In act 2, scene 1, Fluello, Castruchio, and Pioratto invite Bellafront to dinner that evening. She refuses. While Matheo is the only one who believes he can command Bellafront’s obedience, the others are willing to change the date to achieve her presence, even if her acquiescence is the vague ‘Well’ (2.1.221) (Thomas Dekker, *The Honest Whore, Part I*, in vol. 2 of *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, Fredson Bowers [ed] [Cambridge, 1964]; all quotations from the play will refer to this edition). If we do not realize Bellafront’s independence in this interchange, her comment to Hippolyto, ‘I am in bondes to no man’ (2.1.258), should do so.

Mistress Fingerlock, defined in the cast list as ‘a bawd’, is a confusing character. She appears in only one scene (3.2), in which she and Bellafront’s servant, Roger, lament the financial losses they suffer from Bellafront’s exit from the profession. But since Bellafront lives alone in her own establishment, I question to what degree Fingerlock is her bawd. If Bellafront were bound to her, would not Fingerlock exercise more control? In the course of this scene, Roger and Fingerlock revise their financial arrangement, thus reinforcing the capitalist nature of prostitution in this patriarchal society.

According to Jonathan Gil Harris, in ‘This is Not a Pipe: Water Supply, Incontinent Sources, and the Leaky Body Politic’, *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property, and Culture in Early Modern England*, Richard Burt and John Michael Archer (eds) (Ithaca and London, 1994), 203–28, in the pamphlet *The Dead Tearme* Dekker uses water as a pathological figure for the threat presented to the body politic’s health by the excessive incontinence of both its members and its enemies’ (211). For example, ‘Dekker identifies’ Letchery’s “outrageous waters” with prostitution’ (212).

The 2003–2004 war on Iraq, perpetrated in the wake of the 2001 attacks on the United States and subsequent invasion of Afghanistan, emphasized for me more than any other event so far in my lifetime the need for activism, critical inquiry, and pedagogy that is rigorous, theoretical, and socially and politically engaged. Societies worldwide are rapidly becoming more interconnected through mass media, transportation, and commerce; and the means by which people compete and negotiate for resources and power are becoming progres-
sively multifaceted, industrious, insightful, and more desperate. Governments and corporations dance with the ebb and flow of capitalism’s power; they demonstrate repeatedly that a combination of ingenuity and deception – for example, the Bush and Blair administrations’ ability to equivocate or mislead about such things as evidence for weapons of mass destruction – is typically requisite for the successful manipulation and dominance of discourses, societies, markets, and nations.

Developments in technology, culture, and science give the impression that societies are moving faster and getting ‘better’ than ever, and previously uncharted terrains – ideational and/or material – are explored, graphed, occupied, or subsumed. Exponentially, super-powered nations (the United States, Great Britain, China) and super-empowered iconic concepts and institutions (Christianity, Satan, Capitalism, Islamic Jihad) generate via ‘sociopolitical conductors’ influential products, such as texts, systems, and students. Sociopolitical conductors are the familial, religious, juridical, media, and educational structures that interconnect a society’s ideological framework. The interrelations among the conductors and their products effectuate conceptually dynamic assemblages, what I call ‘articulatory spaces’, that are discursive environments which surround, enmesh, embody, and laminate charged topics, objects, and events, thereby furthering their dissemination of ‘open power’, ‘state power’, and/or ‘transversal power’. Within and through articulatory spaces these powers escalate and radiate both diachronically and synchronically, affecting people in significant ways: sociocultural economies negotiate and function in conjunction with the articulatory spaces through which they develop; and through this engagement people come to see and believe certain things, consequently undergoing subjective ‘becomings’ and ‘comings-to-be’ as the result of poignant and repeated performances. Performing, experiencing, thinking, reading, and/or writing about any culturally dominant iconic subject, whether sports, popular music, film, or literature, and the iconic subject’s myriad permutations necessitate becomings, comings-to-be, and a passing-through of spacetime thresholds. When encountering or embodying any media conceptually and/or materially imbued or manifested by an icon’s ‘affective presence’ (the combined material, symbolic, and imaginary existence of a concept/object/subject/event), we become situated as participants within articulatory spaces and their overlappings and fusions, in much the same way that subsets and their elements work in mathematical set theory. For instance, Shakespeare’s affective presence (as marvellous poet, cultural icon, or ideological symbol) engages us with the phenomena of what Donald Hedrick and I have termed ‘Shakespace’, a term
that encompasses the plurality of Shakespeare-related articulatory spaces and the time and speed at which they move through places, cultures, and eras. 5

