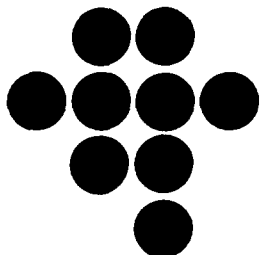


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COMMUNICATIONS
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"Pleasures from the Past:
Rethinking Film Music and Performance"

November 15, 1990

Seminar Notes

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MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
COMMUNICATIONS FORUM

"Pleasures from the Past:
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Seminar Notes

Prof. David Thorburn, M.I.T., Organizer

Prof. Edward Baron Turk, M.I.T.

Prof. Henry Jenkins, M.I.T.

Prof. Peter Donaldson, M.I.T.

Elizabeth H. Prodromou, M.I.T., Rapporteur

This session of the MIT Communications Forum brought together three speakers for a discussion of issues related to film music and performance in older movies. What tends to fascinate contemporary viewers about older movies is an elusive or evocative quality in these films - for example, the movement of a performer's body or the grain of a star's voice. Film scholarship, including the M.I.T. Film and Media Studies Program, has begun exploring such auditory and visual dimensions in old films.

Prof. David Thorburn, Director of the M.I.T. Film and Media Studies Program, introduced the three speaker for the session. He began with some summary remarks on the history of the Communications Forum, commenting particularly on its founder, the late Professor Ithiel de Sola Pool. He noted that Prof. Pool felt that there was a community concerned with engaging in a continuing discourse on issues of communications policy, including humanistic, aesthetic and artistic issues, as well as political and technological development. Thorburn explained that Pool started the Forum in order to foster an environment that would support discourse on these issues.

Thorburn then introduced the day's speakers. He explained that Prof. Turk would draw on his current research into musical performance, genre and gender in operetta films of the 1930's; Prof. Jenkins would discuss his recent work on representations of gender among male and female comedians of the early sound era; and Prof. Donaldson would analyze performance and visual texture in selected film adaptations of Shakespeare.

The first speaker was Prof. Edward Baron Turk, M.I.T. Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Turk introduced his talk, on the subject of operetta films of the 1930's, by placing it within the context of his current research on film star Jeanette MacDonald. He explained that one of the reasons for his interest in Jeanette MacDonald's life and career was his conviction that her musical comedy work in the 1920's, her motion pictures from 1929 to 1949 (at Paramount, Fox, and Metro), as well as her opera performances in the early 1940's, serve to open windows onto significant and interesting issues in American cultural history.

Turk explained that, within the context of his current research interest into Jeanette MacDonald as a cultural phenomenon, his talk would use information from a handful of the thousands of documents he is gathering on her life and career, in order to touch on three overlapping issues: (1) debates on the appropriate place of serious music and the operatic voice in talking pictures; (2) the historically ambivalent infatuation of both Hollywood and the American moviegoing public with things European; and (3) the ways in which motion pictures of the early sound era renewed and enriched American thinking on so-called

popular and highbrow art.

Turk began by invoking two cinematic moments from non-MacDonald films as a means of summarizing his main interest in his presentation. First, he referred to the 1933 Marx Brothers film, DuckSoup; in this film, at the moment that Mrs. Teasdale reaches for the top note in her operatic rendition of "Hail Freedonia," the Marx brothers pelt her with fruit. Turk remarked that, for some reason, many American men, and perhaps American women as well, do not like a fat soprano. Second, Turk referred to Walt Disney's 1940 film, Fantasia; after completing pieces from Tchaikovsky, Bach, and other classicists, the players representing Leopold Stokowski's Philadelphia Orchestra spontaneously move into nearly one minute of improvisational jazz. Turk commented that the American public seems to find long-haired musicians suspect, even when their performances are matched with images as benign as Mickey Mouse.

Turk noted that it is interesting that the conductor of Jeanette MacDonald's first Hollywood Bowl concert in 1945 was the same Leopold Stokowski. He explained that Stokowski's detractors had accused him of lacking in the intellectual gravity expected of great musicians and also had accused both him and MacDonald of being musical charlatans. Turk stated his opinion that such views were erroneous and incomplete.

