Ingratitude of a Common Wealth: or, the Fall of Caius Marius Coriolanus* (1682), "a remarkable piece of Roman History, though form'd into Play" in Tate's words in the Epistle Dedicatory to Lord Herbert. He admits that his play is not "a work meerly of my own Compiling; having in this Adventure Launcht out in Shakespear's Bottom", and that his choice was inspired by parallels with the contemporary political scene. As a matter of fact, the revised play aims at unifying the audience around sentimental family issues. However, it goes beyond this, since Tate's adaptation of Shakespeare's play is filled with political motivations. His revision cannot overlook the fact that Coriolanus

is not a viable political leader. His Coriolanus cannot inspire the loyalty that the playwright advocates in his Dedication to Lord Herbert because Tate is caught between his ideological allegiance to the monarch and his creative allegiance to the Bard. The Prologue, written by Sir George Raynsford, sounds a note relevant to our topic:

> Our Author do's with modesty submit,
> To all the Loyal Criticks of the Pit;
> Not to the Wit-dissenters of the Age,
> Who in a Civil War do still Engage,
> The antient fundamental Laws o'th' Stage:
> Such who have common Places got, by stealth,
> From the Sedition of Wits Common-Wealth.
> From Kings presented, They may well detract,
> Who will not suffer Kings Themselves to Act.
>
> Yet he presumes *we may be safe to Day,*
> *Since* Shakespear *gave Foundation to the Play:*
> *'Tis Alter'd—and his sacred Ghost appeas'd;*
> I wish you All as easily were Pleas'd:
> He only ventures to make Gold from Oar,
> And turn to Money, what lay dead before.[10]

[10] Nahum Tate, *The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth: Or, the Fall of Caius Martius Coriolanus*, Prologue, lines 9-11 (London: Cornmarket Press, 1969). Italics mine.

Although the treatment of the play is such that Shakespeare is forcefully turned into a royalist partisan, his "sacred" ghost is "appeas'd" – we are told – since he is being revived and appropriated for such material objectives as financial gain, dramatic improvement and, last but not least, service for the royalist cause. Tate shows the very same ambivalence to his forefather Shakespeare as is shown by nearly all other adaptors of the late seventeenth century, and uses the "latent political values" of the former play to question the aesthetic and political anxieties of the age.[11]

[11] "The Restoration Coriolanus bodies forth a range of aesthetic and political anxieties that are as significant for what they express as for how they cannot be reconciled". Olsen Thomas G., "Apolitical Shakespeare; or, the Restoration Coriolanus", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 38.3 (1998), 412.

3.

Dryden's Ghost of Shakespeare turns into a material being: he walks onto the stage before the dramatic action begins, and – as Prologue – speaks directly to the audience.

Dryden's re-writing of *Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found too Late* was probably produced for the first time in April 1679, the same month its printed version was entered in the Stationers' Register. The re-writing undergoes a special treatment, which is clearly and fully stated by Dryden himself in the Epistle Dedicatory to the Earl of Sunderland, in the Preface and the annexed piece of criticism ("The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy"). According to his ambitious project of reforming and giving stricter formal rules to the English language, the main theme of the Epistle Dedicatory, Dryden meant to "remove that heap of rubbish, under which many excellent

thoughts lay wholly bury'd".[12] Thus, such "rubbish" as obsolete nouns, adjectives, verbs, grammatical and syntactical constructions that would undermine the principles of clearness and plainness of language were deleted and replaced with contemporary forms. A companion aim was also pursued within the same re-writing, that of partially adjusting the dramatic structure and the narrative fable of the original to the newly introduced principles of neoclassical dramaturgy. For example, the sequence of the scenes is turned into a symmetrical alternation, which is more respectful of the principle of verisimilitude on the stage. Furthermore, ambiguity of character is avoided thanks to the deletion of speeches or parts of speeches. On the contrary, the cardinal principle of 'poetic justice' is disregarded at the end of the narrative fable, where Troilus – on discovering the loyalty and faithfulness of his dead lover Cressida – seeks his own death in battle against the Greeks. The two lovers end tragically due to an irreconcilable conflict; they are eventually transfigured as the virtuous hero and heroine of a pathetic tragedy, according to the Aristotelian canon as revisited by the French theorists. Radical changes, therefore, characterize Dryden's manipulation.[13]

In a previous adaptation, that of *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island*, worked on together with William Davenant (1670), Dryden had paid homage to his forefather, "old Shakespear's honour'd dust", and admitted that "Shakespear's Magick could not copy'd be,/ Within that Circle none durst walk but he". Shakespeare is king and his power "is sacred as a King's".[14] In the Preface both Dryden and Davenant declare a special veneration towards the playwright from Stratford. But this did not stop either of them from developing a complete manipulation of the original story and its linguistic manifestation.

