

KOTT, OR DRAMATURG:  
INVESTIGATING JAN KOTT'S PATTERN OF DRAMATURGY WITH PETER BROOK'S  
*KING LEAR* (1962)

by

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Kott, or Dramaturg: Investigating Jan Kott's Pattern of Dramaturgy with Peter Brook's *King Lear* (1962)

Thesis directed by Assistant Professor Amma Y. Gharthey-Tagoe Kootin

Polish theatre professor Jan Kott (1914-2001) is often regarded as a critic and scholar because of his distinguished collection of essays *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (SOC). While theatre scholars have long agreed that Jan Kott's essay "*King Lear*, or *Endgame*" inspired Peter Brook's production of *King Lear* (1962); no one has critically examined Kott's contributions to Brook's production of *Lear* as a pattern of dramaturgy. This thesis utilizes a broader perspective of Kott's work and examines the aspects that would constitute his pattern of dramaturgy for Brook's *Lear* as the following: first, Kott formed a scholarly and personal perspective of how Shakespeare should be performed, which he believed should be realistic and cruel, and this perspective came out of his WWII and post-WWII experience in Poland. Secondly, Kott wrote dramatic criticism that contained "playable values" for his director to translate on stage. Lastly, Kott actively pursued the director, Peter Brook, whom Kott believed agreed with his own perspective of how Shakespeare should be done. Accounting for Kott's contributions to Brook's production of *Lear* as a pattern of dramaturgy clearly situates Kott in the field of dramaturgy and more precisely describes the nature of this alternative dramaturgical approach to Shakespeare.

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## CONTENTS

## CHAPTER

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	Jan Kott's Pattern of Dramaturgy.....	3
	Historicizing Models of Dramaturgy.....	7
	Criticism of Kott.....	12
	Summary.....	15
II.	KOTT'S PERSONAL AND SCHOLARLY PERSPECTIVE ON SHAKESPEARE.....	19
	Kott and University.....	20
	Kott and the Polish Army.....	21
	Kott and the Communist Party.....	23
	Summary.....	29
III.	KOTT, " <i>KING LEAR</i> , OR <i>ENDGAME</i> ," AND PLAYABLE VALUES.....	30
	<i>King Lear</i> Plot and Production History.....	30
	" <i>King Lear</i> , or <i>Endgame</i> ," and Playable Values .....	33
	Kott in Brook's <i>Lear</i> .....	40
	Summary.....	42
IV.	THE PROACTIVE DRAMATURG.....	46
	First Encounter, Two Stories.....	46
	The Benefits to a Proactive Dramaturgical Approach.....	52
	Summary.....	55

V.	CONCLUSION.....	56
	Finding a “Diamond in a Sewer” .....	56
	Suggestions for Contemporary Dramaturgs.....	58
	Summary.....	61
	 BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	 63

## TABLES

## Table

1. Timeline Of Kott's Pattern Of Dramaturgy: 1934-1962.....17-18

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

“[Kott] had the air of being a space and time traveler”  
– John Elsom

“Kott is a razor; Kott is a laser”  
– Peter Brook

Jan Kott (1914-2001) has been described in many different ways; by Shakespeare scholar John Elsom as a “space and time traveler” (315), and by British theatre director Peter Brook (1925--) as a “razor” and a “laser” (“For Kott” 303). There are other descriptions of Kott that typically arise as well: professor (Brook, Preface), theatre critic (Pace), and Shakespeare scholar (Pace 1). However, only every so often is Kott described as a dramaturg (Cattaneo 4; Schechter 24). A “dramaturg” refers to one who offers analysis of dramatic structure, research of unclear terms, and practical application of those terms in order to bring a script to the stage (Chemers 3). On occasion, scholars have considered Kott’s work as dramaturgy based on the commonly agreed upon knowledge that Kott, and his essay “*King Lear*, or *Endgame*,” later published in his well-known work *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, inspired Brook’s *King Lear* with the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in 1962 (Ioppolo 1, 5). However, it becomes tricky to directly acknowledge Kott as a dramaturg in relation to this production because he was not present in rehearsal for *Lear* (Marowitz, “Lear Log”), nor was he given any credit for dramaturgy in the RSC performance database record of this production (“Archive Catalogue”). It is far easier to define Kott’s work in relation to this production with vague terms: Kott “provided the springboard” (Cattaneo 4) and “influenced” Brook (Foakes 26), or Kott “radicalized and



reinterpreted” (Ioppolo 5) *Lear* in an essay that Brook read before his production. Still, such descriptions as these do not clearly situate Kott as a dramaturg in relation to Brook’s *Lear*.

It has been difficult for scholars to clearly recognize Kott as a dramaturg for two other major reasons. Since the early 17<sup>th</sup> century (Halleck), Shakespeare has undergone a great deal of academic analysis as literature as well as theatre, and it is wise to be wary of simply labeling all analysis of Shakespeare’s plays as dramaturgy (Marowitz and Kott 20), for dramaturgy is a unique collaboration of “literary academia and practical theatre” (Hartley 1). Director Charles Marowitz unpacks how he distinguishes between purely academic analysis, and analysis that he desires as a director:

For the academic, theories, suppositions, and speculations are ends in themselves, and a really solid piece of Shakespearean criticism need only be well argued and well written to join the voluminous tomes of its predecessors. But a director is looking for what in the theatre are called ‘playable values’ – that is, ideas capable of being translated into concrete dramatic terms. (Marowitz and Kott 20)

Marowitz defines this presence of “playable values” as one difference that brings academic analysis of Shakespeare towards analysis that belongs to the theatre as well. Playable values in criticism could be regarded as one important aspect that marks dramaturgy.

The second reason why scholars have been resistant to definitively naming Kott as Brook’s dramaturg is because Kott denies serving that role (Bharucha, Paran, and Shyer 223). Kott’s perspective is recorded in a 1983 interview with Rustom Bharucha, Janice Paran, and Laurence Shyer for an essay entitled “Directors, Dramaturgs, and War in Poland: An Interview with Jan Kott.” Kott is asked, “Jan, you have not written about your association with Peter Brook or Giorgio Strehler in any way that would confirm this, but would you say you served as their

dramaturg?” (223). Kott replies, “I cannot say I was his dramaturg. It would be impossible to be a dramaturg for Peter. You can only be a dramaturg in his dream, if he dreams about you” (224). Perhaps scholars have been resistant to definitively naming Kott as fulfilling the role of dramaturg when Kott himself did not acknowledge that he filled that role. Strangely, the *New York Times* obituary for Kott contains contradictory quotes from him saying “‘the most exciting time in my life was cooperating on productions with Peter Brook and Giorgio Strehler,’ and Kott’s idea of the ‘ideal relationship [in the theater] was to be ‘dramaturge for the great directors’” (Pace). This confusion in Kott’s own perspective suggests that Kott sensed his work was some form of dramaturgy, despite the unofficial nature of his status in relationship to Brook’s *Lear*.

#### Jan Kott’s Pattern Of Dramaturgy

This thesis seeks to reconsider Kott’s contributions to Brook’s *Lear* as a unique “pattern of dramaturgy” (Proehl 87). In doing so, this thesis discovers a method of understanding Kott’s work that goes beyond simply acknowledging Kott’s analysis of *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* as his dramaturgy, which scholars have already done (Schechter 24). The term “pattern of dramaturgy” is a phrase introduced by Geoff Proehl, former president of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA) and author of *Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility* (2008). Proehl finds that it is too limiting for those in the field of dramaturgy to continually examine “dramaturgy in relation to dramaturgs,” but instead Proehl agrees with Mark Lord’s call “to embrace dramaturgy not as a role or career, but as a form, as ‘intellectual *mise-en-scène*’” (qtd. in Proehl). Proehl laments that “We, and I include myself, are persistently drawn to dramaturgy as role, not dramaturgy as pattern” (87). When Proehl uses the term “pattern of

dramaturgy” he is seeking more specific vocabulary to communicate broader understanding for what a dramaturg does, and hopes to thereby include figures such as Kott (86). Proehl muses on Kott’s awkward position in the field of dramaturgy when he says: “I am still curious as to why dramaturgy, as these critics practice it [referring to Kott], has felt strangely peripheral to conversations and writings that have been defining dramaturgy in North America over the past forty years” (86). Proehl certainly considers Kott’s essays on Shakespeare to be “exemplars of a dramaturgical sensibility aimed at a dramaturgical analysis” (86). This thesis will utilize the phrase “pattern of dramaturgy” to indicate the phases of ‘intellectual *mise-en-scène*’<sup>1</sup> (Lord qtd. in Proehl 85) that emerge from investigating Kott and the contributions he offered to Brook’s *Lear*. After accounting for Kott’s contributions as a pattern of dramaturgy, this thesis will highlight some of the approaches that contemporary dramaturgs might utilize from Kott as an example.

If theatre history scholars as well as those in the field of dramaturgy desire to consider Kott’s work as a pattern of dramaturgy, then the question naturally follows; what *was* Jan Kott’s pattern of dramaturgy? This thesis proposes that Jan Kott’s pattern of dramaturgy consisted of the following: first, Kott formed a scholarly and personal perspective of how Shakespeare should be performed, which he believed should be “realistic” (Sawicka) and “cruel” (Kott, *SOC* 346). This perspective was developed in Kott’s WWII and post-WWII experience in Poland (*SOC* xix). Secondly, Kott wrote dramatic criticism that contained playable values for his director to translate on stage (Marowitz and Kott 20). Marowitz suggests the presence of playable values distinguishes Kott’s work other Shakespearean critics like Harold Bloom (Marowitz and Kott xii). This thesis goes further than Marowitz and suggests that this inclusion of playable values in

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<sup>1</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “*mise-en-scène*” as “The staging of a play; the scenery and properties of a stage production; the stage setting.”

Kott's analysis firmly lifts Kott out of the category of academic analysis of Shakespeare, and necessarily plants him in the field of dramaturgy—the place where “literary academia and practical theater” (Hartley 1) converge. The last element of Kott's pattern of dramaturgy is that Kott proactively pursued the director, Peter Brook, whom Kott believed agreed with his own perspective of how Shakespeare should be done (Kott, *SOC* 353). This thesis culminates by exploring how Kott presents both an active and proactive approach to dramaturgy that directly opposes passive habits plaguing contemporary dramaturgs.

Kott's pattern of dramaturgy resulted in such a massive impact on a production that it merits study to definitively include him in the field of dramaturgy. Marowitz, who also served as the Assistant Director of Brook's *Lear*, comments that:

It is hard to cite a Shakespeare critic other than Kott who has left an indelible mark on contemporary productions. Directors are always cribbing ideas from a variety of scholars and critics, but only in Kott's case is one able to trace a direct genealogical line between a critical concept and a finished production. (Marowitz and Kott xii)

Additionally, theater scholar Martin Esslin (1918-2002), known for distilling post-WWII theatre into the genre Theater of the Absurd, makes a similar observation about Kott's impact:

There are few expositions of drama by university professors that have ever, in the long history of the theatre, been openly acknowledged as the inspiration of a highly successful production. Jan Kott is one of the few who can claim to have achieved that feat. Peter Brook's production of *King Lear* with Paul Scofield in the title role, which is by now generally acknowledged as one of the finest Shakespearean performances within living memory was, so the director himself assures us, inspired by Kott's chapter “*King Lear*, or *Endgame*.” (Introduction, *SOC* xxi)

Again, Esslin considers Kott's contribution to the production as massive, yet Esslin uses vague language such like "inspiration" and "inspired" Brook. Esslin does not refer to Kott's contributions as dramaturgy, and these terms do not precisely account for how Brook and Kott worked together. To be fair, Esslin utilizes the sense that Kott was "inspiring" to Brook from Esslin's interpretation of Brook's own words on the subject. Esslin is referring to Brook's acknowledgement that "I read [Kott's] writings with passionate interest and at the time of preparing *King Lear* it took just one phrase, one image amongst so many, to open a thousand doors" ("For Kott" 304). This thesis proposes to explore more deeply what Marowitz, Esslin, and Brook all suggest when they refer to Kott's vital contributions as inspiration. This thesis contends specifically Kott provided a pattern of dramaturgy, which merits examination even if Kott was not in the role of dramaturg.

