

Reflection: The Twenty-Line Trap? Shakespeare Enacted by Young Women

Shannon Reed

University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA
sreed151@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Professional actors assemble a toolkit of monologues with an obligatory “Shakespearean monologue” of around 20 lines. But female actors are at a disadvantage, with less than 150 women in a repertoire of over 1100 characters in Shakespeare’s 37 or more plays. Young female¹ actors are even more at a loss, if the powerful and complex older female roles are removed, leaving only a few dozen appropriate speeches. What effect does this limited canon have on such actors? Here, I reflect upon my own participant observer experience as a young woman actor, who received the bulk of my early training as a student in a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre: Acting and Directing program at an American university in the 1990’s. I also present research, accomplished through interviews with two other women who also played Shakespeare’s young female characters, in which they reflect on their casting, rehearsal and production experiences in the roles, as well as how their subsequent choices of theatrical work were influenced by such formative experiences. Their words point to the dual, contradictory nature of this limited canon, proving both its limitations and opportunities. Findings explore what these experiences suggest for pedagogical changes in teaching Shakespeare.

Keywords: Theater, Shakespeare, Feminism, Academic Theatre Training, Girls, Girl Actors, British Theatre, American Theatre, Renaissance Theatre, Pedagogy

[1] Here, I define “young female” as aged 18–22, the most common age of college students in America. A few of Shakespeare’s “girl” roles are generally agreed to be younger in age (e.g. Juliet). In keeping with academic theatrical practice of the early to mid-1990’s, I have chosen to use the words “female” and “women” interchangeably, although we understand them to mean different concepts today.

Professional actors put together a toolkit of monologues they can perform at auditions, with often at least one obligatory Shakespearean monologue. There's no way around Shakespeare for most professional actors: there are over 65 festivals dedicated to his work in the United States and his plays are performed far more frequently in college theatre, summer stock, community theatre and regional theatre than any other playwright. For good reason, of course; Shakespeare's work is widely agreed to be beautifully written and dramatically compelling, fun for audiences and fulfilling for actors and directors.

Or, to be more precise, the plays are fulfilling for *male* actors, who are given a multitude of casting opportunities in any Shakespearean play. Female actors are at a disadvantage, with fewer than 150 women in Shakespeare's repertoire of over 1,100 characters, unless they choose (or are chosen) to perform a male role. For young female actors, the choices are further limited, with the powerful and complex older female roles removed, leaving only a few dozen appropriate speeches that are long enough, at twenty lines or so, to serve as an audition monologue.

I call this the *twenty-line trap*, a problem often faced by young female actors just as they begin their professional training. What effect does this trap have on them? What effect did it have on me as a young female actor? Here, I reflect on my own experience as well as that of Willow and Eileen², both women, like me, in their 40's, who shared through ethnographic interviews their thoughts about their struggles with the twenty-line trap. They reflected back on their experiences twenty years ago when in academic acting training programs.

In approaching this work, I kept in mind the responsibility feminist scholar Lynn Walter assigns to such research. Although I do not identify as a feminist anthropologist, I am in sympathy with how the field-specific point she makes here applies to broader scholarship:

As a field of study, feminist anthropology should ask questions about how differences in power and knowledge have been constructed over time as gender differences, how people recreate and resist these gender differences in everyday life, and how they are occasionally able to change them. (272)

Using Walter's view allows for the validity of localized experiences, such as my own, Eileen and Willow's, as a lens for questioning the construction of gender differences. Small, considered fragments of our lives cannot constitute a definitive statement about the role Shakespearean drama ought to play in theatre that seeks to be inclusive to young women. Instead, I hope these shared experiences reveal the possibilities of small-scale change that may prove effective in eventually creating a larger-scale adaptation to new norms all the while keeping in mind that the individual experiences recounted here cannot represent the whole of female actors' experience. As Walter points out, "No anthropologist has enough experience...to [fully] represent others" (247).