By explaining our relationships to the articulatory spaces through which we evolve, I hope to reveal how such spaces, especially the literary-cultural-critical spaces that have influenced our understandings of subjectivity in early modern England and today, can be political, empowering, and artistically inspiring. The ‘investigative-expansive mode’ of analysis that guides the praxis of ‘transversal poetics’, 6 the critical approach, theory, and aesthetics that I have developed to combat the disempowering of people that has been encouraged by much humanist, poststructuralist, psychoanalytic, and new historicist discourse, and to foster agency and creativity, as well as the production of more conscientious and socially purposeful scholarship and pedagogy, has led me to propose a particular methodology that I call ‘fugitive explorations’. Operating within the framework of boundless potential proposed by transversal theory, fugitive explorations call for readings of a given text that defy the authorities that reduce and contain meanings, both of the readings and of the text itself. Dominating authorities can be found in all readings and reading environments, both of a text’s inception and point of reception; they are the past, present, and future interpretive communities that constrain them; they are the interested authorities who channel and situate a text and its interpretations across spacetime, arbitrarily producing its history and value. Hence, ‘fugitive explorers’ venture wherever they are drawn, reconstituting parameters accordingly, as they strive to uncover fugitive elements – human, narrative, thematic, semiotic, and so on – of the subject matter being examined and the environments in which it has been contextualized, particularly those that pressurize the authorities and, by extension, the communities necessary for the substantiation of the authorities’ power. In effect, fugitive explorers often endow agency where agency had been wanting, evacuated, or forbidden.

Politically invested fugitive explorations might, for example, involve an attempt to link transversally within history, culture, and metaphysics the ectoplasmic traces of the ghost-characters of Shakespeare’s Cymbeline, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, and Hamlet in productions of the plays (theatrical and literary-critical) and in other artifacts. The purposes of this undertaking might be to give voice to commonly marginalized or elusive perspectives on or of the ghost-characters, to highlight opinions about the phenomena of ghosts across history, cultures, and disciplines, and to engage with scientific theories that might illuminate in unexpected and productive ways the ghostly subject matters under investigation. In response to queries about the fact that
transversal poetics makes no overarching or definitive claims with regard to its specific political investments, but rather remains as fluid and case-specific in its determinations as the ideas, opportunities, and methodology it promulgates, I offer fugitive explorations as a derivative, transversal approach with a pronounced agenda: to understand and empower fugitive elements insofar as doing so generates positive experiences.

To elucidate some of the distinct characteristics and advantages of fugitive inquiry within and beyond transversal poetics, I want to turn now to a comparison with the philosophy and methodology of deconstruction, as formulated by Jacques Derrida. Like deconstruction, fugitive explorations pursue slippages, loose threads, and latent signifiers in a chosen text as a means by which to undermine and unravel the text’s apparent meanings for a given interpretive community or communities. Unlike deconstruction, however, it does this deliberately as a gateway to other possible readings and, by extension, to other conceptual, emotional, and physical localities. Thus, fugitive explorations do more than merely expose the instability of texts and the semiotic systems in which they function. It would not be enough to show how the witches in *Macbeth*, for instance, undermine through prevarication or powers of suggestion the patriarchal system within the play. The fugitive explorer might also relate Shakespeare’s representation of witches to dissident or exploitative occasions precipitated by the circulation of certain seductive or misleading concepts outside of the play text (in, for example, contemporary advertising campaigns, religious institutions, or college classrooms) as a means by which to illuminate types of becomings, comings-to-be, and subject performances that make possible, encourage, or inspire, at least conceptually, such currently hotly debated cognitive interventions as leading the witness and faith healing.

