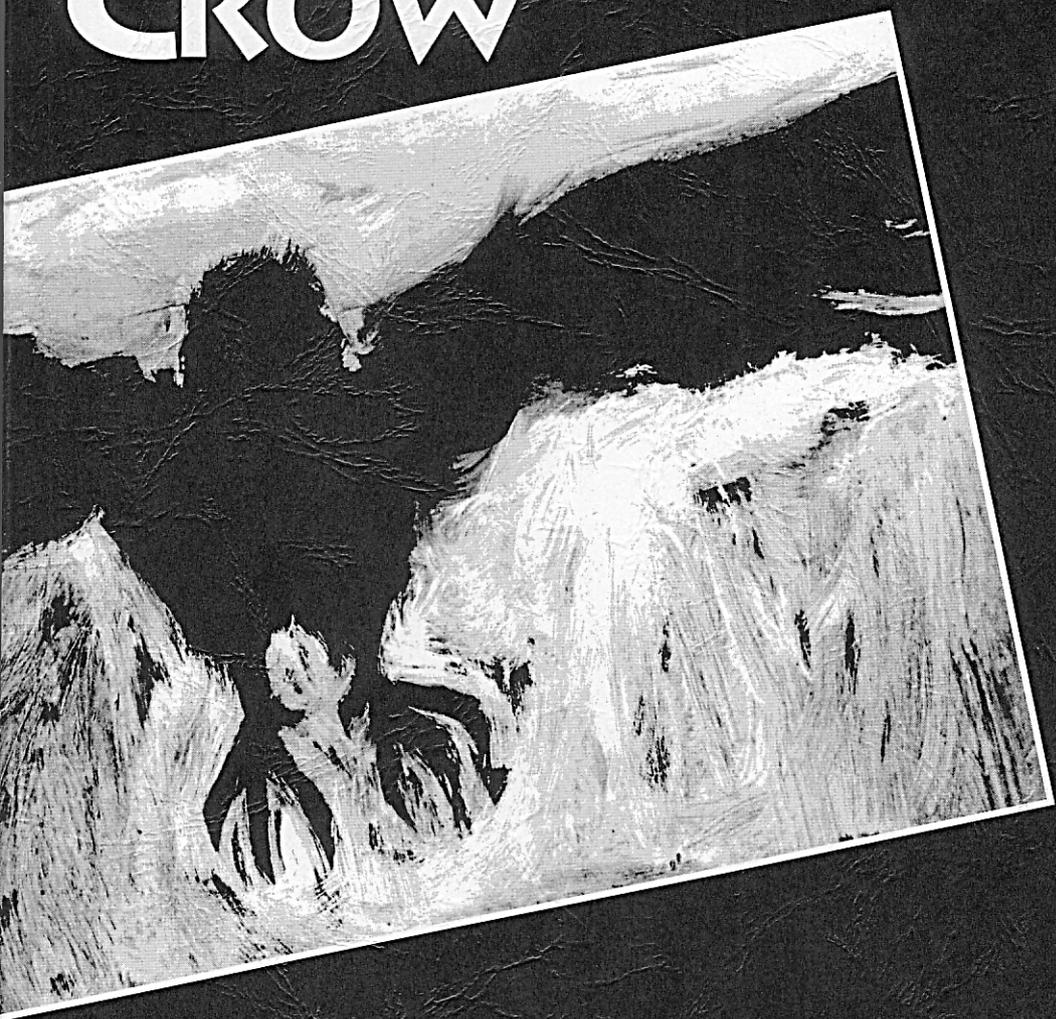


THE UPSTART CROW



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About anyone so great as Shakespeare, it is probable that we can never be right, it is better that we should from time to time change our way of being wrong.

— T. S. Eliot

What we have to do is to be forever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions.

— Walter Pater

The problems (of the arts) are always indefinite, the results are always debatable, and the final approval always uncertain.

— Paul Valery

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From the Editor

In the past year *The Upstart Crow* lost two of its most avid supporters or “crownies,” as we like to call them—Roy Battenhouse and Paul Ramsey. Roy, the author of *Shakespearean Tragedy: Its Art and Its Christian Premises* and editor more recently of *Shakespeare’s Christian Dimension: An Anthology of Commentary*, was a frequent contributor to the *Crow*, particularly in its sensitive early years. Paul Ramsey, the author of *The Fickle Glass: A Study of Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, was a charter member of the editorial staff and a positive inspiration for the founding editor, Bill Bennett. Paul, too, was a frequent contributor to the journal, especially in the many fine poems he submitted to the *Crow* over the years. Volume XI of the *Crow* was dedicated to Paul in honor of his retirement from teaching that proved all too brief. Thankfully, both Roy and Paul had contributed pieces to the *Crow* just before they died, a final set of Shakespearean poems of Paul Ramsey and an amazingly synoptic piece by Roy Battenhouse on his favorite topic, Christian themes in the plays of Shakespeare. The manuscript was in lecture form when it was received and remains as such because of our new policy of introducing each *Crow* with a lecture.

On a more positive note, Jeanne Roberts has agreed to assume Paul Ramsey’s duties on the editorial board. We are very proud to have her with us.

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Anna Whateley
by Paul Ramsey

The wheat field opens in sunlight
Where a girl walks.
The girl walks alone in the sunlight
Out of our hearing.
Straw, rain, and oblivion
Follow her footsteps
So dimly
We can pursue her
Only by reaching
Through many a field of sunlight
And moonlight and winter's harvest
Toward a man's anger
Or cowardice
Or, more likely, perhaps, a clerk's mistake.

The rain begins to fall
Not on marble or golden monuments
But on a golden wheat field's presence
And on a girl walking
Homeward, beautiful, O far!

Note

According to the bishop of Worcester's register, a license was granted on November 27, 1582 for a marriage "inter Willelmum Shaxpere et Annam Whateley de Temple grafton" (Mark Eccles, *Shakespeare in Warwickshire* [Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1961], p. 64). The bond gives the name as "william shagspere" and "Anne hathwey of stratford . . . maiden."

The scholarly consensus (a dangerous phrase! but probably ok here—it would include E. K. Chambers, Mark Eccles, and Samuel Schoenbaum) is that "Annam Whateley de Temple grafton" was a clerk's mistake, and that Shakespeare married Agnes Hathway of Shottery (Agnes and Anne are sometimes used convertibly, and Shottery is in Stratford parish), for whom there is some (if hardly overwhelming) confirmatory evidence.

It is probable that the consensus is right, but Temple Grafton remains unexplained, and there are varied uncertainties. There may have been two women involved, and some drama, or even two William Shakespeares. We really don't know.

At any event, Anna Whateley has haunted my imagination for some time. Who was she? Merely an error of a pen? The name and the mystery of the past, the mysteries of knowledge, flow together and may vanish wherever, or is it whenever?

Shakespeare, Justicer by Paul Ramsey

The Dark Lady

Her fingers danced, and Will replied
With hunger, sweetness, will, and pride.

Love's Labor's Lost

Love's labor is lost? That could be.
Berowne's word was *ydotarie*.

On Shakespeare's Stage Properties

The skulls mirror the crowns.

Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*

My daughter and my ducats flee away.
Greed and hatred thrive and plan to stay.

Death: On a Metaphor from *Hamlet*

["this fell sergeant, Death. / Is strict in his arrest"]
Th'arrest is strict, the judge and jury one,
The trial instant. The verdict is unknown.

Macbeth

A throne was promised, the cost known.
Then overreaching was overthrown.

Edmund in *King Lear*

Nature is Goddess. Nature is self-will.
Edmund proclaimed, and then repented, will.

Edgar in *King Lear*

The gods are justicers, the justice hid.
The wheel returns and overturns in blood.

The Fool: *King Lear*

The kingdom's broken. Where did it go?
The fool's vanished who might know.

Roderigo at the End of *Othello*

Deceit led me by the purse and throat.
Deceit has vanished. Blood has not.

Iago at the End of *Othello*
["From this time forth, I never shall speak word."]
Wit was mine, engendering speech.
Silence now is what I teach.

Othello at the End of *Othello*
Who dares a hand against me? Only I.
I love. I do not understand. I die.

Emilia at the End of *Othello*
Faithful at last, I spoke. Therefore I fell.
The willow has an echo. All is well.

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Shakespeare's Christianity: The Future for Scholarship by Roy Battenhouse

The future for studies of Shakespeare's Christianity must build on the shoulders of the past. Therefore, a brief review of past achievements is in order. Let me list a sampling of the evidence that has accumulated regarding Christian patterns in Shakespeare's plays. The imagery of atonement theology has been detected, for instance, in *Measure for Measure*, in *All's Well*, and in *Cymbeline*. The Bible's parable of the Prodigal Son has been found in the basic design of *King Lear*, as have also the New Testament concepts of worldly fool and holy fool. The paradigm of the prodigal has been noted in Shakespeare's Bertram in *All's Well* and in Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*. Conversion of heart is a key motif in most of the comedies, and the mediator of such conversion is usually a person of mysterious charity who works enigmatically through disguise. Barbara Lewalski has shown that the two natures of Christ, human and divine, have their analogy in the twins who mediate a happy ending in *Twelfth Night*; and in *The Merchant of Venice*, J. A. Bryant, Jr. has seen Christ's two natures in the two mediators of Bassanio's rescue, namely, Antonio and Portia. Theology, therefore, can not be irrelevant to secular situations. Rather, in its healthy version it is the light of the world and the salt of the earth. In its perverse versions, on the other hand, it can be said to provide a primrose path to the bonfire of self-destruction. An analogue to the self-centered love of Judas has been dramatized by Shakespeare in *Othello*, just as the ambition of Cain can be seen reflected and its results displayed in the kingship of Henry IV. The tyranny of a biblical Herod has its updated manifestations in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, and even more conspicuously in Richard III's massacre of the innocents.

Regarding biblical allusions, we have discovered that even minor ones in Shakespeare's text can have fascinating implications. For instance, why does Shylock refer to Jacob's "wise mother" who "wrought in his behalf" (*MV*, II. iii. 69)? Is this done to show in Shylock a knowledge of Judaism? Rather, it lets us see how superficial his knowledge is. For in fact the wise mother was Rebecca, who helped her child deceive a spiritually blind Isaac so that Jacob could procure the family's birthright inheritance and escape to another country, where he could make a blessed marriage. In Shakespeare's play, Shylock is a blind Isaac from whom

Jessica with Gobbo's aid escapes, so that she can make a blessed marriage that preserves her birthright inheritance. The Bible's paradigm is thus enacted in an analogous version.

Various liturgical allusions as patterns have also been discovered in Shakespeare's dramas and found to be tantalizing when probed. Consider, for instance, the baptismal feast which concludes *The Comedy of Errors*. This may seem at first glance a mere touch of local color. But when examined more closely, it can be seen as marking the culmination of a liberation of Ephesus from its bewitching illusions. The baptismal feast functions to celebrate the mysterious interventions of grace which have exorcised the demons causing alienation in the city; it is a sacramental extension into public life of the Christian wisdom that a priory had mediated and a divine providence has fostered. Similarly, the sacrament of marriage that concludes *Much Ado About Nothing* may seem a theatrical *tour de force*; but on closer inspection it is recognizable as the logical outcome of a Friar-provided cure for the shambles caused by self-centered versions of shallow love. After a ritual penance had been enacted to repair relationships, marriage functions to inaugurate a wise love.

Liturgical allusion in other of Shakespeare's plays serves to give amplitude to the story's import. Let us recall, for instance, the word *patens* used by Lorenzo when contemplating the "floor of heaven" in act five of *The Merchant of Venice*. Edmund Malone correctly glossed the word *patens* as the sacred plate on which the Eucharist is offered at a Catholic mass. But Malone neglected to draw out the implications of this image. If each of the orbs is a golden plate of holy offering, and if this is accompanied by a singing to heaven's cherubim, is not a choral Eucharist being celebrated by the cosmos? When thus understood, the image becomes the most grandly liturgical in all of Shakespeare's plays. Moreover, it serves to expand on an earlier moment of a love duet by Lorenzo and Jessica, sung to the theme of "such a night as this." That phrase, eight times repeated by the lovers, has been discovered by Mark Gnerro to be an echo of the phrase "This is the night" used eight times in the church liturgy for Holy Saturday, in which Israel's exodus from Egypt is recalled as a model for Christian catechumens preparing for Easter Day. The reason for Shakespeare's echoing here a church ceremonial is, quite evidently, to align the love quest of Lorenzo and Jessica to that of Israel's pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai, which typologically foreshadows Christianity's mystical Jerusalem and also the Beautiful Mountain where Portia dwells. Portia, by her pilgrimaging from Belmont to Venice and then returning, has brought to fulfillment the quest of Lorenzo and Jessica, who can be seen as the catechumens of a holy

love that finds its Eastertide in their receiving a gift of "deed" which they recognize as "manna" from heaven.

The typological understanding of Shakespeare's language which recent scholarship has revived puts us in a stronger position than ever before to emphasize the figural quality of Shakespeare's art. I. H. Cormican (in 1951) insisted, rightly, that for Shakespeare the facts of history are not so much an account of things once done as they are "a parable of what people continue to do." Parable is as ancient as Aesop, and we find it used by the Bible's Nathan to educate King David. All the major prophets of the Old Testament conveyed their chief insights through parables, and so did Jesus. In Shakespeare's times, parables are mentioned by Sidney when defending poetry, and Spenser's allegories and eclogues were essentially parables. But parable does not open its enigma to superficial readers. Even the disciples of Jesus, we may recall, were puzzled by his parable of the sower until he spelled out for them its meaning. When doing so, moreover, Jesus gave an ironic reason for using parables. They convey, he said, a secret which outsiders to spiritual truth do not perceive. Hearing them they do not understand, lest they repent and be forgiven. We should ponder that point. Parables elude the understanding of readers who fear having to repent. St Paul, in *Ephesians* 4:17-18, explained that persons who live "in the futility of their minds," because alienated from the life of God, have a "hardness of heart." That makes them ignorant. In Shakespeare's plays we have come to recognize hardness of heart as a characteristic of his tragic heroes. Dolora Cunningham, in her well known essay on *Macbeth*, titled it "The Tragedy of a Hardened Heart." Is that not so in *Othello*, too, who tells us that his heart has turned to stone? Shakespeare's tragedies may be regarded as parables of the mistakes made by stony-hearted heroes, just as his comedies are parables that reveal how gracious persons help to cure moral blindness. When in our day we are beset by deconstructionists who seem to wish to reduce literary texts to mere patches of "discourse," we can save Shakespeare's text from fragmentation by elucidating the parabolic unity of his work. The spiritual food of great poetry, we can quietly explain, resides in the kernel within the husk.

When exploring the value of Shakespeare's Christian dimension, we must begin by absorbing the deeper meaning which our best scholarship has provided. After assimilating this, we can share it with our colleagues when opportunity arises. I see no need for a combative stance since we have no doctrine we wish to impose on other minds. Rather, our professional obligation is to describe Shakespeare's mind truthfully, so far as we can know it by studying his works. Our aim as teachers can be simply to

encourage, wherever we tactfully can, the innate capacity of apt students for intellectual discovery. Such discovery often entails, of course, a self-discovery—which can be a troubling process because it usually requires in the seeker the giving up of prejudices. But that can be achieved with patience, if we but remember, as each of us can, some moments from our own past experience when we acted foolishly because (in the *Prayerbook's* words) we were following too much “the devices, and desires of our own hearts” and leaving undone that which we ought to have done. And, as students of Shakespeare, we may recall also the good example of Viola in *Twelfth Night*, who while striving to overcome the obstacle of Orsino's obtuseness, cried out: “O Time, thou must untangle this, not I / It is too hard a knot for me to untie.” We must entrust to time the providential victory of truth, since by Shakespeare's own testimony truth is the “daughter of time.” Our role, therefore, is to “watch and pray” with oil in our lamps, as the Bible admonishes, that we may be ready when the apocalyptic moment presents itself of falsehood collapsing and truth emerging for public recognition. That happens occasionally in history, and may happen in our time too.

For those of us active in research, there remains an ongoing challenge to detect further evidence of Shakespeare's use of Christian lore. New findings are still possible, and the need continues for a more trenchant evaluating of the moral import of various plays. One approach that seems to me particularly profitable is that of looking closely into Shakespeare's narrative sources as assembled by Geoffrey Bullough and estimating, through a study of the changes made in Shakespeare's version, the extent to which Christian concepts underlie his revisings. It was by studying Shakespeare's departures from earlier tellings of the Lear story, we may recall, that R. W. Chambers became the first critic to argue convincingly for the distinctively Christian quality in Shakespeare's design. Likewise, recent scholars of *The Winter's Tale* have been able to establish this play's Christian features by contrasting them with the neoclassical design of Robert Greene's story. And on Shakespeare's history plays, my own interpretations have relied on a discerning of how he recast the chronicles of Hall and Holinshed.

As a stimulus to further study of this kind, let me conclude by offering a brief explication of the ending of Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. The reading I have arrived at came to me recently after pondering the speculations of a Japanese critic, which struck me as mistaken, once I undertook a close examination of Shakespeare's play in relation to his source materials.

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You may recall that the play's fifth act shows us an attempt by Proteus to rape Sylvia, the fiancé of his friend Valentine, who is in the forest as a disguised outlaw and watching him. Valentine intervenes with the command, "Ruffian, let go that rude uncivil touch," and he proceeds to upbraid Proteus as a treacherous man of perjured bosom, who by beguiling Valentine's trust in him has wounded him deeply and must never more be trusted. Proteus on being thus caught red-handed is filled with guilt and shame and begs forgiveness, tendering as ransom for his fault a "hearty sorrow." Valentine thereupon receives him as honest once again, and declares:

Who by repentance is not satisfied
Is nor of heaven nor earth, for these are pleased.
By penitence th' Eternal's wrath's appeased,
And that my love may appear plain and free,
All that was mine in Sylvia I give thee.

(V. iv. 79-83)

The final two lines of this speech have so shocked most readers of the play that they react by declaring that Shakespeare can not be serious. Rather (as H. T. Price says), the dramatist is humorously proving Valentine a fool by giving him an action that "wrings the last drop of silliness out of Valentine's convention." Kenneth Muir, who is equally sure that "Shakespeare meant us to think it absurd," says the play's climax is "a sardonic comment on the popular idea that friendship is superior to love."

But is this really what Shakespeare is implying? Has Valentine said that friendship is superior to love? Rather, has he not been saying that friendship is so *central* to genuine love that a true lover must condemn false love, but at the same time be ready to forgive a sinner who genuinely repents? Let us recall that Jesus forgave sinners, and even his friend Peter's lapse of deserting him. John's gospel (15:13) has Jesus teach that "greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for a friend." Friendship requires charity. R. G. Hunter, therefore, was on the right track when in his book on *Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness* (1965) he insisted that Valentine's words about repentance are "a central tenet of Christianity." Hunter did not attempt to explain, however, Valentine's willingness to give Proteus "All that was mine in Sylvia." What do those words mean? H. B. Charlton read them as meaning that Valentine "enthusiastically resigns his darling Sylvia to the traitor," an act that "makes him a nincompoop." The best Hunter could reply was that Valentine's gesture makes him "a Christian nincompoop."

I don't think so, but would propose instead a more subtle reading of the phrase, "All that was mine in Sylvia." It refers, I think, to Sylvia's love for Valentine. Valentine has overheard her say to Proteus, only a few lines earlier, "O heaven be judge how I love Valentine,/ Whose life's as tender to me as my soul," and further he has heard her advise Proteus to "Read over Julia's heart, thy first best love." The "all" in Sylvia that is Valentine's is precisely this kind of love—a love that caused her to seek out Valentine when he fled, and caused her also to desire that Julia's seeking out of Proteus be appreciated. Sylvia's love in these respects is truly friendly. Her model of love is what Valentine is giving Proteus. When Julia responds by swooning, she is not protesting Valentine's words (as Clifford Leech supposed); rather, she is picking up his gambit. By revealing herself to Proteus as a lover ever faithful and now ready to forgive, she enables Proteus to consolidate his stated repentance and also prevents him from lapsing into a pursuing of Sylvia. Valentine can then complete his own friendly "gift" of good will by uniting Proteus and Julia in a handclasp.

Why have critics up to now not recognized the Christian model of love with which the play concludes? Their obstacle has been their supposition that Valentine thinks of friendship as did the Greek Gisippus in the story chronicled in Thomas Elyot's *The Governor*. In that story a Roman youth named Titus, when pierced by "the fiery dart of blind Cupid," falls into an "inordinate" love for the fiancé of his friend Gisippus. Tormented in conscience he confesses his plight to his friend, blames it on the power of Venus, curses his fate, and says he wishes he had never been born. Whereupon Gisippus, who is a student of philosophy, tells his "sweet friend" not to be dismayed, since only by "divine inspiration" can so fervent a love have entered the heart of his virtuous friend. It would be, he says, both unjust and repugnant to "the determination of god" not to receive joyously this "chance of love," and therefore "I here renounce . . . all my title and interest . . . in that faire maiden." Plainly, Gisippus is here practicing a pagan philosopher's ideal of love and of friendship.

Shakespeare's Valentine is of a different stripe. His character has been developed by Shakespeare as a contrast to the cupidinous love and false friendship of Proteus. Valentine's love has a concern for rescuing. In this respect his motivation parallels that of Julia, a heroine whose capacity for pity and forgiveness is the key to the play's happy ending. Why did Shakespeare lean on a Spanish novella by the Portuguese Montemayor when constructing his play's heroine? Evidently, he did so because Elyot's

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Venus-serving heroine was starkly Roman, whereas Montemayor's heroine practiced a rescuing love in the name of Diana. Yet Shakespeare bettered Montemayor's story while at the same time improving and updating the piety of Elyot's hero by drawing on his own Christian understanding of the mystery of friendship-love. With that observation I conclude my argument for studying Shakespeare's modifications of source materials as one useful means toward discovering and appreciating his reliance on Christian lore.

Indiana University

The Comedy of Errors:
Variation on a Festive Theme
 by Sharon R. Yang

C. L. Barber and François Laroque specifically exclude *The Comedy of Errors* from the corpus of Shakespeare's festive comedies.¹ Relevantly, Larry Champion, Francis Fergusson, and Northrop Frye emphasize the play's Plautine characteristics.² Nevertheless, careful appraisal of *The Comedy of Errors* reveals that old comedy's mistaken identities and its "absurd, cruel or irrational law" that the protagonist outmaneuvers to revitalize society³ are intertwined with distinctly festive patterns anticipating Shakespeare's development of the themes of festive comedy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Merchant of Venice*, amongst others. If we consider Claude Levi-Strauss' observation that the components of myth are discrete elements that can be rearranged or inverted to convey the same essential message in varying incarnations,⁴ then *The Comedy of Errors* can be seen as an intriguing variation on the festive world's release through clarification. Sojourners do not escape into the rejuvenation of the holiday world so they can better deal with the workaday world; instead, in the form of the disruptions caused by the sojourning Syracusians, the holiday world invades and subverts the world of constricting and oppressive clocks, money-making, mad houses, and lethal laws to reunite parents and children, husbands and wives, and justice and mercy.

Although *The Comedy of Errors* does not invoke a specific holiday such as Midsummer Eve or Twelfth Night, the play is still shaped by the basic holiday spirit. *The Comedy of Errors* shares with other festive works three essential traits: (1) the holiday world's valuing community, sharing, and solidarity over "a world of isolated, busy individuals"⁵; (2) festivity subverting authority to provide a temporary release from both outward and self-imposed restrictions, enabling individuals to clarify their understanding and their relationship with society by reaffirming bonds with nature and other people;⁶ and (3) acknowledgement that this festive release "need not threaten the social structure itself, but can instead serve to consolidate it" through a ritual abuse or cleansing of "[c]raven," and "inadequate" people or even "high flown idealis[ts]."⁷ In *The Comedy of Errors*, as in later festive plays, the clarification of holiday enables one to reorient or re-shape oneself rather than the foundations of society to balance between "sentimentality and cynicism"⁸ and to "achieve a sense of

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relativity and perspective so that at the end of the play, neither [workaday nor festive world] is seen as predominant."⁹ This holiday clarification, then, "has a debunking effect that leads to detachment and lucidity."¹⁰

Barber and Laroque both see festive comedy as particularly concerned with working out a contemporary Renaissance conflict between:

two different codes of behaviour [sic] that now clashed: on the one hand, a system of traditional obligations, in which hospitality and charity were regarded as sacred duties; on the other, a new spirit of individualism that tended more and more to reject those customs as now outdated.¹¹

Barber specifically discusses how *The Merchant Of Venice* reflects a view that, although "wealth glowed" "for the new commercial civilizations of the Renaissance," "there were at the same time traditional suspicions of the profit motive and newly urgent anxieties about the power of money to disrupt human relations."¹² Both critics see the code of charity and community, reflected in the values of holiday celebration, opposed against a new "individualism" rooted in the materialism and acquisitiveness of "the measured time of the towns and the business world"¹³ that ironically links both aristocrats and Puritans.

Laroque observes that on one hand, "the local aristocracy turned its back on the simple festivities of the countryside, including its own charitable obligations, preferring the more egotistical and sophisticated pleasures of the towns."¹⁴ Similarly, C. L. Barber suggests Shakespeare's contrast of Shylock's "static" and destructive use of money with the freeness of the Venetians emphasizes the need for aristocracy to treat wealth as a generous "expression of the triumph of human social relations over the relations kept track of by accounting."¹⁵ Both Laroque and Barber, however, perceive the major target of festive drama's scoffing and mocking to be the "ideological and religious Puritan reformers" who object not only to "the whole edifice of popular superstition" as idolatrous and sinful,¹⁶ but especially to festivity's ritual abuse of "a world of isolated, busy individuals, each prudently deciding how to make the best use of his time."¹⁷ The Puritan's interpretation of wealth as "private property,"¹⁸ of time as a commodity to be managed like money for maximum profit,¹⁹ and of the bond between humans and nature, especially in terms of sexuality, as base or even satanic²⁰ or even satanic becomes the "craven or inadequate" scapegoat that must be flouted and jeered to retrieve

a fulfilling "realization of a power of life larger than the individual, crescent both in men and in their green surroundings."²¹ Thus, according to Barber, Shylock becomes the "scapegoat" to be "abused, ridiculed, and expelled" as an incarnation of the failure to use money "dynamically," to invest it, as well as himself, "in life." Malvolio, "like a Puritan, because he is hostile to holiday," "is imprisoned in his own virtues" of propriety, acquisitiveness, and pride.²² Even earlier in Shakespeare's career, *The Comedy of Errors* anticipates *The Merchant of Venice's* "dramatiz[ing] the conflict between the mechanism of wealth, and the masterful social use of it."²³

In *The Comedy of Errors* Ephesus is ordered on principles that exclude "traditions of charity and hospitality," instead defining human relations in terms of individual self-aggrandizement that reduces all connections to the status of possessions. The law condemning Egeon for lacking one thousand marks; Adriana and Antipholus' marriage; friendships that vanish with the whiff of disrepute or insolvency, all emphasize "relations kept track of by accounting" over "human, social relations."²⁴ Further, *The Comedy of Errors* anticipates *Twelfth Night* in using the imagery of settings stressing constriction, darkness, even madness to create an ambiance of incomplete lives: the imprisonment of Egeon, and later Antipholus of Ephesus, under unjust or misdirected authority; the madhouse imprisoning of Antipholus of Ephesus; and the confinement of Aemilia in the abbey during thirty years of separation from her family. Much as Malvolio's box-sized madhouse would incarnate the constriction of his dark, miserly, ego-centric world view, these images of lives interrupted and confined reflect the quality of human life in Ephesus: Adriana and Antipholus' imprisonment of each other in marriage, the sisters' unempathetic bickering over the duties and rights of marriage, or the merchant unhappily driven by time and the "profit motive."²⁵ This play's festive "debunking" reveals such a social order to be more of a facade than a foundation. The society of Ephesus is incapable of resisting the festive challenge inadvertently posed by the two sojourners whose unknown identities completely disprove and undermine its reordering of human relations in terms of possession.

The Comedy of Errors also uniquely anticipates the journey from the court world into a holiday world of later festive comedies such as *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* or *As You Like It*. It is true that Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse venture out of the mercantile world into what they believe to be a lawless, boundless Saturnalian world of "imaginary wiles" and "Lapland sorcerers"

(IV. ii. 10-11).²⁶ And it is true that Antipholus is searching for identity and fulfillment through human relations, finding a long lost mother and brother. And finally, it is true that the disruption his identity creates brings him fulfillment in romantic love (Luciana), a more charitable attitude toward his inferiors,²⁷ and reunion and reconciliation with his family. However, in this early experiment within the festive mode, Ephesus is not a holiday inversion of the workaday world order; it is as much a workaday world as the Syracusian Antipholus and Dromio leave behind.²⁸ Only Antipholus of Syracuse's imagination populates the city with "nimble jugglers," "dark-working sorcerers," and "witches" with the power to "deceive the eye," "change the mind," or kill the soul (I. ii. 98-100). This mistaken perception of Ephesus is a key point because it fuels many of the mistakes and confusions that disrupt the smooth-running machinery of the city to reveal the corruption and inadequacy beneath the facade. Even more importantly, Antipholus' "misinterpretation" of the world he visits is actually not so far from the truth. There may be no actual "sorcerers" or "witches," but the play reveals that people in their marriage, friendship, princship, and other human relations have become "deform[ed]" in spirit rather than "body" (I. ii. 100). The unreliability, as well as the demotic nature, of the Ephesian world view is further underscored by the fact that the imagery of lawlessness in Antipholus' descriptions does not so much flout and jeer at festive kill-joys as emphasize this world's deceptiveness, malformation, and temptation to perdition.

Antipholus of Syracuse brings into this society the element that will flout and jeer its inadequate values and clarify the appropriate state of relations among humans and with nature.

I to the world am like a drop of water,
 That in the ocean seeks another drop,
 Who, falling there to find his fellow forth
 (Unseen, inquisitive), confounds himself.
 So I, to find a mother and a brother,
 In quest of them (unhappy), ah, lose myself.
 (I. ii. 34-39)

In his first moment alone, Antipholus expresses the alienation of the individual without community connection, while his imagery re-enforces humanity's roots in nature. Thus, in *The Comedy of Errors* Shakespeare's sojourner is not merely acted upon by a Saturnalian environment, but, though inadvertently, interacts with and reshapes his environment as well as himself.

The disruptions Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse unintentionally cause mock the Ephesian view by revealing how the

materialistic privileging of individual possession is itself a mockery of the legitimate sources of social power. The gaffes that the Syracusians and Ephesians make due to mistaken identities reveal the inadequacy, incompleteness, even oppression of a workaday world lacking "love," "holiday," and "imagination."²⁹ In this play, Shakespeare focuses on how a world solely devoted to the "mechanism of wealth" and personal property corrupts four particular holiday preoccupations: (1) fellowship and feasting, (2) love, (3) clarification of legitimate authority, and (4) natural cycles of time.

C. L. Barber notes that communal, unselfish sharing of bounty is an integral part of holiday both in traditional celebrations and in festive comedies such as *The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night*.³⁰ François Laroque locates a strong manifestation of the holiday emphasis on community in the sharing of food or "'hearty eating'": the pre-Lent gluttony of Shrove Tuesday, the "feasting" at the "church ale" on Whitsunday, sharing the Michaelmas goose and the Martinmas beef, the spectacular Christmastide feasts and wassailing, and various feastings in celebration of completion of sheep-shearing or at church wakes and ales.³¹ Significantly, *The Comedy of Errors* also depicts a connection between feasting and fellowship. However, the world view of Ephesus has corrupted and disempowered this festive device. Adriana's attempts to feast her husband leave her both to "fast" (I. ii. 89) physically and to "at home starve for a merry look" (II. i. 88), while he is merry with "some merchant" at "the mart" (4-5). Adriana ends up feasting the wrong Antipholus and sauces the meat at her board with bitterness and self-pity. Antipholus of Ephesus' feast with the courtesan springs from an attempt both to escape and to punish his wife (III. i. 104-21), and rather than sharing bounty with the courtesan, he takes her ring, promising an exchange he never fulfills (IV. iv. 81-96). The absence of "holiday," "love," and "imagination" from these feasts reveals Antipholus of Syracuse's assessment of Ephesus as deceptive, deformed, and pernicious to be more accurate than he realizes.

Antipholus of Ephesus' attempt to feast his companions at home is a particularly telling instance of how his brother's disruptive presence clarifies the corruption of feasting and fellowship in this world. When Antipholus invites his associates to dine, the language of their exchange is a paradigm of graciousness and good fellowship (III. ii. 20-29). However, the hollowness of Ephesian fellowship is brought out emphatically by the swiftness with which Antipholus' "But though my cates be mean, take them in good part; / Better cheer you may have, but not with better

heart" (28-29) swiftly degenerates into insults to his wife (58) and threats to beat his servants and break into his own house (50-80). Similarly, his friend Balthazar may declare, "I hold your dainties cheap, sir, and your welcome dear" (21), but he and Angelo are soon grumbling with equal alacrity: "Here is neither cheer, sir, not welcome: we would fain have either" and "In debating which was best, we shall part with neither" (66-67).

Interestingly, in studying this scene, Larry Champion stresses the emphasis on "appearances."³² The friends caution, "Herein you war against your reputation, / And draw within the compass of suspect / Th' unviolated honor of your wife" (III. i. 86-88). Although these friends do suggest Antipholus can uncover the truth later in private, the main reason for their urging discretion is that the people of this society will judge him harshly, superficially, and unjustly if he makes a scene (100-06). Similarly, Angelo, as well as another merchant, demonstrate just such superficial fellowship toward Antipholus of Ephesus when money and possessions are at stake. Once again, the visiting Syracusians are the catalyst to the scapegoating of materialistic values. Mistakenly identifying Antipholus of Syracuse as his Ephesian twin, Angelo the goldsmith hands over a gold chain that the latter had ordered, "graciously" insisting the payment be deferred (III. ii. 173-74). His charity, however, is bounded by both his monetary needs and his pride. Pressure to make the tide and sail forces the second merchant to press Angelo for repayment of debts under threat of imprisonment, which in turn forces Angelo to press Antipholus of Ephesus to pay him for the gold chain, which Antipholus is equally determined he has not received and consequently will not pay for. Further complicating matters, mix-ups between the two Dromios and their twin masters result in Antipholus of Ephesus being thrust into jail and both Dromios severely beaten, when the bailiff does not get his one-thousand-marks bail. What is interesting about this variation on Plautine comedy is that it becomes a festive stripping away of professions of friendship to reveal the selfishness, injustice and narrow-mindedness of people solely concerned for themselves and their possessions.

The merchant initiates his case with good fellowship, even evoking the festive spirit of sharing with his reference to "Pentecost," or Whitsuntide: "You know since Pentecost this sum is due, / And since I have not much importun'd you, / Nor now I had not, but that I am bound / To Persia and want gilders for my voyage" (IV. I. 1-4). However, in the next line he segues into a threat with amusing alacrity. "Therefore make present satisfaction, / Or I'll attach you by this officer" (5-6). The interchanges between Angelo

and Antipholus over the disputed chain are equally revealing. One of the men he had so graciously honored as friend little more than one hour before, Antipholus now automatically assumes is trying to cheat him: "A man is well hold that trusts you: / I promised your presence and the chain, but neither chain nor goldsmith came to me" (22-24). Angelo is only slightly more patient. After greeting Antipholus's initial hostility with "saving your merry humor" (27), the pressure of hurt pride, desire for reimbursement, and fear of imprisonment inspire Angelo to vociferate, "This touches me in reputation" (71), then "I would not spare my own brother in this case, / If he should scorn me so apparently" (77-78). Getting one's money and salvaging one's pride are all that really concern these characters. The merchant, driven by his need to leave expeditiously, is perfectly satisfied to throw Angelo into jail, no matter that the difficulty is not his fault. Angelo and Antipholus just assume that one is out to cheat the other; and neither tries to probe more deeply into the confusion to square confusing, hostile behaviors with earlier professions of friendship. Individualism and materialism combine to turn honor into Angelo's egotistical and vindictive "reputation" and Antipholus' self-defeating, unproductive challenge just to try to throw him into jail (74-75). These men are so concerned with not being cheated and spiting one another, that they are incapable of perceiving each others' innocence or the deeper truth in the situation. Only by breaking with their perception of selfishness, insincerity, and acquisitiveness as the natural guiding forces in life can they begin to get at the truth, fantastic as it may be. Thus Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse create confusion that reveals the disorder and viciousness beneath the smooth facade of the Ephesian order.

Antipholus of Syracuse's presence also sparks situations showing that in a world which ignores the "graciousness of community" love and marriage become a shell of respectability over a core rotten with resentment, possessiveness, and pride. Perhaps the most telling statement of this world's values and their painful superficiality comes in III. i. when Luciana mistakenly believes she is wooed by her brother-in-law. The usually high-minded Luciana does not preach fidelity, but she recommends prudently disguising one's adultery! "Bear a fair presence, though your heart be tainted; / Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint; / Be secret-false: what needs she be acquainted?" (13-15). According to the principles of this world, in marriage as in friendship, fidelity or sincerity in human ties are inconceivable. The best one can hope for is "vice" "apparell[ed]" "like virtue's harbinger" (12).

Significantly, however, Antipholus of Syracuse's presence undercuts this world view, for earnest love and loyalty to his family have brought him to Ephesus. Luciana's view of the true basis for human relations is as much an inaccurate vision of reality as her belief that Antipholus of Syracuse is actually her adulterous brother-in-law.

Further, Luciana's appeal to fiscal rather than humane considerations underscores the prostitution of human connections in marriage within the parameters of this world: "for her wealth's sake use her with more kindness" (6). True, marriages contemporary to the play were mainly arranged for power and money rather than love, and true marriage was seen as a microcosm of the kingdom, with the husband's authority paralleling that of the prince.³³ Nevertheless, to a certain degree, mutual respect and affection between spouses were valued by the society, and the husband, like the king, was not only awarded power but the responsibility to love and cherish those dependent on him.³⁴ In *The Comedy of Errors* Shakespeare uses the confusion created by the sojourners to "debunk" marriages in which spouses view each other as objects or possessions. Antipholus clearly sees his wife more as an object than as a human to whom he is emotionally obligated. When Antipholus first wooed her, she was something to be possessed, something for him to savor, to give him pleasure: "The time was once, when thou unurg'd wouldst vow / That never words were music to thine ear, / That never object pleasing in thine eye, / That never touch was welcome to thy hand, / That never sweet-savor'd in thy taste, / Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carv'd to thee" (II. ii. 113-18). Now that he possesses her and her wealth, "His company must do his minions grace, / Whilst [Adriana] at home must starve for a merry look" (87-88), and Adriana must be railed at as "shrewish" (III. i. 2) when she makes demands on his independence. Even Antipholus' attempt to make amends with Adriana suggests the hollowness of values that supplant human connections with acquisitions. Rather than giving her the time or affection she craves, he tries to buy her off with a golden chain. The inadequacy of this gesture resonates in Adriana's response: "you know he promised me a chain; / Would that alone a' love he would detain, / so he would keep fair quarter with his bed!" (II. i. 106-08). Even more interesting, Antipholus of Syracuse provokes a further revelation of the insincerity of this gesture. When Adriana embarrasses her husband in front of his business associates by mistakenly entertaining Antipholus of Syracuse instead of her husband, Antipholus of Ephesus spitefully promises to turn the necklace over to the courtesan he has been

entertaining instead of his wife (III. i. 117-19). His twin's presence triggers a demonstration that pride and control are more important to the Ephesian than communication and understanding.

Despite the legitimacy of her complaints, Adriana to some degree is also selfishly possessive. That Adriana's love is suffocatingly possessive and might indeed be part of the reason for her husband's valuing money-making over love is particularly suggested in her lament to Antipholus of Syracuse. Her description of human bonding initially portrays a beautiful devotion that even recalls the imagery of the twin's own plaint for reunion with family in I. ii. 35-40: ". . . as easy as mayst thou fall / A drop of water in the breaking gulf, / And take unmingled thence that drop again, / Without addition or diminishing, / As take from me thyself and not me too" (125-29). However, Adriana's devotion gradually curdles into a somewhat egocentric concern for her pride (130-46), and her solidarity degenerates into strangling, possessiveness: "I will fasten on this sleeve of thine: / Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine, / Whose weakness, married to thy [stronger] state / Makes me with thy strength to communicate" (173-76). Aemilia's tricking Adriana into admitting her tendency to overwhelm Antipholus with jealousy (V. i. 40-91) underscores that this wife is not entirely guiltless. Also important, Adriana joins forces with the courtesan to keep her husband completely in (her) hand and beyond the reach of others by having him committed to a madhouse (IV. iv)—removing him from the devil's possession into her own. These spouses demonstrate that marriage guided solely by principles of aggrandizement and selfish individualism creates a self-perpetuating prison or mad house of bitterness, cruelty, and narrow vision crying out for the relief of human connection. Adriana's words sum up the vicious circle: "my heart prays for him though my tongue do curse him" (IV. ii. 28).