MY EXPERIENCE

As a white, middle-class, young woman residing in the suburbs of a small city in Pennsylvania in the 1990's, I had access to after-school activities that spurred my love of acting. Getting cast was never an issue for me: I always got a plum part in the drama club productions (which were chosen with the student participants in mind) or accepted that I was not suited for musical productions (I cannot sing!). Until my college experience introduced me to the fierce competition for parts among the young women in the theatre department of my small Midwestern university, I never sensed that being female would pose challenges to me in my acting career. Suddenly, acting was not about portraying a role I was interested in or felt drawn to.

[2] Names provided are pseudonyms.

Instead, acting was a contest in which a large number of young actors competed for a small number of main-stage parts. Those uncast worked on crews or did not participate in the productions.

It was in this atmosphere that I became aware of the problem of the twenty-line trap. It began when I had to choose a Shakespearean monologue. At 20 years old, my choices were limited; the powerful and complex older women's roles—Gertrude, Lady MacBeth—might have posed an enticing acting challenge but would do me good in competing for the ingénue roles for which I would most likely audition. I was left with only a few dozen speeches from the girl roles. This was a secret canon of twenty-line monologues, known to every young female actor, of which Juliet's speech in Act 2, Scene 5 of *Romeo and Juliet*, begins, "The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse...". Whether we liked it or not, it seemed that young female actors were trapped into a very limited selection and had to hope we suited something from it.

Our training program at that time slotted us into a class in Shakespearean acting during our junior year. I was assigned a scene from *As You Like It*, playing Rosalind, as well as Lady Anne's monologue from *Richard III*. Of course, I was thrilled to attempt such challenging roles and barely noticed as my female colleagues, generally physically smaller and prettier than me, struggled through their own assignments. Looking back now, I can see that, in keeping with Walter's view that people may "ask about gendered symbolic and material structures without necessarily asking how such structures are constructed and contested," at the time I was concerned more with the roles I had been assigned than with asking why so few roles were available to so many young women (275).

Meanwhile, my classmates were struggling to apply the craft of acting techniques they'd learned to the small roles available to them. It turned out that such tasks as constructing a character biography were much easier to do with larger, more complex roles than we had been assigned. "Yes, but what does she *want*?" one classmate complained about Miranda from *The Tempest*. Another, assigned to play Ophelia in a scene, joked that she barely had anything to memorize, so long as she could "run around and look scared." They were beginning to realize what actor Fiona Shaw has pointed out about some of Shakespeare's female characters: "I'm dying to put up a fight but look at the text – it ain't there!"³

It was not until we had to choose our own monologue to work on that I fell into the trap. We were encouraged to be conservative in our choosing and find a role that we might conceivably be cast in after college. Our male classmates had dozens of young male roles to choose from; meanwhile, we young women tried to find some appropriate monologue that was not already taken by a classmate. Some gave up and simply worked on one of the standards.

I did not really understand what was being asked of me, it seemed, since I asked if I could work on a young man's monologue, perhaps one of Prince Hal's from either of the *Henry IV*s. Much like Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I wanted to play all the roles. Also like Bottom, I was firmly told whom I must play—and it was not Prince Hal. Finally, I coaxed the professor to let me attempt the gender-less Prologue from *Henry V*, which would go on to serve as my Shakespearean audition piece for the few years until I left acting for playwriting, where I was (finally) able to play all the parts.

In the years since, I have occasionally thought about the twenty-line trap. Although I was principally angry with my professor at the time, I see now that the trap is contained within Shakespeare's plays themselves, with their staggering reliance on male characters over female. The structure that I might have contested was not only that of my college's theatre department but also that of the Shakespearean canon itself. The plays are inherently male, deliberately outside of the world of young women. In *Clamorous Voices*, Carol Rutter quotes the actor Juliet Stevenson who said, "If you are playing one of Shakespeare's women, you are by definition in a supporting role. You appear in relationship to the man—as wife, daughter, mother, lover" (xxiv).

