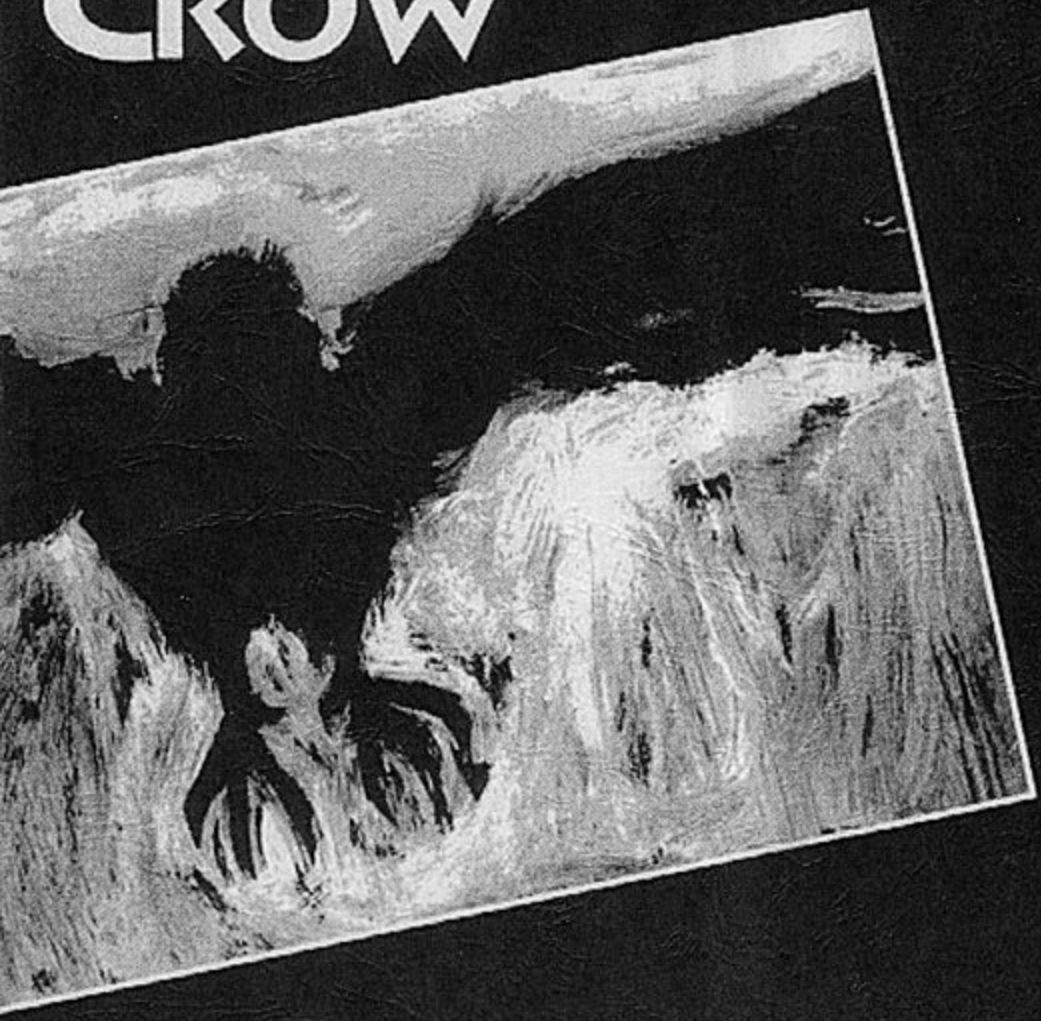
The Upstart Crow



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American Standard
by Paul Muldoon

When the water dangled into the washbasin
it was like a rope draw-drawing sin
and when the sin had singled me out
the tile would hanker after a gob of grout
and when the grout began to harden
a stone settled back in the forest of Arden
and when the forest gave the all clear
there came a hound with one red ear
and when its ear leaned on a reed
it took the rosette for best of breed
and when "best of breed" began to rankle
a shackle fell in round my ankle
and when the shackle lost its bolt
a slave cried out to Alexander von Humboldt
and when Humboldt stared into the volcanoes
the fires stared back from within his dugout canoes
and when those dugouts nudged the dugongs
the sea was a torment of gongs
and when the gongs became as sounding brass
methought I was enamor'd of an ass
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Arion himself struck up a dithyramb
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he hung it upon a willow, at an angle,
and barely had the ink
dried on his dirge than he threw himself into the drink
and when he was borne to safety by a dolphin
the Byerly Turk had somehow outstripped the Godolphin
and only when the Godolphin began to gain
did the basin draw level once again.

Princeton University

Intersections: The Editor, the Director, and the Theatre Historian

by Alan C. Dessen

Of the many interpreters of Shakespeare's plays, I am here singling out three constituencies or agendas/ideologies. Editors, starting in the early eighteenth century (but perhaps as early as the compilers of the First Folio) have shaped the early printed Quarto and Folio versions so as to make the plays accessible to a readership that can include students, teachers, scholars, a general reading public, and theatrical practitioners. Directors (and, before their advent in the twentieth century, other adapters for the theatre) have turned the editions available to them into playscripts deemed suitable to their actors and audiences. Theatre historians (a much smaller group) have a host of agendas, but my concern here is with that breed (of whom I am one) with a strong interest in teasing out what can be known or guessed about the first performances of these plays. The advent of productions at the reconstructed Globe in London has recently made the historian's often esoteric concerns of greater interest than has been the case for some time.

These three groups intersect in a variety of ways, both obvious and subtle. My purpose is not to preach a sermon to any one of them and certainly not to sing a hymn to the virtues of attending to theatre history in order to "Solve All Problems." Rather, my goal is to present a series of case studies in which two or preferably all three of these interpretative groups intersect in some potentially revealing fashion. My examples will range from the tiny (single words) to the very large (telescoping three plays into two or even one).

I. Words, Words, Words

Students of Shakespeare regularly encounter situations wherein a specific word may vary from text to text. Most famous are the many variations in Q2/Folio *Hamlet* such as *solid* versus *sallied/sullied* flesh (I. ii. 129),[1] *despised* versus *disprized* love (III. i. 71), and *scullion* versus *stallion* versus *scallion* (Q1's delectable version—II. ii. 587), but also well known in editorial circles are items such as Othello's base *Indian/Judean* (V. ii. 347) and Juliet's *name/word* (II. ii. 44). Here is where editors make choices on behalf of their readers. Directors, who may or may not

be aware of these interventions, face comparable problems when presenting speeches and interactions to their auditors. Thus, an editor may present to the reader a difficult passage and then gloss it by means of an explanatory note, but directors, fearful of losing their auditors and not getting them back, regularly cut or simplify syntactically complex passages or otherwise streamline long speeches, with mythological allusions particularly vulnerable. In the eyes (or ears) of a director, the need for a steady flow of communication without jolts takes precedence over textual purism—assuming there is anything "pure" in these muddy waters.

Many of these directorial alterations are tiny and go unnoticed even by veteran playgoers—as when at the outset of *The Taming of the Shrew* (OSF 1991)[2] the hostess's reference to the *thirdborough* (Induction I. xii.—*headborough* in the Folio) was changed to *third-constable*. In two rival 1999 productions of *Antony and Cleopatra* the Globe director retained Enobarbus' comment that Antony at Philippi "was troubled with a rheum" (III. ii. 57), but the RSC director changed *rheum* to *cold*. In the 1994 RSC *Twelfth Night*, Sir Toby described Cesario to Sir Andrew not as "fencer to the *Sophy*" (III. iv. 279) but rather to "the *Shah of Persia*." Beatrice grieves that a woman must "make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl" (II. i. 62-63), but the director of the 1989 OSF production changed *marl* to *sod*. In director Brian Bedford's 1991 SFC *Othello* Iago called Roderigo a *pimple*, not a *quat* (V. i. 11); Desdemona was described as a *treasure craft*, not a *land caract* (I. ii. 50); and Othello referred to a *reed*, not a *rush* and *judgment day*, not *compt* (V. ii. 270, 273).

Sometimes in-the-theatre changes occur when words or phrases are deemed offensive or politically incorrect. Prominent among the casualties are Portia's comment on the departed Morocco "Let all of his complexion choose me so" (II. vii. 79) and Benedick's "if I do not love her, I am a Jew" (II. iii. 263). Portia's line is sometimes omitted, whereas Benedick's *Jew* has been changed to *knave* (OSF 1989), *fool* (RSC 1990) or, as reported to me from another recent production, *jerk*. Moreover, some directorial ears are more sensitive than others. To cite two recent examples, the director of the 1995 D.C. *Macbeth* changed Macduff's "Be not a *niggard* of your speech" (IV. iii. 180) to *miser* and the director of a 1995 *Othello* (Playmakers Repertory Company Chapel Hill) omitted such lines as "Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (I. iii. 290) and "Haply, for I am black" (III. iii. 263). The latter cut may also have been influenced by Othello's subsequent comment that "I am declin'd / Into the vale of years"

(III. iii. 265-66), for in this production a youngish actor was cast in the role.

At the other extreme are those theatrical purists who resist *any* changes even if "obvious" errors. To cite two examples, as Corin in the 1992 OSF *As You Like It*, actor Barry Kraft took on the challenge of actually playing the First Folio's "*pood* pasture" (TLN 1226, III. ii. 27—"that pood pasture makes fat sheep") rather than accepting the universal editorial emendation to *good*. Kraft wafted his hand under his nose and grimaced so as to convey clearly the sense of *manured* (and Ashland playgoers who chuckled were not aware of anything unusual in this line reading). Similarly, actor Bill Christy in Homer Swander's 1991 Santa Barbara production of *The Taming of the Shrew* refused to accept as a misprint Petruchio's line "Borne in *Verona*, old *Butonios* sonne" (TLN 756, I. ii. 190) where all other editors and readers have emended *Butonios* to *Antonio's* (clearly established elsewhere as the name of Petruchio's father). In what may be the ultimate in textual purism, Christy played the line as a joke at Gremio's expense, with *Butonio* an equivalent to *Butt-insky*, a meddler (again, the moment *was* amusing and *did* make sense in context).

As extreme instances such examples "prove" nothing. When faced with an odd word or phrase, a director may ask: why should I include in 2001 a four-hundred-year-old joke that needs a footnote? The application of such reasoning is most visible/audible in Shakespeare films targeted at a wider audience (as when in the prayer scene Olivier's Hamlet says "dark intent" rather than "horrid hent"—III. iii. 88). A stock (though not always successful) theatre routine such as the "buttery bar" exchange between Maria and Sir Andrew (I. iii. 65-79) is omitted from Trevor Nunn's movie version, as are comparable bits from the Branagh *Much Ado*. That is no country for purists.

II. Transpositions

To the non-specialist playgoer the omission of a passage or even an entire scene may slip by unnoticed, but more visible is the repositioning of significant items. Best known perhaps is the movement of "To be, or not to be" from its familiar Second Quarto/Folio placement in III. i before the nunnery scene back into II. ii as "justified" by the First Quarto (a choice made by director Matthew Warchus in his widely seen 1997-98 RSC production starring Alex Jennings). To reinsert this famous speech after Hamlet's "except my life, except my life, except my life" (II.

ii. 216-17) is to provide a stronger context for thoughts of suicide and to remove what some interpreters see as an anomaly—the pause or indecision exhibited in Hamlet's first appearance after his decision at the end of the previous scene to use *The Murder of Gonzago* to "catch the conscience of the King" (II. ii. 605). A comparable directorial choice is the repositioning of the king's order to kill his French prisoners in *Henry V*, IV. vi. 37. Critics have made much of this problematic moment, but playgoers often do not get to experience the effect as scripted in the Quarto and Folio. Rather, directors either omit Henry's command entirely or move it (as with Michael Kahn's 1995 D.C. production) so that it comes after the Fluellen-Gower speeches that begin IV. vii, a solution that makes a problematic moment much less troubling. In both instances, directors find the original narrative logic askew or puzzling and therefore adjust their playscripts accordingly.

In my playgoing experience transpositions of scenes most commonly are linked to an effort to minimize set changes. Here Shakespeare's presentation of distinctive locales (generated, with few exceptions, by means of a combination of dialogue, costumes, and portable properties) sometimes does not mesh comfortably with a director or designer's reflexes on how best to display a forest, throne room, or other distinctive place. One of my few memories of Jack Landau's *Antony and Cleopatra* (Stratford, Connecticut 1960) is the rearrangement of scenes in acts two and three to avoid Shakespeare's movement back and forth between Egypt and Rome; rather, the director presented consecutive sequences in one or the other locale and therefore (at some cost) managed to keep in place for a long stretch the elaborate Egyptian throne room set. Similarly, a rendition of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Regents Park 1987) strung together all the Verona scenes at the outset so as to make possible a continuous presence for the rest of the show of an elaborate "Milan set" (the forest scenes were done in the green areas to the left and right of the audience).

Such instances call attention to a revealing gap between then and now. The onstage storytelling of Shakespeare and his contemporaries is often keyed to the rapid alternation of scenes and locales as befits their flexible open stage, but that flexibility or openness can collide with today's sense of "design" or "set" that precludes such alternations. The collision is most visible in productions of *As You Like It* where the court scenes, including III. i, are sometimes strung together as one unit before the action moves to II. i and the "Forest of Arden set." Within a month in

1990 I saw two productions that, to avoid elaborate set or costume changes, offered their audiences I. ii, I. iii, II. ii, III. i—then II. i in one production; II. iii, then II. i in the other. Here a pragmatic approach to "place" superseded the original sequence, with any loss of scenic counterpoint or any confusion in the plot deemed an acceptable trade-off. However, such transpositions do make a difference. For example, the rationale for Oliver's murderous plot against Orlando (revealed by Adam in II. iii) may be understood very differently if the playgoer has already witnessed III. i (the interview between Oliver and Duke Frederick).

Editors of *Hamlet*, *Henry V*, or *As You Like It* may acknowledge such problems and potential moves in a gloss or introduction but are not likely to change their texts. Nonetheless, some repositioning of elements, especially stage directions, is standard editorial procedure. Consider one of the best known comic moments in all of Shakespeare, the entrance of a smiling Malvolio in yellow stockings and cross-gartered (*Twelfth Night*, III. iv). Except for the Riverside Shakespeare, all the modern editions I have consulted place that entry just before Olivia's "How now, Malvolio?" (15), so that she and the playgoer see the entering figure at the same time. In the Folio, however, Malvolio is directed to enter two lines earlier (TLN 1535), just after Olivia's "Go call him hither," so that in the only authoritative early printed text of this comedy Malvolio is onstage for her "I am as mad as he, / If sad and merry madness equal be" (13-14).

To some readers the difference may seem unimportant; to most editors, apparently, the Folio placement appears illogical or impractical. In the theatre, moreover, to follow the Folio is to run the risk of drowning Olivia's lines in the audience's laughter at Malvolio's new look and bizarre behavior. But this Folio placement is but one of many that fall into the category of what I term "early" entrances[3] in which the original printed text brings in a figure one or two or even ten lines before he or she actually speaks or is noticed by those already onstage. Some of these early entrances may be the result of errors or sloppiness (by author, scribe, bookkeeper, or compositor); many (like this one) have been filtered out of the editions we use. Nonetheless, this moment is representative of a larger family of comparable entrances scattered throughout the canon and therefore generates various questions. What would be the effect upon Malvolio if at his entrance he overhears Olivia talking about her own madness? Could such words reinforce in his mind the evidence gained from the letter in II. v and therefore serve as another

building block for the cross-purposes and comic delusion that follow? Or would a playgoer who sees Malvolio enter while at the same time hearing Olivia talk of her own malady be more likely to see an analogy between the two instances of comic madness or self-delusion? As with so many in-the-theatre choices, to gain effect X (here the biggest possible laugh) may be to lose effect Y. Given the standard editorial "move," moreover, few directors are even aware of the option.

III. Actor Exigencies

To move onto different terrain, a host of problems are generated by the huge gap between 1) our theatres and our assumptions about plays and playgoing and 2) the resources/material conditions taken for granted by Shakespeare. Here is an arena where the theatrical historian is often at odds with both the editor and the director. As but one of many potential examples, consider the effect upon a performance of the number of actors available. Editors on the whole can sidestep this question—though it does arise occasionally with certain problematic situations. With the notable exception of the ACTER five-actor renditions, today's directors usually have more actors at their disposal than Shakespeare's company; nonetheless, some recycling of personnel in minor roles is often necessary, particularly in a script such as *Julius Caesar* where only five figures from the first half of the play are to be found after the assassination (Brutus, Cassius, Antony, Lucius, and Caesar's ghost). Theatre historians and others have speculated about how the multiple roles would have been handled in such a situation, with several of these speculations attaining some notoriety, most notably the hypothesis that the same actor (Robert Armin) played both Cordelia and the Fool.

Representative is a small but practical problem for the editor and director of *Julius Caesar*: should Cassius appear in II. ii (he is not cited in the stage directions or dialogue of the First Folio) as part of the group that escorts Caesar to the Capitol? A scholarly explanation for this silence is that the actor in the original productions who played Cassius was needed to play Caius Ligarius and therefore was not available for II. ii (Ligarius' presence *is* scripted here). A comparable moment is found at the end of the tavern scene (II. iv) in *1 Henry IV* where (to the surprise of readers) Peto rather than Poins picks Falstaff's pockets. Here a scholarly hypothesis is that the Poins actor, a Welsh speaker, was needed to play Glendower in III. i.

But should such a scholarly-historical explanation linked to a theatrical exigency that no longer exists pertain to a 1990's production? Why should a director not substitute Poins for the Quarto's Peto? In his 1995-96 RSC production of *Julius Caesar* Sir Peter Hall chose to include both Ligarius *and* Julian Glover's Cassius in II. ii so that a problem (why would Cassius be present but not mentioned) had to be solved. The solution was to have Caesar greet all the senators named in his speech but snub Cassius by walking right by him. This choice made sense out of Caesar's failure to include Cassius in his greetings and fit neatly with both Caesar's comments about Cassius and Cassius' resentment of Caesar in I. ii. Is this "solution" to be valued as an "improvement" or should the theatrical purist object?

IV. Changing the Conventions

The issue of theatrical conventions/procedures/vocabulary then versus now is a huge topic (to which I have devoted two books). The most visible gaps are generated by today's assumptions about 1) onstage night and darkness and 2) place/locale. Having seen in summer 1997 three London productions of *King Lear* I am reminded yet again of a pet problem: how to stage Kent in the stocks (end of II. ii, beginning of II. iv) in conjunction with Edgar's soliloquy that constitutes II. iii. Here and in comparable situations (e.g., *As You Like It*, II. v-II. vii) a director will use post-1800 variable lighting to black out Kent during Edgar's speech so that a playgoer will be less likely to worry about "geographical realism" (e.g., Edgar's reference to an escape by means of "the happy hollow of a tree" [2] does not mesh comfortably with stocks placed in the courtyard of a castle). Earlier editors (up through and including the Arden 2 series) were also much concerned with such matters (and regularly set up formal on-the-page scene breaks to enforce such a division). Thus, page 80 of my copy of Kenneth Muir's 1952 Arden edition contains 1) the final five lines of II. ii; 2) three lines of textual notes in small type for II. ii; 3) a half inch of blank space; 4) a centered "SCENE III.—[*A Wood.*]"; 5) "*Enter Edgar*"; 6) the first six lines of II. iii; 7) two lines of textual notes in small type; 8) the Arden notes/glosses. The more benign Riverside approach is to provide a note at the bottom: "Location: Scene continues. (The sleeping Kent remains on stage.)" In this arena theatre historians have had some impact upon more recent editorial practice (so that "Another Part of the Forest" scene locations are the exception today) but have had little if any effect upon theatrical practice. Outside

of a Globe staging, rare indeed is a lights-up approach to *Othello*, V. i. or *Macbeth*, III. iii (to cite two of my pet examples).

V. Re-scripting *Shrew*

To conclude with an unusually messy example, the relationship between *The Taming of the Shrew* printed in the First Folio and the 1594 Quarto of *The Taming of a Shrew* remains vexed. Recent editors (e.g., Arden 2, Oxford, Cambridge) provide their formulations in an introduction or appendix and then include in their editions the post-Induction Christopher Sly material—in effect, creating a do-it-yourself kit for directors and others who deem the Folio version (wherein Sly disappears after "*They sit and mark*"—TLN 564, I. i. 253) incomplete. The standard in-the-theatre choices are then 1) to omit Sly completely or 2) to use the 1594 material or something analogous to "complete" the story.

Space does not permit an investigation of the many issues at stake here, particularly in the supplying of a Sly coda that supersedes the closure in the Folio[4] (and most productions I have seen, with or without coda, end the Folio play with Petruchio's "God give you good night!" and thereby cut the closing couplet shared by Hortensio and Lucentio). Rather, I wish to single out one moment. For those not familiar with the Quarto, the 1594 Sly has several scripted interjections after the end of I. i (where he disappears in the Folio); eventually he falls asleep, is reclothed offstage, and is brought back onstage so that his awakening in the presence of the tapster provides the coda that ends the comedy. The most striking penetration of Sly into the play proper comes in the 1594 equivalent to V. i (the climax of the Tranio/false Lucentio plot) when Sly reacts strenuously when a group of figures is threatened with prison. What is instructive here is the difference between 1594 and 1623 as to who is in trouble and why. In 1594 Sly intervenes not to save the equivalent to the true Vincentio (the figure threatened with prison in Folio V. i) but rather to prevent the arrest of the two plotters (Valeria-Tranio and Philotus-pedant) who do not have the success of their analogues in 1623 and are easily cowed by the father of Aurelius-Lucentio. Indeed, the entire sequence is distinctively different, for after the duke (the equivalent to the true Vincentio) rejects Philotus (the substitute father), his son Aurelius (onstage already, not initially offstage as is Lucentio) kneels and begs to be heard, whereupon the duke reacts: "Peace villaine, lay hands on them, / And send them to prison straight" (F2r), at which point "*Phylotus* and *Valeria* runnes away. Then *Slie* speakes."

For a director today to insert the 1594 Sly interruption into a production of *The Shrew* (as in the 1981 SFC, the 1991 OSF, and the 1992 RSC productions) is therefore to rescript the scene in more ways than one. Although the threat of prison may motivate Sly's interruption in both scenes, the threat to the true Vincentio (1623) is very different in tone and kind from the threat to the two fleeing tricksters (and the subsequent arrival of Lucentio in 1623 yields a very different pay-off). Note too that the Folio line, "He shall not go to prison" (V. i. 95) is spoken not by Sly (who has long been silent or has disappeared) but by Gremio who quickly backs down and is overruled by Baptista ("Away with the dotard, to the jail with him!"—106-07). An objection to someone being sent to prison-jail therefore *is* to be found in 1623 but from a different speaker, directed at different figures, and with a very different impact. What seems to the casual reader simple and straightforward when the "additional" Sly passages from 1594 are printed as an appendix to 1623 in the Arden, Oxford, or Cambridge editions (just plug them in . . .) is, in fact, far more tangled, so that, as with the two versions of *King Lear*, a third conflated version of V. i can emerge that corresponds to neither *A Shrew* or *The Shrew*.

Given 1) the apparent disappearance of Sly in the Folio and 2) the presence of an alternative version, *Shrew* provides a unique situation that for theatrical professionals cries out for a creative solution. Loosely comparable are the problems, both artistic and economic, generated by two or three-part plays. I do not remember seeing a production that telescoped into one show the 2 parts of *Henry IV* (although one such script for a private performance *has* survived from the 1620s),[5] but I *am* familiar with various solutions wherein sections of *3 Henry VI* have been used in *Richard III* or the closing moments of *2 Henry IV* have appeared at the outset of *Henry V*. Moreover, all the productions of *Tamburlaine* I have read about have telescoped together both parts (in order, as with *Shrew*, to "complete" the story). Most tellingly, rare is the theatrical company that will invest the resources to present the three parts of *Henry VI* as separate units (notable exceptions are the RSC in 1977, OSF in 1976, 1977, and 1978, and the RSC again in 2000). Rather, the usual choice is to compress the three into two (so that *1 Henry VI* has concluded by the first interval/intermission and *2 Henry VI* is split into two different evenings) or more radically to present *Henry VI* as one play. Three-into-one is the most cost-effective solution but leads to obvious problems (Shakespeare Lite?). Three-into-two can yield two exciting shows, but the price-tag is a bifurcated *2*

Henry VI, wherein the fall of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester is divorced from the Cade scenes and the rise of York (an analogue would be to have the assassination of Julius Caesar and the deaths of Brutus and Cassius in separate plays).[6] yield two exciting shows, but the price-tag is a bifurcated *2* Henry VI, wherein the fall of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester is divorced from the Cade scenes and the rise of York (an analogue would be to have the assassination of Julius Caesar and the deaths of Brutus and Cassius in separate plays).[6]

As noted at the outset, my purpose is not to portray theatre historians as saviors, editors as interlopers, and directors as vandals. Especially with regard to the latter, the theatre historian can readily set up hypotheses or point to the virtues in the original scripts with no particular damage done if the argument does not fly (other than a rejection slip from a journal or university press), but a director will not stay a director for very long if he or she misjudges the economics of the situation or the tastes of the targeted audience. In an ideal world the kinds of intersections I have singled out would be fruitful, mutually beneficial. O brave new world . . . .

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Notes

[1]Citations are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974). Citations from the First Folio are from *The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare*, ed. Charlton Hinman (New York and London, 1968). For *The Taming of a Shrew* I quote from John Farmer's Tudor Facsimile Text (Amersham, 1912).