The abbreviated courtship of Antipholus of Syracuse and Luciana is also relevant. Like the Orlandos and Orsinos of other festive comedies, Antipholus is inspired by his love of a female "voice of reason and tolerance . . . to forge a new identity through union with her own."³⁵ Still, Shakespeare gives this relationship a festive twist, for Luciana's mistaken understanding over who is courting her challenges her own intolerance. In II. i., Luciana berates her sister for failing to live up to a Pauline demand of wifely submission,³⁶ ignoring Adriana's legitimate complaint that her husband neglects his responsibility to honor and cherish her. Adriana wisely sums up the naiveté and intolerance of her sister's view with: "A wretched soul, bruis'd with adversity, / We bid be quiet when we hear it cry; / But were we burdn'd with weight of

pain, / As much, or more, we should ourselves complain" (II. i. 34-37). The truth of Adriana's words is given subtle credence when Luciana's idealism is tested by Antipholus of Syracuse's wooing her. Luciana is certainly virtuous enough to resist what she supposes an invitation to adultery, but her relying on expediency rather than morality reveals that her world view has been tainted by the materialism and superficiality of Ephesus. In actuality, she can no more adhere to ideal behavior than her sister can.

Typical of festive comedies, authority itself is "flout[ed] and flee[r][ed]"³⁷ in *The Comedy of Errors*, but specifically in ways revealing the inadequacy and injustice of an order privileging materialistic individualism over "the graciousness of community." The law condemning Egeon to death is not only an example of old comedy's "harsh or irrational law,"³⁸ but also reveals the flaws of the predominating Ephesian and Syracusan materialistic world view. In I. i. 5-21 the Duke details the inception of the law, revealing it as the outgrowth of vindictive trade wars in which both Syracusan and Ephesian governments greedily attempt to snatch up as much booty as possible from innocent merchants. Thus, valuing money and possession over compassion and human connections supplants justice and ethics. That "Egeon is . . . the helpless but blameless victim of the arbitrary law that condemns him"³⁹ is further emphasized by the fact that his "end / [w]as wrought by nature, not by vile offense"; the coincidence of a storm, not his desire to do mischief brought him under the sway of this law. Even the Duke admits the injustice of Egeon's suffering and regrets his inability to counter this injustice (I. i. 14-45). His "crown," his "oath," his "dignity" are corrupted and warped by an order founded on acquisition. This world, lacking community and compassion, completely disempowers humans and forces them to violate what they know to be moral; society becomes a destroyer rather than a protector.

Similarly the authority of husband over wife and master over servant also receives festive scrutiny. The resentment and bitterness resulting from Antipholus' and Adriana's self-preoccupied violation of their marital responsibilities, exposed and clarified by the confusion the Syracusians create, has been discussed above. The connection between master and servant is also important. Neither Dromio seems to encounter the right Antipholus two times running, to the painful regret of both servants. Although each follows orders loyally and correctly in collecting ropes, one-thousand-marks bail, or masters for a mistress, each, through no fault of his own, brings the wrong item to the wrong master or the

wrong master to the wrong mistress and is at best excoriated, at worst so severely beaten that it seems they "have nothing for [their] service but blows" (IV. iv. 31-32). Unquestionably, Shakespeare is not a crusader for bondsmen's liberation; still, this treatment hardly mirrors the bond of "charity" and "obligation" in return for service and obedience⁴⁰ marking the festive connection between master and servant.

Finally, the perception of time in *The Comedy of Errors* reveals the necessity of leavening the workaday world of commerce and individualism with the festive recognition of Nature's cycle of renewal and rebirth. In a solely mercantile world, time becomes humanity's enemy, pushing, driving, limiting, becoming something that must be struggled against, often at the cost of human relations. The merchant pushes and threatens Angelo for his money because "[t]he hour steals on, I pray you, sir, dispatch" (IV. i. 52). His "business cannot brook this dalliance," so that if he does not receive the money owed him he will "leave [his debtors] to the [arresting] officer" (61). In this world people are capital or losses, while time, "wind and tide" (46) are almost enemies that must be placated. Egeon's life, because of trade wars, is not so much measured as circumscribed by time: first to the cycle of a day, then to the cycle of an hour. Finally, over thirty years of Aemilia's life have been confined within an abbey. Even though her role of abbess is powerful and respected, her description of that tenure as "thirty-three years . . . in travail / . . . and till this present hour / My heavy burthen ne'er delivered" (V. i. 401-03) indicates that she perceives reunion with her family as her true, best destiny.

Perhaps most importantly in *The Comedy of Errors*, Nature's cycle ultimately triumphs and resanctifies the relations human beings have corrupted with their misdirected values and misapprehensions. Although Nature had separated the family of the Antipholi many years previously, it also reunites them under circumstances that teach the festive values of community. Nature wrecks Egeon's ship and brings him imprisonment at the beginning of the play, but that imprisonment ultimately leads to the reuniting of his family. Similarly, Antipholus of Syracuse travels without his father for seven years to retrieve lost loved ones and to rebuild his family. Seven years is the age at which Elizabethans believed the child first attained the potential to reason. Consequently, at this age children were separated according to gender to begin to learn about their adult roles.⁴¹ His experiences in Ephesus lead him to recover his past, rethink his way of interpreting the world, and to move into the future with the possibility of creating his own family with Luciana. Significantly, the reunion

of families (parents and children, wives and husbands, masters and servants) at the end of the day transforms the twenty-four hour cycle from a limitation of life to a symbol of rebirth and continuous regeneration.

The final reclamation of time at the conclusion of the play demonstrates the need to value the green world spirit of community. Critics have argued that few to none of the characters change⁴² or that Shakespeare handles the search for identity in an unsophisticated manner.⁴³ Nevertheless, characters do significantly learn and grow as a result of the Syracusians precipitating the confusion that brings out into the open the inadequacy and perniciousness of possessive world views. Adriana, her resentment bursting the glaze of propriety, must now admit the Abbess "did betray me to my own reproof" (V. i. 90). Antipholus of Ephesus, after learning of the reason for his wife's "abusing" him, may not directly forgive her, but his generosity in offering to ransom his father and returning the courtesan's diamond with "much thanks for [his] good cheer," his new-found kindness to Dromio, and his brotherly exit to join the festival (390-414) all suggest he has been regenerated by the holiday spirit. The Duke even promises to reclaim the powers of kingship to decency and humanity by compassionately pardoning Egeon in response to Antipholus of Ephesus' offer of generosity (393). Thus the reunion and reconciliation of split halves pave the way for the reconciliation and renewal of society: twin brothers to twin brothers, husbands with wives, lover with lover, master to servant, prince to subject, holiday with workaday worlds. In addition, concluding the play with Aemilia's invitation to "all . . . that by this sympathized one day's error / Have suffered wrong" to "go keep us company" at "a gossips' feast" where "we shall make full satisfaction" (398-406) symbolizes the festive spirit's reclamation and reconciliation of life that had become limited and incomplete.

Particularly important, Shakespeare establishes a seal of Christian approval on the closing feast by linking it closely with two sacraments that, for the Anglican Church, powerfully mark rebirth into a Christian communion with God and humans: Baptism and the Eucharist. The connection to Baptism is the most obvious. Aemilia characterizes her celebration of her liberation from the convent and her fellows' liberation from imprisoning world views and a harsh law as a "gossips feast," which the editor glosses as a "baptismal feast."⁴⁴ The significance of the sacrament of Baptism runs even deeper than a simple reference. The play's conflicts and their resolutions echo the manner in which sixteenth century Anglican beliefs concerning divine absolution, reconciliation, and salvation are expressed in this sacred rite.

According to the 1552 *Book of Common Prayer* and its 1559 variation,⁴⁵ Baptism absolves a child of its sins and welcomes it into a Christian community that will help that child maintain the sacred state to which the sacrament has translated it.⁴⁶ The Baptismal Rite characterizes water as a divine tool. As God has used water to sanctify as well as save his chosen ones, the waters of Baptism sanctify the child, freeing it from original sin.⁴⁷ Further, Baptism's drowning of the sinful human self and resurrection of the individual into a sacred Christian community is described as enacting the liberation from sin Christ brought to humanity through his death and resurrection: "that as he died and rose again for us, so should we which are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living."⁴⁸ Thus, Baptism would be seen not only as a rite of absolution or purification, but as an initiation into a communion with a supportive God and humanity:

Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that these children be regenerate and grafted [grafted] into the body of Christ's congregation: let us give thanks unto God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto almighty God, that they may lead the rest of their life according to this beginning.⁴⁹

Shakespeare links the rebirth of the characters and their society in *The Comedy of Errors* to contemporary conceptions of Baptism in several ways. First and most obviously, as noted above, Aemilia describes her separation from her family as "thirty-three years . . . travail" (V. I. 401) and characterizes the celebration of their reunion as a baptismal celebration. The characters' rebirth is not linked to this sacrament solely in terms of babes brought to the baptismal font. Throughout the play, as in the sacrament of Baptism, water plays an important role in symbolizing the death of an isolated, darker self and a rebirth into an identity linked to a supportive, virtuous community. As noted earlier, Antipholus of Syracuse speaks of a submerging himself in "the ocean" in hopes of being reborn into the most essential unit of community, an intact family (I. ii. 34-40). Further, husband and wife, children and parents, brother and brother, are apparently drowned in oceanic storms, only to be doubly reborn when this same ocean once again reunites them in Ephesus. They are reborn in the sense that those thought lost to death are given new birth in the eyes of those who thought them lost. More importantly, they are reborn spiritually by their rejection of past values of pride, greed, materialism, and cynicism. In fact, rather than being reborn to a *place*

in the Christian community, these characters actually give their society itself a second nativity as a Christian community. Lucia's decision to treat her husband with respect and love, her husband's decision to treat his servant and perhaps his wife with patience and kindness, and the Duke's decision to circumvent a harsh law based on greed and vindictiveness show individual resolutions to "forsake the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all [the] covetous desires of the same, [and] the carnal desires of the flesh, . . ." ⁵⁰ actually giving new birth to a community founded on Christian virtue, "stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity." ⁵¹

The final feast's links to the Anglican Eucharist are not stated directly but are still significant. The comedy's view of the final feast as a consolidation of individuals' rebirths into a compassionate community echoes the concept of Christian solidarity inherent in the Anglican conception of the sacrament of Holy Communion. For the sixteenth-century audience, Holy Communion is a sacred feast where the individual celebrates a bond with the divine within the context of a communal celebration. For example, in disputing claims that the priest alone should be a communicant, Thomas Cranmer portrays the Lord's Supper as a bonding of the community in its celebration of an uplifting mergence with the divine: "'not only the priest, but also as many beside as communicate with him, may be fulfilled with grace and heavenly benediction.'" ⁵²

The conclusion of *The Comedy of Errors* also evokes the Eucharist, much as it evokes Baptism, by celebrating a death of "the old man" ⁵³ and a rebirth into a purer being closer to God. Thus, Thomas Cranmer cites the following prayer from the Communion rite: "'O Lord, that thing which we have taken in our mouth, let us take it also with pure minds, that this communion may purge us from our sins, and make us partakers of heavenly remedy.'" ⁵⁴ Similarly, in *Comedy*, the characters suffer alleged deaths in drowning, layered over the death of the selves that valued greed, pride, and selfishness. Also similarly, these characters are reborn to their friends, family, and society in general when their physical deaths are revealed as false, and they reject their deathly spiritual states to be reborn to form a community based on charity, faith, hope, and love.

Herbert Coursen's discussion of the significance of Eucharistic reverberations in Shakespeare's plays raises points especially relevant to understanding the sacramental symbolism of the play's final feast. Coursen observes that before one is allowed to partake of communion/Communion with Christ and his Church, the indi-

vidual must publicly or privately repent his or her sins. Coursen's citing the portion of the liturgy that requires the "Curate" to call out "open and notorious evil liver[s]" or any "betwixt whome he perceyveth malice and hatred to reigne"⁵⁵ in order to inspire recognition of and repentance for one's sins is especially pertinent to *The Comedy of Errors*. Aemilia, invested with the holiness of an Abbess, also calls out the "malice and hatred" and the sinful living of her daughter-in-law's possessivness and vindictiveness. In addition, Aemilia's subsequent revelation of her husband's, her sons', and their servants' identities leads to their recognition and repentance of personal flaws that in turn opens the way for a celebration of their union in a joyous feast. The sincere repentance, forgiveness, and loving fellowship has even prompted the duke to put aside the vengeful law threatening Egeon and strengthening the strife between Ephesus and Syracuse. Coursen's summation of the priest's invitation to repentance could also describe benefits that Aemilia's feast promises: "sins are repented, love and charity replace hatred and malice; the thrust toward a new life beyond the sacrament is emphasized; the community of God and congregation is implied."⁵⁶ This sentiment is playfully but no less powerfully expressed in the play's concluding couplet by even the lowliest of figures, the servant Dromios. Not only have both been included in the feast by their social superiors, but both forswear a proud or selfish struggle for ascendancy. Instead, they enter the feast honoring and loving each other: "We came into the world like brother and brother; And now let's go hand in hand not one before the other" (V. i. 425-26). The play ends by layering Christian sacred over holiday and generic patterns to create an intriguing variation on the social reconciliation marking the conclusion of festive comedy.

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Notes

¹C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Form and Its Relations to Social Custom* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972), p. 11 and François Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), p. 198.

²Larry Champion, *The Evolution of Shakespeare's Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 22, 25; Francis Fergusson, "Two Comedies (*The Comedy of Errors* and *Much Ado About Nothing*)" in *Shakespeare's Comedies*, ed. Laurence Lerner (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1967), pp. 32-37; and Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 163-66. References can be found linking *The Comedy*

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of *Errors* to holiday, but only tangentially, in C. L. Barber's and Richard Wheeler's *The Whole Journey: Shakespeare's Power of Development* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1989) and in Anne Barton's introduction to the play, "Introduction to *The Comedy of Errors*" in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972). Barber and Richard Wheeler acknowledge there is "a special situation like a holiday" in *The Comedy of Errors* but still do not classify the play as a festive comedy (p. 71). Similarly, Anne Barton discusses some specific elements of festive comedy (the sojourn to the exotic land, the search for love and identity), but does not explicitly place this play with other festive comedies (p. 81).

³Frye, *Anatomy*, pp. 166 and 43.

⁴Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman, vol. 1 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 14-15, 341-42.

⁵Barber, *Festive*, p. 23.

⁶Barber, *Festive*, pp. 6-15.

⁷Barber, *Festive*, pp. 245 and 8-9.

⁸Barber, *Festive*, p. 10.

⁹Laroque, p. 194.

¹⁰Laroque, p. 194.

¹¹Laroque, p. 28.

¹²Barber, *Festive*, p. 167.

¹³Laroque, p. 174.

¹⁴Laroque, p. 28.

¹⁵Barber, *Festive*, pp. 166-72.

¹⁶Laroque, p. 172.

¹⁷Barber, *Festive*, p. 23.

¹⁸Laroque, p. 116.

¹⁹Laroque, pp. 30-33, 87-88; Barber, *Festive*, pp. 21-24.

²⁰Barber, *Festive*, pp. 21-24; Laroque, pp. 36-37, 116-17

²¹Barber, *Festive*, p. 24.

²²Barber, *Festive*, pp. 254-56.

²³Barber, *Festive*, p. 170.

²⁴Barber, *Festive*, p. 170.

²⁵Barber, *Festive*, p. 167.

²⁶William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors in The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972); all subsequent quotations from the play will be cited parenthetically in the text.

²⁷Barton, pp. 81, 82.

²⁸Antipholus and his father, representatives of Syracuse, are both merchants. Additionally, Duke Egeon's description of Syracuse's starting the fatal trade wars with Ephesus (I. i. 5-21) indicates that Syracuse is also guided by a materialistic, mercantile world view.

²⁹Laroque, p. 194.

³⁰Barber, *Festive*, pp. 21-22, 163-91, and 250-54.

³¹Laroque, pp. 48-49, 103-04, 138-40, 142-45, 145-54, and 155-62.

³²Champion, pp. 14-16.

³³Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1977), pp. 151-54.

³⁴Stone, pp. 135-38 and E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Random House, n. d.), pp. 32-37.

³⁵Barton, p. 81.

³⁶Barton, p. 81.

³⁷Barber, *Festive*, p. 7.

³⁸Frye, *A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & the World, 1965), p. 73.

³⁹Wheeler and Barber, *The Whole Journey*, p. 80.

⁴⁰Laroque, p. 40.

⁴¹Steven Mullaney, "Mourning and Misogyny: The Final Progress of Elizabeth 1600-07," (paper presented at the 1992 MLA Convention, New York) and Stone, p. 168.

⁴²Champion, p. 17; Fergusson, pp. 36-37.

⁴³Frye, *Natural*, pp. 58 and 77-78.

⁴⁴V. i. 406.

⁴⁵Peter J. Jagger, ed. *Christian Initiation 1552-1969: Rites of Baptism and Confirmation Since the Reformation Period* (Holy Trinity Church, London: S. P. C K., 1970), pp. 11-18. The text of "The Ministration of Baptism" that I have cited is from the 1552 version of the rite in the *Book of Common Prayer*, with 1559 emendations added in brackets. According to Jagger, the next significant emendations were made in 1604 and thus would not be applicable to the 1592-94 *The Comedy of Errors*.

⁴⁶The baptism rite not only requests that "God the Father" absolved the subjects of original sin, when "they are baptized with water and the Holy Ghost," but also stresses the communal support by fellow Christians for new member of the Church: the baptized are "received into Christ's holy church, and made lively members of the same," p. 13. They become members of a community. Similarly, the wording toward the close of the rite especially stresses communal support. The congregation promises that "[w]e receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock and do sign him with the sign of the cross. . . ." Further, the Christian community promises to lend spiritual support so that the baptized subject may remain steadfast in faith: "[w]e . . . do sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that he shall not be ashamed to confess faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end," p. 17.

⁴⁷"Ministration," pp. 13-14.

⁴⁸"Ministration," p. 18.

⁴⁹"Ministration," p. 17.

⁵⁰"Ministration," p. 16.

⁵¹"Ministration," p. 14.

⁵²Thomas Cranmer, "Answer to the Fifteen Articles of the Rebels, Devon" (1549) in *The Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1846), p. 171. See also Herbert R. Coursen, Jr.'s analysis of Richard Hooker's views of communion as a simultaneous bonding of the community and an uplifting merge with Christ in *Christian Ritual and the World of Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell Univ. Press), pp. 20-21.

⁵³"Ministration," p. 18 and Coursen, p. 20. In fact in "Answer to the Fifteen Articles," Cranmer even portrays Communion as re-enforcing and spiritually nourishing Baptism's purifying re-enactment of Christ's death and resurrection to free Christians from sin, p. 176.

⁵⁴"Answer to the Fifteen Articles," p. 172. Also see Coursen's discussion of how sixteenth century conceptions of Holy Communion and the conventions of comedy are both shaped by a pattern of struggle for purification leading to inclusion in a supportive, morally sound community, pp. 15-24.

⁵⁵"Elizabethan Communion Service" from *The Book of Common Prayer*, quoted in Coursen, p. 16. See also G. J. Cuming, *A History of Anglican Liturgy* (New York: Macmillan, St. Martin's Press, 1969), pp. 63-64.

⁵⁶Coursen, p. 17.

Calling and Commonwealth in *As You Like It*: A Late Elizabethan Political Play by A. Stuart Daley

This paper proposes that in *As You Like It* Shakespeare designed a comedy about politics in the contemporary sense of pertaining to the art of governance and the state of the commonwealth. His subject is the problem of redeeming a sovereign dukedom from the tyranny of a usurper and, on the parallel level of an eminent family, the freeing of an orphan youngest brother from the oppression of his elder brother, now in *loco parentis*. Accordingly, the expository first act details the infection of the body politic by the vices typical of tyrants, whether public or domestic, namely ambitious pride, the sin against God, and anger, envy, and avarice, the sins against kinsmen and neighbors. According to another venerable model, the usurping younger brother personifies Force, and the fratricidal eldest brother personifies Fraud; both are guilty of treachery against country and kindred.¹

It might seem puzzling that a political reading of *As You Like It* has not been ventured hitherto. Two reasons suggest themselves. First the long dominance of the views of what might be called the Bonny Prizer school because its criticism has been inspired by the Wrestler's chatty hearsay (I. i. 98, 99, "news," "news"; 114, 117, "they say," "they say")² about the court-in-exile. These critics have generally concurred in representing the exiles as camping in a pastoral *locus amoenus*, enjoying an idyllic (idle?) holiday of hunting, impromptu discussions, and wooing. Second, having been led down the pastoral path by these interpretations, we have either overlooked or not taken seriously first-act exposition of the issues at stake and the opposing parties.

A simple lack of attention, therefore, may explain why the opening discourse on the denial of Orlando's education and, consequently, the whole first act have been either neglected or misconstrued, a deficiency of which Louis Adrian Montrose very usefully reminds us.

The compact early scenes expose hostilities on the manor and in the court that threaten to destroy both the family and the state. Although modern productions have shown that these scenes can be powerful and effective in the theatre, modern criticism has repeatedly downplayed their seriousness and significance. They are often treated merely as Shakespeare's mechanism for propelling his characters—and us—into the forest as

quickly and efficiently as possible. Thus Harold Jenkins, in his influential essay on the play, writes of 'the inconsequential nature of the action' and 'Shakespeare's haste to get ahead': for him, the plot's interest consists in Shakespeare's ability to get most of it over in the first act.³

In order to rectify what he acutely perceives to be ill-grounded and unenlightening criticism, Montrose undertakes a fresh approach to the play through a new reading of the first seventy-three lines taken in their historical context. Montrose concludes that, "In *As You Like It*, the initial conflict arises from the circumstances of inheritance by primogeniture."⁴ Montrose quotes protests against the inequities of primogeniture, and infers that

Shakespeare's opening strategy is to plunge his characters and his audience into the controversy about a structural principle of Elizabethan personal, family, and social life. . . . In the course of *As You Like It*, Orlando's gentility is preserved and his material well-being is enhanced. Shakespeare uses the machinery of pastoral romance to remedy the lack of fit between deserving and having, between Nature and Fortune.⁵

An important value of Montrose's essay rests in its demonstration of direct connections between *As You Like It* and the real world of its day in its rebuttal of the romantic insistence that the play presents a patchwork pastoral with nothing more profound to offer than the "perfect happiness of the simple life, an illusion, much mocked at, but still cherished."⁶ On the other hand, Montrose's thesis that "the expression and resolution of sibling conflict and its social implications are integral to the play's form and function,"⁷ important as it is, poses in turn difficult questions and inconsistencies.

While sibling conflict consequent on inheritance by primogeniture may be the immediate cause or condition of Orlando's deprivations, it never in itself becomes an issue, nor can it account for the play's conflicts in general. Instead, on the positive side, primogeniture determines both the legal rights and status in the hierarchy of the two dukes and their daughters as well as the de Boys brothers. Thus we know that the "old" duke is unquestionably the legitimate, that is, hereditary sovereign, and that while Celia ranks as a royal princess, her cousin Rosalind is the *de jure* heir apparent to the throne. Furthermore, the ultimate restoration of the lands, revenues, and dignities of the exiles (cf. I. i. 102-03; V. iv. 163-64, 174, and 186) unarguably endorses the rightfulness of their inheritance. Above all, the proposed thesis cannot explain

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why Oliver discriminates so harshly against Orlando, yet not against his next younger brother, a glaring inconsistency announced (therefore) at the very outset when Orlando says, "My brother Jaques he keeps at school, and report speaks goldenly of his profit" (I. i. 5-6). Oliver's selective animosity alerts us to deeper, more private motivations. I propose instead that the issue introduced in lines 1-73 springs from the denial, for whatever reasons, of the education appropriate for a youth whose gentle condition of birth coupled with his exceptional personal gifts mark him fit to govern in the realm. By denying Orlando's vocation, Oliver defies a paramount public and patriotic interest, the training of future servants of the Crown.

Orlando pointedly insists on his status as a gentleman and, moreover, on his status as the son of a distinguished minister of the Crown because it defines his brother's duty to him. When he tells the hostile duke that he is proud to be Sir Rowland's son and "would not change that calling" (I. i. 233), he probably uses "calling" in the two senses of the patronymic and the office. Aptly enough, in Shakespeare's story source the duty of one of his calling is summed up by Sir John of Bordeaux for the guidance of his sons:

Let your Countries care be your hearts content, and
thinke that you are not borne for your selues, but to
leuell your thoughts to be loyall to your Prince, careful
for the Common weale, and faithfull to your friends; so
shall *France* say, these men are as excellent in vertues as
they be exquisite in features.⁸

These criteria for the ruling class set a standard for its representatives in the play.

The betrayal of such duties by the illegitimate new duke and the unnatural (IV. iii. 123, 124) eldest brother has brought on the malignancy afflicting the realm. The duty to take care for the common weal, the public good, governs everyone in the play because the dukedom mirrors a commonwealth of people, in analogical parlance a "body politic," associated structurally in a pyramidal hierarchy of estates or classes, the aristocracy forming the apex just below the prince, and the large mass of rural and unskilled laborers forming the base that supports the intermediate and higher degrees of people. For centuries, a national society had been conceived of as organological in nature, each class or member cooperating with the others to maintain a harmony of effort conducive to the common profit.⁹

The solution to be worked out by the drama, if a catastrophic ending is to be averted, is the restoration of the common weal

within the constraints of the Tudor prohibition of active resistance to authority, however illegitimate and tyrannical it might be, and in accordance with the Tudor doctrine that its social cohesion and general welfare depend upon the dedication of its *individual members* to leading a life governed by reason and (therefore) moderation, each one contentedly accepting his divinely allotted status in the hierarchy, rendering obedience to those set over him in degree and authority, and discharging as ably as possible the public and private duties of his calling.¹⁰ Of these means, the theoretical cornerstone of a well regulated commonwealth was the general observance of the doctrine of calling or vocation. Today these words mean little more than one's trade or profession, or a sense of fitness for a particular employment, but for the Tudor age and much of the seventeenth century, too, the socio-economic theory of calling is said to have been nothing less than "the central organizing concept in Reformed social ethics."¹¹ The concept is rooted in biblical injunction; the Geneva Bible gloss on 2 *Thessalonians* 3:10 sums it up: "Then by the worde of God none ought to liue idelly, but ought to giue him self to some vocacion, to get his liuing by, and to do good to others."¹² Orlando makes the essential point at the outset when he objects that idleness "mar[s] that which God made" (I. i. 32-33).

Vocation was a recurrent topic in Tudor sermons and books, but two specific treatises of interest appeared during Elizabeth's reign, Aegremont Ratcliffe's translation of Pierre de la Place's *Politique discourses, treating of the differences and inequalities of vocations* (London, 1578; STC 15230.5), and the ultimate exposition of 1 *Corinthians* 7:20: "Let euery man abide in that calling wherein he was called," in *A Treatise of the Vocations, or Callings of Men, with the sorts and kinds of them, and the right vse thereof*, by the prestigious Puritan preacher and theologian of Cambridge, William Perkins (d. 1602).¹³ For Elizabethans, two frequent reminders of this duty were the joining of degree and vocation in the homily on good order and obedience (1547) and the pledge made by every child at confirmation to "learn and labor truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life, under which it shall please God to call me."¹⁴

In brief, as Ratcliffe asserts in his dedication to Secretary Walsingham, "There is not one, who . . . is not secretly by the unspeakable providence of God, called to some vocation: that is to say, to one manner of living, or other." This "manner of living" comprehended not merely one's office or work, but also one's obligations to one's family, class, community, and church. The corollary followed that "no one may or can leave his owne, to take to him his felowes office or charge" on which Stephen L. Collins

comments, "This is the ethical imperative of Tudor order theory."¹⁵ The imperative perpetuated the medieval ideal of an organological community sanctioned by "a certain bond to linke men together, which Saint Paul calleth the bond of peace and the bond of perfection, namely, loue" (Perkins 732). In a social order bonded by love, of course, there ought not to be a stranger, an *Aliena*: "No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."

This long standing concept of mutual need and symbiotic obligation explains, relates, and unifies the diverse elements of the play, some of which have appeared improvised, impromptu, even implausible to our ego-centered culture. Just as the conflicts essentially issue from the egoistic repudiation of the duties of vocation and degree, so the solutions follow from the constancy of the protagonists to their callings, as I hope to show. To a ruling-class audience, it is the key to the problem set by the first act, the restoration of Le Beau's "better world than this" (I. ii. 284). It is a perennial problem already dramatized by Shakespeare's English history plays, and about to be examined in *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*. For comedy, such an academic subject might seem impossibly undramatic, and certainly *As You Like It* has long been faulted for lack of plotting and action, but in fact it offered exploitable theatrical analogues.

To begin with, the playwright arranged a cast of characters that brings on stage a cross-section of Elizabethan society that, although limited in number, is diversified enough in rank and circumstance to replicate very closely—as it happens—the hierarchy of degrees and vocations enumerated in one of the sermons appointed to be read during the year:

Every degre of people, in their vocacion, callyng and office, hath appoynted to them their duetie and ordre. Some are in high degre, some in lowe, some kynges and princes, some inferiors and subjectes, priestes and laimen, masters and servauntes, fathers and chyl dren, husbandes and wifes, riche and poore, and every one have nede of other: so that in all thynges is to be lauded and praysed the goodly ordre of God, without the whiche, no house, no citie, no common wealth can continue and endure.¹⁶

These degrees are represented, and in the course of the play every one from duke to rustic comes to "have nede of other." Indeed, by the manipulation of a plot conducive to repeated exercise of pity and mercy, *As You Like It* dramatizes the need of each for other to an extent unsurpassed in the canon save for *King Lear*, its counterpart in the tragic mode.

The figures most implicated in the political issues of the play Shakespeare took over from Lodge's *Rosalynde*, drastically altering them to suit his purposes. Thus all are purged of incompatible pastoralism save Silvius and Phebe, who will be purged in the play. Two far-reaching changes in personal relationships are, first, the substitution of primogeniture for Lodge's partible or gavelkind inheritance, and, second, turning the dukes into brothers, the elder becoming a philosophical prince seemingly as well-read as Queen Elizabeth. Lodge's "Norman" wrestler gets a name and a share of the unscrupulousness of the two tyrants, while Alinda is renamed Celia in token of the qualities she exercises. Shakespeare transmutes the stereotype pastoral shepherd Coridon into Corin, an idealistic yet practical farm laborer, and refines Lodge's pugnacious Adam—handy with a poleax—into a patient servitor who is the model of his calling.

Aside from bit parts, Shakespeare rounded out his model by adding five familiar types. Two neatly balance each other: a court clown and Jaques, a type of melancholy gentleman crossed here with the libertine Italianate traveler. The other three represent rustic types, namely Audrey, a goat girl ambitious to rise above her station, William, a droll example of the prospering peasantry of the Forest of Arden, and the vicar of a chapel.

Finally, mention of other pursuits and social types imaginatively evokes the larger world of the dukedom—that is, England. A few, like the extravagant city woman or the lawyer sleeping between terms, were staples of estates satire and sermons, while others serve to elucidate or color a situation. Thus the de Boys' hinds and horse trainers betoken a magnate's county seat, and Corin's churlish master who rejects the Christian duty of hospitality records the new kind of strictly profit-motivated farmer who ignored the social code that charged the squire with care for the welfare of his laborers and the neighboring poor.¹⁷ (Plotwise, his passing notice adroitly sets up the duty and occasion for subsequent acts of "sacred pity" [II. iv and vii].) Ultimately, calling alone sufficiently accounts for the *deus ex machina* in the guise of "an old religious man" that providentially prevents a catastrophic ending at the critical moment.

The stage resources for revealing the status and calling of a character were rich and conventional. *As You Like It* makes full use of nomenclature and titles, class-revealing speech, dress, and behavior, occupational garb and gear, the physical marks of daily activities, and mental traits popularly associated with a particular vocation. Of the latter, surely the mockery of Jaques' list (IV. i. 10-14) of the humors peculiar to each of five professions and the fashionable lady was due to its aptness to the composition of his first-night audience.

Some characters are addressed simply by the nomenclature of their callings. At his first entry, Corin is greeted by name, but thereafter only as shepherd. The vicar's punning appellation, Martext—a spoiler or botcher of the text—identifies Sir Oliver with the notorious “dumb dogs” or “lack-latin” priests (cf. III. ii. 319) who were a scandal of the Elizabethan church.¹⁸ It should be noted here that for the play's auditors the vicar is the *only Oliver*. Orlando's eldest brother is spoken of or to throughout the play *only* in terms of his calling in the de Boys family as a brother and the head (“your worship”) of the house.

Two attributes of class and calling, one symbolic, one factual, rest on contrasting physical features. Rosalind's light and fair complexion symbolically distances her from the dark and foul (III. iii. 39-41; III. v. 62, 66) Audrey and Phebe. In five other instances, Shakespeare relates hands to status with painterly detail; these are Rosalind's white hand, the courtier's perfumed hands, the dairy maid's chapped, the shepherd's hard and greasy with suint and tar, and the rural housewife's hands that look like old gloves.

At the end of the troubled nineties, in the dogwatch of the reign, the play does not ignore its audience's awareness of skepticism about the regenerative efficacy of traditional hierarchical and altruistic ideals. In fact, the century had experienced such social instability from the self-interested pursuit of personal profit and prestige that by 1555 social climbers were being called “Vpstartes, a term lately inuented,” and “crowish start ups . . . from the dunghill,” and the like.¹⁹ Accordingly, Shakespeare provided a spokesman for the empirical thinking that, appealing to “experience” (IV. i. 26), accepted the natural primacy of the ego and its disregard for others, that is, the cynical libertine and railing melancholic Jaques. A footloose commentator who shirks the liabilities of commitment, Jaques represents the dissenter from the Elizabethan orthodoxy of Duke Senior. Their philosophies are presented by principle and symbol in the thematically crucial opening scene of act two, and so diverse are their convictions that the play's resolution for good or ill depends upon whose shall finally prevail.

The banished duke's christian *consolatio* accepts adversity with content because there is “good in everything,” as is evident from hieroglyphs in the forest's book of creatures such as trees, brooks, and stones—and toad. The duke is “happy” because he exemplifies a princely patience (cf. V. iv. 187).²⁰ First Lord then reports the moralizing of “the melancholy Jaques” on the spectacle of a wounded stag abandoned by his “velvet friends,” the careless herd. The deer, too, offer hieroglyphic meanings, spiritual and, as a herd, political. For Jaques the deer mirror the velvet courtiers and the “fat and greasy

citizens" of London. But he draws therefrom conclusions repugnant to the duke's Christian-humanistic "translation."

Jaques translates the spectacle to mean, if anything, that Nature teaches frigid self-interest, certainly not benevolence towards an unfortunate friend, and indeed the saying was "Everyman for himself and God for us all," a selfishness condemned by the orthodox like Perkins, who writes, "And that common saying, Euery man for himselfe, and God for vs all, is wicked, and is directed against the end of euery calling, or honest kind of life" (728. 2). Jaques pessimistically concludes that, "'Tis right, . . . thus misery doth part / The flux of company" (II. i. 51-52). Nowadays, "'Tis just the fashion" to spurn the unfortunate. In fact, both pagan and Christian authorities censured such antisocial behavior. Thus Cicero rules that, "we are certainly forbidden by Nature's law to wrong our neighbor," adding that the rejection of common ties and social obligations "demolishes the whole structure of civil society."²¹ Perkins identifies the benevolent design of Nature in terms of the proper fulfillment of one's vocation: "the workes of our callings [must] be profitable, not onely to the doers but to the commonwealth. This the law of nature teacheth" (741. 2). On the authority of experience, however, Jaques proposes or accedes to such a rejection of the bond of love as being both natural and socially acceptable.

At this point, in the political vein, Jaques introduces the first of three analogues for the commonwealth that permeated Tudor political discourse. Having invoked a gregarious-animal similitude, the deer herd, to image ruthless self-interest, he extends his strictures to the ubiquitous idea of the body politic: "Thus most invectively he pierceth through / The body of [the] country, city, court" (II. i. 58-59). Here, "body" denotes its common political sense, as in the opening of Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Book Named the Governor*: "A public weal is a body living, compact or made of sundry estates and degrees of men, which is disposed by the order of equity and governed by the rule and moderation of reason." William Perkins gives a typical explanation of the analogy between the commonwealth and nature's masterpiece of unity in diversity, the human body.

In mans bodie, there be sundrie parts and members, and euery one hath his seuerall vse and office, which it performeth not for it selfe, but for the good of the whole bodie; as the office of the eye, is to see, the eare to heare, and the foot to go. Now all societies of men, are bodies; a family is a body, and so is euery particular Church a bodie, and the common-wealth also: and in these bodies there be seuerall members, which are men walking in

seuerall callings and offices, the execution whereof must tend to the happy and good estate of the rest; yea of all men euery where, as much as possible is. (728. 1)

When a Tudor writer or speaker touched upon the relations of the individual member with the corporate body of society, one or more of these analogues usually came into play.²²

When Jaques returns to the analogue, he likens the world to a sick human being, boasting that he will, "Cleanse the foul body of th'infected world, / If they will patiently receive my medicine" (II. vii. 60-61). The "health" of the state was implicit in the organological comparison, and connects several strands of our play's thought and imagery. The sick state image abounds in Shakespeare's history plays, where, Caroline Spurgeon says, "the picture of the 'infection of the time' . . . is constant," to which observation Leonard Barkan has added, "Outside of *Coriolanus* perhaps the most continuous use of the analogy between body and commonwealth is to be found in the Lancastrian tetralogy."²³ A political reading of *As You Like It* seems, therefore, decidedly recommended by the fact that this comedy surpasses these plays, even *2 Henry IV*, in talk and acting of maladies, infirmities, remedies, and cures. In fact, the imagery in Jaques' speech echoes *2 Henry IV*, III. i. 38-43:

King. Then you perceive the body of our kingdom
How foul it is, what rank diseases grow,
And with what danger, near the heart of it.
Warwick. It is but as a body yet distempered,
Which to his former strength may be restored
With good advice and little medicine.

Warwick's diagnosis of the kingdom's symptoms fits the distempered dukedom in *As You Like It*. Its people's (and world's) consistently sound moral judgments and the daily defection to the good duke of young and old of worth show it to be a body "Which to his former strength may be restored / With good advice and little medicine." The medicine, however, is no jester's therapy to be effected by a physician who cannot cure himself.