³ See Aston, Elaine, 94. Shaw was speaking specifically about Kate from *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Given the prohibition against female actors taking the stage during his lifetime, as well as the all-male composition of his troupe, Shakespeare chose to create many more male roles than female. The women characters of Shakespeare, young and old, were played by men, so it is not surprising that the female roles were far fewer in proportion and often smaller in speech length and time on stage. All of the young female roles I was allowed to consider had been played by young men (called “boy actors”) in Shakespeare’s troupe.

Today, we may find it curious, as Carol Rutter notes, “to think that as a modern actress my opportunities in Shakespearean repertoire have been determined by the limitations or excellences of two or three generations of Elizabethan boy players” (xxiv). While Shakespeare could only work within his era, we are not of that time. The theatre community—particularly the academic theatre community—might question its general lack of awareness about or action to fix the inherent issues for young women arising from the seemingly perpetual performance of Shakespeare, performances that often take place without the investigation of insightful ways to combat gender-determined casting.⁴

I do not want to argue against the perennial performances of Shakespeare’s plays but instead to closely examine the experiences of two other female actors to ponder the impact of their experiences; to understand what each woman learned about theatre and Shakespeare, and, as Lynn Walter suggests, to ask questions about the possible limitations of both; and to anticipate ways to change the trap I have identified.

EILEEN’S EXPERIENCE

Eileen holds a Bachelor of Arts from a large University in the Southern United States in English and Theatre, a Master of Arts in Teaching from the same school in Theatre, and a PhD in Educational Theatre from a large Mid-Atlantic university. We spoke in 2014 specifically about her time as an undergrad 20 years before, where she first faced the twenty-line trap in preparing for an audition. She said, “It was hard to find a Shakespearean monologue that was age appropriate. [I turned to] Juliet almost as a default setting.”⁵ But when the department decided to stage *Romeo & Juliet*, Eileen realized she would have to compete with 100 other young women for three roles. She decided to present the Jailer’s Daughter’s monologue from *Two Noble Kinsmen* at her audition because she was worried that “the director might feel there was a ‘right’ way to play Juliet et al. but if I busted out something he didn’t know I’d have a better shot.” The role went to someone else, and she says she was not surprised, since she knew subconsciously that the role was preconceived for someone of a different type. The woman who was cast was “very petite,” she says, “and I’m very tall.” Because there were so many talented and skilled young women to choose from, the director could insist on a particular physical type. Eileen had the instinct to change something about the audition process but did not consider trying to resist or adapt the structure and tradition that informed it.

Her university presented a Shakespearean play every year, Eileen noted. Women in the department grumbled about how few female roles there were in these plays, but there “was also a sense of ‘this is the way it is,’” Eileen said. These are the “‘important’ plays so in order to get a proper theatre education these are the ones we have to study or perform or so on.” It meant that young men in the undergraduate acting program often were cast more often than women in the MFA program, but that was accepted as necessary because the classics had to be performed.

The department was what Walter refers to as an “oppressive structure” (273) that many wanted to challenge, but challenging the structure in order to create change was difficult. I asked Eileen if she had ever considered auditioning for a male role. She said,

[4] It is interesting to note that Elizabethan theatre, in allowing men or boys to play female roles, actually practiced less rigidity than many mainstream theatres today, which insist that women play female roles and men play male roles (and defines those gender roles rigidly).

[5] All quotations from Eileen and Willow are from personal interviews conducted by the author.

I definitely thought about it—and was fascinated by the women who played breeches roles. I remember having to learn a Hamlet monologue in English class in high school, essentially as a memorization exercise, really. And I felt a much stronger interest in Henry V than I remember feeling in most other Shakespearean roles. I had a much stronger desire to say those lines than anything Juliet utters.

But, in the end, her professors were not interested in cross-gender casting since there were many young men available to play the roles.