Finding potentialities in instabilities, as in the case of *Macbeth*’s witches, fugitive explorations emphasize the text’s possible meanings beyond its intended, immediate, or future audiences. A goal of transversal poetics in and through fugitive explorations is to discourage blinkered, hermeneutical reductionism, such as of the kinds that force an investigation to bow down willy-nilly to overdetermined concepts like historicism, presentism, or futurism. Unlike deconstruction, transversal poetics asks that we consider artifacts positively and extensively, rather than define negatively, defer continuously, or dismiss alternative interpretations and applications by relying only on dialectical argumentation. Yet it also asks, like deconstruction, that we remain aware that there is no inherent, absolute, or unmediated meaning or subject position; that truth and perception are processual and contingent; and that
any text or social identity (like Derrida’s own writings and affective presence) can be made to deconstruct itself endlessly, through what Derrida calls ‘différance’, by replacing one supplemental, always already indeterminate meaning after another, each standing in for the never-to-be-found conclusion or transcendental signified. Nevertheless, while this can be a valuable approach, especially when implemented to undermine rhetoric and systems that are employed to oppress people, it often leaves unanswered questions significant to people, like our students, who want to relate the literary text in question to issues pertinent to their lives.

When studying *Macbeth*, for instance, students often contemplate who is ultimately responsible for Macbeth’s actions. They are usually unsatisfied when I suggest to them that the play is merely words, ‘a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / signifying nothing’ (5.5.27–8), as the play itself suggests, and that no one is responsible because there is nothing there but indeterminacy for which anyone could be provisionally responsible. Instead, my students have defined a range of culpable agents: Duncan, the inept and careless ruler; Macbeth, the naïve, ambitious, and weak would-be king; Lady Macbeth, the power-mongering emasculator; the witches, who are prophetic and interfering; Shakespeare, the authorial agent; the early modern English society that produced Shakespeare; and we, the immediate interpreters of the play. My point is that who or what is responsible for Macbeth’s actions matters only inasmuch as we can productively associate the question, examination, and possible answers with issues important to people today, and – positively – to people ‘tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow’ (*Macbeth* 5.5.19). As scholars and teachers, this is our responsibility.

As fugitive inquiry works to reveal portholes and expand passages, fostering travel into disparate territories, it does not pursue or resolve comfortably with the nihilism of deconstruction or with the notion of infinity that it invokes (the fugitive explorer is never a caged gerbil forever spinning on a treadmill). Nor does fugitive inquiry privilege any axioms, including the influential psychoanalytic and post-Marxist axioms that define desire and subjectivity as predicated on lack. Fugitive inquiry is not a victim or victim-making approach. For transversal theory, subjectivity is processual and develops positively through becomings and comings-to-be; this often occurs through the recognition of differences, but not typically or desirably as a consequence of negation. Accordingly, compensation or totalization is not the objective of fugitive explorations, although sustaining an understanding may be a welcomed outcome. Informed by transversal theory, fugitive explorations recognize limits within circumstances and agents even while remaining steadfastly
committed to both the concept that anything is possible and the fact that there is a real where things are, happen, and can be done, however difficult to access or influence, and however subject to mediation and a matter of perception. This is where fugitive inquiry most departs from deconstructionist analysis, as well as from the poststructuralism of theorists as different and antithetical as Jean Baudrillard and Judith Butler.

Fugitive explorations can also expose, either wilfully or inadvertently, hidden elements that are disempowered because they can no longer operate covertly. For instance, once unknown enemies are identified and locatable, their deconstructionist mission, subversive potential, or state power can be weakened or diverted insomuch as they can be quashed or co-opted. Consider, for example, Caliban’s recognition and subsequent manipulation of Trinculo and Stephano as power-hungry, lustful human beings (*The Tempest* 3.2). Either way, through the exploratory process, the investigative-expansive thinker becomes fugitive as a means by which to move transversally outside of what I have termed one’s own ‘subjective territory,’ the combined conceptual, emotional, and physical range from which a given subject perceives and experiences the world. Fugitive explorations can work to get people outside of their subjective territories through such ‘transversal movements’: feelings, thoughts, and actions alternative to those that work to circumscribe and maintain one’s particular subjective territory, and, by extension, the greater ‘official territory’ comprised of the subjective territories of a society’s members.