[2]To streamline my references to individual productions I use the following abbreviations: D.C. (Shakespeare Theatre of Washington, D.C.); Globe (London's Globe Theatre); OSF (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); RSC (Royal Shakespeare Company); SFC (Stratford Festival Canada).

[3]See chapter four of Alan C. Dessen, *Recovering Shakespeare's Theatrical Vocabulary* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[4]For my interpretation of these issues see "The Tamings of the Shrews" in *Shakespeare's Sweet Thunder: Essays on the Early Comedies*, ed. Michael Collins (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1996), 35-49.

[5]See William Shakespeare, *The History of King Henry the Fourth, as revised by Sir Edward Dering, bart.*, ed. George Walton Williams and Gwynne Blakemore Evans, the Folger Facsimiles (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1974).

[6]For a fuller discussion of the trade-offs in the three-into-two approach see my "Staging and Dramaturgy in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*," *Yearbook of English Studies*, 23 (1993), 65-79.

Will's Monosyllable
by Alan Powers

Unaccustomed as we are to writing monosyllables, we may well wonder at their prominence in the Shakespeare canon. This prominence results partly from the linguistic resources of Early Modern English, especially the lexicon with its monosyllabic ablaut past tenses (like Goneril's "The news is not so tooke" *Lear* IV. ii. 86).[1] And Shakespeare himself expanded that monosyllabic word-hoard. My essay focuses on his use of our shortest, simplest words in framing his poetic meter, in rewriting prose sources into verse, in starting and completing sonnets, and, as Ted Wright shows, in "conveying emotional excitement."[2] When our sonneteer disingenuously declares that he is no great innovator, that he writes "far from variation and quick change," he acknowledges an identifiable style, "That every word doth almost tell my name"(Sonnet 76). In characterizing or even imitating that style, one could do worse than be a writer of monosyllables. Let us see what the monosyllable does tell—in both senses, "to count" and "to express"—about Shakespeare's poetic style.

Begin with the first lines of his sonnets. Of the hecatomb and a half of them, an astonishing ninety-seven begin with all monosyllables except for one word. (Twenty-three initial lines are all monosyllables, including "They that have pow'r," "Was it the proud full sail," and "When my love swears. . . .") Such a predominance of first-line monosyllables amounts to a stylistic tic at the least. Spenser's *Amoretti*, by comparison, have thirty-one first lines all monosyllables except one word: about one third of his eighty-nine, compared to almost two-thirds of the sugared sonnets. By my quick count, the sonnets in Samuel Daniel's *Delia* have twenty initial monosyallabic lines of his fifty sonnets, or forty percent, while those in Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* boast fifty-six of one hundred and eight, or slightly over fifty percent.[3]

A few of these initial lines set a demonstrable beat, indeed a metronome: "When I do count the clock that tells the time"(Sonnet 12). There is a tapping out, perhaps, a determining of the poetic rhythm. But occasionally, there may be increased rhetorical stress which leads to a metric indeterminacy. I am reminded of the first measures of a symphony by Alexander Borodin, where the key is not determined until a dozen measures into it. Though I am not prepared to push this comparison and

argue the metric indeterminacy of Shakespeare's monosyllabic lines, I believe something very interesting is going on. Are the lines more daring than their extreme familiarity implies? Or is the poet simply blocking out the line, almost paint-by-number? At the very least, between these polemical poles of daring and mechanics, Shakespeare's ear operates.

I would include all three of the famous first lines above as showing metric variation—*not* simple iambs—for expressive ambiguity: "Was it the proud full sail of his great verse" suggests self-doubt on the speaker's part; "When my love swears that she is made of truth" implies suspension of doubt, a complex ambiguity; "They that have pow'r to hurt and will do none, / That do not do the thing they most do show," like "Was it," inverts the first foot, but adds doubtful rhetorical stress on "do." Is it stressed in "will *do* none"? It surely is in "do not do," but the "not" has virtually the same emphasis.

Almost as astonishing are the sonnets' final lines. By my count, thirty-four of them are composed entirely of monosyllabic words, for example "So long lives this, and this gives life to thee" (Sonnet 18) and "That then I scorn to change my state with kings" (Sonnet 29). In all, one hundred and six of the hundred and fifty-four ultimate lines include no more than one word exceeding one syllable. Two out of every three sonnets: in fact, almost seventy percent. By comparison, Spenser's cycle employs such lines in thirty-eight cases of eighty-nine total, for forty-three percent; Samuel Daniel's practice approaches Shakespeare's, with thirty-one out of fifty concluding monosyllabic lines, or sixty-two percent. However, Sidney almost ties Shakespeare here, with monosyllables dominating sixty-eight of 108 ultimate lines for sixty-three percent. One could also credit Sidney with two more which technically fit my one-multisyllable criterion: "Thanke-worthiest yet when you shall break my heart" runs the last line of Sonnet 95. I do not include it among my monosyllabic lines because to my ear it does not qualify. Then again, consider that the soneteer's lady's name is bisyllabic. Had Astrophel written to a Lady with a one-syllable name, Sidney would have surpassed Shakespeare in completely monosyllabic final lines, thirty-five to thirty; as it is, he just edges our poet in percentage, twenty-three percent to nineteen percent, because Sidney's cycle is forty-six poems shorter. But I have been discussing the predominant use of monosyllables, or all monosyllables except for one word.

Shakespeare emerges triumphant in the criterion I am using, with 108 final lines, a whopping seventy percent, primarily

monosyllables. I admit to granting our poet syncoped monosyllables: "even = e'en" in lines like "Even to thy pure and most most loving breast" (Sonnet 110) and "Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men" (Sonnet 81): "heaven = hea'n" in "Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun staineth" (Sonnet 33) and "To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell" (Sonnet 129). Certain other words I have cited as monosyllables when they scan so: "towards" in Sonnet 51 ("Towards thee I'll run, and give him leave to go"), and "Being" in Sonnets 36, 52, 84, and 96, but not in "Thine by thy beauty being false to me" (Sonnet 41).

Shakespeare appears to use monosyllables as a kind of metric and rhetorical skeleton upon which to hang the sonnet, bare bones on which to flesh it out. Although I have not been able to make a thorough count—here's a job for Sgt. Preston and his wonder computer—the remaining twelve lines of these sonnets appear to contain a lower ratio of monosyllabically constructed lines. As far as the last lines are concerned, some remarkable effects appear based on monosyllables even in lines that do not "count" here. For example, "Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds" concludes a sonnet that begins with the first two lines entirely monosyllabic: "They that have pow'r to hurt and will do none, / That do not do the thing they most do show" (Sonnet 94). The falling rhythms of the first words of the last line break the meter; prosodically, they smell. "Lilies that fester" indeed! "Not in *my* iambic pentameter," they almost shout. Or consider the polysyllabic clang of how Sonnet 67 begins, "Ah, wherefore with infection should he live, / And with his presence grace impiety." How does this end but with "O, him she stores, to show what wealth she had / In days long since, before these last so bad."

Turning to the plays, we find a different ratio of mono to multisyllabic lines; that is, I hypothesize this on the basis of spot checking initial lines. We may all recall "O for a Muse of fire" with its one bisyllable "ascend," Orsino's "If music be the food of love, play on," and "So shaken as we are, so wan with care." Then we find in the sequel Rumor's "Open your ears; for which of you will stop / The vent of hearing . . . " as well as the Witch's "When shall we three meet again," though trochees and tetrameter. The King of Navarre begins in pure monosyllables, "Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives," the Merchant Antonio, too, "In sooth, I know not why I am so sad."

Pericles, Cymbeline and *Henry the Eighth* begin so: "To sing a song that old was sung"(our second tetrameter), "You do not

meet a man but frowns. Our bloods / No more obey . . . ," and "I come no more to make you laugh. Things now . . . " This last, a Prolog, recalls another in *Troilus and Cressida*, "In Troy there lies the scene. From isles of Greece / The princes orgulous . . . " I am tempted to broach my own operative classification of only one polysyllable in the case of *Julius Caesar* because the emphasis in the first line depends on the monosyllables, "Hence! home, you idle creatures, get you home!"

Julius Caesar provides a good transition from monosyllables as metric frame to their use in rhetorical emphasis. Several of Shakespeare's plays that I have not yet included nevertheless begin in monosyllables. These may start in prose, or they may be half lines of verse, as in *Hamlet*. Barnardo's "Who's there?" appears an extrametric spondee, or more probably two monosyllabic feet comprising a half-line, since Francisco's response, "Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself" is a full pentameter. George T. Wright discusses such metric monosyllables as a device Shakespeare developed, an expressive departure from metric expectation. Such foot-long monosyllables occur in the imperative first word of Isabella's curse on her brother, "Die, perish!" (MM, III. i. 143), as in Capulet's vocatives,"^ Nurse, ^ wife, what ho? What Nurse I say" (RJ, IV. iv. 23). Wright calls such metric monosyllables in the middle and later plays "a deliberate device for conveying emotional excitement" (177).

Such metric monosyllables can be seen as lines missing unstressed syllables; or, put another way, they are lines in which the poet has preferred a monosyllable even though the meter requires polysyllables. Wright cites famous instances in *Lear* and *Hamlet*; for instance, the last two feet in "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage, blow!" (III. ii. 1), or the first feet in Hamlet's "Saw? Who?" continued in Horatio's, "My Lord, the King your father" (I. ii. 190). Both are moments of intensity—and dare we say Hopkinsian metric displacement?

Earlier in *Hamlet*, Horatio tries monosyllables in his ghostspeak, "Stay, speak, speak, I charge thee speak" to which the Ghost responds by exiting (I. i. 51). One might have expected more latinate language to address the supernatural, for which Latin is said to be handy. Recall that Marcellus urged Horatio to use his linguistic capacity, "Thou art a scholar—speak to it, Horatio" (I. i. 42). Interestingly, Horatio chooses monosyllables. Or maybe he is not "choosing," but caught in the emotive moment.

Such monosyllabic feet are quite different from monosyllables used to fill out pentameter, which often give the effect of

great sincerity. Perhaps that is their predominant use in sonnets, to convince via simple directness. This may also be their effect in the plays' first lines. Surely it is in the first verse line of *As You Like It*, Duke Frederick's "I would thou hadst been son to some man else" (I. ii. 213).

When not used for rhetorical stress, the monosyllable is Shakespeare's favorite additive; for instance, to turn source prose into his patented verse, devoid of "newfound methods and of compounds strange" (Sonnet 76). Consider the following example from early in *Henry the Fifth* (I. i. 9-19), where he lifts from Holinshed almost verbatim, except for a sprinkling of monosyllables. Let us imagine an Elizabethan impresario who advertises for help in recasting the chronicle.

Wanted: Poet/Rewrite Man to revise the following passage into competent verse:

> . . . that the temporall lands devoutlie given, and disordinatelie spent by religious, and other . . . might suffice to maintelne, to the honor of the king, and defense of the realme, fifteene earles, fifteene hundred knights, six thousand and two hundred esquiers, and a hundred almesse-houses, for the reliefe onelie of the poore, impotent, and needie persons, and the king to have cleerelie to his coffers twentie thousand pounds.... [4]

Among the responses, some are in rhymed couplets, but one response expands the perfectly iambic "the temporal lands devoutly given" (if "temp'ral" is syncoped): first, by a subordinate clause which manages to reverse noun and modifier ("which men devout"—almost an authorial signature) perhaps for the purpose of avoiding the falling rhythm on the past participle; next, by addition of the precise legal instrument, "by testament." But then all this author needs are monosyllables to change raging, disruptive trochees into iambics; he starts with "fifteen Earls, fifteen hundred knights, six thousand and 200 esquires," and adds only three monosyllables, "full," "and" and "good."

> My Lord of Bills,
> To your recent contest on improving history, consider
> my humble submission.
> For all the temporal lands which men devout
> By testament have given to the Church,
> Would they strip from us; being valued thus:
> As much as would maintain, to the King's honor,
> [Full] fifteen earls [and] fifteen hundred knights,
> Six thousand and two hundred [good] esquires;

[And, to relief of lazars, and weak age,
Of indigent faint souls past corporal toil,]
A hundred almeshouses right well supplied;
And to the coffers of the King beside,
A thousand pounds by th' year. Thus runs the bill.
Your lordship's most humble servant,
WS

Of course, without benefit of our hindsight, the impresario may well have selected one of the couplet authors. However, we are at liberty to imagine an enlightened, though not overly modern (strong-line, Donnean) impresario writing to our poet: "Dear WS: You're hired." After all, he won this contest with a favorite device, the monosyllable.

To supply Shakespeare's enormous metric demands, he expanded—and contracted—English on a regular basis. As Van Dam and Stoffel show, he used apocope to cut such suffixes as "-en, -er, -al, -le, etc." as in "disposal>dispose" (TGV, II. vii. 86) and even "-ment" and "-ation" as in "accusation> accuse" (2HVI, III. i. 160).[5] He very often used syncope to cut internal syllables as in "abil'ty" (OTH, III. iii. 247) and "Le'nato" (ADO, IV. i. 246). Only rarely does syncope result in monosyllables, as in "e(ve)n, e(ve)r, e(vi)l, n(ev)er, and o(ve)r" (these first and last from *Venus and Adonis* — 1, 677).[6]

Most interestingly for our single-syllabled purpose, Shakespeare used aphesis (Van Dam's "aphaeresis") in producing monosyllabic words such as the following: amaze>maze, bemock>mock, attire>tire, endure>dure, agree>gree, array>ray, behead>head, belong>long (MM, II. ii. 61), complain>plain, conceive>ceive (MM, II. iv. 141), disbranch>sbranch (LR, IV. ii. 34 Q), entice>tice (TIM, II. iii. 92), both impress>press and oppress>press (in the same play, R2), endure>dure (LUC, 224), offence>fence, excuse>scuse (MV, IV. i. 441, "That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts"). To include one bisyllable because the shortened word anchors the sentence, and the meter, consider "encounter>counter" (1HIV, I. iii. 114, "He ne'r did counter Glendower, I tell thee!") In fact, Van Dam and Stoffel list no fewer than two hundred and twenty monosyllablic words resulting from aphesis, the loss of the first (and less stressed) syllable.[7]

Many of these constructed monosyllables are symptoms of a general monosyllabic emphasis—even structure—in the passages where they appear. Shakespeare creates one of these aphesic words for Isabella's heavily monosyllabic plea,

Too late? Why, no; I that do speak a word

> May call it again. Well, believe this,
> No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
> Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword . . .
> Become them with one half so good a grace
> As mercy does.
> If he had been as you, and you as he,
> You would have slipp'd like him, but he, like you,
> Would not have been so stern.
> *Angelo.* Pray you be gone.
> *Isabella.* I would to he[av]en I had your potency,
> And you were Is[a]bel! Should it then be thus?
> No, I would tell thee what 'twere to be a judge,
> And what a pris[o]ner.
>
> (MM, II. ii. 57-69)

We might say that Isabella's eloquence, the force of it, depends partly on her monosyllables, as in thirty lines previously, "For which (vice) I would not plead, but that I must; / For which I must not plead, but that I am / At war 'twixt will and will not." Even Angelo's passion requires monosyllables, "What's this? Is this her fault or mine . . . Not she; nor doth she tempt; but it is I . . ." (II. ii 168-170).

Some of Shakespeare's most inventive language, including monosyllables, occurs in *Lear*, as in Regan's gruesome instructions to her servants after Gloucester's blinding, "Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell / His way to Dover" (III. vii. 91-92). That "smell," by its ultimate position in the line, is one of the more terrible monosyllables in the canon. That ultimate position is the last chance for a bisyllable—a chance not missed in the most famous line in all his plays, "To be, or not to be, that is the [all monosyllables until] question." But staying with *Lear* for a moment, one could develop an extensive essay on the use of monosyllables in this play alone. Consider:

> And my poor fool is hanged! No, no life.
> Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
> And thou, no breath at all. Thou'lt come no more.
>
> (V. iii. 306-08)[8]

This duly famous passage is completely monosyllabic until the astonishing next line, "Never, never, never, never, never." Surely all those stunning monosyllables, simple as if senescent, poignant as a profound truth—surely they set up the anvil strokes of falling rhythm, trochees, "Never, never," which have the effect of a screeching halt. In fact, these trochees are the rhetorical sign of Lear's literal heartbreak, his last words.

At many important points in this play, as in others, monosyl-

labic words seem to punctuate and clarify the action. For instance, as his arms are bound Gloucester urges, in a tone somewhere between a host's invitation and a captive's plea, "You are my guests. Do me no foul play, friends" (III. vii. 31). The previously mentioned storm scene begins with that famous monosyllabic line before moving into turbid, stormy tongue-twisting polysyllabics, "cataracts and hurricanoes . . . oak-cleaving thunderbolts"; but it includes also Kent's first lines, "Alas, sir, are you here? Things that love night / Love not such nights as these"(III. ii. 42-43).

As in the later tragedy, *Othello* is a mine of monosyllables; in fact, it concludes with such essential lines:

> Soft you, a word or two before you go.
> I have done the state some [service], and they
> know't . . .
> Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak
> Of one that loved not [wisely], but too well . . .
> (V. ii. 338-39, 343-44)

> I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee. No way but this:

Earlier, in the temptation or conversion scene, Othello expresses his painful self-division in predominant monosyllables.

> What sense had I in her stol'n hours of lust?
> I saw't not, thought it not; it harm'd not me.
> I slept the next night well, fed well, was free and
> [merry].
> (III. iii. 338-40)

> 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. Her name, that was as fresh . . .
> (III. iii. 383-86)

All this may fall under Wright's classification of monosyllables to exhibit passion, as more obviously in a line like, "Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her, damn her!" (III. iii. 476). We would expect cursing to take on such heightened rhythmic emphasis, here apparently spondees rounded out with monosyllables—a strangely balanced line, balanced as on a scale exactly in the middle with that "O" as a fulcrum. Yet Othello is unbalanced as he speaks this incantatory curse, just one line before he exits to "furnish me with some swift means of death / For the fair devil."

I have briefly sketched some of Shakespeare's uses of lines

dominated by monosyllablic words. I have been surprised at their prevalence. I cannot think of an English poet since Shakespeare (Yeats may be a distant second?) who has depended on monosyllables so greatly. My perception of their prevalence is partly a result of linguistic change, including the enormous growing latinity of English nouns, under the influence of the hard sciences, the social sciences and the pretenses of all disciplines—dare I mention the jargon of deconstruction, for instance? Partly, the poetic movement away from monosyllables results from diminished poetic license to syncope and aphese at will. How many of the words that contemporary schoolboy parodists of supposed Shakespearen style might use—"oft, art, thou, ere, ne'r, O, 'Zounds," etc.—are monosyllables. How many of the words that really were his stylistic signatures—"sweet," "full," "dure," "scuse," "'twere," and "a" (unaspirated "he")—really were monosyllables. Yet how often Shakespeare turned—at the crisis point in a play, or at the conclusion of a sonnet, when he wanted real clarity and lyric emphasis—to the monosyllable. O Will.

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Notes

[1]This text is Q1-2. Except as noted, all quotations are from G. Blakemore Evans, *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974). I became interested in this ablaut form in Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *The Complete Works*. Compact Edition (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), but they modernize the spelling to "took."

[2]George T. Wright, *Shakespeare's Metrical Art* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988), p. 177. I have also used Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare's Verse: Iambic Pentameter and the Poet's Idiosyncrasies* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987) and Frederic Ness, *The Use of Rhyme in Shakespeare's Plays* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1941).

[3]Edmund Spenser, *The Poems of Spenser*, ed. Smith and DeSelincourt (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961). Samuel Daniel, *Delia*, ed. Arthur Colby Sprague (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1930). Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophel and Stella*, ed. Mona Wilson (N.P.: Nonesuch, 1931).

[4]T. W. Craik, Ed., *King Henry V*. The Arden Shakespeare. (London and NY: Routledge, 1995), p. 122 n (lines) 1-21.

[5]A. P. Van Dam and C. Stoffel, *William Shakespeare: Prosody and Text* (London: Williams and Norgate, n.d.), p. 123.

[6]Van Dam and Stoffel, p. 64.

[7]Van Dam and Stoffel, pp. 25-33.

[8]"^No, no life" from Q1-2. This seems to me a clear instance of the monosyllabic foot discussed above. Evans uses the Folio's "No, no, no life."

Philobats and Ocnophils: Romantic Pairings in Shakespeare and Film

by Marina Favila

My ambition to trace romantic pairings in film to their comic counterparts in Shakespeare is not original. In *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage*, Stanley Cavell argues that Shakespearean romantic comedy is the main precursor for America's own film renaissance: the celebrated "comedies of remarriage" of the thirties and forties. Gerald Mast echoes this sentiment. In *The Comic Mind: Comedy and the Movies*, he repeatedly draws parallels between Shakespeare's plays and American cinema and goes one step further in his book *Can't Help Singing: The American Musical on Stage and Screen*: "Shakespeare's comedies became prototypes of musicals. It is hardly surprising that American musical shows unified their diverse entertainment by reverting to the Shakespearean model."[1] I too wish to link the romantic, comic worlds found in Shakespeare and movies, but whether or not the Bard may be credited as a major influence is not really my concern. The success of these critics lies not with their analysis of Shakespeare's overreaching influence, but their sound readings of the genre of comedy, the psychology of romance. To posit connections between plays written nearly four hundred years ago and films created in our own century is to argue indirectly that the human heart, though unique in development, may still be mapped in recurring patterns. At least in the realm of romantic comedy, "It's very clear, our love is here to stay." This is where my interest lies: How do we define the world of romance and shape it in our art? What patterns of thought and behavior may we discern when we analyze romantic pairings—from Neil Simon to Shakespeare? Woody Allen to Astaire? What is the origin of loving?

How we define the world of romance is largely based on how we define the world and our place in it: for living precedes loving, and loving (like any art) is something that must be learned. Michael Balint's theory of philobats and ocnophils takes us back to the origin of both. His book *Thrills and Regressions* traces adult fears and desires back to infancy: the period of magical fusion thought to occur between mother and child when the baby's every need (to be nursed, kissed, cuddled, coddled, changed) is anticipated by an attentive parent. Like his contem-

poraries Klein and Winnicott, Balint cites the major trauma in every infant's life as hinging on the knowledge that his mother (or the breast that feeds him) is a separate object beyond his control. Later approaches to life—living itself—become an attempt to return to this magical period of "primary love" when the baby believes that his satisfactions are mutually satisfying to the mother, that, in fact, he and his environment are much the same thing. Balint suggests that this early disillusionment may lead to extreme responses in the adult: "ocnophilia," the need to cling to people, objects, faiths, jobs, in order to recapture the oneness shared with the mother—a looking for the mother figure; or "philobatism," denying the need for other people, objects, etc. and promoting the idea of self-sufficiency—the mother figure herself. Balint places acrobats, daredevils, mountain climbers in this latter category, people who physically recreate the trauma of being separated from the mother by denying the laws of gravity and chance, all to show their ability to navigate around any problems by their *own* skill. Theirs is a life of no ties (physically and emotionally), one of complete independence and thereby achieves the illusion of omnipotence enjoyed by the baby who sees everything bending to his will.[2]

This framework is evoked over and over in movies. Ocnophil meets philobat; the stuffed shirt who only feels safe tied to his personal habits and usual routine meets the wild, adventuresome free spirit who often attracts and repels him at the same time. The plots of many films, particularly romantic comedies, are expressions of this very structure.[3]

Female Philobats/Male Ocnophils

She Done Him Wrong (1933), *Cleopatra* (1934, 1963), *My Man Godfrey* (1936), *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), *Gone with the Wind* (1939), *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* (1939, 1969), *Ball of Fire* (1941), *Lady Eve* (1941), *Remember the Night* (1941), *Take a Letter, Darling* (1942), *Desk Set* (1957), *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957), *Auntie Mame* (1958), *Houseboat* (1958), *South Pacific* (1958), *Peter Pan* (1960, male philobat, but often played by a woman), *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), *Gypsy* (1962), *Man's Favorite Sport* (1964), *Mary Poppins* (1964), *My Fair Lady* (1964), *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* (1964), *The Sound of Music* (1965), *Gambit* (1966), *Barefoot in the Park* (1967), *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967), *Funny Girl* (1968), *Hello, Dolly!* (1969), *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1969), *The Owl and the Pussycat* (1970), *Star Spangled Girl* (1971), *Butterflies Are Free* (1972), *The Heartbreak Kid* (1972), *What's Up Doc?* (1972), *Cinderella Liberty* (1973), *My Brilliant Career* (1979), *Night Shift* (1982), *Victor/Victoria* (1982), *Educating Rita* (1983), *Risky Business* (1983), *Protocol* (1984), *Splash* (1984), *American Dreamer* (1984), *Blame It On Rio* (1984), *Into the*

Night (1985), *Desperately Seeking Susan* (1985), *Gotcha!* (1985), *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986), *Room with a View* (1986), *Who's That Girl?* (1987), *The Accidental Tourist* (1988), *Bull Durham* (1988), *A Fish Called Wanda* (1988), *Dick Tracy* (1990), *Pretty Woman* (1990), *The Butcher's Wife* (1991), *Impromptu* (1991), *Defending Your Life* (1991), *The Bodyguard* (1992), *Housesitter* (1992), *Sirens* (1994), *Mad Love* (1995), *A Couch in New York* (1996), *My Best Friend's Wedding* (1997), *Forces of Nature* (1999), *The Muse* (1999)

Male Philobats/Female Ocnophils

Carefree (1938), *Test Pilot* (1938), *Ninotchka* (1939), *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939), *Tarzan* movies (1945-51), *The Harvey Girls* (1946), *Angel and the Badman* (1947), *Bachelor and the Bobbysoxer* (1947), *The African Queen* (1951), *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954), *Rainmaker* (1956), *Funny Face* (1957), *The Long, Hot Summer* (1958, 1985), *The Music Man* (1962), *Hatari* (1962), *Goldfinger* (1964 and following Bond films), *Alfie* (1966), *Walk, Don't Run* (1966), *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (1967), *Cactus Flower* (1969), *Support Your Local Sheriff* (1969), *Star Wars* (1977), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), *Romancing the Stone* (1984), *Out of Africa* (1985), *The Sure Thing* (1985), *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986), *Green Card* (1990), *Quigley Down Under* (1990), *Doc Hollywood* (1991), *City of Joy* (1992), *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), *Tin Cup* (1996), *The Mummy* (1999), *The Story of Us* (1999)

As illustrated by the movies listed above, philobats and ocnophils attract. That's not surprising. Surely how we embrace the world affects how we embrace each other. What does prove unexpected is the casting of these roles. In films revolving around a romantic plotline, a woman seems to be cast as the philobat more often than a man—a curious gender marking as it goes against supposedly traditional patriarchal attitudes. Usually men are seen as the adventurers, women as the clinging vines. Why the gender reversal in movies? Is it just the novelty of the unexpected? Or is there something about such casting that is attractive to both men and women?[4]

Before answering this question, it might be helpful to bring in Winnicott's theory of male and female elements as they coincide nicely with Balint's theory of philobats and ocnophils. Winnicott defines the purely female element as the feeling of being one and the same with the mother. This is indeed the position of the philobat, who both merges and/or identifies herself with the omnipotent mother figure. The purely male element is defined as the later acknowledgment of the mother as a separate entity, which is the position of the ocnophil, who recognizes that he himself is not omnipotent. Given that, I would like to go a step

further and suggest that in art, at least in traditional romantic comedies where a choice must be made between the male and female roles, the tendency to cast a woman as the philobat is due to the female element being fused with the source of omnipotence—the mother herself. She is the desired object in the baby's view. (Indeed only the female infant has a shot at becoming a mother herself.) That leaves the male element (or the male) in the role of looking for the desired object that will nourish, protect, and love him. Romance may be defined as the wish to return to the mother/child fusion: primary love gives birth to secondary love.

