

## SHAKESPEARE, SPECTATORSHIP AND THE TECHNOLOGIES OF PERFORMANCE

*Shakespeare, Spectatorship and the Technologies of Performance* examines how rapid changes in performance technologies affect modes of spectatorship for early modern drama. It argues that seemingly disparate developments – such as the revival of early modern architectural and lighting technologies, digital performance technologies, and the hybrid medium of theatre broadcast – are fundamentally related. How spectators experience performances is not only affected in medium-specific ways by particular technologies but is also connected to the plays' roots in early modern performance environments. Aebischer's examples range from the use of candlelight and re-imagined early modern architecture to set design, performance capture technologies, digital video, social media, hologram projection, biotechnologies and theatre broadcasts. This book argues that digital and analogue performance technologies alike activate modes of ethical spectatorship, requiring audiences to adopt an ethical standpoint as they decide how to look, where to look, what medium to look through, and how to take responsibility for looking.

PASCALE AEBISCHER is Professor of Shakespeare and Early Modern Performance Studies at the University of Exeter. She is the author of *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies* (2004), *Jacobean Drama* (2010) and *Screening Early Modern Drama* (2013). Formerly the editor of *Shakespeare Bulletin*, she has also co-edited several collections of essays, including *Performing Early Modern Drama Today* (with Kathryn Prince, 2012; Choice Outstanding Academic Title winner 2013) and *Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience* (with Susanne Greenhalgh and Laurie Osborne, 2018).

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-42048-8 — Shakespeare, Spectatorship and the Technologies of Performance  
Pascale Aebischer  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

SHAKESPEARE,  
SPECTATORSHIP AND  
THE TECHNOLOGIES  
OF PERFORMANCE

PASCALE AEBISCHER

*University of Exeter*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-108-42048-8 — Shakespeare, Spectatorship and the Technologies of Performance  
 Pascale Aebischer  
 Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

**CAMBRIDGE**  
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India  
 79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108420488](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108420488)

DOI: 10.1017/9781108339001

© Pascale Aebischer 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

NAMES: Aebischer, Pascale, 1970– author.

TITLE: Shakespeare, spectatorship and the technologies of performance / Pascale Aebischer.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2020. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2019056029 (print) | LCCN 2019056030 (ebook) | ISBN 9781108420488 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108430357 (paperback) | ISBN 9781108339001 (epub)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616 – Dramatic production. | Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616 – Stage history – 21st century. | Theater – Production and direction – Technological innovations. | Theater audiences – Effect of technological innovations on. | Technology and the arts.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC PR309I.A34 2020 (print) | LCC PR309I (ebook) | DDC 822.3/3–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019056029>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019056030>

ISBN 978-1-108-42048-8 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

## *Contents*

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>List of Tables</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
<i>How to Read This Book</i>	xv
<b>Introduction: Shakespeare, Spectatorship and the Technologies of Performance</b>	
Theories of Theatrical Co-presence and Technologies of Performance	3
A Spatial Theory of Technologically Mediated Spectatorship for Early Modern Drama: <i>Locus</i> , <i>Platea</i> and Offstage Obscurity	12
The <i>Platea</i> and the Offstage in the Digital Age	20
Shakespeare, Spectatorship and the Technologies of Performance	28
<b>PART I CANDLELIGHT AND ARCHITECTURE AT THE SAM WANAMAKER PLAYHOUSE</b>	
Being ‘True to the Architecture’ of a Jacobean ‘Smart Space’: Access, Physical Regimes and Enskilling the Audience	33
1 Dominic Dromgoole’s <i>The Changeling</i> (2015): Social Division and Anamorphic Vision	51
(In)visible Labour and the Discovery Space	56
Anamorphic Sex in the Closet	60
2 Dominic Dromgoole’s <i>The Tempest</i> (2016): Labour, Technology and the Gender of Theatrical Magic	66
Perspectival Magic and the Model Spectator: Prospero’s <i>Tempest</i>	68
‘Feeling-Technologies’ and the Upper Gallery: Ariel’s <i>Tempest</i>	76
Backstage Technicians and Eccentric Lords: <i>The Tempest</i> as Technical Labour	79