Looking back now, Eileen felt that was disappointing. She says, “I would have found it extremely empowering to have been encouraged to look at male roles. The message that [came through to me was] there are limited ways of being female but a multitude of ways to be male.” Further, she notes, “I think that enabling students to seek the words that call to them—like the visceral pull of Henry V [for me]—would yield far greater rewards in both artistry and academia than the ‘traditional’ way of doing things.”

Eileen was captivated by some of Shakespeare’s work and interested in exploring it, but the option of doing so was cut off by her department’s rigorous adherence to established gender roles, a structure that had been in place for many decades. She sought to be empowered and intellectually energized by the complexity of Shakespeare, but the way the department sought to teach Shakespeare did not allow her to be so, as she was forced to try to find a role within a structure quietly oppressive to young women. In fact, what she learned was that girls should not seek complexity but be satisfied to fulfill a type; that there are set limits on what females can be and do; and that the important work fell disproportionately to the men in her program. These lessons may have been tacit, but they were clear.

WILLOW’S EXPERIENCE

Willow earned a diploma in theatre arts and then an advanced certificate in dramatic art from a prestigious university in the United Kingdom. We spoke in 2014 specifically about her time at that school in the mid-1990s where she played Titania from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and Miranda from *The Tempest* in repertory during her first year. As in many British drama schools, students were allowed to specify what kind of role they would like to play in the final shows of their time at the school. These requests were made before the specific productions were announced, so, for example, while a student might specify wanting to play a male lead in a musical, he wouldn’t know what part he was assigned in which musical until some time later. Willow asked for the lead female role in the school’s next Shakespeare production. When it was announced, she learned that, as she said, “[*Troilus and Cressida*] was our final college production and as I’d asked for the [female] lead role in the Shakespeare, I got [Cressida].”

Although the part met the guidelines she had been allowed to specify, Willow explained that she was not happy. She had hoped for a large, exciting role such as Rosalind from *As You Like It* or a similarly more complex part. “Cressida is a bit of a sap,” she says. Worse, the director chose to cast other women from her department in roles that were traditionally male. Thus, playing the “female lead” actually turned to be a smaller, less rewarding part than many of the women onstage got to play. As Willow said, “The women playing the men were obviously women playing men, but . . . it didn’t really matter. [Cressida] is abused by pretty much everyone she encounters.” Although the director pursued a production that was untraditional in gender roles, the main female character remained written in a way that Willow found to be disempowering to play, the very opposite of the experience she wished to have before graduating. She should not have been surprised, she says now: “In fact, most of Shakespeare’s girls have that same pathetic, put upon . . . start off excited, end up abused crap.”

Asked to compare playing Cressida to Miranda, whom she had played the year before, Willow pointed

out that Miranda “. . . actually had a bit of kick to her . . . At least I don't recall her wailing as much as Cressida.” Also, Willow was alternating playing Miranda with Titania from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which made it more “challenging.” “The ingénue was never for me,” she said, and playing Titania, a role often cast with an actress past girlhood, allowed her to see that there was more to Shakespeare than “playing boring little girls.” She wanted to do more than “Stand there. Look pretty. Wail a bit.”

While Eileen and I struggled with the oppressive structure of our respective academic environments and with Shakespeare's plays, Willow's difficulties were grounded solely in the latter. As David Mann notes in *Shakespeare's Women*:

In Elizabethan plays, whilst female characters are often the fulcrum of the action in some moral crisis or transgression, it is almost always one which relates to male sexuality, and the actual focus of their contribution to the plot; hence, their frequent relationship to the principal male character as wife, mother, or daughter. (124)

For Willow, the lack of agency was harrowing, especially coming so fast upon the heels of feeling that she had some say in choosing her part.

Willow said that she wished she had realized as a girl that for her, comedy was much more rewarding to both play and watch. Her favorite Shakespearean roles, even then, were the comedic older women's roles: the Nurse, Mistress Quickly, and so on. Even though she sensed this, she did not feel empowered to do more than ask for a role in a Shakespearean piece. She said it would not have occurred to her to request a specific play or demand to try out for a male part, having been given the plum role of the female lead.