But if I am to make the assumption that we, more often than not, style our women mysterious and magical in art, perhaps we need to look at the differences between men and women. If art is the representation of wishes, then what differentiates the wish of a man from the wish of a woman? Freud would say penis envy. Balint suggests that philobatism is related to erection and potency; he sees the equipment used by philobats (ski pole, ice pick, the whip of a lion-tamer, the tools of an artist) as phallic objects which confer a sense of omnipotence. Such tools mean

> also being in possession of a powerful, never-flagging penis, magically reinforcing our own potency, our own confidence.... [When a person possesses such an object] he feels himself in possession of almost magic powers, and is much more confident in braving the hazards of the philobatic state.[5]

This may sound like a Hemingway fantasy, but I argue that regardless of which sex it is applied to, it is a feminine fantasy (or in Winnicott's terms, born of the female element) as it is a wish to identify with the omnipotent mother figure. From the little girl's point of view, it is penis envy: longing for that which she lacks and thus that which would make her whole, complete, independent—a philobat, the desired object, the omnipotent mother herself. This wish is partly achieved when the little girl becomes a mother, too; Freud's equation of baby and penis hits the mark in more ways than one.

Ocnophilia seems to me more easily tied to womb envy. Sabbath and Hall argue in their book *End Product: The First Taboo* that womb envy is the source of man's ambition. Their surely unpopular argument is backed by a surprisingly impressive number of anal creation myths (culled from Native American, Polynesian, Indian, Eskimoan, Australian, and Judeo-Christian sources) where man, often angry or envious at woman's

ability to create life, creates other men, women, the world itself, from his own feces:

> Here is the point to master: myths are the creations of men. Men must have something to pass from generation to generation so they produce tall buildings and tall tales, while the women produce life. But men are never content with their lot, and the stories they tell of life's beginning are not tales of the womb, but of the anus.[6]

These legends show man's need to create something that will last, something to confer immortality, something he can depend on. Surely this wish can be likened to the ocnophil who longs to attach himself to "things" that will prove his worth. His overriding need is to collect things, acquire habits, achieve goals, implement methods, create some sort of structure that can be touched and held onto, something to insure his safety. He finds his union with specific tasks and creates a life of substitutions: cars, money, achievements, anything that can be catalogued and filed.

If I am correct in linking philobatism with the female element and penis envy, and ocnophilia with the male element and womb envy, then the fantasies of both originate from the same wish for some magical union between man and woman as well as mother and child. Certainly the philobat is a hermaphroditic figure, claiming the omnipotence of the mother, yet often wielding some phallic object as a magic wand. As Leonard Shengold has already pointed out in his delightful essay "Everything: A Poetic Meditation on Freud's Question, 'What does a Woman Want?'," this image of completeness is perhaps what we all long for, a symbol of wholeness, unity.[7] Freud, at least, would not be surprised at such a revelation. His essays "On the Sexual Theories of Children," "Femininity," and "Fetishism" suggest that children's theories of gender difference also yield a Phallic Mother ideal.[8] The little girl views the knowledge as a personal lack, not a general one, and so she denies that other women, specifically her mother, lack a penis too. Boys view the knowledge as a personal threat and thus fantasize or fetishize the Phallic Mother. Perhaps this first fantasy leads to the larger fantasies of the philobat and ocnophil, who respond with their own special brand of magical thinking, either by taking on the role of the Omnipotent Mother or creating a symbol for her power in another object.

The idea or image of a Phallic Woman/Omnipotent Mother appears to be inherently attractive to both girls and boys. Does such an attraction follow us to adulthood? Could such an attrac-

tion explain the predominance of female philobats in romantic comedies? With this in mind, let us return to the two lists of movies. A closer analysis of the plots of each film reveals a variety of differences besides that of casting. First, when a woman is cast as a philobat, she often retains the illusion of omnipotence throughout the film. Hello Dolly, Holly Golightly, the Unsinkable Molly Brown, Auntie Mame, Calamity Jane, Cleopatra, Fannie Brice, Scarlett O'Hara, George Sand, Mae West and Madonna (on or off camera) seem to rule the world around them in almost casual fashion. The focus of the romance is one of seduction, out of the safe world of the ocnophil and into the zany world of the philobat.[9] They are films about letting go and freedom from fear. However, when the man is the philobat, the emphasis is often on a compromise between the two positions. The male philobat is seduced (as opposed to doing the seducing) back into reality. He admits his loneliness and waywardness and settles down with Myrna Loy, Gail Russell, Judy Garland, or Jane Powell. Or, as in films *The African Queen, Star Wars, Doc Hollywood,* and *City of Joy,* the hero is seduced back into the realm of idealism and duty, his omnipotence now tied to honor and love. Though he is the philobat, he is still in the position of looking for the mother figure.

The male philobat often wields one of Balint's famous phallic objects with which he controls his environment: Crocodile Dundee's lethal blade, Matthew Quigley's 34 inch rifle, OO7's miraculous mechanical gadgets, the sleek airplanes of Gable, Grant, and Redford in their respective roles as carefree pilots. Skill and bravery are a must for the male philobat; he tames his environment. However, his female counterpart often floats through her world. She rarely carries anything but her wits, which she either has in abundance or not at all. Still, her I.Q. is of little importance, for the world seems to bend to her will as if she truly is the protected free-floating baby in the womb or the omnipotent mother figure herself, for both are the same person.[10]

An exception to this broad delineation is the musical of the thirties and forties, or in terms of our list, *Carefree, Funny Face,* plus any film footage where Fred Astaire dances. These male philobats retain their omnipotence throughout the film, for their omnipotence depends upon the genre: the sweep of the music, certainly, but primarily the movement of dance. Consider that the wish of the philobat is to fly free, unhampered and unimpeded by anything or anyone, perhaps a faded memory of his carefree existence in the mother's womb. This illusion is replicated in dance. Fluid motion, grace in action. No one bumps into

anything or anyone on the dance floor. But it is the man, even today, who negotiates this magic in ballroom dancing, or in Balint's terms, navigates the perilous journey between potentially dangerous objects and into the free, friendly open spaces so beloved by the philobat. Here the man is the seducer. Fred seduces Ginger, Leslie, Cyd, Audrey, Ann, Rita, Vera, Joan, Judy into dancing with him, dancing with space itself. Yet, even here, the woman remains the focus, for the man leads her around the room safely, his effortlessness given over to her. She is twirled and lifted through the air. The sweep of her skirt is motion incarnate. But she is more than an ocnophil who clings to her object for protection, for clinging is death on the dance floor. She becomes a philobat herself, whirled safely through space; he, her phallic object that literally holds her erect. They defy gravity together.[11]

This pairing of philobat and ocnophil also occurs in famous comedy teams: Laurel and Hardy, Abbott and Costello, Jackie Gleason and Art Carney, Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, Popeye and Bluto, Disney's Baloo and Bagheera/Jaq and Gus, Oscar Madison and Felix Unger, John Candy and Tom Hanks, Chris Farley and David Spade. Their physical differences reflect their contrasting personalities: philobat/ocnophil, fat/thin. However, the humor here is almost always based on debunking the philobat's pretensions that he can do anything, play anything, get out of any scrape or steer past any danger. In romantic comedies, quite the opposite is true. The philobat's ability to sidestep danger is usually her most attractive quality, an illusion Barbara Stanwyck, Carole Lombard, Katharine Hepburn, Rosalind Russell, Barbara Streisand retain with our blessing. We laugh with them, not at them. All of which suggest, again, that the idea of a female philobat/omnipotent woman is, if not sacred, at least attractive to everybody. Could that be why there are few similar female comedy duos? Lucy and Ethel, Roseanne and Jackie are possible exceptions; yet in both cases, the scheming Lucy/brash Roseanne character often avoids disaster in the closing minutes of the show. Even the team of Burns and Allen celebrates Gracie's disarming ability to sail through troubled waters without a scratch.

Of course, Balint admits that philobatism and ocnophilia are extreme responses and that an individual would most likely be made up of a combination of the two. (Winnicott makes a similar concession when explicating his theory of male and female elements.) But I assume Balint pushes his analysis to the extreme to find and illustrate the core of each fantasy. This too was my

hope—by pursuing a tangent in romantic comedies and slapstick humor (where characterization is usually exaggerated) I might be able to pinpoint the most salient features of the theory in art and thus steer an easier passage through Shakespeare's more complex portraits of men and women. So far, Balint's theory seems to revolve around the Omnipotent Mother figure, or a variation of her, the Phallic Woman. She shines as an ideal for both men and women, a champion of magical thought.

With that in mind, let us turn to Shakespeare's romantic comedies where the illusion of the Phallic Woman is amply celebrated. The comedies offer an array of women dressed as men, witty ones, whose depth of feeling, sincerity, and intelligence overshadow their male counterparts. Rosalind outwits in wits her Orlando. Viola "outwoos" the wooer Orsino (as does her prototype Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*). Portia gambles in court to save her gambling husband's gambling friend. The romances too boast a woman disguised as a man, and like her predecessors, Cymbeline's Imogen outshines her husband in virtue and fidelity, the living embodiment of the diamond ring he gives away.

Of course, that's not to say that clothes make the man, or even make the woman a man (as Viola will lament when challenged to fight as Cesario). More than fashion, the illusion of the Phallic Woman is created by the merging of gender identities in each heroine. Surely the layered acting required by the role of Rosalind is enough to challenge any experienced thespian, especially a Renaissance one: boy-actor plays girl acting like boy acting like girl. Remember, both the actor and the character must be successful in their craft, for the plot calls for Phebe to be taken in by Ganymede, Orlando by Ganymede's Rosalind, and the audience by Rosalind herself. By the time you get to the end, his/her pretty epilogue creates a stunning illusion of completeness. Male dressed as female speaks directly to a male/female audience.[12]

> I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as please you; and I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women (as I perceive by your simp'ring, none of you hates them), that between you and the women the play may please. If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleas'd me, complexions that lik'd me, and breaths that defied not; and I am sure, as many as have beards, or good faces, or sweet breaths, will for my kind offer, when I make curtsy, bid me farewell.
>
> (11-23)[13]

If anyone could please both sexes, here's the girl to do it.

Viola follows suit, so to speak. Though her smitten heart rarely winks at the audience as Rosalind does, she successfully woos Olivia; and when she cannot accommodate the lady, she promptly divides herself in two. Or so it appears to a baffled Antonio, who is startled by the sight of Viola next to her twin brother, Sebastian: "How have you made division of yourself? An apple, cleft in two, is not more twin / Than these two creatures" (V. i. 222-24). Imogen crosses gender as well as filial boundaries. Dressed as a boy, she is greeted as a woman: "Were you a woman, youth, / I should woo hard" (III. vi. 68-69) and transformed into a mother for her two long-lost brothers; for who else cleans the house, cooks the meals, sings like an angel, *and* is more important than your father?

> I know not why
> I love this youth, and I have heard you say,
> Love's reason's without reason. The bier at door,
> And a demand who is't shall die, I'ld say
> "My father, not this youth."
>
> (IV. ii. 20-24)

This sense of self-sufficiency found in Shakespeare's heroines continues even after the obligatory defrocking (castrating?) of their masculine role at the end. Indeed the image or thought of a Phallic Woman often remains as an ideal in the memory of the audience and sometimes as a physical presence in the concluding action. Paglia reads Hymen (who was traditionally portrayed as a beautiful young man) as the "emanation or double . . . [the] projected mental image of the transvestite Rosalind."[14] Viola, the penultimate hermaphroditic figure of Shakespeare's comedies, who both "is and is not" (V. i. 217) what she seems, retains her double persona to the very end: her "maid's garments" (V. i. 275) are unavailable at the final curtain. Imogen and Julia also remain dressed as page boys even after their identities are revealed. As Garber[15] suggests, the illusion of the Phallic Woman in Shakespeare seems almost governed by the principles of the fetish: in the cases of Julia, Viola, and Imogen, the climax denies them a penis at the same time it celebrates the illusion of their double persona.

The difference between the male and female philobat in films holds in Shakespeare's comedies as well. Rosalind, Portia, and Viola steer past all dangerous objects. The world is made to fit them, even if their clothes are not. Arden protects Rosalind. Belmont proves a haven for Portia and all of her guests. Time

unties the knot Viola can't undo. Even Imogen safely maneuvers a plot so intricate that few can remember its order of events, her starved wanderings leading her to the idyllic cave retreat of the family she didn't know existed. Yet Falstaff dressed as a woman will find his environment less than friendly, his costume constricting if not castrating. His role as fat Mother Prat in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* proves a punishment for wooing two women at the same time and ultimately robs him of some of his natural ability to control his surroundings.

Would-be philobats like Bertram in *All's Well that Ends Well* and Angelo in *Measure for Measure* do not fare nearly as well—in both their own eyes and the audience's. Each attempts to move through his respective world free and unencumbered. Bertram longs for adventure and spurns his mother's wishes, guardian's request, and wife's nuptial rights/rites. Angelo also presents an independent stance to Vienna. His high moral standards make him appear above reproach; his serpentine maneuvers, above the law. But in the end both characters are forced to publicly admit their personal failings and (much like their movie counterparts) marry the ladies who so diligently pursed them. Unlike the happier comedies manned by Viola, Rosalind, and Portia, *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* are deemed problem plays, one of the problems surely revolving around unattractive heroes.

Duke Vincentio is one of few successful male philobats in Shakespeare's canon. His friar costume permits him to move about his kingdom freely and unquestioned: seeking, finding, entering, and changing his subjects' troubled hearts. However, although he too claims to need no one in the beginning, "Believe not that the dribbling dart of love / Can pierce a complete bosom" (I. iii. 2-3), he later finds "an apt remission in [himself]" (V. i. 498) and proposes to the woman who inspired it.

Humor in Shakespeare's comedies and romances follows the same pattern previously traced in film and television. Big laughs are saved for male philobats, such as Parolles, Jaques, Bottom, Malvolio, Stephano, whose pretensions are almost systematically debunked. Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek fit nicely into the list of fat/thin comedy teams. Surely one of *Twelfth Night*'s comic highlights is when Belch's all-too-clever plan to marry his uptight niece is literally cut to shreds by the sword of Viola's twin. But no leveling awaits his female counterpart, Maria. Her plan to humble Malvolio goes off without a hitch, perhaps making her heir to Belch's role as philobat as well as literal heir as his wife.

Of course, the most notable example of this comic pattern is the large-in-girth, larger-in-spirit Falstaff and his skinny straight man, Prince Hal. More than Belch, Falstaff illustrates the full-flying form of the philobat, who can't be cornered or trapped by his outrageous lies, even when forced to face them head-on. Much of the comedy in the tavern scenes is almost circular in structure, tracing the rise and decline of Falstaff's ego. His pretentious boasting seems almost to birth his downfall, which then miraculously births an even more preposterous falsehood that continues, at least for Falstaff, the illusion of his omnipotence. Of course, the *Henry IV* plays are not romantic comedies, which might explain why Falstaff loses much of his allure when forced to leave the play world of the tavern. But though Falstaff refuses to admit his lack of courage, intellect, nobility, his constant forget-me-nots to the throne's heir betray his ocnophil status. The story of his death in *Henry V* is told in such a way to suggest that Falstaff has finally bowed to Hal's rejection and died of a broken heart.

No such fate awaits Shakespeare's comic heroines. The vast majority of female characters in the comedies, pants or no, could be described as strong, smart, determined: Helena, Isabella, the princess of *Love's Labor's Lost*, even Cressida are all strangely independent both in thought and action. The sport to this tradition is *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Here we have a play seemingly structured to challenge (as opposed to celebrate) just that, female self-sufficiency. Amazon is captured, girlfriends divided, and a goddess subdued by some questionable narcotics. What gives, and why is this play such a crowd-pleaser?

Perhaps the best way to fathom the play is to turn to the heart of its troubles: the dispute over a changeling boy. Consider Titania's reasoning to continue the war with her husband regardless of its consequences to nature:

> Set your heart at rest;
> The fairy land buys not the child of me.
> His mother was a vot'ress of my order,
> And in the spiced Indian air, by night,
> Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
> And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
> Marking th' embarked traders on the flood;
> When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive
> And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
> Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait,
> Following (her womb then rich with my young squire)
> Would imitate, and sail upon the land
> To fetch me trifles, and return again,

> As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
> But she, being mortal, of that boy did die,
> And for her sake do I rear up her boy;
> And for her sake I will not part with him.
> (II. i. 121-37)

The origin of the dispute is both explained and rationalized by the origin of the boy—surely the closest we come in Shakespeare to a supernatural conception. As such, the passage aptly foreshadows Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra's floating divinity, where woman reflects and merges with the natural elements (*Ant.* II. ii. 191-218). Here an invisible force appears to impregnate passing ships, their sails "conceive / And grow big-bellied." The mother rivals their fertility, her pretty swimming gait sheltering a cargo infinitely more rich. Titania envisions a totally feminine world, weighted with maternity: a woman's womb sails upon the land imitating, not just the "traders on the flood," but the aqueous womb of mother earth; a genderless wind breathes life into trade and laughter into women who identify with its life-giving force.[16]

Still, there's something slightly suspect in the passage despite its lyrical beauty. First, a mercantile conceit underlies the birth process, indirectly suggesting that the boy is a commodity to be owned by the mother. Consider that the votress is compared to a "trader," its haul/her womb heavy with "merchandise," thus making the baby the last of the "trifles" given to her mistress. The fairy land *buys* not the child of Titania. Second, and perhaps more important, there is no mention of men in this obvious description of the birth process—not the fairy father that would have him his knight, nor the Indian king who could claim him as son (indeed Puck tells us that Titania has stolen him from his real father). Two women, bound together by the ties of friendship (much like the prepubescent Hermia and Helena), gossip one fine Indian evening on a yellow beach. Communing with the earth and each other, they bring life into the world as if by some magical act of self-generation.[17]

Why must this illusion be dispelled in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? And how is this celebration of feminine omnipotence different from the magical personas of Rosalind, Viola, Portia, and Imogen? The heroines I discussed earlier found their magic in a merging of identities: male and female, and thus the projected illusion of a Phallic Woman. But Titania and her earthly twin, Hippolyta (as Queen of the Amazons), embrace only the female, their decisions to live without men suggesting that the other half of the human race are not really needed—for compan-

ionship or procreation. Surely much of the play can be seen as a squaring off of the sexes. Nor does Titania project some wondrous merging of mother and child as does Imogen (and her sister in romance, Marina[18]). Instead, her identification is with the dead mother, her votress and best friend. A mortal mother is replaced by a supernatural one: this mother cannot die. Is it ridiculous to suggest that if a parent cannot die, then a child cannot, certainly need not, grow up? The motif of the parent who denies her child maturity is partially mirrored in Egeus' irrational refusal to let Hermia choose her own husband, his language echoing Titania's in its financial possessiveness: "And she is mine, and all my right of her / I do estate unto Demetrius" (my italics, I. i. 97-98). Even the play's opening image suggests a similar problem created when a young man is halted in the cycle of life by a mother who doesn't die: "but O, methinks, how slow / This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires, / Like to a step-dame or a dowager / Long withering out a young man's revenue" (I. i. 3-6).

Though *A Midsummer Night's Dream* lacks a shimmering female figure to outshine her male counterpart, perhaps the play may still be structured through male and female wishes. As already suggested, the female figure is again linked with the wish of the philobat: to be free, totally independent. The play is filled with mini-idylls void of men: the Amazon tribe suggested through its conquered queen, Titania's female bonding with the pregnant votress, Hermia and Helena's double-cherry childhood. Given the fate of the female cast, both Montrose and Garner have argued convincingly that the comedy supports male disruption/destruction of the intimate bonds between women.[19] But the wish for some female utopia is also curbed by Mother Nature; for babies are not created by women alone, and the marriage beds cannot be blessed without a physical union of man and woman at the finale. In the terms of the play, the old moon must finally give way to the new: Luna, the goddess of chastity, revolves one quarter turn to let her earthy, more fertile side, Diana, shine and thus perhaps stave off the final phase/face of Hecate.

The twin to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* might well be *Love's Labor's Lost.* Only here the all-male utopia of King Ferdinand and his courtiers is based upon the structure of education, fame garnered by the collection of knowledge. This earnest group of ocnophils will be disrupted by the princess of France and her ladies-in-waiting; and though female force is not used to violate the men's chosen state of independent bliss, their vows

are definitely broken as the two sexes enter into a witty game of courtly love. Again, nature has the final word. News of the death of the princess's father lends a sober tone to the comedy, forcing the would-be scholars not only to rethink their isolated stance apart from women, but what it really means to make a vow for life. Perhaps it is not totally irrelevant to observe that the utopia of female philobats, over the utopia of male ocnophils, shines brighter here as well. Titania and Hippolyta may look conquered in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but they never look pretentious or childish (nor do they write bad sonnets!), all of which Ferdinand and his court do in *Love's Labor's Lost*.

Like their brothers in *Love's Labor's Lost*, the rulers of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* seem more aptly described as ocnophils. Yes, Oberon will finally get the boy, but unlike Titania, who seems blissfully happy without him, he appears angry and frustrated without his wife at his side. One must wonder if it is not the loss of his beloved's adoration as much as the young squire that has bewildered him. Their first twenty line exchange is devoted to mutual accusations of adultery, and Titania's opening line snidely questions the reason for her husband's anger: "What, jealous Oberon?" (II. i. 61). Again, Titania is not the one with the problem: she moves from moonlit revel to fairy ring to sleeping bower with minimum fuss, in spite of the admitted progeny of their dispute: floods, frosts, fog, and famine. As the Queen herself boasts, "the summer still doth tend upon my state" (III. i. 155). Oberon spends the vast majority of the play following her lead, trying to restore, no, not just the status quo, not even the structure of nature, but the structure of human nature (yes, as he sees it). In "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "Jack Shall Have Jill; / Nought Shall Go Ill,'" Garner argues that Oberon asserts his patriarchal claim to dominate/violate woman's independence. But in the case of the lovers, Oberon aligns himself with the spurned woman, not the scornful man. He, in effect, grants the wish of the ocnophil, for both himself and Helena: to be recognized by the beloved, to be chosen, cared for, cherished. In the eyes of the ocnophil, love should be returned.

Theseus, Oberon's earthly counterpart, provides a classic definition of the ocnophil. He opens the play tied to the law of the land and the law of reason, regardless of their respective limitations. He admits to being troubled by the rumors of Demetrius's inconstancy, but can only respond to the situation from a prescribed legal viewpoint:

> Hermia, look you arm yourself

> To fit your fancies to your father's will;
> Or else the law of Athens yields you up
> (Which by no means we may extenuate)
> To death, or to a vow of single life.
>
> (I. i. 117-21)

The freewheeling worlds of the lover, the lunatic, and the poet (which the audience must obviously embrace) totally escape this rigid king. His captured wife, however, is "free" enough both in mind and spirit to embrace the lovers' stories as "something of great constancy . . . strange and admirable" (V. i. 26-27). It is only at the end, perhaps due to his upcoming marriage, that Theseus is able to let go of these social and intellectual structures, overstep Egeus's demands, and allow Hermia and Lysander to be married. In the Royal Shakespeare Company's 1981 production, a recalcitrant Hippolyta falls in love with her captor's anguish over this very decision. At an appropriate pause, she places her hand in his, and he opens himself up to the higher, more generous law of love, physically united with his female (dare I say "better"?) half.