The last popular political analogue to be noticed is the enduring *theatrum mundi* topos, one that is truly apposite to a play replete with theatrical terms, playlets, entertainments, and actors self-consciously adopting roles. Therefore, when Duke Senior plausibly likens the misfortunes just seen in II. vii. to "woeful pageants" in "this wide and universal theater" of human life, he gives Jaques his cue. He begins with an admirable statement of the topos, then adapts it to a man's life seen in seven acts (II. vii. 139-43). Rather regrettably,

the focus of this famous speech on the gentry class and its callings has been ignored in favor of the hitherto unquestioned assumption that "it is a good summary of life lived on the average." However, by 1385, John Gower had summed that up in an aphorism, "Crying torments the baby, school the boy, lust the adult, ambition the man, and covetous desire the old man."²⁴ Jaques uses Gower's tormentors, but shows no interest whatever in everyman. His only specimen of *vulgus vulgare* is the besmattered nursemaid. Instead, with unmistakable detail, Jaques places his specimen in a privileged and exclusive class: the *differentiae* prove him to be a member of the Elizabethan squirearchy caught in revealing glimpses of their way of life, such as their nurture, their traditional pursuits, and above-average longevity. It is instructive to compare the seven-ages speech with a pictorial counterpart, the resume of the life of Sir Henry Unton in a panoramic montage picturing him, *inter alia*, as an infant in his mother's arms, an Oxford student, soldier, and diplomat. Both the memorial painting and the thematic speech focus on the historic callings of the class: "To judge men and to fight."²⁵

Predictably, Jaques caricatures the two gentle callings, but in doing so he contributes to the play's current-time mode not only role details like the occupational cut of beards then in vogue, but also the growing criticism of justices of the peace for compromising their vocation by extorting bribes. "The justice in fair round belly with good capon lin'd" (II. vii. 154) was distinctly topical. Exacting capons for bribes had become a byword for their malfeasance which had been censured in the last Parliament and would spark debate again in 1601 when a Member sneered that, "A Justice of the Peace is a living creature that for half-a-dozen of chickens will dispense with a whole dozen of penal statutes. . . . These be the Basket-Justices," and more.²⁶

We have surveyed the rich texture of commonwealth ideology variously dramatized in players' parts, discourse plain and figurative, and action. In that context, roles played by the two princesses and, by contrast, two of the "meaner sort," Adam and Corin, can be examined to illustrate how devotion to their predestined offices serves to baffle the schemes of their oppressors and otherwise further the recovery of the good old order. Of the princesses, Celia embodies certain royal virtues and obligations, primarily prudence and justice, together with love as friendship. When able, she will "in affection" and by her honor (I. ii. 20-21) restore Rosalind's birthrights. Here Celia anticipates her fervent speech, kindled by her father's pitiless banishment of Rosalind, when she volunteers to go with her for "the love / Which teacheth thee that thou and I am one" (I. iii. 96-97). These words epitomize

the aristocratic ideal of selfless friendship that binds those who share the same virtues and ideals to the extent of having, in effect, "one soul in bodies two," thus, as Sir Thomas Elyot puts it, "making of two persons one in having and suffering." More broadly, in the *Ethics* (Bk. 8, 1155a), Aristotle suggests that friendship bonds social communities by promoting unanimity and justice.²⁷

Celia's is but one instance of this antidote for injustice. We have already heard of the "three or four loving lords [who] have put themselves into voluntary exile" with their legitimate duke, and how Duke Senior had loved his good counselor, Sir Rowland de Boys, "as his soul" (I. ii. 235)—just as Jonathan had loved David (1 *Sam.* 18:1, 4; 20:17). Likewise, Orlando's manifest virtues had moved a decent courtier, Le Beau, to declare despite the risk, "I do in friendship counsel you" (I. ii. 261).

Rosalind's multifarious character dominates the play; she speaks a quarter of the lines. (The next most essential character, Orlando, gets fifteen per cent.) Her part is magnified by her central role as the magisterial counselor on issues of conduct. In addition, she claims (III. ii. 404-405; V. ii. 71, and *passim*) skill in healing and magic, powers traditionally attributed to the mana of royal blood and instrumental to the reconciliations and accords. Her make-believe marriage to Orlando suggests an effective use of imitative magic.²⁸ But fundamentally Rosalind discharges the accepted ideal, subscribed to by both Elizabeth and her successor, that great ones owe to their inferiors a model of ethical conduct. More generally, every one is obligated to instruct and correct his erring fellows. Even such a popular manual on farming as *The Book of Husbandry* devotes several pages to alms deeds; it is the husbandman and his wife's duty "to correcte them that do amysse and to brynge them into the way of ryghte." Failure to do so is immoral because, "He that maye correcte and dothe not, he taketh the offence to hym-selfe of the dede."²⁹

Royal Rosalind's sphere of accountability is primarily for the spiritual rather than the physical works of mercy. Her complementary traits of reason and temperance qualify her to teach the ignorant and admonish the erring. Moreover, she has lost her own pride with her fortunes (I. ii. 252) and learned to bear wrongs patiently (I. iii. 78-79).³⁰ Above all, she is "heavenly" in character precisely as the astute Orlando intuited at their first meeting (I. ii. 289), and as Hymen eventually proclaims. Her personification of the Jovial attributes of reason and temperance is further evinced by her choice for an alias of "no worse a name than Jove's own page. . . Ganymed," because contemporary iconography had glossed the name as meaning a joyous bringer of counsel "which is born of the

pure mind; therefore, Jupiter takes it to himself." Thus Ganymede signifies one "knowing wise counsels in his mind."³¹

Since reason and temperance abhor excess, the logic of the play requires confrontations between Rosalind-Ganymede and the usurper duke, Phebe, Silvius, and Jaques. Both decorum and circumspection counsel a moderated rejoinder to the malice and wrath of the duke, and Rosalind opts for an unassailable appeal to English juridical defenses against lawless rule—in essence, the right of due process—that forces Frederick's evasion into calumny and a capricious judgment. Regarding the other three exceeders of due measure, the "shepherd boy" can be forthright, and, in the purport of the play, her counsel is not idle conversation, but authoritative prescription for the cure of socially dysfunctional behavior.

As a type of "proud disdainful shepherdess," Phebe lacks even the excuse of natural beauty; in taking her over, Shakespeare drastically transformed her from Lodge's lovely blonde into a sunburnt adolescent with black hair, "bugle eye balls," "cheek of cream," and a "leathern hand" (IV. iii. 24), a "huswife's hand" stained by routine drudgery. These changes symbolically contrast her to Rosalind as darkness contrasts to light. Phebe's excessive vanity has deluded her into disregarding the realities both of her estate and the fact she herself represents "the ordinary / Of nature's sale-work." Her case calls for unsparing diagnosis, some of her own medicine in fact: "For I must tell you," Rosalind declares, "friendly in your ear, / Sell when you can, you are not for all markets" (III. v. 59-60). Thus Rosalind holds up to her in place of the flattering glass of Silvius's adulation, the corrective mirror of truth.

Not randomly, then, in this well-orchestrated play, Jaques, too, comes in for a royal castigation because "extremity of love" (IV. iii. 23) includes his narcissism (note Orlando's allusive, "[The fool] is drown'd in the brook; look but in and you shall see him" (III. ii. 287) together with his self-indulgent "extremity" in sadness (IV. i. 5), foreign travel, and financial improvidence. Furthermore, these excesses in an old English gentleman (V. i. 4) amount to flagrant derelictions of calling which Rosalind scores off with trenchant ridicule.

Two humble callings are used for their fitness to demonstrate dramatically that "every one have nede of other." Old Adam and Corin represent them as ideal members of the body politic who fully acquiesce with their allotted stations and vocations, and labor conscientiously not only for livelihood but also for the common good. Adam plays the model servant of the aristocracy

who obeys "to the last gasp" the "antique" (feudal) code of truth and loyalty (II. iii. 69-70), one of a sterling breed, "when service sweat for duty, not for meed," then thought to be disappearing along with noble housekeeping and hospitality. "Thou art not," laments Orlando, "for the fashion of these times" (cf. 56-59), such being the ruthless self-serving that Jaques had declared to be now "just the fashion."

Old Adam's congener, Corin, a servant of husbandry, notably represents what William Harrison proclaims "the fourth and last sort of people in England . . . [those] who have neither voice nor authoritie in the common wealth, but are to be ruled."³² As a shepherd who does not "shear the fleeces that I graze," old Corin makes a precarious living on wages, as Celia realizes (II. iv. 94). Any one more wretched than he must be wretched indeed (II. iv. 68). It is, then, one of the least and last sort of people who rescues the fugitive royal princesses in the Forest of Arden, and Shakespeare further honors him as the ideal of the true laborer. Once we grasp the philosophy that informs *As You Like It*, we realize that Corin's speech beginning "Sir, I am a true laborer" (III. ii. 73-77) no more celebrates the joys of country life than does Chaucer's similar portrait of "A trewe swinkere," the Plowman, one of Corin's precursors and, therefore, also a perfect Christian "Living in pees and parfit charitee." Like the portrait, the speech recites tenets of a vocational creed inspired in part by the Sermon on the Mount. Shakespeare gives both old men Scriptural allusions pertinent to their codes.³³ Between them, Adam and Corin set before the audience a pattern of self-subordination to the interest of the common good to which their advanced years witness their persevering dedication.

Shakespeare's audience, of course, believed that self-sacrificing philanthropy conflicts with the human appetite for acquisition. Corin's profession of being "glad of other men's good, [and] content with my harm" could be regarded as morally heroic. "For there is nothing harder and more greeuous to mans cares, inclined naturally to his owne profite," *Politique Discourse* asserts, "then to heare that he must renounce the loue and good will he beareth to him selfe, wholly to abandon him selfe, to procure an other mans profite: yea, to quite his owne right to leave the same to his neighbour."³⁴ What could account then for such altruism as we see here and elsewhere in *As You Like It*? William Perkins provides an orthodox explanation in his *A Treatise*. In essence, he ascribes "continuance" in one's calling to personal holiness and constancy. Holiness requires what Adam and Corin (and others) so well illustrate, first the eschewing of vices, especially covetousness

and injustice (743, 744), and second, the practicing of two key virtues. "The vertues which the word of God requireth of vs in the practice of our callings, are many, but two especially: *Faith*, and *Loue*" (749). The second major need is constancy, the quality which enables a person "to abide in his calling, without change or alteration" avoiding "ambition, envy, and impatience" (750).

The protagonists of *As You Like It* exhibit these virtues in the pursuit of their callings. Even Jaques, in his valedictory, must credit Duke Senior with "patience and virtue" and cite Orlando for his "true faith." An observation by James Nohrnberg on the similar concern with constancy in *The Faerie Queene* seems apposite here because it suggests the broader literary context of the topic. Nohrnberg remarks that, "All the heroes [in *The Faerie Queene*] are heroic insofar as they are faithful to their 'troth' or calling, all must exhibit steadfastness, loyalty, courage, and perseverance. The underlying prerequisite is most nearly constancy, literally 'standing with.'"³⁵ Certainly the heroes and heroines of *As You Like It* exhibit constancy; they have endured (V. iv. 173) the course.

As You Like It can be construed as the dramatization of the regeneration of a state imagined on the model of the organological commonwealth defined in Tudor political thinking. Under his master subject, Shakespeare integrates subordinate themes such as the varieties of love and their place in society, or the personal contentment attained by means of the self-disciplining virtues of temperance and reason. Therefore, the characters are essentially abstractions, or embodiments, of degrees and callings and their particular virtues and derelictions. Taken as a group, they represent a dramatic cross section of the Elizabethan hierarchical world.

According to received doctrine, explicit in the play, the remedy for "the foul body of th'infected world" depends on two premises. First, a good society is the product of the goodness of its members, and especially its leaders. Hence, the stress on personal values and the need to know oneself. Orlando admirably states this thesis: when Jaques invites him to *sit down* and cursorily "rail against our mistress the world, and all our misery," Orlando retorts, "I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults" (III. ii. 277-81). The second premise, implicit in the body politic analogy, postulates that (as expressed by the *Homily*), "every one hath nede of other." Working through the doctrine of calling, these ideals determine the resolution of the comedy.

Finally, a comment should be made on the congruity of the Masque of Hymen with the general tenor of *As You Like It*, since it

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has been rejected as an irrelevant interpolation. After a first act where, to use the apt words of a Whitney *Embleme*, "Three furies fell, which turne the worlde to ruthe, / Both Enuie, Strife, and Slaunder, heare appeare,"³⁶ the Masque symbolically crowns the drama when the numerically meaningful eight "take hands to join in Hymen's bands," and all atone together. *As You Like It* seems to have been composed for the nuptials of members of two gentry families who enjoyed ties with the court and the Inns of Court circle. Such an occasion and audience would invite the recurrent witty and urbane perspectives on aspects of love and the role of marriage that feature this sort of comedy. Furthermore, and especially for an establishment audience, love and marriage, social issues, and political theory could be perfectly compatible subjects as Kevin Sharpe explains: "Love and marriage were normative analogues and vocabularies in early modern England and so came naturally in political discourse to men for whom the ideal of government was a replication of God's divine order founded on love. Love expressed harmony and balance; in loving relationships authority and subjection were as one, not in contention; love unified the community."³⁷ The Masque of Hymen embraces all the communal imagery of *As You Like It* within the epithalamic symbolism of wedlock, great Juno's bond.³⁸ Thus comes the auspicious juncture for the intervention of Providence, whose unworldly agent, "an old religious man," overthrows the usurper and his mighty power. Those who have endured can now quit their desert place of exile and return to restore a better world to their commonwealth.

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Notes

¹For Frederick as a traditional tyrant and the moral resources of his victims, see A. Stuart Daley, "The Tyrant Duke of *As You Like It*: Envious Malice Confronts Honor, Pity, Friendship," *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, 34 (1988), 39-51.

²Shakespeare quotations are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, gen. ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

³Louis Adrian Montrose, "'The Place of Brother' in *As You Like It*: Social Process and Comic Form," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 32 (1981), p. 29. The Jenkins article is "*As You Like It*," *Shakespeare Survey*, 8 (1955), 40-51.

⁴Montrose, p. 30.

⁵Montrose, p. 33.

⁶Jenkins, p. 50.

⁷Montrose, p. 33.

⁸Thomas Lodge, *Rosalynde. Euphues golden legacie* (1590), in Richard Knowles, ed., *As You Like It: A New Variorum Edition* (New York: MLA, 1977), p. 387.

⁹On the Tudor concept of the commonwealth, see Whitney R. D. Jones, *The Tudor Commonwealth 1529-1559* (London: Athlone Press, Univ. of London, 1970). A valuable introduction to socio-political ideas appealed to here is "A commonwealth of meanings: languages, analogues, ideas and politics," Kevin Sharpe, *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England* (London and New York: Pinter, 1989), pp. 3-71. Especially useful on the role of the individual is Stephen L. Collins, *From Divine Cosmos to Sovereign State* (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 14-28, outlining the Tudor idea of order. Cf. the salutary reminder of Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 277, n. 5: "Apart from the Judeo-Christian West, we should recall, most of the great civilizations of the world have placed overwhelming emphasis not on the isolated member but on the conformity of every element to its role in the society; the dominant ideology of Hinduism, for example, begins from the standpoint of the total hierarchical structure and then moves to the particular, constituent parts." R. E. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (1933; Oxford; rptd. Basil Blackwell, 1961) ch. 9, quotes generously from preachers and writers on the precepts of the corporate society.

¹⁰Regarding aspects of calling or vocation in early modern England, see Jones pp. 82-83, 96-100, and *passim*; Jean Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1966), ch. 14; Walter E. Houghton, Jr., *The Formation of Fuller's Holy and Profane States*, Harvard Studies in English, 19 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1938), pp. 44-73, 89-92; Helen C. White, *Social Criticism in Popular Religious Literature of the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1944) discusses calling and the necessity of contentment with one's place.

¹¹Debra Kuller Shuger, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: Univ. of California Press, 1990), p. 87.

¹²Bible texts in English are quoted from *The Geneva Bible, A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, intro. Lloyd E. Berry (Madison, Wisc.: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

¹³STC 19751.5 notes an octavo edition of *A Treatise* in 1603. I cite (parenthetically) the edition issued at Cambridge by John Legate, Printer to the University, 1608, in *Works of William Perkins*, Cambridge, 1609, a folio with two columns to the page. For the substance of *A Treatise* and the importance of Perkins, see Louis B. Wright, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (1935; Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1958) ch. 6 and *passim*.

¹⁴*The Book of Common Prayer 1559*, ed. John E. Booty (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1976), p. 286; also pp. viii, 315, and 320.

¹⁵Collins, pp. 21 and 27, also p. 19. Collins, p. 17 reports that, "Most agreed that civil order and politic rule were necessary, and that by following one's duty, whatever one's degree, such order could be maintained. Throughout the century this theme was commonly sounded."

¹⁶"An Exhortacion Concerning Good Ordre and Obedience to Rulers and Magistrates," *Certain Sermons or Homilies (1547) and A Homily against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion (1570)*, ed. Ronald B. Bond, *A Critical Edition* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 161.

¹⁷For these effects, see Alan Everitt, "Farm Labourers 1500-1640," *Chapters from the Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500-1750*, ed. Joan Thirsk, vol. 2, *Rural Society . . . 1500-1750*, ed. Christopher Clay (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 204-05, 226 and *passim*. Hence Celia will mend Corin's wages (II. iv. 94).

¹⁸For the state of the Warwickshire clergy see their answers to the inquiry of 1585 transcribed and ed. D. M. Barratt, in two vols. of the Dugdale Society Publications XXII (Parishes A to Li) and XXVII (Lo to W), *Ecclesiastical Terriers of*

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Warwickshire Parishes (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1955 and 1971). In her introduction to the play, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, p. 368, Anne Barton says, "With the exception of Rosalind, most of the characters resolve themselves when looked at closely into familiar Elizabethan types." Martext is no exception.

¹⁹*OED*, citing *The Institucion of a gentleman* (London, 1555); Jones, p. 98, and on the general topic, pp. 88-90 and *passim*.

²⁰Personal adversity was to be accepted patiently and endured as God's will. It was seen as the school of wisdom and virtue and the test of friendship. In *Meditation XVII*, John Donne states the truism that, "affliction is a treasure, and scarce any man hath enough of it. No man hath affliction enough that is not matured and ripened by it and made fit for God by that affliction." A comprehensive study of the subject is *The Triumph of Patience: Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Gerald J. Schiffhorst (Orlando: Univ. Presses of Florida, 1978). *As You Like It* accepts human tribulations as inevitable and stresses the countering virtues of fortitude and patience; see my "The Triumph of Patience in *As You Like It*," *The Aligarh Journal of English Studies*, 13 (1988), 45-66.

²¹Cicero, *De officiis*, trans. Walter Miller (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1913), 294/295, bk. 3. 6; he cites (22/23, bk. 1. 7) Plato: "we are not born for ourselves alone." Touching on the theme of social corruption in Tudor morality plays, F. P. Wilson asserts that "Dramatists and preachers and pamphleteers are moralists to a man, and the difference between the approach of a Langland and a Jonson, or a Nashe or a Dekker, between a medieval friar and a Lever or a Perkins is almost imperceptible. The saying, 'Every man for himself and God for us all' was abhorrent to them." (*The English Drama, 1485-1585*, ed. G. K. Hunter [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969], p. 56.) I would further note that principles of John Gower's social philosophy resonate in *As You Like It*.

²²Elyot quoted from S. E. Lehmborg, ed. (London: Dent, 1962), p. 1. John of Salisbury had elaborated the body-state analogy in *Policraticus* (1159), bks. 5, 6. The country-city-court formula expresses the conventional tripartite division, but Richard Levin, *The Multiple Plot in English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 58, maintains that "when [the dramatists] wished to present a systematic cross section of their nation, it was more likely to emerge as a survey, not of classes, but of various vocations or 'estates'"—in effect, what is demonstrated in this paper. Two histories of the body-state metaphor are David George Hale, *The Body Politic* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1971) and Leonard Barkan, *Nature's Work of Art: The Human Body as Image of the World* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1975). Sharpe finds that "The phrase 'body politic' . . . stood as the most familiar of all the analogues for the commonwealth" (61), an analogy completely medieval, as Jones observes (p. 13).

²³Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery* (1935; Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1965), p. 160 and chart 7. Barkan, p. 109. On the convention, see Jones p. 16, also pp. 17-18, 127-28. One of the king's *personae* was that of physician for his people.

²⁴John Gower, *Vox Clamantis*, bk. 2, ch. 1, trans. Eric W. Stockton, *The Major Latin Works of John Gower* (Seattle, Wash.: Univ. of Washington Press, 1962), p. 98. Jaques echoes the conventional "covetous desire" of old men with "His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide" (II. vii. 160). Both Gower and Jaques repeat bromides from the stock that includes King Lear's "When we are born, we cry." It is worth recalling apropos of an imagined universal application that Gower's fourteenth century schoolboy came mostly from about the upper five per cent of the population and that almost all literate Elizabethan males apart from the clergy belonged to the small social and vocational classes that needed to read and write. In respect to which Phebe may be that rare bird, a literate woman of the yeomanry or minor gentry! See David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading & Writing in Tudor & Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980) ch. 6, and regarding "massively illiterate" women, pp. 106, 119-21, 145-49 and *passim*.

²⁵Sir Roy Strong devotes ch. 10 to the "story picture" of Sir Henry Unton in *The Cult of Elizabeth* (1977; Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985), pp. 84-110. Color plate 4, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, reproduces the painting from the original in the National Portrait Gallery, London. On the historic callings, see Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984), p. 152.

²⁶J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments 1584-1603* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1957), pp. 366, 399, citing *The Journal of Sir Roger Wilbraham for the Years 1593-1616*, ed. Harold Spencer Scott, in *The Camden Miscellany*, vol. 10 (London: The Royal Historical Society, 1902). Actually, the diarist further states that at the end of the 1597-1598 session the Queen intended Lord Keeper Egerton to charge "that manie Justices of peace were baskett Justices, to gather hens & capons *colore officii*, but not to distribute justice to the releaf of the subjects" (pp. 12-13). I. H., *A Health to the Gentlemanly Profession of Serving-Men 1598*, intro. A. V. Judges, Shakespeare Association Facsimile, 3 (1598; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford Univ. Press, 1931) C4' tells how a concerned farmer offers the local magistrate "a couple of fat capons" and other inducements to exempt his son from conscription.

²⁷Elyot, p. 134. See Laurens J. Mills, *One Soul in Bodies Twain: Friendship in Tudor Literature and Stuart Drama* (1937; Ann Arbor, Mich.: Univ. Microfilms International, 1980). The cultural origins of the ideal are surveyed by Gervase Mathew, "Ideals of Friendship," in John Lawler, ed. *Patterns of Love and Courtesy* (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), pp. 45-53.

²⁸Thomas M. Greene, "Magic and Festivity at the Renaissance Court," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 40(1987), 636-59 is a valuable account of the expressions of royal magic in, especially, court entertainments. Greene's elucidations of the symbolism and purposes of the marriage masque, representations of heavenly descent, and closing dances can clarify their use in *As You Like It*.

²⁹Master [Sir Anthony] Fitzherbert, *The Book of Husbandry*, ed. Walter W. Skeat, English Dialect Society (1882; Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1965), pp. 119, 121-22. This popular book was reissued in 1598.

³⁰Joseph F. Delany, "Mercy, Corporal and Spiritual Works of," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Charles G. Hubermann, et al. (New York: Robert Appleton, 1911), vol. 10, p. 199, observes that one needs suitable qualifications to perform spiritual works of mercy.

³¹Don Cameron Allen, *Mysteriously Meant* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 159; E. H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images* (1972; London: Phaidon Press, 1975), pp. 10, 25. See James M. Saslow, *Ganymede in the Renaissance: Homosexuality in Art and Society* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 6, 22-25 for spiritualized allegory.

³²William Harrison, *The Description of England* in Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, 6 vols. (1807; rptd. New York: AMS Press, 1965) vol. 1, p. 275. Also, David Cressy, "Describing the Social Order of Elizabethan and Stuart England," *Literature and History*, 3 (1976), pp. 29-44. The Parliament of 1597-1598 had been much concerned with the depressed state of agriculture and the hunger and unemployment among workers on the land.

³³Brief though Corin's statement is, its explication would exceed available space. See my preliminary study, "Shakespeare's Corin, Almsgiver and Faithful Feeder," *English Language Notes*, 27(1990), pp. 4-21. On the Plowman's typifying the ideal Christian layman, see Joseph Horrell, "Chaucer's Symbolic Plowman," *Speculum*, 14 (1939), pp. 82-92.

³⁴I quote 81', The Huntington Library copy of STC 15230.5.

³⁵James Nohrberg, *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), p. 72. Cf. Elyot, "Of constancy or stability," pp. 205-208.

³⁶Geffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes* (Leyden, 1586), 4 "Veritas tempus

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filia," lines 1-2, in Peter M. Daly, *The English Emblem Tradition, Index Emblematicus 1* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 93.

³⁷Sharpe, p. 60. See also entries under family as a metaphor and marriage. Although Sharpe focuses on the early Stuarts, the Tudor modes, as he explains, continued to influence "a discourse of politics in terms (often derived from Aristotle) of the family, of love and marriage, of the body" (p. 64), granting of course that, "A shared sense of what ought to be did not prevent conflict about how to restore an earlier (idealized) harmony and unity."

³⁸Cf. Alastair Fowler, *Triumphal Forms* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1970), p. 153, "The association of 8 with Juno patroness of marriage had earlier [that is, before Jonson's masque, *Hymenaei*] been introduced in the wedding masque with which *As You Like It* harmoniously ends. . . . 'here's eight that must take hands.' No doubt the number symbolism here implies ideas of harmony (the octave) and of justice." To Fowler's implications of eight, I would add that the number two in "Thy loving voyage / Is but for two months victualled" should be understood in its bad sense of discord and division, the predictable prospect for the comedy's example of marrying for the wrong reasons.

The Outline Guide Industry and the Processing of Shakespeare's Gertrude by Dorothea Kehler

Introducing Cliff Hillegass, founder of Cliffs Notes, at a business dinner, Warren M. "Gus" Swanson played Horatio to Hillegass's Hamlet: "He sees more coming up than the rest of us dream about." Swanson explained: "This ability comes from knowing the market, knowing the product. . . . It is guaranteed to sell and make you a profit, or Cliffs Notes takes it back unconditionally. It is the only guarantee like it in the entire industry."¹ The outline guide industry is extensive and Cliffs is its most visible presence. The yuppie played by Ben Stiller in the 1994 movie *Reality Bites* is succinctly characterized for the broadest audience by the wisecrack, "He's the reason they invented Cliffs Notes." Easily America's favorite literary critic, Cliff is, for most students, alone in his field—author of the sole critical work they need consult on any text. At my institution students often emphasize how well prepared they are for my Shakespeare exams by saying, "I've read the Cliffs Notes," although I have never mentioned Cliffs or suggested the use of outline guides. Cliffs Notes on Greek and Roman literature are available at our official campus bookstore; a block away from campus, a private entrepreneur carries Cliffs' full line. Cliff is an ubiquitous mediator. A teacher's voice may be tuned out, a class slept through or cut, but not so with Cliff; his audience abides. And although a theatrical production will be informed by the director's interpretation, directorial meaning is conveyed implicitly and often elusively. Outline guides, on the other hand, don't fool around; reception theory be damned, they tell students explicitly what counts, what the play *means*. My unhappy thesis is that the commercial processing of literature for high school and college students is an important if largely unrecognized way that culture, in both a literary and a sociological sense, is transmitted.

My purpose is not only to call attention to the neglected history of this mode of processing literature for profit, but to identify it as a subject for cultural analysis. In this essay as in the trade, Cliffs Notes is the most prominent example of such processing materials as outline guides, study guides, review books, and notes, also published in the USA by Monarch (a division of Simon and Schuster), Barnes and Noble, and Barron's. While there is considerable difference in the quality of these companies' prod-

ucts, commercial success seems to be a function of marketing rather than merit. I have chosen *Hamlet* as my exemplary text because of its financial appeal to review book publishers. In a typical sales year, 1987, profits for Cliffs Notes on *Hamlet* were exceeded only by the notes on *The Scarlet Letter*, *Macbeth*, and *Huckleberry Finn*.² Within the world-without-end of *Hamlet* criticism, I have focused on the outline guides' representation of Gertrude, a vehicle for more questions than answers, e.g., was she guilty of adultery? of complicity in murder? of incest? Should we privilege the ghost's and Hamlet's appraisal of Gertrude over her own speeches? Does she believe Hamlet's account of Claudius? Does she become a celibate? Confronting these questions, most outline guide writers decline my favorite answer—a definite maybe; instead, they index traditional expectations for the category of widow, while at the same time, unwittingly, they teach those same cultural biases to students. In effect, what the outline guides have to say about Gertrude charts how the sexuality of middle-aged women has been processed in our own time, and serves as one instance of the way in which guides blur the line between literary interpretation and social indoctrination.

I.

Cliffs was actually a latecomer to the outline guide genre. Hillegass entered the field only after his predecessors had shown that the guides could be produced and sold inexpensively and distributed widely. Although most of the original outline guides were amateur affairs,³ as early as 1904 Boston's Palmer Company initiated what was to become a ninety-four volume series, *Outline Studies in Literature*.⁴ Maud Elma Kingsley, a voracious outliner, prepared not only many of these volumes but also outlines of history, geography, civics, grammar, and the Old Testament. Her twenty-eight-page guide to *Hamlet* cost fifteen cents in 1904, twenty cents by 1927. For the intervening years entries under "Shakespeare, Study" in the *United States Catalog* yield various "study programs," "questions," and "topics." Among the amateur endeavors is Edgar Packard's 1927 progenitor of Cliffs Notes; Packard, who chaired the English Department at what is now Kent State in Ohio, then State Normal College, composed a \$.60, 32 page guide to Shakespeare, with commentaries in Harvard outline form, and had it printed by the College Exchange at Kent. Three years later another local product appeared, J. R. Webster's guide to *Hamlet*, which could be had from The Author, Box 1, Cambridge, Massachusetts for \$.50. More commercially significant

publication followed in 1931 with I. J. Semper's *Shakespeare Study Guide* for \$1.75. Semper, a professor of English literature at Columbia College, tells the reader that the outlines are designed for classroom use.⁵ That is, he is trying to tap the sizable market potential of outline guides as supplementary course texts.

In 1935 a guide to Shakespeare's plays by three collaborators from New York University—Homer A. Watt, Karl J. Holzknecht, and Raymond Ross—was entered in Stationers Hall, London. The 1941 American edition, bearing the imprint of the College Outline Series of Barnes and Noble, a reputable New York publisher of school materials, cost \$1.00. I borrowed a copy from California State University at Sacramento, a repository suggesting coast-to-coast distribution and some degree of academic respectability. A 1957 revision added a number of bibliographic entries and a genealogical chart, but when the expanded 212 page guide was reprinted in 1967, the *Hamlet* entry remained unchanged. Longevity is a depressing feature of most guides since more often than not the views they express are antiquated at the time of initial publication.

If the critical view in the Barnes and Noble guide remained static, the cost was a bargain—only \$1.25. In terms of real purchasing power, this was a marked drop in price from Packard's privately printed \$.60 guide of 1927. Commercial publication was making outline guides inexpensive. In fact, prices for the guides I discuss in this study (all but the pioneer efforts) were initially set at only a little over the then hourly minimum wage. That Interlibrary Loan found my copy of the latest edition of the Barnes guide at UC Berkeley could be construed as pedagogical certification.⁶ Affordability for students and acceptability to academic librarians presaged the guides' staying power.

Cliffs Notes started operation in 1958 when Clifton T. Hillegass reprinted guides to sixteen Shakespeare plays from the Canadian series, Coles Notes, adding a new guide to *Macbeth*. A summary of Cliffs guidelines by Connie J. Brakhahn, Director of Advertising, shows that Cliffs introduced a much more elaborate format than had been used previously in the USA—"Life of the Author, List of Characters, Brief Synopsis, Summaries and Commentaries, Suggested Essay Topics, and Selected Bibliography"⁷—and the series enjoyed almost a decade of ever-increasing profitability. As Hillegass tells it, his life exemplifies the generic American success story in which intelligence, industry, and opportunity conjoin. In his 1988 speech to the Newcomen Society, he relates being "reared in the ultraconservative Midwest by a very conservative family";⁸ his father was a mail carrier in a tiny Nebraska town during the

Great Depression. Hillegass worked his way through college and two years of graduate school (he studied science) before marrying at age twenty-one. He found a job in a college bookstore in Lincoln where, except for his military service, he worked until he launched Cliffs Notes. When in the mid-sixties the spectacular sales of Cliffs Notes fell off, Hillegass knew why:

The key word in those years was "relevance." Students wanted to be taught "relevant" courses, often outside their majors. They were convinced that they were being taught useless information, information that hadn't been changed or upgraded, according to them, since their grandparents were in school. And in addition to the new subject matter they wanted, they wanted either to grade themselves, or else enroll in courses that were graded pass/fail.

As a result, everyone in the class got As. There was no distinction between excellence and mediocrity. All traditional standards of academic excellence were discarded in favor of "relevance."

It was not until teachers once again took charge of the classrooms, in the mid-1970s, that our sales began to increase once more. From 1980 until the present, sales have grown steadily—parallel to the academic excellence that was lost in the mid-1960s and finally restored to the classroom.⁹

Hillegass's views on the '60's aren't surprising in view of his Horatio Alger circumstances. Moreover, by assuming the posture of an upholder of standards, Hillegass asserts his claim to the moral high ground against those who attack him as a producer of crammers that simplify, pre-digest, and for some students replace literary texts.

Cliffs users and abusers can be found worldwide. Brakhahn writes that "At the present time [10/1990] there are 6,000 plus outlets active in selling Cliffs Notes in the United States" and that "Cliffs Notes, Inc. has distribution agreements in Australia, Germany, Southeast Asia, Japan, Canada, United Kingdom and other European countries, among others [sic]." Hillegass prides himself on the use made of his Notes abroad: "Cliffs Notes are taught in foreign countries with two purposes in mind: one, learning American English in clear, precise, compact sentences and paragraphs; and two, learning about American literature and literary classics, the classics that we ourselves read in order to learn and reinforce what is meant by such phrases as "American Values" and "the

American Experience."¹⁰ These sources of felicitous prose and ideology are free to students whose libraries have purchased the Cliffs Notes Hardbound Literary Libraries, a twenty-four-volume hardbound series covering over two-hundred literary learning aides from Cliffs, of which three volumes treating twenty-six plays comprise "The Shakespeare Library."¹¹ Moonbeam Publications' sales brochure tells librarians that the series offers "greater control over how this popular aid is used"—a tacit admission of misuse?—and "provides a *professional library reference appearance*." To paraphrase Lear, hard covers hide all.

In light of the ubiquitous distribution of Cliffs Notes, we might wonder who writes them. Not Cliff. Gary Carey, Cliffs Notes Editor, receives hundreds of resumes from would-be Note writers who are paid "four or five figures" for about a year's work.¹² Significantly, Carey awards sixty per cent of his contracts to high school teachers because he feels they produce clearer, more detailed work than college professors. That high school teachers are not trained as specialists but rather as generalists, that they are overworked and apt to lack the time and research facilities to keep abreast of current criticism does not disturb Carey. His preference for those with less education over those with more may in part account for the Notes' preponderantly conventional views within discussions inclined to sacrifice complexity to clarity. While it is true that theoretically self-conscious scholars are often loath to compromise their ideas through facile inscription, and that much recent criticism has favored broad contextualization over close reading, surely it cannot be impossible to find guide writers whose work is lucid, comprehensive, and up-to-date.

Of the forty per cent of post-secondary academicians who write Cliffs Notes, Carey most reveres Professor James L. Roberts of the University of Nebraska, Cliffs Consulting Editor for over twenty-five years. Carey observes that Roberts "has authored more Notes than any other human in history, among them every Note on every William Faulkner work."¹³ Professor James K. Lowers, author of the 1971 *Hamlet* Notes, was chosen to write some of the earlier Notes because, according to Advertising Director Brakhahn, "he had taught Shakespeare for 40-plus years, and because his solid body of Shakespearean scholarship was acknowledged in the academic community." Cliffs must have redefined scholarship, for searching the *MLA International Bibliography* from 1929 on turned up no Shakespeare entries under Lowers; in fact, the only Lowers entry was a Berkeley monograph published in 1954 on polemical, non-dramatic literature relating to the North-

ern rebellion of 1569, the monograph bearing only a slightly changed title from his 1950 UCLA dissertation.

Cliffs Notes are revised, says Brakhahn, when new material on a work appears—"a new diary, pertinent memoirs, or a new edition of a literary work incorporating previously unpublished material." Although Brakhahn's examples suggest that Cliffs is concerned with the emergence of new primary material to the exclusion of new critical approaches, Cliffs brings out more revised than new editions. Professor Roberts states, "Our basic guideline is that if the Note in question was written before the (majority of) the students now in college were born, it's time to revise it."¹⁴ Carey adds, "We try to give the old Note to somebody new and fresh who's taught the work recently. . . . We want to be as timely as possible."¹⁵ Albeit this was not the case with the *Hamlet* Notes, it nevertheless sold over 100,000 copies in 1989, claims Brakhahn. If students are not concerned about the recency of a note, it may be because they only seek "objective" plot summaries, or perhaps they anticipate that their instructors will offer a warmer reception to older interpretations than to new ones.

Cliffs won a major share of the outline guide market during the 60's, both the apex and nemesis of such apparatus. (Remember casebooks?) By 1965 the three original publishers had grown to thirteen, shrinking back to three by 1968.¹⁶ I have located five *Hamlet* guides (including Cliffs annotated edition of the complete text of *Hamlet*) and one guide to the tragedies, all published in the 60's. The publishers' bid to impart respectability to their products may be inferred from the *bona fides* of the guidebook authors and editorial board members. Monarch Notes enlisted Leonora Leet Brodwin of Queens College to write the 1963 *Hamlet* guide (extended in 1964 and 1965 without revision of the Gertrude sections). Monarch drew its editorial board from Hofstra, Montclair State, and Fairleigh Dickinson. George R. Price's *Simplified Approach to Shakespeare's "Hamlet"* for Barron's followed in 1964. In his introduction, Price, a Michigan State professor, claims to have taught Shakespeare for fifteen years. Fredson Bowers, known for his work on revenge tragedy, was an appropriate choice for Barnes and Noble's 1965 *Hamlet* outline. Also in 1965 Barnes issued *Plot Outlines of Shakespeare's Tragedies: Scene by Scene*, edited by J. Wilson McCutchan, a Professor at the University of Waterloo. Cliffs countered with "*Hamlet*": *Commentary. Complete Text Glossary*. This Complete Study Edition was edited by Sidney Lamb, who had studied at Columbia and Cambridge and was affiliated with Sir George Williams University of Montreal. John T. Shawcross, then a Rutgers Miltonist with a Ph.D. from NYU,

wrote *A Critical Study Guide to Shakespeare's "Hamlet"* for Littlefield's series, ERA (Educational Research Associates) Key Indexed Guides, about 1965-66; Littlefield's board included professors from Wisconsin, Ohio University, UCLA, and Pittsburgh; Shawcross himself was an editorial consultant. In a decade in which publishers vied with each other to secure the services of impressively credentialed academics, Cliffs' Sidney Lamb was one of the weaker contenders, yet Cliffs survived. In the outline guide industry, academic prestige is not the ultimate asset.

However, Cliffs' sales did take a beating in the late 60's as students complained of "being taught useless information, information that hadn't been changed or upgraded, according to them, since their grandparents were in school."¹⁷ Such complaints may have led Hillegass to bring out a new edition of *Hamlet Notes* in 1971. How current that edition was, even in the year of its publication, may be gauged from Lowers' Bibliography, which skips from a 1959 entry for Harry Levin (cited as rejecting oedipal theory) to the most recent entry, Eleanor Prosser's 1968 study of the play's Christian elements. Most of Lowers' sources—i.e., H. H. Furness, A. C. Bradley, L. L. Schucking, Lily Bess Campbell, John Dover Wilson, Harley Granville-Barker, E. M. W. Tillyard—were originally published between the 1870's and 1950. This is the edition still being marketed.

The 1980's produced only two guides to *Hamlet*. The 1982 Checkernotes on *Hamlet* (published by a Toronto firm called Checkerbooks) credits no author or board of consultants and makes no mention of any university imprimatur. Barron's, on the other hand, hired Michael Feingold, theater critic for the *Village Voice*, in a successful effort to seek out spirited writers who encourage students to reflect on the texts; Barron's series and Feingold's manuscript were critiqued by high school and university faculty and by NCTE board members (National Council of Teachers of English) before publication in 1984. It is worth remarking that Barnes claims each outline guide is written by a "distinguished educator,"¹⁸ that other series also employ writers of some scholarly reputation, and that Barron's achieved a coup with a Left-leaning drama critic, yet the leading literary processor, Cliffs, prefers high school teachers or professionally inactive Ph.D.'s.

II.