### Historicizing Models Of Dramaturgy

Perhaps scholars have not considered a broader perspective of Kott's contributions to Brook's *Lear* as a pattern of dramaturgy because it does not fit easily inside established models of dramaturgy. This section outlines the history of these various models of dramaturgy, in order to understand where we might situate Kott's pattern of dramaturgy within dramaturgical historiography.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Several texts outline a history of the development of dramaturgy, yet all disregard or misunderstand Kott. For example, *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy* (2005) provides a comprehensive and in-depth account of the development of dramaturgy, but does not mention Jan Kott. Brook is mentioned three times in the text, and there are multiple other opportunities where the author suggests further sources for deeper reading in dramaturgy and Shakespeare analysis. Other texts that also do this include *The Art of Active Dramaturgy* (2008) by Lenora Inez Brown, and *The Shakespearean Dramaturg* (2005) by Andrew James Hartley. These books, especially *The Shakespearean Dramaturg*, are examples where those in the field of dramaturgy have omitted Kott from study as a dramaturg. This thesis provides a way to understand the larger picture of Kott's work as a pattern of dramaturgy, so that we may begin to find his place in the historiography of dramaturgy.

In the Western theatre tradition, the earliest model of dramaturgy (beginning with ancient philosophers and lasting until the eighteenth century) is the dramatic criticism model. This model of dramaturgy is characterized by philosophers, writers, or scholars sharing their analysis of theatre and dissecting dramatic structure (Chemers 14). Michael Mark Chemers observes that “The ancients did not, to the best of our knowledge, employ a dedicated dramaturg the way we think of the role today” (12-13). While ancients may not have seen the work of dramaturgs as it is practiced today, the roots of the dramaturg’s work—doing deep analysis of a play—can be located in ancient models of dramatic criticism. The writer that established this early model of dramatic criticism was Aristotle (384-322 BCE) and the *Poetics*. This dramatic criticism model provided the roots of what was to become the modern day profession of dramaturgy. It is crucial to understand the development of dramaturgy from its roots in dramatic criticism, as this thesis shall later situate part of Kott’s work as a form of dramaturgy that perhaps echoes this dramatic criticism model. However, the practical application of Kott’s analysis goes much deeper than dramatic criticism that analyzes a play’s structure. Often in dramatic criticism, such as with Aristotle, the author was looking back and doing analysis of play structure many years after performances, while Kott’s dramatic criticism in “*King Lear*, or *Endgame*” goes deeper than dramatic criticism, and indeed has a profound impact upon what would be Brook’s production, bringing him closer to the eighteenth century model of dramaturgy.

The model of dramatic criticism as an early sense of dramaturgy, or play analysis, continued until the defining era for the profession of dramaturgy with G.E. Lessing (1729-81). Lessing, widely acknowledged as the father of the profession of dramaturgy (Brown xiv; Cattaneo 3; Chemers 36), began by criticizing the neoclassical values persisting in German drama. Lessing marked an important moment in the professionalization of dramaturgy when in

1767 the National Theatre “invited” Lessing to be an “in-house critic who would praise the German drama and the Enlightenment values and perhaps write pithy plot summaries and give historical notes in the programs” (Chemers 35). Although Lessing did not give the National Theatre exactly what they expected as he continued to criticize German theatre for its tendency toward French neoclassical theatre, Lessing was the first dramaturg asked by a theater to be actively involved with their production of theatre. He took his collection of criticism that came out of his time at the National Theatre and published *The Hamburg Dramaturgy*, which birthed “the role of the dramaturg as thought of today: an expert in play analysis and theatre history who is profoundly committed to the notion of theatre as a tool for dialectical self-improvement and social change” (Chemers 36). Thus, from the dramatic criticism model of dramaturgy, which focused on play analysis, Lessing expanded and cemented the German model of dramaturgy to include a direct connection with a theatre and involvement with productions. He inaugurated the German model of dramaturgy, characterized by a theatre approaching a dramaturg and hiring him or her to work on a production. The professionalization of dramaturgy split dramatic criticism, which as Marowitz argues need only be well-written to constitute substantial analysis of a play (Marowitz and Kott 20), and dramaturgy, which aimed to blend theoretical and practical worlds of theatre. Bertolt Brecht is the second figure of the German model of dramaturgy that is acknowledged for his “model of creative collaboration” between directors and dramaturgs (Cattaneo 5). Brecht is celebrated for gathering artists together to brainstorm about season planning, programming, play adaptations and relevant issues to the Berliner Ensemble and their Marxist perspective. Brecht’s approach is also representative of the German model of dramaturgy, which is characterized by a dramaturgy office and “two-to-four person dramaturgy staff” (Cattaneo 5). Brecht is an important example in the development of dramaturgy as one

who desired, similarly to Lessing, to utilize dramaturgy in order to link productions with powerful meaning for their audiences.

Contemporary dramaturgs of Shakespeare's plays often work within the model that Lessing introduced, which occurs when a theatre hires a dramaturg for a production, and also they must also operate with a strong sense of dramatic criticism, which emphasizes play analysis.<sup>3</sup> The reason for this emphasis on play analysis regarding Shakespearean dramaturgy is related to the language and references of Shakespeare's plays that are often dense and difficult for contemporary audiences to understand. One notable scholar who performed an exemplary dramaturgy, balancing both dramatic criticism and production awareness, was Harley Granville-Barker (Mehra I; Salenius Preface). Granville-Barker, an early twentieth century actor, producer, playwright, and dramatic critic, is perhaps best known for his work *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, a four-part series published between 1927 and 1947. These essays "initiated a new approach to Shakespearean studies and productions of his plays" (Mehra i). Granville-Barker presents a model of Shakespearean dramaturgy that "effectively bridged the gap between the library and the stage" (Mehra i). The majority of Shakespearean dramaturgs hope to do this type of work bridging libraries and stages. Granville-Barker became well known for producing a "series of Shakespeare revivals which were outstanding in their fidelity to the text of the plays, and in speed, simplicity, and beauty of productions" (Salenius Preface), and he is also critically important for taking part in the rise of the role of director as artistic lead of a production.

Director Charles Marowitz also marks how important the rise of the director was in terms of the artistic lead for a production. After mentioning the earliest directors in the nineteenth century, including the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, Marowitz reminds his reader that after the

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<sup>3</sup> There are not as many differences between America and Europe in Shakespearean dramaturgy (Hartley 12). The RSC now has a Dramaturgy Department, and "In the United Kingdom... the issue of whether a dramaturg is employed is often similarly bound to issues of company and budget size" (Hartley 12).



impact of directors such as Stanislavsky, Daly, and Reinhardt, “the director, aimed with a stylistic prerogative and aesthetic bias, gradually came to the fore” (Marowitz and Kott 21). The notion that a director would be responsible for a more intellectual and aesthetic mark on the production occurs with productions of Shakespeare as well. In regards to production of Shakespeare, the director now takes a piece of classic theatre and aims to discover new meaning, and in turn engage “audiences that never imagined the plays dealt with the theme they now seemed to be about” (Marowitz and Kott 21). Although directors are taking on a sense of dramaturgy as they critically examine how an established play such as Shakespeare can resonate with a contemporary audience, directors of Shakespeare still employ dramaturgs. The current model for a professional dramaturg of Shakespeare varies from League of Resident Theatres (LORTs) to Shakespeare festivals, and largely depends on budget, company size, and audience demands (Hartley 9). Typically, a theatre company or Shakespeare festival will take on a volunteer dramaturg, hire a dramaturg as a freelance position rather than a staff position (Hartley 10), or utilize their staff Literary Manager or Resident Dramaturg who is involved in larger company decisions as well. The trend in dramaturgy of Shakespeare, as Marowitz suggests, is for the director to be the artistic lead, and for the dramaturg to offer analysis, research, and practical application for that research (Chemers 3), but ultimately the dramaturg supports the director's vision of the show. Often dramaturgs are assigned plays after they've been hired and are often informed by the director of what additional research is needed.

Jan Kott's pattern of dramaturgy is striking for a few reasons and defies being easily categorized by scholars within the established models of dramaturgy. Kott analyzed Shakespeare, and in that sense is perhaps similar to the early dramatic criticism model of dramaturgy. However, Kott's analysis had direct results on directors and stage productions,

whereas authors of dramatic criticism often offer analysis and observations reflecting on the past, rather than towards impacting future productions. Kott's model of dramaturgy also defies the standards cemented by Lessing, although Kott did attempt a Lessing-like approach to dramaturgy at different times in his career. In 1976, the Burg Theater in Vienna invited Kott for a six-month dramaturgical residency, yet Kott found his time there entirely unproductive. Kott recalls that the theatre knew he didn't speak German and hired him anyway, that he was left alone by directors and actors, and that two other, older resident dramaturgs were employed there as well without use (Bharucha, Paran, and Shyer 228-9). Kott's bizarre experience at the Burg Theater reveals that Kott was aware of the more contemporary style for theatres to hire dramaturgs. Instead, Kott forged his own pattern of dramaturgy that accomplished what a residency at the Burg had been aiming for Kott to do—"to change things, to introduce innovations" (Bharucha, Paran, and Shyer 229).

Kott's pattern of dramaturgy in the fifties and sixties that culminated in his dramaturgical influence on Peter Brook's *Lear* was certainly outside of these German and contemporary models of dramaturgy. Not only was Kott *not* hired by the RSC for his dramaturgical influence, nor present in rehearsal, nor credited in the archival record of the show, but his pattern directly contrasts the established contemporary model. In the typical model, a director offers the artistic vision, but in Kott's pattern, he provided the artistic lead on which Peter Brook based his production. The nature of artistic lead is so blurry in this case, that direct phrases from Kott's essay "*King Lear, or Endgame*" such as "*King Lear* is a high mountain that everyone admires, yet no one particularly wishes to climb" (SOC 127) appear almost verbatim in Brook's address to the actors at the first Stratford reading; "Brook spoke of the play as a mountain whose summit had never been reached" (Marowitz, "Lear Log" 105). Kott's pattern of dramaturgy is also

different from the current model because Kott approached his director, and was not hired by the RSC for this production. Thus, when this thesis takes account of the broad picture of Kott's pattern of dramaturgy, although varied from established models, it seeks to establish the elements of Kott's pattern of dramaturgy and examine with greater precision how Kott contributed essential dramaturgy to one of the greatest productions of Shakespeare in the twentieth century (Cattaneo 4).

### Criticism Of Kott

There is significant criticism of Kott's analysis of Shakespeare, which may partially explain why his analysis hasn't been fully embraced as dramaturgy. One scholar critical of Kott is Leanore Lieblein, who contends that Kott's analysis of Shakespeare is too limited and that Kott only dialogues with aspects of the text that speak to his own life experience. Lieblein seemingly chastises Kott for his analysis of Shakespeare that appears in his definitive work *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*:

Kott sees one text in terms of another, not in the spirit of the recent critical recognition of the intertextuality of all discourse, but by seeing in those texts of which he speak (which speak to him) the embodiment of his philosophical assumptions. (42)

Lieblein is correct to argue that a scholar investigating Shakespeare should not only engage the text on a personal level, and to be sure, dramaturgs are responsible for considering a broad intellectual, aesthetic, and visceral perspective (Hartley 5-6). Yet, dramaturgs *are* responsible for connecting the text to what makes a play relevant in the present theatrical moment. This responsibility might involve an awareness of the text and the intersection it has with a contemporary audience, including oneself. When a dramaturg asks the important question "Why

this play now?" (Chemers 108; Hartley 17), s/he infers that there is already a lot of work to be done with Shakespeare to intersect the text with resonance for a contemporary audience. Shakespearean plays are "steeped in ideas, logics, and belief systems that are foreign to the present" (Hartley 17) and audiences are even further distanced from Shakespearean plays by heightened, archaic language. "Every word of the play's dialogue" (Hartley 17) can create confusion for an untrained ear. A dramaturg of Shakespeare is uniquely needed to understand where the text has potential to have meaning for a contemporary audience.

Kott believed that Shakespeare himself was not foreign "logics and belief systems" (Hartley 17). Kott believed that Shakespeare's England and the modern experience were quite similar. In his essay "Shakespeare—Cruel and True," Kott discusses the connection he finds between the production of *Titus Andronicus* (1957), directed by Peter Brook, and the modern world. After observing that Brook has portrayed the King's hunt, Tamora and Aaron's meeting in the forest, and the rape of Lavinia "literally" (Kott, *SOC* 352), Kott proceeds to draw out parallels between the Renaissance world and the modern one that define his perspective of Shakespeare:

Such a Shakespeare belongs to the Renaissance, and at the same time is most modern indeed. He is violent, cruel and brutal; earthly and hellish; evokes terror as well as dream and poetry; he is most true and improbable, dramatic and passionate, rational and mad; eschatological and realistic. (*SOC* 352)

Lieblein believes that Kott's analysis is problematic and contends that the "criticism in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* becomes a private hermeneutics in which interpretation fulfills expectation" (42). If Kott's analysis is considered to be a component of his pattern of dramaturgy, then Kott is doing the work of the dramaturg by "urging the play to speak to the

present” (Hartley 17). Shakespeare scholar John Elsom recalls Kott asserting that “What matters is that through Shakespeare’s text we ought to get at our modern experience, anxiety and sensibility” (314). While Lieblein criticizes Kott as one whose analysis of Shakespeare is too limited and sees Shakespeare only through Kott’s own life experience, this thesis agrees with Kott and thus Kott was wise to integrate the personal and scholarly to form his perspective of Shakespeare in order to be rooted in the “modern experience, anxiety and sensibility” (Elsom 314). Kott managed to write from a perspective that largely captured the experience and anxiety of Europe in the post-WWII moment. Brook agrees that Kott’s experience is the reason for his success:

If Kott’s influence has penetrated so far and wide, the secret is in the title of the book that first made him known- *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*: the contemporary is Kott himself, and even if everyone else believes that he is inevitably a contemporary of the period in which he lives, it is not true: *there are very few who live their time*” (“For Kott” 303).