Bottom, whose boasting bravura insures most of the belly laughs in the play, joins the list of famous philobats. He coasts from the real world to the fairy world without even missing a beat—or bray, for that matter. But his response to his journey is that of a pure ocnophil: a baby who recognizes his inferiority to the omnipotent mother figure; for that is how Titania treats him, as a replacement for the changeling boy: feeding him, kissing him, weaving flowers in his hair, and likewise refusing to let him go.[20] The world she creates for Bottom is highly descriptive of Balint's infantile period of "primary love." Mustardseed, Peaseblossom, Cobweb, and Moth stand ready guard to meet his every need at the moment he wishes it. The Queen insures her beloved will sleep like a baby prince when she orders a bed of pressed flowers, a fairy lullaby, and a night-light made of bumblebee thighs and glowworm eyes. Bottom accepts this as a dream come true; but once awakened, he is not fool enough to think his "rare vision" (IV. i. 205) can be captured again or even explained. Almost in answer to Sabbath and Hall's theory of womb ambition, Bottom longs to recreate this scene of "primary love" in high art. He will give birth to a ballad, not baby, and claim a part of Titania's omnipotence as his own.

But what is to become of this shimmering illusion of omnipotence once she leaves the world of Shakespearean comedy? Here she promises a magical climax: kingdoms/dukedoms are returned, ships saved, lives spared, ballads created in her honor. A

sense of renewal and community graces the closing curtain; for the heroine only marries the hero of her choice, and children sometimes glimmer on the horizon. The late tragedies prove a complete inversion of this. Heroes regress to children, and the heroines take over the Omnipotent Mother role, feeding wishes of immortality to their respective sons in almost a parody of Winnicott's configuration of the mother/infant relationship. Lady Macbeth feeds her husband the wish to be king, nursing him with endless desire for the unattainable. Volumnia feeds her son the wish to be invincible, nursing him with the "valiantness" (III. ii. 129) required of a man who "wants nothing of a god but eternity and a heaven to throne in" (V. iv. 23-24). True, the nursing imagery evoked by these women is rather unusual. Lady Macbeth imagines smashing a baby's skull while it nurses at her breast (I. vii. 54-59). Cleopatra's idea of suicide is to suckle a serpent (V. ii. 309-10). Volumnia, in aesthetic rapture, equates a nursing breast with a bleeding war wound (I. iii. 40-43). Surely these gruesome images leave something to be desired. Or is that it? Even the nursing imagery underlines that what is being nursed here is "something to be desired": dynasty, legend, immortality.

Be it comedy or tragedy, the illusion of omnipotence embraced by the philobat seems inherently linked to woman in Shakespeare's universe: most noticeably, the Phallic Woman in the comedies, the Omnipotent Mother in the late tragedies. Could this change in the female role from comedy to tragedy reflect the playwright's understanding of the two genres? The structure of comedy embraces the wish of the philobat. A magical union of opposites is celebrated, be that of the male and female elements found in Rosalind, Viola, Portia; or the fusion of mother and child found in Imogen and Marina; or simply the union of husband and wife/philobat and ocnophil found in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Quasi-magical worlds like Arden, Belmont, and the Fairy Woods liquidate the boundaries of reality and float the protagonist past any obstacles that stand between her and a happy ending. Marriage is embraced, and the promise of children touches immortality. Female characters dominate this genre.

Tragedy, however, proves the recognition of the ocnophil: that we are not omnipotent, that we are, in fact, shamefully mortal. The Phallic Woman with all her mystery and promise becomes a dangerous mother figure—dangerous for suggesting that her son is everything he wishes himself to be: larger than life, above the law, a philobat. Reality will prove him wrong; yet

the wish this mother/lover feeds him (as well as herself) is what makes the tragic hero magnificent, unforgettable. Fame, not children, promises immortality. A hero's story, not his marriage, closes the curtain. More often than not, male characters get the title roles as well as the titles.

Comedy and tragedy blend in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and perhaps that in part explains the great push for male and female to come together. A dark current runs through its laughter in the form of Hermia's nightmare of a strangling snake, open graves and howling wolves, the lion's roar, an eerie memory of a shroud. Both Bottom and Titania will use music to control their fears: Bottom's cuckoo ditty proves he's not afraid; a lullaby to ward off reptile, snail, and spider charms the goddess to sleep. More important, marriage combines with music to provide an ocnophilic structure against these horrors. The lovers lie safely in each other's arms during Puck's frightening close, their first and future night sanctified with "sweet peace" (V. i. 418). The marriage beds are further blessed with loyalty between husband and wife, and children free of deformity. Even the dust, if not eliminated, is swept behind the door.

Everything in the play leads up to a marriage of opposites: male and female, philobat and ocnophil. Harmony is the happy ending. Remember, this is a world where the hunting hounds are bred for their voices, not swiftness. Even the mechanicals' play will be chosen for its harmony of discords:

> "A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
> And his love Thisby; very tragical mirth."
> Merry and tragical? Tedious and brief?
> That is hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
> How shall we find the concord of this discord?
> (V. i. 56-60)

Such a question could be asked of all Shakespeare's comedies. In *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, the harmony is internalized within the heroine herself. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the concord is created by the physical, empathic, and imaginative union of man and woman, ruler and subject, actor and audience—a triple marriage/a trio of duets celebrated quite literally in dance. The mechanicals' welcomed Bergomask is followed by the newlyweds' "nightly revels" (V. i. 370) and climaxed in the Fairies' tripping dance of blessings. Like Astaire and Rogers' *pas de deux*, gravity is defied, death delayed, in the closing scene, the performance itself dancing beyond the theatrical structure of stage and "shadow," costume

and light, to shimmer before us—alone. Even Puck steps back insisting that the *Dream* is our own.[21]

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Notes

[1]Gerald Mast, *Can't Help Singin': The American Muscial on Stage and Screen* (Woodstock, NY: Over-look Press, 1987), p. 10. See also Stanley Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981) and Gerald Mast, *The Comic Mind: Comedy and the Movies* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973).

[2]The notion that a baby may enjoy a sense of omnipotence due to an attentive parent does not originate with Balint or the British School, but with Freud's "Formulations Regarding the Two Principles in Mental Functioning" (1911), *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), vol. 12, 218-26. In a lengthy footnote to this essay, Freud provides the basic structure of psychoanalysis: a hungry baby hallucinates the breast and, being fed, sleeps—the pleasure principle; but when the hallucination is not successful, the baby cries/kicks/screams until breast/bottle/baby food appears—the reality principle. Freud does not focus on this moment of illusory omnipotence when the baby's wish is promptly met: for him, the reality principle impinges upon the pleasure principle early and frequently in life. But analysts from the British School, such as Klein, Balint, and Winnicott, will highlight this moment of suspension and rework Freud's model in pre-oedipal development: infant/object relations is born. It should be noted that these analysts follow the lead of Freud's contemporary Sandor Ferenczi, who argued that a child's belief in his own omnipotence began in the womb when every need was automatically met by the mother's body. For Ferenczi's analysis of magical thinking in children, see his essay "Stages in the Development of the Sense of Reality," *First Contributions to Psycho-Analysis* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1952), 213-39. For Winnicott's discussion on "transitional objects," see his book *Playing and Reality* (London: Routledge, 1971). Hana Segal provides a good introduction to Klein's theory of infantile fantasies; see her book *Introduction to Melanie Klein* (New York: Basic Books, 1964). (A version of this essay first appeared in my dissertation, *Magical Thinking in Shakespeare's Tragedies*, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1995, 29-59.)

Throughout the paper I will refer to the parent as mother for several reasons: one, the vast majority of mothers are still the primary caretakers of their children; two, the theories I'm dealing with encourage such a choice with their own terminology; and three, part of my argument revolves around the attraction of an omnipotent mother figure to both sexes. I will refer to the baby as "he" for clarity's sake.

[3]This list is by no means exhaustive; it also does not account for variations on the theme, such as triangular relationships found in *Gone with the Wind* (Dir. Victor Fleming, 1939) or *Star Spangled Girl* (Dir. Jerry Paris, 1971). However, it was compiled with certain guidelines in mind. I tried to choose films where romance was central to the plot, thus forcing a gender choice for the position of the philobat. I also tried to stay away from films involving the supernatural, though I have made exceptions where the creation of the philobat was intrinsically linked to the wish of the ocnophil as in *Mary Poppins* (Dir. Robert Stevenson, 1964) or *Splash* (Dir. Ron

Howard, 1984). Some of the films were chosen for their perfect portrayals of either a philobat or ocnophil, even though the romantic interest might represent more of a normal position or prove secondary to the plot as in the action/adventure James Bond or Indiana Jones series.

[4]*Desperately Seeking Susan* (Dir. Susan Seidelman, 1985) presents a female philobat who is attractive to both sexes. The wife and husband, both locked in their hum-drum lives, are respectively obsessed and seduced by her. Susan joins the list of larger-than-life female characters who rule the world around them with a certain sense of fun and flair.

Could this attraction to legendary female figures cross over into gay idealizations of women? This is at least true in the shadow world of stereotypes. The stereotypical homosexual in the arts is someone who has close female friends and who idolizes Judy Garland, Liza Minnelli, Barbara Streisand, and Marilyn Monroe. However, the stereotypical lesbian doesn't reflect this bias. She does not idolize the gay equivalent of female stardom by swearing allegiance to Clark Gable and Humphrey Bogart. Instead, her idols are also strong and talented actresses, such as Jody Foster and Angelica Huston. Such a universal focus on the omnipotent female figure might also shed light on why female impersonators have no real equivalent in the opposite sex.

[5]Balint, *Thrills and Regressions*, p. 29.

[6]Dan Sabbath and Mandel Hall, *End Product: The First Taboo* (New York: Urizen, 1977), p. 51.

[7]Leonard Shengold, "Everything: A Poetic Meditation on Freud's Question, 'What Does a Woman Want?,'" *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 10 (1989), 419-22.

[8]Sigmund Freud, "On the Sexual Theories of Children" (1908), *SE*, vol. 9, 209-26; "Femininity" (1933), *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, *SE*, vol. 22, 112-35; "Fetishism," (1927), *SE*, vol. 21, 152-57.

[9]Film critic Wes Gehring argues for a similar pairing in screwball comedies: the man is often cast as a child that needs to grow up to become a fit partner for his lover or just the opposite: a boring, rigid adult in desperate need of saving by a spirited ingenue; see his book *Screwball Comedy: A Genre of Madcap Romance* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 44-45. Rick Altman analyzes musical couples in terms of sexual opposites: "one partner's apparent fear of sexuality is compensated for by the other's lawless, uncontrolled drives"; see his book *The American Musical* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1987), p. 141.

[10]The difference between the female and male philobat in films is also embraced outside of the sphere of romance. Consider *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (Dir. George Roy Hill, 1969) and its obvious feminine counterpart, *Thelma and Louise* (Dir. Ridley Scott, 1991). Both films boast likeable same-sex duos, much comedy, and center around a long, involved chase. The four protagonists, up until the very end, always appear one step ahead of the law and embrace their freedom. But though the endings for both couples are the same, the underlying message to the audience is quite different. Thelma and Louise, cornered by a police caravan and cliff, choose death–freely–their car flying into space. We do not see the inevitable crash. The credits roll on the last frame: that one moment of suspension when car and women defy gravity. The ending (complete with brave smiles from both Thelma and Louise) attempts to suggest that their choice for freedom over bondage (by prison or men) is uplifting.

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid are likewise trapped in a Bolivian open shack and surrounded by an army of law officers. But unlike their female counterparts, they meet their fate with surprise. Butch's last words are "For a moment there I thought we were in trouble." The last frame freezes on their gun-drawn stance, but

the audience hears the captain's call and three rounds of shooting. Where Thelma and Louise choose death Cleopatra-style, Butch and Sundance are defeated by reality, a reality already predicted by Sundance's girlfriend, Etta Place.

[11]*Dirty Dancing* (Dir. Emile Ardolino, 1987) and *Strictly Ballroom* (Dir. Baz Luhrmann, 1992-Australian) act as modern versions of Astaire's dancing romances. The heroes, both loners, fall in love with their stumbling-turned-stunning female partners *on* the dance floor. This perfect union of male and female is also celebrated in the all male chorus line of *Victor/Victoria* (Dir. Blake Edwards, 1982). Each dancer is dressed as a man in the front and a woman in the back or vice versa. Quick turns on the dance floor give the illusion of a man and woman dancing together.

[12]Camille Paglia uses this point to argue for a "touch of male homosexual coquetry" in the epilogue. Her chapter, "Shakespeare and Dionysus: *As You Like It* and *Antony and Cleopatra*," focuses on the sexual ambiguity of Rosalind, Viola, and Cleopatra and provides a more detailed analysis of the "dazzling series of impersonations" required by the role of Rosalind. See her book, *Sexual Personae* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 204-05. William Kerrigan also explores gender roles/gender friendships in his essay, "Female Friends and Fraternal Enemies in *As You Like It*," *Desire in the Renaissance*, eds. Valerie Finucci and Regina Schwartz (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994), 184-203. For a detailed examination of transvestism and the Phallic Woman in Shakespeare's plays, see Marjorie Garber's chapter on "Fetish Envy" (pp. 118-27) and sections devoted to the "Transvestite Shakespeare" (pp. 32-40), *Vested Interest: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

[13]All quotations from Shakespeare's plays will be taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Hourghton Mifflin, 1974).

[14]See Paglia, *Sexual Personae*, p. 211.

[15]See Garber, *Vested Interests*, pp. 122-27.

[16]C. L. Barber presents a similar reading: Titania's speech provides the audience with "a glimpse of women who gossip alone, apart from men and feeling now no need of them, rejoicing in their own special part of life's power"; see his book *Shakespeare's Festive Comedies* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 136-37.

[17]For an alternate reading of this passage, see Louis Montrose, "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture," *Representations*, 2 (1983), 61-94; reprinted, *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988), 31-64. Montrose argues that Titania's celebration of female fecundity is an answer to Theseus's notion of paternity in the opening scene (*MND* I. i. 47-51), i.e., Titania excludes men from the birth process and Theseus excludes women. I agree wholeheartedly with this assessment, though I am somewhat mystified that Montrose still reads the passage as undercutting the woman's power to create life, but supporting man's:

> Nevertheless, despite the exclusion of a paternal role from Titania's speech, Shakespeare's embryological notions remain distinctly phallocentric: the mother is represented as a vessel, as a container for her son; she is not his maker. In contrast, the implication of Theseus' description of paternity is that the male is the only begetter; a daughter is merely a token of her father's potency. Thus these two speeches may be said to formulate in poetic discourse, a proposition about the genesis of gender and power: men make women, and make themselves through the medium of women. (*Representing the English Renaissance*, p. 42)

Though I follow Montrose's line of thought, I would argue that the imagery of this passage overwhelmingly suggests that *women make men*. The vessel and the generative power belong to Titania and her mistress. Specifically, the women's words, passing back and forth between the two as they gossip on the beach, indeed their breath mingling in the warm night air, figuratively create and verbally recreate the child's birth. This generative act parallels the wanton wind impregnating the ship sails and takes us back to the first act of generation: God breathing life into Adam's nostrils. In an essay analyzing paintings of the Annunciation, where Mary is fertilized by words or wind entering through her ear, Ernest Jones traces the idea of impregnation by breath through world mythology, folklore, and philosophy. He quotes Titania's speech as a poetic remnant of these ancient beliefs; see his essay "The Madonna's Conception through the Ear," *Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis* (London: International Psycho-Analytical Press, 1923), p. 279.

[18]With pleasure I observe that the romantic heroine Marina is a philobat: her magical virtue outmaneuvers murderers, pirates, pimps, and paying customers! Surely part of her magic comes from the incorporation of her missing mother. Pericles, her father, recognizes this fusion of parent and child: "O, come hither, / Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget" (V. i. 194-95).

[19]See S. N., "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*: 'Jack Shall Have Jill; / Nought Shall Go Ill,'" *Women's Studies*, 9 (1981), 47-63; Montrose, "'Shaping Fantasies'..." 31-64.

[20]Weston Gui's "Bottom's Dream" (1952-53) argues for an oedipal reading of the triangular relationship between jealous Oberon, doting Titania, the changeling child and/or his replacement, Bottom; see his essay "Bottom's Dream," *American Imago*, 9 (1952-53), 251-305. Montrose's "'Shaping Fantasies'" likewise sees Bottom being treated as both lover and child by an alternating nurturing and infanticidal mother (p. 41).

[21]This paper was presented at the University of Massachusetts' colloquium "Tuesdays at 4:00pm" on May 10, 1994. Robert Bagg's opening question "What happens when two philobats fall in love?" led me to rethink my equation from a different vantage point. Double philobat romances do occur in romantic comedies (e.g., Shakespeare's Beatrice and Benedict, *Much Ado About Nothing*), but I wonder if these couples tend to inhabit the world of sweeping romance more than romantic comedy. The most obvious example that comes to mind is *Gone with the Wind*: the ever-independent and resourceful Scarlett O'Hara loves the honor-bound, tradition-hound Ashley Wilkes, realizing only too late that her passion is really tied to the equally independent Rhett Butler. The double philobat romance likewise blossoms on the written page in the paperback historical romances so popular today: two fiery independent people clash wills, only to realize in the end that they can't do without one another. Philobat or no, the state of being in love belongs to the ocnophil.

At the same colloquium, Normand Berlin's comments on Woody Allen as ocnophil prompted me to ask myself the opposite question: "What happens when two ocnophils fall in love?" Obviously, you get the mature Woody Allen. *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy* (Dir. Woody Allen, 1982) and *Hannah and Her Sisters* (Dir. Woody Allen, 1986) present Woody's endearing ocnophil adoring Mia Farrow's philobat, but ending up with the ocnophilic Mary Steenburgen and Dianne Wiest, respectively. Specifically, the miracle in *Hannah and Her Sisters* (which in some small way condemns the self-sufficient Hannah) is delivered in the last line.

The Splintered Glass
by James Schiffer

> Who, if not us, will question once more the objective status of this "I," which a historical evolution peculiar to our culture tends to confuse with the subject? . . . An impossible mirage in linguistic forms . . . in which the subject appears fundamentally in the position of being determinant or instrumental of action.
> —Jacques Lacan (*Écrits* 23)

> I'll be at charges for a lookinglass,
> And entertain a score or two of tailors
> To study fashions to adorn my body.
> Since I am crept in favor with myself,
> I will maintain it with some little cost.
> —*Richard III* (I. ii. 258-62)

For almost every critic who has exulted in the opening speech of *Richard III*, there are those who have descanted on the deformity of Richard's nightmare soliloquy in V. iii. One problem these critics point to is the improbability of the remorseless Richard of the earlier acts (or, for that matter, of the Richard later in the same scene) suffering from a bad conscience just because he is visited by eleven vengeful ghosts. A second problem is the rough-hewn quality of the speech itself. Pounding both drums, E. E. Stoll points out that Richard's remorse on the eve before battle is not only unrealistic but is also "crudely and ambiguously represented" (347). Wilbur Sanders has written that the soliloquy is "exceedingly wildly aimed, and, in any case, too clumsy a blunderbuss to do more than disintegrate the object of its activity" (106-07). Although sympathetic to Shakespeare's dilemma at this point in the play (whether to expand Richard's "punch self" or else fail to explore moral issues raised by the action), Sanders finds "something more than faintly comic" about Richard's "antithetical warring selves." Richard, he observes, "simply hops like a flea from one antithesis to another" (107).

Not every critic has taken such a harsh view of the final speech, but those who appreciate its frenetic movements are in the minority. Peter Milward calls it "[t]he most interesting . . . of all [Richard's] soliloquies. . . . For a brief moment [Richard's]

mask is removed and we can see him as a man, endowed with a conscience. He can even speak with himself, and answer himself, revealing more selves in himself than the evil self he has hitherto shown. . . . What he now utters in soliloquy is at last deeply human, as, prompted by his conscience, he realizes his loneliness, his guilt, and his need of love and pity. His very sentences are short and broken, as though reflecting a broken heart" (10-11). Wolfgang Clemen writes that "It is an astonishing piece of self-revelation, second in importance only to the opening soliloquy from which it differs in every way. . . . [Richard] appears . . . to express thoughts emanating from different levels of consciousness. In a relatively short passage a psychological drama of great immediacy is enacted" (Shakespeare's Soliloquies *20). Meanwhile, in his stage history of* Richard III, *Scott Colley regards lines in the final soliloquy as "among the most powerful of the many words spoken in Shakespeare's play. . . . The fractured syntax, the starts and stops, the assertions and denials, all represent a dramatic voice not previously heard in the play. Richard has shown brilliant mastery of language throughout the tragedy, but here for the first time, something distorted in the inner man emerges in his troubled, syncopated speech. It is an extraordinary moment in the play—almost electric in effect—all the more striking because the audience has not encountered such rhythms" (30-31).*

From an actor's or a director's point of view, the final soliloquy has often seemed a nightmare, a sorry decline from the dramaturgically sophisticated *coup de theatre* that opens the play. In his famous film version of *Richard III*, for example, Laurence Olivier preserves only the fact of Richard's waking in sweaty terror and shouting: "Give me another horse! Bind up my wounds! / Have mercy, Jesu!" Here as elsewhere in the film Olivier follows the lead of eighteenth century adapter-director Colley Cibber: "Cibber cut the number of ghosts from eleven to four, and did not allow them to address Richmond. He realized, as later directors have, that the ghost scene is one of the more difficult in the play to bring off" (Colley 7). According to Colley, "Cibber apparently could not stomach the shocking change in Richard's diction and character. . . . Four straightforward lines replace Shakespeare's two dozen," including the famous addition: "Conscience avaunt; Richard's himself again!" (31). Cibber's changes have had a long influence: "most of the important Shakespearean Richards of the nineteenth century—Phelps,

Irving, Edwin Booth, Calvert, and Benson—cut Richard's awakening speech nearly to the length of Cibber's, and removed Richard's most tortured expressions of self-hatred and remorse (that is, lines 188-92 and 202-03)" (32).

Olivier's cuts may not reflect a harsh judgment of the speech so much as an attempt to save time and money, to compensate for tampering (mainly by addition) with Shakespeare's opening. Not every production, of course, cuts the last soliloquy. And it is even possible to turn the speech into exciting theater. In her TLS *review of the 1989 Clifford Williams's production at the Phoenix Theatre in London, Julie Hankey writes: "[Derek] Jacobi's nightmare speech is a* tour de force, *delirious with panic, and ending finally in weak, mad laughter" (111). After observing that the scene has "provided a particular challenge for great actors" (22), Clemen notes that William Hogarth's portrait of David Garrick as "Richard 'starting from his dream,' . . . has been called 'probably the greatest theatre portrait painted in England'" (22). Clemen goes on to say that in "recent productions this soliloquy has also been turned to account in indicating a schizophrenic state of mind, or megalomania. Ian Richardson, after playing the part at Stratford, remarked in an interview: 'When it comes to that last soliloquy you realize that he is no longer talking to the audience but to this schizoid person, this alter ego, and you trace back through the script to find where this began to happen and when he started shutting out the audience from his confidence. You find it—and this shows Shakespeare's remarkable insight—from the moment the crown is on his head'" (23). Colley notes that "[a]udiences schooled by Freudian and other psychological characterizations in novels and plays have seemed better able to accept Shakespeare's writing of Richard's soliloquy than have earlier playgoers" (32).*

One could argue that the falling off in the quality of Richard's language and the near-complete disjuncture from Richard's former self are what the last soliloquy is designed to convey. Such a reading, no doubt, will sound like another attempt to defend "bad Shakespeare," to rationalize the errors of a young dramatist who perhaps "has bitten off more than he can chew" (Sanders 107). Possibly so. But there is also no denying that the qualitative decline from first to last soliloquy fits very neatly into the play's mirror structure of parallelism and contrast,

whereby Richard's rise is balanced against his fall, his crimes against his punishment, the first three acts against the last two; and these movements are paralleled by our initial, ambivalent attraction to Richard and our eventual, ambivalent revulsion from him. Once Richard gains the crown at the end of act three, his efficacy and his appeal as a sportive villain decline significantly (efficacy and appeal are, of course, closely related). Instead of the subtle Richard of the first three acts who with consummate skill divides and conquers the court of England, who operates brilliantly against the foolish and the guilty, we have the heavy-handed, paranoiac king of act four who tells Buckingham (referring to the innocent princes) that he wishes "the bastards dead" (IV.ii. 18). Instead of Richard's bold, preposterous, successful wooing of the Lady Anne in I. ii, we have Richard's very similar, but much lengthier—and ultimately unsuccessful—wooing of Queen Elizabeth for her daughter's hand in IV. iv. (The latter scene inevitably reminds us of the earlier wooing. Elizabeth may appear to cave in, prompting Richard to call her a "Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman" [IV. iv. 431], but we learn in the next scene that "the Queen hath heartily consented" that Richmond "should espouse Elizabeth her daughter" [IV .v. 7-8].) Instead of the confident Richard of act one who cannot wait to have "the world . . . to bustle in" (I. i. 152), we get the Richard who concedes in act five that he has "not that alacrity of spirit / Nor cheer of mind" that he "was wont to have" (V. iii. 73-74). Given all this evidence of decline, it should not surprise us that Richard's final soliloquy lacks the rhetorical sparkle of his first, or that we are reminded of Richard's initially spirited villainy even as we witness his suffering, however clumsy the depiction, through a night of fear and trembling.