PART II DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND EARLY MODERN DRAMA AT THE NATIONAL THEATRE AND THE RSC	85
3 Stanislavski in the Closet: Joe Hill-Gibbins' <i>Edward II</i> (National Theatre, 2013)	89
<i>The Changeling</i> as 'Stressor': Obscene Dramaturgy and Stanislavski's 'Backstories'	89
The Torture Live Cam: The Voyeuristic Violence of Subject Technologies	100
4 'Tech-Enabled' Theatre at the RSC: Digital Performance and Gregory Doran's <i>Tempest</i> (RSC, 2016)	108
Digital Innovation and Social Media Performances at the RSC: <i>Such Tweet Sorrow</i> (2010), <i>A Midsummer Night's Dreaming</i> (2013) and <i>Volpone</i> (2015)	108
'Future Practices' at the RSC: Gregory Doran's 'Tech-Enabled' <i>Tempest</i> (2016)	119
Enter the Cyborg	124
Enter the Body	129
Face-to-Face with the Cyborg: The Crisis of Tech-Enabled Theatre	137
Coda: From Live Performance to Archive	144
PART III 'INVISIBLE' TECHNOLOGY AND 'LIVENESS' IN DIGITAL THEATRE BROADCASTING	149
5 <i>Hamlet</i> in Parts: Robin Lough's RSC Live Cinema Broadcast of Simon Godwin's <i>Hamlet</i> (8 June 2016)	157
Broadcast-as-Performance: Context, Geopolitical 'Backstory' and Process	157
<i>Hamlet</i> in Parts: Telling the Story for a Cinema Audience	164
Technologies of Race: Unconscious Bias in Camera Design and Lighting	180
6 Offstage Dynamics and the Virtual Public Sphere in Cheek by Jowl's Live Stream of <i>Measure for Measure</i> (2015)	191
Control, Response-Ability and the Virtual Public Sphere	192
Framing and Re-framing Isabella in the Technological Setup of the Live Stream	199
Concluding Most Obscenely: Offstage Technophelias	207
<i>Bibliography</i>	219
<i>Index</i>	236

## Figures

- |          |   |         |
|----------|---|---------|
| Figure 1 | Prosthetic light and eyesight in rehearsals for the ‘eye ballet’ in <i>The Changeling</i> , dir. Dominic Dromgoole (SWP, 2015), photograph by Marc Brenner                                      | page 52 |
| Figure 2 | Beatrice-Joanna (Hattie Morahan) seeking eye-contact with the lower galleries in <i>The Changeling</i> , dir. Dominic Dromgoole (SWP, 2015), photograph by Marc Brenner                         | 54      |
| Figure 3 | Ariel (Pippa Nixon) as a harpy spreading her wings in <i>The Tempest</i> , dir. Dominic Dromgoole (SWP, 2016), photograph by Marc Brenner   | 75      |
| Figure 4 | Lizzie Clachan’s set for the start of <i>Edward II</i> , dir. Joe Hill-Gibbins (NT, 2013), photograph by Philip Carter  | 93      |
| Figure 5 | Gaveston (Kyle Soller) in the <i>platea</i> . <i>Edward II</i> , dir. Joe Hill-Gibbins (NT, 2013), photograph by Philip Carter  | 95      |
| Figure 6 | Live video projection of Isabella (Vanessa Kirby) inside the parliament. <i>Edward II</i> , dir. Joe Hill-Gibbins (NT, 2013), photograph by Philip Carter                                       | 96      |
| Figure 7 | Edward (John Heffernan) subjected to a forced shave while filmed by a ‘Dog’. <i>Edward II</i> , dir. Joe Hill-Gibbins (NT, 2013), photograph by Johan Persson / ArenaPAL                        | 105     |
| Figure 8 | Perspectival spectacle in the magic illusionist masque. <i>The Tempest</i> , dir. Gregory Doran (RST, 2016; screengrab of the RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon broadcast, dir. Dewi Humphreys) | 122     |
| Figure 9 | The harpy avatar animated by Mark Quartley. <i>The Tempest</i> , dir. Gregory Doran (RST, 2016; screengrab of the RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon broadcast, dir. Dewi Humphreys)             | 132     |