Ultimately, as much as she loved Shakespeare, she feels that “in training [young women] to be actors there are probably better, more challenging roles to learn your craft with” than Shakespeare's girls. But this insight arrived with maturity; in her student years, Willow did not attempt to question the structure around her, nor, as with Eileen and me, try to change it.

WHAT TO DO?

As young women, Eileen and Willow, like me, found part of the process of acting Shakespeare disempowering. Instead of having opportunities to carefully research and prepare a role that would push us to our limits in the intelligent choices, emotional depth and technical craft required for Shakespeare's finest roles, we were all left with the understanding that our other, usually physical, qualities had more value for our professors and directors. We absorbed the message that acting Shakespeare was for other people—either those older than us, or male, or more of the physical type of the director's preference. Simultaneously, we were told, both implicitly and directly, that Shakespeare's genius made his work accessible and appropriate for all and that the proper course of actor training included the ability to study and enact his works.

With an emphasis on physical appearance and one's ability to match expected norms, acting is admittedly often a disempowering profession. Our professors did their best to prepare us for a difficult career. As Willow noted, “Acting as a profession rarely has gender blind casting, so I'm guessing that in order to prepare young female actors [professors and directors] should let them know what they're in for. Ingénue-ity.”

However, it's also important to note that all three of us were intrigued by the possibilities of Shakespeare and wanted opportunities to explore his work through our chosen craft of acting. Outside of any private

[6] Even if one of our programs had presented a play with some of Shakespeare's more intriguing girl roles, *As You Like It*, perhaps, or *Twelfth Night*, the experience of playing those roles would have gone to one or two women in the department, while the men of the department would still have had 15 roles or more to be sorted into.

effort we put forth, though, we were not able to do so: the classic twenty-line trap.⁶ Because agreeability is a characteristic that directors sought, we did not want to “resist” the gender differences we saw and therefore lose roles (Walter 273). We did not understand that resisting had the potential to change more than our own casting fates, that it might help to change the values of the structure we were enmeshed in.

What can be done now? Cutting Shakespeare out of the college theatre department repertoire seems as unlikely as it is foolish, removing the valuable educational and artistic opportunities presented by his work. But there must be some middle ground between a Shakespeare-less season and one in which 90 young women compete for one part. Eileen, Willow and I all have had different subsequent experiences that may serve as a guide for a way forward.

After earning a doctorate in educational theatre, Eileen taught high school theatre in South Carolina for several years. “I think the limitations I experienced as an actor did to some extent inform my choices later,” she said. It was important to her to find a way to incorporate Shakespeare into her curriculum in a way that welcomed all of her students because she felt his work was necessary: “It was rewarding . . . to work to understand the language choices and appreciate the poetry. Shakespeare is so much in our culture that any firsthand experience would enrich other encounters.” For her drama club’s production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, for example, she found a way to have 70 students in the play, most with at least a few lines. She cast to talent and work ethic, not gender, finding it very easy to justify doing so in an educational institution. The play went so well that she continued a policy of gender-blind casting for the rest of her directing career. Her choice is to change the structure of how theatre works in order to accommodate the best actors for each part.

Willow continued as an actor and recently performed in an all-female *Julius Caesar* that played at Donmar Warehouse in London and at St. Ann’s Warehouse in Brooklyn. This opportunity to be part of largely female cast is rare; to be in an all-female production of Shakespeare seemed like improbable good fortune. She said that the experience was liberating but reminded her of the limitations of Shakespeare’s women and girls. As the director of the production said to her, “Men in Shakespeare talk about really big subjects, life, the universe, feelings . . . women talk about being women or being next to their man . . . Even the women playing men talk about the men they love.”⁷ This was apparent in rehearsal as some women had large parts with big themes to play and others played the wife. The relative skimpiness of Shakespeare’s female characters remains and cannot be changed; the casting and production of his plays, however, can be.