The crudity of its rendering notwithstanding, the final soliloquy is quite fascinating from the point of view of Lacanian psychoanalysis. The speech, especially as it stands in relation to the first soliloquy, seems to illustrate with great clarity many of Lacan's ideas about the formation and disintegration of a subject's identity: the theory of the mirror stage, the subject's illusion of autonomous, unified selfhood; the aggressiveness that underlies and protects this illusion; the often inevitable fragmentation, especially in dreams, of the subject's fiction of a coherent, unified, essential self—what Lacan calls the retrospective fantasy of the *corps morcelé* ("the body in bits and pieces"), and the notions that "the unconscious is the discourse of the other" and that psychosis is the uncontrollable resounding of such discourse in the subject's conscious mind.[1]

In light of Lacanian theory, one might be tempted to say that in the first soliloquy we actually witness Richard in the process of fashioning an identity for himself, creating himself through language, but in fact, this self-fashioning has already taken place. (See Pearlman, Adelman 1-10, Garber 28-51, and Neill 103-114.) The crucial moment of self-fashioning occurs in Richard's soliloquy in III. ii of *Henry VI, Part III*, where Richard spends comparatively more lines than he does in *Richard III* weighing the prospect of becoming a lover:

> Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard;
> What other pleasure can the world afford?
> I'll make my heaven in a lady's lap,
> And deck my body in gay ornaments,
> And witch sweet ladies with my words and
> looks.
>
> (146-50)

But Richard quickly rejects this option because of his deformed body:

> O miserable thought, and more unlikely
> Than to accomplish twenty golden crowns!
> Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb;
> And for I should not deal in her soft laws,
> She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe,
> To shrink mine arm up like a withered shrub,
> To make an envious mountain on my back,
> Where sits deformity to mock my body;
> To shape my legs of an unequal size,
> To disproportion me in every part,
> Like to a chaos, or an unlicked bear-whelp
> That carries no impression like the dam.
> . . .
> I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,
> And, whiles I live, t' account this world but hell,
> Until my misshaped trunk that bears this head
> Be round impalèd with a glorious crown.
>
> (151-62; 168-71)

Although the speech suggests internal division within Richard, most of the lines, as well as those in Richard's later soliloquy in V. vi, are expository rather than exploratory and dramatic. Richard is not here in the process of discovering what he thinks; rather, he seems to report his already formed thoughts to the audience.

In the first soliloquy of *Richard III*, Richard presents the finished, monstrous product of his self-fashioning to our fasci-

nated gaze:

> And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
> To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
> I am determinèd to prove a villain
> And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
> Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
> By drunken prophesies, libels, and dreams,
> To set my brother Clarence and the King
> In deadly hate the one against the other[.]
>
> (I. i. 28-35)

There is little or no soul-searching here, even less than in Richard's soliloquies in *Henry VI, Part III.* We might even say that there is no soliloquy here, at least not in the sense that we normally use the term, for Richard does not regard himself as alone. Instead, as the theatrical tradition goes, he addresses himself directly to the audience in the manner of a Vice from the medieval drama. [See Robert Weimann's distinction between *platea* and *locus* (73-85)! Also J. L. Styan: "Richard is not a character communing with himself; no accidental disclosure of a secret lies in the text: The speech is an unashamed address to the audience" (168).] And by addressing us, he draws us into collusion with him in his quest for the crown and makes us a character in the play. We share the dangerous, ironic, erotic knowledge of his villainous plots, just as we share his contempt for the now effete court of England:

> Our bruisèd arms hung up for monuments,
> Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
> Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
> Grim-visaged War hath smoothed his wrinkled front;
> And now, instead of mounting barbèd steeds
> To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
> He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
> To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
>
> (I. i. 6-13)

[What do I mean by "we"? Not everyone has responded or will respond positively—or even ambivalently—to aspects of Richard's villainous self-presentation. Many people I know would prefer the "lascivious pleasing of a lute" to "grim-visaged war" any day! Different viewers respond differently to such things as Richard's deformed body (which varies in emphasis from production to production), his misogyny, and his apparent lack of remorse about lying, treason, and murder. Such variations in response from one person to another exist both within

and across historical periods. Watch how I speak of "we" and "us." Watch how you use Lacan, Freud, and others to construct a universal audience's "unitary reaction." The universal audience with its unitary response is as much a myth as is the unified self, or for that matter, the unitary Early Modern response or self.]

The anaphoric use of "our" has the primary meaning here of "those of the house of York" and perhaps also of the royal "we" applied solely to Richard, but Richard's (and Shakespeare's?) rhetorical motive here is to bind us to the protagonist within the force field of the first person plural, even as what Richard describes is the peace-time dismembering of the body politic ("Our bruisèd arms hung up for monuments").

[Note the different, but interesting and equally valid way Clemen reads this: "The second section of the soliloquy opens with Richard's But I, *which stresses his isolation while it detaches him from the* our *which had linked the earlier lines on conditions at court and in the country" (*Commentary 4*). Part of Richard's appeal for us is his posture as the lone individual fighting for the crown against incredible odds.]*

Furthermore, Richard has deftly suggested the deterioration of the military virtues of the nation into the vices of self-indulgence and venality. Later phrasings in the speech such as "this weak piping time of peace" (24), "these fair well-spoken days" (29), and "the idle pleasures of these days" (31) have the additional function of suggesting their opposite in the character of Richard, who is strong rather than "weak," who acts rather than is "well-spoken," and who pursues power rather than these "idle pleasures." Given such a choice, we—*or at least most of us, or rather, a great part of most of us*—side with Richard. In the fantasy image of Richard's wholeness, the desire for our own psychic wholeness is rekindled. In Lacanian terms, Richard is the illusory unified self in the mirror. This is not to say that the spectacle of his wholeness makes most members of the audience feel whole; on the contrary, Richard's attractive single-mindedness divides and complicates our overall response.

[Lacan writes: "We have only to understand the mirror stage *as an identification*, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place within the subject when he assumes an image" (*Écrits* 2).

"The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation—and which manufac-

tures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic—and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development. . . .

"This fragmented body . . . usually manifests itself in dreams when the movement of the analysis encounters a certain level of aggressive disintegration in the individual. It then appears in the form of disjointed limbs, or of those organs represented in exoscopy, growing wings and taking up arms for intestinal persecutions" (*Écrits* 4).

Garber quotes Lacan on the mirror stage after asserting that "The natal circumstances and intrapsychic discourse of Shakespeare's Richard, who ironically resolves, despite his initial disclaimers, to 'court an amorous looking-glass' (I. i. 15; I. ii. 255; I. ii. 262) uncannily anticipate the language of Jacques Lacan's description of the mirror stage" (34-35). Garber sees Richard as Lacan's child, identifying with the wholeness of its image in the mirror. While not disagreeing with that claim, I also see the audience as Lacan's child, taking scopic pleasure in the fantastic image of an undivided Richard on stage.]

Our initial collusion with Richard is not, of course, an undivided experience. The schisms he creates in his family and in the English court have their parallel motions in our responses. Such splitting repeats itself in many guises throughout the play, a notable example being the debate about conscience between the first and second murderers in I. vi:

> Second Murderer. *Look behind you, my lord.*
> First Murderer. *Take that, and that! (Stabs [Clarence].) If all this will not do,*
> *I'll drown you in the malmsey butt within.*
> Exit [with the body]
> Second Murderer. *A bloody deed, and desperately dispatched!*
> *How fain, like Pilate, would I wash my hands*
> *Of this most grievous murder!*
> Enter First Murderer
> First Murderer. *How now? What mean'st thou that thou help'st me not?*
> *By heaven, the Duke shall know how slack you have been.*

> Second Murderer. *I would he knew that I had saved his brother!*
> *Take thou the fee, and tell him what I say,*
> *For I repent me that the Duke is slain.*
> Exit
> First Murderer. *So do not I. Go, coward as thou art.*
> (271-82)

Yes, we (most of us) still have judgment here, still have strong moral reservations against crimes like fratricide. Therefore, our moral fibers recoil as Richard dubs himself a villain, commissions the death of his brother Clarence, and brags of being "subtle, false, and treacherous" (I. i. 37). But that which repels our moral sensibilities attracts other parts of us.

For one thing, there's the aesthetic appeal, our interest in how *Richard will succeed against such incredible odds. Furthermore, most of us enjoy his witty candor, his eloquent sarcasm. Despite our moral reservations, we find his unabashed effort to satisfy his own desires refreshing, perhaps because we are unwilling or unable to pursue (or even admit to possessing) such desires ourselves. In other words, our partial attraction to Richard is a positive response to his own response to temptation: he yields with a purity of purpose and preternatural vitality that are uncompromised by fear of consequence or the inhibitions of morality. Such freedom from conscience makes Richard a fantasy figure, someone exempt from all the rules, a character undivided against himself.* [Norman Holland notes that Freud locates the source of Richard's appeal in Richard's tendency (because of his physical deformity) to make himself an exception "to the ordinary rules of life" (Holland 71).][2] [Although I think she underestimates the degree to which we are implicated in Richard's villainy, Katherine Eisaman Maus provocatively notes our "delight" in being able to discern Richard's real "intentions," which are kept hidden from his victims. Maus observes that in *Richard III* "Shakespeare puts us not only on God's side but in God's place, in the position of 'the high all-seer' in the providential drama of history" (54).]

Well! (as Lacan would say). We have quite another story in the final soliloquy. For one thing, except for the apostrophe to "Jesu," Richard speaks to himself, but shows no awareness of an audience in the theater:

> What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by.
> Richard loves Richard: that is, I am I.
> (V. iii. 182-83)

There is a sense in which this speech is no more a soliloquy than the first one, since Richard is no more alone here than before—but here his companions are not members of the audience but rather his several selves. (There is also the presence on stage of the sleeping Richmond, but in so far as Richard is the only awake and speaking body, the speech remains a soliloquy.) A better description than "soliloquy" might be "colloquy with his several selves." Indeed the notion of there being a single, unified Richard, represented by an "I," is exactly what the speech exposes as an illusion. To speak to oneself at all is to give the lie to the idea of an "I" that somehow adequately represents the totality of the subject:

> Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am.
> Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why:
> Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
> Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good
> That I myself have done unto myself?
> O, no! Alas, I rather hate myself
> For hateful deeds committed by myself!
> I am a villain. Yet I lie, I am not.
> Fool, of thyself speak well. Fool, do not flatter.
> My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
> And every tongue brings in a several tale,
> And every tale condemns me for a villain
> (V. iii. 184-195)

One speaks to oneself in the gap, in the absence of understanding, of mutual knowledge. If there were unity, if the "I" already knew what the "I" was going to say (and here I refer to silently thinking as well as to speaking aloud to oneself), there would be no reason to think or say it. To speak to oneself at all—or for that matter, to have most thoughts—is to acknowledge the differing constituencies within, as well as the lack of accord between them.

In "Shakespeare and the History of Soliloquies," James Hirsh accuses critics of "projecting the interior monologue onto pre-neoclassical drama either by simply ignoring the plentiful evidence that pre-neoclassical soliloquies represented speech acts—the outward behavior of characters—or by applying a muddled and demonstrably anachronistic principle whereby the very same words could simultaneously represent both outward behavior and thought" (1). It is actually Hirsh who is muddled here in

creating a false polarity between speech acts and thoughts. Yes, Richard III speaks aloud after the ghostly visitation in V. iii, and in that sense his words constitute a speech act, but his words also represent Richard's thoughts, his interior selves, his internal division. Hirsh oversimplifies the history of the interiority of the Western subject by dogmatically asserting (citing Francis Barker) that before the late seventeenth century in England there was no essentialist "metaphysics of interiority" (the phrase is Barker's; see David Aers for a refutation of this claim; Aers offers ample evidence of self-reflexive subjectivity and interiority in medieval England). Even if one grants that some soliloquies are dramatized as being overheard by other on-stage auditors and that other speeches are in fact feigned soliloquies, one still must acknowledge that not all soliloquies are overheard or feigned. Hirsh fails to account for what is going on when a character who is genuinely alone on stage speaks and is clearly not overheard by any other character (Hamlet's soliloquy in II. ii of Hamlet, *which begins "Now I am alone")—or when a character utters an aside, as in Macbeth's "This supernatural soliciting" speech in I. iii. Harry Berger Jr.'s concept of "auditory voyeurism" seems appropriate here (see, for example, pp. 74, 93, and especially 102: "Just as there is an element of dialogue in soliloquy, so there must be an element of soliloquy in dialogical speech events"): Richard is audience for his own soliloquizing speech act; he says what he says to discover what he thinks (as Joan Didion has written that she writes to find out what she is thinking).*

It is important not to confuse the concept of interiority with notions of a unified, coherent self. A subject's experience of interiority will often seem disrupted, fragmented, incoherent. Hence, our desire that characters and the works in which they appear "add up" as "complete wholes." Also our desire and expectation for critical discourse, despite the loose ends and contradictions that many critical readings seek to smooth over or conceal. To find a form that can register without falsifying unresolved conflicts of interpretation, differences in critical approach or emphasis, thought, tone, and mood—differences major or minor, subtle or extreme. An approach that resists the totalizing "right reading" that resolves all ambiguities, that resists the posture of the critic as Lacan's "subject supposed to know." To resist the semiotics of the polished essay, the single voice, that comes to stand in for the multivalence of critical consciousness and audience response. The voices that are silenced in the name of hermeneutical consistency.

Throughout Richard's last soliloquy there are distorted ech-

oes of the first one, echoes which perhaps are there to remind us of how great a falling off has occurred. Perhaps no echo is more striking than the repeated use of "I" in both speeches, yet the meaning and effect of this repetitive usage could not be more radically opposed. In the first soliloquy, the nine vocalizations of "I" work toward the construction of Richard as a character of preternatural confidence, coherence, and purity of purpose; in the last soliloquy, the fifteen soundings of "I" register a nightmarish splintering of self. In the first soliloquy, Richard repudiates the role of lover and embraces that of villain; it is as a villain, after all, that he initially achieves a measure of self-love (and wins our fascinated attention as well). His sardonic words after successfully wooing Lady Anne ("I'll be at charges for a looking glass," etc. [I. ii. 258]) do not indicate a change of heart, a revelation that he can indeed be a lover despite his physical deformities, though he has just demonstrated that he could be. Instead, he speaks as a scheming villain, contemptuous both of Anne and of romantic love. However, the expression of self-love at the end of I. ii seems genuine: Richard loves himself *because* he is a villain. In the final soliloquy, however, Richard's villainy is what prevents self-love. The conscience that he has repudiated throughout the play—and will again repudiate later in the same scene ("Conscience is but a word that cowards use, / Devised at first to keep the strong in awe" [309-10])—has unaccountably become internalized, speaking potently with "a thousand several tongues." [Writing in 1975, Michael Neill draws upon R. D. Laing's *The Divided Self* and *Self and Others* to explain the emptiness at Richard's core. According to Neill, "Richard, the chameleon actor who has created himself only in his fleeting changes, can locate no stable self to love, no self solid enough to be loved" (124).]

And what is our response to the spectacle of Richard's fragmentation? If our initial response to Richard's undivided villainy is to experience an ambivalent split between disapproval and chuckling admiration, do we regain our unity of self *(that is, for most of us, the illusion of a unified self)* as we watch Richard fall apart? Certainly, Richard's internal suffering provides us our moment of moral satisfaction, a satisfaction enhanced to the degree that we formerly enjoyed his villainous escapades (see Richard L. Levin's chapter on *Richard III*). And perhaps we (or at least the original Elizabethan audience) are also reassured that God is in his heaven after all. God may sleep for a while, his vengeance may be delayed, but not forever. *Yet along with our punitive satisfaction, our rediscovered moral superiority, our*

sigh of relief that while Richard is punished, we escape and survive; an undercurrent of pity is generated by the scene. The very way the ghosts gang up on Richard while at the same time they bless Richmond perhaps rekindles our sympathy for the underdog. Yet why should we pity Richard? He feels no pity for others, not even for himself:

> I shall despair. There is no creature loves me,
> And if I die, no soul will pity me.
> And wherefore should they, since that I myself
> Find in myself no pity to myself?
>
> (V. iii. 200-03)

For this reason he should be pitied all the more. We pity him—or at least feel fear—because in his self-divisions, his "thousand several tongues," his lost paradise of unity, Richard becomes one like ourselves, a cacophony of rival discourses, a mutinous army hiding behind the mirror of the illusory "I." Aristotle and Lacan embrace. Richard's nightmare disintegration is the splintered glass wherein we glimpse the truth of our own fictive selves, see through the illusion that we are unified and coherent, contained by and within our bodies, from one moment to the next to the next until the end of consciousness. We see in Richard the terrible dreams that shake us nightly. Initially we were captivated by our sense of Richard's powerful agency, that he is "determinèd to prove a villain"; now in the final soliloquy we hear "determinèd to prove a villain" in an entirely different way: Richard has been "determinèd" by Shakespeare, by the propagandistic Tudor historians upon whom Shakespeare relied, and by their version of a God who would shape a Richard to be his scourge. Richard's agency was just an illusion, and we feel comfort that the final joke, the last laugh, is on this most viciously jocular of villains. [Yet as Betty A. Schellenberg observes, "To the end, Richard refuses to accept the paradigm of Margaret's curses with its underlying suggestion that he might be the duped instrument of a retributive God. Thus in his final despairing soliloquy he turns not against God, but against himself as the author of his own destiny" (66).] [Garber on how Richard's "misshaped" body is the result of the deformations of the Tudor historians: "Richard's deformity, itself transmitted not genetically but generically through both historiography and dramaturgy, becomes the psychological and dramatic focus of the play's dynamic" (36).] [Maus writes: "The epistemological self-assurance of *Richard III* is its ultimate fiction, its most effective seduction scene" (54). See also Neill: "If the conclusion

of *Richard III* has a weakness, it is not in the dramaturgy of Richard's moral collapse but in the dramatist's moralization of his fall" (126).]

Wilbur Sanders dismissively—and wittily—states that the nightmare speech bears no relation to the "mature Shakespearean soliloquy of introspection, unless it be the relation of parody" (106). And perhaps what he implies about the quality of the speech is true. Still, I would contend that Richard's progression from apparent psychic wholeness to disintegration points the direction that many of Shakespeare's later plays, especially the tragedies, will follow. And in these plays, especially (though not exclusively) in many of their soliloquies, it is hard not to hear echoes of Richard's final attempt to talk to himself, to find himself, to recreate himself through language. We can hear the echoes in the sound and fury of Lady Macbeth's somnambulistic babble. We can hear them as well in Hamlet's demand to know "Who calls me villain? Breaks my pate across? / Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face? / Tweaks me by the nose? Gives me the lie i' the throat / As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?" (II. ii. 572-75). Or in the broken syntax of Othello's "or for I am declined / Into the vale of years—yet that's not much— / She's gone" (III. iii. 281-83), and in his relived vengeance against a "malignant and a turbaned Turk," a "circumcisèd dog" (V. ii. 363, 365).

If we listen, we can hear Richard III's final soliloquy in Richard II's deposition scene when the defeated king looks at his image in the glass and anatomizes the disjuncture between his still untroubled face and his internal fragmentation:

> Give me that glass, and therein will I read.
> [*He takes the mirror.*]
> No deeper wrinkles yet? Hath sorrow struck
> So many blows upon this face of mine,
> And made no deeper wounds? O flattering glass,
> Like to my followers in prosperity,
> Thou dost beguile me! Was this face the face
> That every day under his household roof
> Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
> That, like the sun, did make beholders wink?
> Is this the face which faced so many follies,
> That was at last outfaced by Bolingbroke?
> A brittle glory shineth in this face—
> As brittle as the glory is the face,
> [*He throws down the mirror.*]
> For there it is, cracked in an hundred shivers.
> (R2, IV. i. 277-90)

If we listen, we can also hear Richard III's nightmare of multiplicity in Richard II's last and most brilliant meditation:

> Thus play I in one person many people,
> And none contented. Sometimes am I king;
> Then treason makes me wish myself a beggar,
> And so I am. Then crushing penury
> Persuades me I was better when a king;
> Then am I kinged again, and by and by
> Think that I am unkinged by Bolingbroke,
> And straight am nothing. But whate'er I be,
> Nor I, nor any man that but man is,
> With nothing shall be pleased, till he be eas'd
> With being nothing.
>
> (*R2*, V. v. 31-41)

If we listen, we will hear Richard III's last soliloquy in a number of Shakespeare's later great tragic speeches as well. We may even hear it, if we listen carefully, in our own silent misunderstandings with ourselves . . . till we be eased with being nothing.

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Notes

[1]My main borrowing from Lacan is his attack (which is more or less continuous throughout his writings) on the notion of a unified subject. For specific readings, see *Écrits* (especially "The Mirror Stage," "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis," and "The Function and Field of Speech in Psychoanalysis"; this last essay is also published as "The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis" with commentary by translator-editor Anthony Wilden in *The Language of the Self*) and *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*.

[2]Freud's discussion of Richard's first soliloquy appears in his essay "Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytic Work" (313-15).

[3]Remember to pick up dry cleaning + get dog from kennel. Call therapist.

[4]Shopping: milk, artichoke hearts, pears, chicken livers, leg of lamb, feta cheese, beer, Pepcid AC, dental floss, Huggies, condoms, tampons, Polygrip, Rogaine, Scope, Windex, Visine, duct tape.

[5]T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

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The Theatricality of Rot in Thomas Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy* and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

by Mark King

In 1999, actor Del Close died from emphysema at the age of sixty-three.[1] Among his last requests was a curious one: he donated his skull to the Properties Department of Chicago's Goodman Theater; Close hoped that it might be used as Yorick in future productions of *Hamlet*. At a ceremony marking the bequest, Close's colleague Charna Halpren raised the possibility of the skull appearing onstage in other works.[2] Halpren remarked, "He's not picky, he just wants the work."[3] Since Close's gesture was itself such a melange of theatricality and corporeal rot, it seems to me his skull might make an appropriate property in Thomas Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy*.[4]

Given the recent rise in attention to the works of Middleton, it is not unthinkable that Close's pate might find itself playing Gloriana. Both plays share that particular property requirement as well as other similarities. Although the wealth of similarities between *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *Hamlet* is well-trod ground,[5] the differences between the two texts have not received comparable attention. These differences have been either overlooked or dealt with in a casual off-hand matter—as if they are somehow self-evident. Although some label Middleton's work as a parody of Shakespeare's,[6] the discrepancies between the two plays are more intricate than those usually found between vehicle and parody. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to delimit a work as outlandish as *The Revenger's Tragedy*. As Leslie Sanders points out, the very title of Middleton's text points toward a certain amount of instability and portends the difficulty inherent in pinning down the work[7]: what *is* a "revenger's tragedy" anyway? Is it a revenge play? A tragedy? A parody?

So in the interest of untangling this morass—and perhaps as a service to the spirit of the departed Mr. Close—I'd like to examine some points of departure *The Revenger's Tragedy* takes from *Hamlet*. In particular, I'd like to examine the plays' configuration of rot; but since rot has a way of spreading, I will also touch on theatricality. Rot and theatricality have a significant relationship in the plays. I will argue that the heightened theatricality of *The Revenger's Tragedy* is a result—not of its genre—

but rather, of its more ubiquitous sense of rot. Although both *Hamlet* and *The Revenger's Tragedy* contain allusions to rot, the texts present rot in vastly different ways. In the topsy-turvey world of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, rot takes on positive connotations. Conversely, in *Hamlet* the rot is negative and, interestingly, gendered. *Hamlet* represents a progression whereby the rot expands from a fixed point in a homosocial male world to a female locus.

Hamlet is not the only text to present a gendered conception of rot. Although *The Oxford English Dictionary* does not associate rot with the feminine sphere *per se*, it does associate the term with an animal that has served (at least in myth and lore) as a feminine substitute: the sheep. Of the *OED*'s six definitions for rot, one is traced back to 1349: "to affect (sheep) with rot."[8] At other loci in the Shakespeare canon, this connotation flourishes: of the nineteen times the word appears in the plays, it carries a reference to gender, sex, or sexuality six times or thirty-two percent.[9] Shakespeare found gendered rot especially useful as a denunciation or curse; in *Timon of Athens*, Timon rejects an opportunity to kiss the prostitute Phrynia and renouncing her rot says,

> I will not kiss thee; then the rot returns
> To thine own lips again.
>
> (IV. iii. 63-64).[10]

Early modern nonfiction texts reflect a feminized conception of rot as well: contemporary gynecological texts often associate rot with women, women's genitalia, or childbearing.[11]

The most striking characteristic of *Hamlet*'s configuration of rot is that it shifts and expands during the play. In act one the rot is seemingly contained and male. However, as the play progresses, rot emerges as both more widespread and, simultaneously, more feminine than it seemed at first conjecture. This progression is somewhat more apparent when we examine the two allusions to rot that bookend the play: in act one a frightened Marcellus states, "something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (I. iv. 89). This first allusion to rot occurs in the homosocial all-male world of the guards and seemingly fixes the play's conception of it: if *some*thing is rotten, it stands to reason that other things are *not* rotten. Indeed, much of the stage business of act one seems geared to make it appear that—on the surface level at least—the Danish court is running smoothly. Ferreting out the rot in Denmark becomes Hamlet's assignment, and he embarks

on his mission with his all-male group of cronies, guards, and schoolfellows in tow. By V. i he has completed that mission; he knows where the rot in Denmark is and what he must do about it. Yet the sense of fixed certainty that accompanied the first allusion to rot has been abandoned. As Hamlet has located one source of rot, others have become apparent. The mission has grown larger, the male cronies have fallen away (only Horatio remains), and the rot has grown slipperier. What began as a search for a particular source of political rot (Claudius' guilt) has blossomed into a full-fledged investigation into the source of a philosophical rot (the nature of mortality).