- Figure 10 Ariel (Mark Quartley) in the cloven pine, with Prospero (Simon Russell Beale). *The Tempest*, dir. Gregory Doran (RST, 2016). Photograph by Topher McGrillis ©RSC 135
- Figure 11 Crisis: Ariel (Mark Quartley) facing the roaring Prospero (Simon Russell Beale). *The Tempest*, dir. Gregory Doran (RST, 2016; screengrab of the RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon broadcast, dir. Dewi Humphreys) 138
- Figure 12 Distribution of cameras around the RST stage for the broadcast of *Hamlet*, June 2016. Auditorium layout courtesy of the RSC 160
- Figure 13 Silhouette drawing of single moving crane shot of Gertrude's account of Ophelia's drowning. From top to bottom: 13.1: Claudius, Polonius' clothes on the floor, Gertrude on the upstage plinth, Laertes downstage; 13.2: Claudius, Polonius' clothes on the floor, Gertrude on the Plinth; 13.3: Gertrude. *Hamlet* (RST, 2016; RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon broadcast, dir. Robin Lough) 168
- Figure 14 Obscene camerawork in the court scene. *Hamlet* (RST, 2016; screengrabs of the RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon broadcast, dir. Robin Lough) 171
- Figure 15 15.1: deep focus from downstage left camera; 15.2: shallow focus from downstage left camera creating emotional proximity. *Hamlet* (RST, 2016; screengrabs of the RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon broadcast, dir. Robin Lough) 173
- Figure 16 Differential effects of shading on the faces of Hugh Quarshie's Othello and Joanna Vanderham's Desdemona. *Othello* (dir. Iqbal Khan, RST 2015; screengrab of the RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon broadcast, dir. Robin Lough) 183
- Figure 17 17.1: Guildenstern (Bethan Cullinane) and Rosencrantz (James Cooney) framing Hamlet (Paapa Essiedu), whose face is camouflaged and flattened against the patterned backdrop despite good lighting; 17.2 and 17.3: shot/reverse shot dynamic using cameras 1 and 6 to isolate and define individuals with different skin tones. *Hamlet* (RST, 2016; screengrabs of the RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon broadcast, dir. Robin Lough) 185
- Figure 18 Hamlet (Paapa Essiedu) as a 'primal' fighter coded for his 'to-be-looked-at-ness'. *Hamlet* (RST, 2016; screengrabs



*List of Figures*

ix

- of the RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon broadcast,  
 dir. Robin Lough) 187
- Figure 19 19.1: Isabella out of the frame during her initial response  
 to Angelo's proposal; 19.2: Isabella shot from an  
 approximation of Angelo's point-of-view. *Measure for  
 Measure* (Cheek by Jowl, 2015; screengrab of the live  
 stream, dir. Thomas Bowles) 201
- Figure 20 'Framing' Isabella: the Duke's proposal in act 5 scene 5.  
*Measure for Measure* (Cheek by Jowl, 2015; screengrab  
 of the live stream dir. Thomas Bowles) 202
- Figure 21 Shots of Isabella corresponding to figures 19.1, 20.1  
 and 20.2. *Measure for Measure*. (Cheek by Jowl, 2015;  
 screengrab of the Education Pack stream dir. Thomas  
 Bowles, remix by Nick Ormerod) 205
- Figure 22 Jowonder at work on *6 Days Goodbye Poems of Ophelia*  
 (2007). Photograph courtesy of Jowonder 214
- Figure 23 Day 1 of Jowonder's *Six Days Goodbye Poems of Ophelia*.  
 Grayscale image courtesy of Jowonder 215

## *Tables*

Table 1	Sequence of shots at the start of the broadcast of <i>Hamlet</i> (RST, 2016; broadcast dir. Robin Lough)	165
---------	---	-----

## *Acknowledgements*

Halfway through writing this book, I paid Barbara Hodgdon, my mentor, role model, fairy godmother and friend, a visit and brought her two beeswax candles from the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse to let her partake, through smell, in the sensory environment and technologies of a theatre she was never going to be able to experience directly. This book is dedicated to her memory.

