

A361: Shakespeare
A361/09: King Lear – Workshop 2

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Clip transcript: A361 King Lear workshop 2

Graham Martin

Then finally, to the later part of Act IV, Scene VI, the meeting between the mad Lear, Edgar, and the blinded Gloucester.

John Russell-Brown

It's got nothing to do with "Ay, every inch a King". It's just bearing out the world until the world comes to nought. And for the moment, you are in fact seduced by Gloucester.

Lear

...Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Gloucester

Ay, sir.

Lear

And the beggar run from the cur? There thou mightst behold the great image of authority; a dog's obeyed in office. Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand. Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thy own back. Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind for which thou whipp'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener. Thorough tattered clothes great vices do appear; robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sins with gold, and the strong lance of justice hurtles, breaks. Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw may pierce it. None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em. Take that of me, my friend (giving flowers) who have the power to seal the accuser's lips, the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes, and like a scurvy politician seem to see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now, now! Pull off my boots. Harder, harder – so.

Edgar

O matter and impertinency mixed, reason in madness.

Lear

If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes. I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester. Thou must be patient; we came crying hither. Thou knowest the first time that we smell the air we wawl and cry. I will preach to thee – mark!

Gloucester

Alack, alack the day!

Lear

When we are born we cry that we are come to this great stage of fools... Now

John Russell-Brown

Yes?

Julian Glover

This good block.

John Russell-Brown

Yes, this is a good block. It means my head.

Julian Glover

So I can use that, can I?

John Russell-Brown

Yes, absolutely, absolutely. It's his head or it's your head. It's a man's head. That is, "we born that we are come into this great stage of fools". I think it is this, your head actually. I know, I understand, I have the way to do it. I am clever, and from that you get into "a delicate stratagem to shoe a troop of horse", because you then move away from your understanding, to your understanding of your understanding, and that's fatal. You immediately think about what you can do, and your revenge comes teeming back. Do you see? I think it is your block. It means I'm clever, I've got my wits about me, and that is fatal. From there you then get onto kind of revenge time. Do you see?

Julian Glover

Yeah

John Russell-Brown

Let's try that, and I thought taking his head is absolutely right. Um "...if thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes". And I think the two of you are in fact, I mean, it would take him like this, and in a sense, you are both at that time weeping I suspect. I mean, not at this stage in the game, but if one was really there, you would both be weeping at that point. OK can we do it then from the same place?

Julian Glover

Um.

John Russell-Brown

Can we, sorry.

Julian Glover

Yeah sure. I can't remember where the same place was.

John Russell-Brown

Neither can I. It was "usurer hangs the cozener".

Julian Glover

Sorry, I'm beginning to run out a bit now, John.

Basil Henson

I'll stay here, I think, don't you for this.

John Russell-Brown

This will be the last time, all being well.

Basil Henson

You have these, at this stage (handing over flowers)

Julian Glover

I have them at this stage, yes...

John Russell-Brown

Let us hope this will be the last time.

Julian Glover

My symbol of regality.

Lear

The usurer hangs the cozener. Thorough tattered clothes great vices do appear; robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sins with gold, and the strong lance of justice hurtles, breaks. Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw may pierce it. None does offend, none, I say none; I'll able 'em. Take that of me, my friend (giving flowers) who have the power to seal the accusers' lips. Get thee glass eyes, and like a scurvy politician seem to see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now! Pull off my boots. Harder, harder – so.

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Gloucester

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Lear

When we are born we cry that we are come to this great stage of fools. That's a good block. It were a delicate stratagem to shoe a troop of horse with felt. I'll put it in proof; and when I have stolen upon these sons-in-law, then kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill.

John Russell-Brown

OK. Thanks very much. Let's call it a day. Thank you.