Turk then ran three film clips which were meant to show the evolution in MacDonald's persona. The first clip was from the 1932 film One Hour With You, which was the second of four films she made with Maurice Chevalier, and showed the two actors performing the Leo Strauss song "What a Little Thing Like a Wedding Ring Can Do." Turk explained that this clip shows MacDonald during the phase in her career when she was generally dubbed "the lingerie queen of boudoir farce." The lyrics are filled with double entendre, and MacDonald's character is reduced to playing the domestic sex kitten to Chevalier's prowling tomcat. According to Turk, MacDonald's operatic potential was usually curtailed in this phase of her career.

The second clip was from the 1935 film Naughty Marietta, an adaptation of Victor Herbert's 1910 stage operetta and the landmark MGM film which first paired MacDonald with the then unknown operatic baritone, Nelson Eddy. The team eventually did seven films together. Turk explained that this film was made on the heels of Hollywood's decision to enforce the self-censorship mechanism known as the Hollywood Production Code, and was intended to bring wholesome family fare back to neighborhood cinemas. Turk points out that, in the performance of "Italian Street Song," MacDonald's screen person undergoes a pivotal developmental moment. Through expansive lyricism and bright coloratura and by sustaining the penultimate note for twice as long as Eddy had sustained his, she is transformed from "lingerie

queen" to "iron butterfly." According to Turk this moment meant that, in both musical and emotional terms, male subjectivity becomes dependent on female authority.

The third clip was from the 1937 extravaganza Maytime, a reworking of Romberg's 1917 operetta and again teaming MacDonald with Nelson Eddy. The clip shows MacDonald performing "Nobles Seigneurs, Salut" and "Une Dame Noble et Sage." Turk commented that this clip shows the enormous change in the construction of gender and genre in the MacDonald character.

Turk turned to consider some cultural forces of the mid-1930's which help to account for the striking success of films such as Maytime. He remarked that MGM deliberately sought to convert and transplant its operetta heroes and heroines from Ruritanian and French nationalities and settings to more native ones, and suggested that this was probably an attempt to respond to xenophobic fears amongst the American public. However, he noted that there still remained substantial reservations about operetta films. Turk noted that quotes from theater owners illustrate objections to what they deem non-indigenous and non-normative, operatic singing. Turk recalled his opening remark that "there is something in many Americans that dislikes a soprano," noting that this held even when she is shapely and alluring like MacDonald. He also noted, however, that there is likewise something in many other Americans who yearn to see and hear the operatic on screen. Turk elaborated on this apparent contradiction. He noted that, as early as 1926, the Vitaphone Corporation had contracted with the Metropolitan Opera Company to engage Met artists to take part in Vitaphone productions. Reading from a 1929 newspaper interview of soprano Mary Garden, Turk quoted, "There is a big tenor at the Metropolitan whom I have never liked. I have found him wanting in several respects...but I heard him sing...in the talkies and rose to my feet with the audience, applauding and shouting in my enthusiasm. What had happened? The instrument, that marvelous sound instrument, had brought him to me. He had no idea of what was in him - the instrument found it. It reveals the subconscious. In days to come only the honest artist can succeed as a singer. The man or woman who sings for his check is finished." Turk noted that, although by 1930 a wealth of opera stars had been won over by what Garden had referred to as Hollywood's recording "instrument," only a few were successful in their new film careers.

Turk suggested that the Great Depression was a key factor in reshaping ideas on the relations of film and opera. He cited the fact that many opera companies were forced to reduce their seasons during the Depression. He also commented on another interview, in which Met opera star Lawrence Tibbett commented on Hollywood's ability to recreate the personal contact between singer and audience through use of close-ups and other film

production techniques. Turk commented that motion pictures were a medium in which the American public, somewhat intimidated by live opera performances, could develop a taste for opera. He also noted that, despite Tibbett's prescience, he did not have a noteworthy film career. noted that, in fact, the majority of the opera stars who made the transition to films did not have significant film careers. Turk pointed out that only MacDonald, who emerged from within the studio system, successfully combined voice, looks, and a sense of how to sing for the camera. He noted that MacDonald, again, succeeded where other opera divas failed, in projecting the convincing blend of sex appeal and operatic force necessary to win over audiences.