That second, more slippery search for rot (and his appetite for revenge) leads Hamlet to a point literally knee-deep in a space where a *woman* will rot—Ophelia's grave. The graveyard scene marks the full development of the play's configuration of rot. As V. i begins, Hamlet assumes the place of rot is male; he asks the gravedigger, "What man dost thou dig it for?" (V. i. 126). Although Hamlet soon learns that this place of rot is feminine, interestingly, the gravedigger takes the position that the state of rot is genderless. The gravedigger maintains he prepares a place of rot for, "One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead" (V. i. 131). The gravedigger's position might lead to a genderless conception of rot until we consider Hamlet's parting gibe to the skull. Casting off the skull he bades it, "get you to my lady's chamber and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come" (V. i. 187-89).[12] Physically and imagistically Hamlet deposits the rotted bones in the sphere of the feminine. These lines take on a special importance when, considering where the Prince is standing, we wonder whether Hamlet addresses the directive to Yorick's skull or to himself.

The other allusions to rot between acts one and five indicate an association with the feminine and accelerate its slide from a fixed male point to an unfixed female one. For example, when Hamlet makes a wish for his own rot,

> O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
>
> (I.ii.129-30)

his speech careens quickly from self-pity to the curse "Frailty, thy name is woman!" (I. ii. 146).[13] Similarly, in the closet scene Hamlet warns his mother that her, "rank corruption" will mine "all within" (III. iv. 148).

A correlation between rot and the feminine in *The Revenger's*

Tragedy is more apparent and perhaps requires less explanation—after all, the play contains a scene in which a skull is dressed up as a beautiful woman (III. v). However, *The Revenger's Tragedy*'s conception of rot is no simple parody of the rot in *Hamlet*; in Middleton's text rot becomes a purifying agent and an avenger.

The inverted, corrupt dukedom that is *The Revenger's Tragedy*—a nation state in which "to be honest is not to be i' the' world" (I. i. 95)[14]—is a world in which the rot is far too advanced to be pinpointed: rot is everywhere.[15] Here, perhaps because the state is itself so corrupt, the process of rot (essentially an *un*doing or *dis*assembling) takes on positive connotations. Particularly strong is the image of the skull. As Peter Stallybrass notes, "the skull is the product of corruption and dismemberment, but it is a corruption which seems, at least to secure the 'purer part.'"[16] Stallybrass' point is well taken; in I. i Vindice speaks of his love for Gloriana in a way that makes us wonder if he is speaking about his memory of the woman he courted or about the skull itself. Vindice's attachment to Gloriana does not diminish; it actually *grows* due to the rot process. Likewise, Antonio presents the dead (and, we might expect, rotting) corpse of his wife as the epitome of feminine grace and chastity declaring it

> a miracle at last,
> That, being an old man, I'd a wife so chaste
> (I.iv.76-77)

His associates concur and declare Antonio's wife worthy of "a tomb of pearl" (I. iv. 70)—an undertaking that will encapsulate her rotting corpse within a white shell.

The Revenger's Tragedy's configures rot as pure, but not passive: Vindice introduces the familiar Renaissance concept of rot-as-equalizer; indicating the skull he says,

> Be merry, merry,
> Advance thee, o thou terror to fat folks,
> To have their costly three-pil'd flesh worn off
> As bare as this—for banquets, ease and laughter
> Can make great men, as greatness goes by clay,
> But wise men are more great than they.
> (I. i. 44-49)

Rot cannot only level the playing field, it can also glean the truth from those given to deceit. Before he murders the Duke, Vindice addresses the skull and warns the audience,

> see, ladies, with false forms
> You deceive men but cannot deceive worms.
> (III. v. 96-97)

The message is clear: makeup and fancy clothes might deceive men, but the worms (and the rot they represent) will ferret out the truth.

The play's most conspicuous use of avenging rot occurs during the Duke's murder in act three. As Vindice rubs the skull's lips with poison so she can "kiss his lips to death" (III. v. 104), Gloriana's role enlarges and moves from the victim to the vehicle by which revenge is extracted. To many, this image of a rotted but dressed up skull is the emblematic moment of *The Revenger's Tragedy*.[17] The sheer power of the image, however, should not eclipse the way it highlights the interplay between rot and theatricality. It is not possible to discuss rot without discussing theatricality, no more than it possible to discuss Del Close's bequest without remembering he was (is?) an actor. Understanding the parasitic relationship between rot and theatricality is vital to an appreciation of the workings of rot in both works.

Much of the theatricality in *Hamlet* is bustling and loquacious. Although early in the play, Prince Hamlet seems to eschew theatrical falsity with his, "Seems, madam! Nay it is; I know not seems" (I. ii. 76), I think we can question his self-knowledge (or his seriousness) on this point. In fact, he seems to know his way around *seems* quite well: he wants to insert a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines into the play (II. ii. 535-36), he uses a play to test his uncle's guilt (II. ii. 601), he can recite long dramatic passages from memory (II. ii. 461-75), and he has some very definite ideas about theatrical interpretation (III. ii. 1-47). The reader might well agree with Ophelia, who says of the Prince, "You are as good as a chorus, my lord" (III. ii. 238).

Likewise many characters are given to acting and storytelling. Hamlet tells us, "the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all" (III. ii. 146-47). And he is right; they do tell all: on the chilly watchtower Horatio entertains the men of the guard with a long and somewhat convoluted story of King Hamlet's reign (I. i. 79-107). The Ghost is so garrulous that he even speaks from under the stage (s.d., I. v. 148) and interrupts the Prince while the latter is in his mother's closet (III. iv. 111-16).

Theatricality in *The Revenger's Tragedy* is both quieter and more extravagant than the theatricality of *Hamlet*.[18] Indeed, the theatricality in Middleton's work makes *Hamlet* appear down-

right frumpy in comparison. Middleton's work is marked by a flashy and predatory but *mute* theatricality in which people refuse to or are prevented from speaking. In the final analysis, the theatricality of *The Revenger's Tragedy*—though extreme—resounds with a cacophony of silence. Reminiscent of the way allusions to rot bookend *Hamlet*, the first and last scenes of *The Revenger's Tragedy* begin with a silent theatrical procession. Act one's initial stage direction calls for a silent theatrical procession of the royal household—those Vindice pointedly refers to as *characters* (I. i. 5).[19] Later, a silent procession will help expedite the play's ending.

In between acts one and five, a pattern develops in which the text's most extreme moments of theatrical violence are accompanied by utter silence. For example, aided by the tools of the theater—lighting, costume, and makeup—the silent Gloriana quiets the lecherous Duke by poisoning his mouth. Although the poison quickly rots his lips and teeth out, Vindice and Hippolito ensure the stillness by "invent[ing] a silence" (III. v. 190-91) and nailing down the Duke's tongue with a dagger (III. v. 194). Since we can assume the Duke is on the ground at this point—Hippolito and Vindice stomped him a moment earlier—it is easy to imagine a staging of the play in which the Duke's tongue is nailed to the stage floor itself. Earlier I mentioned that for some the trussed up skull served as an emblematic moment for the play. Although I don't dispute that reading, I think the Duke's tongue nailed to the stage floor would serve equally as well as an emblem for a text that so readily mixes violence with mute theatricality.

The dumb show that begins Middleton's V. iii, mimics the procession of nobles that began I. i. Subsequently, V. iii's initial dumb show is represented by yet *another* procession. However, the second procession in V. iii is not a true duplicate: in fact, it's a deadly, horrific version of a procession. Lussorioso and his cronies are quickly and (need I add?) *silently* slaughtered. As the lecherous Lussorioso gasps his last breath, Vindice symbolically quiets him with the caustic and sarcastic rejoinder, "Tell nobody" (V. iii. 78).

The admonitory "Tell nobody" stands in marked contrast to the final moments in *Hamlet* where the focus is on disseminating the story, not silencing it. Dying, having aided in the slaughter of the entire Danish court and living just long enough to watch his homeland occupied by a foreign power, Hamlet's final thoughts are not of himself, his family, or his nation. Rather, his concern is with his story. In his waning moments the Prince asks Horatio to delay his own death in order to spread Hamlet's

version of the narrative; he states:

> Absent thee from felicity awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
> To tell my story.
> (V. ii. 339-41).

Horatio's request encapsulates the archetypes of theatricality and loquacity. Addressing Fortinbras, he asks that the new king,

> give order that these bodies
> High on a stage be placèd to the view;
> And let me speak to th' yet unknowing world
> How these things came about.
> (V. ii. 378-80)

Despite the alacrity with which the intrepid Horatio moves to complete his assignment—the blood is not yet congealed and he's making arrangements for the dissemination of the story—we have doubts regarding how accurately Hamlet's tale will be told. Fortinbras adds his own interpretation to the narrative; he commands,

> Let four captains
> Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage;
> For he was likely, had he been put on,
> To have prov'd most royal; and for his passage
> The soldier's music and the rite of war
> Speak loudly for him.
> (V. ii. 385-90)

Fortinbras' content and his style betray his intentions. Yes, Hamlet probably would have made a good king, but he also would have made a good priest, a good scribe, or a good cooper for that matter. To orchestrate Hamlet's story to soldier's music is to sing Hamlet's song to Fortinbras' tune. At the very least, such an emendation will color the narrative and change it. As the curtain falls, a final peal of ordinance (s.d., V. ii. 405) contradicts Hamlet's last words[20] and simultaneously reminds us who is really in charge of all casting and editorial decisions in Denmark now. Perhaps part of the "tragedy" in *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* is that we can never know how the story has been jostled, tweaked, amended, emended, revised, or whitewashed before we receive it.

Ironically, it is Vindice's own violation of the dictum "Tell

nobody" that seals his fate. Having eliminated the opposition, he cannot resist sharing the news with Antonio. As the fourth duke to rule[21] during *The Revenger's Tragedy*, Antonio's first act of state is to condemn Vindice and Hippolito to death (V. iii. 103). No matter how useful the brothers have been to him, the Machiavellian Antonio knows that they are too dangerous to keep around. The play ends with a promise by Antonio to whitewash—or eliminate—the story. Having sent the revengers off to die, Antonio is alone on stage and wishes "their blood may wash away all treason!" (V. iii. 130)

In light of Antonio's parting shot, the amalgamated title of Middleton's work makes a little more sense and the words, "revenger's tragedy" are not quite so puzzling. Maybe we don't have to worry ourselves with whether or not the play is a tragedy for revenger's or of revengers. Perhaps Middleton's work states that the revenger can have no tragedy—for his is a story that will always end in silence.

Finally, an examination of rot and theatricality in concert leads to a reconsideration of the two plays and a larger understanding of them in terms of genre. I don't think it is possible to look at the heightened theatricality of *The Revenger's Tragedy* and dismiss Middleton's work as a simple parody of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Certainly, there are parodic elements in Middleton's text; however, I assert its super-charged theatricality stems from its more pervasive sense of rot. In Hamlet the rot is significant, certainly—but it's also fixed and contained.[22] Conversely, Middleton's world is surrounded by and overwhelmed in rot. As one awash in this sea of putrefaction, Vindice understands the only type of gesture that will make a ripple is a flashy, theatrical one. Outrage leads to outrageous behavior; Vindice becomes reminiscent of a silent-film actor—he makes broad, exaggerated, soundless gestures in the face of unspeakable evil. Extreme? Absolutely. Parody? Probably not.

Tell nobody.

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Notes

[1]Evan Osnos, "Even After Death, Del Close Ahead of Acting Crowd," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 July 1999, sec. A, p. 1.

[2]Osnos, p. 1.

[3]Quoted in Osnos, p. 1.

[4]I tend to align myself with those who assign the work to Middleton's *oeuvre* and—although I am aware that many do not share that opinion—I will refer to him as the author of the play throughout this work. Since my argument focuses on the text itself and eschews biographical criticism, whether Middleton, or Tourneur, or a third party is the true author of the work is of secondary importance.

[5]Although Howard Felperin's excellent *Shakespearean Representation: Mimesis and Modernity in Elizabethan Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977) is the most oft-cited example of this type of study, there are other quality sources as well. For example, Steven Mullaney's "Mourning and Misogyny: *Hamlet, The Revenger's Tragedy*, and the Final Progress of Elizabeth I, 1601-1607," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 45 (1994), 139-62 provides an excellent analysis of the role monarchial succession plays in the link between the two plays. Additionally, Scott McMillin's "Acting and Violence," *Studies in English Literature*, 24 (1984), 275-91 makes an admirable and thoughtful response to Felperin's earlier work. Also see Maurice Charney, "Comic Villainy in Shakespeare and Middleton," in *Shakespearean Comedy*, ed. Maurice Charney (New York: NY Literary Forum, 1980) 165-73 and Gary Taylor, "Forms of Opposition: Shakespeare and Middleton," *English Literary Renaissance*, 24 (1994), 283-314.

[6]See Leslie Sanders, "*The Revenger's Tragedy*: A Play on the Revenge Play," *Renaissance and Reformation*, 10 (1974), 25-36. p. 26.

[7]Sanders, p. 25.

[8]*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "rot." See also *The Middle English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "rot" for a similar connotation.

[9]Percentage based on data from Marvin Spevack, *The Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973).

[10]Many Shakespearean uses of *rot* involve the labeling of women as practitioners of aberrant or alternative sexual behavior. For examples of this, see *Measure for Measure* III. i. 118-19, Leontes dismissal of Camillo in *The Winter's Tale*, "Make that thy question and go rot!" (I. ii. 324); Othello's curse to Desdemona, "Ay let her rot" (IV. i. 177).

[11]For example, the 1656's *The Compleat Midwifes Practice* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1963) warned against "putrid humours that issues from the womb" and Nicholas Fontanus' 1652 manual, *The Woman's Doctour* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1964) blamed "the presence of Feculent and Corrupt Blood" within the "Matrix" for "the cause of all those disease which happen to women." Other midwifery texts—most notably Nicholas Culpeper's 1656 text *A Directory for Widwives* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1985)—associated the presence of a male child with vitality, health, and activity and tied the presence of a female child to putrefaction, inactivity, and rot.

[12]For a more detailed exploration of this moment see, Shirley Nelson Garner, "'Let Her Paint an Inch Thick': Painted Ladies in Renaissance Drama and Society," *Renaissance Drama*, 20 (1989), 123-39.

[13]Looking at Hamlet in terms of rot has the unexpected benefit of letting us bypass the old debate concerning the degree of Hamlet's misogyny. Under this reading, the Prince goes on a quest to ferret out rot and that rot leads him to a feminine sphere. Hamlet's misogyny (or lack thereof) is almost beside the point.

[14]All line references from *The Revenger's Tragedy* from Bryan Loughrey and Neil Taylor, eds., *Thomas Middleton: Five Plays*, (London: Penguin, 1988).

[15]*The Revenger's Tragedy* is marked with a sense of societal rot overflowing. Whereas Hamlet has trouble beginning the killing process, Vindice has trouble stopping his murder spree once he begins. Vindice announces that he will kill the Duke; that task is completed by III.v, yet the killing continues unabated for another two acts.

[16]Peter Stallybrass, "Reading the Body: *The Revenger's Tragedy* and the Jacobean Theater of Consumption," *Renaissance Drama*, 18 (1987), 121-48, p. 132.

[17]See Karin S. Coddon, " 'For Show or Useless Property': Necrophilia and *The Revenger's Tragedy*," *ELH*, 61 (1994), 71-88, p. 71.

[18]For explorations into *The Revenger's Tragedy*'s sense of the theatrical, see Howard Felperin, *Shakespearean Representation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977); Peter Hyland, "The Disguised Revenger and *The Revenger's Tragedy*," *Southern Review*, 15 (1982), 254-62; Peter Lisca, "*The Revenger's Tragedy*: A Study in Irony," *Philological Quarterly*, 38 (1959), 242-51; and Michael E. Mooney, "'This Luxuirous Circle': *Figurenposition* in *The Revenger's Tragedy*," *English Literary Renaissance*, 13 (1983), 162-81.

[19]Other critics have been drawn to this opening scene as well: for a particularly engaging reading of the scene, see Charlotte Spivack, *The Comedy of Evil on Shakespeare's Stage* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh-Dickinson Univ. Press, 1978). Spivack calls the scene a "candlelit pageant of the deadly sins cast as members of a corrupt court" (p. 128).

[20]At first glance, Hamlet's last words, "the rest is silence" (V. ii. 350), might seem to undercut my premise of a bustling and loquacious theatricality in *Hamlet*. However, here—as when he claims not to understand the word 'seems' (I. ii. 76)—Hamlet is simply wrong. The text contradicts him immediately: the rest is *not* silence. Hamlet does not have the final word in the tragedy that bears his name; that honor belongs to Fortinbras and, significantly, to Fortinbras' canon.

[21]The original duke was succeeded by his son Lussorioso; Lussorioso was in turn (briefly) succeeded by Supervacuo (V. iii. 54) and Supervacuo is succeeded by Antonio in the closing moments of V. iii.

[22]It is worth pointing out here that just as the sense of rot in *Hamlet* is contained (at least at first), so is *Hamlet*'s sense of theatricality. Most references to plays, the theater, and playacting occur in a relatively small portion of the text—in II. ii or III. ii. By the time Prince Hamlet returns to Elsinore from the pirate ship, he has—for the most part—put aside playacting.

"This is Venice: my house is not a grange": *Othello*'s Landscapes of the Mind

by Lisa Hopkins

It has been often noticed that many of Shakespeare's comedies depend for their *dénouement* on retreat to a green world, a life-giving natural space which allows for personal growth and regeneration and a rebalancing of psyches unsettled by the pressures of urban living. It is rather less of a critical commonplace that several of his tragedies feature an inversion of this pattern,[1] generally in the form either of an image pattern playing on death, waste, and decay, or of an actual staging of a scene in a non-urban location marked as a wasteland rather than as a rural retreat. In *Macbeth*, for instance, the heath is withered, emblematizing the desolation of Macbeth's Scotland, while the English soldiers who carry boughs to Dunsinane are clearly readable within traditions such as the May-lord and rites of renewal; in *Hamlet*, there is a developed motif of blighted pastorality and unweeded gardens; and in both *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*, there are again clear reference to country customs and fertility rites.

At first sight, it might seem that *Othello* deviates from this pattern of pastoral inversion. Just as it has the sketchiest counterpointing comic episode of any of the tragedies,[2] with the arguable exception of *Macbeth* (though people rarely forget the Porter, and rarely remember the Clown), so it seems to differ from the other tragedies also in having no pastoral element. Indeed the quotation I have chosen for my subtitle, "This is Venice: / My house is not a grange,"[3] appears to confirm as much: what is Venetian cannot, by definition, be rural.

Shakespeare, however, had already played some very interesting games with offsetting the Venetian with the pastoral in *The Merchant of Venice*.[4] In *Othello*, he does so again, and demonstrates that the veneer of urban sophistication cannot eradicate behavioral patterns and attitudes rooted in much older contexts: when Othello avers that "A horned man's a monster, and a beast," Iago assures him, "There's many a beast then in a populous city, / And many a civil monster" (IV. i. 62-64).[5] Brabantio may not live in a grange, but his daughter is figured as a sheep when Iago tells him that "an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe!" (I. i. 87-88). This farmyard imagery, which is almost immediately consolidated by Iago's insult that "you'll

have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse" (I. i. 109-10), ushers in a whole bevy of other imagined animals, prominent amongst which are Othello's "Goats and monkeys!" (IV. i. 263). Even supersubtle Venetians (and adopted Venetians) are, it seems, still configured by rural roots.

The imagery of sheep and goats has, though, also another resonance. In the microcosm of *Othello* as in the macrocosm of the early modern world as a whole, two religious systems jostle for pre-eminence. Again as in early seventeenth-century England, women tend to adhere to the older one: Desdemona pleads for Cassio "By'r lady" (III. iii. 74), and Emilia would "venture purgatory" (IV. iii. 76). Against this clearly Catholic language, however, is set Cassio's "there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved" (II. iii. 99-100). This sudden irruption of an unmistakably Calvinist theology adds a suggestive new dimension to those metaphors of sheep and goats.

That this will be so has already been suggested by this play's very distinctive inflection of the frequent Shakespearean garden-motif. First Iago dismisses Cassio's passion for Desdemona: "Ere I would say I would drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen I would change my humanity with a baboon" (I. iii. 315-17). To Iago, then, love is debasing and animalistic, and Desdemona no more than a guinea-hen. While he can stay aloof from the passion, however, he *does* recognize an absolute division between humans and animals (the same assumption also configures his subsequent dismissal, "Come, be a man! drown thyself? drown cats and blind puppies" [I. iii. 336-37]). When Roderigo protests that he is incapable of remaining aloof, Iago goes on:

> Virtue? a fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus, or thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners. So that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many, either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry—why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions. But we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this, that you call love, to be a sect or scion.
>
> (I. iii. 320-33)

The image of man in the garden is of course a common one—arguably, indeed, the fundamental underlying image of western

culture. The image of man *as* a garden, however, is a rather different one. Man *in* the garden is a creature who is conditioned by his environment. His ability to assert a free and independent will may be a point of doctrine, but practically speaking—as every theologian knew, and as Milton found to his cost—it is more problematic. Even in the most rigorous view of things, man in the garden was at least influenced by woman. In Iago's view of things, however, woman is no better than an animal, and love for her is merely a "scion" or plant; and man is not the limited denizen of a physical, material garden but the absolute ruler of a psychological one.

Such a view is at best arrogant, and at worst, in a religiously-oriented ideology, blasphemous. In such a schema, moreover, the pastoral becomes of necessity not a beneficent background or a configuring genre or mode, but an accessory, a metaphor, a psychological illusion with no material reality. Though it effectively denies the material reality of the pastoral backdrop, however, it is in itself a comprehensively, indeed ruthlessly, materialist view, denying the importance or influence of anything beyond the will of man. And at the same time, of course, Iago's assurance and perspective are subtly but steadily undercut by the audience's insistent awareness of the alternative scenario of the man *in* the garden. The whole passage thus reminds me of nothing so much as Faustus' denial to Mephostophilis of the existence of hell, tempered with a disturbing dash of Shakespeare's own Edmund and his disdain for the stars. And it rings with especial irony in the light of the play's flirtation elsewhere with a Calvinist theology which would entirely disable the unaided operations of the human will.

Iago's view of human nature, then, is one which is both materialist and also predicated on an assumption that passionate emotion is animalistic and so dehumanising—lusts, for instance, he figures as "unbitted," as though they were properties belonging to horses rather than people. In some ways, perhaps, this contempt for emotion takes us as close as we will ever get to understanding Iago's "motiveless" malignity towards those impassioned associates whom he so callously sends to their deaths, and certainly he can dismiss Othello's emotional commitment with "[t]hese Moors are changeable in their wills" (I. iii. 347), an assumption that he also makes about Desdemona: "she must have change, she must" (I. iii. 352). Presumably, he regards both of them as different from himself, whose own cause is "hearted" (I. iii. 367); he implicitly dismisses Othello as an ass (I. iii. 401) and even Roderigo, in his absence, as a "snipe" (I. iii. 383),

leaving only Cassio—"a proper man" (I. iii. 390)—and himself defined as fully human. And later, as soon as Cassio shows courtesy to Desdemona, even he will degenerate to a "fly" being caught by a spider (II. i. 169), while Iago's ability to manipulate the situation appears effectively to constitute the guarantee of his own humanity.

The animal qualities which Iago ascribes to his companions recur writ large in the subsequent scene. Observing the storm, the Second Gentleman remarks that "The wind-shaked surge, with high and monstrous mane, / Seems to cast water on the burning bear" (II. i. 13-14). If a "mane" is attributed to the sea, and "the bear" refers to a constellation, humanity is envisaged as being hideously sandwiched between vast animal forces redolent of a pagan rather than a Christian eschatology. Shortly afterwards, Cassio too figures a world populated by anthropomorphizingly animated objects:

> Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
> The guttered rocks and congregated sands,
> Traitors ensteeped to clog the guiltless keel,
> As having sense of beauty, do omit
> Their mortal natures, letting go safely by
> The divine Desdemona.
>
> (II. i. 68-73)

Whereas Iago imagines a world in which nature and the powers of natural forces are minimised, and man's will, sharply distinguished from animal impulses, reigns supreme, both the Second Gentleman and Cassio inhabit a mental landscape in which the wills of humans are significantly smaller than those of the powerful inhuman presences which dominate man's all-important environment and are themselves governed solely by passion. It is little wonder that Cassio goes on to pray "Great Jove, Othello guard, / And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath" (II. i. 77-78); both the belief in the supernatural and the image of the human environment casually manipulated by an animated force are precisely of a tenor with what has gone before, as is his effective acceptance of a form of sympathetic magic in his assumption that the love-making of Desdemona and Othello will "bring all Cyprus comfort" (II. i. 82). Similarly, when he greets Desdemona with "the grace of heaven, / Before, behind thee, and on every hand / Enwheel thee round!" (II. i. 85-87), this could well be taken to represent a virtually literal version of how he sees humanity in the universe, surrounded by cosmic, all-enveloping, and conscious or quasi-conscious forces, just as he privi-

leges divine agency over human when he tells Desdemona that "The great contention of the sea and skies / Parted our fellowship" (II. i. 92-93).