Brook is arguing that Kott lived his time in a way that few scholars and dramaturgs are able to do, and was influential as a result. Dramaturgs of Shakespeare may seek a similar sense of blending their knowledge and experience of their time with their analysis of the text to offer playable values, which may generate meaning on stage and connection with an audience.

## Summary

Jan Kott holds a tenuous place in the field of dramaturgy. Kott’s analysis in “*King Lear*, or *Endgame*” is firmly recognized as having inspired Peter Brook’s production of *King Lear* (1962), and at times, Kott is unofficially credited as having acted as dramaturg for Peter Brook

(Hay 17). In other instances, scholars have considered only Kott's collection of essays, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, as Kott's dramaturgy (Schechter 24), which brings him closer to the model of dramatic criticism as a type of dramaturgy. However, since Lessing and the professionalization of dramaturgy in the mid-1700s, Kott's dramaturgical contributions to *Lear* do not fit within the established models of professional dramaturgy (Hartley 9), which consist of a theatre or company hiring a dramaturg to work on a specific production. Kott also does not fit neatly inside the contemporary model of dramaturgy of Shakespeare, which includes the director providing the artistic lead and typically a theatre or Shakespeare festival dramaturg hiring in a freelance dramaturg, or utilizing their staff Literary Manager or Resident Dramaturg for a handful of productions. However, if scholars consider Kott's work as a unique pattern of dramaturgy, scholars can consider his work from a broader perspective and account for Kott's development and contributions as a dramaturg with greater precision than the current vocabulary. Those in the field of dramaturgy can firmly locate him as a critical figure in their field.

The following chapters of this thesis will examine the three aspects of Kott's pattern of dramaturgy separately in order to demonstrate how Kott developed his larger pattern. As Table 1 demonstrates, a timeline of Kott's life and work reveals a sense of the chronological evolution of his perspective aimed at both critical analysis and productions of Shakespeare, the combination of which demonstrates a pattern of dramaturgy. This thesis aims to show how each element works together to allow theater historians and scholars in the field of dramaturgy to consider a broader, yet clearer picture of Kott as a dramaturg and therefore expand scholars' understanding of dramaturgy. Accounting for Kott's contributions to Brook's *Lear* from the perspective of a unique pattern of dramaturgy allows for scholars to discuss his contributions more accurately and clearly, as the commonly utilized terms "influenced" and "inspired" do not explain Kott's work

with any sense of precision. These terms also do not give credit to the immense value of a dramaturg in the production of Shakespeare on stage. Often dramaturgs suffer from misconceptions that they are unnecessary luxuries (Chemers 8) or that their presence will be too academic, “dry-as-dust” (Marowitz and Kott 20), and stifling in their attempts to guard Shakespeare (Hartley 3). Kott’s pattern of dramaturgy is a fascinating example of the power of a dramaturg when staging Shakespeare. His pattern of dramaturgy may also allow contemporary dramaturgs of Shakespeare to consider a varied approach to offering their valuable contributions.

Table 1

A Timeline Of The Three Elements Within Jan Kott's Pattern Of Dramaturgy

1933-4	While Kott is studying law at Warsaw University, he begins to see a connection between classic literature and contemporary horrors.	The First Element: The development of Kott's personal and scholarly perspective of Shakespeare.
1939	Kott is drafted into the Polish Army, and is active in the defense of Warsaw.	
1942-8	Kott begins writing theatre reviews for <i>Kuznica</i> , and calls for productions of Shakespeare to be done with a sense of realism over spectacle. Kott is writing criticism with a strong sense of alignment with socialist ideals.	
1943	Kott joins the Polish Communist Party (PPR).	
1949-50	Kott is accused of Communist Party deviation, exiled to Wrocław, where he begins teaching Romance Languages at Wrocław University.	
1950	While teaching in Wrocław, the newspaper <i>Worker's Daily</i> hires Kott to write theatre reviews. Here Kott begins to draft original analysis of Shakespeare.	
1953	Kott goes back to Warsaw, and begins a series of essays entitled, <i>As You Like It</i> , which later become <i>Sketches on Shakespeare (1961)</i> , the polish edition of <i>Shakespeare Our Contemporary (1964)</i> . Kott is moving away from strict socialist values, finding his own voice as a writer, and developing analysis aimed towards passionate, bloody productions of Kott's idea of Renaissance Shakespeare.	The Second Element: Kott develops written and oral playable values.



1957	Kott, now fully disillusioned with communism, quits the Communist Party. This shift is reflected in his analysis of Shakespearean tragedy and the development of Kott's famous term, the "Grand Mechanism."	
	Kott sees Brook's touring production of <i>Titus Andronicus</i> in Warsaw, and is convinced of the need for cruelty in Shakespeare on stage. Kott and Brook meet at a nightclub in Warsaw, and begin their conversations about <i>Lear</i> .	The Third Element: Kott's active and proactive dramaturgical approach with Brook.
	Brook invites Kott to his flat in London for two weeks to discuss <i>Lear</i> , during which time Kott offers Brook an early, French version of the essay, " <i>King Lear</i> , or <i>Endgame</i> ."	
1962	Brook's <i>King Lear</i> premieres at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.	

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Source: "Archive Catalogue"; Bharucha, Paran, and Shyer 223; Kott, *Still Alive* xi, 64; Nicolaescu 133; Pace; Sawicka.

## CHAPTER II

### KOTT'S PERSONAL AND SCHOLARLY PERSPECTIVE OF SHAKESPEARE

“For me, there is not a great difference between books and life, between dramatic literature or criticism and basic human experiences: fighting, eating, sleeping, making love, travelling, and so on. They are not separate but the same, and they provide mutual enrichment; books enrich human experience and human experience enriches books”  
- Jan Kott

“[Kott's] ideas never originate in the cold laboratory of the mind, they are first experienced in the furnace of his involvement in life, before being forged into piercing weapons by the hard logic of his intellect”  
- Peter Brook

The following chapter examines the first element of Kott's pattern of dramaturgy, which is his scholarly and personal perspective that Shakespeare should be performed as realistic and cruel, which came out Kott's life experience in Poland. This chapter will examine three phases of Kott's life experience that were essential to the development of his personal and scholarly perspective of cruel Shakespeare. The first section of Kott's life that this chapter will examine is Kott's encounters with the Nazi Party in 1934 during his time studying law at Warsaw University. This time is the earliest mention Kott makes of his argument that classic literature connects with modern anxieties (Kott, *Still Alive* 64). The second section of this chapter will examine Kott's time in the Polish Army in the fall of 1939 (Kott, *Still Alive* xi), which resulted in Kott's belief in the “laws of history” as explained by Marxism (Esslin, Introduction *SOC* xv-xvi). The third section of this chapter will explore Kott's participation in the Communist Party (1944), and the subsequent failings of Stalinism. This time resulted in Kott's perspective of history and

Shakespeare as both exemplifying the “Grand Mechanism” (Kott, *SOC* 14) and the idea that *King Lear* represented a “tragic and grotesque world” (Kott, *SOC* 132). By Stalin’s death in 1953 (Kott, *Still Alive* 162), Kott wrote about Shakespeare with the urgent call for realistic (Kott, *SOC* xvii), cruel (Kott, *SOC* 352) Shakespeare, and by 1956 Kott had a rough draft of the Polish version of *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (Nicolaescu 134).

### Kott And University

The first crucial period of time in the development of Kott’s personal and scholarly perspective of Shakespeare was his early life. Jan Kott was born on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1914 in Warsaw (*Still Alive* xi). Kott was of Jewish ancestry, but later in his life he was baptized as a Roman Catholic (Nicolaescu 133). In Kott’s autobiography *Still Alive* (1990), he recalls several occasions where Jewish friends and family were baptized, and Kott muses, “I don’t know how many of these conversions were truly religious and how many were prompted by the threat of a wave of anti-Semitism” (15). As a student, Kott studied law at Warsaw University in 1933-4 (Kott, *Still Alive* 68), and later earned a scholarship to the Sorbonne University in Paris in 1938 (Kott, *Still Alive* xi; Kustow, “Obituary”). Kott mentions that during his time studying law in Warsaw, at twenty-three years old, he had also begun to study classic literature and romance languages. Kott was writing on these topics and while still in school for law had “begun [a] chapter on Tacitus that constituted the beginning of my *Mythology and Realism*. I was trying to show that classic texts contain contemporary horror. As I got off the streetcar on Mickiewicz Street, I noticed a German patrol” (*Still Alive* 64). Kott is chased into an alley and apprehended, and the Germans take his notebook. This anecdote demonstrates Kott blending of scholarship

and the realities of fear and anti-Semitism surrounding him. Kott characterizes his second year of law school in the following way:

All around us the horrors mounted by the day. Slowly the ghettos were starting to be liquidated through Poland. Sealed trains were leaving for Belzec, Treblinka, and Auschwitz. We already knew about the gas chambers. More and more alarming reports came... (*Still Alive*, 69)

As early as 1934 Kott had begun to look for “classic texts contain[ing] contemporary horror” (*Still Alive*, 64), but the horror that Kott encountered only increased during his lifetime, and his perspective on Shakespeare and modern cruelty would only deepen with time.

#### Kott And The Polish Army

In August 1939, the German-Soviet Pact was made which “stated that Poland was to be partitioned between [The Soviet Union and Germany], enabl[ing] Germany to attack Poland without the fear of Soviet Intervention” (United States Holocaust Museum). In September, Kott was involved with the Polish campaign to resist the Nazi invasion of Poland (Kott, *Still Alive* xi; Kustow, “Obituary”). In a 1983 interview with Rustom Bharucha, Janice Paran, and Laurence Shyer, they ask Kott about his “own experience in the war” (Bharucha, Paran, and Shyer 230).

Kott gladly agrees and tells this harrowing story:

It was the last weeks of the guerilla campaign in Poland, after the Warsaw uprising. The situation was very bad, everything was being destroyed. The regiment to which I belonged was trying to cross the Vistula River to escape the German army, and we counted on the Hungarians’ help... Anyway, our regiment bought submachine guns from the Hungarians and they told us that they would insure our passage across the river. I

don't know if what happened next was a mistake, a change in plans from German headquarters, or a betrayal, but when we got to the river, we were met not by the Hungarians but by an army of S.S. We fought them for four days and nights; we were completely circled. Our regiment consisted of about 180 men with four machine guns among us. The fighting was very heavy we tried desperately to escape. We had nothing to eat or drink in all that time and we lost about a dozen men. Finally, on the fifth night, we managed to escape. We marched about 20-25 kilometers and encamped at last. My captain assigned me to night watch. It was extremely difficult — and I fell asleep in the early hours of the morning. Another officer discovered me. Falling asleep on guard duty was a very serious offense during the war. A military court was held the next day and I was sentenced to be shot. The tribunal was held at six a.m.; I was to be shot at one. As I remember, I went back to sleep after the sentencing. I was still exhausted and slept like a log. About noon, my captain came to see me. 'Janek,' he said to me, 'I'm sorry, we're all extremely sorry, but what can I do? There is no other way. Now there is an old military custom that, if you are going to be shot, you can have a final request— a bottle of vodka, a girl, or a priest. Janek, because we all love you, we'll make an exception for you: you can have all three.' I was still so tired I had only one wish- to be allowed to sleep up to the time of the execution. No girl, no priest, no vodka— well, maybe that, just before the shot. No one could believe I was so cold-blooded. Half an hour later medics were sent in. They discovered I was running a very high fever; in fact I had typhus. When they realized I was ill, they were put in rather embarrassing position. You can't put a sick man to death, it's against procedure. A man must be in good health to die. Later, a new trial was held and I was absolved of my crime. In fact, because they were ashamed of having

earlier convicted me, they awarded me the highest military honors and sent me back to the hospital. (230-32)

This is only one story that captures the extreme conditions and absurd paradoxes Kott experienced in war: Kott is told “you can’t put a sick man to death,” and left to regain his health so that his superiors might execute him. Even though Kott has been given a death sentence for falling asleep on duty, he is later given military honors based on the same actions. Kott reflects that “During the Nazi Occupation, years before *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary*, I started to read Shakespeare through the experiences of war” (*Still Alive* 165). Martin Esslin finds that intellectuals enduring experiences of war will reflect on art in this way:

The only record of human experience that is truly objective and truly concrete and particularized: the great autonomous works of art. Only there could they find the strength and consolation that must spring from a sense of communion with kindred spirits who have faced similarly extreme situations. (Introduction *SOC* xv)

This tale of Kott’s almost execution speaks to the “purification” and agony that began to develop Kott’s personal perspective of Shakespeare. Esslin remarks that Kott’s reading of Shakespeare has “overwhelming emotional intensity” (Esslin, Introduction *SOC* xv), and this story of Kott’s time in the Polish army captures how such a perspective was rooted in Kott’s personal experience.

