Theodore Leinwand's *The Great William: Writers Reading Shakespeare* comprises seven chapter-length essays, each addressing literary response at the level of the individual reader. It's an often elusive topic; yet Leinwand's case studies are abundantly documented. Together, they invite a new view of reading, not merely as reception, but as itself a mode of appropriation.

Leinwand begins with Coleridge and Keats in the nineteenth century and moves on to Woolf in the early twentieth. He then settles down in the decades after World War Two, with Charles Olson, John Berryman, Allen Ginsberg, and Ted Hughes. The wide range of primary material includes Coleridge's lectures (in the records that survive); Keats's letters and marginalia; Woolf's reading notebooks; and the archives of the four postwar poets. Some of this material is well known, but much is not. Few Shakespeareans will have heard much about Berryman's unpublished commentaries on his own dreams (131-39).

While varying greatly in their origins and purposes, Leinwand's documents generally reflect two broad categories of response. One is "cognitive" — thinking about how a text is made and what it means. The other is "phenomenological" or "affective" — evoking sensory or emotional experiences associated with reading. Most of Leinwand's evidence skews toward the cognitive, as writers seek to explain Shakespeare. But phenomenological aspects also appear, and the cognitive can get mixed up with the affective.

The cognitive responses can look like appropriations, yielding versions of Shakespeare that serve a writer's practical needs. For example, pointing to Shakespeare's putative lapses can be liberating. Woolf thus depicts Shakespeare in her reading notes as hurried or distracted — a writer who doesn't always "take the trouble to work it out" when he hits a snag (quoted at 80). Perhaps his busy life in the theater won't let him "alone to think" (quoted at 82). Or maybe it's his temperament: in *Coriolanus* he seems "impatient," using "too few words for the meaning" (quoted at 83). While admiring the speed of Shakespeare's thoughts, Woolf also charges them with overtaking his pen,
overloading his words, and overtasking his readers. This is a less enchanted view of the poet whom we glimpse gauzily through the protagonist's eyes in *Orlando* — sitting alone, in a reverie, until he "very quickly" scribbles out his lines (Woolf 1956, 22).

In humanizing Shakespeare, Woolf was of course reacting to his deification by earlier writers such as Coleridge and Keats. Coleridge made Shakespearean lecturing a quasi-priestly occupation; only a sacred text could deserve such philological, psychological, and metaphysical labors. This vocation must have compensated somewhat for Coleridge's creative inhibitions — but also exacerbated them; officiating in the church of Shakespeare might be professionally enabling but poetically disabling. Keats, too, envisioned a demigod with "the utmost atchievement [sic] of human intellect prostrate beneath his indolent and kingly gaze" (quoted at 58); yet he was better than Coleridge at compartmentalizing this unattainable Shakespearean standard. In "On sitting down to read King Lear once again," which Leinwand compares in both its manuscript versions, Keats plans to emerge from the Shakespearean flames as a stronger poet (49-51).

If these Romantic cognitive appropriations gave us the deified modern Shakespeare, Leinwand's close reading of them reveals the complexity of this divinizing process. For example, two notions that echo through modern criticism are Coleridge's "myriad-minded Shakespeare" and Keats's "negative capability." Leinwand traces the first phrase back to 1801, when Coleridge writes "Shakespeare?" alongside the epithet "myriad-minded" in a Greek ecclesiastical text (23-24). It's a fitting origin for a phrase describing Shakespeare's supernal *nous* (Greek for "mind"). By contrast, "negative capability" fails to tell the whole story about the Keatsian Shakespeare, whose imaginative sympathy is not always quite as universal as this idea implies; as Leinwand shows, Keats sometimes allows Shakespeare a preferential love of "Beauty" that feels more sensual and partial (quoted at 50, 62).