Willow noted that at least in England the show, which was heavily covered in the media, seems to have had an impact: “I think that production has spawned many others—so the generations [of girls] to come might get a better crack at the whip.” She added: “Wouldn’t it be amazing if young women *had* to play the young male roles in college training programs so as to be ready for the myriad of roles they might be offered upon leaving school and taking up acting as a profession? And what about the young men who want to take a crack at playing Miranda?” Willow’s frustration with the oppressive structure of Shakespeare’s plays is somewhat supplanted by an excitement over how this structure might change for women.

As for me, I played Shakespeare just one time after graduating with my BFA in Acting and Directing in 1992. I was cast as Lennox in 2003 in a production of *MacBeth* that ran at the Edinburgh Fringe. My casting was a matter of expediency, as I was really there to play female roles in the other, non-Shakespearean plays we were running in rep with the Scottish play. Without much directorial guidance, I chose to play Lennox as clearly female but in a man’s garb. No one, audience or cast, seemed to mind. The entire proceeding was so unremarkable that I found myself reflecting on my college experience all over again, wondering what possible harm there was in allowing women to audition for and play any of the roles in *MacBeth*. Theatre is entirely a

[7] This is Willow’s recounting of the director’s statement.

façade anyway, so why is ignoring gender a step further than ignoring all of the other realities in front of the audience for the sake of the production?

In Elaine Aston's 1999 text on feminist theatre, she seeks to help feminist theatre companies to create new productions of Shakespeare's plays with all female or mostly female casts. Aston was at work around the same time that I earned my BFA, and her text wasn't published until after I'd graduated. Thus, expecting my professors to be familiar with her ideas is too much of a demand on them. Still, I find myself wishing that my professors (and perhaps Eileen's and Willow's, too) had been able to know her work and follow her advice: "Don't be conditioned by dominant images" (94). She urges directors to allow their actors to follow their interests and enthusiasms in choosing parts to play, much as Eileen and I had longed for, and Willow had tried to achieve. Aston's ideas seem to be not just good feminist theatre practice but of pedagogical importance too. Teachers who allow their students to follow their interests are generally more helpful to those students.

More recently, I saw Willow's production of the all-female *Julius Caesar* in Brooklyn. The experience for me was similar to seeing an all-male production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin a few years ago: a little strange at first, but in the end, the production rose and fell on the directorial and design choices as well as the skill—not gender—of the actors. Some of the women in the play were young enough to be cast in a role like the wimpy, wailing Cressida, so I found myself feeling happy that they had found the *Caesar* roles which offered them far more to do while learning the craft of acting. I began to think that the trap was not in the girl roles at all but in the idea that such roles were *all* that young women were allowed to play⁸. Few young men thrill at the thought of playing a thankless role like Horatio, Hamlet's best friend, but they know that Hamlet might be next. For young women, the trap is that after Ophelia, there's more of the same—at least until they age considerably. The actor Harriet Walters (who later played Brutus in Willow's *Julius Caesar*) told Carol Rutter: "There are plenty of middle-aged parts for men, but not for women. We can play Juliet in our teens and Margaret in our seventies, and all the great female roles in our thirties, but not much... in our own middle age" (xxv).

When Fiona Shaw played Richard II at the National Theatre in 1995, the *Guardian* called her casting choice "the sort of thing you might expect to see at the end of term in a boarding school" (Rutter 314). The critic is implying that casting a woman in a male role would only be done in a setting—such as an all-girl's boarding school—which did not allow for the casting of men. Leaving aside the merits of that particular production, as well as the condescension that is intended, this quote reminds me that it is often true that our schools can, if they choose, be more daring than our established theatres. Eileen's and my experiences (and to some extent, Willow's) do not show much in the way of such innovation by our departments, and sadly, not much has changed in how Shakespeare is produced on college stages since the mid-1990's. But the potential is still there.