Throughout the research and writing of this book, I have been supported by the University of Exeter and the Department of English, which awarded me two periods of research leave, and by colleagues who provided inspiration and support: Ranita Chatterjee, Sally Faulkner, Felicity Gee, Gabriella Giannachi, Helen Hanson, Joe Kember, James Lyons, Jane Milling, John Plunkett, Debra Ramsay, Victoria Sparey, Lisa Stead and Nela Vlaisavljevic-Kapelan. Supervisions and conversations with several graduate students were sources of insight as I was thinking and writing: Callan Davies, Nora Williams and Harry McCarthy have all shaped my ideas in visible and invisible ways. In the Department of Drama and in collaboration with Paul Jepson (Northcott Theatre), Jon Primrose and Chris Mearing helped me run a pilot workshop on how to do *The Changeling* intermedially. Collaborating with them and with Callan Davies, Evelyn O'Malley, Sharanya Murali and Nora Williams taught me more about intermedial performance and live streaming than I'd learned through months of reading.

I was very fortunate to be allowed behind-the-scenes access and insight into production processes by many 'invisible' backstage miracle workers and artists. Many thanks to Farah Karim-Cooper and Will Tosh at Shakespeare's Globe for insightful conversations, email exchanges and introductions to Ian Farmery and Tinky Walker, who helped me understand the work they do. Thanks, also, to Victoria Land and her always helpful interns in the Globe's archive. At the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), it has been wonderful to talk to Sarah Ellis and Geraldine Collinge,

two inspirational women who took time to answer my many questions and helped me understand the RSC's organisational structures and digital challenges; thanks, too, to James Ranathan for access to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust archive. At RSC Live, the impossibly energetic and always helpful John Wyver not only let me sit in on camera rehearsals and the recording of *Hamlet* but has spent hours reading my drafts, responding to my papers and answering questions. I am very grateful to David Gopsill (RSC Live) and to the other technicians and scholars who helped me find a path through the maze of skin tone biases in photography and digital video, especially Lorna Roth, Philip Szporer and Peter Kuling (and thanks to Randall Martin for brokering an introduction). That work was also made possible thanks to the input of my audience-turned-informants at the *Criando e Recriando Shakespeare* conference in Campinas (Brazil), who helped me check that I wasn't making things up. Emily Hockley at Cambridge University Press went the extra mile to ensure the images I needed to make my point could be included in this book. At National Theatre Live, I am grateful to Flo Buckeridge for granting an interview, while at the National Theatre archive, Frances Horner helped me find all I needed. At Cheek by Jowl, Dominic Kennedy and Sarah Fortescue generously shared information, answered questions and responded to a draft. Davy and Kristin Maguire, as well as Jowonder and Simon Park, discussed their respective Ophelia installations with me and gave me permission to use images of their work.

Many colleagues kindly let me read their work-in-progress: thanks to Gina Bloom, James C. Bulman, Rob Conkie, Katharine Craik, Callan Davies, Sarah Dustagheer, Briony Frost, Víctor Huertas Martín, Lindsay Brandon Hunter, Michael Ingham, Peter Kirwan, Harry McCarthy, Rachael Nicholas, Simon Park, Stephen Purcell, Kim Solga, Millie Taylor, Neil Vallelly and John Wyver. Other colleagues offered companionship in the theatre and enlightening pre- and post-performance conversations: thanks to Andy Kesson, Sonia Massai, Harry McCarthy, Clare McManus, Lucy Munro, Stephen Purcell, Catherine Silverstone and Nora Williams. Mark Thornton Burnett, Tom Cartelli, Peter Kirwan, Hester Lees-Jeffries, Lucy Munro, Kathryn Prince, Lawrence Publicover, Eleanor Rycroft, Emma Smith, Victoria Sparey, Tiffany Stern and Ramona Wray provided a listening ear and encouraging words just when I needed them and helped me tap those hidden reserves of energy and thinking that allowed me to find a way through the various impasses I encountered. Susanne Greenhalgh and Laurie E. Osborne agreed to co-edit a book on theatre broadcasting with me: I learned a lot