By the mid-twentieth century, some poets' cognitive appropriations of Shakespeare are driven by the institutional economies of modernism and the academy: they see him as a source of cultural capital, potentially underwriting their own entry into the literary-canonical marketplace. In this way Olson, the Black Mountain poet and author of *The Maximus Poems*, enlists the later Shakespeare as an unlikely advocate for his own "objectivist" or "projective" verse. On Olson's view, Shakespeare found "between Hamlet & Lear . . . [that] the lyric & psychological [were] both dead" (quoted at 96), and accordingly began treating words as things. Equally self-serving, though in different ways, is Hughes's *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*. Leinwand finds some buried nuggets in this largely unread book: for example, Hughes makes the verbal figure *hendiadys* a miniature analogy of English cultural history (182-84). Yet Leinwand stops short of suggesting that we recuperate Hughes as a Shakespeare critic.
Next to Olson's and Hughes's grandiose rethinkings of Shakespeare, both Berryman's and Ginsberg's appear humble. Berryman poured countless hours into a Lear edition that he never finished. In his painstaking notes and lists — some reproduced as illustrations — Leinwand sees a "deep identification that compels one to rewrite the master's words," not so much by emending as by "reconfiguring" them (126). Then there are Berryman's wild Shakespearean glosses on his own dreams: his 154 dream analyses mirror the number of Shakespeare's Sonnets (132). Berryman occasionally asserts himself in his formal Shakespearean essays, which "pass judgment" on Shakespeare's style and even on his values (117-119). But on balance, he is servile — a Caliban to Shakespeare's Prospero. Leinwand calls him "Shakespeare's Berryman" (10).

Just one writer in The Great William seems to harbor no anxiety about Shakespeare, show no excessive deference, exhibit no restiveness under his authority. Ginsberg's recorded class lectures at Naropa in 1975 and 1980 depict Shakespeare as "funny" (quoted at 150). Although intellectually stimulated by Shakespeare, Ginsberg is far less reflexively cognitive — more intentionally phenomenological and affective — than Leinwand's other subjects. He praises Shakespeare's "William Carlos Williams-like" verses for their "tangible, corporeal, sensory, tactile . . . visual fact minute particulars" (quoted at 152). Of The Tempest, he says that Shakespeare does what "imagist poets have been working for eighty years" to do — "describe a cloud" — and that he delights us with "chiming" and "pretties" (quoted at 158, 159). This, Leinwand writes, is "reading Shakespeare by feel, by ear, and by mouth" (161).

Is Ginsberg uniquely free of the need to appropriate Shakespeare? Happy just to enjoy him? Leinwand does not go so far. Noting that Ginsberg once called Shakespeare "a primary source" (quoted at 142), Leinwand finds his poem "Kaddish" illuminated by Shakespearean parallels. These "Shakespearean shards" suggest that even the joyful Ginsberg used Shakespeare for his own artistic ends (164, 165).

Although Leinwand does not use the term "appropriation," his book implicitly supports the application of this concept to any substantial readerly engagement with Shakespeare. After all, reading as a cognitive activity is selective and shaped by readers' goals; so Andrew Elfenbein explains in his recent book The Gist of Reading, drawing on empirical research in psychology (Elfenbein 2018, 45). The traces of reading examined in The Great William attest to the variety of these readerly goals, as well as the intensity of the appropriative efforts that they can inspire.
References


Borrowers and Lenders

artists' patron, with a sum of $50,000 granted to each of them, the two realize that the "box of money" they've each been given has been incautiously counted.

Braymount: No. You know what? Timon doesn't know. He's sweet. If I tell him he shorted me five, he'll give me seventeen. So what I should do is tell him he shorted me seven . . . .

Cee Cee: No. No. I got about five thousand clams extra, so I realized: no one counted the money. No one knows if it's too much or too little . . . . We can tell him he owes us anything . . . . Now, go get ready. Get dressed importantly. We're not beggars anymore. We're deservers . . . . I didn't know how much I was worth until I started to be grateful (Lynn 2016, 23).

While Shakespeare and Middleton's artists are parasites, they offer a symbiotic form of parasitism, presenting artistic production and sycophancy in exchange for Timon's bounty. Lynn's artists, by contrast, find themselves unable to produce art when their stomachs are full. Instead, they demand ever greater sums to fund their appetites.

Though Fixing Timon strips away the feeble veneer of an artist-patron relationship from Timon of Athens, it also creates a friendship between Cee Cee and Braymount that moves beyond their mutual desire to bilk Timon. Their rapport infuses some levity into a profanity-laden script that occasionally borders on bathos. In Fixing Timon's final scene, the two are reconciled over the news that Timon has died in the wilderness:

Braymount: Timon's dead and this is what's written on his tombstone. I was up all night painting.

Cee Cee: It's beautiful.

Braymount: I don't even know what it says.

Cee Cee: Not the painting. You.

Braymount: Don't say that.

Cee Cee: A list of all the things you mean to me that you [are] too embarrassed to hear me say.