In *Troilus*, Dryden's Ghost of Shakespeare appears on the stage as a character in its own right, although it expresses Dryden's ideas: clothing his words as Shakespeare's, he has the playwright say that his [Dryden's] reshaping of the play is more truthful to the original fable of the two ancient lovers than that told by Homer himself ("My faithfull Scene ... shall tell/How Trojan valour did the Greek excel").[15] Above all, that it was he – despite being illiterate and as "barbarous" as his own age – who founded the English stage thanks to the richness and originality of his invention. An ambivalent attitude is shown here by Dryden: on the one side, he makes Shakespeare's Ghost say that he has improved the whole structure of the "rough-drawn" original play, while, on the other, he makes him declare that the original "Master-strokes" are preserved untouched ("He shook; and thought it Sacrilege to touch", *TC* 16). This is a highly ambivalent way of putting things together.

In the light of his previous discussion of the political implications of Shakespearean re-writings in general, Dobson defines this a "distracting

[12] Maximillian E. Novak, George R. Guffey and Alan Roper, eds., "Preface", in *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. XIII (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 226.

[13] See Marisa Sestito, *Creare imitando. Dryden e il teatro* (Udine: Campanotto, 1999), 33-36. See also Sergio Rufini, *Shakespeare via Dryden*. (*Il Troilus and Cressida attraverso il rifacimento di Dryden*) (Perugia: Editrice Guerra, 1988), 9-10 and passim. On the re-writing of the pathetic heroine and specifically Cressida see Jean I. Marsden, "Rewritten Women: Shakespearean Heroines in the Restoration", in Marsden, ed., *The Appropriation of Shakespeare*, 50-51.

[14] Maximilian E. Novak, ed., *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. X (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 6. The quoted lines taken from the Prologue of *The Tempest* are 3, 19-20, 24.

[15] John Dryden, *Troilus and Cressida, or, truth Found too Late* (*1679*). *The Prologue Spoken by Mr. Betterton, Representing the Ghost of Shakespear*, lines 37-38. See Appendix I. Hereafter referred to as *TC*.

prologue", meaning by this that Dryden, the adaptor, shifts the attention of the audience from his own reworking of the original play (and its political implications) to very different issues, such as his own 'devout' homage to Shakespeare, the rewriting of English History (the legend of the Trojan hero Brut, Aeneas' nephew and ancestor of the ancient Britons, and consequently the founder the English Nation), then finally the relation between Shakespeare and Homer.[16]

Although Dobson insists on an improper, far too contemporary, Bloomian principle, that of the 'anxiety of influence', he does not fail to underline the importance of opening his play by introducing Shakespeare's Ghost on the stage. What is of capital importance – in my opinion – is the fact that Shakespeare's name is turned into a 'tangible' being, and is exhibited to an audience who might not have been aware of the materiality of that name. By giving flesh and voice to the dead playwright the adaptor acknowledges something more than the mere name, although this is still something less than full authority.

[16] Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, 74-75, and note 27.

4.

What if an adaptor had a more deferent attitude towards Shakespeare's achievements?

Such is the case of Charles Gildon, a versatile professional writer and translator who was at home in the company of Dryden, William Wycherley and Aphra Behn. He is also known as the compiler of Shakespeare's biography and criticism under the title "Remarks on the Plays of Shakespeare", contained in the seventh (spurious and 'unauthorized') volume of Nicholas Rowe's edition of Shakespeare's plays (1710).[17]

Measure for Measure, or Beauty the Best Advocate was first performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields in February 1700.[18] The play was closed by Shakespeare's Ghost as Epilogue, and spoken by the actor who had played the role of the Duke.