I want to contextualize Cliffs' discussion of Gertrude both as part of a "Great Tradition" of outline guide treatments and as a

replication and affirmation of a prejudice against widows' remarriage. Despite the comparative independence of the English Renaissance widow, she was subject to moral constraints designed to ensure loyalty to her first spouse. In the Catholic view, marriage was no mere contractual arrangement but a sacrament unvanquished by mortality. The Church Fathers had grudgingly allowed remarriage as an alternative to whoredom, young widows being plagued by lust, but worthy "widows indeed" (I *Timothy* 5:3) were enjoined to shun remarriage and give their hearts to God.¹⁹ While most Protestants demurred, the issue remained a sensitive one, despite the fact that at least a quarter of English marriages were remarriages,²⁰ about the same proportion as in Shakespeare's plays, in which remarrying widows generally have a bad name or bad luck. *Hamlet* is a classic instance of the anxiety attendant upon the remarriage of a mother, in particular one at the borders of reproductivity. A Duke University study holds that "It is hard to think of a social role more bound by custom, more strictly prescribed than that of the widowed."²¹ For many, custom still dictates that the middle-aged and elderly—both men and women—abjure interest in sex, "but especially . . . widows, regardless of age!"²² Of widows no longer young we are apt to believe with *Hamlet* that the heyday in the blood is, or should be, long past.²³

If this is currently the popular feeling, what might people have thought of desirous widows prior to the sexual revolution? Maud Elma Kingsley, my candidate for mother of American outline guides, although impressed by Gertrude's "sensibility and affection," particularly at Ophelia's grave, nevertheless finds the queen "Criminal in some respects. . . ."²⁴ Professor Packard is harsher. In his 1927 outline of *Hamlet*, he credits Gertrude with "maternal affection" but quotes "Frailty, thy name is woman." This he follows with "Gertrude: married, but should be unmarried." Under *III.1b, King Claudius*, we find "Debased the Queen."²⁵ These laconic insights create ambiguity. Should Gertrude have remained unmarried temporarily or permanently? Is she at fault for remarriage too soon, for remarriage Claudius, or for remarriage at all? Packard refrains from clarifying what he means by "debased." I assume he is sparing the sensibilities of the students at State Normal, but the effect of such vagueness is to call remarriage itself into question. Like Packard before him, Joseph Rowe Webster makes no mention of incest or adultery in his guide to *Hamlet*. That Webster was born in 1871 may in part account for his avoidance of these subjects in 1930. His is one of the more generous assessments of Gertrude, stressing her maternal qualities under

Motives and Traits, noting that she is "courageous and tactful."²⁶ What Webster charges Gertrude with is disloyalty: "Although [Hamlet] does not say so, we surmise that his thought runs thus: 'If such a woman as my mother was false to such a man as my father, what woman can be trusted? Why bring children into such a fearful world?'"²⁷ These musings would encourage a student to believe that remarriage, o'erhasty or not, is disloyal, in itself a breach of chastity.

Even more corrosive is the Bradleyan view of Gertrude that most outline guides express, either openly or by implication. Andrew Cecil Bradley (1851-1935), Oxford Professor of Poetry, was the son of Charles Bradley, an Evangelist; half-brother of George Granville Bradley, distinguished as a teacher and Anglican divine; and the brother of Francis Herbert (F. H. Bradley), an Oxford fellow and important Idealist Philosopher. With such a background, A. C. Bradley could be expected to hold orthodox Victorian views on sexual morality. In 1904, as outline guides made their American debut, the preeminent Shakespearean character critic published the lectures that make up his *Shakespearean Tragedy*, lectures he had been refining since the 1880's. A personal discomfort with passionate desire is suggested by a sentence describing Hamlet's response to Ophelia: "There are signs that Hamlet was haunted by the horrible idea that he had been deceived in Ophelia as he had been in his mother . . . that what had seemed simple and affectionate love might really have been something very different."²⁸ For Bradley, it is surely Gertrude's "animal nature" that leaves her "untroubled by any shame at the feelings which had led to [her 'o'erhasty marriage']."²⁹ This fleshly Gertrude, whom Bradley accords little more than contempt, has become the preferred outline guide representation.

Professor Semper's 1931 guide, which under a new title and publisher remained in print through the forties,³⁰ is a Bradleyan offshoot. Originally one of the Century Catholic College Texts, the guide characterizes not only Shakespeare's characters but also Shakespeare the man: "he was a lover of country, of friends, of music, of outdoor nature and of virtue in women."³¹ This last predilection prepares us for a heavily Victorian reading. Semper quotes Bradley on Hamlet's "Loathing of his mother's sensuality, his horror at her shallowness," on the "sudden ghastly disclosure of his mother's true nature" which, says Semper, "has opened his eyes to the moral rottenness of the world."³² Under the rubric "*The Queen*" Semper quotes Bradley who "has the best comment on the Queen: 'She had a soft animal nature, and was very dull and very shallow. She loved to be happy, like a sheep in the sun; and, to do

her justice, it pleased her to see others happy, like more sheep in the sun."³³ Semper concludes with Bradley that Gertrude was an adulteress though not complicit in murder. He endorses Bradley's reading of Gertrude as incapable of celibacy—of assuming a virtue—by pointing out, "Bradley thinks that the last scene shows that she has slipped back into the old groove."³⁴

Bradleyan character criticism (or patriarchal moralizing) is overtaken by new criticism in the Watt-Holzknacht-Ross guide (1941, 1957, 1967). The authors announce in the Forward that the descriptive phrases they culled from the text "were selected for their general applicability to the characters and those discolored by rage, hate, or other emotions were excluded. . . . It is perhaps not too much to say that often a single vivid phrase from the play is worth more as a characterization than pages of flat and wordy 'character analysis.'"³⁵ The well-meaning NYU trio also disapprove of the usual practice of making "a sharp and curious division between male and female"; they prefer to list characters in order of importance "without distinction of social rank or sex."³⁶ One would like to think that this egalitarian attitude had something to do with the survival of the Barnes and Noble guide for over a quarter of a century. Yet while its authors say nothing about her sensuality, adultery, or incest, remarking only on her "hasty marriage,"³⁷ even so Gertrude is presented as the "weak-willed Queen of Denmark," and like Professor Packard, the phrase they choose to quote, supposedly uncolored by emotion, is Hamlet's misogynous judgment: "frailty, thy name is woman!"³⁸

Cliffs *Hamlet Notes* (the anonymously authored Canadian reprint) made its debut in 1959. It included Brief Summaries of Characters (omitted from the 1971 edition), that attempt fair-minded appraisal. Cliffs' Gertrude is "obviously attractive. . . . poised and dignified and gracious. Simple and direct . . . astute enough in some ways . . . kindly, unsuspecting," in short, "one of those sweet, unsuspecting, unconsidering women who are the cause of disaster to everyone around them!"³⁹ All things considered, Cliff concurs with the ghost and Hamlet; Gertrude's "sin"⁴⁰ is "infidelity to the memory of his father and . . . her sensuality."⁴¹ For purposes of review the student is asked, "What examples are there in this play of what the Greeks called nemesis, that is the weakness of a person's own character causing disaster to that person?" Cliff suggests, "Gertrude's faithlessness to her husband's memory and her precipitate marriage with this man she loves so madly, eventually brings about her death through his treachery to her son."⁴² "Faithlessness to her husband's memory" is, in effect, an injunction against remarriage. Loving "so madly" is an injunc-

tion against female sexuality. The best one can say of this outline guide is that momentarily it looks forward to issues of character *construction* (or back to Elmer Edgar Stoll) in the perception that "Hamlet is a man's play. There are only two women in it, and as a dramatist Shakespeare could not allow either of them to distract attention from the grim main theme."⁴³ Here the commentary moves beyond both character criticism and attention to "the words on the page," to an ever so faint suggestion that the conventions of gender and genre are made, not born.

In 1963, after more than half a century, another outline guide on *Hamlet* to be written by a woman appeared. If Leonora Leet Brodwin is judged by her careful review of the criticism and bibliography for the Monarch guide, she appears a better scholar than most. Her penchant for seeing the play as "profound religious drama which attempts to explore as well the cosmic mysteries of existence"⁴⁴ is unexceptional for the period. Regrettably, Brodwin out-Bradleys Bradley. She is the Phyllis Schafly of *Hamlet* redactors. Brodwin's Gertrude is an adulteress who destroys both son and husband: because of her Hamlet cannot revenge his father and Claudius cannot protect himself by killing Hamlet. Yet Gertrude "is herself a most ordinary creature. Beautiful and warm-hearted, she has no mind of her own and is pulled by whatever force is most powerfully directed at her at any moment. By temperament she turns to the sunny side of life and cannot bear to face any pain or conflict. What pain her adultery with Claudius may have cost her we cannot know. . . ."⁴⁵ Bradley's comparison of Gertrude to "sheep in the sun" is echoed metonymically by Brodwin when she speaks of Gertrude's fatal attraction to "the sunny side of life"; by this logic it is only appropriate that Gertrude "dies the miserable victim of her sentimental and deluded hope for happiness."⁴⁶ Brodwin eulogizes her as a middle-aged Ophelia, "rather simple minded . . . easily molded by the more powerful opinions and desires of others."⁴⁷ Brodwin pursues the parallel no further, disregarding the similarity of Elizabethan ideological models for wives and daughters (both must accept male rule), obliterating a gulf of six decades between her Monarch guide and Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*.

Barron's entered the market the following year with George Price's *Simplified Approach to Shakespeare's "Hamlet"*. In keeping with his title, Price states baldly, "While the King still lived, Claudius seduced Queen Gertrude. She was guilty of both incest and adultery before her husband's death."⁴⁸ Not surprisingly, under the rubric "A Sampling of *Hamlet* Criticism" Bradley is the only twentieth-century critic (1904) Price quotes. Price examines

Gertrude's speech on Ophelia's death only to deny her voice: "Gertrude is depersonalized for a few moments and speaks with a poetic eloquence which she has shown no signs of possessing elsewhere in the play."⁴⁹ Price discovers seven chief causes of Hamlet's depression, no less than four of which relate to Gertrude, all illustrating hypocrisy and lust. What stands out in Price's routine discussion of Hamlet is a flash of what seems like personal indignation: "His idea of sex in middle-life appears positively naive. . . ."⁵⁰ With this sole qualification, Price approves Hamlet's version of Gertrude, observing that "Hamlet's *idealism* still survives despite the shock of his mother's indecent marriage. . . ."⁵¹

Barnes and Noble fielded several treatments of *Hamlet*. Fredson Bowers' 1965 guide for Barnes also follows Bradley in its reference to Gertrude's "incestuous marriage"⁵² and adultery.⁵³ Hamlet must "bring his impure mother to repentance."⁵⁴ Under "Analysis of Characters: Gertrude," Bowers attributes "Courage, Sensuality, Maternal Feeling, and Guiltiness (Remorse)." It strikes me—but not Bowers—as significant that Shakespeare has Gertrude speak all the lines cited under Courage and Guiltiness, seven of the nine lines cited under Maternal Feeling, and *none* of the lines cited under Sensuality.⁵⁵

Barnes' Focus series appears to be the company's superior line. Each Focus book is written by a "distinguished educator."⁵⁶ of the several guides appearing in 1965, Professor McCutchan's is least distressing. In his introduction McCutchan urges the reader to "always remember that Shakespeare was more interested in entertaining than in teaching. . . ."⁵⁷ Much like Watt, Holzknicht, and Ross, who also wrote for Barnes, McCutchan ascribes judgmental speeches to the characters without endorsing them—a welcome distancing. In fact, he remarks on Hamlet's "most unfilial manner" in the closet scene,⁵⁸ which today we recognize as one of many examples of violence against women in Renaissance drama. That is, unlike almost all the other guide writers, McCutchan questions Hamlet's behavior toward Gertrude; by refusing a total identification with the protagonist, McCutchan acquires authority as a critic.

Competing with Barnes' guides was Cliffs Complete Study Edition of *Hamlet* (1965). Glossing act one, scene one, Sidney Lamb makes a provocative point about "legal" as opposed to physical incest: "The effect is to confuse the clear outline of family relationships upon which so much depends when questions of succession come up";⁵⁹ however, Lamb resists the political and economic interrogations that inform much of present-day materialist criticism, opting instead for commentary on Hamlet's "noble

fury and bitter shock" over "his mother's criminal infidelity."⁶⁰ He tells students that "adulterate" means "adulterous" (a disputed point), and characterizes Gertrude as "weak and soft,"⁶¹ blind to [the Ghost] because she betrayed him,⁶² but finally gaining some "stature from her remorse."⁶³ Lamb seems to be echoing Bradley's invitation to abuse: "Her only chance was to be made unhappy."⁶⁴ So too Shawcross, whose Littlefield guide, published in the latter half of the 1960's, presents Gertrude as

a gullible, somewhat slow-witted, easily manipulated, changeable, and inconstant sybarite. She has been wooed and won over (easily?) by her husband's brother, apparently even before his murder (probably through flattery), and has thus become an adulteress. She avoids self-accusation and analysis, and seems incapable of coming to grips with unpleasantness. . . . There is little to admire in Gertrude, regardless of what pardons we make for her, and her role as a mother figure is never realized.⁶⁵

Shawcross is preferable to Brodwin, if to no one else, insofar as he at least reads Ophelia as Gertrude's binary opposite rather than her alter-ego. The Gertrude of both Lamb and Shawcross is a Bradleyan creation.

Cliffs' most recent foray into the *Hamlet* market was in 1971 with James K. Lowers' Note, currently in print. Lowers' representation of Gertrude suggests a critic torn between what he sees in the text and what he thinks he ought to see. For example, commenting on act one, scene two, he observes that neither Gertrude's words nor actions are blameworthy; he notes the queen's adultery in Belleforest's *Histories Tragiques*, but questions it in *Hamlet*;⁶⁶ he finds the queen duly maternal. Even her "o'er-hasty marriage" doesn't particularly disturb him. Incest, rather, is her sin—albeit he admits that the doctrine she offends against was not universal, and he "wonders why the subjects of the King and Queen voiced no protest or expressed no feeling of shock."⁶⁷ However, for Lowers as for the Ghost, "Gertrude is the weak vessel, deficient in moral insight,"⁶⁸ because only such a reading can "do justice to Shakespeare's intentions"⁶⁹ to which Lowers is privy. Bradley triumphs as Cliffs' *Hamlet Notes* concludes: "Only with reluctance can she move just a step toward moral awareness and self-criticism."⁷⁰

The anonymous 1982 Checkernotes on *Hamlet* is interesting chiefly because its author either plagiarized from Shawcross, or its author is Shawcross. Whoever he is, he isn't trendy. Under

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“Critical Appraisal of the Play,” he summarizes Hazlitt, Coleridge, Goethe, and Karl Werder (who wrote in 1875 and to whom Bradley was indebted). After deploring “the crooked smoke of psychological and sociological criticism that has clouded our vision,”⁷¹ he presents the student with Bradley’s Gertrude dressed up in Shawcross’ invective, e.g., “The picture of the queen that arises in perspective is of a gullible, easily manipulated, changeable and inconstant woman.”⁷² The sentence is unchanged from the 1965 Littlefield guide except for the substitution of “woman”—an easy word—for Shawcross’ “sybarite”—a hard one.⁷³

The best of the *Hamlet* guides is the most recent I have found: Michael Feingold’s for Barron’s (1984), a surprising contrast to Barron’s *Simplified Approach* by Professor Price, twenty years earlier. Although Feingold’s bibliography is weak, eliminating the most innovative recent criticism by concluding with David Bevington’s *Twentieth Century Interpretations of “Hamlet”* (1968), Feingold’s commentary indicates a willingness to enter imaginatively into the text and invites students to do the same. Feingold sees Gertrude as “a touching and mysterious figure” because

You never learn explicitly how much Gertrude knows about her husband King Hamlet’s death, or how deeply she is attached to her new husband, Claudius. She never expresses her feelings, either, about the morality of marrying her brother-in-law, though this was considered incestuous at the time. But she expresses her concern for her son and her affection for Ophelia, plus (in the Closet Scene) a vague sense of guilt that only adds to the mystery about her. The ambiguity of Gertrude’s position reaches its height in the final scene, when she drinks from the poisoned cup. Whether she knows it’s poisoned is something you will have to decide for yourself.⁷⁴

As Feingold resists interpellations by Hamlet and his father, resists conventional polemics against Gertrude’s remarriage, and instead grants Gertrude a subject position, I find myself fantasizing a better world where all outline guides are benign, an affordable source of helpful and progressive mediation in language accessible to the less verbally privileged.

If Feingold must be commended for emerging from the shadow of Bradley—no risk-free task for writers of outline guides—so too must Barron’s. Literary criticism within the academy masks its economic motive,⁷⁵ but in the outline guide industry Dr. Johnson’s credo could not be more evident: “No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money.” Better for the guidebook writer to avoid new ways of seeing than chance breaking an implicit promise to

students and losing them as customers. Outline guides promise to get students through tests graded by instructors whose sense of an appropriate reading—even if they are not personally sympathetic to it—is likely to be a familiar one. Consequently, with the exception of Feingold's commentary on Gertrude, interpretations have changed very little.

In earlier guides like Cliffs' *Hamlet Notes*, which continues to sell successfully, old ideals survive; a time-honored role-model is the wife who remains eternally faithful to her husband. Jane F. Gardner notes that "In Classical Rome, the woman who had married only once, *univira*, was approved of, and was regarded as attaining some ideal of marriage."⁷⁶ This still respected attitude informs the thinking of guide writers born within a few decades of the turn of the century. For such as Bowers, Holz knecht, and Lowers, whose sense of suitable behavior was formed before divorce and remarriage were prevalent, and before the pre-nuptial contract became a customary means of protecting the inheritance of the remarrying woman's children, remarriage alone might have damned Gertrude. Moreover, standards for a queen—an idealized figure—have always been conservative; "the makers of manners" from James I's widow to George V's grew into dowagers, thus developing a code of royal propriety that plays into the Renaissance Catholic view of remarriage as suspect, a view tilted toward the male sensibility, and firmly anchored in the mores of western culture.

Predictably, guide writers recycle a Bradleyan reading that mirrors hostility towards women within *Hamlet* itself. The writers' discomfort with remarriage finds expression in the zeal with which Gertrude is condemned. Although the Gertrude that emerges from *Shakespearean Tragedy* has her provenance in the Elizabethan fear of remarrying widows, she was no stranger in 1904, nor is she today. Bradley's character criticism, supplemented but never displaced by other approaches, has been familiar classroom fare for almost a century; it "almost functions, through a system of universal education which has established the study of Shakespeare as its linchpin, as part of the air we breathe."⁷⁷ Bradley's Gertrude is our contemporary.

III.

What harm is there in accessing Gertrude through outline guides that read her through Bradley's eyes? To begin with, Bradley's Gertrude is reductive, almost univalent, complacently corrupt, "very dull and very shallow," says Bradley, who then

repeats “dull” once again.⁷⁸ Rather than analyzing the play as a construction, Bradley unself-consciously accepts Hamlet and the ghost as trustworthy narrators, thus suppressing many of the play’s ambiguities, especially those having to do with gender and sexuality. Whereas the principal actors in *Hamlet* feel love, respect, and pity for Gertrude no less than anger and contempt, the Gertrude of *Shakespearean Tragedy* is the object of scorn, misogyny, and sexual uneasiness concealed under the guise of finer feelings. It is not my intention to diminish Bradley’s achievement or to fault him for not transcending his time. What disturbs me is the neglect of more balanced criticism that was available to the outline guide authors as early as the 1950’s and ‘60’s. I am thinking, for example, of John W. Draper’s “Queen Gertrude” (1938),⁷⁹ Carolyn Heilbrun’s “The Character of Hamlet’s Mother” (1957), and Rosamond Putzel’s “Queen Gertrude’s Crime” (1961)⁸⁰—all preceding the advent of a specifically feminist criticism.⁸¹ Now, of course, there is even less of an excuse for ignoring alternative readings of Gertrude and perpetrating a unitary Bradleyan interpretation.⁸²

The theatrical occasion of the household canard “Frailty, thy name is woman!” is too notable to be left to guidebooks disseminating an unproblematized interpretation from the last century, an age more reticent than ours about sexuality. For among the dangers of most outline guides, perhaps the greatest is that they not only peddle old interpretations but represent them as *facts*. Over time, any continually reinforced interpretation takes on a life of its own. Reinscribed in guide after guide, this Gertrude becomes a simulacrum, displacing Shakespeare’s complex construction and confirming a view of women that students may bring to class—a view so long expounded, so briefly contested. Shrinking Shakespeare to validate age-old, worldwide traditions of sexism is a poor substitute for educating students to a broader literary and social vision.

Yet we cannot excise outline guides from their lucrative niche in the education market. In 1993 my university newspaper began to advertise the portable Sony Data Discman, a battery-operated, two-pound CD player that makes Monarch Notes instantly available “At home, in class, on the road, in the dorm—anywhere!”⁸³ Cliffs is now targeting teachers as well as students. *Cliffs Teaching Portfolios on Hamlet, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Midsummer Night’s Dream, and Romeo and Juliet* are advertised as including teacher’s guides and exams for only \$11.00 a play—another line destined to stretch out to the crack of doom. What to do? At the 1991 International Shakespeare Congress in Tokyo, Terence Hawkes offered the bold suggestion that we bring Cliffs into the classroom

for analysis. For outline guides, like the literature they address and the criticism draw upon, are also texts, ideologically loaded, neither unitary nor transparent. What sets outline guides apart from the academic criticism they digest is the primacy of the commercial motive rarely tempered by peer review. All the more reason, then, for those who *will* read Cliffs Notes to read them *analytically*, learning to weigh what is said against what is left unsaid, to read the biases of their society through predictable and reductive interpretations. Thus used, Cliff and his kin can become bridges to the text and to criticism that is original, self-conscious, and pluralistic.

Nor need the academic community restrict its message to students; we can talk to the guide publishers, urging the incorporation of multiple interpretations and current approaches—new historicism, Marxist, feminist, psychoanalytic, theatrical, rhetorical, etc.—in return for professional certification. Although certification cannot insure high sales, at least it fumigates the product. Barron's NCTE-endorsed series is the acceptable outcome of a dialogue between business and the academy. Extending that dialogue could allow us to rest more easily with a commercially based, education-related industry that, like it or not, is instrumental in shaping and perpetuating our cultural values.

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Notes

¹Swanson's testimonial prefaces the text of a speech Hillegass gave to the Newcomen Society meeting in Lincoln. The reprint was part of a parcel the Cliffs Notes company sent in response to my query for information. Clifton K. Hillegass, *Cliffs Notes Inc.: Quality of Product . . . Service . . . Policy* (New York: Newcomen Society, 1985), pp. 6-7.

²Dave Ferman cites these statistics in an article about Cliffs Notes commemorating Shakespeare's birthday: "The Classic Shortcut," *Dallas Morning News*, 23 April 1988, sec. c, p. 2.

³My study is confined to the North American product only. Although I've found references as far back as the 1860's to British guides designed to help students pass university and government examinations, I have not seen these.

⁴In this same year, Mary Ellen Ferris Gettemy published her *Outline Studies in the Shakespearean Drama*, less a review than a traditional handbook, and within two years the A. Flanagan Company of Chicago brought out a second edition for \$.75.

⁵I. J. Semper, *A Shakespere Study Guide*, The Century Catholic College Texts (New York: Century, 1931), p. v.

⁶Almost all the outline guides I examined for this project came from academic libraries in California.

⁷I quote here and elsewhere from a public relations letter to me from Brakhahn, dated 3 October 1990.

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⁸Hillegass, p. 12.

⁹Hillegass, p. 21.

¹⁰Hillegass, pp. 24-25.

¹¹Another Cliffs project is the American publication of a British series of "Bluffer's Guides." Centennial Press, a Cliffs imprint, offers guides to such varied interests as baseball, golf, computers, wine, and even sex ("Cliffs notes for the Rest of Your Life," *Newsweek*, 29 July 1991, p. 40).

¹²Ferman, sec. c, p. 1.

¹³Ferman, sec. c, p. 1.

¹⁴Ferman, sec. c, p. 2.

¹⁵Ferman, sec. c, p. 2.

¹⁶Hillegass, pp. 21-22.

¹⁷Hillegass, p. 21.

¹⁸J. Wilson McCutchan, *Plot Outlines of Shakespeare's Tragedies: Scene by Scene*, Barnes and Noble Focus Books (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965), reverse title page.

¹⁹Also see I *Timothy* 5:5-6 and 11, I *Corinthians* 7:8-9, and the third book of Joannes Ludovicus Vives's influential *Instruction of a Christen Woman* (1523).

²⁰Barbara J. Todd ("The Remarrying Widow: A Stereotype Reconsidered," *Women and English Society 1500-1800*, ed. Mary Prior [London: Methuen, 1984], p. 56) cites thirty per cent for mid-sixteenth century remarriages. Lawrence Stone's figure for the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is about twenty-five per cent (*The Family. Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* [New York: Harper, 1977] p. 56).

²¹Herbert H. Hyman, *Of Time and Widowhood: Nationwide Studies of Enduring Effects* (Durham, NC: Duke Press Policy Studies, 1983), p. 10.

²²Helena Znaniecka Lopata, *Women as Widows: Support Systems* (New York: Elsevier, 1979), p. 152.

²³More recent sociological studies reveal attitudes towards widowhood and remarriage in flux; see Helena Znaniecka Lopata, ed., *Widows: North America*, vol. 2 (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1987); Robert C. DiGuilio, *Beyond Widowhood: From Bereavement to Emergence and Hope* (New York: Free Press, 1989); and Anne Martin Matthews, *Widowhood in Later Life* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1991).

²⁴Kingsley, *Outline Studies in Literature: "Hamlet,"* no. 38 (Boston: Palmer, 1904), p. 18.

²⁵Edgar Packard, *Outlines for the Study of Shakespeare's Plays* (Kent, Ohio: College Exchange, 1927), p. 4.

²⁶J. R. Webster, *Practical Analyses of Shakespeare's Plays for Ready Reference . . . "Hamlet"* (Cambridge, Mass.: J. R. Webster, 1930), pp. 11-12.

²⁷Webster, p. 3.

²⁸Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth* (1904, rptd. New York: Meridian, 1955), p. 412, n. 19.

²⁹Bradley, p. 137.

³⁰*Hamlet Without Tears*, published by Loras College Press of Dubuque, Iowa.

³¹From the 1931 edition of Semper, p. 10.

³²Semper, p. 131.

³³Semper, p. 134.

³⁴Semper, p. 134.

³⁵Homer A. Watt, Karl J. Holzknecht, and Raymond Ross, *Outlines of Shakespeare's Plays*, College Outline Series, rev. ed. (New York: Barnes, 1941), p. iii.

³⁶Watt, Holzknecht, and Ross, p. iii.

³⁷Watt, Holzknecht, and Ross, p. 159.

- ³⁸Watt, Holzknrecht, and Ross, p. 158.
- ³⁹*Hamlet Notes*, rev. printing (Lincoln, Neb.: Cliffs Notes, 1959), pp. 95-96.
- ⁴⁰*Hamlet Notes*, p. 28.
- ⁴¹*Hamlet Notes*, p. 94.
- ⁴²*Hamlet Notes*, p. 90.
- ⁴³*Hamlet Notes*, pp. 95-96.
- ⁴⁴Leonora Leet Brodwin, *Review Notes and Study Guide to Shakespeare's "Hamlet"* (New York: Monarch, 1963), p. 8.
- ⁴⁵Brodwin, p. 81.
- ⁴⁶Brodwin, p. 83.
- ⁴⁷Brodwin, pp. 84-85.
- ⁴⁸Price, *A Simplified Approach to Shakespeare's "Hamlet"* (Great Neck, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 1964), p. 65.
- ⁴⁹Price, p. 53.
- ⁵⁰Price, p. 46.
- ⁵¹Price, p. 2.
- ⁵²Bowers, "Hamlet: An Outline-Guide to the Play," Barnes and Noble Focus Books (New York: Barnes, 1965), p. 6.
- ⁵³Bowers, pp. 7 and 35.
- ⁵⁴Bowers, p. 18.
- ⁵⁵Bowers, pp. 94-96.
- ⁵⁶Publisher's introduction to the Barnes and Noble Focus Books series, J. Wilson McCutchan, *Plot Outlines of Shakespeare's Tragedies: Scene by Scene* (New York: Barnes, 1965), reverse title page.
- ⁵⁷McCutchan, p. x.
- ⁵⁸McCutchan, p. 55.
- ⁵⁹Lamb, "Hamlet": *Commentary. Complete Text, Glossary, Complete Study Edition* (Lincoln, Neb.: Cliff's Notes, 1965), p. 27. Lamb's guide was originally entitled "Hamlet": *Complete Study Guide*.
- ⁶⁰Lamb, p. 28.
- ⁶¹Lamb, p. 55.
- ⁶²Lamb, p. 70.
- ⁶³Lamb, p. 71.
- ⁶⁴Lamb, p. 137.
- ⁶⁵John T. Shawcross, *A Critical Study Guide to Shakespeare's "Hamlet,"* ERA (Educational Research Associates) Key Indexed Guides (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, 1968), p. 75.
- ⁶⁶Lowers, *Hamlet Notes*, new ed. (Lincoln, NE: Cliffs Notes, 1971), pp. 6 and 30.
- ⁶⁷Lowers, p. 21.
- ⁶⁸Lowers, p. 69.
- ⁶⁹Lowers, p. 21.
- ⁷⁰Lowers, p. 69.
- ⁷¹*Hamlet Notes*, Checkernotes (Toronto: Checkerbooks, 1982), p. 121.
- ⁷²*Hamlet Notes*, Checkernotes, p. 102.
- ⁷³Checkernotes, Shawcross, p. 75.
- ⁷⁴Michael Feingold, *William Shakespeare's "Hamlet,"* Barron's Book Notes (Woodbury, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 1984), pp. 18-19.
- ⁷⁵See Terry Eagleton's discussion in his conclusion to *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1983), especially pp. 200-03.
- ⁷⁶Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 50-51.
- ⁷⁷Terence Hawkes, *That Shakespeherian Rag: Essays on a Critical Process* (London: Methuen, 1986), p. 31.

⁷⁸Bradley, pp. 137-38.

⁷⁹Draper, "Queen Gertrude," *The "Hamlet" of Shakespeare's Audience* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1938; rptd. NY: Octagon, 1966), pp. 109-26. Actually, the essay first appeared in the *Revue Anglo-Américaine* four years earlier in 1934.

⁸⁰Carolyn Heilbrun, "The Character of Hamlet's Mother," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 8 (1957), 201-06; rptd. in Heilbrun's *Hamlet's Mother and Other Women* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 9-17; and Rosamond Putzel, "Queen Gertrude's Crime," *Renaissance Papers 1961*, ed. George Walton Williams (Durham, NC: Southeastern Renaissance Conference, 1962), pp. 37-46.

⁸¹Draper's Gertrude marries Claudius for political, not sexual, reasons; she, like the court, overlooks the strict construction of their union as incestuous because it is of overriding importance that the succession of a mature leader be secured immediately in order to avert war. Heilbrun is concerned with refuting Bradley's judgment of Gertrude as "dull" and "shallow." Heilbrun's Gertrude, though lustful, "is also intelligent, penetrating, and gifted with a remarkable talent for concise and pithy speech" (p. 17). For Putzel, Gertrude is "unassertive," and "malleable" but "never vicious"; she marries Claudius because "her nature required a leader" (p. 45).

⁸²See Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely, "Women and Men in Shakespeare: A Selective Bibliography," in their anthology, *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1980), pp. 314-35, for feminist work on *Hamlet* through 1979. (This anthology includes Rebecca Smith's important essay, "A Heart Cleft in Twain: The Dilemma of Shakespeare's Gertrude," pp. 194-210.) The Lenz-Greene-Neely bibliography is updated in Dorothea Kehler, "A Selective Bibliography of Feminist and Feminist-Related Shakespeare Criticism, 1979-1988," in *Another Country: Feminist Perspectives on Renaissance Drama*, ed. Dorothea Kehler and Susan Baker (Methuen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1991), pp. 261-301; and in Philip C. Kolin, *Shakespeare and Feminist Criticism: An Annotated Bibliography and Commentary* (New York: Garland, 1991).

⁸³*The Daily Aztec*, 2 December 1993, p. 3.

Charmian's Laughter: Women, Gypsies, and Festive Ambivalence in *Antony and Cleopatra*

by Charles Whitney

I.

While the Jacobean stage to some degree repudiates "Elizabethan mirth" and the King's Men mount to higher social respectability,¹ Shakespeare's later tragedies nevertheless tap powerful resources of popular festivity. Like many other royal protagonists in English Renaissance drama, from a festive point of view, Cleopatra is a Queen of Misrule, that is, she presides over a special time and place of revelry that both satirizes rule-ordered existence and offers a temporary alternative.² The present study, however, focuses on Cleopatra's feminine and festive court community itself, especially on the most notable member of the royal retinue, Charmian. To a certain degree, Queen Cleopatra emerges from and is enabled by her intimate circle, and undergoes a death made meaningful by the affirmations of its festive wisdom.

The festive court world in *Antony and Cleopatra* is foregrounded in the opening portion of act one, scene two, where it prepares for Cleopatra's entrance. In these seventy-eight lines the Soothsayer and Cleopatra's attendant Charmian are at the center of a group beginning what appears to be a night of eating and drinking. This scene is sometimes cut or shortened in performance, just as the role of its main character, Charmian, is often reduced or overlooked in both performance and in criticism. Some performances have even cut Charmian's and her fellow servant Iras' suicides,³ which, respectively, immediately follow and precede Cleopatra's. But if one takes seriously the play's festive implications, Charmian leaps into prominence as a tragic character in her own right, and this scene, especially when juxtaposed with the later suicides of the three characters (V. ii), can provide a powerful basis for understanding how festivity, tragedy, power, and gender are related in this play.

The significance of the Egyptian court is also increased by virtue of a topical association that has not been the subject of discussion hitherto: the other face of the exotic splendors of royal Egypt is England's own internal, low, marginal other, its own "Egyptians," the gypsies, commonly associated with plebeian festive occasions. Persuasive arguments have been made for relating the title characters to Elizabeth, James, James's lovers, and other matters of the English court,⁴ but the juxtaposition of high and low is precisely the festive way. Living like English

gypsies a life revolving around performance, Cleopatra and her court circle could seem to some playgoers like English gypsies threatened with execution in Octavian or Jacobean campaigns to force "Egyptians" to renounce their culture and assimilate. At any rate, accounts of the orientalism of *Antony and Cleopatra*⁵ need to take into account the close relationship between the exotic and the domestic Egyptian in the minds of contemporary Englishmen. To sum up the argument below, Cleopatra's tragedy of erotic, maternal, and political power can be socially situated in two festive, mostly plebeian or commoner groups: the play's own exotic, predominantly female Egyptian court, and contemporary English society's own gypsies. These groups exemplify a philosophy and practice informing tragedy that can be called "festive ambivalence." Those portions of Jacobean playgoers identifying or sympathizing with these groups would be among those most likely to make and appreciate such connections.

Many scholars of festivity have found Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of festive ambivalence illuminating, including Shakespeareans Michael Bristol and François Laroque. Bakhtin has found ambivalence in holiday celebrations, ritual spectacles, pageants, marketplace shows, parodies, and in many typical genres of everyday popular speech—festive or "carnavalesque" practices and discourses that have seemed to him to infiltrate and transform elite culture in the Renaissance. Ambivalence, two contrasting attitudes or feelings about the same thing, stems partly from the experience of living in a hierarchical society—at any level, though those near the bottom usually have greater opportunities for ambivalence. Ambivalence can be expressed in destructive or constructive ways. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance festive experiences provide the opportunity to develop ambivalent feelings about social relations, both celebrating free association and mocking injustice. Festivity can provide a temporary space of "freedom, community, equality, and abundance," as Bakhtin says, and moreover the opportunity to "renegotiate identity," relationships, attitudes, and the very social order itself; on the other hand it satirizes and demystifies oppressive power.⁶ Historically, Renaissance holiday festivity derives partly from agricultural rituals celebrating another source of festive ambivalence, the seasonal death and regeneration of life: as Laroque says, quoting Le Roy Ladurie, "the festival feeds on the dead 'to produce living flesh anew.'"⁷ Reversible and evolving processes of time that encompass the linear movement of tragedy characterize festive ambivalence.

Bakhtin privileges the humorous aspect of festive ambivalence decisively, perhaps excessively, but on the one hand the

tragedy in *Antony and Cleopatra* is never far from humor, and on the other carnival's ferocious laughter embraces both genres. To Bakhtin ambivalent festive laughter expresses not primarily the reaction of an individual but of a chorus expanding indefinitely. The subject of laughter is also the world, as seen in its droll aspects, its "gay relativity." The laughter is directed at everyone, including oneself, those in power and those subjected to it. It celebrates liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order, and so can imply or envision a sort of world-upside-down utopia that affirms the productive forces of body, nature, and community beyond present oppression, danger, or catastrophe, including death. The laughter is ambivalent most of all because it is both "triumphant and mocking"; it asserts and denies, buries and revives, embraces and blames. One laughs with and at simultaneously (11-12).⁸ In the symbolic inversions of festive Saturnalia, the top becomes the bottom; one shares the Lord of Misrule's fun, but laughs at his ineptness, and yet again with his implied or explicit satire of the ruling lord. In a grotesque style the body is envisioned as extending indefinitely with gaping orifices, and as capable of stupendous generation, labor, consumption, evacuation, and decay: such ambivalent images celebrate the transformative powers and potential of the body, and affirm on the one hand its individual demise in death and decay and on the other its collective continuance through reproduction.

In his idealized picture of festivity Bakhtin does not fully recognize that the laughter of festive tradition often loses a good deal of its constructive ambivalence when it comes to traditionally oppressed groups such as women and Jews, who were sometimes the victims of violence premeditated during those festive times of attitude renegotiation. Women are generally subordinated and less represented, and a common female pastime, the so-called gossips' meeting, where women sometimes drank together, was for many males a reliable source of anxiety, humor, and indignation. Narrow limitations are often put on the meaning of grotesque images of the female body and functions. Janet Adelman traces in Shakespeare's tragedies a masculine horror of "suffocating mothers" attributable to the anxieties of a patriarchal culture. Such anxieties figure in Valerie Traub's brilliant excavation of that lovable piece of repressed maternal flesh, festive Falstaff, whose grotesque body inscribes a submerged trace of the infant's experience of the mother before the acquisition of language and identity—experience that men in Prince Hal's and Shakespeare's cultures are apparently supposed to forget.⁹ Yet since festivity often involves an alternative to the patriarchal hierarchy, and

since it emphasizes themes like generation, renewal, and companionship, it would seem to valorize qualities traditionally associated with women. Renaissance popular literature features many husband-dominators and picaresque heroines. As Natalie Davis says, "The unruly woman on the float was shameful, outrageous; she was also vigorous and in command. And the message of the urban carnival was mixed."¹⁰ By playing off Roman and Egyptian viewpoints to female-centered festivity, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* discourages pat responses.

Festive ambivalence informs all of Shakespeare's tragedies. Its power had invested drama long before Shakespeare, and it complements the basically ambivalent, serio-comic tone and the juxtaposition of high and low styles found in medieval religious and secular drama. *Antony and Cleopatra* flouts neo-classical conventions of tragedy and gains tragic energy from a festive ambivalence that is anchored in popular culture and that is clearly gendered.

II.

Recent books by Janet Adelman and Theadora Jankowski have each placed a particular emphasis on aspects of Cleopatra that I want to show can be aligned with festivity in the play. Adelman focuses on maternal aspects, Jankowski on Cleopatra's methods of ruling. In her brilliant synthesis, Adelman presents Cleopatra as both lover and mother of Antony, a "model and source" for Antony's generosity, his "bounty," which is his distinguishing heroic attribute. Cleopatra also re-creates a heroic image of Antony in the nurturing, as it were maternal, space of her memory, and soon comes to envision her own death as both a sexual and maternal reunion with him. Adelman argues that in Shakespeare's other tragedies since *Hamlet* protagonists must defend themselves from dangerous females, but that for "one fragile moment" in the sequence of Shakespeare's tragedies, male heroism here is enabled by a woman's nurturing love, becoming a masculinity "enormous in its capacity to share in the female mystery of an endlessly regenerating source of supply, growing the more it is reaped." And "trust in female process similarly bursts the boundaries of the tragic form" (191-192).

Jankowski builds upon the many studies that have emphasized Cleopatra's ability to play roles and games, showing how this ability becomes effective politically. She emphasizes Cleopatra's vulnerable position as a woman and as a ruler under the indirect domination of Rome. Like Queen Elizabeth, Cleopatra

survives by her ability to perform and to create fictions, such as "lover, joker, politician, queen, goddess, Egypt," controlling "her world by controlling how others see her, through her careful staging of her natural body to serve her political ends," including the staging of her own death.¹¹ She loves Antony but she must reconstruct to her advantage the often sexualized or demonized images he and others project on to her.