### Kott And The Communist Party

Perhaps the most formative time of Kott’s perspective of Shakespeare is crystallized during his involvement and subsequent disillusionment with the Communist Party. After Kott’s service in the Polish army as a part of the “doomed campaign” (Kustow, “Obituary 1”), Kott

spent time in Lvov. This area of Poland was overwhelmed with over 110,000 Jewish refugees from Germany, and underwent an occupation by Soviets on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939. As a result of the Soviet occupation of Lvov, they “impos[ed] their system on the city” (Gottlieb) and Kott spent time in Lvov while it was occupied (Sawicka). Soon Kott, like many of the Warsaw “intelligentsia” (Kott, *Still Alive* 15), became interested in Marxism and looked to it for the “material well-being and intellectual freedom” (Esslin, Introduction *SOC* xv) it seemed to promise. Kott also recognizes that “I owed my personal salvation— my defense against the nightmare that kept me from succumbing to its horror- to the conviction that history is in the right, that it will always be proved right, that fascism *must* be crushed and that it would be the Red Army that crushed it” (Esslin, Introduction *SOC* xv-xvi). By 1944, the verge of the end of WWII, Kott moved past a “youthful fascination with Marxism” and officially joined the Polish Workers’ Party (Sawicka). Kott’s life after this looked quite dramatic;

In a dizzying world of violence, heroism and betrayal, Kott joined both the communist-led underground and the nationalist partisans, leading a life on the run, witnessing experimental plays and poetry in cellars, skirting death, finding brief love in a time of destruction. (Kustow, “Obituary”)

Polish historian Adam Michnik believes Kott joined the Worker’s Party because Kott “wanted to be in accordance with History. He wanted to choose the kind of fear. He wanted to be on the side of progress, of the modernity, of the social reforms” (qtd. in Sawicka). From the dramatic tale to the secret motives of Kott’s decision to join the Communist Party, this decision reflects a desire to be on the side of what Kott believed would be the victors, to be in “accordance with History” as Michnik phrased it. At this point in Kott’s story perhaps he still believed such a position as victor or one of progress were still possible.

After the war and the political and personal experiences that occurred there, Kott began a career as a theatre critic. Sawicka notes that “His great interpretations of dramas started modestly - with writing reviews from theatre plays, among others Shakespearean. In the mid-forties, theatre for Kott was only a marginal element of his literary criticism” (Sawicka). Kott accepted a post at a newspaper in Łódź named *Kuźnica*, a paper founded by intellectuals of the Communist Party meant to comment on literary and social life (*Still Alive* 286).

Kott, as well as the majority of *Kuźnica* writers, believed that to write and discover “realism” in literature was their task. However, what Kott would come to view as “realism” was in fact “sorealism (the infamous Stalinist socialist realism)” (Nicolaescu 133).<sup>4</sup> Kott’s reviews of theatre in the early fifties reflect a desire for realism on the stage. Kott is disgusted with spectacle, and

According to the principles of *Kuźnica*, Kott proposed such interpretations of Elizabethan plays so as to expose their realism – painting a true picture of Renaissance reality, great passion, brutality and authenticity, vulgarity and plebianism. Earlier interpretations of *Hamlet* and *Midsummer’s Night Dream* irritated Kott. He wanted to see an undistorted Shakespeare, without aesthetical ornaments. (Sawicka)

Kott claims that Shakespeare’s experience as an Elizabethan was similar to his own life experience, and that productions of Shakespeare steeped in spectacle were dishonest to Shakespeare and to the ideals of realism. Kott scholar Madalina Nicolaescu concurs that as Kott was “reading Shakespeare’s plays, particularly as they had been or might have been staged, [it] became a way of writing a ‘critical history of the present’, albeit in an indirect and veiled way that could circumvent censorship” (135). Kott is conflating realism with socialist ideology, and

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<sup>4</sup> Socrealism is a Marxist doctrine that utilizes art, literature, and music to promote the worker’s life in a socialist country (“Socrealism”).



employing a certain “‘double thinking’: he would publicly mouth the official discourse whilst at the same time trying to undermine it” (Nicolaescu 134). Kott is arguing for the potential truth (Kott, *SOC* 350) of doing Shakespeare realistically, but at the same time a tight regime grip on art and literature is not creative freedom (Nicolaescu 134).

Kott was brushing up against the official propaganda that was curbing the writings of *Kuźnica*, and would eventually suffer for his position. As the political climate grew more and more oppressive under Stalinism, Kott aligned enough with the party to continue writing, but pushed boundaries that would eventually lead to his exile from Poland. The problem was that although “[Kott] was an avid Marxist, an idealist to a certain extent, he propagated realism but, at the same time, he demanded respect for classical literature” (Sawicka). In the late 1940’s, policy became more and more restrictive, demanding that writers adhere to strict rules of “social realism,” an official decision from the Congress of the Polish Union of Writers. Unwilling to stand the rigid expectations, *Kuźnica* closed in 1950 (Kott, *Still Alive* 286) and Kott continued to develop as a literary and theatre critic elsewhere. Kott was offered a position at Wrocław University in the Romance Literature Department, eventually moving to the Polish Literature Department, and he also gained employment as a theatre reviewer at the *Worker’s Daily* (*Gazeta Robotnicza*) in Wrocław. Kott harshly criticized theatre in his reviews, emphasizing that the conflicts in drama were uncomplicated and lacked “blood” (Sawicka). As a critic, Kott was writing about Shakespeare when he saw it, and Kott’s criticisms of drama at the *Worker’s Daily* around 1956 were the seeds of *Sketches on Shakespeare*, *Szkice o Szekspirze*, the Polish version of *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (Nicolaescu 134).

Kott’s reviews in the *Worker’s Daily* expressed a ferocious dissatisfaction with the productions of Shakespeare that he saw, including *Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, and *A Midsummer*

*Night's Dream*. It was undisputed that "Kott's fifties-era reviews could be blunt and pitiless – at times even cruel" (Sawicka). In a 1953 article, "Shakespearean Misunderstandings" from the *Worker's Daily*, No. 4, Kott said he felt "the situation of Shakespeare on our stages is not good. It must be clearly said that we are at the beginning of the road to the new, realistic, Renaissance and humanist Shakespeare" (Kott qtd. in Sawicka). Kott presents an essential idea of his that is also paradoxical analysis; Kott believes the realistic Renaissance Shakespeare was also "new" Shakespeare. Kott's belief in the road to the "new, realistic, Renaissance" Shakespeare is a comment from Kott's review of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Teatr Polski in Wrocław. In the review Kott found the design focus on spectacle repetitive of past productions and untrue to the emotion of the play. Kott's review, "Shakespeare in Wrocław," this time of *As You Like It* (1951) at the Teatr Polski, appeared in *Worker's Daily* and reveals Kott's political perspective as he writes that Forest of Arden should represent "folk criticism of feudal injustice and folk picture[s] of noble robbers, folk belief in the victory of justice" (Sawicka).

Just as Kott's alignment with the Worker's Party began to crumble, a sense of fear permeated Kott's scholarship as a result of Stalin's death in 1953:

The fact that Kott was a 'dutiful ideologist,' a member of the party, that many people feared his opinions and his sharp pen did not let him get rid of fear...Kott's thinking of history...penetrates too the analysis of *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Hamlet*. Everywhere there is the same picture of a hero who is unable to undertake independent decisions or who is condemned to decisions with tragic consequences, determined by historic necessity or absurd of his own existence. (Sawicka)

At this point in the development of Kott's pattern of dramaturgy, Kott is becoming more deeply convicted that the great tragedians in Shakespeare are representative of a realism in history that

Kott terms the “Great Mechanism,” or “the world as it really is” (Kott, *SOC* 32). Kott claims that in history, leaders climb up stairs towards a crown, only to fall at the top and be replaced by a leader who is no different, only climbing the stairs to the same crown, the same eventual fall. This perspective of history and power expresses no regard to the morality or value of those leaders or ideologies. Kott writes that “there are no bad kings, or good kings; king are only kings. Or let us put it in modern terms: there is only the king’s situation, and the system” (Kott, *SOC* 17). Kott’s perspective of the cold “Grand Mechanism” is his most famous term, and he believed this mechanism operated in Shakespeare’s history plays, as well as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*.

Kott continued to develop his perspective of cruel Shakespeare, and Kott still longed to see the “Grand Mechanism” on stage. In 1956, a three-hour long, political production of *Hamlet* at the Sary Theatr in Kraków encouraged him: “My review of the Kraków performance of *Hamlet*... was called ‘*Hamlet* after the XX party convention’. With that Elsinore where ‘walls have ears’ but people do not have ears started all my later and the latest interpretations of *Hamlet*” (Sawicka). Kott’s analysis of this production of *Hamlet* is a stunning reflection of his own life experience in 1956, and for Kott, this *Hamlet* represented realism. Life looked like this for Kott after what he had experienced under Stalin, as Kott demonstrates with this anecdote in *Still Alive*:

I was tied to Nowak by long-standing bonds (although being ‘an old pal from the army,’ or ‘an ‘old schoolmate’ was never as sacred to me as it was for him), and I had complete confidence in his sense of discretion. And yet one day in Munich, in his study, I saw an elongated black object on his desk. I thought I heard it making a sound like the hum of a running tape. ‘You’re recording me!’ I yelled. He turned red and then suddenly went

pale. 'So that's how you've been programmed.' Now I was the one who turned red with shame. The black object was simply an old camera. (209)

Kott was certainly encouraged by a production of *Hamlet* that reflected the deep fears, distrust, and agony that war, Nazis, and Stalin had inflicted on Poland. Kott still desired to see the "cruel" on stage, which he describes as "violent, cruel and brutal; earthly and hellish; evokes terror as well as dreams and poetry; he is true and improbable, dramatic and passionate, rational and mad; eschatological and realistic" (Kott, *SOC* 352).

### Summary

Kott's first element in his pattern of dramaturgy was to develop a specific view of staging Shakespeare with an emphasis on cruelty, which according to Kott would also be "true" Shakespeare. This philosophy came out of Kott's life experiences in Poland, specifically his experiences at university, his war experiences in Poland in 1939, and his joining and subsequent disillusionment with the Communist Party in 1944. Each of these periods of Kott's life informs his reading of Shakespeare and his belief that to perform Shakespeare in a Renaissance manner would bring cruelty to the stage for the "new," modern theater. Kott specifically did not like productions he saw of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* with too much spectacle, and Kott believed that Shakespeare's world was as cruel as his and needed to be performed with that in mind.

## CHAPTER III

### KOTT, “*KING LEAR, OR ENDGAME*,” AND PLAYABLE VALUES

As Kott’s desire for cruel Shakespeare on stage crystallized in the fifties, he wrote dramatic analysis of Shakespeare that distinctly related the plays with dramatic possibilities, what are otherwise known as playable values. The following chapter will explore this second element of Kott’s pattern of dramaturgy in the following way: first, this chapter will introduce the plot and production history of *King Lear* to explain the negative regard toward this play that existed before Kott’s analysis and Brook’s production; secondly, this chapter will examine “*King Lear, or Endgame*” to account for the playable values which demonstrate Kott’s ability to connect “literary academia and practical theatre” (Hartley 1); and lastly, this chapter will discuss a few exemplary scenes where Brook quite visibly translated Kott’s playable values to the stage, which demonstrates the powerful potential within Kott’s pattern of dramaturgy to impact a production.