Braymount: You forgive me.

Cee Cee: Come 'ere.

Cee Cee goes to Braymount. It is lovely to see them reunited. (Lynn 2016, 69-70)

Following their previous scene together, when Timon asks them to create for him "a picture of two people in the last moment of their friendship" (Lynn 2016), it is indeed lovely to see Cee Cee and
Braymount reunited. Throughout *Fixing Timon*, Timon demonstrates the power of wealth gained and lost to alienate people from him and each other. In Cee Cee and Braymount, Lynn creates a relationship unlike anything in his mordant source material. The world of *Timon* is relentlessly acerbic, much of its comedy arising from the heaps of abuse its characters pile on one another. To locate true camaraderie in a play that has otherwise eschewed friendship lives up to Lynn's note from the original production's playbill: "Fixing the play it feels a little like we get to pull Timon out of the forest and be the friends he needs" (Program 2016). At the very least, Lynn's fixed play suggests that friendship is possible somewhere in the world of *Timon*.

"Money's been a wall between me and people"

*Fixing Timon* is a blunt play, but not a bludgeon, as it uses coarseness to increase the impact of its critical contribution and Lynn's method of adaptation as literary criticism. Lynn's bluntness conveys his understanding of *Timon*'s themes with surprising deftness. Reading Middleton and Shakespeare's *Timon* can be disorienting, partially because of the possibly-corrupt textual status of the play, but partially because of the bombastic rendering of the title character.

Timon's toast at his final sumptuous banquet (1.2.81-96) runs across nearly 20 lines of prose and projects Timon's philosophy of charity onto his guests: "We are born to do benefits; and what better or properer can we call our own than the riches of our friends? O what a precious comfort 'tis to have so many like brothers commanding one another's fortunes. O joy's e'en made away ere't can be born!" (1.2.88-94). In this, Timon's imagined community of friends is figured as bounteous and unselfish, as he imagines himself to be. Elsewhere in the scene, Timon comments that "there's none / Can truly say he gives, if he receives" (1.2.10-11), and "methinks I could deal kingdoms to my friends, / and ne'er be weary" (1.2.209-10).

In Lynn's rendering, Timon combines the reflections on giving that pervade Shakespeare and Middleton's scene into a plain-spoken toast:

Listen everybody, I know you don't understand, but there's an ecstasy in giving. When you get home in the early morning light. Look at your partners and children. Look over all your possessions. Look at all your money in your purse. And then imagine giving it away to better people. People who can love and invest and focus better than you. (Lynn 2016, 21)

More is operative in this simplification than a familiar vocabulary. Lynn's writing dispatches with Timon's overwrought metaphors and replaces them with a keen study of his character's flaws and capacities. Why does Timon distribute his wealth? Because he finds the people around him more worthy of it than himself. In the plain style Lynn employs, Timon's magnanimity feels less
contrived than genuine, and Fixing Timon locates important vulnerability in the title character. In passages such as this, Timon's speeches reveal the loneliness and insecurity behind his exorbitant and flashy gift-giving.

Timon's desire to overcompensate reaches its logical limit in his offer to pay the dowry of his loyal servant Flavia. Flavia's character combines a request made by an anonymous "Old Athenian" with Flavius, the only character in Timon of Athens loyal to the Athenian lord. Lynn's method of "genderscrewing [the text] toward parity" (Rude Mechs 2018) results in several fully developed female characters in Fixing Timon, and Flavia not only knows where Timon keeps his money, but refuses to accept any of it for herself. When it is revealed that a dying senator's last wish is for his son, and Flavia's paramour, to marry his social equal (certainly not Flavia), Timon proclaims that he will give Flavia the biggest dowry in Athens:

I'm gonna give her a dowry twice as big as any woman in Athens. 500,000. And not just pieces of gold, but 500,000 various, so gold, but also emeralds and other rocks, and ponies, and servants, and probably more gold. But when you count it all up the total items will be 500,000. So that's everything, everything I got, all my stuff when I finally die (Lynn 2016, 9).

Timon's generosity cannot be undermined by the sheer absurdity of his statement. He has publicly proclaimed Flavia as his sole heir, and though the number of items approaches the uncountable, the gesture reveals a finite limit to both Timon's wealth and his ability to give it. Timon cannot imagine himself reaching the bottom of his coffers without also reaching the end of his life. His wealth has always been boundless; even his flight into the wilderness later in the play does not free him from the wealth that pursues him, Midas-like, everywhere.