Gildon's Ghost of Shakespeare appears, then, on the stage at the very end of the play, and engages in a vigorously enraged complaint about a countless number of misdemeanours perpetrated against his own plays: his Falstaff has been rendered unrecognizable, no more no less than "one poor Coxcomb" because of poor playwrights mangling his playtexts; his Macbeth, Hamlet and Desdemona "Murder'd on the Scene" fail to raise fear, pleasure and passion because of poor acting. The Ghost's protest, therefore, goes against the persecution enacted by mediocre scribblers as well as by mediocre actors ("Let me no more endure such Mighty Wrongs,/ By Scriblers Folly, or by Actors Lungs").[19]

The fact that the Ghost vehemently objects to his adaptors and their performers right at the end of this new version of *Measure* raises the

[17] Rowe's edition of Shakespeare's corpus appeared in six volumes in 1709. The addition of a seventh volume in 1710 was a somewhat piratical operation performed by printer Edmund Curll, without the authorization of either the previous printer or of Rowe himself.

[18] An extensive comment of the play is provided by Romana Zacchi, "Una storia troppo shakespeariana: Davenant, Gildon e *Measure for Measure*", in *Measure for Measure. Dal testo alla scena,* ed. by Mariangela Tempera (Bologna: Clueb, 1992), 123-140.

[19] Charles Gildon, *Measure for Measure, or Beauty the Best Advocate* (1700). The Epilogue. *Shakespeares* GHOST, *Spoken by Mr. Verbruggen*, By the Same, lines 13, 6, 21-22. See Appendix II.

ambiguous question whether the play that has just been acted, before his appearance on the stage, falls into the group of 'murderous' operations or not. In the printed version of the play the Epilogue is located at the beginning, after the 'Persons Names', the Epistle, dedicated to Nicholas Battersby, and the Prologue. Such an unusual position provides an answer to the question raised, since the reader is allowed to read the Ghost's accusations immediately before reading the full playtext. By means of this editorial expedient Gildon seems to be willing to claim that his rewriting has the textual and philological qualities to stand as a truthful revisitation of the original play, while a comparative analysis of both would soon reveal the cuts and changes, due to a double intention of the author, one being a reverential admiration of Shakespeare's genius, although tempered by comments on its "irregularity" and lack of "poetic justice" (as may be read in the "Remarks" mentioned above); the other a tentative conformity to the wave of moral and didactic "reformation of the stage" promoted by Jeremy Collier a couple of years before.[20]

[20] See Jeremy Collier, *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (London, 1698).

5.

And what if two illustrious Ghosts appeared on the stage? This is exactly what happens one year later, in 1701.

George Granville, Baron Lansdowne, a writer and politician, took up his pen and adapted Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, after Dryden had been favourably impressed by his first attempts at playwriting and had encouraged him to do so. His version changed the original title into *The Jew of Venice* and was first performed at Little Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1701. In the brief "Advertisement to the Reader" Granville advances an explicit justification for his operation by referring back to the exemplary endeavours of his predecessors, such as Davenant, Dryden and Tate, the "three succeeding Laureats" of his age, and by declaring that "the judicious Reader will observe so many Manly and Moral Graces in the Characters and Sentiments, that he may excuse the Story, for the Sake of the Ornamental Parts".

The Prologue to the new play was written by Bevill Higgons, one of Granville's kinsmen, but it seems to be closely consistent with the adaptor's concepts and ideas: a reverential attitude towards Shakespeare's genius and beauties, mixed with mild critique of his treatment of dramatic plots, as the Advertisement puts forward.

Shakespeare's ghostly figure appears on the stage in the company of the recently dead Dryden; the two ghosts, both "Crown'd with Lawrel", engage in a duologue before the "radiant circle" of the theatre, denouncing to their audience the decline of the stage, the deplorable fashion of imitating French farce, the indifference to, or better, the ignorance of the true beauties

of Nature as portrayed by great poets. The relationship between the original play and its rewriting is defined well by the lines pronounced by Shakespeare's Ghost:

> These Scenes in their rough Native Dress were mine;
> But now improv'd with nobler Lustre shine;
> The first rude Sketches Shakespear's Pencil drew,
> But all the shining Master stroaks are new.[21]

[21] George Granville, *The Jew of Venice* (1701). The Prologue. *The Ghosts of Shakespear and Dryden arise Crown'd with Lawrel*. Written by *Bevill Higgons*, lines 35-38. See Appendix III.