The transversal inclination is always fugitive to the subjectified, but not all transversal movement is fugitive on every level. Someone occupying conceptual, emotional, and/or physical spacetimes alternative to those prescribed by an official culture has moved out of her subjective territory, is expanding her experiential range, possibly disidentifying with her established social role, and is self-referentially acting fugitively. If someone’s transversal movement works in the interest of dominant sociopolitical conductors to institute predominantly a subjective territory that reinforces official culture, thereby promoting the overarching ‘state machinery’ that the conductors together comprise, the dissident potential of the fugitive action can diminish for that person. This might occur if a member of a criminal group violates the group’s codes, thereby becoming fugitive to the group, and inadvertently supports the mainstream culture against which the group defines itself. Whatever the outcome, the person’s transversal movement may nonetheless serve as a model that inspires others to wander.

Theatre happens when a performance is presented to an intended audience that is aware of an interpretive frame specific to that performance. As an event,
in effect, of performance, theatre is often an exemplary model of the kind of
apparatus that induces transversal wanderings through processes of becom-
ings-other and comings-to-be-other, such as of other social identities, species
categories, or spiritual beings. Theatre spurs these wanderings through the
phenomena of identification, empathy, projection, hypothesis, and/or trans-
ference. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, this was especially the case for early
modern England’s public theatre. The metatheatrics and naturalistic impersonations
that characterized the public theatre, unlike allegorical presentations in pageants and morality plays, challenged established beliefs about the
singularity and cogency of reality and, by extension, the traditional sexual,
gender, moral, and class differentiations that depended on those beliefs. The
public theatre posited all social categories, such as ‘man’ and ‘woman’, as
constructs that must be performed in order to be. It suggested that the body
(with or without genitalia) matters only inasmuch as it is a point of departure
for identity becomings.9

The lived reality of the public theatre’s transversal influence in early
modern England – of the theatrespace engendered there – can be seen
especially in the vehement antitheatrical discourse and actions taken against
the theatre. Yet the transversal influence of the theatre was most manifest in
the workings of criminals and social deviants, such as individuals who
disguised themselves as gypsies in order to extort money, sell herbal remedies,
and read palms, con men who pretended to be different people in order to
perpetrate crimes, and people who practiced transvestism, whether male-to-
female in the theatre or female-to-male on London’s streets, the latter having
become a popular fashion contemporaneous with the public theatre’s popu-
ularity. The transversal power of the public theatre transgressed the Church’s
ideology and corresponding official culture, undermining the properties of
the society’s interiority that endeavoured to organize and monitor via so-
ciopolitical conductors the subjective territories of the society’s members.

Whether through theatre or critical inquiry, fugitive explorations can be
precarious undertakings because they challenge, defy, and promote the defi-
ance of authorities (personal, cultural, governmental), which can lead to real
consequences, including social metamorphosis, combat, punishment, and
liberation. Transversal movements, moreover, are often corollary to fugitivity,
and can take one deep into ‘transversal territory’, a multidimensional space
encompassing, among other known and unknown qualities, the nonsubject-
tified regions of all individuals’ conceptual and emotional range. Thus,
movement into transversal territory could cause the wayward traveler to
experience a cognitive disjunction that is often pathological, taking the form
of a dream-like state of altered consciousness in which themes are lost and reappear, possibly over and over again (the waking nightmare or living dream of the deconstructionist). Such persistent occupation of transversal territory can be counterproductive if the goal of the fugitive explorer is to emancipate readings of the text, and/or herself, and/or others in order to achieve agency. Certainly Macbeth’s irresistible transversality, influenced by his quest for what he cannot know, pushes his subject performance into what zooz eloquently terms a ‘progressive quagmire’:

Progressive quagmires are research states, indeed states of being (if you will), that are manifest when the analytical tools which were believed to fuel progress prove unable to resist the analysis’ momentum and thus are incapable of generating new directionality and expansion because the analysis is pushed along a rigid course. And yet the researcher, having experienced past “successes” with them, and being urged on by social, cultural, political, and paradigmatic conventions, is reluctant to part with these investigative tools and, by extension, the (de)limiting assumptions underlying them.¹⁰