Turk briefly considered MGM's technological expertise as important for shaping the MacDonald persona of the mid to late 1930's. He noted the importance of playback technique, amongst others. Turk then moved on to discuss the fact that, amongst intellectuals of that time, there existed a condescending and even suspicious attitude toward incorporation of opera into film musicals. Commenting on writings of the period, Turk pointed out severe criticisms of the quality of operatic music which served as the source for many movie musicals (which were thought by some commentators to represent superior adaptations of third-rate music).

According to Turk, motion picture theater owners were especially polemical in their debates over the so-called arty and operatic movies. His research shows their emphasis on producing films that would appeal to the broad public, as opposed to narrow audiences of so-called intellectuals, and on moving away from features that were seen as too arty and too costumy. Turk pointed out that, from the opposite perspective, there were those who argued against films for the "movie morons" and who encouraged Hollywood toward continuous experimentation and creativity and away from notions of set formulas for public taste.

In closing, Turk suggested that Jeanette MacDonald's MGM films constituted a unique cultural experiment in American democracy. He argued that, in political terms, they tested mass society's ability to respond to artistic phenomena traditionally associated with a social elite. In musical terms, he viewed the films as betting on people's instinct for recognizing quality when exposed to it. He ended by remarking that terms such as quality, the masses, and the social elite are in themselves problematic, so that the MacDonald films offer a variety of avenues for debate and inquiry into American culture.

The second speaker was Prof. Henry Jenkins, in Literature and Media Studies at M.I.T. Jenkins noted that his talk is part of a larger study on the styles of comic performance within the early sound cinema. The study traces comic performance styles to

much older traditions within various entertainment media. **Jenkins** explained that his specific interest is in examining a group of films which have acquired the label of anarchistic comedy - the group is perhaps best known through the screen vehicles of the Marx Brothers and W.C. Fields, but it also includes a far broader range of works, including the films of Burns and Allen and Jimmy Durante, amongst others. **Jenkins'** argument is that these films represent the importation into Hollywood of an aesthetic system fundamentally different from the classic aesthetic and derived from Vaudeville theatre.

Jenkins explained that Hollywood's attempted in the early talkies to recruit stage-trained actors who were capable of effectively delivering dialog and of attracting large urban audiences. He noted that, insofar as these stars brought with them years of experience in Vaudeville and on Broadway, Hollywood screenwriters had to construct vehicles which assimilated and made the most of certain elements (e.g. gestures and personality) in the stars' previous backgrounds. These were the elements which had made the stars successful in their previous media. **Jenkins** explained that this fact forced Hollywood to experiment with and integrate into film certain aspects of the Vaudeville aesthetic. He emphasized that the significant point is that the Vaudeville aesthetic was based on heterogeneity, affective immediacy, and performance virtuosity, while the Hollywood aesthetic emphasized causality and consistency, closure and cohesiveness.

Jenkins argued that the juxtaposition of these two alternative aesthetics posed a series of issues which had to be negotiated and resolved through the scriptwriting and production processes. These issues raised the question of whether comic texts should build on the Vaudeville aesthetic's heterogeneous appeal or whether they should strive for a new degree of unity and integration. Another question was whether narrative causality should determine the arrangement and structure of individual scenes or whether the film should provide space for unmotivated performance sequences. **Jenkins** pointed out another relevant question as being whether characters should be rounded and fully developed or whether they should remain simply vehicles through which performers could display their skills.

Jenkins proposed to focus on one aspect of the above questions, that is, the ways that the broad style of Vaudeville performance became linked to thematic values and, more specifically, the ways that the struggle between narrative and performance became mapped onto a struggle between masculine authority and feminine pleasure in one 1929 Warner Brothers Comedy, So Long Betty. He noted that the story, while having been a spectacular success on the New York stage, was only moderately successful as a film. The film starred Charlotte Greenwood, who subsequently made only a small number of screen

appearances and whose name has completely disappeared from film history texts.

In Jenkins' view, the film deserves consideration because it was one of the few early sound comedies which centered on the antics of a female clown and, as such, offers a vantage point for reexamination of the sexual politics implicit in most other comedies of that time period. He noted the standard claim that there have been no female comedy stars, and he remarked on the persistence of attitudes which deny or suppress the possibility of feminine laughter and joking. He commented that such attitudes block female efforts to construct their own collective subjectivity or to articulate their resistance to social control. Jenkins noted that the authority to jest constitutes an enormous social power, in that it frees the jestor to publically challenge dominant institutions and pervasive social practices. He emphasized that women have rarely been permitted to exercise such authority to jest.