*Acknowledgements*

xiii

from our conversations and debates, and their and our contributors' scholarship. At various stages, I received nuggets of information and incisive feedback on drafts from Roberta Barker, Amy Borsuk, Callan Davies, Sarah Dustagheer, Ian Farmery, Susanne Greenhalgh, Ella Hawkins, Víctor Huertas Martín, Dominic Kennedy, Peter Kirwan, Rhodri Lewis, Emer McHugh, Subha Mukherji, Stephen O'Neill, Stephen Purcell, Jami Rogers, Erin Sullivan, Ayanna Thompson, Will Tosh, Neil Vallely, Nora Williams and John Wyver – they, and Cambridge University Press' readers, have sharpened my thinking and challenged me to do better: I could not have hoped for better critical friends. Cambridge University Press's Emily Hockley, with Natasha Burton by her side, was an exemplary editor: patient, supportive and efficient. 'Backstage' at Cambridge University Press, the near-invisible but essential labour of project manager Vinithan Sedumadhavan, senior content manager Sarah Starkey, and eagle-eyed freelance copyeditor Joshua Hey made a big difference in the final stages of the book – I am indebted to their work.

*Shakespeare Bulletin*, meanwhile, helped with image permissions and, for the duration of my editorship, placed me at the centre of an international network of scholars producing stimulating new work on early modern performance studies: the chance to get a sneak preview of so much new thinking has certainly left its mark in this book.

I was also grateful for the opportunity to present work-in-progress and receive feedback from various academic audiences: thanks to Sarah Dustagheer (Marlowe in Performance Symposium, Kent), Emma Smith (Oxford Renaissance Graduate Seminar), Hester Lees-Jeffries and Sophie Read (Cambridge Renaissance Graduate Seminar), Hilary Cockhill, Paulina Kewes and Lucy Clark (Herbert Society Seminar, Jesus College, Oxford), Romola Nuttall and her fellow organisers of the London Shakespeare Graduate Conference, Briony Frost (Plymouth English Research Seminar), Ramona Wray on behalf of the British Shakespeare Association committee (Belfast), Régis Augustus Bars Closel (Campinas, Brazil), and Helen Hanson of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Film Research (Exeter) for their invitations, and to M.J. Kidnie and Katharine Rowe for collaborating on a panel on 'Shakespeare, Technology and the Future of Performance' at the Shakespeare Association of America (SAA) 2017. James C. Bulman's invitation to contribute to *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Performance* (2017) gave me the impetus to first articulate some of the fundamental thoughts that went into this book – thanks to Oxford University Press for permission to rework and expand on the ideas that

went into my chapter on ‘Technology and the Ethics of Spectatorship’ (pp. 302–20).

All of this would not have been possible without my family’s support, Rhiannon and Glyn’s willingness to put up with my enthusiasm for this project, and David Jones’ seemingly endless supply of kindness, indulgence, patience, and scholarly insight. ‘Thank you’ still and ever more does not feel commensurate.

## *How to Read This Book*

This book might have been three books: one on candlelit performance at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, one on intermedial and social media performance at the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company, and a final one on theatre broadcasting. It has been trimmed down and dovetailed to form a single overarching argument that aims to demonstrate how modes of technologically mediated spectatorship across all three types of performance are interrelated and form part of a bigger picture, with an introduction that anchors all three sections in a theoretical framework.

Therefore, if your focus is on just one of the book's three parts, I advise you read it in conjunction with the Introduction, as all parts of the book assume the reader's familiarity with the framework laid out there. A further shortcut consists in diving straight into the introductory section headed 'A Spatial Theory of Technologically Mediated Spectatorship for Early Modern Drama: *Locus*, *Platea* and Offstage Obscenity' (p. 12). For readers of Parts Two and/or Three, 'The *Platea* and the Offstage in the Digital age' (p. 20) is also essential.

All citations from Shakespeare's plays refer to Stephen Greenblatt et al.'s *The Norton Shakespeare* (2008), and citations from early modern plays refer to David Bevington et al.'s *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology* (2002). Unless otherwise noted, websites were checked and information was available and accurate in May 2019.

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-42048-8 — Shakespeare, Spectatorship and the Technologies of Performance  
Pascale Aebischer  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---