Many of the themes emphasized by Adelman and by Jankowski are present in the play's opening party scenes at the court of Cleopatra—that world-famous hostess memorialized by the symposium guests in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophists*. In Charmian's soothsaying party scene (I. ii. 1-78) male characters (Alexas, Soothsayer) bring what turn out to be bad fortunes to female characters (Charmian, Iras), who interpret their fortunes in festive and positive ways, ways that also affirm the values of their world. Full of high spirits young Charmian pleads with Alexas in lines 1-5 to have the Soothsayer tell her fortune. She has heard Alexas praise the Soothsayer to Cleopatra and wants to hear more about a certain prophecy concerning somebody's husband (hers or Cleopatra's, the text does not make clear) who "must change [or charge] his horns with garlands"¹²—that is, either be already cuckolded on his wedding day, or die a cuckold, garlands being typical of the rituals associated with both occasions. Charmian's fortune, which the Soothsayer applies to Iras as well, turns out to be a set of disappointingly brief, vague, and on balance unpropitious comparatives: you will be "fairer than you are," "more loving than beloved," longer lived than your mistress Cleopatra, and unluckier than in the past (17, 23, 31, 33-34). The women's disappointment leads to much festive abuse and banter, and to good-natured mockery in the last half of the interlude. Charmian's dismissal of the Soothsayer, "Out fool, I forgive thee for a witch" (40), shows irreverent disappointment that he is apparently not in touch with the dark forces. Charmian and Iras exemplify the "sacred parody" typical of popular festivity by pretending to pray to the Goddess Isis that Alexas be "fifty-fold a cuckold" for bringing such dour prophecies, while he responds with a shot of his own, which could be spoken good-naturedly or resentfully: "Lo now, if it lay in their hands to make me a cuckold, they would make themselves whores but they'd do't" (75-78).

The principal theme in this festive scene, however, is the utopian fantasy of Charmian the unwedded female servant concerning an almost total inversion of life: she wants a life of wealth and pleasure, accomplished and famous children, power over her husbands, and a royal status equal to her mistress—along with

continued residence in the court as companion to her beloved Queen. Ah, how food, drink, and fellowship can prompt "the symbolic construction of an alternative world," can "reassert the legitimacy of natural instincts and the dignity of the supposedly vulgar."¹³ Charmian wishes, "Let me be married to three kings in a forenoon, and widow them all" (26). That tossed-off, heady hyperbole arises from the same grand and generous capacity for dreaming shown by Antony in the previous scene, where he declares to his beloved, "Here is my space, Kingdoms are clay" (I. i. 34-5): these are both aspirations arising in the bountiful atmosphere of the court but undermining the idea of a court, suggesting a world in which sheer exhilaration collapses hierarchies. Charmian's greatest wish seems to be for awesome maternal vigor: "Let me have a child at fifty, to whom Herod of Jewry may do homage." The scene's biggest and most ambivalent laugh, the climax of the Soothsayer's prophecies about Charmian, is his solemn and indirect answer to Charmian's "Prithee how many boys and wenches must I have?": "If every of your wishes had a womb, and fertile every wish, a million" (37-39). Charmian's aspiration to motherhood may be the best, though to my knowledge still unnoticed, indication that Shakespeare when composing *Antony and Cleopatra* did in fact consult Robert Garnier's *Marc-Antoine*, translated in 1592 by Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, under the title of *Antonius*. In Garnier, Charmian attempts at length to dissuade Cleopatra from suicide by arguing that she should care for her children. Shakespeare here resituates the subject of motherhood and the theme of maternal nurturing from melodrama and family duty to festive pleasure and pride.

In Charmian's imagination the utopian festive community in fact replaces the patriarchal family unit. The festivities of this scene do affirm and celebrate sex with men as the path to familial and social status, and one is free to discern a Gargantuan, million-wished appetite in Charmian for sexual generation—though Iras' phrase, apparently applied to her, "wild bedfellow" (51), may suggest openness to same-sex enjoyment as well. Charmian likens sexual desire itself (47-49) to the fertility-bringing Nile in flood, and teases Iras by suggesting that she is promiscuous by nature; she and Iras laugh about the extra inch of virile member Iras wishes on her future husband (59-61). On the other hand, wanting to run through "three kings in a forenoon," like three screwdrivers at brunch, hardly suggests eagerness to submit to the constraints of a patriarchal nuclear family. Given the prospect of doting on (and being dominated by) an unloving husband, Charmian declares she would rather excite herself with alcohol

(24). Most significantly, her request "Find me to marry me with Octavius Caesar, and companion me with my mistress" (29-30), would consolidate a female-centered, festive court on the friendship between two equals, Cleopatra and the enlarged Charmian, providing moreover a pre-emptive solution to the fundamental political rivalries of the play between Antony and Octavius that start to build later in this same scene! Charmian would no doubt concur with Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* that if Shakespeare had given Cleopatra women friends of her own class, the play would be radically altered and perhaps more interesting—though she would have hardly agreed with Woolf that Octavia, Antony's wife, was the best affective candidate. Charmian's fantasy world is ruled by women who have availed themselves of the resources of men in order to become more independent of them.

All in all, Charmian envisions a festive condition of maximum power, freedom, maternal productiveness, pleasure, companionship, and community that anticipates the play's positive presentation of erotic and maternal themes (Adelman's subject), and of political themes (Jankowski's). Further, like the ordinary people who are Bakhtin's main subjects, Charmian's aspirations suit her subordinate position. For instance, Charmian's advice to Cleopatra in the very next scene not to cross Antony in anything because "In time we hate that which we often fear" (I. iii. 9) may well reflect a servant's anxiety about not pleasing a superior; this is precisely the kind of anxiety that Charmian's fantasies would eliminate. World-upside-down visions are intrinsically ambivalent, partly because they can't be realized; they are produced in hierarchical societies that keep many down but allow a few to pursue a grand range of human possibilities: they respond to pain and imply satire. Though she clearly takes the license to engender "fear," Cleopatra is also subordinated: both to Antony and to the Romans as a woman, an Egyptian, and an embattled head of state threatened by imperialism; her performances for Antony in part reflect these conditions, and Charmian and her court world complement her.

Charmian's ambivalent position is underscored deeply in this scene by its pointed juxtaposition of the servants' carefree and optimistic playfulness with the ominous weight of future catastrophe. Audience members familiar with the fate of Cleopatra and her two servants may appreciate both the foreshadowing in the Soothsayer's dignified, dark prophecies and the powerful dramatic irony resulting from Charmian's gross misinterpretations of these prophecies. Charmian's only "husband" will be death (4); in

her suicide she will be "fair" in the sense of displaying a noble solidarity with Cleopatra (17), and therefore "more beloved than beloved" (23). In her suicide she will "outlive" Cleopatra (31), by a couple of minutes, dying by the venom of the snakes hidden in those "figs" to which she has said she prefers long life (32).

It is in these dramatically ironic prophecies that different attitudes toward Egypt and Cleopatra are juxtaposed for the first time in the play. By the Roman standards of Philo, whose moralistic commentary opens the play, Charmian's responses to the Soothsayer are those of an irresponsible, lustful, flighty if not hysterical, and (because she so misreads her fate) pathetic female who is, moreover, twice dubious because oriental Egyptians are so like English gypsies (as will be discussed later). This judgment will either produce no laughter at all or an unfestive, thin sardonic sound. Even a Philo able to entertain ambiguity would conclude at best not with festive ambivalence but with undecidability or moderate balance, like the critic judiciously balancing one's pleasure at Charmian's enthusiasm with reservations about her character or maturity. But playgoers are not really being asked to remain detached at the margins of a staged festivity. For insofar as Charmian's hilarity expresses a tradition of festive ambivalence, it is a type of discourse that itself implies an awareness of limits to an individual's aspirations and life, along with an affirmation of powers of desire, generation, nurturing, and friendship. There is, as William Flesch remarks, a "thrifless economics," an atmosphere of sheer expenditure in the Egyptian world.¹⁴ If the festive genre and ambivalent laughter of the scene are appreciated, at least some audience members should be able to find in it an affirmation of the productive and renewing forces of festive community, an affirmation that could enable the audience to go right on laughing in the same spirit as Charmian and Iras, but more deeply than they, *with* the dramatically ironic knowledge that the Soothsayer speaks sooth. "The banquet in which one eats," Laroque says of festive ambivalence, "covertly evokes a banquet in which one might be eaten."¹⁵ Bakhtin cites the feast of tripe when Gargantua was born, where the hilarious guests use puns to identify eater and eaten, fecal matter, food, and birth. For instance, "dressing the calf" means getting oneself dressed as well as preparing the calf to be cooked; "washing the tripe" also means drinking wine, which washes one's own intestines (p. 225). It is impossible, on the other hand, to join in the laughter of the partying Romans in the next act; their drunken hypocrisy covers deadly scheming, posturing, and mockery.

One may have the hunch in this soothsaying scene that the devotion enabling the two attendants to carry through with their

own suicides is not so much that of the Oriental slave of Western stereotype or of the Roman wife who joins her Stoic husband in suicide as the solidarity of loving female companions who have shared a vision of female regiment, a vision informed by festive ambivalence and play. Here festivity is by no means beyond politics; it turns out to support both recognition of Cleopatra's positive erotic and maternal qualities and her political ability to rule. My point, then, is that the affirmation of female erotic, maternal, and political power that recent critics have explored in the play is in this scene *socially* situated in a festive circle of women.

The significant role played by this circle, and by Charmian in particular, in establishing the playful atmosphere of Egypt and the attitude of festive ambivalence that is central to the tragedy and to the tragic affirmation also needs to be stressed. For many playgoers that hunch about solidarity and play will later turn out to be true. Playing in part a choral role, Charmian does seem to fulfill in part her desire for companionship with her mistress. With teasing similar to that in the soothsaying scene, she reminds Cleopatra that her love for Antony has precedent: before him, there was Caesar, during what Cleopatra amusingly referred to in her defense of Antony as her "salad days" (I. v. 73). But Charmian joins in what Adelman calls Cleopatra's "erotic recreation" of Antony during his absence (p. 185), reminiscing about the pranks the two lovers enjoyed, the fake fish trick and the drunken cross-dressing, and, in a scene (II. v.) with tremendous potential for camp obscenity in the style of Charles Ludlam and his Ridiculous Theatrical Company, Charmian trades bawdy innuendos about the love-lorn Cleopatra's obsession with billiards.

Hampered by his Roman prejudices and his rigid, Roman conceptions of heroism and masculinity, Antony struggles throughout the play with a destructive ambivalence toward Cleopatra.¹⁶ After Antony's last and worst fit of rage, Cleopatra desperately turns to her companions: "Help me, my women!" (IV. xiii. 1). At this point it is actually Charmian who suggests that Cleopatra retire to the monument and give out that she has killed herself (IV. xiii. 3-6)—that is, that the solution to the problem at hand is to reinforce the solidarity of the group, and to stage another performance, one that would help Antony overcome his obsession. This suggestion leads to Antony's suicide, though Charmian's suggestion apparently follows Cleopatra's theory that Antony should be crossed rather than accommodated: her justification is "The soul and body rive not more in parting / Than greatness going off" (IV. xiii. 5-6). And it is Charmian who retrieves the clown with his

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fatal snakes. As the clown says of another woman recently killed by an asp—Cleopatra—Charmian and Iras are each “a very honest woman, but something given to lie, as a woman should not do, but in the way of honesty” (V. ii. 252-54). Their monument ruse failed tragically, revealing the inevitable risks of the strategy and philosophy of play, which had enabled love and lovers.

Given that Cleopatra, Charmian, and Iras are left at the mercy of the Romans after the defeat of the Egyptian and Antonian forces, their choice of suicide is motivated to a large extent by their desire to play their parts in the pageant or theater of their choice, rather than of their enemy’s. Told that they will become part of Caesar’s victory pageant, they wish to avoid the humiliation of marketplace mockery when led in triumph through Roman streets and when impersonated in tawdry street theater. Their lives are wedded to the festive milieu they themselves have created. Cleopatra explains,

The quick comedians
Extemporally will stage us, and present
Our Alexandrian revels: Antony
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
I’ th’ posture of a whore

(V. ii. 216-21).

Here playfulness extends to awareness of the limitations of the theatrical medium, particularly of the boy actor speaking these lines. “I’ll never see’t!” cries Iras, “for I am sure mine nails are stronger than mine eyes.” “Why, that’s the way / To fool their preparation, and to conquer / Their most absurd intents,” replies Cleopatra (V. ii. 222-25). Death itself is then also conceived as play: Cleopatra’s assignment to her two servants is to “play till doomsday” (V. ii. 23, an instruction repeated partially by Charmian as she prepares for death, V. ii. 319). Performance is the means by which Cleopatra rules; it is also a way of life that includes love and devotion under the sign of play.¹⁷

In the death scene the ambivalent festive laughter that overcomes the pain and fear of untimely death modulates into a juxtaposition of the grotesque and the sublime in Cleopatra’s body. Cleopatra offers a profound kind of playing still concerned with what Adelman calls a “female mystery,” “an endlessly regenerating source of supply, growing the more it is reaped” (191). That supply is, in part, Cleopatra’s ability to dramatize her death as a rending surrender like sexual love, as a reunion with a “husband” she ennobled in life and in her nurturing imagination after his death. Dying, she identifies the serpent biting her breast

with a baby, saying to Charmian, (309-10) "Dost thou not see my baby at my breast, / That sucks the nurse asleep?" The pain mingles with the pleasure of breast-feeding and sexual ecstasy. Here is the "joy of the worm" (V. ii. 260), a grotesquely ambivalent ensemble of tremendous resonance, wished for Cleopatra by the plebeian clown who brought her the asp. As does the soothsaying scene, this ensemble accepts and affirms the Egyptian world and its self-determined end. Its multivalence, especially in its treatment of snake imagery, invites comment from the Christian moralist, but as little more than the Roman Philo who is so disgusted at Antony's Egyptian sojourn. Besides Eve and Mary Magdalene, whose strengths rather than guilt seem emphasized, the snake allusions may also suggest the Egyptian goddess Isis as well as several personages depicted with snakes at their breasts: the fertility goddess Terra and opposing personifications of the vice Luxuria and of the virtue Wise Prudence. Among other female roles, Cleopatra is lover, wife, priestess, goddess, temptress, queen, and, in the Egyptian context, the monarch whose afterlife represents the continuity of the social body.¹⁸

Several critics have pointed out that the play is limited in its validation of Cleopatra's sexuality and power and of Antony's enlarged masculinity: the play fulfills our desire to witness the sexual union of the lovers only in this death scene solo, where female sexuality may be less threatening, and Antony reaches his fullest development only in Cleopatra's imagination after the man himself is dead.¹⁹ This limitation is significant. But consideration needs to be given to the popular-festive significance of the love-death, even one without a partner. The festive love-death validates ecstasy unconditionally and affirms its unrepresentability. It does not anticipate reunion in another world—what other world? As something more than a limit, the other world becomes an affirmation of the lovers: as examples, as figures for the powers of love and generation beyond the deaths of individuals, as part of a possible world in which love is more central and sex better. Any sufficiently broad performance of this scene that brings out Cleopatra's erotic arousal should help here. Even though Renaissance tragedy is littered with the bodies of women who have had no alternative but suicide, this final scene could represent for some playgoers in the early seventeenth-century, thanks partly to the vigor of its grotesque, ambivalent festivity, a positive rendition of female desire, powers of generation, and mutuality in love, as well as political shrewdness in denying Octavius a full victory over Egypt.²⁰

As Mary Hamer's survey of seventeenth-century views of Cleopatra, "Cleopatra: Housewife," indicates, the scene has pro-

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vided a convenient entrance into what are today called “family values” simply because Cleopatra’s suicide, then and sometimes today too, could be considered virtuous only if carried out only for the sake of Antony.²¹ The commitment of Cleopatra to a woman-centered festive community—ultimately, Egypt itself—that preserves its power by a series of successful performances seems to be qualified by the final performance, because it seems to fulfill a masculine fantasy. Hasn’t the play been sending up such fantasies all along, by showing Cleopatra retaining power through her manipulation of them? But whether or not Shakespeare’s female protagonist had to do higher duty for the dominant ideology,²² Charmian did not have to do so. Although she apparently remains chaste, relatively silent, and obedient to her mistress throughout the play (creative stage business could easily undo the first two appearances), her demise is nevertheless tragic, festive, and liberating in a way Cleopatra’s is not.

Unlike Cleopatra, Charmian chooses suicide without having fulfilled her wish to love and to bear children: part of her tragedy is this sheer loss of possibility. When Cleopatra asks Charmian to imagine that the serpents are babies, one might imagine Charmian recalling her own aspiration to motherhood, so important to the festive ensemble in act one. “O, break! O, break!” (311) may express her feelings of loss about the possibility for her own development as lover and mother, as well as her sorrow over her mistress. One may recall Charmian’s three royal weddings when she delivers her lines defending Cleopatra’s suicide to the Roman guards who have rustled in, lines Shakespeare has taken almost verbatim from Plutarch (326-27): “It is well done, and fitting for a princess / Descended of so many royal kings.” The social conditions of lovemaking and childbearing that Charmian has preferred involve not a nuclear family but a community of women. Her last words, “Ah soldier,” suggest two sublimities. Spoken to one of the virile guardsmen standing above her, they may be an expression of pleasure, a great act of imagination that ignores her situation, death alone with foreign invaders, and that recalls her desire for sexual generation expressed in the early festive scene, comprising in fact Charmian’s own merely vicarious version of Cleopatra’s ecstatic love death. And the words may express a sense of triumph: “We’ve beaten you by dying according to the rules of our order.” In any case, Charmian dies with her vision of a female-centered festive community intact and uncompromised. Her sense of festive ambivalence, that is her affirmation of the ways of that community, even including her own demise, carries through from the soothsaying scene to her death.

Who, by the way, ever had so many responsibilities while at the same time taking her own life? Charmian puts herself on festive duty in the monument death scene: she is at once character, prop manager, chorus, and audience. Iras intended to die, but didn't know Cleopatra's lips were poisoned when she kissed her, and so was left nothing to do but expire. But after attending Cleopatra's death, and then eulogizing her, Charmian arranges her for public display (the posthumous performance), steadying her crown, which had gone "awry" (V. ii. 318)—as a Queen of Misrule's crown should go, unto death. Then Charmian actually stalls the Roman guards by making them believe for a moment that Cleopatra is sleeping and at the same time manages to coax a deadly asp to bite her too:

1. *Guard.* Where's the Queen?
Char. Speak softly, wake her not.
 1. *Guard.* Caesar hath sent—
Char. Too slow a messenger.
 [*Applies an asp.*]
 O, come apace, dispatch! I partly feel thee.
 (V. ii. 320-22)

Then while dying Charmian briefly but effectively defends Cleopatra's suicide with the lines from Plutarch; her last words, "Ah soldier," show that she goes off to play till doomsday thinking of the sexual generation of utopia, earnest game-playing, or both. If, as Clair Wills says, the "bourgeois ego" was formed partly by separation from a lower-class female sexuality associated with carnival and hysteria,²³ empathy with Charmian laughing and Charmian breaking could tend to inhibit that formation.

III.

Sensitivity to the Egyptian court world in *Antony and Cleopatra* brings out another dimension of plebeian popular festivity important to understanding Cleopatra and her tragedy: gypsies. The Romany are one of the social "others" involved in the identity of Cleopatra and her world, and along with the woman, the oriental, and the witch comprise for Roman characters grounds for a demonization of her character. John Dover Wilson remarked "Shakespeare's age could hardly have helped believe in a 'gypsy' Cleopatra."²⁴ However, from the festive viewpoint some playgoers may accept and appreciate the peculiar nature of gypsies, finding themselves at odds with the Roman viewpoint and ready better to understand and to validate the Egyptian order. For some

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playgoers *Antony and Cleopatra* may also have initiated a review of attitudes towards gypsies and their difficult situation in contemporary England, as reflected in the tragedy of *Cleopatra* and her companions. English gypsies' cultural ways, as far as one can tell, exemplify an attitude of profound festive ambivalence, because many continued to practice their ludic culture even though this was a capital crime.

Gypsies entered England around 1500 from Scotland. They were thought incorrectly by many to have come from Egypt, hence the name "gypsy"; the first English account of them, two pages and a woodcut by Andrew Borde in 1547, did not even distinguish clearly between Egyptians in Egypt and elsewhere: Egyptians "be swarte and doth go disgisyd in theyr apparel. . . . There be few or none of the Egipcions yt doth dwel in egipt. . . ." ²⁵ Only two nations come after Egyptians in Borde's anthropology: Turks and Jews. While at first treated in Scotland as a sovereign nation, gypsies were soon classified by the English with "rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars." In 1531 they were officially banished, and a series of laws in the sixteenth century called for execution of those who did not leave or did not have a license to follow a lawful trade. ²⁶ Legal and historical written sources, notably the rogue literature, are almost entirely negative; the outlawed art of palmistry is the most typical activity cited. Thomas Harman in 1566:

the wretched, wily, wandering vagabonds calling and naming themselves Egyptians, deeply dissembling and long hiding and covering their deep, deceitful practices, feeding the rude common people, wholly addicted and given to novelties, toys, and new inventions, delighting them with the strangeness of the attire of their heads, and practicing palmistry to such as would know their fortunes; and, to be short, all thieves and whores. ²⁷

Thomas Dekker in 1608:

Upon days of pastime and liberty, they Spread themselves in small companies amongst the Villages, and when young maids and bachelors (yea, and sometimes old doting fools that should be beaten to this world of villainies and forewarn others) do flock about them, they then profess skill in Palmistry. . . . These are those *Egyptian Grasshoppers* that eat up the fruits of the Earth, and destroy the poor cornfields. To sweep those worms out of this kingdom there are no other means but the sharpness of the most infamous and basest kinds of punishment. ²⁸

Indeed, both as King of Scotland and of England James put into practice sharp punishment, increasing suppression of gypsies as he did of vagabonds and witches. His policy reflected in part society's more critical opinion of idleness, rising numbers of itinerant poor, and a trend toward state intervention to separate the deserving from the reprobate.²⁹ The ultimate goal continued to be not to eradicate gypsies but to force them to assimilate. Attitudes varied, providing the opportunity for the theater to stage moral issues. For instance, in a Scottish case Moses or Mosie Faw and his friends were finally executed in 1611 for refusing for many years to "renounce gypsy ways," but in another, James himself showed clemency in 1616, commuting the death penalty to banishment, which meant in effect merely that John Faa and his family would have to cross the English border.³⁰

In that same year rogue pamphleteer Samuel Rid declared that "now they dare no more be known by the name of Egyptians, nor take any other name upon them than poor people." Rid condemns only the past knavery of gypsies, when "Giles Hather (for so was his name), together with his whore Kit Calot . . . had following them a pretty train, he terming himself the King of Egyptians, and she the Queen." They rode "about the country at their pleasures uncontrolled." Nowadays, he says, many gypsies have settled down, and practice juggling or sleight of hand often merely "for recreation and mirth, and not to the hurt of our neighbor nor to be profaning and abusing of Gods' holy name."³¹ As more or less continuous references through the seventeenth century show, Rid was totally wrong about Jacobean gypsies' not daring to "take any other name on them but poor people": many of them dared, cleaved to their identity, and resisted the pressures of the law and the King.

Gypsies could resist settling down because they were sometimes accorded a measure of respect and sympathy, because their numbers were increased by mainstream English itinerants desiring adventure or without other means of support and because there was a demand for the legal and illegal services they provided. Shakespeare and Jonson both found charm in the image of gypsy children traveling two or more on a horse and singing or doing tricks (*As You Like It*, V. iii. 14-15; *Gipsies Metamorphos'd* [see below]). In fact, many of the services gypsies provided could be summed up under the general heading of festivity, that is, various kinds of entertainment, play, and performance. The wise gypsy fortuneteller woman described in Henry Chettle's *Kind-Hart's Dream* (1593) is a trickster whose ruse shows up the greed of a local farmer; *The Man in the Moone telling Strange Fortunes* of 1609—just

a year or two after *Antony and Cleopatra*—is a moral dialogue that apparently gives the role of wise man to a gypsy fortuneteller. Gypsies were motion men or puppeteers, put on plays, and were entertainers at fairs. They featured eye-catching costumes, dancing, singing, fortune telling, and sleight-of-hand; some people suspected them of having occult powers. The reputation of gypsies for being performers can be inferred from statutes, such as the law of 1572 against “rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars” (14 Elizabeth c. 2), which lumps together and outlaws many kinds of itinerants, including theatrical companies without official patrons and “idle persons . . . using subtle, crafty, and unlawful games or plays, and some of them feigning themselves to have knowledge in physiognomy, palmistry, or other abused sciences.”³²

Cleopatra is first identified in the play as a gypsy, not explicitly as a native of Egypt. Philo’s framing commentary on the play’s first scene concludes that Antony “is become the bellows and the fan to coole a gypsy’s lust” and become “a strumpet’s fool” (I. i. 9-10, 13). We are invited, in other words, to look both at the lovemaking and at the soothsaying party scene that immediately follows in the context of the domestic as well as the foreign “Egyptian” worlds: to conflate, as the word “gypsy” does implicitly, and as Andrew Borde did explicitly, the exotic and the domestic Egyptian, Egypt’s Queen and an English market-day Queen o’ Little Egypt. Just as in Jonson’s festive *Gypsies Metamorphos’d* (1621), where the Duke of Buckingham and other nobles actually dressed as gypsies and read the palms of king, courtiers, and peasants, here the gypsies/Egyptians occupy two extreme social positions at the top and the bottom and at the center and the margin, as well as at home and abroad. The name “Cleopatra” itself bridges these extremes. Mercutio joked that to Romeo’s Rosaline, Cleopatra was “but a gypsy” (*Romeo and Juliet* II. iv. 43-44). *The Gypsies Metamorphos’d* opens with five English gypsy children riding on a horse, called “the five Princes of Egypt”: “Gaze upon them as on the offspring of Ptolemy, begotten upon several Cleopatras in their several counties.”³³ Perhaps itinerant English gypsy women entertainers regularly presented themselves as Cleopatras. In *Antony and Cleopatra* a central link between exotic court and local English byways is play or performance: where the Queen of Egypt must perform in order to rule, the domestic English gypsy must perform in order to eat.

Philo’s view of corrupt Egyptian gypsies is virtually identical with the condemnatory view of gypsies in the rogue pamphlets by Harman and Dekker. But sympathy for the festive ambivalence of the soothsaying scene would tend to make us appreciate gypsies

and their status in the play. We may suppose for a moment that the Soothsayer is a virtual gypsy and Charmian and Iras the supposedly simple country girls on holiday whom the rogue pamphleteers think so vulnerable. But these "girls" are not vulnerable: even though they do not get satisfactory fortunes, they do get entertainment, precisely in the manner that Samuel Rid accepted as "not abusing our neighbor or profaning God's holy name." Fortunetelling scenes such as this could be found on the fringes of fairs and holiday celebrations in England, where not cozening but mutual advantage could no doubt often be achieved.³⁴ Some playgoers might even regret that such a transaction, in England, was officially outlawed. Or we may take it that everyone in the scene is a virtual "gypsy" and that fortune telling is common with them, devoid of the scandal and the suspicion that it carried in England. A true gypsy soothsayer then would be a "witch," as Charmian implies (I. ii. 40), but in the good humor of this scene, even the evil atmosphere in parts of *Macbeth*, designed just two or three years earlier to cater to the new monarch, the sophisticated witch-monger James, would apparently be a subject for laughter. The dynamic of festivity in the soothsaying scene could be seen by some playgoers to mirror and to appreciate the values of English gypsies.

The matter of gypsies, specifically the alleged perfidious and occult enticements of female gypsies, surfaces again powerfully in Antony's murderous revulsion at Cleopatra after the third and final battle against Octavius Caesar is lost. His attitude toward gypsies here mirrors many of the stereotypes in the rogue literature, except that he seems actually to attribute real occult power to the "gypsy" Cleopatra to work love-charms. When, because of unfavorable auguries Cleopatra's ships fail to engage the Romans, Antony decides that Cleopatra has betrayed him to Caesar and likens her to "a right gypsy [who] hath at fast and loose Beguil'd me, to the very heart of loss" (IV. xii. 28-29). Fast and loose was a gypsy game first described as involving disappearing knots in a handkerchief,³⁵ but in fact all of Antony's characterizations of Cleopatra between the final defeat in battle and the report of Cleopatra's suicide to him (IV. xii. 13) could be said by one claiming to be the victim of an English gypsy. On the one hand is the suggestion that Antony has been enchanted: he calls Cleopatra "my charm" and "grave charm," "spell," and "witch" (IV. xii. 16, 25, 31, 47). One thinks here of Othello's rage, which shows a similar obsessive indignation in detailing the Egyptian origins of Desdemona's magical love-talisman, that handkerchief, and which seems to conflate African and English Egyptians. Othello begins,

"That handkerchief / Did an Egyptian to my mother give; / She was a charmer, and could almost read / The thoughts of people" (III. iv. 55-57). On the other hand, Antony's sense of betrayal by a "foul Egyptian," a "Triple-turn'd Whore" who has "sold" him to Caesar and "Pack'd Cards with Caesar's" (IV. xii. 10, 13, 48; IV. xiv. 19), may be glossed by this intelligence from *Rid on gypsy card sharks'* use of women to seduce their "Cozen":

it is not very hard for them at all times to provide for their amorous Cozen a lewd lecherous Lady to keep him loving company. Then fall they to banqueting, and carousing, and hunting of Taverns, and much is the coset that this silly Cozen shall be at in Jewels and apparel. Otherwise, he had not once get a grant to have a kiss of his mistress's lips. And ever in middle of their conference, she layeth in this reason, for her sake to put in twenty or thirty crowns in adventure at Cards or Dice. "You know not," quoth she, "what may be a woman's luck."³⁶

In the present reading Antony's words demonstrate his limited capacity for play, his inability to trust Cleopatra and her world—female, oriental, preserving itself through creative fictions—revealed to him suddenly here as a world of spellbinding, cheating gypsies. He suffers a temporary but fatal regression in his growth beyond rigid ideas of masculinity. Further, his anger blends with that of Englishmen who attack the theater, popular festivity, and unruly women, and who wax murderous towards vagabonds, witches, and gypsies.

In fact, Antony's harshness in these scenes does involve threats of death. "The witch shall die. . . She dyes for't" (IV. xii. 47, 49). It is not Antony but the sickening, inexorable, "universal peace" (IV. vi. 4) of Octavius Caesar that defeats Cleopatra and her attendants. But determinedly stationary though they are in Egypt, their situation and fate do mirror that of contemporary English gypsies. Being a gypsy in Shakespeare's England could be fatal. Any English gypsies who refused to assimilate, who refused as one statute put it "to leaue they . . . naughtie, ydle, and vngodly lyfe and company, and to place them selues in some honest seruice or . . . worke,"³⁷ and thus refused to renounce their ludic culture and identity, were, in effect, under a death sentence. Characterized as a gypsy by Antony and threatened with death from him, Cleopatra with Charmian's and Iras' help feigns suicide, and later all three choose to carry through—not wishing to sacrifice their ludic culture and identity. "Rather a ditch in Egypt / Be gentle grave unto me" (V. ii. 55-58) says Cleopatra, where a ditch in

England could well be the grave of a vagabond gypsy. Caesar is politic when admitted to the monument in the last scene, but his first words give him away: "Which is the queen of Egypt"? Which of three basically indistinguishable English gypsy prisoners is the one who does the Queen of Little Egypt routine (the one I'm trying to forget that old Julius liked so much)? To remain a gypsy in England was an ambivalently festive affirmation, was to eat at a banquet where one could be eaten.

The new regime belongs to the Octavian lover of order, King James, who pursued policies that, as Rid says, force gypsies not to "take any other name upon them than poor people." "A poor Egyptian yet," Cleopatra's messenger says of himself when addressing triumphant Octavius and anticipating the effacement of his identity as his country is absorbed into the empire (V. i. 52). But his mistress and her circle suggest either dangerous defiance or the unyielding commitment of non-assimilating gypsies like Mosie Faw. If *Antony and Cleopatra* addresses the increasing moral ambivalence about marginal others, its festive ambivalence encourages sympathy with them, lowering the genre of tragedy to take in even the condition of gypsies.³⁸

The popular-festive aspects of the play considered here under the rubric of festive ambivalence have focused on a group of unruly, independent women and a problematic, unhoused ethnic minority. Whether or not such connections were entirely premeditated, it seems that festivity in new forms remains vital in Shakespeare's later tragedies and that the Shakespearean theater remained open to association with unsanctioned groups.

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Notes

¹See Paul Yachnin, "The Politics of Theatrical Mirth: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *A Mad World, My Masters*, and *Measure for Measure*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 43(1992), 51-66.

²Sandra Billington, *Mock Kings in Medieval Society and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press 1991), pp. 210, 215.

³*Antony and Cleopatra: A New Variorum Edition*, ed. Marvin Spevack (New York: MLA, 1990), pp. 736-37, 746-47.

⁴Paul Yachnin, "Courtiers of Beauteous Freedom: *Antony and Cleopatra* in its Time," *Renaissance and Reformation*, 15 (1991), 1-20; Katherine Eggert, "Ravishment and Remembrance: Responses to Female Authority," dissertation, Univ. of California, Berkeley, 1992; Ellis Hanson, "Sodomy and Kingcraft in *Urania* and *Antony and Cleopatra*," *Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment England: Literary Representations in Historical Context* (New York and London: Haworth, 1992), 135-51.

⁵See Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1989) pp. 127-30.

⁶Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: MIT Univ. Press, 1964), p. 9; Michael Bristol, "Charivari and the Comedy of Abjection," *True Rites and Maimed Rites: Ritual and Anti-Ritual in Shakespeare and His Age*, eds. Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1992), p. 82; see also Bristol's *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (New York: Methuen, 1985); Robert Stamm, "On the Carnavalesque," *Wedge*, 1(1982), pp. 47-55; Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press 1986).

⁷François Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), p. 305.

⁸Bakhtin cites Laurent Joubert, *Treatise on Laughter* (1551), which contains popular-festive views on the ambivalence of laughter, finding it therapeutic and "derived from joy and sorrow," trans. Gregory David de Rocher (University, Alabama: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1980), pp. 44, 126-80.

⁹Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, "Hamlet" to the "Tempest"* (New York: Routledge, Chapman, Hall, 1992); "Prince Hal's Falstaff: Positioning Psychoanalysis and the Female Reproductive Body," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 40(1989), pp. 456-74. See also Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 17-32, and Mary Russo, "Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory," *Feminist Studies, Critical Studies* ed. Teresa de Lauretis (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1986), 213-29.

¹⁰Clair Wills, "Upsetting the Public: Carnival, Hysteria, and Women's Texts," *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, eds. Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 130-51. In *The Newly Born Woman*, pp. 122-30, Cixous finds in *Antony and Cleopatra* an example of feminine writing. On Clément and Cixous see Elizabeth Harvey, *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 54-74. For discussions of Bakhtin and women's issues see Anne Herrman, *The Dialogic and Difference: "An/Other Woman" in Virginia Woolf and Christa Wolf* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1989); *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic*, ed. Dale M. Bauer and Susan Jaret McKinstry (Albany: SUNY, 1991); *A Dialogue of Voices: Feminist Literary Theory and Bakhtin*, eds. Karen Hohne and Helen Wussow (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1994). Several essays in Natalie Z. Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1975) concern popular festivity; see especially pp. 133-34, 138-39; the quotation is from "Women on Top," p. 140.

¹¹Theadora Jankowski, *Women in Power in the Early Modern Drama* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1992), pp. 161-162.

¹²*Antony and Cleopatra*, I. ii. 5. All quotations of Shakespeare are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

¹³Michel Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance*, trans. Jeremy Whiteley and Emma Hughes (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 9. The questions Charmian asks may be standard: Samuel Rowlands' soothsayer in, *Looke to it: For, Ile Stabbe ye* (London, 1604), E3r, includes these: "Whether a man shall have a happy life, Whether a Louer shall his Loue enjoy: Who shall die first, the husband or the wife? Whether the childe vnborne, be girle or boy?"

¹⁴William Flesch, *Generosity and the Limits of Authority: Shakespeare, Herbert, Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1992), pp. 200-01.

¹⁵Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World* p. 273.

¹⁶On Antony's oedipal tendencies in relation to Cleopatra, see Constance Brown Kuriyama, "The Mother of the World: A Psychoanalytical Interpretation of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*," *English Literary Renaissance*, 7, (1977), pp. 324-51.

¹⁷See also Claire Kinney, "The Queen's Two Bodies and the Divided Emperor: Some Problems of Identity in *Antony and Cleopatra*," *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon*, ed. Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty Travitsky (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1990).

¹⁸Laura Severt King, "'Blessed when They Were Riggish': Shakespeare's Cleopatra and Christianity's Penitent Prostitutes," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 22(1992), 429-49. On *Terra* and *Luxuria* see Janet Adelman, *The Common Liar: An Essay on "Antony and Cleopatra"* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), p. 205; C. W. R. D. Moseley, "Cleopatra's Prudence," *Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft West Jahrbuch* (1986), pp. 119-37. The Prudence motif shows how close Neoplatonizing humanism can get to the popular tradition: Ficino, More, and Erasmus, like Rabelais, all affirm the goal of pleasure, and Ficino, like Shakespeare in Cleopatra's death scene, affirms the dual nature of *Luxuria* or *Voluptas* as debasing or exalting, except that in the popular tradition, debasing is exalting. On Ficino and *Luxuria*, see Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1958), pp. 69-71. On the social symbolism of the monarch's death, see Kirby Farrell, *Play, Death and Heroism in Shakespeare* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1989), p. 45.

¹⁹See Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, pp. 190-91, 341.

²⁰I am indebted here to Carol Thomas Neely, *Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Plays* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 160-62, and to Evelyn Gajowski's interpretation of Cleopatra in *The Art of Loving: Female Subjectivity and Male Discursive Traditions in Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1992), pp. 86-119.

²¹Mary Hamer, *Signs of Cleopatra: History, Politics, Representation* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 24-44.

²²A view rejected by Gajowski, *The Art of Loving*, pp. 86-119.

²³Clair Wills, "Upsetting the public."

²⁴Quoted in Adelman, *The Common Liar*, p. 185.

²⁵Andrew Borde, *The First Book of the Introduction to Knowledge* (1547), ch. 38.

²⁶22 Henry VIII c. 12 (1531); 1 and 2 Philip and Mary c. 4 (1554); 5 Elizabeth, c. 20 (1562); Proclamation of Dec. 14, 1576; 39 Elizabeth c. 4 (1596). See *Rogues, Vagabonds, and Sturdy Beggars: A New Gallery of Tudor and Early Stuart Rogue Literature*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1990), p. 310; Dale B. J. Randall, *Jonson's Gypsies Unmasked: Background and Theme of "The Gypsies Metamorphosed"* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 51-55; Brian Vesey-FitzGerald, *Gypsies of Britain* (1944; rptd. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973), p. 31. Nine gypsies were executed in Yorkshire, for instance, in 1596 (A. L. Beier, *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England, 1560-1640* [New York: Methuen, 1985], p. 58).

²⁷Thomas Harman, *A Caveat for Common Cursitors, Vulgarly Known as Vagabonds in Rogues, Vagabonds, and Sturdy Beggars*, ed. Kinney, p. 112. "Charms, sorcery, enchantments, witchcrafts, soothsaying, or any like devilish device," as well as seeking "counsel or help" through these means, were outlawed repeatedly. See Proclamation 460, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. Paul F. Hughes and James F. Larkin, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964-9), vol. 2, p. 126.

²⁸Thomas Dekker, *Lanthurne and Candle-Light* in Kinney, p. 245.

²⁹David Macritchie, *Scottish Gypsies Under the Stewarts* (Edinburgh, 1894), pp. 77-78; Randall, *Jonson's Gypsies*, pp. 53-56; Beier, *Masterless Men*, pp. 121-2. Proclama-

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tion 27 of James, 17 Sept. 1603, and an act of the Privy Council on July 7, 1604 are among the Jacobean measures taken to secure enforcement of 39 Elizabeth c. 4 on vagabonds, including Egyptians, and to stiffen it by, for instance, prescribing branding for the first offence and death without benefit of clergy for the second.

³⁰Macritchie, *Scottish Gypsies*, p. 81 (see *Register of the Privy Council*, [1609], vol. 8, p. 372); Macritchie, pp. 89-94 (see Privy Council Minutes, Aug. 28, 1616).

³¹*The Art of Juggling* in Kinney, pp. 266-67.

³²Dekker, *Lanthorne and Candle-light*, ch. 8, identifies gypsy and moon-man; "W. M., *The Man in the Moone Telling Strange Fortunes; or The English Fortune-Teller*," in *Books of Characters, illustrating the habits and Manners of Englishmen from the Reign of James I. to the Restoration*, ed. James O. Halliwell (London, 1857). Some educated people believed there was validity in an elite, "scientific" tradition of palmistry going back to the Egyptian Hermes Trismegistus. "English Jipsies all live free, And love, and live most jovially," says the only mildly ironic ballad "The brave english Jipsie" (W. Chappell, ed., *The Roxburgh Ballads*, [Hertford: The Ballad Society, 1875], vol. 3.1, p. 545). See Vesey-FitzGerald, *Gypsies of Britain*, pp. 12-33; Randall, *Jonson's Gypsies*, pp. 47-66. On motion-men and players see Macritchie, *Scottish Gypsies*, pp. 53-60; Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), p. 235, records a 1624 reference to "Gipsie Jigges" on the public stage; gypsies put on a play in Middleton and Rowley's *The Spanish Gypsy* (1623). See Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World*, p. 121 on gypsies and the morris dance. On the reputation for occult powers see Samuel Rid's manual purporting to explain gypsy tricks, *The Art of Juggling or Legerdemain*, Kinney, p. 267. Quotation from *Selected Statutes and Other Constitutional Documents Illustrative of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I*, ed. G. W. Prothero, 4th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), p. 69.