Jenkins challenged the common assertion that female comedy stars do not exist. He argued that the problem is not that they do not exist, but that they have faced an uphill battle in trying to gain the acceptance of the film industry and American movie audience and in achieving recognition by contemporary critics and historical scholars. Jenkins remarked that Nancy Walker, in her recent study of female literary humanists, discusses the fact that each new generation has had reinvent styles of feminine comedy because previous efforts were erased from literary history. He noted Walker's observations on the belief that women lack a sense of humor, and he noted that anthropologist Matthew Apte sees this as a cross-cultural phenomenon.

Jenkins discussed the propensity of 19th century male writers to deny that women even possessed a sense of humor. Amongst other writings, he cited an 1842 magazine article which stated that "There is a body and substance to true wit, with a reflectiveness rarely found apart from a masculine intellect...The female character does not admit of it." Jenkins observed that such denials of feminine jocularly were tied to the dominant comic tradition's function as a release of male anxieties and fears; a laughing and joking woman posed a pointential new threat to male authority and masculine dignity, intensifying the tensions which masculine-centered comedy sought to resolve. Jenkins interpreted the representation of feminine laughter as unnatural as being a denial of the possibility of publicly expressing feminine dissatisfaction with and resistance to partriarchal authority even in a joking fashion.

According to Jenkins, these views were being less openly and strongly expressed by the turn of the century. He noted that women were apppearing in Vaudeville, and he cited writings which debated whether or not women indeed had a sense of humor.

Jenkins pointed out that writers generally concluded that women were capable of both joking and laughing, but they also posited fundamental differences in the joking of men and women. He observed that feminist writers tried to demonstrate that the denial of feminine humor was a powerful tool for social control, citing the view in one particular magazine article that "If she is so ill-advised as to indulge in mirth at man's expense, she risks the loss of his material support - a consideration of which the woman in the home is very much aware."

Jenkins turned to consider So Long Letty, noting that the film deals with many of the same contradictions evident in the aforementioned writings. He pointed out that the film explores the comic possibilities of feminine resistance to masculine demands for propriety and domesticity. He noted that the opening sequence seems characteristic of the anarchistic tradition within early sound comedy. Reduced to its simplest outline, "anarchistic comedy" explores the relationship of the natural, uninhibited individual to rigidifying social order, of creative impulses to encrusted habit and conventional modes of thought. He explained that the abstract forces of law and license, the social and the individual, are played out within the conflicting figures of the clown and the comic antagonist. The clown embodies the possibility of change, encapsulating all that strains against the narrow codes of social life, all that resists the dehumanizing aspects of the civilizing process. The comic antagonist personifies all that is stifling or corrupt within the existing order, all that would block or thwart efforts towards individual self-expression and personal pleasure. **Jenkins** noted that this fundamental opposition structures the narrative trajectory so that the film moves in a series of lurches between moments of order and moments of disorder, towards an explosive climax which shatters the old order and allows for the final release of the clown from its constraints.

Jenkins suggested that the paradigmatic example of the anarchistic sequence might be one of the various confrontation between Groucho Marx and Margaret Dumont which dot the Marx Brothers comedies. He observed that Dumont's dowager matron encapsulates all that is self-important and stagnant in the existing social hierarchy. She forbids pleasure, while Groucho Marx embraces it; she struggles to make sense, while he struggles just as vigorously to destroy it and, in doing so, brings a liberating disorder to her carefully regulated environment.

Jenkins pointed out that So Long Letty follows the same logic as the Dumont-Marx confrontations. He described it as an explosion of comic aggressiveness directed against a carefully ordered space and an emotionally repressed character. But he noted that So Long Letty is different, in the surprising way in which the film reverses the normal assignment of gender roles within that scenario. **Jenkins** cautioned against exaggerating the

"liberating" potential of this type of female comic performance. He noted that, if So Long Letty allows a moment of female enunciation which challenges the normality and desirability of patriarchal order and directs a feminine laughter against a male butt, the film like many vehicles for female comics, works to transcribe the traditional structure of the joke - transforming the female clown back into the object rather than the subject of her own comic discourse. He noted that the film's second scene illustrates this shift in perspective, as the audience is asked to evaluate Letty from her unfortunate husband's point of view.