#### *King Lear* Plot And Production History

Kott’s analysis in his essay “*King Lear, or Endgame*” weaves in and out of what Kott considers to be William Shakespeare’s most cruel play (SOC 346) and addresses the more cruel aspects of the plot. *King Lear* begins as the aging title King divides his kingdom between his three daughters, if they will compete to make grand proclamations of their love for him. Lear rewards his elder daughters, Goneril and Regan, who gladly exaggerate their love to receive larger shares of the kingdom. Lear hastily disinherits and banishes the young and earnest

Cordelia to France for speaking honestly, yet modestly, about her affection for her father.

Meanwhile, the Earl of Gloucester has welcomed his bastard son, Edmund, home from war.

Edmund secretly plots to gain his father's trust and convince Gloucester that the elder, loyal son, Edgar, intends to kill Gloucester.

The world of the play gradually disintegrates as Goneril and Regan claim Lear's power, disown their father, and cast him out. They take their rage out on Lear's supporters as well; most horrifically Gloucester, who is blinded and expelled by the Duke of Cornwall, Regan's husband. Gloucester is followed by Edgar disguised as the madman Poor Tom. While "Poor Tom" guides his father to commit a false suicide at the cliffs of Dover, King Lear, the Fool, and Lear's loyal friend Kent, disguised as a servant, are all outside during a terrifying storm. When Cordelia returns to fight for her father, she is captured and hanged in prison. Regan and Goneril have both had romantic affairs with Edmund, and out of jealousy Goneril poisons her sister. Edgar fatally wounds Edmund, and Goneril kills herself. Lear dies from a broken heart over Cordelia's dead body, and Kent dies shortly after. In the end of the play, only Edgar and Albany, Regan's husband, remain alive. Edgar declares with unfathomable sorrow:

EDGAR        The weight of this sad time we must obey,  
                   Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.  
                   The oldest hath borne most; we that are young  
                   Shall never see so much, nor live so long.  
                   (5.3.322-325)

Kott's imagining of the cruelty within *Lear* assisted in transforming the critical opinion of this play from confusion to how it is now regarded: as the pinnacle of Shakespeare's genius, accomplishment, and understanding of the human experience (Foakes 1). Before Brook's 1962

production, the play was regarded with confusion and disdain for the majority of its production history (Foakes 1; Ioppolo 1). Shakespeare wrote *King Lear* in 1606, about sixteen years into his career (Ioppolo 1), and thematically was moving away from the revenge play genre that provided clear resolution, as seen in *Titus Andronicus* (1594) and *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) (Ioppolo 1). Shakespeare's *King Lear* is an adaptation of *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*, a popular play in London around 1594 (Ogden 12-13). Shakespeare takes the plot of a King dividing his kingdom between his children, and dramatically alters what had been "a straightforward triumph over good and evil" (Ogden 13), whose tragic hero had been the righteous Cordelia. Instead, Shakespeare adds the subplot of Gloucester and his sons to draw out additional commentary on the complicated relationship between parents and children, and shifts the focus to Lear as the central figure. Shakespeare also underscores the distinctly pre-Christian era of *Lear*. Shakespeare scholar Joel Ogden contrasts the world of *Hamlet* with that of *Lear* noting "there is no Horatio to say 'flights of angels sing thee to thy rest,' and no Fortinbras to restore order to the Kingdom. At the end of *King Lear* the chief survivors – Albany, Kent, and Edgar – are almost as dumbfounded as the audience" (14). *King Lear* certainly represents a more complex narrative than his earlier plays (Ioppolo 3).

Initial responses to *Lear* may have been positive, but the desire for comedy after the Restoration in 1660 led to a radically altered *Lear* on the stage until the nineteenth century (Ioppolo 4). Although in the 1600s there was no official person to have reviewed *Lear*, there is evidence that the play was successful: it was chosen to be performed in front of King James I and published twice in quartos (Ioppolo 3; Ogden 14-15). When the English theaters re-opened after the Restoration, *Lear* was one of nine among Shakespeare's plays selected for revival (Ogden 15), but "All that Shakespeare may have been attempting to represent about the nature of civil

war, treason and family division in *King Lear* was too fresh and real for audiences” (Ioppolo 4). In 1681, Nahum Tate radically adapts *Lear* by erasing the Fool and Lear’s speech in the storm, he situates Edgar and Cordelia as lovers, and Lear and Cordelia do not die in the end of the play. The kingdom is ultimately restored to Lear (Ogden 15-16), and until the nineteenth century “Tate’s reworking with a happy ending formed the basis of all stage representations” (Foakes 1). In 1838, critics such as Dr. Samuel Johnson and Samuel Taylor Coleridge read the play and felt that it was a powerful tragedy, but as Shakespeare had written it with Gloucester’s blinding and Cordelia’s death, *Lear* was still considered “too horrid to be endured in dramattick exhibition” (Dr. Johnson qtd. in Ogden 16). In 1834, English actor William Macready returned Shakespeare’s *Lear* to the stage, yet critics still resisted embracing *Lear*. Although Lear was now performed as written by Shakespeare, the trend established by directors like Henry Irving and Harley Granville-Barker was “to stage the play in its traditional, historical setting while trying to shield their audiences from its disturbing emotional power” (Ioppolo 4). While the response to *Lear* over the past 400 years has been varied, there is no argument among scholars that Peter Brook’s production of *King Lear* in 1962 with the Royal Shakespeare Company is a critical turning point in which particularly horrifying aspects of the plot are accentuated, instead of hidden (Foakes 2; Ioppolo 1; Ogden 21).

#### Kott, “*King Lear, Or Endgame*,” And Playable Values

Peter Brook discovered how to stage some of the most cruel aspects of *Lear* by translating various playable values Kott presented in “*King Lear, or Endgame*,” one of several chapters in Kott’s definitive work, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. To reiterate, directors like Marowitz believe playable values are analysis that can translate to the staging of Shakespeare, as



opposed to a “scholarly insight [which] can make very good sense and be untranslatable in stage-terms” (Marowitz and Kott 20). Marowitz, who assistant directed Brook’s *Lear*, makes a general observation that “criticism is to come up with interesting ‘playable values’ rather than theoretical *apercus* which merely tickle the cerebral cortex and then get diluted in the bloodstream” for “A classic in production makes demands that are never called for in study (Marowitz and Kott xii, 20). Marowitz first utilizes the term “playable values” in 1991 with his chapter “Harlotry in Bardolatry,” and Marowitz brings up the term again in the Introduction to *Roar of the Canon* (2001). There Marowitz illuminates what is *not* a playable value: “literary perceptions which are dazzlingly original but cannot be translated into theatrical terms,” (Marowitz and Kott xii) suggesting that a “playable value” *is* an original literary perception which *may* be translated into theatrical terms. Before Marowitz, James Michael Thomas uses the term “playable values” three times in *Script Analysis for Actors, Directors, and Designers* (1991), explaining that his method of script analysis “attempted to discover the dramatic possibilities or playable values within each given circumstance” (54). Before either Marowitz or Thomas, the term “playable values” originated with Michael Mooney’s *Shakespeare’s Dramatic Transactions* (1990). Marowitz has developed what began as a small aside by Mooney to delimit literary values from playable ones (Mooney xiii). Ultimately Marowitz does acknowledge that many moments of inspiration for directors come from “a scholar’s dry-as-dust thesis” (Marowitz and Kott 20), but dramaturgy specifically takes research, an aspect of literary analysis as well, but provides “practical application” (Chemers 3) for that research. Practical application is another term for playable values, and both present dramaturgy as both “literary academia and practical theater” (Hartley 1). This thesis uses the term “playable values” to mean a literary perception in Kott’s writing that *can* be translated into concrete dramatic terms. The term “translate” suggests the place where

Brook's work as director and as artistic author (Marowitz and Kott 21) launches from Kott's work as dramaturg.

Kott built bridges from literary analysis to dramatic possibilities and suggests playable values beginning in the very titles of his analysis. Kott frames his analysis by comparing objects and phrases in terms of other things as a dramaturgical tool of "bridge building" (Giguere) in order to inform his reader why Shakespeare's plays were needed "NOW" (Hartley 17 ). Not only is the dramaturg considering "why this play now," but also as Dr. Amanda Giguere, Outreach Director for the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, proposes, "the dramaturg is the bridge-builder. We bridge the gap between scholarship and practice. We bridge the gap between actor and their understanding of the text. We bridge the gap between the play and the audience..." (Giguere). Kott utilizes "or" often in his titles to suggest playable values, for Kott is already incorporating dramatic possibilities for a director to translate into concrete terms. Leanore Lieblein, author of "Jan Kott, Peter Brook, and *King Lear*" (1987), criticizes Kott for this practice by suggesting that his bridge building is perhaps too limited. Lieblein finds that the bridges he builds set up a "private hermeneutics in which interpretation fulfills expectation" (42) and Kott is in the "habit of thought that sees one things in terms of another – whether an object or a phrase, and conflates contradictions" (42). However, analyzing Kott's writing as a pattern of dramaturgy reveals that his approach is precisely the work of a dramaturg.

Dramaturgs often are responsible for considering the events that are shaping the theatrical experience of the audience, and Kott begins that work even in the title of his analysis (Chemers 162). Kott's use of the word "or" appears several times in the titles of his essays:

"*Macbeth*, or Death-Infected"; "*King Lear*, or Endgame" ; "*Coriolanus*, or

Shakespearean Contradictions." The "or" implies not alternative options of interpretation

but alternative ways of expressing the same thing. It is the equivalent of ‘in other words,’ conjunctive rather than disjunctive. (Lieblein 42)

The perspective of a dramaturg is quite rightly “conjunctive,” “serving to unite” (*OED* “conjunctive”). The use of a play, followed by “or,” “--,” or “and”, as Kott often utilizes those conjunctions as well: “Titania and the Ass’s Head,” “*Troilus and Cressida*—Amazing and Modern,” “Shakespeare – Cruel and True” (Lieblein 42), demonstrate examples of playable values that a director will encounter at first glance. Kott’s *conjunctives-followed-by-adjectives* style implies an alternative way to quickly connect the reader’s mind with a dramatic possibility. Lieblein finds that this style of analysis is perhaps too limited and Kott excludes a broader perspective than his own experience. However, Kott believed that “What matters is that through Shakespeare’s text we ought to get at our modern experience, anxiety and sensibility” (Kott qtd. in Elsom 314). Kott’s playable values in the title help a reader almost instinctually relate Shakespeare to his or her modern “experience, anxiety, and sensibility,” and his claim is similar to Giguere’s proposition of dramaturg as bridge builder. Charles Marowitz remarks that Kott’s playable values in his analysis are significant: “Kott’s gift was always to penetrate the ‘apparent’ and discover the seedbed from which it grew – just as, in my opinion, he taught Peter Brook to look for and find the ‘secret play’ nestled at the heart of an overfamiliar work of Shakespeare” (“Twinkle” 310). Kott follows his essay titles with analysis of the plays, however the framing of analysis with these short bridges is where Kott begins presenting playable values to his reader.

Kott begins suggesting playable values in the writing of his essay “*King Lear*, or *Endgame*” by paralleling the established critical perspective of *Lear* with alternative concrete examples. Kott begins by explaining that given “the attitude of modern criticism to *King Lear* is ambiguous and somehow embarrassed” (127), one should connect this masterpiece with other

concrete examples that are tangible for the reader. Kott begins in the very preface of his essay with a line from *Lear*, followed immediately by a line from Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*:

LEAR Dost thou call me fool, boy?

FOOL All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

(*King Lear*, I, 4)

We are all born mad. Some remain so. (*Waiting for Godot*, II)

(*SOC* 127)

In Kott's essay on *The Tempest*, he utilizes a quote from Moby Dick in the Preface, yet for *Lear*, Kott draws a parallel not to a novel, but to a piece of dramatic literature that already exists in concrete dramatic terms on the stage. That dramatic literature, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, was first performed in 1953 and gained popularity in Europe (Merritt) by the time Kott wrote this essay in the late fifties. Kott quickly follows this preface by writing in his first paragraph "*King Lear* is compared to Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, to Beethoven's *Fifth* and *Ninth* Symphonies, to Wagner's *Parsifal*, Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, or Dante's *Purgatory* and *Inferno*" (127). Kott is framing *Lear* in the style of comparison; Kott sets *Lear* next to *Godot*, and Kott brings *Lear* next to other artists and their masterpieces in music, visual art, and literature. If *Lear* was considered a play that had "lost its power to excite" (Kott, *SOC* 127), then Kott is generating excitement by comparing *Lear* with a piece of popular modern drama, and other concrete masterpieces like Bach, Beethoven, so that a reader might connect with the impact of those works.