³³Ben Jonson *Masque of the Metamorphos'd Gypsies* in *The Complete Masques*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1969), p. 318.

³⁴Wye Saltonstall, "A country Fayre" in *Picturae Loquentes or Pictures drawn forth in characters* (London, 1631): "Gypsies flocke thither, who tell men of losses, and the next time they looke for their purses, they find their words true." "Egyptians" were whipped in Peterborough market in 1569 (*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series* [London: Longman et al., 1856-72], 1569, vol. 51, no. 11 [June 27]).

³⁵Samuel Rid, *The Art of Juggling* in Kinney, p. 266, copies from a more extensive description in Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, trans. Abraham Fleming (1584; rptd. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 280-81. Editions of *Antony and Cleopatra*, including Spevack's, usually cite a much later description of fast and loose involving swords and a folded belt.

³⁶Rid, *Art of Juggling* in Kinney, p. 276.

³⁷5 Elizabeth c. 20 (1562), quoted in Randall, *Jonson's Gypsies*, pp. 53-54.

³⁸Thanks to David Phillips for research assistance on gypsies.

Dramaturgical Uses of Visual Forms in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* by Marvin Glasser

The invention at the end of the fifteenth century of an "artificial" perspective through the application of optical principles opened up to the painter and sculptor the possibility of using space not only to render new perceptual realizations but conceptual ones as well. Space came to be defined in its own terms in the Renaissance rather than in the Aristotelian terms of the objects it contains, and this conceptualization of space is evident in the Elizabethan period in both narrative and dramatic literature as well as in the visual arts.¹

Correlations between painting and dramatic structure with regard to the use and effect of space have been noted by many commentators. Una Ellis-Fermor, using *Antony and Cleopatra* for the most part in illustration, speaks of how the "Attention of the subordinate agents" in the plays "invest[s]" the main characters "with significance which draws some of its potency from their spatial relations." That is, the foregrounding of minor characters enhances the impact of major figures in the middleground or background, an important structural principle in painting as well, of course. *Antony and Cleopatra* also shows "the dramatic function of perspective" in its creating a "sense at once of vastness, of coherence, and of significance."² Walter J. Ong speaks of Shakespeare's conceptual use of visual space as well in a way that reflects the belief that "the mind has its spaces too" and that space is a factor "in the notion of knowledge itself."³

We are shown multiple ways of "knowing" by Shakespeare, to an important degree because of the multiple "spaces" in which characters are presented either singly or with others and also because of the multiple ways they are spatially related to one another. The self-reflexiveness of the plays—Shakespeare's repeatedly requiring us to see the action in the plays *as* acting—makes all the more apparent the deliberately staged grouping of the characters, the fact that where they stand relative to one another has dramatic weight and perceptual significance. The scene in *Troilus and Cressida* (V. ii.) in which Troilus accompanied by Ulysses watches secretly and in anguish as Cressida is seduced by Diomed and in turn is being spied upon by Thersites who acts as the vitriolic *sprecher* for the audience is a clear instance of the use of recessional space to define various moral and philosophical

stances. In the discussion that follows I will turn once more to *Antony and Cleopatra*—a play traditional in structure and in what G. Wilson Knight calls “atmosphere” between the tragedies and the late romances—to consider more fully how Shakespeare has adapted to his dramatic needs his age’s discoveries of visual forms.

Elizabeth Cook writes that for *Cleopatra* “Antony’s function is comparable to that of the crucial figure in the foreground of a painting which is needed to fix and give coherence to what otherwise would be seen as random blobs of paint.”⁴ Implicit in this is the idea that Antony projects a certain kind of order or design—what E. H. Gombrich calls in visual art a “schema”⁵ or conceptual totality—because he, or part of him, embodies the Roman imperial world order. Presumably *Cleopatra*, on the other hand, is a background figure, and by implicit analogy without Antony she is one of those “random blobs of paint.” But such blobs can be richer in evocative power than definitively rendered forms, as late sixteenth and seventeenth century artists such as Titian, Rubens, and Rembrandt discovered. Undefined forms seen at the right distance and from the right perspective can, through “contrasting colors” and “light effects,”⁶ create equivalences of texture [that] touch a deeper layer of our awareness.⁷ Gombrich sees an “entirely new idea of art . . . taking shape” in the late sixteenth century. “It is an art in which the painter’s skill in suggesting must be matched by the public’s skill in taking hints.” The philistine “does not understand the magic of *sprezzatura* because he has not learned to use his own imagination to project.”⁸ This is a failing that is found in many characters in *Antony and Cleopatra*. It is a challenge that Shakespeare is constantly issuing to us in his plays.

Cleopatra is a “background” figure in the sense that she is in recession from the “foreground” world of Roman *realpolitik*. In the course of the play she moves increasingly toward a vanishing point, the “other” world of the dead where she will rejoin a presumably already transfigured Antony. It is an apotheosis suggestive of the hybrid human-divine mythologizing of the masque in which royalty become gods. *Cleopatra* is the catalyst for Antony’s transfiguration, the instrument, to apply Gombrich’s ideas regarding visual art to the play, by means of which the “schema” of imperial Rome becomes merely a “starting point for corrections, adjustments, adaptations, the means to probe reality” until Antony’s “portrayal ceases to be a secondhand formula and reflects the unique and unrepeatable experience the artist wishes to seize and hold.”⁹ The Roman earth’s inadequacies—

Cleopatra. I'll set a bourn how far to be beloved.
Antony. Then must thou needs find out new
 Heaven, new earth

(I. i. 16-18)—

are often noted.

Antony illustrates Maria Bunim's observation on the art of the period that "In general, the trend of the evolution of space as judged from the form of figures is from conceptual to optical representation,"¹⁰ but with a difference, because, after all, the space he must ultimately come to inhabit is transcendent space and therefore requires a new kind of optics. Hence, the imagery in the play suggests he is bursting the seams of the world, and therefore the dramaturgy confronts us not with theater as the world's mirror but with the world as theater. In *Antony and Cleopatra* Shakespeare needed to create a four-dimensional space that would couple, in fact make indistinguishable, the space of the actors and that of the audience as well as past and present. The theater as the world is the world as a "little O"—reminiscent of the "wooden O" image in *Henry V*—and would reduce Antony to a drunk and Cleopatra to a "quick comedian" who will "boy her greatness / I' the posture of a whore" (V. ii. 220-21). And, of course, there are those who do see these characters more or less in this light, reducing them to the types that moral convention in the traditional morality play would dictate.

But, once again, the two lovers belong to another space. Shakespeare's problem was to render this space theatrically so that their mythic properties would be projected plausibly to an audience. One of the means by which he did so was through the setting up of multiple planes of depth that held different figures belonging to different moral spaces and in a sense different times in suspension. The technique is suggestive of that used in such Mannerist paintings as Parmigianino's *Madonna of the Neck* and *Vision of St. Jerome* and, more complexly, Rosso's *Moses and the Daughters of Jethro*.

Except for a brief soliloquy before his botched attempt at a Roman death, Antony is never alone, nor is Cleopatra. They are always playing to an audience, either separately or together, to an audience on stage. The opening scene of the play, for example, is framed by two minor figures, Philo and Demetrius, who both literally and figuratively belong in another space altogether from that of the lovers. Philo, after expressing regret for the "dotage" of Antony and bitter contempt for Cleopatra, urges:

Look where they come.
 Take but good note, and you shall see in him

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The triple pillar of the world transformed
 Into a strumpet's fool. Behold and see.

(10-13)

The insistence of the demand to observe the scene from Philo's perspective is curious. There are five verbs of sight in the short passage, four in the imperative. Earlier lines in the same speech mourn the fact that Antony's

... goodly eyes
 ... now bend, now turn
 The office and devotion of their view
 Upon a tawny front."

(3-7)

The play opens with comments on distorted vision and a summons to see what the speaker believes to be a disfiguring of one of the props of the world. (It is an interesting irony that the play closes with another sight imperative when Octavius commands that Dolabella "see / High order in this great solemnity," that is, to mark the funeral of Anthony and Cleopatra.) The audience, of course, can "see" for itself and form its own conclusions, so Philo's urging would smack of redundancy were it not for the fact that it does suggest that the relationship between the two lovers will be perceived along varying sightlines. That we are to take as valid the judgment of any of the witnesses to this relationship is put into question as early as the opening lines of the first scene and confirmed at its close when Demetrius says that he is "full sorry" that Antony "approves the common liar, who / Thus speaks of him at Rome" (I. i. 59-61). How one can realize the oxymoron of approving a liar rather puzzles the wits.

The space in which the viewer is located determines how the central figures are to be perceived. As in a Renaissance painting, all the sightlines in the scene are designed to meet at a point outside the dramatic frame of the figures, with the viewers—including us—at the apex of a triangle. The characters, like *sprechers*, seem to point to us rather than one another, as Antony suggests:

The nobleness of life
 Is to do thus, when such a mutual pair
 And such a twain can do't, in which I bind,
 On pain of punishment, the world to weet
 We stand up peerless.

(I. i. 36-40)

The embrace of the stage direction here is for the world to see; the warning is for the world to take note of. Octavius, Antony's other angel, remains always locked within his circumscribed psychological and political space. He identifies "motion" with "rot"—"This common body, / . . . goes to and back . . . / To rot itself with motion" (I. iv. 44-47). What he admires is the fixed, reductive life, the life that can sustain itself on "the stale of horses" and "strange flesh / Which some did die to look on" (I. iv. 62, 67-68). His world is one of constrictions, as is evident in the language he uses when he expresses his wish for reconciliation with Antony:

Yet if I knew
What hoop should hold us stanch, from edge to edge
O' the world I would pursue it.

(II. ii. 116-18)

Such a "hoop" would result eventually in the peace of death for Antony, who is urged by a soothsayer to "make space enough between" (II. ii. 23) himself and Octavius.

The world of Octavius is like that of the "shallow stagespace of paintings before the fifteenth century," as John White describes them, a "space . . . not controlled by ambivalence, or by thrust and counterthrust [of orthogonals and transverse] but by the simple, less ambitious means of limitations."¹¹ Shakespeare, though, creates a fluid, multiple space in the play. First of all, there is the space of the plane surface of the hurly-burly of historical Rome—the schema our attention is focused upon; secondly, there is the space and time of the audience that, through the use of converging sightlines (Philo's "behold and see"), merges into that of the past; and finally there is "Egypt," a deeper and timeless space belonging like that of *The Faerie Queene* to psychic *loci* and transfigured nature. "Egypt" in both usages in the play—locale and queen—is an image of a transcendent state unfixed in time and space and analogous to the world of Arcadia into which the sixteenth century had transmuted classical antiquity using the perspective time could grant, a perspective only recently rediscovered.¹² It is a construct of the imagination by means of which the age could both escape from, and set up a moral alternative to, the "modern" Machiavellian world. *Antony and Cleopatra* is about the shaping of such an Arcadian alternative through passion and the will to commit to "otherness." The spatial emblem of the shaping process is the use of recessional dramatic form in which Roman immediacy acts as frame and foreground for the agon and ultimate "distancing" of Antony and Cleopatra.

A comparison with the scene structure of *2 Henry VI* reveals a significant difference between Shakespeare's earlier use of space

and what he does in *Antony and Cleopatra*. The first scene of the chronicle, for example, may be likened to what in perspective is called the "complex frontal."¹³ The weight given to the stance of Gloucester is equalled by that given to his bitter enemy Cardinal Beaufort whose own "frontal" stance, on his departure, is followed in turn by those of Somerset and Buckingham, Salisbury and Warwick, and finally York in a soliloquy. Each nexus of political will is projected on the same lateral plane in a balanced sequence much as figures and architectural designs are in medieval art. It is a projection used not only in individual scenes but in the dramatic structure of each play as a whole as well as in the entire trilogy. The result is that the differing perspectives of the characters are given equal dramatic weight and therefore equal existential validity. Ironies rest only in the implicit indication of the limited vision, the single "side" displayed by each character or set of characters suggesting how they will variously be chewed up by history. Everything takes place on the surface in one-dimensional space and time and therefore lacks the sense of a multifoliate reality that later plays create.

The manifold space in *Anthony and Cleopatra* is synchronous; the points of view, though multiple, are presented in varying depths, *not* frontally. Whatever the psychological reason for our reaction might be, we feel that the more recessed the point of view is, the profounder it is, because it is the one we are meant to empathize with most fully, whether or not we are meant to affirm it intellectually or morally. Shakespeare renders this inner space more magically than the outer space of Roman politics, a metonymy for the pragmatics of life.

The frame of act two, scene two, sets up contrasting images of Antony, both ironically cast by the same character, Enobarbus. In the opening we are told of the old, pre-Cleopatran Antony, by Enobarbus the authentic one—"I shall entreat him to answer like himself" (II. ii. 3-4). In center ground (the body of the scene), held in Roman space where he is now no longer being fed by the infinite variety that is Cleopatra, we see an enervated figure, a Mars *manqué*; and in the closing frame through the eyes of Enobarbus we see the heterogeneity that has reshaped Antony, the "otherness" that is Cleopatra whom Enobarbus realizes his Captain will never leave.

The structure of the scene is complex: pictorially, it suggests the conventional arrangement of groups of figures in Renaissance paintings, with secondary figures in the foreground focusing on the major figures who are centered and recessed:

Lepidus: Here comes the noble Antony.

Enobarbus: And yonder Caesar.

Temporally, the opening of the scene, corresponding to the left hand border of a painting, looks to the past; the central passage involving Octavius and Antony is set in the present; and what may be called the right hand border, the close of the scene, looks toward the future and foreshadows Antony's fate. The sequence follows the pattern of such paintings as Botticelli's *Primavera* in which the ending of Spring's brief joys is signalled by the dark figure on the far right who is seizing one of Flora's attendants.

The world shrinks more and more as we move further into act two, and in scene seven it is reduced to the size of a Roman galley; the cutting of a mere three throats as Menas indicates will hand it to Pompey. It is the world as pragmatic men see it, a narrow space whose shallow depths are mirrored both in the tautological image of a crocodile as described by Antony and in the truncated recessional lines leading from the foreshortened conspiratorial whispering of Menas and Pompey to the carousing of the triumvirs:

Menas. [*Aside to Pompey*] Forsake thy seat,
I do beseech thee, Captain,
And hear me speak a word.

Pompey. [*Aside to Menas*] Forbear me till
anon.—This wine for Lepidus!

Lepidus. What manner o' thing is your crocodile?

Antony. It is shaped, sir, like itself, and it is as
broad as it hath breadth. It is just so high as it is, and
moves with its own organs. It lives by that which
nourisheth it, and the elements once out of it, it
transmigrates.

Pompey. [*Aside to Menas*] Go hang, sir,
hang! Tell me of that? Away!
Do as I bid you. . . .

I think thou'rt mad. The matter? [*Rises and
walks aside*]

Menas. I have ever held my cap off to thy
fortunes.

Pompey. Thou has served me with much
faith. What else to say?
Be jolly, lords.

Antony. These quicksands, Lepidus—
Keep off them, for you sink.

Menas. Wilt thou be lord of all the world?

. . . I am the man
Will give thee all the world.

(II. vii. 43-71)

The complex mix of dialogue involving different sets of characters occurs on nearly the same plane, both spatially and morally, unlike that of the play's opening scene in which secondary characters

The Upstart Crow

by contrast set off the great recessional depth of Antony and Cleopatra. Now wedded in a passionless union to “a great part” of Octavius—his sister Octavia whose name makes brother and sister a kind of “natural perspective” like Viola and Sebastian but with contrasting, more deadening impact—Antony in the scene is reduced in psychic space to holding up self-reflexive and therefore self-cancelling mirrors to the world. Because he is so smothered in his narrow confine, he is unable to look out onto or move in the “huge sphere” of the world but has become, as the servants have said earlier of Lepidus, “the holes where eyes should be” (II. vii. 16-17). It is somewhat analogous to what happens in act two of *Julius Caesar* where the political ideals of Brutus in scene one are ironically mirrored and therefore cancelled by parallel action and echoic dialogue involving Caesar in scene two.

Act three’s notorious structure reflects the “orts” and “bits” that the world, like Cressida, has become. But unlike that faithless shuttlecock, Cleopatra possesses magical powers, for among other things she is capable of making time stand still, leaping the gap between act two, scene five, when she sent the bearer of the news of Antony’s marriage fleeing for his life and act three, scene three, when she recalls him for some descriptive details concerning Octavia. This power to integrate or recast objective reality is further evident in her transfiguring of Octavia after an image of her own making—“dwarfish,” old, tardy-gaited, mousy-haired, low-browed. And she makes sure that her servants bow before the images she creates, including that of her own:

Cleopatra. What majesty is in her gait? Remember,
If e’er thou look’st on majesty.
Messenger. She creeps.

(III. iii. 20-22)

And,

Cleopatra. Why, methinks, by him,
This creature’s no such thing.
Charmian. Nothing, madam.
Cleopatra. The man hath seen some majesty, and
should know.
Charmian. Hath he seen majesty? Isis else defend
And serving you so long!

(III. iii. 43-47)

Cleopatra here is both frame and center; she is the determiner of sightlines and their focus. She fills her own space, a fact evident even in the staccato rhythm of the dialogue, which is both charged with her energy and toned with the charm of her innocent vanity.

The scenes in the act that follow are set in a world that has shrunk small enough for "a pair of chaps" (III. v. 14) to chew on. Antony's preoccupation with his conflicting passions regarding Cleopatra reveals the shrinkage of his space as a result of his "inward wars," wars that end not merely with his physical death but with the departure of "the god Hercules, whom Antony loved" (IV. iii. 16). The tautological Antony, the Antony who like the speaker in the Young Man sonnets fed upon a self-engendered ideal—in his case of Herculean or Martian virtues—also dies. The demise of this Antony is implicit in his urging Cleopatra to "seek your honor with your safety" (IV. xiv. 46) from Octavius whereas earlier he had felt any dealings on her part with Octavius were a betrayal.

To Enobarbus Antony's conduct is folly. He sees its impetus as lying in "his will" which he has made "lord of his reason" (III. xiii. 3, 4), a grievous offense in the Renaissance hierarchy of faults. For Shakespeare, though, the fault is not that clear. Horatio, after all, is not only dramatically but psychically inferior to Hamlet, and in the Dark Lady sonnets "will" is not merely lust but intensity of being and that which completes one:

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy "Will,"
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there.

(Sonnet 136)

The speaker in the sonnet has broken out of the narrow space of the homogenetic world of the Young Man sonnets and is reaching out to otherness, to the heterogenetic, in the symbolic person of the Dark Lady.¹⁴ Antony similarly is in the process of breaking free once and for all from the claustrophobic, homogenetic Roman world suggestive of the enclosed space of medieval art and uniting with his own Dark Lady. His "space" will not only be doubled but will undergo a transfiguration of Paracelsan thoroughness, for the ultimate union is greater than the sum of its parts.

Despite intimations of "otherness" evident in his earlier account of Cleopatra's journey to Cydnus, Enobarbus holds fast to his Roman perspective. As a result the interposing of his angle of vision between our own and that of the lovers in act three, scene thirteen, when their relationship is especially volatile, seeks to reduce them to mameets tilting. His critical comments and asides are characterized by the kind of this-worldly wisdom we associate with the Shakespearean Fool. But the limits of such wisdom with its applicability only to the "square" of this world is evident when, after closing act three by declaring his intent to "seek / Some way

to leave" Antony, Enobarbus ends up in the Roman camp declaring that he is "alone the villain of the earth!" (IV. vi. 30). Ultimately he comes to feel the need for Antony's "own particular" (IV. xix. 18) forgiveness, however the world judges him, reflecting human standards altered from those of the world—now Roman exclusively—to those of someone whose perspective he implicitly recognizes, like that in a Mannerist painting, has broken from the fixed order.

Antony's "visible shape"—his "knave"—he finds he "cannot hold" (IV. xiv. 14). His form, like all forms in this space, must shift as clouds do. A comparison of the game Hamlet plays with clouds to confirm Polonius a politic ass, and Antony's cloud metamorphoses offers rich possibilities. In Hamlet's reading, objective reality can be altered by human agency: kings can become loam used to stop a beer barrel (V. i. 233-35) and "a mildewed ear" (III. iv. 64) may become a king. His "directing" of Polonius' vision—he is after all a knowledgeable theater director and therefore creator of illusions—leaves the cloud unchanged in itself. It is the viewer's perception of it, the "curious perspective" effect that alters an image depending on the angle from which it is seen, that Hamlet is playing with. Antony's clouds, on the other hand, are varied as well in their inherent shape as they are in the ways we see them:

That which is now a horse, even with a thought
The rack dislimns and makes it indistinct
As water is in water.

(IV. xiv. 9-11)

No one is "directing" this vision, nor is he "directing" that of Eros in the scene, since he is speaking of clouds in the mind's eye only to draw an analogy with himself. It is Cleopatra who is skilled in staging shows and who will in the end stage climactically one of "black vesper's pageants" (IV. xiv. 8) as she prepares to take leave of this world.

But Antony's space, at least until Cleopatra's transfiguration, is that of a constricted Roman immediacy. And his cloud imagery suggests his sense of the insubstantiality of objects in this space wavering like El Greco forms. He is a perplexed soldier whose ground is no longer solid under him. His unfixed perspective, like ours in the course of the play, is a dramaturgical reflection of Nicholas Cusanus' conundrum concerning point of view as restated by Ernst Cassirer: "None of these points of view has any priority, because only the concrete totality of them can indicate a true picture of the whole for us. . . . Every view includes the thing seen as

well as the manner and the direction of *seeing*.”¹⁵ Antony exists in Arnoldian indeterminacy: his world is dead and a new one is powerless to be born unless it be through the vision of Cleopatra.

The report of her death with his name on her lips gives Antony a glimmering of another reality that his “heart,” once it has “cracked” the “frail case” of its “continent”—of that which contains it—will be able to reach a distance point “where souls do couch on flowers” (IV. xiv. 40, 41, 51). But he cannot sustain it, not as long as she is not in that realm to charge it with her poetry. When he learns of her deception after his botched attempt to end his own life and is taken to where she is hiding from Octavius, Antony’s thoughts turn again to this world. He advises her, “Of Caesar seek you honor, with your safety” (IV. xv. 46), advice he would have recognized in his more lucid moments to be self-contradictory. His folly continues as he reflects on his own renown in a world where he “lived the greatest Prince” (IV. xv. 54). He sees his death as a confirmation of his nobility and courage—he is “a Roman by a Roman / Valiantly vanquished” (IV. xv. 57-58).

The aesthetic process of transfiguration begins immediately upon his death when, now that the crown of the earth has melted and nothing remarkable is left “beneath the visiting moon,” for Cleopatra “all’s but naught” now (IV. xv. 68,78)—indistinct as water is in water. But beyond the shifting moon things are different. So she begins her preparations for a second journey to Cydnus. From the Roman world that she has concluded is nothing and from which Antony has made nothing she will create a drama of death whose text will give life to souls couching on flowers.

Act five is framed by speeches of Octavius who serves in the kind of secondary and ironic role performed earlier by such lesser figures as Philo, Demetrius, Menas, and Agrippa. In Antony he sees not a human being but a “name” in which “lay / A moiety of the world” (V. i. 19). With the “stall” of the world his, he can now write a script and stage a spectacle that will reaffirm an image of the world and of himself in it that he has always nurtured and that has nurtured him. It is, essentially, an image of dead ends, of the natural world as something measurable and self-enclosed. In the long run, Cleopatra’s view of him is an accurate one: “’Tis paltry to be Caesar” (V. ii. 2).

The act ends with a speech in which Octavius gives directions for the burial and funeral ritual of the lovers. It demonstrates how circumscribed his vision of the world is. Cleopatra is to be

... buried by her Antony.
No grave upon the earth shall clip in it
A pair so famous.

(V. ii. 361-63)

To him they are mere decaying flesh “clipped” by the earth and not ‘clipping’; they are only a notable instance of romantic gesturing that will live on only as spectacle or through “their story” (V. ii. 364). They are a dumb show or something he would embalm in narrative’s past tense rather than keep alive with drama’s regenerative impulse. The ontological fact of the world for Octavius is rooted in the abstractions of power and social ritual. It is a schema comparable to the religious paradigm of medieval art in which reality is not something determined by “optical” facts, that is, by sensuous apprehension of the world, but by a given conceptualized design. Cleopatra’s view in the last scene is different. Out of her “desolation” she will make a “better life” (V. ii. 1-2), not by pursuing any “moiety” of this world but by leaving it through “another sleep” that will elicit another vision of Antony:

I dreamed there was an Emperor Antony.
Oh, such another sleep, that I might see
But such another man!

(V. ii. 76-78)

But to her Antony was something more because he was “past the size of dreaming” (V. ii. 97). When Dolabella denies there was such a heroic figure as Cleopatra describes, she declares he lies. Rationalists like Dolabella are also doubtful of her claims because we have seen Antony acting less than nobly. But the force and eloquence of Cleopatra’s vision sweep aside such pedestrian doubts. Like the poet she can take what belongs to the imagination and imbue it with such power that it becomes as real as the phenomena of the natural world—in fact becomes part of that world:

Nature wants stuff
To vie strange forms with fancy, yet to imagine
An Antony were nature’s piece ‘gainst fancy,
Condemning shadows quite.

(V. ii. 97-100)

Her ability to project this image is evident in Dolabella’s response: “Your loss is as yourself, great” (V. ii. 101). The implication is that her perception of Antony, the “direction of her seeing,” has substance because of the “manner” of the “seeing”—that is, the power of her imagination. Antony becomes no mere “shadow,” no mere *poseur* acting out a part before his historical contemporaries, nor is he only some Elizabethan player in the Globe; instead he is a vision that is projected through Cleopatra into our own reality.

In this last scene of the play Cleopatra undertakes her second journey to Cydnus. She is departing this world, this globe where she is in danger of being "boyed," to enter one of her own conceiving, and the space she must cross is not physical but numinous. Hence, unlike the fragmented structure of acts three, four, and five, all of which are set in Egypt, this scene is tightly knit, and Shakespeare brings Cleopatra together with Octavius. He wants to juxtapose the two spaces, the two realities—that of realpolitik and that of passion and the imagination. There are no additional sardonic asides from wordly-wise secondary characters which tended to cramp Cleopatra and Antony in earlier acts and set them at a remote, often ironic distance from the audience. There is no longer a need for the lovers "to make space enough between" them and political pragmatists, because Cleopatra has now the means to keep herself—and Antony—free of being "pinioned" (V. ii. 53) by enemies. She has created out of the world they have known together another world, a world that is like a theater because its sightlines are those of dreams.

Cleopatra's transfigured reality, though, is made possible only through her union with Antony who completes her. He is the alchemical figure that lends material substance to her imagination and also transmutes what Murray Roston describes as the "sybaritic, licentious, and effete" Egypt of the earlier acts into "a kingdom defying limitations of time and space."¹⁶ The new Cydnus is made possible only after Antony, through death, escapes completely from the limiting effects of Roman space and withdraws towards a distant vanishing point. It is then that Cleopatra can work her magic and can complete the process of making Antony and herself whole by purging away the adulterating dross of this world.

Octavius starts out with a schema or script and fits the world to it as if to a Procrustean bed. Since for him reality is artificially determined, the world must learn the lines set down for it. Just as theological concepts shaped the objects and figures in the two-dimensional art of the Middle Ages and held them in an Aristotelian space that enclosed its contents, so do Octavius' political and social views shape his space. Cleopatra, to apply Erwin Panofsky's comment on the development of depth perspective in the Renaissance to Shakespeare's tragedy, "removed the object from the inner world of the artist's imagination," or solipsistic ideal, "and placed it firmly in the 'outer world'."¹⁷ Instead of imposing the constricted space of "theater" on the world, she has transfigured the world into the theater of the imagination by adopting Giordano Bruno's concept of space as

the free medium of movement, extending unhindered beyond every finite border and in all directions. This movement cannot and may not find any obstacle in "nature" of any individual thing, or in the general condition of the cosmos. For movement itself, in its universality and in its limitlessness, constitutes nature as such.¹⁸

The world of Octavius can become splintered or reduced to the dimensions of three throats in a galley. In Cleopatra's world "realms and islands" drop from one's pockets, there is "infinite variety" that includes sexual metamorphoses—

I drunk him to his bed,
Then put my tires and mantles on him whilst
I wore his sword Philippan

(II. v. 21-23)—

and there are renewable journeys to Cydnus. It is a world of "fire and air," for "other elements" have been given to "baser life" (V. ii. 292-93).

And yet it is not an unrecognizable world. Cleopatra remains what she has always been—willful, capricious, passionate, self-involved, and magical. Her lying to Octavius about her wealth despite her intention to commit suicide is a reminder of her frailties, as is the jaundiced opinion of women offered by the tedious deliverer of the asps who, while acknowledging "that a woman is a dish for the gods" (V. ii. 276), believes that devils "mar" five out of ten. What Shakespeare is doing is thrusting this world into another, that of theater as conceived by Cleopatra, just as painters through linear perspective were wiping out the difference between the space of the viewer and the space of the painting. The result, as Henri Focillon says of theater design, is that

By means of *trompe-l'oeil*, perspective completely demolishes architecture, and shatters its ceilings with one explosive apotheosis after another. [It] wipes out the boundaries of stage scenery by creating a false infinity and an illusion of vastness. [It] extends the limits of vision until every horizon of the universe is exceeded. Here we may see the principle of metamorphosis exploiting its deductions to the last possible limits. . . . An examination of the various conceptions of space shows us that the life of forms is renewed over and over again," and not "according to fixed postulates."¹⁹

Cleopatra's theatrical gestures—"Show me, my women, like a Queen. Go fetch / My best attire. I am again for Cydnus" (V. ii.

227-28)—spring from her “immortal longings” and assure that she will be “renewed.” Even an Octavius can see that in her “sleep” she will “catch another Antony / In her strong toil of grace” (V. ii. 349-51).

It is this creation through the imagination in *Antony and Cleopatra* of a space beyond that of this world, a space that continues to the vanishing point of infinity, that gives the play the tone of one of the late romances rather than of tragedy and persuades us that illusions are real, if they are theatrically intensive enough. Like Imogen and Posthumus, and like Hermione, Antony and Cleopatra—as “Eastern star” (V. ii. 311)—will rise and be “warm” again, and will indeed have joy of the worm.

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Notes

¹*The Faerie Queene* is one example of narrative that uses space in this way. Elevated or depressed settings such as mountains or caves clearly have psychological implications as do recessed areas such as the Bower of Bliss.

²*Shakespeare's Drama*, ed. Kenneth Muir (London, New York: Methuen, 1980), p. 51.

³“System, Space, and Intellect in Renaissance Symbolism,” in *The Barbarian Within* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 73. Among others who have written on Shakespeare's use of space in *Antony and Cleopatra* is G. Wilson Knight whose argument, based on imagery rather than the use of perspective, is that space in the play “is expanded . . . to infinity itself.” *The Imperial Theme* (London: Methuen, 1930; rptd. 1965), p. 248. For Knight, however, “space” is less a dimension than a metaphor for “atmosphere” or concept. He writes elsewhere of Shakespearean tragedy as being “set spatially . . . in the mind.” *The Wheel of Fire*, 4th ed. (London: Methuen, 1930; rptd. 1949), p. 3. Paradoxically, another critic sees a “bounded world,” one that evokes a sense of “claustrophobia” (“the little O, the earth” [V. ii. 81]) (Elizabeth Cook, *Seeing Through Words: The Scope of Late Renaissance Poetry* [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1986], pp. 78-79). Since in my reference to Cook's study I cite one of her quotations from the play using the line number from the text I used, I will note here the edition from which all my citations are taken: *The Complete Works*, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1948). Correlations between visual and verbal forms have been pointed out by Jean Howard, who uses terms from paintings as metaphors for dramatic form: the “ground” is the “world” of the play; in the “foreground” or “figure” is the actual, particular event; and the “frame” is the way “through which the audience perceives the unfolding action.” “Figures and Grounds: Shakespeare's Control of Audience Perception and Response,” *Studies in English Literature*, 20 (1980), pp. 189-90. Francis Berry refers to what he calls “insets,” narrative or expository passages such as Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra on her way to meet Antony at Cydnus, as belonging to another time or even another place; an inset is located on “a plane which contrasts with the plane of the surround.” *The Shakespeare Inset: Word and Picture* (New York: Theater Arts Books, 1965), p. 98. The literary

analogues of both anamorphic painting and the images shaped by various other perspective devices of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are the subject of a study by Ernest Gilman. The result of the transcribing of these "visual witticisms" into dramatic form is to "undermine the viewer's authority by dislocating him from the 'centric point' and obliging him to see the work of art from multiple 'perspectives' before he grasps it fully." *The Curious Perspective: Literary and Pictorial Wit in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1978) pp. 51, 50. Finally, using Sonnet 24—"Mine eye hath played the painter and hath stelled"—as her point of departure, Virginia Vaughan considers how Shakespeare employed design and juxtaposition to create a verbal and visual perspective art" in which "seeing becomes integrally related to knowing." "Shakespeare's Perspective Art," in *Bucknell Review* (30, no. 1), ed. Mark Neuman and Michael Payne (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 18, 31.

⁴Cook, p. 77.

⁵*Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, Bollingen Series, XXXV (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), *passim*.

⁶Claudio Guillen, "On the Concept and Metaphor of Perspective," in *Literature as System* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), p. 311.

⁷Gombrich, p. 333.

⁸Gombrich, p. 195.

⁹Gombrich, p. 173.

¹⁰*Space in Medieval Painting and the Forerunners of Perspective* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1940), p. 121.

¹¹*The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space*, 3rd, ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987), p. 180.

¹²Erwin Panofsky says that in the Renaissance "the classical past began to be looked upon from a fixed distance, quite comparable to the 'distance between the eye and the Object' in . . . focused perspective." Such a "distance deprived antiquity of its realness" and hence the creation of the myth of Arcady. "The classical past was looked upon, for the first time, as a totality cut off from the present." *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), pp. 108, 113.

¹³In painting such a perspective allows the introduction of more than a single side of a given object by "swinging" another side "round until it too lies undistorted in the plane" (White, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27). The "sides" are equally distant from the viewer's eye; there is no recession or thrust into the distance, and so there is no sense of three-dimensional space.

¹⁴See Joel Fineman, *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye: The Invention of Poetic Subjectivity* (Berkeley, Calif.: Univ. of California Press, 1986). Fineman argues that the sonnets culminate in the Dark Lady sub-sequence in which the speaker's—or poet's—sensitivity has matured. That is, he has broken out of Self and the idealizations of youth into a dialectical relationship with what is alien and actual.

¹⁵*The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans. Marip Domandi (1927; rptd. New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 32.

¹⁶*Renaissance Perspectives in Literature and the Visual Arts* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), p. 272.

¹⁷*Idea: A Concept in Art Theory*, trans. Joseph J. Peak (1924; rptd. Columbia, S.C.: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1968), pp. 50-51.

¹⁸Cassirer, p. 187.

¹⁹*The Life of Forms*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1948), p. 30.

**Exit Pursued by a Quaint Device:
The Bear in *The Winter's Tale*
by George Walton Williams**

Since Mönkemeyer suggested that the bear in *The Winter's Tale* might have been a real animal and not, as had been supposed, an actor dressed in a bear skin or costume, critics have divided on the question of natural or artificial.¹ No final solution has been accepted, and recent editions, when they annotate the direction, present both possibilities to their readers.² Supporters of the natural bear have included J. D. Wilson (ed. 1931), J. H. P. Pafford (ed. 1963), J. L. Styan (1975); those arguing for the artificial are best represented by W. J. Lawrence (1935).³

Though it is readily acknowledged that a real bear could have been obtained for *The Winter's Tale* from the Bear Gardens adjacent to the Globe, we are to suppose that the bears at the Bear Garden were chosen for their ferocity, made vicious by hunger, to provide entertainment for the spectators on the South Bank.⁴ A bear from this background would have required a bearward for passing through the streets to the Globe and to the Blackfriars and—one would have to argue—for passing from one door to the other over the stage. It is not difficult to imagine how the presence of a fierce wild beast would have affected the gallants sitting on the stage and how the presence of a bearward following the animal would have affected the dramatic coherence of the play.

There is, indeed, record of one dramatic production that solved this problem: Ben Jonson's *Masque of Oberon* used *two* bears, white bears, to draw the chariot in the grand procession of Oberon (played by Prince Henry). These bears were attended by seven bearwards dressed as Sylvans for the procession. One of these beasts could have pursued Antigonus, it is said. On the other hand, it has been argued that there might have been available at least one tame bear, valued for its docility⁵; such a creature might have been trained specifically to pass without a bearward from one door to the other, following a human. But it is difficult to imagine how such a friendly animal could have been diverted from examining the crowd or finding out what sweetmeats the gallants on stage might have had in their pockets.

As anyone who has directed *Two Gentlemen of Verona* will know, a four-legged actor is the most independent and unpredictable of subjects. Professor Turner has sagely remarked that if real bears could have been used in *The Winter's Tale*, "the stage history

[of the play] . . . would be thick with bears, but not a single production on record employs one."⁶ Such negative arguments should have put to rest "the ridiculous idea that the bear was real,"⁷ but one positive argument must be advanced for the artificial bear.

The action of the pursuit occurs at the generic center of the play; the direction is the fulcrum on which the play balances. In the past lies the tragic part of this play of mixed genre; in the future lies the comic part. The Shepherd announces the tragic-comic structure: "Thou mettest with things dying, I with things new-born" (III. iii. 106-07). Professor D. B. J. Randall has observed that scene iii is the central scene of the play, with seven scenes before and seven after. The pursuit of the bear and the death of Antigonus obviously make a major symbolic statement, and this event prepares for the other spectacular event and device, the resurrection of Hermione and her reunions with lost daughter and contrite husband.⁸ Seventy lines after the spectacular direction the interval occurs. The second part of the play, after a reminder of the past which serves also as prologue to the future, moves to song and dance. Spring brings in the sweet of the year.

Most critics have not directly considered how Shakespeare might have wished to mark this major structural moment in the play. What was essential, as he must have known, was a spectacular moment of theatricality, something that would powerfully and suddenly move the audience from tension to release. Two scholars have recognized the problem and have realized Shakespeare's solution to it.

In 1958, Nevill Coghill, with a keen sense of professional stagecraft, observed: "the terrible and the grotesque come near to each other in a *frisson* of horror instantly succeeded by a shout of laughter. . . . The practical aspects of production make it certain that no [bear] was borrowed from the bear-pit."⁹ And Ernest Schanzer in 1969 developed this point of view: "[The bear] is a dramatic embodiment of all the perils which beset Perdita, and fills us with pity and fear. . . ; [on the other hand,] the sight of an actor in a bear's skin . . . was bound to have a partly comic effect."¹⁰ Unpersuaded, J. L. Styan in 1975 could still argue that "only the actuality of this bear could touch both horror and farce at the same time, and thus swiftly and without a word build a bridge between the tragedy of Hermione and the comedy of the shepherds."¹¹

On the contrary, the transfer that Styan has exactly and forcefully expressed can be accomplished only by the artificiality of this bear.¹² A natural bear could not have been depended on to produce this dramatic reversal; a man dressed as a bear could be directed to achieve precisely such a transition.¹³

When the actor in a bear costume runs on stage making a savage clamor and reversing the normal order of hunter and hunted, the first reaction from the audience is shock, if not fright, or even terror—attributes of tragedy. The second reaction, following immediately, is relief and laughter—attributes of comedy. An artificial bear, capable of achieving this contrast at once, is the visible symbol of the thematic center of the play. It shows us Shakespeare, the dramatic craftsman, at his surest; as Coghill has said: horror succeeded by laughter.