Jenkins observed that So Long Letty reverses the conventional terms of the comedy of marital combat tradition linking social restraint directly to the patriarchal order and the desire for spontaneity and joy to feminine resistance. Unlike other portrayals, Letty is a bad wife not because she refuses to allow her husband to have fun but rather because she wants to have fun herself. He noted that, ironically, those traits which make Letty such a frustration for her husband and a threat to his uncle are precisely those qualities which make her such a delight to the audience - Charlotte Greenwood's directness and loud voice, her colorful use of language, and especially her unorthodox physicality.

Jenkins went on to comment on Greenwood as a woman who relished her mastery over her own body, frequently challenging local women (and sometimes, men) to footraces as part of the publicity for her Vaudeville tours and generally offering women a model for a more fit and limber style of femininity. **Jenkins** observed that what Greenwood called "girlish laughter" was actually a celebration of a feminine pleasure within the body that transcended traditional conceptions of beauty and glamour, a bodily pleasure for women which did not necessarily translate into voyeuristic pleasure for men. He noted that, as Letty, Greenwood drew out many of these same qualities. Letty's gestures and movements were simply too large-scale to be comfortably contained within the domestic spaces where the men wished her to remain, suggesting a high-spiritedness and spontaneity resisting all restraint (self-imposed or otherwise).

Jenkins emphasized that the zestfulness of her performance must have made it difficult for even contemporary audiences to accept the legitimacy of the men's oft-repeated demands for decorum and domesticity; the restraint of Letty would rob the film of much of its entertainment, overpowering the logic of the narrative which requires precisely that type of capitulation to the husband's demands in order to settle its facial situations. According to **Jenkins**, the problem becomes how to resolve the trouble that this "terrible woman" causes, how to repair the disruption within her family relations, without simultaneously robbing the text of its vitality and comedy, how to reconcile the competing demands for performance spectacle and narrative

closure.

Jenkins suggested that the film resolved the problem only in its final scenes, holding open the possibility of Letty's resistance to the very last second, and then pulling her abruptly back into the domestic sphere. Letty must be hauled before a judge, her marriage in total disarray, and must be forced to proclaim her love and affection for her husband and tearfully beg to be allowed to return to married life.

Jenkins concluded that the film's conclusion stands in stark contrast to that of the Marx Brothers' Duck Soup. Admittedly, the two scenes share many common elements. But **Jenkins** maintained that, while the anarchistic Marx Brothers are allowed to triumph over the the killjoy who attempts to restore order, the pleasure-seeking Letty must succumb to the demands of the decorum-governed uncle. He notes, though, that the uncle's victory is far from absolute, in that it flies so totally in the face of generic convention.

The third speaker was Prof. Peter **Donaldson** from the M.I.T. Department of Literature. **Donaldson** entitled his talk "Claiming from the Female: Gender and Representation in Laurence Olivier's Henry V." He opened with some comments about the prologue of Shakespeare's Henry V, which apologizes for the shortcomings of the stage, asking how the heroic exploits of great kings can be portrayed by lowly actors and how the "wooden O" of the Globe theater can contain the vast fields of France. **Donaldson** explained that calling attention to the discrepancy between theatrical representation and its referent is put to complex use in the play. He observed that this issue authorizes the imaginations of the spectators, who must complete what the stage can not present; it signals a discrepancy between self and role that guides the perception of the king's performative and self-divided character; and it creates possibilities for alternative political readings of its own ideological premises, problematizing the war by raising questions about its representation. **Donaldson** continued by explaining that the ill-repute of the theater, the manipulativenness of its devices, and even the empitness of the stage and its illusions, kept in the audience's minds by the chorus, can become metaphors for the play's epic subject, calling into question the glory of the war and the methods and motives of the king. He noted that the play's reflection on the inadequacy of its means can be read, that is, not as the humble apology it pretends to be , but as a vehicle for the current of doubt and subversion so many recent critics have detected beneath its celebratory surface.

Donaldson pointed out that Laurence Olivier's film version of the play, completed in 1944, aligns itself with the affirmative, heroic energies of Henry V, and, in doing so, give the metatheatrical aspect of the play a very different function

from the disjunctive or critical one outlined above by Donaldson. He also explained that, for Olivier, the disclaimers of the chorus were to be taken literally and that they offered a mandate for the representational amplification film could provide. According to Donaldson, reading certain scenes as "frustrated cinema," Olivier's conception of his role as adaptor was shaped by patriotic fervor and sanctioned by what he describes as an almost mystic or dyadic identification with Shakespeare.