Following Timon's declaration that Flavia will be his heir, she and her betrothed, Vinnie, attempt to return some of Timon's wealth to him. In this exchange, the best version of Timon's intentions is legible in Vinnie's words. As Vinnie thinks about his deceased father, he wishes the old man an abundance of love: "I hope heaven is full of mom. Like twenty of her. Every time my dad's ghost opens a door in heaven, or a drawer, or an envelope, I wish the Gods would make my mom pop out" (Lynn 2016, 14). Timon's generosity of spirit is shown to have engendered the same generosity in its recipient. As Timon had named an uncountable dowry for Flavia, Vinnie wishes for the wealth of love to replicate itself endlessly. The use of impossibly large numbers characterizes Timon's giving and the largesse it inspires in others.
Timon's generosity and Vinnie's reflection of it reveal, in the end, the impossibility of Timon's mission to buy his way out of loneliness. Timon appears to recognize this, and Fixing Timon gives him knowing lines about wealth's ability to dissolve social bonds and cheapen relationships:

I always like to tip assholes who don't expect it. Did you know, I tip on my taxes? I want the politicians to know I think of 'em as just another batch of servants hired to polish my freedom. So let's throw an extra five grand in the faces of Alcibadia's jailers. I want the judge to feel like a valet bringing me back a friend that got parked in jail. (Lynn 2016, 4-5)

Timon recognizes the power of cash to commodify and devalue civil institutions, rendering them a service industry in which anyone wealthy enough can buy their way out of civic duty. Though he expects his cash gifts to create bonds of friendship between himself and his party attendees, he exercises control over civil servants via the same largesse.

It is this largesse, for Shakespeare and Middleton and for Lynn, that demonstrates the ability of extravagant gifts to create dependency. In a crucial moment for Timon, Vinnie and Flavia attempt to give him back the box of money he had given them previously. For once, Timon is able to be repaid and to give the gift of a settled debt. Instead, he replies, "I would rather burn that box than open it" (Lynn 2016, 15). Given the opportunity to be gracious, Timon spurns the gift that he himself had given. Timon's gift-giving is seldom purposeful or effective in creating bonds of friendship, but when it is, he refuses to dissolve a relationship of dependency upon him in favor of an equal ledger.

Timon's patronage of Braymount, the painter, presents one of the more raw distillations of his views of money. After Timon unquestioningly grants Cee Cee $50,000 to write a book of "conceptual poetry," Braymount offers to give him a painting for free. Timon's response is unequivocal:

No one's ever given anything to me. Money's been kind of a wall between me and people like you . . . Here's this. 50,000. Everything I've got left in this money box. Don't worry. This isn't my only money box. I want you to paint this money. I want you to stack it up in your studio and I want you to paint it everyday [sic] for a month. You'll be surprised how it changes day to day. How it grows. How it'll eat away at your ability to paint. How it eats your friends. Money is a very hungry thing (Lynn 2016, 11).

Fixing Timon heaps abuse and curses on everyone in Timon's orbit, but the curse of wealth carries greater force than the dozens of "fuck yous" hurled around by Apemantia and Timon. In this moment, Timon clearly describes the isolation and alienation his wealth has caused him. His
prediction comes to pass, as both Cee Cee and Braymount find themselves unable to create art or maintain their friendship after being granted more money than they have ever had.

_Fixing Timon_ situates wealth as only a cause of and never a solution to loneliness and alienation, both from one's society and one's labor. Marx writes, "does not my money, therefore, transform all my incapacities into their contrary?" (qtd. in Klein 2001, 7), but Lynn's insight that "money is a very hungry thing" describes the inverse. An excess of money, rendering labor valueless because in excess of need, turns capacities into incapacities.

Conclusion: Timon's Extra Epitaphs

One of the odd textual problems in _Timon of Athens_ is that the title character has too many epitaphs. When Timon's grave is discovered by a soldier in the final act of Shakespeare and Middleton's play, the soldier reads Timon's epitaph aloud before declaring that he cannot read what it says. Timon is thus given two sets of commemorative verse. The first: "Timon is dead, who hath outstretched his span; Some beast read this; there does not live a man" (5.3.3-4); and a longer, second epitaph:

_Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft;_
_Speak not my name; a plague consume you, wicked caitiffs left._
_Here lie I, Timon, who alive all living men did hate;_
_Pass by and curse thy fill, but pass and stay not here thy gait._ (5.4.70-73)

The second epitaph metrically does what the first suggests; it outstretches its span, spilling over into 12- and 14-syllable lines and breaking the regularity of pentameter. Even in death, Timon cannot limit his giving. His verse is excessive, as are the number of epitaphs he composes for himself.