Perhaps a glance at another play might support this hypothesis. *The Tempest*, the play written next after *The Winter's Tale*, has been seen—to oversimplify—to reflect the same basic fable as that in *The Winter's Tale*, though *The Tempest* begins at the mid-point of that fable. The first half of *The Winter's Tale* enacts the tragic events sixteen years earlier; the second half begins with the maturity of the ruler's daughter. *The Tempest* begins with the maturity of the ruler's daughter and recalls the tragic events of about sixteen years ago. If the evidence of this structural half-parallel has any usefulness for us here, we might expect to find at the beginning of the play a highly theatrical stage direction, one equivalent to that at the mid-point of *The Winter's Tale*. And, of course, we are not long disappointed in our search. That direction is: "A tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard" (I. i. 0. 1).

Custom has made us insensitive to the uniqueness of this opening; the direction that opens *The Tempest* is extraordinary—and not simply because it opens also the First Folio. The direction that opens *Macbeth* is commonplace: "Thunder and lightning"; and *Macbeth* is an extraordinary play. Professor Jeanne Addison Roberts suggests that we should credit Ralph Crane, the scribe, "with elaborating authorial stage directions" so as to give "an account of what happened on stage . . . after he saw the play."¹⁴ She is certainly correct.

"The tempestuous noise" was an effect that Crane actually saw—or, rather, saw and heard; he has recorded his response to a remarkable and unusual theatrical device—something different in degree, perhaps in kind, from the standard Jacobean thunder and lightning—different from his other climatological experiences at the performance, which he recorded simply as "A noise of thunder heard" (II. ii. 0. 1) and "Thunder and lightning" (III. iii. 52. 1).

To the unaccustomed and violent attack on their senses made by this opening direction, the original audience at *The Tempest* must have reacted with astonishment, fright—even terror. As

perhaps they recognized, storm in Shakespeare's plays had from the time of *The Comedy of Errors* represented the violent division of the family, perturbations of mind and spirit, the disruption of the body politic. The opening scene of *The Tempest* did nothing to dispel this assumption: the cries of the shipmen and of the passengers, the drenching of the Mariners, the confused noises within—all assured them, as they assure us, that the storm is as real as the storm in *The Winter's Tale* with its "loud weather" (III. iii. 11), frowning day and dimmed heavens (54, 56), and shipwreck (87-90). The second reaction of the audience, however, is one of relief and comfort as Miranda observes that the storm is the creation of her father's art (I. ii. 1-2). In spite of the title of the play, the tempest, though it seemed a real tempest, was nothing of the kind; it was an artificial tempest, a man dressed as a tempest.

Shakespeare knew what he was about in both these plays. He was dealing with artifice and quaint device to work his magic on his audience. The artificial bear, one quaint device, produces precisely the effect desired: it turns the audience instantly from grief to joy, from tragedy to comedy and to romance.

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Notes

¹The comment is attributed to Mönkemeyer by W. J. Lawrence in *Those Nut-cracking Elizabethans* (1935), p. 26. I am much obliged to Professor Robert K. Turner who has generously made available the Commentary Notes on this celebrated direction—"Exit, pursued by a bear."—which he is preparing for his edition of the play in the New Variorum series. The comments of the various critics derive from his research. Quotations and citations are from the *Complete Pelican Shakespeare*.

²See, for example, the editions of Evans (1974), p. 1567; Bevington (1992), p. 1485.

³New Cambridge Edition (1931), p. 157; Arden Edition (1963), p. 69; *Drama, Stage and Audience* (1975); *op. cit.*

⁴Lawrence, p. 26.

⁵Arthur Quiller-Couch, *Notes on Shakespeare's Workmanship* (1917), pp. 264-65; George F. Reynolds, "Mucedorus, Most Popular Elizabethan Play?", in *Studies in the English Renaissance Drama*, eds. J. W. Bennett, et al., (1959), 248-268, esp. pp. 260-64. "Trained bears were plentiful," Reynolds convincingly demonstrates (p. 262). He argues further that the bear required in *Mucedorus*, artificial in 1588, was natural at the revival in 1610 and that its spectacular presence caused the ensuing popularity of the play as marked by subsequent performances and by a long series of quarto editions, originating after that latter date. But provincial performances would not have had access to a particular London bear, and the effect of a live bear on the stage in 1610 would have been irrelevant to a reader in later years.

⁶R. K. Turner, Notes to the Variorum Edition.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸D. B. J. Randall, "'This Is the Chase': or The Further Pursuit of Shakespeare's Bear," *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 121 (1985), 89-95.

⁹Nevill Coghill, "Six Points of Stage-craft in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Survey*, 11 (1958), 34-35.

¹⁰New Penguin Edition (1969), p. 17.

¹¹Styan, p. 34.

¹²The actuality of this bear in a crowded theater would inhibit the ability of at least this observer to regard the creature as farcical.

¹³In *Mucedorus* (ca. 1588; "amplified" 1610), the bear is directed to come on stage at a precise moment, crouch down behind the actor who is walking backward across the stage, and cause him to tumble over. Such timing is probably beyond the scope of a wild animal.

¹⁴"Ralph Crane and the Text of *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare Studies*, 13 (1980), 213-33, esp. pp. 214-18 (expanding a hint by Dr. Susan Nascimento [Zimmerman] on *A Game at Chesse*); her hypothesis has been supported by John Jowett in "New Created Creatures: Ralph Crane and the Stage Directions in *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare Survey*, 36 (1983), 107-20. And see also Virginia J. Haas, "Ralph Crane: A Status Report," *Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography*, N. S. 3 (1989), 3-10.

Prospero: The Storm Within

by John B. Harcourt

Inga-Stina Ewbank has aptly compared *The Tempest* to a sea-shell: "Much of what you hear in it—be it Shakespeare's autobiography or a colonial discourse—is yourself."¹ Surely the many divergent readings of the character of Prospero confirm the validity of this observation. For Edward Dowden, in the heyday of Romantic criticism, Prospero was to be identified with the dramatist himself, his departure from his island being nothing less than "the abandoning by Shakspeare of the theatre, the scene of his marvelous works."² Some decades later, Colin Still saw the banished duke of Milan as a God-figure, using his power to bring good out of the tangle of human evil.³ G. Wilson Knight, while quoting Still with evident respect, would settle for a Prospero who is "somehow more than poet yet less than God"—in short, a Shakespearean Superman.⁴ Walter Clyde Curry found a benevolent magus, ready by the epilog "to take the final step and to consummate the assimilation of his soul to the gods."⁵

More recent criticism is far less certain that Prospero is a wholly admirable character. D'Orsay W. Pearson, rejecting Sisson's more benevolent view, is convinced that Shakespeare's audiences would have found even white magic morally and theologically reprehensible and that Prospero is saved only when, at the very end, he begs the spectators for their prayers.⁶ Our post-World War II awareness of third-world countries and our uneasiness about imperialism have prompted many to sympathize with Caliban as representative of all exploited native populations and to see his master as a distinctly unpleasant proto-colonialist.⁷

Psychoanalysts, whether Freudian or Jungian, have subjected Prospero to the therapy of the couch and have revealed dark subconscious forces operating within his deeply conflicted personality.⁸ And the feminists have pounced upon him as the embodiment of all that is hateful in the patriarchal father certain that his daughter is a property to be disposed of at his pleasure.⁹

These interpretations of Prospero in the light of some theological, philosophical, ethical, or socio-political concept have tended to make him a static, rather pallid character, and some of the scenes in which he appears, such as the visit to Caliban in I. ii and the interrupted betrothal-masque, have been hard to relate to the play's dramatic structure. It may be useful to restudy the evidence of the text itself, without the superposition of any *a priori* ideological pattern. Prospero, whatever else he may be, is first

and last a dramatic figure, beset by some of the conflicts and ambivalences inherent in the human condition. Shakespeare has placed him in a sequence of scenes, has given him his lines, and has placed him in relationships to other characters. In this essay I assume the competence of the playwright and the basic integrity of the text. It has been my experience that to look carefully at scenes or speeches that have proved embarrassing to criticism and that have even sometimes been dropped from performance may offer new insights into the artist's total control of his material.¹⁰

Prospero, in my reading, can be studied on at least four psychological planes. First, on the fully conscious level, he unmistakably has a well defined self-image—and that a high one. Even in exile, he sees himself as the rightful duke of Milan; now, he is no less the absolute ruler of his island. He is a magus, a Faustian demi-god, exulting in his control over the elements, his attendant spirits, his daughter, and his slave. Both as sovereign and as father, we would identify him as an authoritarian personality—like all such types serenely confident that he exercises authority only for the most benign and reasonable motives. Convinced of his omnicompetence and indispensability, he is a perfectionist, concerned that every detail of his elaborate scenarios be carried out to the letter—a playwright-director-producer insistent that the performance be nothing less than perfect and only on his terms.

But this elaborate facade, compounded, as we shall see, of self-deception and rationalization, is far from the total picture. On a second and somewhat deeper level, Prospero is an angry and bitter man, deeply hurt by the wrong done him by his brother and Alonso some twelve years earlier in Milan. Throughout his stay on the island, he has nursed vengeful thoughts, dreaming of horrid ways of striking back at his enemies. Now bountiful Fortune has brought them within the force-field his magical power has generated. What action will he take at last? The conflict between Prospero the benign demi-god and Prospero the revenger fills his "project" with ambivalence. In I. ii, he reassures Miranda that "There's no harm done," that he has acted only in care of her (I. ii. 14-16)¹¹, and Ariel presumably articulates the "official" plan in III. iii:

Thee of thy son, Alonso,
They have bereft; and do pronounce by me
Ling'ring perdition—worse than any death
Can be at once—shall step by step attend
You and your ways; whose wraths to guard you from,—
Which here, in this most desolate isle, else falls
Upon your heads,—is nothing but heart-sorrow
And a clear life ensuing.¹²

(III. iii. 75-82)

So far as Ariel knows, the good Prospero wishes only to bring his enemies to self-knowledge and repentance—and then, like God, he will magnanimously extend his grace to the converted sinners. But some of Prospero's own lines fairly crackle with hostility and sadistically punitive emotions, as in IV. i. 255-61. Only in V. i, after an inner upheaval that leads to the turning-point of the play, does he decisively move beyond vengeance to forgiveness.

Thirdly, Prospero is far from being the benevolent father he imagines himself to be. Shakespeare habitually portrays the human family as a hotbed of turbulent and often destructive emotions; in fact, there is hardly a happy family anywhere in the canon. Shakespearean families are most often broken families, lacking one or the other parent. When both husband and wife are present, their relationship can be a troubled one, as with Macbeth and his lady, Leontes and Hermione, and Cymbeline and his queen. Sons and fathers are depicted as locked in lethal combat; brothers (and in *Lear*, sisters) reenact the archetypal paradigm of Cain and Abel. The father-daughter relationship is hardly exempt from this pattern. From *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*, through the Middle Comedies, on to *Lear*, and down to the Last Plays, Shakespeare explores this particular familial tension. The final group, in which *The Tempest* is numbered, makes central the problems of an aging father and a marriageable daughter.¹³

Shakespeare did not shy away from the fact that this moment in the father-daughter relationship is potentially incestuous.¹⁴ *Lear* uses a powerful sexual metaphor to express his all too obvious desire to have Cordelia completely to himself—a longing briefly and ironically gratified in the prison cell:

I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery.

(*Lr.*, I. i. 123-24)

Both Eric Partridge and Frankie Rubinstein gloss "set my rest" as a penis-as-weapon reference: a knight sets the butt of his lance in a socket or loop preliminary to the charge.¹⁵ *Pericles* openly presents the incest of Antiochus and his daughter in its first scene, an episode that throws considerable light on the ensuing action. For we shall see Pericles strangely distancing himself from his daughter from shortly after her birth until like Philoten she is a "wench full-grown, / Even ripe for marriage rite" (*Per.*, IV. Pro. 16-17). By that time we find Marina in a brothel at Mytilene, in an atmosphere of pervasive sexual menace. And when father and daughter are reunited on the barge—Pericles having been driven to Mytilene by a most Shakespearean tempest—his first act is to

thrust her violently from him, as though her bending over him in her ministrations were the enactment of something both feared and desired. Likewise in Greene's novella, *Pandosto*, that king slays himself in remorse for his lust for his daughter Fawna, and Shakespeare, working from Greene's text in *The Winter's Tale*, depicts Leontes as meriting Paulina's rebuke for his all too evident attraction to Perdita:

Sir, my liege,
Your eye hath too much youth in't.

(WT, V. i. 223-24)

In *The Tempest*, Prospero's stated project for Miranda is unexceptionable. He would marry her to a suitable young man, and Fate and Fortune have contrived to include a marriageable prince on the ship that Prospero has highjacked to his island. But his lines betray his extreme reluctance to part from Miranda, with whom he has indulged the Lear fantasy for the past twelve years. His sexual jealousy both of Caliban and of Ferdinand is hard to miss: note the intemperate abuse of the former in I. ii:

Thou most lying slave,
Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have us'd thee
Filth as thou art, with human care; and lodg'd thee
In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate
The honour of my child.

(I. ii. 346-50)

This violent sentiment is reiterated in IV. i, in his twice-expressed fear that Ferdinand is also a threat to Miranda's chastity.

Benevolent despot, Jacobean revenger, possessive father—there is yet another Prospero, even more deeply buried. Like all of us, he is, in starkest existential reality, merely a human being doing everything in his power to suppress the awareness of aloneness, vulnerability, fallibility, guilt, and ineluctable mortality. The magus role is primarily a denial of creaturely limitation; a demi-god need not give thought to encroaching death. This *hubris* is of course self-doomed and hardly effective even in the short run. Prospero is never without a nagging subliminal sense of the hollowness of his pretension.

Act one presents several problems that can be resolved through an awareness of Prospero's complex, divided, and deeply troubled personality. We learn that he has on earlier occasions begun to tell Miranda of her past only to break off the narration—because even obliquely admitting his failure at Milan would painfully undercut his image of omniscience. Now, at the *knirós*, the moment of

perfect ripeness that must be seized lest his fortunes ever after droop, he must inform his daughter of her true social rank before Ferdinand appears. But the text betrays how difficult a task this is for him. The repeated "dost thou attend me?"; "Thou attendest not?"; "Dost thou hear?" (I. ii. 78, 87, 106) cannot be explained as a crude dramaturgical expedient to break up an overly long exposition. Rather, they are essentially projections: Prospero displaces his own uneasiness and guilt onto Miranda by accusing her of what was precisely his failure at Milan—inattentiveness.

Then Miranda is charmed asleep, and certain business with Ariel is transacted: specifically, Ferdinand is now summoned to appear. But first Prospero awakens Miranda and makes a most curious suggestion:

Come on;
We'll visit Caliban, my slave, who never
Yields us kind answer.

(I. ii. 309-11)

It is hard to see why Prospero, at this precise moment, would wish to visit a monster whom both he and Miranda find repellent. Unlike the dispatching of Ariel just before, there seems to be no adequate reason to see Caliban at this time—no specific orders or instructions that must be given. Caliban states clearly that there is sufficient fuel within the cell, and Prospero is vague about "other business" (I. ii. 369). If the episode is devised merely to cover time as Ariel finds Ferdinand, or if it is intended only to introduce Caliban to the audience, then Shakespeare's hand is clumsy indeed.

But it is not a case of fashionable eighteenth-century people going to Bedlam just to be amused at the antics of the mad folk there. Prospero is spoiling for a fight. The exchanges are pervasively hostile, a series of accusations and recriminations between master and slave. And, since Prospero has insisted on the visit, it must somehow answer his need at this moment in the play. It is, in fact, Prospero's mixed emotions concerning Ferdinand's appearance that must somehow be vented and assuaged. Some lines earlier, when sending Ariel on his errand, he had patently overreacted to Ariel's tactful reminder that his freedom was overdue. Dredging up the ancient story of Sycorax and Ariel's imprisonment, he dwells on every detail of horror and torture and ends with a dire threat:

If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak,
And peg thee in his knotty entrails, till
Thou hast howl'd away twelve winters.

(I. ii. 294-96)

Prospero will go beyond even Sycorax in cruelty by choosing a hardwood oak rather than a cloven pine.¹⁶ Surely the violence of this language betrays an agitation disproportionate to its occasion—one that perhaps has more to do with Ariel's as yet undisclosed task than with Ariel himself.

But in the Caliban episode, Ferdinand's entrance is even more imminent and Prospero's hostility even more in need of utterance. Caliban is a remarkably appropriate surrogate for Ferdinand. A mere slave, he can be freely abused; further, he can be denounced for an earlier attempt to wrest Miranda from her father.¹⁷ Caliban too knows how to curse, but it is important to distinguish between the tender-nostalgic lines in which he addresses Prospero as *thou*:

When thou cam'st first,
Thou strok'st me, and made much of me; wouldst give me
Water with berries in 't; and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night: and then I lov'd thee.
(I. ii. 334-38)

and those in which he switches to *you*:

All the charms
Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king.
(I. ii. 341-44)¹⁸

As in the exchange with Ariel, it is Prospero who is consistently malignant. Both his attendant spirit and his slave serve as lightning-rods to discharge his mounting anger and frustration at the thought of losing his daughter to Ferdinand.

The entrance of that hidden cause of Prospero's edginess illustrates a dramatic technique that will later be used with far greater effect in the betrothal-masque—the delineation of a subtle process of psychological transformation through singing and dancing. Without knowing it, Ferdinand is approaching a turning point in his life, a true passage to manhood. Through the evocative power of Ariel's magic, this transition is presented symbolically—and from Prospero's point of view as he presides over the scene with Miranda at his side.

Ariel, invisible, leads the young prince onstage. The opening song is addressed to other spirits in choreographic imperatives: their unseen dance marks the end of the storm and the re-establishment of harmony in the natural order. Then they are directed to sing a curious "burthen" or refrain:

Burthen dispersedly. *Bow-wow.*

(I. ii. 384)

Ariel provides the necessary interpretation, *The watch dogs bark*, and the burthen is repeated. Watch dogs bark to alert their master of an approaching danger: Prospero is being alerted, psychologically, to the approach of his rival for Miranda's affections. Ariel then describes the prince as Prospero's dark imaginings see him:

*Hark, hark! I hear
The strain of strutting chanticleer.*

(I. ii. 387-88)

But for Ferdinand, this strange music carries no hint of threat: he comments on its ability to calm both the tempest and his own grief over his father's presumed death. Ariel's next song, "*Full fadom five*," certifies the deception that Prospero has decreed; the burthen now becomes Alonso's death-knell. This disinformation, conveyed in such exquisite poetry, enables Ferdinand to accept bereavement and its corollary that he is now king of Naples. As Prospero and Miranda exchange comments, he comes to terms with this new situation and then sees Miranda for the first time. He addresses her in the goddess convention, but his pronoun *you* makes clear his hope, if not his certainty, that she is a mortal maid. His confidence in his just acquired rank as king is immediately established:

I am the best of them that speak this speech,
Were I but where 'tis spoken.

(I. ii. 432-33)

Prospero's rebuke receives a sharp rejoinder, in which the pronoun is *thee*: a king ("myself am Naples") is speaking to an inferior.

Prospero's demeanor now radically alters, and, as usual, Shakespeare builds the essential cue to the actor into the lines themselves:

Why speaks my father so ungently?

(I. ii. 447)

The puppet-master explains to us that he is intervening for the best of reasons, but heaping abuse on Ferdinand comes all too easily to him. In his new self-awareness, the chanticleer-king draws his sword, only to be frozen into immobility. Prospero rages against both Miranda and Ferdinand and forces the latter to drop his phallic sword. The prince is for the moment neutralized, regressed, as it were, to the helplessness of a baby:

Thy nerves are in their infancy again,
And have no vigour in them.

(I. ii. 487-88)

Meekly, he accepts the conditions of his captivity, and Miranda is constrained to acquiesce.

Acts two and three move away from the principal figures to concentrate on the two plots being hatched on the island. Antonio urges Sebastian to murder his brother Alonso and seize the crown of Naples; Caliban tries to incite the drunken Stephano to kill Prospero and so become king of the island. Both plots recapitulate in different modalities, serious and comic, the original usurpation at Milan; both build their hopes of success on the inattentiveness of the victims to political reality. In III. i, Prospero had observed the progress of Ferdinand's courtship with qualified satisfaction:

So glad of this as they I cannot be,
Who are surpris'd with all; but my rejoicing
At nothing can be more.

(III. i. 92-94)

But two scenes later, he is far less benign as he gloats over the discomforture of the court party, before whom the sumptuous banquet is first spread and then defiled and snatched away by Harpy-Ariel and the Shapes. Significantly, it is Ariel, not Prospero, who offers a glimmering of hope if the three men of sin can move on to heart-sorrow and a clear life ensuing. Prospero himself can only darkly mutter that "they now are in my power; / And in these fits I leave them" (III. iii. 90-91).

In IV. i, Prospero returns to center stage, apparently reconciled to the impending marriage. He gruffly apologizes to Ferdinand for his mistreatment and solemnly proffers his daughter's hand. But this betrothal-ritual is not without its darker side. Audiences may find Ferdinand a cautious enough lover:

O, if a virgin,
And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you
The Queen of Naples.

(I. ii. 450-52)

But Prospero seems obsessed with lurid imaginings of where Ferdinand's unbridled sexuality may lead. He chants a litany of imprecations of dire effects that will surely follow: "If thou dost break her virgin-knot before / All sanctimonious ceremonies may / With full and holy rite be minister'd" (IV. i. 15-17). A few lines later, he returns to these forebodings:

... do not give dalliance
 Too much the rein: the strongest oaths are straw
 To th'fire in th'blood: be more abstemious,
 Or else, good night your vow!

(IV. i. 51-54)

As with the earlier denunciation of Caliban's lustfulness, these lines may tell more about the speaker than about the persons addressed.

Yet even now, Prospero does not give up easily. He must make a final effort to assert his own worth over that of his rival:

I must
 Bestow upon the eyes of this young couple
 Some vanity of mine Art.

(IV. i. 39-41)

The word *vanity* gives it away: Prospero is behaving like a modern father boring his daughter's date by dragging out the bowling trophies and the college football pictures.

In the ensuing masque, the theme of chastity is insistently continued. Iris, like Ariel, is exemplary obedience to authority; Juno is the patroness of marriage; and Ceres is more the president of an Olympian garden-club than real fertility goddess. Every hint of dangerous sexuality is banished, at least at first, as we learn that Venus and Cupid have been struck from the cast because they had encouraged Dis' abduction of Persephone. (This mythological allusion also glances at Prospero's anxiety over the impending loss of Miranda.) In this sanitized delineation of betrothal and marriage, Juno pronounces a lovely nuptial benediction, reminiscent of the last moments of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—a striking contrast to Prospero's earlier nightmares about disordered lust. Then the pageant pauses as the young people gratify expectation by murmuring their satisfaction with "so rare a wonder'd father."

But Presenter-Prospero indicates that there is more to come. Iris summons a troop of Naiads to help celebrate a contract of true love. These are described as "temperate nymphs," but Iris also invites a matching group of Reapers—sweaty young farm-hands called in from the fields this hot August afternoon. The two groups engage in a "graceful" dance, surely no court pavane but a country dance of the kind found in the sheep-shearing scene of *The Winter's Tale*.

Whatever may be communicated by the Reapers' visual appearance and by the vigor of their dance, the quality of the poetry perceptibly alters at their summoning. Words become charged

with erotic overtones, so many of them that one may safely infer Shakespeare's conscious or unconscious intent. The term *Reapers* appears only in the stage-direction, but it is a homonym for *rapers*. Almost all the key words of the summons have sexual contexts elsewhere in the canon:

You sunburn'd sicklemen, of August weary,

cf. sunburned Cleopatra "with Phoebus' amorous pinches black" (*Ant.*, I. v. 28)

sicklemen is apparently a Shakespearean nonce-word. For audiences who were far better versed in mythology than we are, it might have recalled the flint sickle with which Cronos castrated his father.

Come hither from the furrow, and be merry.

Ploughing, sowing, reaping have provided sexual metaphors since the first agricultural settlements in the dim pre-history of our species. Cf. "He plough'd her, and she cropp'd" (*Ant.*, II. ii. 228). Partridge lists *furrow* as a term for the female genitals (though from a later period).¹⁹

Make holiday; your rye-straw hats put on.

Holiday=*holy day*; *holy* hints at *hole*, as in *IHV*, I. ii. 51; V. iv. 39; V. iv. 65.

Rye is a homonym with *wry*: cf. "Must murder wives much better than themselves / For wrying but a little" (*Cym.*, V. i. 4-5).

For *straw* in a lurid sexual context, cf. "First thrash the corn, then after burn the straw" (*Tit.*, II. iii. 123).²⁰

And these fresh nymphs encounter every one / in country footing

Encounter merits an entry in Partridge's *Shakespeare's Bawdy*.²¹ So does its second syllable, *coun*.

The nymphs, earlier described as "temperate," are now more enticing: cf. "Ever your fresh whore, and your powdered bawd" (*Meas.*, III. ii. 57).

Country is notorious from Hamlet's "country matters."

The *foot/foutre/fuck* association is established by the French lesson in *Henry V* and by Pistol's oaths.

If the masque mirrors Prospero's inner self, and if Ariel, in contriving it, is attuned to more than just his master's conscious projects, we must ask what has caused this sudden intrusion of at least muted sexual allusions. And how is the summons to the Reapers related to what may be the strangest stage-direction in all Shakespeare?

. . . towards the end whereof Prospero starts suddenly, and speaks; after which, to a strange, hollow, and confused noise, they heavily vanish.

This is not the first instance in the canon of a maimed or interrupted ritual scene. Two earlier examples are relevant. In *Richard II*, I. iii, the king allows the lists at Coventry to proceed to the very moment when the marshall and the trumpets signal the charge; only at that point does Richard throw his warder down. We can readily imagine his growing concern as the moment of truth draws near. Had the trial-by-combat been allowed to continue, God would have awarded the victory to Bolingbroke, and Richard would have stood convicted of Woodstock's murder. Yet aborting the charge creates the same suspicions and intensifies Bolingbroke's all too evident hostility. Richard opts for suspicion rather than for certain exposure. And in *Hamlet*, III. ii, the king has perhaps borne as much of the play-within-the-play as he is able to, or perhaps Hamlet's increasingly menacing behavior becomes intolerable. In either case, he breaks off the performance and rushes from the hall.

There is a third example even more to the point, in a play just prior to *The Tempest*. In *The Winter's Tale*, Polixenes comes in disguise to the sheep-shearing festival to discover what has caused his son to absent himself from court. Like Prospero, this king is also of divided mind: he objects to Perdita's lowly station but is powerfully attracted by her grace.

This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever
Ran on the green-sward: nothing she does or seems
But smacks of something greater than herself,
Too noble for this place.

(*WT*, IV. iv. 156-59)

This reaction may foreshadow Leontes's less than seemly interest in Perdita when she reappears in his court in V. i. But Perdita has already put Polixenes in his place by fitting his age with flowers of winter, so that he must experience her rejection of him as well as his son's. As in *The Tempest*, it is a rather bacchanalian dance, that of the Saltiers or Satyrs, that precipitates his intervention. "Is it not too far gone? 'Tis time to part them" (IV. iv. 345).

Why then does Prospero react so violently precisely as the dance of the Naiads and Reapers is drawing to its close? The imagery of the summons, the young dancers, and the dance itself all point to the true nature of Prospero's perturbation. What would have ensued had the dance moved to its proper conclusion? Presumably the dancers would have approached the two guests of honor and perhaps incorporated them into its final paces. Such a resolution to a betrothal-masque would symbolize the union of the young lovers, in a context tense with sexual energies. For Prospero this return of the repressed threatens to overcome his self-control: he must act, however vainly, to stave off the inevitable a bit longer.

He is of course ready with an appropriate rationalization: "I had forgot that foul conspiracy / Of the beast Caliban and his confederates / Against my life" (IV. i. 139-41). Yet another instance of the inattentiveness theme, but hardly plausible. The conspirators are only a monster, a jester, and a butler—all drunk. The raid on the clothes-line (or lime-tree) will prove them incapable of meaningful action, and, in any case, Ariel has things well under control. Prospero breaks off the masque because internal pressures which he cannot admit to consciousness erupt with a violence only faintly foreshadowed by his partly feigned rage against Ferdinand in I. ii.

Here once again, Shakespeare builds crucial stage-directions into the actors' very words. Ferdinand comments, "This is strange; your father's in some passion / That works him strongly," and Miranda seconds this with "Never till this day / Saw I him touch'd with anger, so distemper'd" (IV. i. 143-45). Prospero, characteristically, attempts to pull himself together by displacing his emotion onto Ferdinand: "You do look, my son, in a mov'd sort, / As if you were dismay'd" (IV. i. 146-47). Then, in his most famous speech, he resorts to an expedient not uncommon in perfectionist-authoritarian types: caught out in a minor lapse, he will write off everything as loss—nothing has any more substance than a dream. Prospero has been taken by surprise, not by the conspirators but by the force of his own inner conflicts. In sweeping philosophical generalizations, he reduces this failure to insignificance by assert-

ing that since everything is really illusion, nothing really matters. That all reality is an insubstantial pageant, that we are such stuff as dreams are made on, is hardly Shakespeare's final commentary on the human condition. Like Macbeth's "tale full of sound and fury signifying nothing" or Gloucester's "As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' Gods," these lines articulate the speaker's psychological state at that precise moment in the play.²²

Prospero's next lines contain some astonishing admissions—unlike anything we have heard thus far from him:

Sir, I am vex'd;
Bear with my weakness; my old brain is troubled:
Be not disturb'd with my infirmity.

(IV. i. 158-60)

Vex'd, weakness, old, infirmity—Prospero is at last coming to terms with the most deeply repressed part of his personality, his fast approaching death.

Dismissing the young people to his cell while he walks about to still his beating mind, he struggles toward a final integration from this new perspective. The impulse to vengeance needs next to be resolved. Ariel appears with a vividly pictorial account of the indignities heaped on Caliban and company. Once again, Caliban serves as lightning-rod to draw off these last vestiges of bitterness and rage. Prospero even extends the range of his vindictiveness to include all his enemies: "I will plague them all, / Even to roaring" (IV. i. 192-93). This ranting continues, as if through habit, into the clothes-pilfering episode and climaxes with lines of extraordinary ferocity:

Go charge my goblins that they grind their joints
With dry convulsions; shorten up their sinews
With aged cramps; and more pinch-spotted make them
Than pard or cat o' mountain.

(IV. i. 258-61)

He again emphasizes the inclusiveness of his rage: "At this hour / Lies at my mercy all mine enemies." The very intensity of these outbursts is potentially cathartic.

After an exit and immediate re-entry, Prospero is ready for his moment of true illumination. Ariel describes Alonso and the others—distracted, mourning, brimful of sorrow and dismay. This narration is so moving that Ariel ventures a comment of his own: "Your charm so strongly works 'em / That if you now beheld them, your affections / Would become tender" (V. i. 17-19). Prospero tries to take this in: "Dost thou think so, spirit?" Ariel's reply is couched in just the right wording: "Mine would, sir, were

I human." Here we have, I think, a moment of stunningly effective stage silence, then, the play's turning point: "And mine shall"—the emphatic *shall* echoing the equally emphatic *will* of "I will plague them all." Prospero goes on to admit, for the first time, his dividedness: "Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury / Do I take part." *Fury*, madness, is surely more than righteous anger or a reasoned sense of injustice done. However inadequate his psychological vocabulary, Prospero is purging himself of a twelve-year accumulation of impotent rage.

He has thus accepted his mortality and renounced the role of avenger. There is therefore no longer a need to be the Faustian demigod, the magus. There will be one last grandiose affirmation of the powers that he has wielded in V. i. 33-50. This done, he can abjure such rough magic and promise, after a bit of tidying up of loose ends, to break his staff and drown his book.

Antonio and Sebastian are unrepentant, but this detail hardly matters: it is simply part of the truth about human behavior. Caliban has crashed through to an illumination of his own, but even before articulates it, Prospero accepts him, perhaps now as part of the truth about himself: "this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine" (V. i. 275-76). He can equate his loss of Miranda to Alonso's presumed loss of a son by drowning, but apart from a crisp "'Tis new to thee" (V. i. 184), he has no further words for his daughter. He says nothing at all to Ferdinand.

The Prospero of act five is an old man, drained of vital power. No doubt he is at last an integrated personality (insofar as that may be), but at a far lower level of psychological intensity. He will tell his story in due time; he will resume his ducal office but without zest; every third thought shall be his grave.

Other Last Plays effect at least a partial restoration. Pericles and Cymbeline regain their daughters (and acceptable sons-in-law); Leontes gets both and also his long-lost wife. But just as in *The Merchant of Venice*, nothing can be found for Antonio except some returned argosies, so here Prospero is left with only his ducal crown. The Venetian Antonio, like Feste, stood alone at the end, outside the magic circle of nuptial festivity. Prospero dismisses the happy company to his cell, then stands solitary for a moment—nobly pathetic perhaps, though hardly tragic. Returning as beggar for the epilog, he strangely blends the conventional bid for applause with the petitions of the Lord's Prayer—that we may all be forgiven even as we forgive.

In the *Purgatorio*, Dante had put that common prayer of Christendom on the lips of the Proud: they are learning to share words known to children and fools, to all the unimportant mem-

bers of our kind. In his long delayed acceptance of the human condition, Prospero too has found the words of the meek and humble of this earth.

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Notes

¹Inga-Stina Ewbank, "The *Tempest* and After," *Shakespeare Survey*, 43 (1991), p. 109.

²Edward Dowden, *Shakespeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* (New York and London: Harper, 3rd ed., 1899), p. 380.

³Colin Still, *Shakespeare's Mystery Play: A Study of The Tempest* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1921). This work was enlarged as *The Timeless Theme* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1936).

⁴G. Wilson Knight, *The Crown of Life* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1947; rptd. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), p. 231.

⁵Walter Clyde Curry, *Shakespeare's Philosophical Patterns* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2nd ed., 1959), p. 196.

⁶D'Orsay W. Pearson, "'Unless I Be Reliev'd by Prayer': The *Tempest* in Perspective," *Shakespeare Studies*, 7 (1974), p. 273. Pearson is reacting both to Curry and to C. J. Sisson, "The Magic of Prospero," *Shakespeare Survey*, 11 (1958), 70-77.

⁷See Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991) and also Leslie Fiedler, "The New World Savage as Stranger" in his *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), 199-253.

⁸See Hanns Sachs, "The Unconscious in Shakespeare's *Tempest*" in his *The Creative Unconscious* (Cambridge, Mass.: Science-Arts, 2nd ed., 1951), 289-323 and also K. M. Abenheimer, "Shakespeare's *Tempest*: A Psychological Analysis" rptd. in M. D. Faber, ed. *The Design Within* (New York: Science House, 1970), 502-19.

⁹See Lorie Jerrell Leininger, "The Miranda Trap: Sexism and Racism in Shakespeare's *Tempest*," in Carolyn Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Neely, eds., *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1980), 285-94.

¹⁰I have used this approach in three earlier studies: "'I Pray You, Remember the Porter'" *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 12 (1961), 393-402; "'Odde Old Ends, Stolne . . .': King Richard and Saint Paul," *Shakespeare Studies*, 7 (1974), 87-100; and "'Children of divers kind': A Reading of *Romeo and Juliet*," *The Upstart Crow: A Shakespeare Journal*, 3 (1980), 67-79.

¹¹Citations from *The Tempest* are from Frank Kermode, ed., *The Tempest* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 6th ed., 1958). Quotations from other Shakespearean plays are from the respective volumes of the Arden Shakespeare.

¹²It is possible that the tortuous syntax may suggest that Ariel has at least subliminal reservations about his master's intent.

¹³It is worth noting that Shakespeare had two marriageable daughters around the time he was writing the Last Plays.

¹⁴American society has, in recent years, become increasingly aware of father-daughter incest as a special and not uncommon instance of child abuse. The significance for the father of the marriage of his daughter is attested even by our attenuated rituals: he must lead her down the aisle to the chancel where the smug bridegroom is waiting; handing her over to his successor, he then returns, virtu-

ally unnoticed, to his place in the congregation. Barbara Melchiori has examined the incest theme in the Last Plays in "Still Harping on My Daughter," *English Miscellany*, 11 (1960), 59-74.

¹⁵See Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (New York: Dutton, rev. ed., 1959), p. 181 and Frankie Rubinstein, *A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sexual Puns and Their Significance* (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 219.

¹⁶Cf. Pearson (note 6).

¹⁷We have only Prospero's word that Caliban had attempted to rape Miranda (I. ii. 349-50); her echoing of her father's accusation is noticeably less specific. What the father prevented may have been only a clumsy adolescent sexual advance.

¹⁸E. A. Abbott notes that Caliban uses *thou* as the singular pronoun of address except when he is cursing: *A Shakespearean Grammar* (New York: Dover rpt., 1966), p. 159.

¹⁹Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (New York: Macmillan, 7th ed., 1970), p. 308.

²⁰The *OED* has some interesting quotations on *strawboys*—young men dressed in straw who burst violently into a wedding celebration. The references seem limited to Ireland, however.

²¹Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy*, pp. 99, 87.

²²R. D. Laing, describing "self-consciousness in the ontologically insecure person," observes that "the loss of a section of the linear temporal series of moments through inattention to one's time-self may be felt as a catastrophe." *The Divided Self* (New York: Pantheon, 1969), p. 116. This is probably true of Prospero, but it does not explain why he interrupts the pageant at that exact moment.

Vanishing Villains: The Role of Tarquin in Shakespeare's *Lucrece* by Edward T. Washington

The general theme of rebellion by an individual against the supreme authority in the established normative order and against the rules by which this order operates [is] the basic meaning of evil in the traditions of the . . . classical and Christian civilizations.¹

Early twentieth-century criticism was reluctant to accept Shakespeare's *Lucrece* as a complex and problematic literary text. Douglas Bush called it a "museum piece," C. S. Lewis said it was "puerile" and "imperfect," and F. T. Prince deemed it "as a whole an artistic failure."² During the 1960's, however, a more controversial critical trend developed when D. C. Allen, J. C. Maxwell, and Roy A. Battenhouse (among others) offered readings of the poem from what has come to be called the "Augustinian" perspective.³ In exploring what Battenhouse called a "surprisingly complex meaning" in *Lucrece*, the Augustinians argued that the judged "imperfection" of the poem derived from the inability of earlier critics to see that Shakespeare's "perfect"⁴ heroine was morally culpable in her own demise. Hence, artistic "incongruities" like Lucrece's long-winded complaints became, not euphuistic flights of fancy by an immature Shakespeare, but rather sophisticated poetic signs that revealed Lucrece's way of "escaping from calling for help."⁵ In the seventies and eighties feminist critics mounted a successful counter-attack against the Augustinians' unkind view of Lucrece's motives and morals, frequently by offering dense readings of their own that presupposed "complex meaning" in the poem.⁶ However, while feminist readings have argued effectively against what the Augustinians called the problem of Lucrece's moral incongruity, their arguments have not adequately accounted for the narrative's *poetic* incongruity. That is, their arguments do not explain the persistent way in which the poem encourages the sense that something more complex is happening in the text than the language and action of the poem seem to indicate.⁷ Why, for example, is the diction used to praise Lucrece so hyperbolic that it makes Petrarchanism feel like idolatry? Why should Lucrece's movement toward courageous self-assertion be compromised by her obviously manipulative methods and style? What are we to think when the political hero, Brutus, dismisses Lucrece's reactions to the rape as weak-minded and "mistook" (1826)?

In the effort to offer a cogent alternative to Augustinian and feminist solutions to the problem of meaning in Shakespeare's

Lucrece, I will suspend the normative critical emphasis on the literal fact of the rape, and hence, on the moral worth of the emblemized protagonists. Rather I will examine these characters in their roles as typological poetic conventions in a highly self-conscious literary text.⁸ By foregrounding the poem's central characters in this way, I will endeavor to show how the villain Tarquin illuminates a "surprisingly complex" pattern of meaning in the poem that helps to clarify long-standing questions concerning incongruities in the poem's ostensibly "perfect" heroine, Lucrece.

I.

