

特別講演

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Reading Madness in the Archive: Shakespeare's Unread "Letters"

Sometimes written letters are mentioned in Shakespeare's plays but go unread. In other cases, alphabetic letters are not read. Here are a few examples: In the last scene of *Twelfth Night*, Olivia refuses to allow Feste to "read madness," that is, "allow" Feste "vox" as he reads Malvolio's letter aloud to her; Polonius's or Hamlet's, depending on how you read it, use of "etc" in the letter Hamlet "machine" writes to Ophelia and that Polonius reads aloud to Gertrude and Claudius: "[*Reads*] 'In her excellent white bosom, these, & c. . . Thine evermore, most dear lady, / Whilst this *machine* is to him, HAMLET'"; the impossibility of deciding what Kent is or is not being quoted from Cordelia's letter after he has been put in the stocks; the French Princess Katherine's English lesson in *Henry V*; when Lucius Marcus finds Lavinia after her rape and mutilation in *Titus Andronicus*, he says he will turn her gestures and signs into "an alphabet" in order to understand her; and Cinna the Poet's name carries a death sentence in *Julius Caesar*. These wide-ranging examples of unread written and alphabetic letters put pressure on what we mean by "reading," since some of these "letters" go unread but are nevertheless archived. Due to limitations of space, I will focus primarily on two cases, high intensity moments of what Derrida would call "archive fever," namely, Lady Macbeth's unwitnessed, unread letter we hear about second hand from her Gentlewoman and Marc Antony's reading of Caesar's will.