Kott's chief comparison is between *Lear* and Theatre of the Absurd drama, which helps him create playable values within dramatic literature characterized by cruelty and absurdism on stage. Kott explains the difference he finds between ancient tragedy, such as *Antigone* and

*Oedipus*, in comparison with the modern “grotesque” theater (SOC 134) of Ionesco, Sartre, and Beckett’s *Endgame*. Kott writes that: “The tragic situation becomes grotesque when both alternatives of the choice imposed are absurd, irrelevant or compromising. The hero has to play, but there is no game. Every move is bad, but he cannot throw down his cards” (SOC 135).

Kott is making the comparison between *King Lear* and Theater of the Absurd; a term captured by Martin Esslin and his text *Absurd Drama* (1965), which explores a collection of plays and playwrights with specific similarities in post-WWII Europe. Esslin describes the concerns of Theatre of the Absurd plays as “expressing a sense of wonder, of incomprehension, and at times of despair, at the lack of cohesion and meaning that they find in the world” (*Absurd Drama* Introduction 1). Esslin confirms that within these plays, such as Beckett’s *Endgame* and *Waiting for Godot* (plays that Kott discusses in his essay), there is “no faith in the existence of so rational and well ordered a universe” (*Absurd Drama* Introduction 1). Kott makes a very similar observation that *Lear* might exist in a world where “if the gods, and their moral order in the world, do not exist, Gloucester’s suicide does not solve or alter anything (Kott, SOC 149). Kott is speaking against the tradition of meaning making that is associated with theatre before WWII. Classic tragedy contains a great hero who falls from a very high position, and this great fall restores order in the world of the play, yet this tradition is obliterated in Theatre of the Absurd.

Kott has a plethora of playable values in his analysis of the first several controversial scenes in *King Lear*; most clearly with Gloucester’s attempted suicide. Kott begins this section by saying both Edgar and Gloucester have “reached the depths of human suffering...But on the stage there are just two actors, one playing a blind man, the other playing a man who plays a madman. They walk together” (SOC 142). Kott is explaining this scene not in character analysis of Gloucester and Edgar, but seeing actors on stage playing these roles. Kott also describes this

scene as an example of the absurd, where gods do not look on and find Gloucester redeemed from his foolish trust in his disloyal son Edmund, rather, the gods do not look on at all. Traditionally, this moment in the play brings redemption for Gloucester when Edgar explains that his survival is “miraculous” (Ioppolo 160, 162-3). However, in Kott’s eyes, Gloucester’s suicide attempt is a picture of the larger absurdity in the world of the play. Kott finds Lear existing in a world without gods that preside over rational moral order, and so moments such as Gloucester’s suicide are not dramatic moments of catharsis, but the journey of aging and disintegrating in a world without moral order. Kott vividly describes this scene in stage terms, as much as character analysis: “It is easy to imagine this scene. The text itself provides stage directions. Edgar is supporting Gloucester; he lifts his feet high pretending to walk uphill. Gloucester, too, lifts his feet, as if expecting the ground to rise” (*SOC* 142). As Kott unpacks this scene, it is all from the perspective of seeing it on stage.

When Kott continues his discussion of Act 4, Scene 6, he is especially enamored with the presence of an empty stage. This is a playable value because it is analysis that can be translated to the stage; in fact, it is direct commentary linking the meaning of the play with concrete dramatic terms. Kott firmly believed that Shakespeare often utilized an empty stage too: “Shakespeare often creates a landscape on an empty stage. A few words, and the diffused, soft afternoon light at the Globe changes into night, evening, or morning” (*SOC* 143). Kott draws a comparison between this scene and a painting, comparing the scene with alternative concrete examples, “But no other Shakespearean landscape is so exact, precise and clear as this one. It is like a Breughel painting” (*SOC* 143), before his ultimate claim about Act 4 Scene 6 and an empty stage. “The stage must be empty. On it a suicide, or rather its symbol, has been

performed” (SOC 145). Kott links the function of the empty stage with Shakespeare and Berenger from Ionesco’s *Le Tueur sans Gages*, in English, *The Killer Without Reason* (1958):

On an empty stage Berenger sniffs at non-existent flowers and taps non-existent walls. The Radiant City exists and does not exist, or rather it has existed always and everywhere. And that is why it is so terrifying. Similarly, the Shakespearean precipice at Dover exists and does not exist. It is the abyss waiting all the time. The abyss, into which one can jump, is everywhere. (SOC 145-6)

The playable values in this analysis are present in two ways; first, Kott analyzes this scene with stage terms and images, the bare stage; secondly, Kott draws a comparison with another concrete image, that of Berenger smelling non-existent flowers on an empty stage. Kott comes back to the empty stage several times in his analysis; “The blind Gloucester falls over on the empty stage” (SOC 147), “The blind Gloucester who has climbed a non-existent height and fallen over on flat boards” (SOC 147), and “Gloucester’s suicide does not solve or alter anything. It is only a somersault on an empty stage” (SOC 149). Kott discovers the meaning of this scene in theatrical terms, all in relation to a type of set design.

#### Kott In Brook’s *Lear*

There are several examples where Kott’s playable values had a visible impact on Brook’s stage design, which demonstrates Kott’s analysis of Shakespeare bridged “literary academia and practical theater” (Hartley 1). Charles Marowitz, who assistant directed Brook’s *Lear*, also published a journal of the rehearsal process in 1963 entitled “Lear Log,” which speaks early on to Kott’s impact by recognizing that “the world of *Lear*” is “like Beckett’s world” (104). While Kott is literally never mentioned in the rehearsal journal, the idea of *Lear* in a Beckettian world

is a connection clearly originating with Kott (*SOC* 127). The connection Marowitz highlights between *Lear* and Beckett's world is that "The world of *Lear*, like Beckett's world, is in a constant state of decomposition" ("Lear Log" 104), which was evident in the metal, rust, and corrosion of set and costumes pieces. Marowitz describes the aesthetic of costume and prop design as "dominantly leather, [which has] been textured to suggest long and hard wear. The knight's tabards are peeling with long use; Lear's cape and coat are creased and blackened with time and weather" (104). The characters in *Lear* are dressed a style similar to the tramps in *Waiting for Godot* rather than royalty, which is one element that perhaps made it easier for audiences and reviewers to see a connection between *Lear* and Beckett. Kenneth Tynan's review in the *Observer* states "*Lear* [...] is a rustic vagabond, of the classless derelicts of Samuel Beckett, and especially the crippled hero of *Endgame*" ("Kenneth Tynan at the Observer"). Here Tynan is an audience member who has seen the playable values Kott provided in the title of his essay, which Brook activated through the costumes choices for the characters in this world.

For Brook to translate the disintegrated values Kott suggests in concrete dramatic terms means having theatrical moments without catharsis. Kott initially provided this playable value in "*King Lear, or Endgame*": "In *King Lear* both the medieval and the Renaissance orders of established values disintegrate. All that remains at the end of this gigantic pantomime is the earth- empty and bleeding" (147). In Western theatrical tradition, especially regarding tragedy, catharsis is the epitome of established theatrical values. Catharsis is an idea presented by Aristotle in the *Poetics* (335 B.C.E.), which discusses the emotion in theater as pity and fear released by purgation (Gerould 49). *King Lear* is a part of the theatrical tradition of tragedy, which has been defined for centuries by Aristotle as "incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions" (Gerould 49). Esslin observes that: "Theater of the



Absurd, as I see it, marks the emergence in contemporary art of a position beyond absolutes, beyond even the possibility of closed philosophical systems” (Introduction *SOC* xx), and for the Western theater tradition of tragedy, the epitome of “closed system” is catharsis. Again, Aristotle originally established catharsis as an essential marker of tragedy and that this fear and pity takes place after the fall of our tragic hero. However, Esslin credits Kott for allowing “Hamlet and Lear,” examples of classic tragic heroes, “[to] shed their cliché existence as romantic heroes and bec[o]me members of the family of Vladimir, Estragon,” these characters of the absurd world where there is no meaning, Godot does not come (Introduction *SOC* xx). When Kott de-romanticized the heroic characters with playable values in his essay, Brook translates this possibility with concrete action on stage. Marowitz addresses catharsis in the performance of *Lear*: “One of the problems with *Lear* is that like all great tragedies, it produces catharsis. The audience leaves the play shaken but reassured” (“*Lear* Log” 113). In an absurd world of the stage, the audience is not “reassured,” but left without the restoration of meaning and moral order. Brook is illuminating the world of *Lear* as one decomposing from the previous moral order of theatrical tradition, which includes the audience experiencing catharsis.

Above all, Kott desired cruelty with Shakespeare on stage, and Brook was able to translate that desire in Act 3, Scene 7 in a way that no other production in history had. In this scene, Regan, and her husband, the Duke of Cornwall, ask the Earl of Gloucester where he has sent Lear. Lear has left Regan’s household when Gloucester informed him of his daughter’s plot to kill him. As Gloucester explains why he has sent away Lear— “Because I would not see thy cruel nails/ Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister/ In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs” (3.7.55-58), Cornwall responds in a rage: “Fellows, hold the chair;/Upon these eyes of

thine I'll set my foot" (3.7.67). In the *Arden Shakespeare* edition of *King Lear*, R.A. Foakes provides some commentary on the traditional staging of this moment:

The text suggests that Cornwall puts out one of Gloucester's eyes, throws it down and squashes it underfoot. In the nineteenth century the blinding was done offstage or was concealed from its audience, with Gloucester seated and facing upstage so that his eyes were not visible. This has remained a common way of staging a deed so violent as to seem for generations of critics and actors too appalling to enact in view of the audience. Only since Peter Brook's production in 1962, in which Cornwall gouged out an eye with one of his spurs, have some producers attempted to register to horror of the deed in full view of the audience. (302)

Foakes gives us a depiction of this moment on stage, which from the earliest production history had been considered a scene so horrifying that even occurring offstage, it shocked audiences. The horror of this violent act, unprecedented in its staging, coincides with the choice of turning up the house lights in order to remove catharsis. Marowitz recognizes the construction of the moment by reflecting that in order

To remove the tint of sympathy usually found at the end of the blinding scene, Brook cut out Cornwall's servants and their commiseration of Gloucester's fate. Once the second 'vile jelly' has been thumbed out of his head, Gloucester is covered with a tattered rag and shoved off in the direction of Dover. ("*Lear Log*" 114)

Brook aims to remove catharsis by flooding the scene with light, and he creates a distinctly absurd world by taking away catharsis after these characters experience situations arousing pity and fear in the audience. Brook allows the audience to see the actions of the characters in full

light, without a distance that allows for the release of the emotional buildup. Also, Brook alters the text where there are originally three servants who speak about what they have just witnessed:

2 SERVANT Let's follow the old Earl and get the bedlam

To lead him where he would. His roguish madness

Allows itself to anything.

3 SERVANT Go thou: I'll fetch some flax and whites of eggs

To apply to his bleeding face. Now heaven help him!

(3.7.101-106)

In Brook's production, these lines are cut and the servants clear the stage as the recently blinded man crawls around under their feet. As opposed to comforting Gloucester, they "rudely shove him aside" (Marowitz, "Lear Log" 114). Marowitz also comments that "As Gloucester is groping about pathetically, the house lights come up, and the action continues in full light for several seconds afterwards" ("Lear Log" 114). Marowitz speaks to Brook's desire for the audience:

If [this decision] works, it should jar the audience into a new kind of adjustment to Gloucester and his tragedy. The house lights remove all possibility of aesthetic shelter, and the act of blinding is seen in a colder light than would be possible otherwise. ("Lear Log" 114)

This horrifying act, previously not even embodied on stage for its brutality, is now seen in full light. Also, the house lights create a sense of complicity between the audience and the actions, as light design frames the story and often distances the audiences from the action on stage. When the lights go down, an audience is passively entertained, yet with house lights up, an audience must see the blinded Gloucester crawl around while they sit in a lit house. Thus, the release of

pity and fear built by Gloucester's blinding is decimated, and the audience is not given the restoration of moral order and sympathy that the servants and dark house have presented in previous productions. Brook's choices continue to translate the concept of a Beckettian world that Kott provided as a playable value. Kott's suggestion that Lear inhabits a world of meaninglessness and absurdity pervades this production.

### Summary

The second element in Kott's pattern of dramaturgy was to provide playable values in his dramatic analysis. Kott imagined dramatic possibilities for the play to be seen in a cruel, absurd light; and Brook decided to make concrete dramatic choices to create this world on the stage. Kott's playable values in his analysis brought together Shakespeare's text and Theatre of the Absurd by always discussing them in terms of their common denominator, the stage.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROACTIVE DRAMATURG

This chapter will examine the third element of Kott's pattern of dramaturgy, which was Kott's proactive pursuit of Peter Brook after the profound realization that Brook shared his views on staging Shakespeare. The first section of this chapter will compare Brook's version of their first meeting to Kott's in order to draw out the subtle differences between their stories. The differences in their recollection of their first meeting arises in Brook's version when he presents their meeting as surprising or accidental, compared with Kott's version when he suggests that he had intentionally pursued Brook with anticipation of their kindred philosophies of staging Shakespeare. The second section of this chapter will explore the significance of Kott's proactive approach, which demonstrates that there are alternative strategies for contemporary dramaturgs to address the negative habits and implications of passive dramaturgy that hinders dramaturgs from being fully utilized in the theatre.