Shakespeare's *Lucrece* is a poem that spends an inordinate amount of time calling attention to its own ill-fitting, somewhat archaic literary traditions (e.g., "the good woman wronged," the Petrarchan ideal, the "mirror" tradition, the myth of Lucrece) and calling attention to its use of conventional, but dated (and incongruous) poetic techniques (e.g., long laments, effusive ornateness, the discourse of moral heraldry); the poem also features many reflexive allusions to the arts, literature, or to written texts (e.g., Lucrece's lament is a "dirge" [1121], the setting is a "stage for tragedies" [766], Collatine is the "publisher" [33] of Lucrece's virtues, Tarquin's eyes are "glassy margents of books" [99-102], etc.). The invocation of these various traditions, techniques, and allusions helps draw our attention to what one critic has called Lucrece's "curious preoccupation with poetic self-consciousness, as if she knows that she is bound for immortality in the realms of poetic fancy."⁹ As Lucrece herself proclaims:

"The nurse to still her child will tell my story,
And fright her crying babe with Tarquin's name.
The orator to deck his oratory
Will couple my reproach to Tarquin's shame.
Feast-finding minstrels tuning my defame,
Will tie the hearers to attend each line,
How Tarquin wronged me, I Collatine."
(813-19)

It is my contention that Lucrece's (and the poem's) "acute and uneasy self-consciousness about poetic technique and resources" (as Katherine Maus has termed it) encourages us to see Lucrece not only as the abused and pitiable victim of a vile rape, but also as the petulant personification of an outmoded but tenacious mythical trope whose suitability as an ideal Petrarchan image of

"unmatched" (13) beauty and "divine" (193) virtue has outlived its usefulness.

This figurative view of Lucrece as an exhausted literary convention receives support from the political theme of revolt against monarchical tyranny in the poem. That is, as the opening "Argument" and the end of the narrative make clear, the central problem the society (and the poem) must solve is that of oppression under the traditional rule of kings. Hence, despite the poem's detailed account of Tarquin's assault and its effect on Lucrece, the rape is but the most vile symptom of a long-standing political tyranny and technically, a subplot of the poem's larger dramatic movement from monarchy to Roman republic.¹⁰ But just as Rome's central problem involves its blind acceptance of "divine" kingship, similarly the Romans in the poem demonstrate an exalted admiration for the "divine" Lucrece. This disturbing parallel between "divine" kings and an "exalted" Lucrece is what lends credence to the idea that, while on a literal level Lucrece is the victim of a violent rape, on the level of metaphor she is, rather, the target of or scapegoat for a strong literary reaction against an outmoded poetic tradition.¹¹ In this scenario, it is Tarquin, Lucrece's antagonist and literary antithesis, who, in the guise of dark lust, purges Lucrece's "perfect white" (394) literary hegemony: a bold and transgressive, but also needful action, not unlike the purging of kingly hegemony that describes the broader political theme of the poem.¹²

To substantiate the assertion that Tarquin's dastardly act also represents a curative rebellion against a hegemonic literary tradition, we may begin by noting that Tarquin's desire to despoil Lucrece does not arise from any pure delight in evil: that is, in going forward with his plan to ravish, Tarquin is fraught with ambivalence, tension, and fear, and he suffers through a genuine struggle between his passions and his more civilized sense of self:

And now this lustful lord leap'd from his bed,
 Throwing his mantle rudely o'er his arm;
 Is madly toss'd between desire and dread:
 Th' one sweetly flatters, th' other feareth harm.
 But honest fear, bewitch'd with lust's foul charm,
 Doth too too oft betake him to retire,
 Beaten away by brain-sick rude desire.

(169-75)

As these lines indicate, Tarquin's tortured consciousness, his psychomachia, does not parallel precisely the willing malignity of Iago, or the vengeful ruthlessness of Richard III, or even the mon-

strous hypocrisy of Angelo in *Measure For Measure*: and unlike Tereus, the archetypal rapist in Ovid, or Demetrius and Chiron in *Titus Andronicus*, Tarquin does not attempt to mask his crime with either the post-facto mutilation of his victim, or murder. On the contrary, given Tarquin's internal struggle with his passions—his “guilty fear,” his chiding of his “vanished loathed delight,” his departure as a “heavy convertite” (740-43)—the circumstances of his crime resemble most the anguishing quandary that all “the world” experiences with respect to lust as described in Shakespeare's Sonnet 129:

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame
 Is lust in action; and till action, lust
 Is perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
 Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight;
 Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,
 Past reason hated as a swallowed bait
 On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
 Made in pursuit, and in possession so;
 Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
 A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe,
 Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
 All this the world well knows, yet none knows well
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.¹³

While Tarquin's ambivalence and guilt allow him more dramatic and thematic significance than critics have typically acknowledged, the arguments against the view that he is anything other than a one-dimensional villain have persisted, due largely to the critical preoccupation with his attenuated and foil-like role in the poem's moral drama. Heather Dubrow, for example, supports her view of Tarquin's limited importance to the text by noting his early departure from the narrative:

Lucrece's assailant seems like nothing so much as the stock villain of Victorian melodrama . . . The differing titles of the poem (“Lucrece,” then later “The Rape of Lucrece”) may reflect the author's recognition that he had gradually lost interest in Tarquin, concentrating far more on Lucrece in the latter part of the poem.¹⁴

Jonathan Hart goes further to suggest that Tarquin's anguished role represents the reader's embarrassed attraction to “the (seductive) power of sex and violence”; thus, Hart maintains that, in the end, Tarquin is a “half-forgotten” force that the poem (and the reader) would prefer to “ignore, hide, or suppress.”¹⁵ And despite his more thoroughgoing assessment of Tarquin as a forerunner of

Shakespeare's later tragic heroes, Harold Walley concludes that Tarquin's role is circumscribed by the limitations inherent in what he calls Shakespeare's psychology of evil: "[In Shakespeare], whatever other damage evil may do, its destructive force inevitably ends in self-destruction."¹⁶ But contrary to the view that Shakespeare "loses interest" in or "half-forgets" Tarquin, or that Tarquin, at best, represents a potentially complex tragic evil that "inevitably" self-destructs, I would argue rather that the poem refigures its own givens regarding Tarquin's role as a one-dimensional villain by re-introducing him, later in the poem, in radically altered character forms. On the one hand, the idea of alternative forms for Tarquin simply echoes the movement toward new political structures in the poem; but in a larger sense, the advent of these enlivened renewals helps to reveal how Tarquin's character is allied with a subversive dramatic energy in the poem that seeks to overturn several types of outmoded conventions—not the least of which includes Lucrece's conventional role as an ideal image of Petrarchan perfection.¹⁷

II.

One of the most singular elements of the Lucretian myth involves Tarquin's coercive threat to kill Lucrece and then to blame her death on an errant sexual tryst with a servant. Tarquin would then murder some unwitting attendant and claim to have killed him after finding him in bed with the slain Lucrece. Given the mordant references to servants expressed throughout the text (they are deemed "vile" [202], "foul" [284], "low" [665], "heartless" [1392], "lustful" [1636], etc.) and given the Romans' almost frenzied concern with reputation or *fama*, even the false accusation of sexual impropriety with an underling is as horrifying a prospect for Lucrece as actual rape by the noble Tarquin. In Shakespeare's poem, moreover, the threat to implicate Lucrece sexually with a low-born vassal, cited three times in the text (in Ovid, Chaucer, and Painter's *Livy* it occurs but once), highlights the issue of class distinction in the narrative to a greater degree than is the case in other versions of the myth.¹⁸ On the one hand, this threatened image of socio-sexual impropriety simply heightens our sympathy for Lucrece's already degrading plight; however, unlike earlier mythical analogues, Shakespeare introduces an element into his poem which deflates the horridness of our imagined view of a baseborn servant sprawled atop the virtuous Lucrece. While Ovid, Chaucer, and Painter represent "vassal slaves" as a vaguely delineated aggregation of inconsequential

humanity, Shakespeare brings forth individualized characters from the servant class (specifically the maid and the messenger) through whom our imagined view of the lower social orders gains immediacy and definitive shape. The most provocative scenario related to this unique depiction of servants involves Tarquin's threat to slander Lucrece with a common "groom" (671)—and in what seems like a nightmare come true, an actual groom appears later (1330) to play the part of Lucrece's bearer of bad tidings to her husband. Yet unlike the poem's generally disparaging view of the plebeian class, the portrayal of this lowly groom is decidedly favorable, and not at all sexual. Notwithstanding his rusticity, he is an earnest, trustworthy, reliable fellow whose positive attributes contradict the pejorative images of servants generally espoused by the poem's elite characters:

The homely villain cur'sies to her low,
 And blushing on her with a steadfast eye,
 Receives the scroll without or yea or no,
 And forth with bashful innocence doth hie.
 (1338-41)

This wholesome portrayal of the groom is placed in even greater relief by Lucrece's unwarranted and ill-conceived mistrust of the loyal envoy ("His kindled duty kindled her mistrust" [1352]), which, despite her overwrought state at this time, seems unjustified given the groom's innocent alacrity.¹⁹ In short, the conventional depravity of the scapegoat vassal, a feature in all versions of the myth, is revised in Shakespeare's *Lucrece* to bring forth an affirming and sympathetic characterization of a groom that deflates slighting references to servants elsewhere in the poem.

Even with this more favorable image of the messenger, the poem appears nevertheless to privilege the more conventional aristocratic view that low social status denotes low morals, the purpose of which is to establish and sustain a metaphorical connection between a depraved Tarquin and a depraved servant class. Thus, the ravisher Tarquin is variously referred to as "slave," (200) "vassal," (429) "servant of lust," (295) etc., and Lucrece repeatedly warns Tarquin that his unlawful advances toward her will topple him from his otherwise lofty position in the social or moral hierarchy—rendering him as slavish as the vassal he would throw on top of Lucrece (and seemingly, the same vassal literalized before us in the figure of Lucrece's groom). The ties between Tarquin and the servants are further joined when the lord softens his earlier denigration of commoners by asserting that

one's social standing depends as much upon the happenstance of birth and social mores as upon failings inherent in the individual: "For marks descried in men's nativity / Are nature's faults, not their own infamy" (538-39). But the point where the affinities between Tarquin and servants merge completely is in the poem's conventional use of blackness as the color emblem of unsavory morals. That is, given the narrative's unrelenting association of Tarquin with images of darkness (e.g., he is associated with "sable night" [117], "dim darkness" [118], "mud" [557], "black lust" [654], "blackest sin" [354], etc.), and given the inferred relationship between his immorality and the turpitude of servant status, and further given the fact that frequently, in art as well as myth, the slave in the Lucrece legend is represented as a "negro" or a dark-skinned Etruscan²⁰—it appears that Tarquin and Lucrece's messenger are joined, not only through the poem's metaphorical equation between low social status and low morals, but also through an imagistic association with darkness ("poor grooms are sightless night" [1013], says Lucrece) that equates "low" racial darkness with low or dark morals.

The ties between Tarquin and the messenger in *Lucrece* suggest that they are actually two aspects of the same servile character. (This is a symbolic feature of the myth generally.) However, because of Shakespeare's uniquely sympathetic presentation of individualized servants, our evaluation of Tarquin's vassal-like baseness is, given his association with the loyal groom, thrown open to question. The unstable nature of this figurative equation between Tarquin, immorality, and low social class allows us now to turn our attention to the narrative's most eminent subaltern, Brutus, the political hero whose role clarifies many of the ambiguities surrounding the conflicting meanings of "high" and "low" in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*.

III.

More than any other character in the narrative, Brutus seems to represent truth and right reasoning. He is the only character who sees through the "divine" appearances of tyrants and who takes direct action to remedy problems. Given the manner in which the poem draws attention to the difficulties that arise with the naive idealizations of kings and of women (i.e., Collatine's boast), it is fitting that Brutus should achieve his heroism by means of a sudden transformation from naive fool to wise leader:

He with the Romans was esteemed so
As silly jeering idiots are with kings,
For sportive words and utt'ring foolish things.

But now he throws that shallow habit by,
 Wherein deep policy did him disguise,
 And arm'd his long-hid wits advisedly,
 To check the tears in Collatinus' eyes.
 "Thou wronged lord of Rome," quoth he, "arise!
 Let my unsounded self, suppos'd a fool,
 Now set thy long-experienc'd wit to school."
 (1811-20)

Shakespeare accentuates the theme of Roman folly by habiting Brutus in the livery of what appears to be a socially inferior court jester, a lowly rank for Brutus that other versions of the myth do not emphasize; however, after Brutus assumes his new higher status as rebellious agent of truth and timely action, curiously, his newly refashioned heroism recalls an earlier description of Lucrece's groom, whose "true respect [is] / To talk in deeds, while others . . . / Promise more speed, but do it leisurely" (1347-49). This shared virtue between Brutus and the groom around the need for action creates a unified agency between them in the poem that opposes the empty rhetoric of the Roman lords who "Promise aid [to Lucrece]" (1696-97), but who fail to act upon her demand for justice. Additional support for the idea that Brutus and the groom act in concert with one another accrues with the poem's evocation of the infrequently used Renaissance word "silly." It hardly seems coincidental that the text should use this somewhat unusual word once in reference to Lucrece's groom (1345), and again when Brutus throws off his "silly" (1812) idiot ways to transform himself from seeming fool to wise leader. That the various *OED* definitions of this word all denote a sense of unexaltedness (i.e., simple, unsophisticated, unlearned; of lowly rank or state) would appear to validate the view that the poem seeks to link Brutus to the groom through the idea of low social status. Admittedly, in isolation, Brutus' humble station does not cause much of a stir; but given the thrice-mentioned threat involving the vassal slave, the presence of individualized servants and vassals, Lucrece's class arguments against Tarquin's designs (and even her distinctions between high and low perspective in the Trojan painting), it seems clear that Brutus' accentuated lower class status in *Lucrece* is intended to align him with both the vassal groom and the fallen Tarquin.

But what are we to make of the parallels between the heroic Brutus and the sympathetic groom whose inferior station also describes the moral baseness of Tarquin's heinous crime? The answer lies with the comprehensive theme of revolt against the status quo which occurs on several levels in the poem. That is,

Brutus revolts on a political level—but in his rise from court lackey to wise leader, there is also an implied social revolt by an assumedly worthless servant caste—a caste whose humane depiction in Lucrece’s servant overturns and upgrades belittling stereotypes of that group by the Roman elite. Similarly, when the poem’s narrator defines the groom’s obliging manner as a “pattern of the worn-out age” (1350), it implies that such a passive pattern of social behavior is no longer viable—and the sympathetic depiction of the messenger as a worthy individual supports this improved refigurement of the slavish model. Moreover, such a radical change in the social hierarchy would appear to be at hand, given Brutus’ sudden rise from lowly fool to the revolutionary hero who will lead Rome to a more pluralistic form of government—a socio-political paradigm of change, we might add, that resembles the momentous economic and political realignments taking place in early modern England.²¹ Yet literary change has been the focus here, and just as Shakespeare’s revision of earlier mythical portrayals of the Lucrecian servant parallels an overturning of literary tradition and of social stereotypes, Brutus’ social and political upheavals in the poem also signal the destruction of an artistic convention. That is, as the Romans’ “silly jeering idiot,” Brutus plays the part of what strongly resembles a literary (as well as social) “court fool”; in heroically throwing off the jester’s habit, Brutus also sheds a conventional literary persona, one ill-suited for the rebellious overthrow of tyrants in a politically naive Rome. Together with the poem’s unconventional portrayal of servants, this overturning of literary convention by the poem’s acknowledged political hero supports the argument that the slave-like “rebel” (625; 714) Tarquin also overturns literary tradition with his figurative assault on the idealized mythical image of the poetically self-conscious Lucrece.²² That Shakespeare was of a mind to articulate such a challenge to accepted poetic traditions would seem to be confirmed by sentiments expressed in Sonnet 59:

If there be nothing new, but that which is
Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,
Which, laboring for invention, bear amiss
The second burden of a former child!
O, that record could with a backward look,
Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
Show me your image in some antique book,
Since mind at first in character was done;
That I might see what the old world could say
To this composed wonder of your frame;
Whether we are mended, or whe’r better they,
Or whether revolution be the same.

O, sure I am the wits of former days
 To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

Thus, if we consider the action of the poem on a literal level, Tarquin does in fact vanish from the narrative after his assault on Lucrece; however, in another sense his dramatic unruliness is resurrected in Lucrece's unconventional groom and in a revolutionary Brutus later in the poem. The three characters act together as avatars of one another, each one a variation of the impulse toward radical change in the narrative. As wise fool and exemplary inferior respectively, Brutus and the loyal groom break restrictive conventions to promote not only new social and political formations, but also new literary modes and values. And in his mimetic relationship to these "low" heroes, Tarquin martyrs himself with the figurative violation of a Lucrecian image that the poem encourages us to see as a compelling, but outmoded, Petrarchan trope of poetic beauty and truth. Hence the poem may be read as a kind of literary allegory, an extended reflexive metaphor that explores the relation between the poet and the prevailing discursive codes of the day. In such a context, Tarquin's violent attack on an entrenched poetic figure may be viewed as a rebellious sacrificial ritual that aims to bring about beneficial literary change—again, much as Tarquin's mytho-historical rape of Lucrece becomes the tragically ironic catalyst of political change in a tyrannized pre-Republican Rome.²³

In this essay I have sought, through an analysis of Tarquin, to explain *Lucrece*'s resistance to interpretations that fail to challenge the poem's surface preoccupation with conventional poetic codes. In rendering what I hope is a fresh perspective on the poem, I have been guided in part by the historicized view of Renaissance drama (I see *Lucrece* as narrative drama) postulated recently by David Kastan and Peter Stallybrass. Theorizing that cultures are not homogeneous productions but rather conflicted entities comprised of "uneven temporalities and contradictory discursive practices," Kastan and Stallybrass conclude that "it was rarely essences and centralities which the drama of the English Renaissance most powerfully staged, but inversions, perversions, the local maneuvers of dressing up and of masquerade, the violent or ingenious word or device in which a whole order of things trembles and fractures."²⁴ I would offer that the Tarquin character in *Lucrece* is at the center of a violent transforming power in the poem, a power that seeks to refigure the established literary order of things through the subversion of a reified symbol of that established literary order.

Given the evolving pattern of twentieth century criticism of *Lucrece*, it appears that the so-called "ironic" reading of the poem answers best the recurring critical questions raised about the

narrative's elusive complexity. Jonathan Hart has succinctly restated these recurring critical questions as follows: "Why must the woman be silent? Why must she die?" With respect to Tarquin, these queries are not sufficiently answered with interpretations that merely invoke those conventions of evil that define the poem as morality drama, with Tarquin as the vice. Cogent answers to these questions do emerge, however, when we go beyond the poem's surface conceit to see Tarquin as a metapoetic signifier of a creative impulse to renegotiate the norms of an inherited—but changing—literary order.

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Notes

¹Vytautas Kavolis, "Civilizational Models of Evil," in *Evil: Self and Culture*, eds., Marie Coleman Nelson and Michael Eigen (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1984), p. 18.

²Douglas Bush, *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1932), p. 154. C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Exclusive of Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), pp. 499-500. F. T. Prince, ed., *The Arden Shakespeare: The Poems* (London: Methuen, 1960), pp. xxv-xxvi. J. W. Lever, "The Poems," *Shakespeare Survey*, 15 (1962), p. 22.

³Don Cameron Allen, "Some Observations on The Rape of Lucrece," *Shakespeare Survey*, 15 (1962), pp. 89-98; J. C. Maxwell, in his introduction to the Cambridge University edition of *The Poems* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1966), pp. xx-xxvi; Roy C. Battenhouse, *Shakespearean Tragedy: Its Art and Its Christian Promises* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 3-41; and Michel Grivelet, "Shakespeare's 'War With Time': The Sonnets and Richard II," *Shakespeare Survey*, 23 (1970), p. 76. For a concise review of the Augustinian perspective in its relation to Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, see Harriet Hawkins, "Myth and Morals," *Essays in Criticism*, 34 (1984), pp. 79-84.

⁴William Shakespeare, *Lucrece*, in *The Arden Shakespeare: The Poems*, ed., F. T. Prince (London: Methuen, 1960), 1. 394. Subsequent references to this edition will appear in the text.

⁵Battenhouse, p.16.

⁶Coppélia Kahn, for example, explained the poem in terms of socio-sexual dynamics of power in patrilinear societies; A. Robin Bowers sought to vindicate Lucrece from "unsympathetic" readers by exploring the medieval roots of the narrative's forensic structure and tracing the poem's relationship to conduct books and Renaissance portraiture; Heather Dubrow demonstrated the latent congruity in *Lucrece*'s incongruous language and action through her analysis of the linguistic trope of syneciosis. Coppélia Kahn, "The Rape in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*," *Shakespeare Studies*, 9 (1976) pp. 45-72; A. Robin Bowers, "Iconography and Rhetoric in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*," *Shakespeare Studies*, 14 (1981), pp. 1-21; Heather Dubrow, *Captive Victors: Shakespeare's Narrative Poems and Sonnets* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1987), pp. 80-168.

⁷Many critics have noted what has been called a "double understanding" or "hidden perspective" in *Lucrece*. For an interesting evaluation of this view of the

poem, see Richard Levin, "The Ironic Reading of *The Rape of Lucrece* and the Problem of External Evidence," *Shakespeare Survey*, 34 (1981), pp. 85-92.

⁸This approach to the poem owes much to Joel Fineman's seminal work on Shakespearean poetic convention in his book, *The Perjured Eye*, and to his analysis of *Lucrece* in the essay, "Representations of Rape in *Lucrece*." *Representations*, 20 (1987), pp. 25-76. Several critics have followed Fineman's lead in addressing the poem's elusive complexity through the examination of the narrative's hyperbolized interest in itself as a literary product. In this regard, see also David Willbern, "Hyperbolic Desire: Shakespeare's *Lucrece*" in *Contending Kingdoms*, eds., Marie-Rose Logan and Peter Rudnytsky (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1991), pp. 202-24 and Jonathan Crewe, *Trials of Authorship* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990), pp. 140-88. For earlier critical views in this same vein, see also Katharine Eisaman Maus, "Taking Tropes Seriously: Language and Violence in Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 37 (1986) pp. 66-82; Nancy Vickers, "Blazon of Sweet Beauties Best: Shakespeare's *Lucrece*," in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, eds., Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York: Methuen, 1985), pp. 95-115; and James R. Siemon, *Shakespearean Iconoclasm* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985), pp. 76-100.

⁹Tita French, "'A Badge of Fame': Shakespeare's Rhetorical *Lucrece*," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 10 (1984), p. 99.

¹⁰"The rape of *Lucrece* narrated at length in the verse is the middle of an action whose beginning is 'kings' and whose end is 'consuls.'" Michael Platt, "*The Rape of Lucrece* and the Republic For Which It Stands," *Centennial Review*, 19 (1975), p. 64.

¹¹Although Platt is not concerned with issues of literary convention and method in *Lucrece*, he does nevertheless corroborate the relationship between the rape and revolution plots with his analysis of the poem's reflexive allusion to the notion of a "conceit deceitful" (1423). As Platt says: "The visible surface of (the poem) shows us the rape of a chaste matron. Like the painter's art in the Troy tapestry, the poet's art leads us to the imagined whole of which this rape is only a part. Just as Achilles stands behind the visible spear, so does a birth stand behind the rape. It is the birth of the Republic." Platt, p. 77.

¹²Among those critics who have argued that the poem is involved in an interrogation of its own conventions and methods, only Siemon has gone so far as to suggest that the poem seeks to carry out a "willful violation" of its own givens. Since Siemon's discussion of *Lucrece* constitutes but his preliminary remarks to a broader examination of iconoclasm in the plays, he does not fully explore, as I hope to here, the implications of his hypothesis that the poem intends not simply to question its own literary premises, but rather to revoke them.

¹³William Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*, ed., Sylvan Barnet (New York: NAL, 1964). Subsequent references to this edition will appear in the text.

¹⁴Dubrow, p. 117.

¹⁵Jonathan Hart, "Narratorial Strategies in *The Rape of Lucrece*," *Studies in English Literature*, 32 (1992), pp. 69, 76.

¹⁶Harold R. Walley, "*The Rape of Lucrece* and Shakespearean Tragedy," *PMLA*, 76 (1961), pp. 486-87.

¹⁷Willbern also postulates that the spirit of Tarquin reappears later in the poem. He contends, however, that Tarquin re-emerges in *Lucrece* herself, as the animus of the victim's involuntary absorption of her captor's viewpoint and identity. Willbern's notion of "binary consanguinity" between victim and aggressor is psychologically valid (i.e., the hostage complex) but not really new or "surprisingly complex." My reading attempts to show how Tarquin's re-emergence in unanticipated character forms invites the reader to entertain a quite different interpretation of Tarquin's role in the poem than has previously been considered.

¹⁸The three references to the threatened slander by a slave occur at lines 515-37, 670-73, and 1630-45. For the single references to the threat in earlier accounts, see Prince's edition of *The Poems*, pp. 191, 194, 200.

¹⁹Lucrece is understandably shaken after her ordeal, but in contrast to her espoused faultlessness, her chidings and her terse, blunt directives (even to her gentle and sympathetic hand-maiden) strike us as untoward and even a bit haughty. We could accept her testy chagrin as simply a manifestation of her recent trauma, but as Lucrece herself has apprehended with Tarquin, "greatest scandal waits on greatest state" (1006). That is, in light of Lucrece's much-touted perfection, we can hardly avoid feeling that she has not quite lived up to the high moral standards proclaimed for her as she falls to chiding and mistrusting her loyal servants.

²⁰Ian Donaldson, *The Rapes of Lucretia* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), p. 13.

²¹That Shakespeare might have recognized the cogency of such social and political ferment would seem to be supported by the shifts in the social and political climate in England that were well underway by the time that *Lucrece* was written. Lawrence Stone remains the most eloquent spokesman of this now widely accepted view of the period: "In the century after 1540, there appeared a growing body of men of substance. . . . These men were steadily enlarging their numbers, their social and economic weight, and their political independence. Behind them loomed far larger numbers of yeomen and artisans, the respectable, industrious, literate, bible-reading, God-fearing lower middle class, many of whose aspirations these leaders shared, represented and articulated. . . . The only response they got (from the ruling elite) was increasingly strident and irrelevant lectures on the Divine Right of Kings. . . ." (Stone's latter statement is particularly suggestive, given the argument here regarding Lucrece's exalted poetic status.) *The Causes of the English Revolution 1529-1642* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 114-16.

²²In support of this latter point, it is noteworthy that the one other invocation of the word "silly" in the poem finds Lucrece referred to as a "silly lamb" (167)—a diminutive designation that should enjoin her fate to that of Brutus and the groom. However, while the poem transforms and elevates our view of Brutus and the servant, the hero Brutus tells us that Lucrece's self-immolation marks rather her inability to move beyond a lowly "mistook . . . childish humor" (1825). That is, Lucrece is criticized for her inability to transform and elevate her traditional portrayal of the despairing, powerless, and finally static good woman wronged.

²³In a recent essay, "Palisading the Elizabethan Body Politic," (*Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 33[1991], pp. 327-54), Linda Woodbridge argues corroboratively that the poem is a topical political allegory in which the heroine, Lucrece, symbolizes late sixteenth-century England's vulnerability to attack from without. In Woodbridge's allegory, Tarquin looks like the enemy, but actually represents a voice of alarm that aggressively seeks to press a recalcitrant England into needful governmental action: "The England (i.e., Lucrece) once conquering others has now conquered itself through tolerating tyranny. . . . In *Lucrece* . . . [Tarquin's] rape . . . lead(s) to the downfall of a tyrannical government and to . . . political salvation." Pp. 338, 347

²⁴David Kastan and Peter Stallybrass, eds., *Staging the Renaissance*, (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 7, 11-12.

The 1994 Alabama Shakespeare Festival by Craig Barrow

Sometimes one or two plays stand out in a repertory season of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, but seldom all three, especially when the plays are as demanding as *Othello*, *The Tempest*, and *Henry V*. Up to this production of *Othello* the play had never been successfully done by the ASF, neither in 1978 or 1987; however, the 1987 production of *The Tempest* was superb. Much to this reviewer's surprise, the 1994 Shakespeare productions all were well done.

Previous productions of *Othello* failed because of casting. The role most difficult to fill was that of Othello, particularly in an age that requires black actors to play the part without giving them enough experience to do the job successfully. In 1978 and 1987 Philip Pleasants, who was at the time the best actor in the Festival, played Iago, and the play, because of his talent and the nature of the role, became his, since neither Sidney Hibbert, with his Jamaican accent in 1978, or David Toney, with his experience as Vic Slade in *All My Children*, could match his power. Derrick Lee Weeden in 1994 was a much better choice to play the role; he has the physique of a middle linebacker, a deep penetrating voice, and he has been doing serious plays for some time. When the role of Othello requires a commanding presence as it does when Brabantio and the officers try to arrest Othello in act one or Othello puts a stop to the drunken brawl in act two, Weeden, unlike Hibbert or Toney, can get the job done. While exposition in act five following Desdemona's murder and curiosity about Iago's motives could cause the play to lose focus, Weeden has the strength to bring the play back to himself. This is absolutely necessary.

Richard Elmore as Iago was nearly as convincing as Pleasants years ago; however, his appearance and voice keep him from taking over the play from Weeden's Othello. Slightly larger than Danny De Vito, Elmore, plump, balding, with a thin beard, has the look of someone selling used cars or aluminum siding, and the voice to match. With such an Iago, the gulling of Roderigo, ably played by David Heuvelman, is predictable, while the intrigue generated with Othello is fraught with danger. Elmore seems like a Renaissance Vice, whereas with Pleasants, the role of Iago became that of a conniving, base Hamlet with limited social grace. Iago in this production displays what Maynard Mack has called "the opposing voice"¹; fortunately, however, it is not the domi-

nant one. Since Pleasants is still with the Festival, the choice of Elmore for the role of Iago was shrewd.

Other casting choices were also fortuitous. Greta Lambert, probably the most capable actress in the 1994 Festival, was not cast as Desdemona, while Suzanne Irving was. Greta Lambert, superb as Hedda Gabler and Blanche DuBois in earlier years, could easily overpower the role of Desdemona, while Suzanne Irving, tall and willowy, looks more vulnerable, more like a Desdemona whose strength occurs only through love and generosity. Irving can convincingly muster strength to defend Cassio or to address the Duke and Senate, but her collapse in facing an enraged and violent Othello is believable. It is hard to imagine Lambert similarly crushed.

Emilia, Desdemona's foil, is ably played by Jill Tanner. Her speech on women's faithfulness tied to men's behavior in act four was nicely done, and her anger at Othello following the murder of Desdemona was well developed as was her shock and horror at Iago's acts. Barry Boys as Brabantio and Ray Chambers as Cassio do their usual effective work. Boys delivers Brabantio's racist comments well, while Chambers is effective in showing the class distinctions between Iago and himself. Drama is really a team sport, and one would be hard pressed to think of one part not ably played.

While Kent Thompson and Edward G. Smith, the Director and Assistant Director, probably deserve much of the credit for the casting of the play, Elizabeth Novak's costuming, set in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is effective. The military uniforms help place characters socially for a contemporary audience much more than sixteenth or seventeenth century costumes would do. This is especially important due to the ASF audience. For some, Othello might be the first play they have seen. The Octagon, which in its U-shaped seating for this performance seats about two hundred, was filled with such people. At times black members of the audience responded to the action as if they were at a Spike Lee movie, providing encouragement and asides not in Shakespeare's script. Women of all races affirmed Emilia's observation, "The ills we do, their ills instruct us so" (IV. iii. 102).² Whenever the play touched on social matters, the audience leapt upon the lines and situation.

With a ten minute intermission near the end of act three, the performance of *Othello* was about three hours long. The Clown, as usual, was cut, but little else was. Just as Iago presses Othello incessantly once he begins to work his evil magic, so too does the play the audience. The pain of Othello's dilemma, expressed as follows,

By the world,
 I think my wife be honest, and think she is not;
 I think that thou art just, and think thou art not.
 I'll have some proof.

(III. iii. 383-86)

is absorbed by the audience, while Desdemona's faith that love goes beyond harsh words and blows and does not depend on appearances is quietly precipitated in the hearts of those witnessing the play. This was the best *Othello* I have seen in North America.

The 1987 ASF production of *The Tempest* was in the Octagon, the smaller of the two Alabama theatres, while the 1994 production of the play was in the 750 seat Festival Stage. One might guess that more spectacle would occur on the larger stage, and in Kent Thompson's production, this is the case, as he tries "to make Prospero's magic real for the audience."³ Wheels and gears of different sizes move at various speeds, while models of planets move around suns above the play's action. Prospero's cell is a moving platform filled not only with the paraphernalia of magic but also science. Leonardo da Vinci, as the model for Prospero's magic, is alluded to by a portrait reproduced on the set of Cecilia Gallerani, the mistress of Leonardo's patron, the Duke of Milan, and by Ariel's harpy wings of III. iii, which are meant to resemble one of da Vinci's designs for a flying machine. Ariel and the fairies at other times have the choreographed movements of insects or robots with costumes to match, so that they appear supernatural on some occasions while at others they assume a natural form. Da Vinci is only one model for Prospero's world; Jules Verne and H. G. Wells are the others. As Kent Thompson states, "we have tried to create a unique world, combining elements of the gifted Leonardo and early futuristic fantasies."⁴ These effects are not simply due to Charles Caldwell's scenic design or Elizabeth Novak's costuming, but they result from the music composed by Maurice Arnaud-Benoir which is artificial but mimics the vibrating sounds of the natural world. It is not, probably, important that allusions to da Vinci or Wells and Verne be identified; one suspects that they are to be felt subliminally.

Beyond these scenic matters is the mystery of *The Tempest* itself, a play that Robert Graves once fancifully described as "a play of revenge" on Shakespeare's enemies, a "farewell to the stage," a "political satire," "a religious mystery," a "spectacle to please the common people," a "celebration of a royal wedding," and "a piece of rhythmic music."⁵ As diverse as Graves' interpretive possibilities are, a good miner of libraries could find many more. Susan Willis, the Assistant Director of *The Tempest*, sees

Prospero clarifying the “intentions and responsibilities” of those washed ashore in the storm,⁶ but she seems to see the main force of the play as the cost to Prospero of the “solitary life he has loved best”⁷ for the public life as Duke of Milan.

What is left murky in the production are the usual difficulties of the play. While Alonso learns through suffering as a result of what he thinks to be the loss of Ferdinand, it is not at all clear what Antonio and Sebastian learn since Shakespeare only seems to threaten them with exposure. Similarly, Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano, aside from being pursued by hounds and suffering pains of the flesh, appear to learn little, despite Caliban’s, “I’ll be wise hereafter / and seek for grace” (V. i. 294-95). What is resolved are the matters of dukedom, Alonso’s rehabilitation, the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda, and the freedom of Ariel following her labors. While sometimes directors and actors find imaginative escapes from textual difficulties, this does not seem to happen here. Perhaps that is Thompson’s point, which seems close to the argument of Bonamy Dobrée, who says, “what I want to suggest is that in it [*The Tempest*] Shakespeare was using for fundamental material, not so much the moral intuitions of repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, and so on, but the metaphysical intuitions of fate and freedom, of appearance and reality.”⁸

Many fine performances grace this production of *The Tempest*. Suzanne Irving was a wonderful Ariel, deftly handling the choreographed movements, the alien/human response, and the singing. Philip Pleasants, who has the potentially tragic part of Alonso, well delineates the progression of feelings that compose this role. The clown parts of Trinculo and Stephano are well performed by John Reese and John Preston.

Ezra Knight, a talented black actor, played Caliban. While the customary fish-like appendages are a part of his appearance, he also had a frankly African appearance even to dread locks, making the politics of slavery part of the floating thematic intentions of the production, although for the most part the issue is muted by the comic doings of Trinculo and Stephano.

Roger Forbes as Prospero is more understated in this role than Philip Pleasants was in the 1987 production. While the securing of Miranda’s happiness brings joy to Forbes’ Prospero, little else does. Virtue must be maintained by public conduct to address enemies, and the cost is Prospero’s magic, his staff, his books, and his privacy. In this production it is not clear that life in Milan will be a triumph; it may indeed be a continuation of the testiness and care that Miranda and Ferdinand observe in Prospero on the island.

The ASF production of *The Life of King Henry the Fifth*, a Festival Stage performance, was directed by Gavin Cameron-

Webb and generated a mixed view of Henry as king and man. While *The Tempest* relished spectacle in its ASF production, *Henry V*, made into two successful films, exaggerated its theatricality. The Chorus, presented well by Barry Boys, was in modern dress, while the actors at several points in the action appeared in costume seated behind him like puppets waiting for their life-appearing cues. Unlike many critics such as Joan Webber⁹, who accepts the Chorus' judgment of Henry V as "the mirror of all Christian kings," Gavin Cameron-Webb sees "an ironic juxtaposition" between what the Chorus says and the behavior of the characters illustrates, between Henry's Crispin Day speech and the "brawl between two cowards," Pistol and Monsieur Le Fer. Cameron-Webb flirts with the negative views of Henry seen in Harold Goddard's long essay on the play in *The Meaning of Shakespeare*¹⁰ or more recently in the work of Larry Champion. Still, at the end of his "Director's Notes" Cameron-Webb says, "However, the Chorus prevails; we are easily persuaded to ignore the shortcomings of Henry's character and the brutality and farce of some of the action. Propaganda is attractive; it allows us to ignore the truth in favor of a preferred version of reality."¹¹

As a reviewer I am used to cuts of Shakespeare's texts in performance, and there were several in the customary places, such as Canterbury's explanation of Henry's right to the French crown, but Cameron-Webb surprised me by adding a scene I had never before witnessed in a *Henry V* production. It occurred before act two, scene two and presented the development of the plot between Scroop, Cambridge, Grey, and the French ambassador. Baffled, I consulted several texts and a Shakespeare specialist in my department, Edgar Shawen, and we got nowhere. Finally, I telephoned Dr. Susan Willis, ASF Dramaturg, about the text. Cameron-Webb added lines from *Sir John Oldcastle* to explain the plot in II. ii, believing that Shakespeare did not adequately prepare for Henry's judgment of the traitors. I disagree, since the Chorus, Exeter, Bedford, and Westmoreland, as well as Henry explain the conspiracy and justify Henry's judgment. In any case, it would have been good to notify the audience of this modification of Shakespeare's text in the program notes distributed in the theater.

Plays are patterns of feeling induced in an audience by performance. In the case of *Henry V*, a drama similar to Marlowe's Tamburlaine plays, we have a heroic play exciting patriotic admiration which is undercut by farce, intrigue, and finally capped by an ending more appropriate to comedy—a treaty and a marriage. Several strong performances graced the production. Roger Forbes

is a burly wise Duke of Exeter, while John Reese makes the most comic use of his role as the threatening braggart, Pistol. Richard Elmore as Fluellen, while at times provoking disunity among the troops in France, is also a catalyst for a unity that becomes all the stronger for the test of discord. The star of the production was Ray Chambers as Henry, one of the best young actors to appear in Montgomery. Chambers handles Henry's public rhetoric well, whether Henry's object is to urge the surrender of Harfleur, to inspire brave fighting at Agincourt, to persuade the French king to agree to all terms of a treaty, or to gain a kiss from Princess Katherine; Chambers' interpretation of Henry's prayer and private musing before Agincourt is also well done. For some of the same reasons that Mel Gibson was good as Hamlet, Chambers, too, could admirably perform that role. While *Hamlet* is scheduled next season, it will not be in summer repertory—only *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Henry VI, Part I* will be. For the first time the Alabama Shakespeare Festival will do the *Henry VI* plays, a courageous decision by the Festival's Artistic Director, Kent Thompson. While *Othello* was the special treasure this season, all of the Shakespeare plays of the twenty-second repertory season were exceptionally well done.

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Notes

¹Maynard Mack, "The Jacobean Shakespeare: Some Observations on the Construction of the Tragedies," *The Tragedy of Othello*, ed. Alvin Kernan (New York: Signet, 1963), p. 213.

²All Shakespeare quotations in this review are from *The Complete Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, ed. William Allan Neilson and Charles Jarvis Hill (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1942).

³Kent Thompson, "Director's Notes," program given to the audience.

⁴Thompson.

⁵Cited in Bonamy Dobrée, "*The Tempest*," *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Tempest*, ed. Hallett Smith (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 58.

⁶Susan Willis, *Official Program Magazine of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival: 1994 Repertory Issue*, ed. Drew Cotten, (Montgomery: Alabama Shakespeare Festival, 1994), p. 14.

⁷Willis, p. 14.

⁸Dobrée, pp. 56-57.

⁹Joan Webber, "The Renewal of the King's Symbolic Role: From *Richard II* to *Henry V*," *Essays in Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. James L. Calderwood and Harold E. Toliver (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

¹⁰Harold C. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 215-58.

¹¹Gavin Cameron-Webb, "Director's Notes."



Suzanne Irving as Desdemona and Derrick Lee Weeden as Othello in the 1994 ASF production of *Othello*. Photo: Scarsbrook/ASF.



Roger Forbes as Prospero and Suzanne Irving as Ariel in the 1994 ASF production of *The Tempest*. Photo: Scarsbrook/ASF.



Ray Chambers (kneeling) in the title role of the 1994 ASF production of *Henry V*. Photo: Scarsbrook/ASF.