Donaldson stated that the talk would examine the strategies by which Olivier attempted to perfect the representational ambitions of the play, paying special attention to gender.

Donaldson explained that in Shakespeare's Henry V, representation and gender are intertwined: the limits of the stage are tested by the task of representing a legendary male warrior, and in Act 5 the peace between England and France is made to depend on the success of a representational illusion, the "perspectival" substitution of the virgin princess for the "maiden walls" of French cities. The representational plot moves from hyperbolic inflation to anamorphic compression, from war to peace, from male to female, through figures that are incipiently sexual at the outset, and more explicitly and violently so in the course of the action. He noted that the "swelling scene" imagined in the prologue anticipates the stretched bodies, bent up spirits and stiffened sinews of Henry's advice to the troops at the siege of Harfleur, and that the cramming of the fields of France into the little "O" of the playhouse prefigures the literal defloration with which the king threatens the virgins of the town, as well as the peaceful forcing of sexual acquiescence from Katherine. Donaldson pointed out that these tropes are forced and uncomfortable; their strain is a reminder of the potential violence that underlies the marital concision and the brief, unstable peace.

Donaldson pointed out, however, that despite the gendered representational tropes of the play, in Henry V Shakespeare does not, unlike in his other comedies, exploit the most distinctive gender convention of his theater, namely, the playing of all female roles by boys. Donaldson explained that, in contrast to other Shakespearean plays, in Henry V the underlying male gender of the women does not enter into the contrast between actor and role.

Donaldson offered a possible explanation for the suppression of the gender tropes in Henry V. He suggested that the representational problem posed an awkward issue because the Salic Law barring King Henry's claim to France was also the law of the English stage, where no woman could appear. He posited that the play therefore suppresses the analogy between the gendered basis of the historical action and the gender exclusions of its own medium. Donaldson maintained that, for Olivier, the transvestite

conventions of the Elizabethan stage are emphasized, and their improvement by filmic means is central to his attempt to correct or complete Shakespearean practice. Like the king, who must pursue a matrilineal claim and secure his conquest through a dynastic marriage, the boy player can succeed only by "claiming from the female," appropriating women's dress and manner, assimilating "feminine" traits to male performance. Donaldson's claim was that film made this possible in a unique way.

Donaldson outlined the setting for the film version of Henry V. It begins in the playhouse, with a historical recreation of late 16th century Bankside and the Globe Theater, where a performance of Shakespeare's Henry V is being attended by an Elizabethan audience. Through the course of the play, the camera gradually moves closer to the stage and reduces the audience's awareness of the theatrical and historical ambience. Yet, again, by the end of the film, the process is reversed and the film ends just as it began, on the stage of the Globe Theater.

According to Donaldson, the shift into cinematic space is prominently marked by the replacement of boys by women, and the return to the theater is effected by a complex filmic transition in which, by means of a hidden cut, the adult performer who plays Princess Katherine becomes the boy actor who is her counterpoint in the frame narrative. Donaldson noted that this hidden cut upsets audience perceptions of gender and impts to the final image of the boy actress an effect of the real beyond the range of the transvestite theater.

Donaldson went on to offer various examples of the gendering process in the film version. Amongst others, he cited the initial introduction of boy actors; they are first introduced, very briefly and incompletely, in the rapid survey of the tiring house in the opening minutes of the film. Two boys are seen shaving, helping each other to dress and wig for their female roles. He commented that the presentation emphasizes their friendly professionalism. When one of the boys tries to stuff oranges in his bosom and then abandons the attemp, opting for a flat chest, this is presented as a technical problem of the theater, perhaps suggesting a degree of improvisation and individual discretion in how boy actors approached the details of female impersonation. In contrast, Donaldson points out that the king enters, backstage, fully robed, rouged, and crowned on the audience's first sight of him. Moreover, in the case of the female roles, the closure of impersonation is deffered, so that the presentation on stage of this aspect of Elizabethan theater most different from modern practice will be a surprise.