While Cassio talks about the overwhelming power of winds, however, Iago once again has a very different perspective. As Cassio and Desdemona talk aside, Iago says contemptuously, "Yet again, your fingers to your lips? would they were clyster-pipes for your sake!" (II. i. 175-77), and immediately afterwards he adds "The Moor! I know his trumpet!" (II. i. 178). The juxtaposition here leaves no room for doubt that the "lower bodily stratum" is being evoked by "trumpet" as surely as it by "clyster-pipes" and, later on, by the clown's fooling: Iago, in short, is talking not about winds but about wind. Once again Iago images his companions as grossly in thrall to their physical natures, and once again his emphasis is on human rather than on natural or divine power: "wind," for Iago, is not some cosmic, capricious force, but an emanation of the human body.[6]

When Othello enters, he too talks about wind. He, however, introduces yet a third way of viewing it:

> O my soul's joy,
> If after every tempest come such calms
> May the winds blow till they have wakened death,
> And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas,
> Olympus-high, and duck again as low
> As hell's from heaven.
>
> (II. i. 182-87)

For Othello, as for Cassio, winds are fearsome, with great power over humans. The difference is that while Cassio thinks of them as governed solely by their own passions, Othello imagines them as acting in response to *his* will, and uses the third-person imperative forms "may" and "let." This is at least as arrogant a misrecognition as Iago's, and arguably more so. With hindsight, we are perhaps unsurprised that of the three of them, only Cassio, who acknowledges both the independent reality of external forces and his own vulnerability to them, will survive.

Ironically, however, Othello's line is almost immediately changed for him by the implications of his own language:

> *Othello.* I cannot speak enough of this content;
> It stops me here, it is too much of joy.
> And this, and this the greatest discords be
> [*They kiss.*]
> That e'er our hearts shall make.
> *Iago. [aside.]*

> O, you are well tuned now: but I'll set down
> The pegs that make this music, as honest
> As I am.
>
> (II. i. 194-200)

In a play that is much concerned with music, this is a characteristic exchange, but it is also a particularly interesting one. Othello complains that he is unable to speak because he is "stopped." He thus casts himself as precisely that which Hamlet disdains and disclaims being, a wind instrument—and, by implication, one which is currently being played by somebody else in a way which prevents full and spontaneous self-expression. While Othello imagines the world in a similar way to Cassio when he urges the winds to do his bidding, therefore, he simultaneously offers a covert concurrence with Iago's view of human manipulability. Perhaps one of the major roots of Othello's tragedy lies in this dangerously volatile fluctuation between excessive and overly-restricted views of himself and his capabilities. This unholy combination makes him awkwardly self-conscious, as when he shortly afterwards tells Desdemona:

> Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus,
> I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,
> I prattle out of fashion, and I dote
> In mine own comforts.
>
> (II. i. 203-06)

Once again, an apparently confident utterance of Othello's is immediately undercut by that which succeeds it. And from this distrust of himself, distrust of others will easily grow.

While Othello thus vacillates, Iago presses on with his plan, still confident that he can fit nature to the measure of man. Plotting to get Cassio drunk, he concludes, "If consequence do but approve my dream / My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream" (II. iii. 59-60). Here nature waits on his wish, and the same reduction of the natural to the scale of the human structures his metaphor of Cassio's temperament: "do but see his vice, / 'Tis to his virtue a just equinox, / The one as long as th'other" (II. iii. 119-21). The consequence of this, he assures Montano, could well "shake this island" (II. iii. 124). In Cassio's own fears about sea-voyages, humans were subject to the caprices of the natural environment; Iago, in a kind of humanism run mad, figures them rather as being able to "shake" that environment. Montano, noticeably, does not echo this magniloquence; his reference to Cassio's "ingraft infirmity" (II. iii. 136) posits Cassio as

a plant, fundamentally the product of its breeding, rather than any earth-shaking force. Iago, however, is unabashed, and proceeds to protest that he would not reveal Cassio's drunkenness to Othello "for this fair island" (II. iii. 138), an assertion which slyly encodes the assumption that a word of his would be sufficient to procure him the lordship of his environment. Iago knows better than to use such language for public consumption, however. At the conclusion of his carefully-staged little playlet, he tells Othello that events have unfolded "As if some planet had unwitted men" (II. iii. 178). As the audience is well aware, though, all that this aping of conventional pieties really does is to offer a covert equation of Iago himself with a planet.

Othello suffers from no such delusions. When Iago first suggests to him that Desdemona might be false, he feels himself cast psychologically adrift in a large and cruel world which he, like other humans, is powerless to control. He contemplates how

> If I do prove her haggard,
> Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
> I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind
> To prey at fortune.
>
> (III. iii. 264-67)

Desdemona would thus be at the mercy of fortune and the wind, while he himself stumbled through "the vale of years" (III. iii. 270), a prisoner in a physical state which seems to find no echo in his psyche. (Later, along similar lines, he will imagine himself in an infected house with a raven flying overhead, and his alienation from the surroundings in which he pictures himself is marked here too, this time by the fact that he figures his apprehension of the raven as the return of the memory of an unwelcome reality [IV i. 20-22].)

However, Othello has not relinquished his earlier faith in the quasi-miraculous power of human agency. He warns Iago that if he is lying, he may as well compound his crime by doing "deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed" (III. iii. 374). As before, Othello's sense of humans as small and distressed runs in curious tandem with his sense of them as gigantic and virtually omnipotent. And the two come into an uneasy congruence as Othello imagines the unstoppable course of his vengeance:

> Like to the Pontic sea
> Whose icy current and compulsive course
> Ne'er keeps retiring ebb but keeps due on
> To the Propontic and the Hellespont:
> Even so my bloody thoughts with violent pace

> Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love
> Till that a capable and wide revenge
> Swallow them up.
>
> (III. iii. 456-63)

Initially, what Othello imagines here conforms neither to Cassio's characteristic perception of man in the landscape nor to Iago's of man *as* the landscape. Instead, it offers a vision which in some ways combines the two, figuring man and nature acting in harmony and tandem. As the ominous mention of the Hellespont, with its encoded associations of death to lovers, might already have served to signal, however, the note of companionableness is abruptly reversed as imagery of drowning and engulfment obtrudes. And as before, Iago once again parrots similar language as token of his supposed loyalty, as he swears insincerely by "you ever-burning lights above, / You elements that clip us round about" (III. iii. 466-67). That Iago has by no means renounced his original opinion is, however, made quite clear when, preparing to talk to Cassio, he speaks of "every region of his face" (IV. i. 84). Once more, man bulks larger than nature in Iago's mind.

Though the characters experiment with such a wide variety of perspectives, the audience is not encouraged to share any of them, unless, perhaps, it is that of Cassio. The prominence of the strawberry motif on the handkerchief surely reminds us that the serpent proverbially hid under a strawberry leaf, and Emilia tells Othello, "If any wretch have put this in your head / Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse" (IV. ii. 15-16). Beset thus by temptation, Othello is an Adam, making his choice in a garden of the mind. But, like the evil-minded lords let loose on the magical island of *The Tempest*, he cannot see his surroundings for what they are. He laments to Desdemona:

> But there where I have garnered up my heart,
> Where either I must live or bear no life,
> The fountain from the which my current runs
> Or else dries up—to be discarded thence!
> Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
> To knot and gender in!
>
> (IV. ii. 58-63)

When she asks if he thinks her honest, he replies,

> O, ay, as summer flies are in the shambles,
> That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed
> Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet
> That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er been

born!

(IV. ii. 67-70)

Two radically different scenarios are outlined here. In the first, it is summer; there are beautiful, sweet-smelling flowers, and there is running water nearby. Othello, however, cannot perceive that world. His is stinking and fly-blown, and he is not allowed near the water. The audience's double knowledge both of Desdemona's innocence and of the means that have been used to make Othello disbelieve in it makes them sharply aware here of the the way that the apprehension of external reality is conditioned by internal perceptions. There is no longer a relatively simple contrast between man-*in*-the-landscape and man-*as*-landscape, but a complex exploration of how any sense of one's relationship to an external landscape is mediated through an internal one. And Emilia makes much the same point:

> Why, the wrong is but a wrong i'th'world; and having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.
>
> (IV. iii. 79-81)

Even the world itself is here envisaged as subject to perception.

This interrelationship between external and internal landscapes recurs in two interestingly parallel passages close to the end of the play. Surveying the body of Desdemona, Othello muses:

> Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
> Of sun and moon, and that th'affrighted globe
> Should yawn at alteration.
>
> (V. ii. 98-100)

Here, he again imagines the will, or at any rate the emotions, of man, effecting a particularly vivid manifestation of the pathetic fallacy and forcing natural phenomena to imitate their mood. Only a few lines later, however, he tells Emilia,

> It is the very error of the moon,
> She comes more nearer earth than she was wont
> And makes men mad.
>
> (V. ii. 108-10)

Here, it is not men's behaviour which influences the moon, but hers which causes theirs. We are thus back to the whole question of causation, and the linked issue of predestination versus free

will, but it seems impossible for us confidently to give the preference to either side.

As the play hastens to its conclusion, the wind which has so often been mentioned begins to blow with renewed urgency. Emilia uses it as an image of sweeping away lies and impediments:

> No, I will speak as liberal as the north.
> Let heaven, and men, and devils, let them all,
> All, all cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.
> (V. ii. 218-20)

"The north" is, as Q's reading of "air" makes clear, a synecdoche for the north wind. For Emilia, the north wind carries all (even heaven) before it in a right cause. Othello, on the other hand, is now completely abject, but even in his self-abnegation he both retains the tone of command and expects the larger world to endorse his personal sense of justice. He cries, "Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulphur, / Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!" (V. ii. 277-78), and wonders the devilish Iago is not struck down and why his feet are not visibly cloven (V. ii. 283-84 and V. ii. 232-33). And with a final irony, Lodovico accords the silent Iago the tribute which he might have wished when he terms him "More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea" (V. ii. 360), thus for one final time endorsing Iago's own hierarchy of human superiority to nature. But the very prevalence of so many elements reminds us, of course, that as with the debate between Catholicism and Protestantism, we simply cannot be sure which is right. Just as the imagery of the choice of Hercules haunts a Hamlet afraid of being led the wrong way up a literal and metaphorical garden path, so the imagery of *Othello* emblematises for us a world in which humans are tragically uncertain whether their wills are paramount or puny.

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Notes

[1]Although see for instance Naomi Conn Liebler, ed., *Shakespeare's Festive Tragedy* (London: Routledge, 1995) and Richard Wilson, "Against the grain: Representing the market in *Coriolanus*," in his *Will Power: Essays on Shakespearean Authority* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 88-125.

[2]Pace Rhymer, and see Michael Bristol's brilliant essay "Race and the comedy of abjection in *Othello*," in his *Big-time Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 1996), 175-202.

[3]William Shakespeare, *Othello*, edited by E. A. J. Hongimann (London: Thomas Nelson, 1997), I. i. 104-05. All further quotations from the play will be taken from this edition and reference will be given in the text.

[4]See for instance James Shapiro, *Rival Playwrights: Marlowe, Jonson, Shakespeare* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991), p. 105, Peter J. Smith, *Social Shakespeare* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), p. 175, and my own *The Shakespearean Marriage: Merry Wives and Heavy Husbands* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 47.

[5]For a very interesting discussion of the language of nature in the play, see Michael Long, *The Unnatural Scene: a Study in Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1976), pp. 46-49. I am grateful to Ian Baker for drawing this to my attention, and also to Ian Baker and Matthew Steggle for commenting on an earlier draft of my own essay.

[6]For comment on the role of wind in the play, see also Philippa Berry, *Shakespeare's Feminine Endings* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 29.

"The Fountain, from which my current runs": A Jungian Interpretation of *Othello*

by Gregg Andrew Hurwitz

Because of its cross-cultural preponderance, the hero myth has often been examined in terms of its psychological applicability. Freud built his entire theory of human behavior around a failed hero (Oedipus), while Jung examined the archetypal "hero myth." Jung claims that in addition to the personal unconscious, "there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents."[1] From a Jungian perspective, the hero's journey is representative of the ego's attempts to integrate the unconscious. This process of integration, referred to by Jung as *individuation* or *centroversion*, is itself the process of personal psychological development. Erich Neumann, a Jungian scholar, claims that "the stages of the hero myth have become constituent elements in the personal development of every individual."[2]

In the male hero myth, the unconscious is represented as feminine, as it is the opposite of consciousness and plays a compensatory role. The hero's task, in coming to terms with his unconscious, is therefore to redefine constantly his relationship with the feminine. *Othello*, a story of precisely such "redefinition," externalizes this Jungian process of psychological development, dramatically displaying elements of the self interacting with one another. The characters represent parts of the total "self" which is fragmented throughout the text. Othello, as Jungian ego, is the force attempting to integrate these elements. The process, however, is not an easy one; deeper meaning and psychological advancement are attained only through an immersion in the painful, the unexpected, the chaotic. This, we can argue, is the very pattern of tragedy: enlightenment and revelation called into existence by suffering.

In the course of psychological development, the ego must balance itself with the personal unconscious, or shadow. Iago, we will see, can be interpreted as Othello's shadow. While it is certainly reductive to maintain that Iago *is* the shadow and Shakespeare intended him as such, it seems reasonable to posit

that he is a complex, highly socialized fictional figure whose dramatic role can be productively analysed when it is interpreted as having shadow qualities. Jung himself uses the term "shadow" metaphorically; it was merely an organizing term under which certain types of psychological behaviors and phenomena could be placed. The shadow is the "other" which has often been repressed due to external pressures; in short, it is everything which an individual's consciousness is not. However, it must be heard and recognized by the ego, and exist with it in some capacity. If it is neglected, it can take over the ego and "swallow up" the conscious personality, causing confusion, anguish, and eruptions of emotion which, Jung claims, have "an obsessive or, better, possessive quality,"[3] a quality which the play will not challenge us to discover in Othello's personality. If such contents of the unconscious lie dormant for long enough, free from the probings of internal reflection, they have the capacity to become the entire personality itself. Thus we can arrive at "My lord is not my lord."[4] The "monster . . . / Too hideous to be shown" (III. iii. 111-12) referred to throughout the play is perhaps what Othello himself becomes.

The shadow is an essential force, for only it can provide the bridge to higher individuation and to the anima, which is a more specific and exclusively feminine part of the collective unconscious (which in *Othello*, I argue, is represented by Desdemona). In his writings and in his own process of individuation, Jung names the anima the essential archetype which guides the ego through centroversion once the shadow has been recognized. The anima is the "Lady Soul [which] . . . embodies all the outstanding characteristics of a feminine being"[5] and which balances the ego with opposite, yet positive, characteristics.

From a Jungian perspective, a union of apparent opposites, such as conscious and unconscious, ego and shadow, and feminine and masculine, is essential for allowing developing subjects to synthesize the various components of their psyches into functional and healthy selves. Rather than ending with the components of the personality brought into harmony, *Othello* displays the destruction which results when individuation does not proceed. Rather than integrating his shadow and wedding his anima, Othello weds his shadow and neglects his anima.

Othello represents the waking center of the self: the ego. He is overwhelmingly "conscious": as a soldier, he is a guardian of his culture; as a husband, he is unabashedly "public"; and as a man, he is painfully egocentric. He is an outsider in Venice, and he overcompensates for his "blackness" by behaving always

with a high measure of self-control. He acts outwardly; he trusts words rather than instinct; he believes in justice and war; and he adheres to these "conscious" traits with such vigor that he does not permit his private and internal self sufficient expression. Even A. C. Bradley, one of Othello's greatest advocates, recognizes that "Othello's mind, for all its poetry, is very simple. He is not observant. His nature tends outward. He is quite free from introspection, and is not given to reflection."[6] And continuing a line of criticism dating back to T. S. Eliot, F. R. Leavis points to Othello's "noble egotism" and claims that his "self-centeredness doesn't mean self-knowledge."[7] Othello seems quite lacking those qualities which, Jung claims, allow for the establishment of a relationship with the unconscious. His oft-observed passivity is not uncommon in archetypal heroes, for it represents the impotence of the ego in the face of the active unconscious.

As an outsider who has achieved advancement, Othello has learned the language of the court. Although he claims that he is "rude in speech," his facility with language is what won him Desdemona. He pretends that he is less vocal than he is; thus he speaks a language of denial, of repression. In her discussion of social speech in *Othello*, Barbara Everett notes that "it is a language which can create peculiar difficulties in the expression of private and personal depths."[8] Othello links this language to his own foreignness explicitly, claiming "for I am black, / And have not those soft parts of conversation" (III. iii. 267-68). His insecurities about his blackness are evident in how quickly Iago's implications that Desdemona views him as an outsider find resonance within him. The quintessential hero-wanderer of archetypal lore "feels himself a stranger to the community,"[9] a description which can't help but recall Othello as "an extravagant and wheeling stranger, / Of here, and every where" (I. i. 136-37).

Othello's massive egocentricity is illustrated in his earliest dialogue, which is filled with references to himself and his accomplishments. In his "My services, which I have done the signiory" speech (I. ii.18-28) he manages no less than seven "I"s in eleven lines. Then, refusing to hide from Brabantio, he claims "Not I, I must be found: / My parts, my title, and my perfect soul, / Shall manifest me rightly" (I. ii. 30-33). He attends quite well to his reputation and his titles, while barely making reference to his love for Desdemona. Public concerns are foremost in his mind.

Indeed, "present business of the state" (I. ii. 90) interrupts even his confrontation with Brabantio, and it seems he moves

directly from the Duke's chambers to the port of Cyprus. Othello accepts "the flinty and steel couch of war" as his "thrice-driven bed of down" (I. iii. 230-31), and in doing so, accepts the state's prominence over his marriage. Even his wife's accompaniment on the journey seems a favor he wishes granted only for her; it is "her will," and certainly not a pleasure "to please the palate of my [his] appetite" (I. iii. 262). Othello has no room for private appetites, it seems, so full is he of public duty. After his joyous reunion with Desdemona in Cyprus, he compliments her in public, then catches himself: "I prattle out of fashion, and I dote / In mine own comforts" (II. i. 206-7). His repression of the private is illustrated even at the end, when he draws the curtains on his bed after murdering his wife.

Othello cannot see Desdemona's worth; he views her as a passive instrument, a receptacle to his words and feats. There is no "we" in Othello's claim that, "I have ta'en away this old man's daughter . . . I have married her" (I. iii. 78-79). His description of their wooing is even more telling; he "draws" prayers from her and "beguiles" her of her tears. His claim, "I had been happy if the general camp, / Pioners, and all, had tasted her sweet body, / So I had nothing known" (III. iii. 351-54), illustrates that his own image of Desdemona is more essential to him than is Desdemona herself.

Yet Desdemona has much more to offer. Like the anima, she represents the positive aspects of femininity. Jung refers to the anima as the "urge to life," claiming that "the anima can also appear as an angel of light, a psychopomp who points the way to highest meaning."[10] The "white" Desdemona, I argue, has all the traits to point Othello to "highest meaning" if only he would recognize her. At least one critic has referred to her directly as an anima figure (Bodkin), and it is hard to deny that she is life-affirming, providing a suitable balance, or compensation, for Othello's personality. Further evidence for Desdemona as anima carrier lies in her association with the handkerchief that Othello received from his mother. He attempts to transfer his anima libido from mother to mate, investing Desdemona with his notions of "the feminine." She becomes, for him, "where either I must live, or bear no life, / The fountain, from the which my current runs" (IV. ii. 59-60).

There is a long-standing critical tradition which describes Desdemona, inadvertently, along the lines of an anima figure. G. Wilson Knight takes note of her near apotheosis, claiming that "she becomes a symbol of man's ideal," and Bradley points to her "strange freedom and energy of spirit."[11] Her openness regard-

ing sexuality strikes a contrast with Othello's guardedness. She is not afraid to ask the Duke, before a roomful of men, to allow her her marital "rites," and we learn from Othello that she played a very active role in instigating his courtship. She counters Othello's repression, drawing out who he is and who they are together with an accepting honesty.

Just as she does not deny her sexuality, she views Othello's color positively, claiming, "I think the sun where he was born / Drew all such humours from him" (III. iv. 26-27). Her whiteness even literally complements Othello's blackness; she is continually associated with white objects: wedding sheets, a handkerchief, snow, alabaster. She contrasts Othello further in her fierce loyalty, which remains consistent from her first appearance, where we see her choose his side against her own father's, to her last, where she ousts the grand tradition of the *artes moriendi* to lie for him in her last breath.

Desdemona's unshakable loyalty and her acceptance of marital sexuality and Othello's color, all point to her rich "private" life. In fact, it is because of her dexterity in fielding private issues that Iago is able to exploit her with Cassio's pleas. She tries to show Othello that hearing Cassio would "do a peculiar profit / To your [his] own person" (III. iii. 80-81), but Othello cannot see through his sense of stately justice to what will yield personal gratification. Her approach to dealing with Othello's suspicion is direct and honest; to Othello's ravings about Cassio, she answers plainly: "Send for the man and ask him" (V. ii. 50). Desdemona's "private" qualities are precisely those which Othello most lacks. Desdemona is revealed as anima figure, awakening virtually from the dead and causing the bed curtains to be opened for the denouement which will expose the truth to Othello. Rather than serving repressive purposes, she facilitates psychological insight.

Yet instead of allowing Desdemona to temper his inclinations, Othello seeks to pull her into his public realm. He makes Desdemona his "fair warrior," and constantly allows what should be moments of privacy to be interrupted with matters of state. Othello's incomplete union with Desdemona, his anima-carrier, is most literally represented in the constant interruption of their wedding night "rites." Cavell goes so far as to say that "there is reason to believe that the marriage has not been consummated";[12] the wedding sheets, it can be argued, serve only destructive ends. Othello allows himself no time or space to grow with his spouse, always fleeing the bedroom to settle public matters. Novy claims that "we never see Othello and Desdemona creating together a

private game-like world of conversation onstage. All the early scenes where they both speak are public."[13]

Othello's inability to relinquish the "public" destroys their relationship. Sanders claims that all of Othello's "outstanding professional virtues become parodies of themselves when he draws on them to solve problems of a personal relationship."[14] Othello's language, even in the throes of his "revenge," remains colored with a public, abstract sense of justice: "Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men" (V. ii. 6). Even here in the play's last scene, he discusses her infidelity in relation to its impact on others, refusing to relate it exclusively to himself.

Othello's inability to recognise Desdemona's worth as an active anima figure stagnates his individuation. In short, he refuses the voice of his unconscious rather than looking to it for guidance. Leavis is characteristically harsh, yet accurate, in his assessment of Othello's view of Desdemona: "Othello acquiesces in considering her as a type—a type outside his experience—the Venetian wife. It is plain, then, that his love is composed very largely of ignorance of self as well as ignorance of her."[15] In viewing her as "outside his experience," Othello cannot integrate those aspects of her character of which he is so desperately wanting. Cavell claims that "to say that he loses Desdemona's power to confirm his image of himself is to say that he loses his old power of imagination."[16] Desdemona sees Othello's image in his mind, even when he loses sight of his name's "visage" and finds it as "begrim'd, and black" as his own face (III. iii. 393). As his anima figure, she never ceases to imagine his potential, developed self, and to urge him toward that end.

Othello's denial of his private needs and, in fact, of a private life, is precisely what opens the door to Iago's treachery. Much critical ink has been spilled over the issue of Othello's implication (or lack thereof) in Iago's design. It is precisely Othello's inability to recognize the Iago-esque elements of himself which summons Iago in his role. Jung, in discussing the phenomenology of the self, inadvertently summarizes the plot of *Othello*:

> It is often tragic to see how blatantly a man bungles his own life and the lives of others yet remains totally incapable of seeing how much the whole tragedy originates in himself, and how he continually feeds it and keeps it going. Not *consciously*, of course—for consciously he is engaged in bewailing and cursing a faithless world that recedes further and further into the distance. Rather, it is an unconscious factor which spins the illusions that veil his world. And what is being spun is a cocoon, which in

the end, will completely envelop him.[17]

Othello, as ego-hero, remains trapped within the limitations of his conscious perception of the world. Lacking insight into his unconscious (which could perhaps be provided by Desdemona), he paves the way for Iago's "cocoon-like" envelopment.

Critical attention has been focused on certain basic questions: Who is Iago? Why does he act as he does? Bodkin, who interprets Iago as a shadow figure, claims that "his hatred for Othello is something intrinsic to his nature, needing no external motive."[18] Iago hates and opposes Othello because that is who he is. He is a negating spirit in the play, and he, in fact, defines himself in such terminology. His "I am not what I am" (I. i. 65) turns God's own "I am who I am" upside down.[19] And he establishes himself expressly as Othello's opposite: "Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago" (I. i. 57). Stanley Cavell summarizes Iago's character in similar terms: "He is everything, we know, Othello is not."[20]

Critically, Iago has always been described in shadow terms: Kermode describes the "bestial" Iago; Cavell claims that "Iago is everything Othello must deny"; Curtis labels Iago "a brilliant practical psychologist"; Heilman notes that Iago is "always susceptible of activation"; Barbara Everett observes that "Iago is from the beginning something like a negative or dark shadow of Othello: different, but not unconnected"; and Hyman points to how Iago's latent homosexuality gives him a desire to "unite" with Othello.[21]

Iago is indeed a dark complement to Othello. Whereas Othello favors swift resolution, Iago prefers slow manipulation. Iago is a creature of the night, finding himself most at home when surrounded by the darkness which he represents. Nighttime is a time for sleep and dream, for unconscious projection, and Iago orchestrates the entire play's plot during the three "night" scenes. Heilman claims that "Iago picks the nighttime for all his main operations; indeed, at least half the action of the play takes place during the hours of darkness that give most scope to Iago."[22] Like a vampire, Iago steals away when light approaches, as in the first scene. In darkness, confusion reigns for the other characters of the play, but Iago is able to deceive, to orchestrate, to murder. When he states, "This is the night / That either makes me, or fordoes me quite" (V. ii. 127-28), we cannot be certain whether he speaks of "the night" in general or specific terms.