To avoid progressive quagmires by becoming fugitive analytically, and therefore to ferret out fugitive components of a system, narrative, psyche, and so on, one frequently has to journey into the hypothetical dimensions of ‘subjunctive space’. Because the fugitive is mysterious, perhaps already on the run, elusive, and/or burrowing in the nooks and crannies of discourse, the transversalist engages subjunctively in atypical possibilities for meaning and articulation: the ‘what ifs’ and ‘as ifs’ that the text (or life experience) may or may not inspire. Taking you with me into subjunctive space, I would like to turn to a brief example, a fugitive dabble of sorts, into the early modern English discourse on equivocation, which is a subject of my forthcoming book Fugitive Explorations.¹¹

Early modern England’s dominant religious ideology maintained that God orders and Satan confuses, a determination that reverberates, for instance, in Macduff’s response to the revelation of King Duncan’s murder: ‘Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!’ (Macbeth 2.3.65). This God-Satan dynamic resounds throughout Macbeth as equivocation (in language and action) and is associated with witchcraft and the Jesuit conspirators who attempted to blow up King James and Parliament in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. In particular, Shakespeare’s use of the word ‘equivocation’ by the Porter (2.3.8–9; 2.3.30–2), as has often been observed, references A Treatise of Equivocation, written by early modern England’s clandestine Jesuit leader, Father Henry Garnet (1555–1606), describing the language and gesture one
can use to provide deceptive answers under oath without retribution from God. The general employment of equivocation in *Macbeth*, especially by the witches, who ‘draw’ Macbeth into ‘confusion’ (3.5.29), mislead him with riddles – ‘none of woman born’ (4.1.79), ‘Birnam wood’ (4.1.93), ‘palter with us in *double* sense’ (5.8.20) – demonstrates through discourse and performance the presence of Satan within the play’s world and beyond as it aligns the play’s witches with both real witches and the Jesuits, who were thought to be ‘devil-conjuring priests’, as Samuel Harsnett describes them in *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603).

Witches and Jesuits, like all of Satan’s underlings and emissaries, were seen as outlaw infiltrators working to promote chaos in God’s otherwise orderly universe; and since equivocation encourages doubt, and wherever there is doubt there is evidence of Satan’s work and further opportunity for Satan to undermine order and goodness, equivocation was seen as a threat to all cosmic structures, moral authority, and societal coherence, which is to say, state power. As documented by Edward Casey, according to medieval and early modern England’s prevailing ideologies, God both created the universe and occupies particular places within it, and to challenge this idea, even under the auspices of hypothesis, was considered heretical and treasonous. In fact, it was clear to early moderners that God occupies some individuals and places more than others, such as pious people, churches, and heaven, God’s presence being measured by the ‘goodness’ found in them. But if we consider alternative theories of being, metaphysics, and subjectivity emergent toward the end of the sixteenth century and developing throughout the seventeenth, as articulated, for example, through the logic behind the Jesuits’s use of equivocation, the extent to which the notion of dissemination and particularity was commonly held becomes questionable.

While researching with my collaborators (especially Donald Hedrick) representations of deceit in early modern English discourse on performance, my fugitive explorations, moving investigative-expansively beyond the text of *Macbeth* and the other texts it typically invokes, led me to what I believe is a hitherto unaddressed connection between the discourse on equivocation and an unprecedented change in perceptions of place as a possible location for either Godly or Satanic interventions. Of the momentous historical sea-changes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including the Copernican system, the great vowel shift, the public theatre, nascent capitalism, and colonial expansion, this important conceptual revolution has often been ignored, although it connects all of these revolutions. I refer to the transformation of the concept of place in relation to the concept of space. While the
change was complex and variously expressed, and occurred over several centuries, it has been generally charted in the history of ideas by Casey as a move toward a de-emphasis of the idea of place as it had been construed in Aristotelian/Ptolemaic and Christian philosophical traditions. By the early modern period, place began to lose its status, indeed its affective presence, as it was subsumed by the notion that God is infinite space (recall that Hamlet speaks of divine kings as occupying ‘infinite space’ [2.2.255]). It was no longer thought that God occupied particular places within the infinite space that he created, but rather that his presence was infinite. He was now thought to be in all places at all times, thereby making a concept of place irrelevant inasmuch as human beings are made in God’s image; for if God could not occupy a discrete subject position from which to observe the universe he created, neither could human beings.