Donaldson noted that, in the diagetic sections of the film, "real" women are associated with an emotional depth, seriousness and compassion beyond the range of the boy players. However, he noted that their presence also goes along with a muting of the

bawdiness and sexual punning fo the text. He observed that, as the transition from playhouse to real world is marked and indexed by the replacement of the boy actor who plays Quickly by the woman, so the transition from the French court back to the stage of the Globe is coupled with a return of the transvestite conventions of Shakespeare's theater.

Donaldson explained that, as in the comedies, one effect of the switch from actress to boy player may be to unsettle gender distinctions. The conventions of film narrative and continuity create the expectation that figures the camera follows in such a sequence will remain the same, while the special stylistic markers Olivier has employed to distinguish diegetic space from playhouse override that expectation. Donaldson suggested that, in making the adjustment, the customarily firm boundary between genders may be called into question. He also suggested that this may be one of the ways in which Olivier perfected Elizabethan practice, creating a filmic equivalent of the playful crossing of genders in comedies. Donaldson turned to an examination of the final scene of the film. He noted that this sequence completes Olivier's contrast between levels of representation and caps his development of the motif of "claiming from the female." Donaldson pointed out that other interpretations (e.g. Gelduld's account) don't look carefully enough into this scene. For example, he argued that Geldud's account overlooks a second transition that takes places after the royal couple turn and face the Globe audience. The pulling back of the camera is actually two separate shots, a close-up followed by a track-back. Because the sets are matched, the close-up is brief, and the backward movement rapid, it is difficult to see the cut. Donaldson noted that the audience therefore reads the two shots thus joined as one; but when individual frames are examined, it is easy to see that the princess shown in the close-up is a female performer. Her appearance differs from that of the boy-player in several respects: her nose and chin are smaller, the features softer, the hair is looser, the gown is cut much lower, and the robe is not gathered so tightly around the bust, amongst moany other things. Donaldson pointed out that the eros that was muted or deferred in the wooing scenes is present in the final one, displaced from the decorous diagetie space into the milieu of the theater - the warm response that Henry can not quite get from Katherine as princess is given to the audience by Katherine as player.

Donaldson summed up the end of the final scene. He observed that, as the camera cuts and tracks back, the king and queen assume static, hierarchical positions reminiscent of Elizabethan formal portraiture; as the audience adjusts to the fact that they are watching two males, the image, in its story-book tableau aspect, abruptly loses its interactive quality; this is no longer a woman offered to and returning an appreciative gaze, but a boy - in fact, the boy seen dressing for his part at the beginning of the film - in a rigid pose, averting his eyes from the

spectators.

Donaldson also considered that, if the final sequence alludes to the homoerotic playfulness of Shakespeare's stage, it also once again shows the film's prejudice in favor of actresses. The image of a real woman is covertly blended with that of a Shakespearean boy player, imparting to the latter a more convincing feminine appeal. **Donaldson** remarked that, as with the other artificialities of the Elizabethan stage, the playing of women's parts by boys is a deficiency in Olivier's mind, and one that can be made good by film.

In closing, **Donaldson** emphasized that the main point of the various ways in which women, the images of women, or qualities thought to be proper to women are transposed into male forms is the restoration of bonds of love and solidarity among the men, the resuscitation, in an age of doubt and cynicism, of the mythology of the loving father-king. He noted that this resuscitation, so brilliantly achieved in the film, entails a thorough and idealizing, but by no means trivializing, conception of the play. He went on to note that the strategy of modifying definitions of manhood based on denial of feeling and defensive difference from women by an admixture of feminine traits is questionable in several ways. It does not question the cultural construction of these traits, but takes them as given; it is based on appropriative strategies that suppress or misname the force and deception that make them possible; it claims from the female without negotiation or mutual recognition; its intimations of psychic and political wholeness take place, despite their use of female images, within male and male dominated institutions centered in a powerful, directing male will and consciousness. **Donaldson** commented on these points as real limitations of the film's utopian vision and, in his opinion, important differences between the critical dissonances of Shakespearean theater and the totalizing aesthetic of realist filmmaking. He concluded, however, that to the extent that the film offers a version of maleness that acknowledges its derivation from the female, and to the extent that it presents the usually rigid boundaries between genders as permeable, the film's achievements are significant.

(There was no Question & Answer).