#### First Encounter, Two Stories

Brook and Kott have separate recollections of their first meeting, with subtle, yet important differences. When *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* was published in 1964, it contained a Preface from Brook that began with a dramatic recollection of their first encounter. Brook tells the story of their first meeting in this way:

I first met Jan Kott in a night club in Warsaw: it was midnight: he was squashed between a wildly excited group of students: we became friends at once: a beautiful girl was

arrested by mistake under our eyes: Jan Kott leaped to her defence and an evening of high adventure followed which ended at about four o' clock in the morning with Kott and myself in the supreme headquarters of the Polish police trying to secure her release. It was only at this point when the tempo of events was slowing down that I suddenly noticed that the police were calling my new friend 'Professor'. I had guessed that this quick-witted and combative man was an intellectual, a writer, a journalist, perhaps a Party member. The title 'Professor' sat ill on him. 'Professor of what?' I asked as we walked home through the silent town. 'Of drama,' he replied. (Brook, Preface)

Brook's description of his first encounter with Jan Kott is certainly exciting, yet Brook builds the story as if he has no idea what Kott and himself might have in common; "I had guessed that this quick-witted and combative man was an intellectual, a writer, a journalist, perhaps a Party member." As Brook suggests a variety of titles for Kott, he seems totally unaware that both he and Kott are involved in the theater. Kott seems to surprise Brook when he answers that he is a professor of drama. This story as told from Brook's perspective presents an encounter that seems accidental, as if their work together began by chance in a nightclub in Warsaw.

Kott's description of their first encounter presents a subtle difference because Kott absolutely knew who Brook was before their meeting. Kott felt before having met Brook that there was a deep connection over shared perspectives of staging Shakespeare. Kott responds in a 1983 interview to the question "When did you first begin to talk with Peter Brook about *King Lear*?" by answering that:

Peter Brook came to Warsaw in 1957 with his production of *Titus Andronicus*. I was impressed by the production; it confirmed my thoughts that the cruel, Renaissance Shakespeare was our contemporary. After seeing his production I took Brook to the old

town section of Warsaw... We had a quiet conversation for three or four hours – it was our first and only meeting not interrupted by telephone calls. It was the beginning of our conversations about *King Lear*. After that Peter invited me to his London flat, where I stayed as a guest for two weeks. He read the French version of my essay on *Lear* before his production of the play. I remember that when we discussed the play he was always working with his hands on a design on the set. For Peter the production was first of all to be planned in the set. (Bharucha, Paran, and Shyer 223)

This interview is striking for a multitude of reasons. First, there is the disparity in Brook and Kott's description of the meeting. While they both acknowledge an encounter in Warsaw, Brook's account makes it sound like an incredible chance that in a nightclub after midnight and an eve of "high adventure," he should meet a professor of drama. When Kott describes his first meeting with Brook, he describes a meeting in Warsaw followed by a few hours of quiet conversation. The difference in their accounts is compelling as it raises the question of how directors and dramaturgs should meet to work together in the first place. Should a dramaturg of Shakespeare seek out a director who has a similar belief about staging Shakespeare? This proactive approach might be difficult to enact in practice, but the profound connection between Brook and Kott converging on their convictions about Shakespeare on stage is the setting for what would become the sensational production of *Lear*. Lenora Inez Brown, author of *The Active Art of Dramaturgy* remarks that "The greatest mistakes that dramaturgs and those who work with dramaturgs make is expecting the director to take full responsibility in determining the dramaturg's role" (56). Kott's style of a proactive approach to his director alongside the essay he provided to frame their discussion of *Lear* exemplifies a dramaturg who isn't passively expecting the director to "take full responsibility" (Brown 56). Brown also suggests that an active

dramaturg will come to the first meeting with a director with 80% of the work done (59). This amount of work done before even meeting the director may sound strange, but for Brown “identifying and pondering these fixed elements of the play can and should be done well before the first meeting” (59). Again, Kott provides an exemplary model of a dramaturg who, at the time he approached Brook, had significant analysis of *Lear* on the page, so that in their initial meetings Kott was able to offer his essay with playable values (Bharucha, Paran, and Shyer 223).

Kott’s active dramaturgical approach led to a very positive, productive relationship with his director, a crucial relationship for the dramaturg (Chemers 151), and one that is often difficult to navigate. As Brown previously observed, a dramaturg should not let all of the responsibility of the relationship fall to the director. Kott’s proactive pursuit of Brook led to an invitation to Brook’s London flat where an important portion of the story of their work together on this production comes to light: They spent two weeks building their relationship and discussing the play.<sup>5</sup> This lengthy amount of time together suggests that directors and dramaturgs would benefit from giving more time to fuller conversations together before rehearsals begin. Although the exact details of this time spent together is lost to the historical record, Kott tells us that in his conversations with Brook, Kott was able to present oral playable values; ones which Brook immediately could test out. Kott explains that during the time they spent discussing the play, “[Brook] was always working with his hands on a design on the set.” Kott suggested a set design that depicts a world disintegrating. He chronicles:

In my conversations with Peter Brook I once tried to persuade him to show how all characters of this drama descend lower and lower. I wanted the early acts to be performed on a large plate placed high up on the stage and to demonstrate physically, materially,

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<sup>5</sup> For the following analysis of oral playable values, I am indebted to conversations with Amma Y. Gharthey-Tagoe Kootin.



visibly as it were, the disintegration and descent. Brook did not need any of these naïve metaphors. The disintegrated world does not grow together in this production, just as it does not grow together in Shakespeare's play... A brother throws over his shoulder the body of brother he has killed. This is all there is. There will not be another king. The stage remains empty. Like the world. (Kott, *SOC* 365)

Kott generated playable values, the second aspect of his pattern of dramaturgy, but in oral form to Brook. Here Kott provides two playable values; one of the stage as “disintegrating,” and the other is the set, like the world, as empty. Irving Wardle captures the sense of “empty” as he describes the set in his review of the production; “a pair of enormous white flats and a prevalence of rusty metal props. Some of these are representational such as a chair that settles into the stage like an iron tooth; but they are mostly abstract shapes” (qtd. in “Peter Brook Production 1962”). Here Wardle's impressions of the set reflect Kott's notion that the stage, like the world, evokes a sense of emptiness that Brook gives the audience with “enormous white flats.” The description of a chair as “an iron tooth” is eerily suggestive of *Endgame* specifically, where Beckett's set design is meant to evoke the tableaux of a skull. Within this anecdote, Kott tells us of his analysis, that Lear's world descends lower and lower and also “empty,” yet Brook actually decides to enact this concept in a different way than Kott initially suggested. Their time working together digesting Kott's “oral” playable values and Brook's subsequent design ideas demonstrate how vital Kott's playable values were from both his essay and the oral playable values a dramaturg can present in conversation with their director.

Kott's proactive approach to connect with Brook is rooted in Kott's sense that Brook agreed with Kott's personal and scholarly perspective of Shakespeare on stage, which was the first element in Kott's pattern of dramaturgy. Brook's production alerted Kott to the possibility

that Brook agreed with Kott's convictions that a Renaissance, cruel Shakespeare would be the new Shakespeare (Kott, *SOC* 353, Sawicka). Kott acknowledges that Brook's "*Titus Andronicus* has revealed to me a Shakespeare I dreamed of but have never before seen on stage. I count this performance among five greatest theatrical experiences of my life" (Kott, *SOC* 353). Brook's *Titus* had such a massive impact on Kott because "it confirmed [Kott's] thoughts that the cruel, Renaissance Shakespeare was our contemporary" (Bharucha, Paran, and Shyer 223). Lieblein echoes a similar perspective that aligns with Kott's narrative that he intentionally pursued working with Brook, and they had great creative success as a result of similar philosophy: "Brook and Kott in fact shared a number of views on the relationship of a dramatic text to its performance. Both agreed that a play's meaning is a product of its historical circumstance and that it must be realized on the stage" (40). Kott's portrayal of their first encounter alongside Lieblein's comment suggests that Kott's proactive approach is a contributing factor to the fruitfulness of his collaboration with Brook. Strangely, for the impact this connection had on Kott, his relationship with Brook is not mentioned in his autobiography *Still Alive*. In Brook's biography, written by Michael Kustow, there is one mention of Kott: "The Polish critic Jan Kott, who saw the production [of *Titus*] in Warsaw on its Eastern European tour, regarded this as Brook's initiation in Shakespearean tragedy, even if *Titus* is an apprentice play" (84). This lack of mentioning of Kott in Brook's biography is especially strange because there is a chapter that describes the time when Brook was preparing for *Lear* rehearsals and contemplating the connection between Shakespeare and Beckett. Yet, Kott is not mentioned at all. Nor is Brook in Kott's autobiography, while other sources capture these men speaking to the significance of each other on the others life and work in the theatre.

In addition to Kott's strong connection with Brook's *Titus* in 1957, there were other examples of Brook's work with set design and the text that deeply resonated with Kott. Brook showed Kott that he agreed with Kott's perspective of a "realistic" Shakespeare often in set design. Kott reflects that "[Brook] employs the fundamental structure of the theater as the theatrical environment. The stage works as a metaphor for the actions, perhaps as it did in ancient Greek theater and at the Globe, where elements of the stage changed into a palace or forest" and Kott claims that "this style began in *King Lear*, where the stage plateau was rendered 'naked' (Bharucha, Paran, and Shyer 225). Secondly, when asked what Kott "admires most about Brook" (Bharucha, Paran, and Shyer 225), Kott responds that "[Brook] is working with the text [...] He is fighting the text, but also fighting for the text" (Bharucha, Paran, and Shyer 225). This idea of love and hate with the text is an idea that Kott felt he established in a similar way on another occasion as a dramaturg in Vienna (Bharucha, Paran, and Shyer 225). Ultimately, the deep resonance Kott felt with Brook's work established their shared fundamental beliefs on staging Shakespeare, which aided the rich nature of their relationship that most visibly resulted in *King Lear*.

### The Benefits To A Proactive Dramaturgical Approach

Kott's third element of his pattern of dramaturgy was a proactive pursuit of a director, which serves as a varied approach for contemporary dramaturgs plagued with the problem of passivity in their work. Lenora Inez Brown calls out this problem even from the title of her book with the word "active" in *The Art of Active Dramaturgy*, as if there were an inactive dramaturgy that is being avoided. Brown defines "active" dramaturgy with the following description:

Whenever an artist poses a critical question while alone or in a room with others, a sort of dramaturgy occurs. Active dramaturgy, however, goes beyond the basic critical questions to include analysis designed to facilitate immediate or eventual artistic/creative application. An active dramaturg seeks ways to articulate heady ideas into active language – that is, language that a performer can easily use to shape an acting choice or a designer, a design choice. (xii)

Brown suggests that one aspect of an active dramaturg is what this thesis has recognized as playable values, but there are several reasons as to why passive dramaturgy develops. One reason appears in Geoff Proehl's diagnoses of dramaturgs becoming passive when assumptions and insecurity lead a dramaturgy to give away their own work:

Perhaps, ironically, dramaturgs do not want to lay too much claim to dramaturgy, assuming an expertise that is certainly not theirs alone to possess. The designer can explore the dramaturgy of image patterns; the actor can look for the dramaturgy of beats; the director can track the dramaturgy of the story. Dramaturgs, tending to observe that everyone does dramaturgy, may actually cede dramaturgy to others. (87)

Proehl captures the tendency of passive dramaturgs to give away their work, assuming that an actor or designer may be doing their own dramaturgy. With the advances in technology that continually put more and more information instantly in the hands of actors and designers, a dramaturg must be active in their approach to their work, because it is inevitable that an actor or designer has looked up some information on the Internet. The dramaturg can't merely function as a gofer for additional research. Active dramaturgs can serve a production more intimately without the anxiety that the combination of passive behavior and other's dramaturgy will eventually eliminate them from a production. Dramaturgs can also become passive if they are too

busy and overrun with work in other areas of their lives. For example, Hartley discusses that when he was writing in 2005, the “Royal Shakespeare Company has a Dramaturgy Department, but has, apparently, found the difficulties of being in rehearsal while simultaneously fulfilling more managerial responsibilities too taxing for their current staff structure” (12). This story demonstrates that perhaps doing dramaturgy as needed while also being expected to perform in another high demand department develops passive dramaturgs: doing research and analysis as needed, as opposed to offering active, fresh analysis and perspective on texts. Hartley mentions that the RSC is moving towards a Literary Department model while hiring dramaturgs freelance for specific productions (12).