The Ghost's words, while alternately denouncing Shakespeare's "rough" and "rude" play, praise the alterations done by the later author: thus, the ghostly appearance of the dead playwright is used as a way of approving them. The new "shining Master stroaks", those parts due to Granville's pen, are the "value added", as it were. In the printed edition of the new play Granville chooses to distinguish his own lines from Shakespeare's by putting his own between inverted commas, as he declares in the "Advertisement to the Reader":

> The Reader may please moreover to take Notice, (that nothing may be imputed to *Shakespear* which may seem unworthy of him) that such Lines as appear to be markt, are Lines added, to make good the Connexion where there was a necessity to leave out; in which all imaginable Care has been taken to imitate the same fashion of Period, and turn of Stile and Thought with the Original.

The notion of improving the "connections", that is, the structure of the original play, is well grounded in Granville as well as in all his contemporaries, although he does not mention the cuts and omissions and understates the effects of the shifting focus from the "merchant" to the "Jew".

A long comment in Dobson's study is devoted to the sexual overtones and consequent moral implications included in the words Nature and natural. The mention of French farce, of Strephon and Sapho, according to Dobson and others, leaves room for an anti-homosexual reading of the Prologue, and in favour of normal (that is, natural), heterosexual relationships.[22] This kind of reading would be justified by the popular wave against immorality and profaneness represented on the stage that has been mentioned before, but it somehow obliterates the real value of the changes in the adapted play.[23]

[22] See Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, 121-124.

[23] An analysis of the play is provided by Romana Zacchi, "The Jew of Venice di George Granville", in Mariangela Tempera, ed., *The Merchant of Venice. Dal testo alla scena* (Bologna: Clueb, 1994), 197-212.

6.

Having examined the three appearances of Shakespeare's Ghost in the late seventeenth century adaptations, one may still find oneself asking the original question: Why put the Ghost of Shakespeare on the stage? The answer is quite simply a "return from [cultural] oblivion", as Ratmoko puts

it.[24] Although never completely obliterated from cultural memory after his death, the name of Shakespeare, his authority and authorship, gradually took the form of a ghostly appearance, which could give flesh and blood – through the flesh and blood of an actor on the stage – to the author himself, and allow him to re-enter the realm of the living and their cultural memory. Whether this was done for the aim of earning money, promoting political visions, gaining "posthumous approval" for the adaptations or canonizing the dead playwright into a cultural monument, is a matter for further speculation.[25]

[24] David Ratmoko writes that "specters offer a key to deciphering the cryptic legacy of the past" (5) and later speaks of "ghosts returning to settle injustice". *On Spectrality*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 5, 86.

[25] Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, 121.

APPENDIX

I John Dryden, *Troilus and Cressida, or, truth Found too Late (1679)*
The Prologue Spoken by Mr. Betterton, Representing the Ghost of Shakespear.

See, my lov'd Britons, see your Shakespeare rise,
An awfull ghost confess'd to human eyes!
Unnam'd, methinks, distinguish'd I had been
From other shades, by this eternal green,
About whose wreaths the vulgar Poets strive,
And with a touch, their wither'd Bays revive.
Untaught, unpractis'd, in a barbarous Age,
I found not, but created first the Stage.
And, if I drain'd no Greek or Latin store,
'Twas, that my own abundance gave me more.
On foreign trade I needed not rely
Like fruitfull Britain, rich without supply.
In this my rough-drawn Play, you shall behold
Some Master-strokes, so manly and so bold
That he, who meant to alter, found 'em such
He shook; and thought it Sacrilege to touch.
Now, where are the Successours to my name?
What bring they to fill out a Poets fame?
Weak, short-liv'd issues of a feeble Age;
Scarce living to be Christen'd on the Stage!
For Humour farce, for love they rhyme dispence,
That tolls the knell, for their departed sence.
Dulness might thrive in any trade but this:
'T wou'd recommend to some fat Benefice.
Dulness, that in a Playhouse meets disgrace
Might meet with Reverence, in its proper place.
The fulsome clench that nauseats the Town
Wou'd from a Judge or Alderman go down!
Such virtue is there in a Robe and gown!
And that insipid stuff which here you hate
Might somewhere else be call'd a grave debate:
Dulness is decent in the Church and State.
But I forget that still 'tis understood
Bad Plays are best decry'd by showing good:

Sit silent then, that my pleas'd Soul may see
A Judging Audience once, and worthy me:
My faithfull Scene from true Records shall tell
How Trojan valour did the Greek excell;
Your great forefathers shall their fame regain,
And Homers angry Ghost repine in vain.