Professors and directors who wish to produce a Shakespearean play in an academic theatre venue might consider several questions carefully, in sequence. First, why produce the particular play in question, aside from such sentiments as "We always do a Shakespearean play" or other tradition-based impetuous? Second, how can this play be liberated from the existent tradition of casting women in female parts and men in male parts in order to provide a richer, less biased educational opportunity for all involved? Third, how can the female parts in this play be best portrayed, including a careful consideration of what cuts are often made and whether they are the best choice for this production? Finally, how can the young women participating in this play be heard as needed and valued voices in the production regardless of the size of their role?

As Aston reminds readers who might wish to mount a feminist production of Shakespeare, "Aim to keep hold of a resistant voice" (100). And, of course, Walter reminds us that feminist anthropologists "are

[8] As the director Leigh Adcock-Starr points out, many presented versions of Shakespeare's plays, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, have a long tradition of extensively cutting many of the female characters' lines, removing much of their dramatic arc.

occasionally able to change” the gender differences they see around them (273). Theatre departments and motivated directors within them have the opportunity to create such change.

I was reminded of this recently, when I served as a judge of the Pittsburgh Public Theatre’s annual Shakespeare Monologue and Scene Contest for middle and high school students. I sat in a dark theatre and watched student after student present, including several teenage boys who sped through the St. Crispin’s Day speech from *Henry V* as if the French Army was in the back of the auditorium. One of the last performers that I saw was a 6th grader. She could not have been five feet tall, and the plastic sword she had as a prop dragged on the ground as she mounted the steps. Then she faced us, and said, “I’m Katie,⁹ and I will be playing Henry V.” No one much responded; certainly there were no snorts or laughs of derision. The audience just waited to see what she might be able to do. The St. Crispin’s Day speech poured out of her tiny frame, loud and clear, with enough emotion that it was clear that she knew what she was saying. She was easily the best of the Henrys we saw. Katie’s performance gives me hope that she, and many other young women, will escape the twenty-line trap.

WORKS CITED

- Aston, Elaine. *Feminist Theatre Practice: A Handbook*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.
- Currier, Willow. Personal Interview. 5 Feb. 2014.
- Duke, Eileen. Personal Interview. 26 Jan. 2014.
- Mann, David. *Shakespeare’s Women: Performance and Conception*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2008. Print.
- Rutter, Carol Chillington. “Fiona Shaw’s Richard II: The Girl as Player King as Comic.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* Autumn 1997: 314-324. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.
- Rutter, Carol. *Clamorous Voices: Shakespeare’s Women Today*. London: The Women’s Press, 1989. Print.
- Walter, Lynn. “Feminist Anthropology.” *Gender & Society* 9.3 1995: 272 – 288. Print.

[9] A pseudonym.

S. Reed

AUTHOR BIO:

Shannon Reed is finishing her MFA in Creative Writing: Fiction at the University of Pittsburgh, where she also teaches writing. She holds an M.A. in Educational Theatre from New York University and a BFA in Theatre: Acting and Directing from Otterbein University. As an essayist, Shannon has recently contributed to *Narratively*, *Vela Magazine* and *The Billfold*. Her fiction had recently been published in the *Mud Season Review*, *Kweli Journal* and *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*. Links to these and others of her works can be found at her website, www.shannonreed.org.

Social Media:

Twitter: @SReed151

REFERENCE CITATION:

MLA:

Reed, Shannon. "Reflection: The Twenty-Line Trap? Shakespeare Enacted by Young Women." *Dialogue: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Popular Culture and Pedagogy* 2.1 (2015). Web and Print.

APA:

Reed, S. (2015). Reflection: The twenty-line trap? Shakespeare enacted by young women. *Dialogue: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Popular Culture and Pedagogy*. 2(1). <http://journaldialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/S-Reed.pdf>



All papers in *Dialogue: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Popular Culture and Pedagogy* are published under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share-Alike License. For details please go to: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/us/>.