Kott’s active dramaturgy also contradicts the contemporary misconception of theater companies that “don’t use dramaturgs where the issue is not obviously one of budget [but] suggests their decision is often driven by a faith in the transparency of the text and its playability” (Hartley 13). Hartley suggests that those who operate in this misconception tend towards either “museum Shakespeare,” hoping to enact a historically accurate approach, or “concept Shakespeare,” ignoring history altogether and hope to merely illuminate the timeless themes (13). This exact trend is evident in the production history of *Lear*; without a dramaturg, a type of “concept” *Lear* emerged when Tate drastically altered the plot to appeal to audiences in the late 1600’s, and later director Harley Granville-Barker attempted to access *Lear* through a “traditional, historical setting” (Ioppolo 4). Kott’s active dramaturgy provided Brook with the active analysis needed to bring *Lear* out of these two realms.

## Summary

There are two important insights from studying Kott and Brook's initial meeting and the subsequent social conversations as the third aspect of Kott's pattern of dramaturgy. The first insight is to note that Kott took an active role in his pattern of dramaturgy and pursued the director he believed shared his ideas that Shakespeare should be cruel and realistic on stage (Lieblein 40). Secondly, Kott's proactive approach to dramaturgy is an interesting alternative to those in the field of dramaturgy that see passivity as a considerable problem for dramaturgs.

## CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSION

“She’s been sitting there in the historical record for a thousand years and was quite celebrated back in the fourteenth century for a while, but lately she was ignored because she didn’t fit into the “correct” idea of the evolution of drama in the Dark Ages. To old-school historians, she was an aberration. To a dramaturg, discovering Hrosvitha is like finding a twenty-four-carat diamond in a sewer”  
 -Michael Mark Chemers

The work of situating Kott in the field of dramaturgy is similar to the experience of discovering Hrosvitha as Chemers describes it.<sup>6</sup> Kott is a scholar whose “popularity [was]...nothing short of phenomenal” (Lieblein 39). His criticism *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* has “gone through two editions and numerous reprintings, has been translated into a number of languages, and has precipitated considerable comment from other critics” (Lieblein 39). However, to a contemporary readership of the UK newspaper *The Guardian*, Kott is described as the “largely forgotten Polish scholar,” and author Michael Billington asks, “Does anyone still read Jan Kott?” Kott has been recognized as the inspiration for Brook’s *King Lear* (1962), but without the firm connection of being hired in the role of dramaturg, it has been all too easy for Kott to be forgotten. To discover Kott and his pattern of dramaturgy in the historical record, who so profoundly altered the way Shakespeare is conceived of today, is similar to discovering buried treasure (Chemers 13). This thesis has aimed to situate Kott in the field of dramaturgy so that contemporary dramaturgs of Shakespeare are more likely to come across a

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<sup>6</sup> Hrosvitha is a 10<sup>th</sup> century German nun, poet, and playwright.

profound example of dramaturgy that had massive impact upon a production and the critical reception of *King Lear*.

This thesis contends that a fresh understanding of Kott's pattern of dramaturgy is discovering a dramaturgical "diamond in the sewer" (Chemers 13). Consider this statement from *A Routledge Literary Sourcebook on William Shakespeare's King Lear* (2003):

Since its composition in 1606, Shakespeare's *King Lear* has 'distressed', 'shocked' and horrified' its theatrical and literary audiences. Termed 'unbearable' in the eighteenth century, 'unactable' in the nineteenth century, and 'dangerous', 'misogynistic' and 'unstable' in the twentieth century...It was not until Peter Brook's revolutionary production of the play in 1962 in Stratford-Upon-Avon, Shakespeare's Birthplace, that these seemingly irreconcilable views of *King Lear* as both horrible and brilliant were portrayed as intrinsically compatible and absolutely necessary. Ever since 1962, the play has taken its rightful place as the finest of Shakespeare's plays and the most representative of his genius. (Ioppolo 1)

This picture of *Lear* boldly states how confusing *Lear* was before Brook, and how it has come to represent Shakespeare's genius after Brook's production, however, Kott is never mentioned in this telling of the story. The editor of this text, Grace Ioppolo, does credit Kott eventually, albeit five pages later (5). The above depiction of scholarly and theatrical regard of *Lear* represents a definitive shift after the 1962 production, so much so that Ioppolo claims views of *Lear* have never been the same since this production. Although Ioppolo does not include Kott in this version of the arch, can one possibly imagine what this story might look like without Kott's dramaturgical influence? With a fresh understanding of Kott's three-part pattern of dramaturgy, scholars can now solidly justify considering Kott's contributions to Brook's production not



merely as vague inspiration or accidental influence, but what Kott has done for *King Lear* can be recognized as a pattern of dramaturgy. This thesis aims to firmly establish Kott as a recognized figure in the field of dramaturgy, and perhaps offer his pattern of dramaturgy to Shakespearean dramaturgs today who are in search for alternative ways of developing their scholarly and personal perspectives of Shakespeare, the way in which they contribute playable values in relation to Shakespeare's text, and potentially proactively approaching a director they believe might share the way they imagine Shakespeare should be done on stage.

### Suggestions For Contemporary Dramaturgs

This thesis begins the work of accounting for Kott's pattern of dramaturgy with greater precision, yet acknowledges the highly specific and variable nature of Kott's upbringing, wartime experiences, and chemistry with Peter Brook. While the question of repeatability regarding Kott's pattern of dramaturgy is left to the investigation of future scholars, this thesis does suggest practices based on Kott's pattern of dramaturgy that might benefit a contemporary dramaturg. First, Kott was able to integrate a deeply personal and yet scholarly perspective of Shakespeare, and from this, contemporary dramaturgs might also be encouraged to question and integrate their experiences of life with their work in the theatre. Marowitz recounts the depth to which Kott mingled his life with his reading of plays all the way to Kott's "eroticism":

Jan's eroticism is not a personal trait divorceable from his professional attributes: it is part and parcel of those attributes. It is Jan's understanding of love, sex, passion, vulnerability, and promiscuity which informs his understanding of Isabella's secret motives to Angelo, Desdemona's flirtatiousness with Cassio, and Cressida's duplicity with Troilus. ("Twinkle" 312)

In this instance, Marowitz is commenting that even the most personal aspects of Kott's life led him to greater understanding of the characters of Shakespeare's plays. From Kott's early development as a student, he considered himself a poet (*Still Alive* 16). Brook writes that poets in the theatre, speaking specifically about Elizabethans and Kott, combine the spirit and the flesh, that "the poet has a foot in the mud, an eye on the stars, and a dagger in his hand" (Preface). This thesis suggests that based on the first element of Kott's pattern, contemporary dramaturgs might also live in such a way; with one foot in the realities of daily life and contemporary anxieties, eyes on the constellations of plays and dramatic possibilities, but also with the dagger of their scholarship in their hand and at the ready.

Secondly, this thesis recommends that contemporary dramaturgs should analyze plays with the intention of providing playable values, both written and oral, for their directors. Kott has been labeled in so many different ways, ranging from critic to scholar to professor to dramaturg, and at various times, he has performed these individual roles. However, to consider Kott's work with *Lear* as a pattern of dramaturgy, as opposed to a mere incidental extension of these roles, is based largely on the presence of these playable values that distinctly situates his analysis in the world of dramaturgy. Like Kott, contemporary dramaturgs often arrive at their profession from a wide variety of training and backgrounds (Chemers 6; Hartley 1). Thus, the initial impulse of dramaturgs toward their work might be influenced by their earlier training as English academics, directors, or actors. However, the anchor that establishes the work of contemporary dramaturgs is the consistent impulse to blend the intellectual and the practical (Hartley 6). Playable values mark the presence of such praxis. Playable values are the nuggets that dramaturgs offer in their written analysis or dialogue with directors that aim again and again to combine the scholarly analysis and research with the material decisions that a director and actors create on stage. As

Kott analyzed Shakespeare's plays, he consistently dialogued with his reader or director about what was happening on stage as a result of the action of the play. Contemporary dramaturgs must aspire, as Kott achieved, to continually blend the scholarly and the practical. Playable values are the tangible product of the liminal practice of dramaturgy.

Lastly, this thesis suggests that by examining the third aspect of Kott's pattern of dramaturgy, contemporary dramaturgs might consider both active and proactive approaches to their work. The nature of "active" is "characterized by outward action rather than inward contemplation or speculation" ("active"), and an active approach to dramaturgy is one characterized by outwardly engaging the director and readily offering all that is asked. Kott did this as he presented ideas about the staging of *Lear* to Brook, such as the actors descending lower and lower on the stage (Kott, *SOC* 365). Even though Brook took this suggestion and translated it in a different way, Kott was outwardly—that is, actively—expressing playable values to Brook as they discussed the play. A common danger and concern for dramaturgs is that they are misperceived as "luxuries" (Chemers 8) or unnecessary, and a passive rather than active approach supports that concern. However, an active approach such as the one exhibited by Kott demonstrates how dramaturgs can be essential and on the forefront of the collaborative process.

In addition to the active nature of Kott's pattern of dramaturg, Kott's work presents a more specifically *proactive* approach to dramaturgy. Proactive, as opposed to merely active, indicates that one is "creating or controlling a situation by taking the initiative and anticipating events or problems, rather than just reacting to them after they have occurred" ("proactive"). Kott pursued Brook before he was needed or appointed as a dramaturg by seeking the director out after the profound connection Kott had with Brook's *Titus*. While Brook and Kott were able to have an adventurous meeting in a bar in Warsaw, contemporary dramaturgs have even more

opportunities than Kott could have dreamed of as a result of the Digital Revolution and Information Age. Dramaturgs no longer need track down directors in bars after their shows, but with platforms such as e-mail, Facebook, or LinkedIn profiles, a dramaturg can professionally approach a director and begin a discussion. While it may be difficult to track down the direct e-mail or Facebook information for a director like Mark Rylance, former artistic director of the Globe Theatre in London,<sup>7</sup> the proactive approach often yields surprising results in modern attempts to connect aspiring artists to more accomplished ones.<sup>8</sup>

## Summary

Jan Kott is an exemplary case of a dramaturg's potential to make great, essential contributions to a production of Shakespeare. Hartley explains that there are very specific reasons why a dramaturg of Shakespeare is necessary, and what he or she must do: "the *Shakespearean* dramaturg [is] unique and invaluable... when staging Shakespeare, then, the dramaturg has to work to find what makes the play immediate and pressing" (17). Hartley specifically emphasizes the need for the Shakespearean dramaturg's ultimate focus to be connecting the play with the "now of the theatrical moment" (17). Kott exemplifies one of the most powerful examples of a Shakespearean dramaturg who found what made *King Lear* "immediate and pressing," when it had been a play so mired in disdain (Hay 17; Ioppolo 1; Foakes 1; Kott, *SOC* 127). While he employed an alternative, and perhaps more daunting,

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<sup>7</sup> While the author of the thesis was attempting to suggest it might not always be possible to reach the most prestigious and sought after of directors, a quick Google search of "Mark Rylance" leads to <http://www.markrylance.co.uk> with a variety of emails and people to contact in order to get in touch with Mark Rylance.

<sup>8</sup> The author of this thesis is writing from experience on the benefits of this approach. She was hired to work at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival as a result of a spontaneous e-mail expressing interest. In the summer of 2013, the author met with Dr. Lou Douthit, the Resident Dramaturg and Literary Manager at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, which was the result of an e-mail meeting request. The proactive approach, when handled with adequate online communication professionalism, provides very exciting opportunities to connect with directors and scholars further along in their careers and who might be otherwise inaccessible due to geography or position.

strategy for the contemporary dramaturg of Shakespeare's plays, Kott's three-part pattern of dramaturgy provides a resounding answer to the Shakespearean dramaturg's question: "why this play NOW?" (Hartley 17). Kott's pattern of dramaturgy situates him in the field so he can be better understood and placed on the spectrum of dramaturgical history for the "diamond" that he is. Even more, Kott's proactive approach in his analysis and seeking out a director who confirmed his sense of how Shakespeare should be staged provides necessary examples for modern day dramaturgs seeking active practices in dramaturgy of Shakespeare. While Kott saw Shakespeare as a contemporary to his world, those in the field of dramaturgy might benefit from considering Kott as a contemporary for them as well.

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