The two epitaphs suggest two alternative futures for Timon's memory. In the first, his name is recorded, but the annihilation of humanity is imagined in the closing, "there does not live a man." This is in concert with Timon's wish that when he dies, all of Athens will have followed him. There will be none left to remember him except beasts. In the second epitaph, Timon directly contradicts himself in his final words: "Seek not my name . . . . Here lie I, Timon." Here he wishes a plague upon his readers, but does not treat their annihilation as a given. His desire to be known as the origin of his curse overrides his desire to be forgotten.

Leaving a totalizing curse as his final act reflects and perverts the bottomless and irresolvable debts Timon's generosity created while he was alive, generating anathema in perpetuity so long as his epitaph endures. His readers cannot return his wish of death, and his tormented writing becomes
a final, self-sustaining attempt to exert power over strangers and friends alike. In this epitaph, Timon realizes a form of boundless giving that needs no creditors.

Lynn's epitaph for Timon departs completely from Shakespeare and Middleton's, but nevertheless captures the truth at the center of *Timon of Athens*. Timon's foremost preoccupation with himself, and his inability to discern between coercive and benevolent generosity, isolated him from both creditors and debtors. Timon failed to account for relationships as meaningful beyond the ledger, and in financial terms, all relationships of borrowing, lending, and giving appear as mostly cyphers.

So it is that for Lynn's Timon, the world becomes a perfect reflection of his myopic outlook, and Timon's disdain for his community is repaid in kind:

> There is no worse realization than this: others think of you the same way that you have spent your life thinking of them. It is our hate that's in the world. Not someone else's. The world is the way it is not because we have failed to live up to our true values—the world is the way it is because it is a perfect replica of our beliefs, though we have never been able to put into words anything as dark or hateful as the world we made.

> So says, Timon of Athens. (Lynn 2016, 72)

Following this epitaph, Alcibadia delivers the final two lines of the play: "But he's dead. / Come in" (Lynn 2016, 72). In Rude Mechs performer Ellie McBride's delivery, Timon's death was dismissed brusquely before her warm invitation that the two friends join her. The revelation of Timon's final thoughts directly follows the reconciliation of Cee Cee and Braymount, and the immediate deflation of his memory by one of his only steadfast friends suggests that, for Timon, his epitaph was true. His was a flawed life, seeking meaning through grandiosity but incapable of bridging the distance he created. His final words reveal a deep-seated paranoia and contempt for those around him. He believes the world to be hateful because he was capable of nothing but disdain.

Shakespeare and Middleton's Timon is unable to write an epitaph that conveys the vulnerability that drove him from Athens. Lynn's Timon, however, finally reveals how pitiable he feels himself to be, projecting the bitterness he held within him onto those who were unable to do anything but accept his gifts. As an epitaph to the play *Timon of Athens*, *Fixing Timon* fulfills what commendatory words often attempt: it creates for us a satisfying narrative of a play that, flaws and all, tried to do and say something important, and it celebrates that effort. Lynn and the Rude Mechs, rather than merely accruing a debt to Shakespeare and Middleton, offer a performance that entertains, refines, and critiques. Adaptation at its best should always produce this kind of excess.
Notes
1. See Christian Smith's "Translation and Influence: Dorothea Tieck's Translations of Shakespeare."
4. See Eric Mallin's "Charity and Whoredom in Timon of Athens."
5. Character is a contested term. Pace Aaron Kunin (Kunin 2019), whom I largely agree with, I will suggest for brevity's sake merely that a character is someone whose features extend beyond their job description. See also Elizabeth Fowler's Literary Character; Fowler defines character as "how literature expresses the human figure in its social form" (Fowler 2003, 28).
7. Cf. Marx and Engels' Manifesto of the Communist Party: "The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers" (Marx and Engels 1969).
8. The editors would like to acknowledge the copyediting and markup work of students in Sujata Iyengar's ENGL 4810 class at the University of Georgia in Fall 2019.
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