Inspired by Casey’s work on place, I searched for references to time and space in early modern England’s commercial literature and noted that England’s early moderners, many years before Sir Isaac Newton published his understanding of space and time as absolute states, conceived of people as existing in the infinite space that is God, and thus accounted for infinite time as well. For instance, Shakespeare often makes time and space synonymous, as in 1 Henry VI, where things happen ‘after three days’ space’ (3.2.294), or as in Love Labour’s Lost, where the action spans ‘three years space’ (1.1.52). Therefore, because people equated space with God and God with time, hence seeing them all as the same substance, what makes equivocation radical in relation to this revolutionary change in the history of ideas is not just that the ambiguity it produces allows for Satanic interventions. The acknowledgment of the everywhereness of God in the logic behind the employment of equivocation – of God occupying placelessness because he is in all places at once – that anticipated and contributed to the succession of space over place that gave way to the scientific revolution also implies a radical understanding of subjectivity. A causal, reciprocal relationship between this new idea of God’s pervasiveness/placelessness and the idea of an open-ended phenomenology ironically problematizing the Cartesian subject – who knows he exists because he thinks, but only knows this because God is the source of truth who bestows thought itself – is supported by the theories of Galileo Galilei and is later crystallized in Newton’s third law of motion, in which the actions of two bodies upon each other are always equal and directly opposite. Unfortunately for some people, such as the seventeenth-century Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza, who was less willing to veil his subscription to this fugitive concept of relational effect than was Newton, the fact that this
law leaves no room for Satan, or, inversely, for God, resulted in their displacement. Indeed, the radical ramification of the all-places/all-times model of God is that it leaves no room for the concept of autonomous and/or individuated subjectivities; it posits subjectivity as always pluralized, infused, and collective; subjects appear unique and differentiated only insofar as they convince each other that they are individuals through framing and performance, which is to say, through theatre.

To conclude, I want to suggest that by moving investigative-expansively across spacetime one could intriguingly compare the everyspacetimeness of God imagined by early moderners to the every-elsewhereness of ‘pure evil’ and the placelessness of weapons of mass destruction repeatedly equivocated by the Bush and Blair administrations. In conjunction, one might also consider the subjective interconnectedness that generated the very articulatory spaces, friendly and/or adversarial, of which Bush’s affective presence is reciprocally contributory. Fugitive explorations encourage us to do so.

**Bryan Reynolds**

**Notes**


2. ‘Open power’ is any power that does not fall under the categories of ‘state power’ or ‘transversal power’. ‘State power’ is any force that works in the interest of coherence and organization among any variables. ‘Transversal power’ is any force that inspires emotional, conceptual, and/or physical deviations from the established norms’ for any variables, whether individuated or forming a group.

3. ‘Becoming is a desiring process by which all things (energies, ideas, people, societies) change into something different from what they are. If the things had been identified and normalized by some dominant force, such as state law, religious credo, or official language, then any change in them is, in fact, becomings-other’ (Reynolds, *Becoming Criminal*, 20–1). As Glenn Odom and
I further explain in our essay ‘Pressurized Belongings and the Coding of Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationality in Shakespeare’s Titus Andronicus’ (in my Transversal Enterprises in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries: Fugitive Explorations [London, forthcoming 2005]), “comings-to-be-other” occur when the subject loses control during the process of becomings-other and becomes more (of/or something else) than anticipated and/or desired. In other words, becomings are active engagements, often self-inaugurated and pursued intentionally, whereas comings-to-be, however spurred by becomings, are generated by the energies, ideas, people, societies, and so on to which the subject aspires, is drawn toward, or happenstentially encounters’.

4 See Reynolds, Becoming Criminal, 1–22; and Performing Transversally, 1–28.
8 See n. 6 above.
9 Reynolds, Becoming Criminal, 150.
11 See n. 3 above. For more on ‘subjunctive space’ see Reynolds, Performing Transversally, 1–28.
12 Samuel Harsnett, A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures (1603; STC 12880), 149.
13 Edward S. Casey, The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History (Berkeley, 1997).