II Charles Gildon, *Measure for Measure, or Beauty the Best Advocate* (1700)
The Epilogue. Shakespeares GHOST, Spoken by Mr. Verbruggen, By the Same.

Enough 'your Cruelty Alive I knew;
And must I Dead be Persecuted too?
Injur'd so much of late upon the Stage,
My Ghost can bear no more; but comes to Rage.
My Plays, by Scriblers, Mangl'd I have seen;
By Lifeless Actors Murder'd on the Scene.
Fat Falstaff here, with Pleasure, I beheld,
Toss off his Bottle, and his Truncheon weild:
Such as I meant him, such the Knight appear'd;
He Bragg'd like Falstaff, and, like Falstaff, fear'd.
But when, on yonder Stage, the Knave was shewn
Ev'n by my Self, the Picture scarce was known.
Themselves, and not the Man I drew, they Play'd;
And Five Dull Sots, of One poor Coxcomb, made.
Hell! that on you such Tricks as these shou'd pass,
Or I be made the Burden of an Ass!
Oh! if Machbeth, or Hamlet ever pleas'd,
Or Desdemona e'r your Passions rais'd;
If Brutus, or the Bleeding Cæsar e'r
Inspir'd your Pity, or provok'd your Fear,
Let me no more endure such Mighty VVrongs,
By Scriblers Folly, or by Actors Lungs.
So, late may Betterton forsake the Stage,
And long may Barry Live to Charm the Age.
May a New Otway Rise, and Learn to Move
The Men with Terror, and the Fair with Love!
Again, may Congreve, try the Commic Strain;
And Wycherly Revive his Ancient Vein:
Else may your Pleasure prove your greatest Curse;
And those who now Write dully, still Write worse.

III George Granville, *The Jew of Venice (1701)*
PROLOGUE.
The Ghosts of Shakespear and Dryden arise Crown'd with Lawrel.
Written by Bevill Higgons, Esq; Prologue.

Dry.
This radiant Circle, reverend Shakespear, view;
An Audience only to thy Buskin due.

Shakes.
A Scene so noble, antient Greece ne'er saw,

Nor Pompey's Dome, when Rome the World gave Law.
I feel at once both Wonder and Delight,
By Beauty warm'd, transcendently so bright,
Well, Dryden, might'st thou sing; well may these Hero's fight.

Dryd.
With all the outward Lustre, which you find,
They want the nobler Beauties of the Mind.
Their sickly Judgments, what is just, refuse,
And French Grimace, Buffoons, and Mimicks choose;
Our Scenes desert, some wretched Farce to see;
They know not Nature, for they tast not Thee.

Shakes.
Whose stupid Souls thy Passion cannot move,
Are deaf indeed to Nature and to Love.
When thy Ægyptian weeps, what Eyes are dry!
Or who can live to see thy Roman dye.

Dryd.
Thro' Perspectives revers'd they Nature view,
Which give the Passions Images, not true.
Strephon for Strephon sighs; and Sapho dies,
Shot to the Soul by brighter Sapho's Eyes:
No Wonder then their wand'ring Passions roam,
And feel not Nature, whom th'have overcome.
For shame let genal Love prevail agen,
You Beaux Love Ladies, and you Ladies Men.

Shakes.
These Crimes unknown, in our less polisht Age,
New seem above Correction of the Stage;
Less Heinous Faults, our Justice does pursue;
To day we punish a Stock-jobbing Jew.
A piece of, Justice, terrible and strange;
Which, if pursu'd, would make a thin Exchange.
The Law's Defect, the juster Muse supplies,
Tis only we, can make you Good or Wise,
Whom Heav'n spares, the Poet will Chastise.
These Scenes in their rough Native Dress were mine;
But now improv'd with nobler Lustre shine;
The first rude Sketches Shakespear's Pencil drew,
But all the shining Master stroaks are new.
This Play, ye Criticks, shall your Fury stand,
Adorn'd and rescu'd by a faultless Hand.

Dryd.
I long endeavour'd to support thy Stage,
With the faint Copies of thy Nobler Rage,
But toyl'd in vain for an Ungenerous Age.
They starv'd me living; nay, deny'd me Fame,
And scarce now dead, do Justice to my Name.
Wou'd you repent? Be to my Ashes kind,
Indulge the Pledges I have left behind.