If Othello is public to a fault, "all of his [Iago's] real life is inward."[23] In the very first scene, Iago makes clear this private

inclination to Roderigo. Throughout the play, he openly confesses his hatred, his anger and his jealousy, while keeping them so private that nobody, not even his own wife, has any idea that he is not who he is. His advocacy of literal hiding also strikes a contrast to Othello's public nature, while representing the act of repression.

Whereas Othello's language constantly refers to himself, Iago uses his language like a weapon, turning it outward. His dialogue with Brabantio in the first act is extremely telling; he warns Brabantio to, "look to your house, your daughter, and your bags" (I. i. 80). He relentlessly speaks not of himself, but of his victim: "you'll / have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have / coursers for cousins, and gennets for germans" (I. i. 111-13). When Brabantio attempts to turn the verbal focus back to Iago by claiming "Thou art a villain," Iago calmly retorts, "You are a senator" (I. i. 117). It is ironic, yet appropriate that Iago, the private man, speaks mostly of others, and Othello, the public man, mostly of himself.

Iago is a sower and a planter (I. iii. 320-21); he preys upon people's existing fears and weaknesses, bringing Brabantio's dream "to light" and finding Cassio's Achilles' heel and "transforming" him to a "beast." Similarly, he verbalizes what Othello represses. Leavis opposes Bradley's famous critical "defense" of Othello, stating that "Othello has from the beginning responded to Iago's 'communications' in the way Iago desired and with a promptness that couldn't be improved upon . . . Iago's power, in fact, in the temptation scene is that he represents something that is in Othello."[24]

Literally dozens of critics have since agreed with and restated Leavis' claim; J. I. M. Stewart claims that "Iago's villainy draws its potency from Othello's own mind . . . he believes Iago's calumny because there is something in his nature which leads him to do so."[25] Bodkin states "this figure of Iago gathers into itself forces inherent in Othello," and indeed we are not hard pressed to see that Iago's "manipulation of Othello depends on the Moor's own prejudices against his blackness and belief that the fair Desdemona would prefer the white Cassio."[26] Kernan reads the play as the struggle in which "Desdemona is balanced by her opposite, Iago . . . One is a life force . . . the other is an anti-life force."[27] The play, Kernan claims, is about Othello's movement between these two poles. This is precisely what I am restating in psychological terms: Othello, as ego, vacillates between the life-affording anima and the destructive shadow.

In what way does Othello possibly need Iago? The unstated

implication within such critical claims as Connolly's "the baseless suspicions of Othello, are the sort of thing suppressed by the 'waking consciousness' "[28] is that Othello would benefit greatly by bringing such notions out of suppression. Heilman notes of Othello, "He endeavors to compensate for or to complete something incomplete in himself."[29] He needs to face his opposite half and to accept it into his self in some healthy fashion, or else it will force itself to consciousness, erupting in its untempered state.

There exists a direct link between Othello's repression and Iago's emergence; the play portrays Iago, in effect, "stealing" over Othello's personality. Figuratively speaking, since Desdemona could not, Iago can "wed" Othello. The only thing "engender'd" on Othello and Desdemona's wedding night is Iago's plan. Coppelia Kahn goes so far as to claim that Iago's pouring of "pestilence" into Othello's ear "inseminates" him.[30] Imagery regarding this impregnation commands the following dramatic action, as in the next scene when a gentleman at Cyprus, looking to sea for Othello's arrival, remarks, "every minute is expectancy / Of more arrivance" (II. i. 41-42).

The third scene of the third act finds us witness to a mock wedding replete with shadow imagery. We can almost pinpoint the instant that Iago, as shadow, takes over Othello. Othello says,

> All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven.....
> 'Tis gone.
> Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell,
> Yield up, O love, thy crown, and hearted throne,
> To tyrannous hate, swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
> For 'tis of aspics' tongues! [*he kneels*]
> (III. iii. 452-57)

The pause before the two-word line, " 'Tis gone," gives maximum dramatic effect to the change which Othello is calling for, the "blackness" he desires to "arise." Even the formal language of a wedding is invoked. Othello says "In the due reverence of a sacred vow, / I here engage my words," to which Iago replies,

> Witness here that Iago doth give up
> The excellency of his wit, hand, heart,
> To wrong'd Othello's service: let him command,
> And to obey shall be in me remorse
> What bloody work so ever.

This brief speech makes use of words associated with marital vows: "hand," "heart," "obey." As if to seal this twisted "con-

tract," Iago, before exiting, tells Othello, "I am your own for ever" (III. iii. 468-69, 472-76, 486). It should not be surprising that the next scene finds Othello suspiciously examining Desdemona's hand until she must remind him that "'Twas that hand that gave away my heart" (III. iv. 41). She does not realize that Othello has just claimed another hand in place of her own.

Iago plays upon Othello chiefly through his insidious language which, as noted above, finds resonance with Othello's own insecurities. He speaks an un-language, a language of gaps and holes which are left open for Othello to fill with his deepest fears and angers: "Nothing, my lord, or if—I know not what" (III. iii. 37); "Honest, my lord?" (III, iii. 105); "Think, my lord?" (III. iii. 109); "But let her live" (III. iii. 481). Iago speaks a language of obsession, a language which recalls the unwanted repetition of a painful thought. "Thieves, thieves, thieves!" he cries when first we meet him, "Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags. / Thieves, thieves!" (I. i. 79-81). In the third scene of the first act, no less than nine times in twenty-four lines, he urges Roderigo to make money.

We find Othello increasingly taking on this obsessive language. His grand diction deteriorates into starts and stops and paranoid repetitions as he becomes "possessed" with his shadow. Iago's un-language is infectious, and we soon find the eloquent Othello speaking so differently that Desdemona asks him, "Why do you speak so startingly and rash?" "Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is it out o' the way?" (III. iv. 77, 78), he replies. His language deteriorates further; Ridley notes that "with Iago's final wrench on the levers, his brutally casual 'With her, on her, what you will,' Othello lapses into almost incoherent ravings, hardly any longer a human being, little better than a slavering mad dog."[31]

Iago's rhetoric of repetition likewise invades Othello's verbal register:

> Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,
> And turn again, and she can weep, sir, weep;
> And she's obedient, as you say, obedient;
> Very obedient.
>
> (IV. i. 249-52)

Later, when Desdemona asks him what sin she has committed, the notion of her adultery "committed" is so horrible that he sticks on the word, repeating it three times in five lines. The last scene finds Othello's speech deteriorated to what Emilia calls a "roar." He meets her horrible revelations with "O! O! O!" (V. ii. 198) and "O fool, fool, fool!" (V. ii. 324). No longer the articulate

soldier of the first act, Othello is reduced into his opposite, instinctual shadow.

The substance of Iago's language also invades Othello's voice. His beastly references, such as his description of Cassio and Desdemona "as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys, / as salt as wolves" (III. iii. 409-10), creep into Othello's register. Heilman notes of Othello that "one flaring index of his decline is the way animal images sweep into his speech after—and *only* after—the suspicions planted by Iago begin to eat at him."[32] Diabolic images are also passed from Iago to Othello. The proportion of diabolic references, in fact, shifts in Othello's favor in each successive act; in act one, we find Iago with eight diabolic references while Othello has one, and in the final act, Iago has no such references, and Othello, six.[33] Iago's last words, "What you know, you know, / From this time forth I never will speak word" (V. ii. 304-05) are telling; he no longer needs to communicate because Othello has assumed his voice.

Iago succeeds in turning Othello into the opposite of what he was. Othello's concerns become increasingly private rather than public; the play itself constricts until we find ourselves inside Desdemona and Othello's bedchamber, a room which Othello was constantly leaving in the first half of the play. Othello also becomes a figure of darkness rather than light. As mentioned above, he calls forth the darkness of the shadow during his "marriage" with Iago. The play's last scene finds him entirely possessed with this darkness. His desire to "put out the light" (V. ii. 7) escalates into the "huge eclipse / Of sun and moon" (V. ii. 100-01). The anima is finally lost; in her very last sentence, Desdemona equates herself with "nobody." Her death represents the final loss of anima, indicating the completion of Othello's possession by his shadow. Othello, a soldier, is unable to kill a bound Iago, perhaps realizing, at some level, that killing himself would accomplish the same end.

There are a number of aspects of *Othello* which point to its psychological capabilities. To begin with, the audience's increased involvement with the play grants them a greater cathartic experience. It is perhaps Shakespeare's most intimate tragedy; G. Wilson Knight claims that "*Othello* is eminently a domestic tragedy," and it has the lowest number of "significant" characters of any of Shakespeare's tragedies—a mere thirteen to *Hamlet's* twenty-five.[34] Also, Othello's flaw is one which most audience members can relate to; as Ridley notes, "we are all liable to blinding jealousy."[35]

The characters and dramatic action seem designed to elicit

the strongest emotional reaction and identification from the audience. Bradley remarks, "Of all Shakespeare's tragedies . . . not even excepting *King Lear*, *Othello* is the most painfully exciting and the most terrible"; Ridley states that in most tragedy "we watch the action; but in *Othello*, we are involved in it"; and Sanders claims that "the play's theatrical grip has never been less than remarkable.[36] *Othello* enjoyed massive Restoration popularity, and, with the exception of seven years, it was staged every year of the eighteenth century. Such a strong emotional impact, one could argue, is derived from the psychological information the play encodes.

Othello's adaptive function is further accented in its emphasis on repetition. Such repetition is the key to restorative healing and psychological insight, both of which archetypal narrative seeks to instill. Lee Edwards best summarizes the active role of repetition and enactment: "Dreaming, we are heroes. Waking, we invent them. . . We dream our heroes. In exchange, our heroes alter us."[37] It should be no surprise then that *Othello* is an extremely "narrative-conscious" narrative. Parker comments on the play's extraordinary emphasis on narrative, an emphasis which Othello makes overt in the final scene when he casts aside his public mask to demand the repetition of his tale: "I have done the state some service, and they know't; / No more of that" (V. ii. 340-41).[38] He then implores his "viewers" to retell:

> I pray you in your letters,
> When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
> Speak of them as they are; nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in malice; then must you speak
> Of one that lov'd not wisely, but too well.
> (V. ii. 341-45)

His "word or two" is filled with references to communication, to "letters," "relating," "speaking," and "setting down." As if to provide an example, before killing himself, he refers to two symbolic narratives, those of a "base Indian" and a "turban'd Turk."

Rather than cheering himself up here, as T. S. Eliot implies, Othello is articulating the function of the play itself. He is a tragic hero arrived at his "journey's end" (V. ii. 268), and "there is no going further."[39] Othello himself makes a metaphor of his internal development as an external "hero's journey," yet, as Holloway points out, he realizes his stagnation in this last scene. This is why he reiterates the need for his story to be re-told accurately; the retelling will allow others to learn from his mis-

fortune. His story, one hopes, will go beyond Lodovico's "repressive" drawing of the bed-curtains. From a Jungian perspective, Othello provides a lesson of "what not to do" while teaching viewers to love well *and* wisely.

Through its portrayal of how the hero adapts to changing conditions in the outer and inner unknown, the hero myth allows the audience vicarious involvement in solving these problems while providing them the opportunity to learn from the hero's mistakes. As a three-dimensional and dynamic art form, drama has a unique capacity to portray a psychological "landscape of symbolic figures" interacting. Psychological discussions of *Othello*, I hope, will add richness to past criticism by casting new light on the play. The interplay between the "critical" and the "psychological" can bring to light further correspondences and elements of significance not realized in either individual criticism. Jung once claimed that "the psychoanalysis of art differs in no essential from the subtle psychological nuances of a penetrating literary analysis."[40] There seems no reason why one cannot serve to inform the other.

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Notes

[1]Carl Jung, *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, ed. Herbert Read, et al. Bollingen Series (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1959), p. 43.

[2]Erich Neumann, *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, trans. R. F. C. Hull. Bollingen Series (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1954), p. 131.

[3]Carl Jung, *The Portable Jung*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Penguin, 1971), p. 145.

[4]III. iv. 121. All references to this play are to The Arden Shakespeare's *Othello*, ed. M. R. Ridley (London: Routledge, 1994).

[5]Jung, *The Portable Jung*, p. 151.

[6]A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth* (London: MacMillan, 1993), p. 162.

[7]F. R. Leavis, *The Common Pursuit* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965), p. 142.

[8]Barbara Everett, *Young Hamlet: Essays on Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 46.

[9]Neumann, *Origins*, p. 136.

[10]Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, ed. Herbert Read, et al. Bollingen Series (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1959), p. 29.

[11]G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Methuen & Co., 1949), p. 109; Bradley, p. 175.

[12]Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), p. 131.

[13]Marianne L. Novy, *Love's Argument: Gender Relations in Shakespeare* (Chapel Hill: The Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1984), p. 126.

[14]Norman Sanders, Introduction to The New Cambridge *Othello*, by William Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984), p. 29.

[15]Leavis, p. 145.

[16]Cavell, p. 130.

[17]Jung, *The Portable Jung*, p. 147.

[18]Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination* (London: Amen House, 1965), p. 220-21.

[19]Exod. 3:14, New International.

[20]Cavell, p. 136.

[21]Frank Kermode, "Othello, the Moor of Venice," *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), p. 1202; Cavell, p. 136; Jared R. Curtis, "The Speculative and Offic'd Instrument: Reason and Love in *Othello*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 24 (1973), p. 193; Robert B. Heilman, *Magic in the Web* (n.p. Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1956), p. 36; Everett, p. 53; Stanley Edgar Hyman. *Iago: Some Approaches to the Illusion of His Motivation* (New York: Atheneum, 1970).

[22]Heilman, p. 69.

[23]Sanders, p. 30.

[24]Leavis, pp. 139-41.

[25]J. I. M. Stewart, *Character and Motive in Shakespeare: Some Recent Appraisals Examined* (London: Longmans, 1965), p. 102-03.

[26]Bodkin, p. 245; Karen Newman, "'And Wash the Ethiop White': Femininity and the Monstrous in *Othello*," *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, eds. Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor (New York: Routledge, 1987), p.144.

[27]Alvin Kernan, "*Othello*: An Introduction," *Shakespeare The Tragedies: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Alfred Harbage (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 76, 80.

[28]Thomas F. Connolly, "Shakespeare and the Double Man," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 1 (1950), p. 32.

[29]Heilman, p. 150.

[30]Coppélia Kahn, *Man's Estate Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1981), p. 144-45.

[31]M. R. Ridley, "Introduction," The Arden *Othello*, by William Shakespeare (London: Routledge, 1994), p. lix.

[32]Heilman, p. 106.

[33]S. L. Bethell, "Shakespeare's Imagery: The Diabolic Images in *Othello*," *Shakespeare Survey*, 5 (1952), p. 69.

[34]Knight, p. 108; Ridley, p. xlvi.

[35]Ridley, p. xlviii.

[36]Bradley, p. 150; Ridley, p. xlviii; Sanders, p. 17.

[37]Lee R. Edwards, *Psyche as Hero* (Middletown: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1984), p. 3.

[38]Patricia Parker, "Shakespeare and Rhetoric: 'Dilation' and 'Delation' in *Othello*," *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, eds. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York: Routledge, 1985), p. 58.

[39]John Holloway, *The Story of the Night* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 53.

[40]Carl Jung, *The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, ed. Herbert Read, et al. Bollingen Series (Princeton, Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), p. 68.

The Pathology of Rhetoric in *Coriolanus*

by Yvonne Bruce

Coriolanus seems to be a play of action, a dramatized world of mutinous citizens, plotting tribunes, famine, war, and banishment. Yet what really happens in this world? The citizens never realize their mutiny, Brutus and Sicinius never realize their ill-defined plot, Coriolanus' consulship is rescinded, the mutual banishment of Coriolanus is undone by his resolve not to make "true wars" against Rome, and the defeat of Aufidius in act one becomes a meaningless victory when Coriolanus is in turn defeated in the final scene of the play. Perhaps it is more accurate to call *Coriolanus* a play of action, a drama in which action is enstated rather than enacted, in which action is described, deferred, erased, and repeated, but in which activity itself is never "finalized" as a discrete event. *Coriolanus* contains plenty of movement but no progression, debate without resolution, plots and promises that are never fulfilled, and constant effort for no realized gain.[1]

The shortage of corn focuses all this fruitless activity, signaling not only material shortage, but also the play's scarcity of viable peace and politics. Coriolanus is the fulcrum about which is balanced Rome's ideology (as expressed by Volumnia) and its reality (the hungry and underrepresented citizens). This Rome is the play's "world elsewhere," held in perfect stasis by the competing tensions of its component parts. The play is at heart a tautology of rhetoric, whereby corn and representation become interchangeable demands made by the plebeians, bodies and voices become substitutable states, and every action is "talked" into the performance of a competing or canceling reaction. For the dearth exists less as material scarcity than as a fortuitous opportunity for the nobles to manipulate the plebeians; if there were no dearth, that is, the nobles would have had to make one up. In fact, after scarcity is established in act one, the *fact* of dearth is largely dropped, while the language of dearth and hunger is assimilated into and shapes the dynamics of the play. By taking into account the related ambiguities present in the figure of Coriolanus and in the issues raised by the corn shortage, one can negotiate the gap between voice and body so problematic in the play, and assimilate the importance of dearth to the drama in a fuller way than merely aligning it with actual shortages in early seventeenth-century England.[2]

The peculiarly systemic relationship between *Coriolanus* and its rhetoric is suggested by T. S. Eliot, who believed that even the most fundamental understanding of Elizabethan drama depended upon a grasp of the "endemic pathology" of Elizabethan rhetoric, which "pervaded the whole system; the healthy as well as the morbid tissues were built up on it."[3] *Coriolanus* displays Eliot's pathology in a notably organic way, and defining this organicism has been the goal of much *Coriolanus* criticism, from Nahum Tate's dedication of his 1682 adaptation of the play, to Zvi Jagendorf's 1990 essay on the failure of Rome's body politic. Even criticism not overtly political recognizes the link between political unity and individual wholeness (and thus wholesomeness). Janet Adelman, for example, explores the play's shift from its "exciting cause," the hungry multitude, to its central focus on the individual, wounded and wounding maternal body.[4] These and other essays, whether arguing from a dialectical understanding of the play's political processes, or from a psychoanalytic point of view or a structuralist, ultimately read the play as an essentialist conflict: between plebeians and nobles, between Coriolanus and the cultural forces against which he is set, between the body and speech, between the maternal and martial. I think this reading by disjunction comes about, surprisingly, because of the play's resistant, even seamless language, language so elusive that one scholar describes the play as "Shakespeare's dissection of verbal inadequacy."[5]

But I believe words succeed in *Coriolanus*; far from disjoining words and meanings, the play's "endemic pathology" of rhetoric suggests its own reconciliation of voice and body, members to corporation, fragments to the whole. What fails in *Coriolanus* is not words, but the uses to which its rhetoric is put, and a clear, cooperative definition of the Roman state from which its rhetoric springs. That is, *Coriolanus* is "about" the manipulative function of rhetoric—to persuade the plebeians to vote for and, immediately after, to banish Coriolanus, to shift Coriolanus' allegiance first to Rome then to the Volscian territories, to enable Volumnia to pit the agents of Rome (her son, the nobles, the tribunes) against one another all in the name of Rome. Yet the citizens remain physically and politically starved, Coriolanus is reduced to martial impotency, and the nobles dependent upon his voice lose the physical presence needed to instantiate their power. The language of dearth and hunger is endemic because every character in *Coriolanus* is hungry for something the play does not provide.

The first scene of the play establishes the relationship among

these elements of hunger, citizens, tribunes and nobles, bodies and speech: *Coriolanus* does not begin, as so many have assumed, with "public violence," but rather with the potential for violence; one's first impression is not of violence being done but of its imminence.[6] The citizens may enter mutinous, according to the stage direction, but once they begin speaking, they more properly become potentially mutinous. Their very first words immediately begin the process of defusing action; even this scene's inflammatory language defers and usurps the impetus toward revolt:

> *First Cit.* Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.
> *All.* Speak, speak.
> *First. Cit.* You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?
> *All.* Resolved, resolved.
> *First Cit.* First, you know Caius Martius is chief enemy to the people.
> *All.* We know't, we know't.
> *First Cit.* Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price. Is't a verdict?
> *All.* No more talking on't; let it be done. Away, away!
> *Second Cit.* One word, good citizens.[7]

The citizens are here stayed by the second citizen to discuss in more detail the nobles' role in the grain shortage, and in particular, the duty of Coriolanus to the commonalty. Upon hearing shouts from the other side of the city, the citizens ask, "why stay we prating here? To th' capitol!" (I. i. 47), but once again are halted, this time by the entrance of Menenius. The citizens remain discussing their grievances with him until the entrance of Coriolanus and his news that "the other troop" of citizens have been granted "Five tribunes to defend their vulgar wisdoms," and "are dissolv'd" (203, 214), prompting a further discussion that continues until nearly the end of the scene. The language of the citizens, whose intent initially seems to be to further action, repeatedly halts or postpones it. The second citizen's interjection appears to interrupt the mutiny, but it is already a repetition of the first citizen's introductory deferral. The citizens claim that by ridding themselves of Coriolanus they will have corn at their own prices: that is, by killing him they will force the nobles to recognize their economic power, but the cause and effect between the citizens' satisfaction and Coriolanus' death is never made explicit. What is clear is the citizens' hunger per se, an easily shifted or deferred but unsatisfied desire.[8]

But how do the citizens come to decide on the link between

food and Coriolanus? Until the point in the first scene at which Menenius enters (at line 50), the likeliest link between corn and Coriolanus comes from the citizens' attribution of abundance to both: "the leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularise [the nobles'] abundance." Although they disagree whether to call Coriolanus "covetous," the first citizen, at least, has more than one complaint: "I need not be barren of accusations. He hath faults, with surplus, to tire in repetition" (29-45). This remark echoes the first citizen's earlier suggestion that the nobles' very behavior makes them suspect hoarders of grain: "What authority surfeits on would relieve us. If they would yield us but the superfluity while it were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely" (16-8).[9] As Coriolanus is also the plebeians' "object of misery," he too serves to "particularise" the abundance of the nobles.

Linking food and Coriolanus symbolically, Jarrett Walker describes hunger as the motive behind the revolt, while Coriolanus is the "symbol of [the citizens'] suffering and the object of their violence . . . [Their] consensus can be built only through speech, [but] it is driven by an impulse that speech cannot describe." For Walker, the citizens' motive is hunger while their act is revenge because voice and body are ontologically different. He bridges the gap between voice and body by suggesting that what really unites the people is "the specific image of Martius," and following René Girard, he describes Coriolanus as a "sacrificial victim," and his relationship to the citizens as a "silent, bodily one." Walker's observation astutely realizes Coriolanus' sometimes nebulous position, and yet his status as bodily object need not be seen as a different phenomenon from the citizens' hungry speech. Walker notes that "neither hunger nor revenge really describes the proposed act,"[10] but his very mention of a *proposed* act points to an alignment of both hunger and revenge in the register of speech, and of the displacement of action into proposition. What the citizens in I. i propose to do is mutiny, and they propose to mutiny because of claims of hunger, yet at the beginning of I. i their hunger is for corn; by the end of the scene it is a hunger for tribunes, and their proposed mutiny culminates in an utterance of banishment in III. iii.

It is not only the citizens who are suspicious of abundance. When a messenger interrupts this scene with news that the Volsces have taken up arms, Martius responds, "I am glad on't; then we shall ha' means to vent / Our musty superfluity" (224-25), language that calls to mind the "superfluity" of grain growing unwholesome in its storehouse. And in this image, by a

rhetorical transformation similar to that by which the citizens feed themselves with news of the tribunes, Martius, hungry for battle, transforms news of Volscian attack into citizens-as-food, feeding them and their insurrection into the wars.[11]

But hunger and scarcity remain the only commodities in abundance in Rome; the tribunes do not satisfy the citizens; victory in Corioles does not satisfy Coriolanus; Coriolanus' banishment does not satisfy the tribunes. As Volumnia so eloquently states the dilemma: "Anger's my meat: I sup upon myself / And so shall starve with feeding" (IV. ii. 50-51). Coriolanus, less enigmatically, attempts to soften the impact of his banishment by prophesying, "I shall be lov'd when I am lacked" (IV. i. 15). What are the inhabitants of this Rome really hungry for? And why do the manifestations of their hunger continually shift? Why can't Rome satisfy its citizens? It may be helpful to address these questions by posing their opposites: what does Rome provide in abundance? What is the relationship between abundance and scarcity? If Rome provides excess for which its citizens are not hungry, then what is the function of its dearth?

One thing Rome appears to have in abundance is wounds: wounded and wounding citizens, the infectious conversation of the tribunes, a "diseased" Coriolanus who "must be cut away" (III. i. 292). Coriolanus in particular is abundantly wounded, a cause for celebration in II. i, as Volumnia, Virgilia, Valeria, and Menenius anticipate his arrival home from the wars in Corioles. And yet, the rhetoric of the waiting nobles values these wounds in terms of their number, rather than their physical effect on Coriolanus. Menenius (surprisingly) offers initial resistance to this "fabulation," but he is no match for Volumnia's exuberance, and together they count twenty-seven wounds, including those acquired in previous wars. Philip Brockbank notes the "discrepant arithmetic" of their calculations, but because these wounds cannot be reasonably quantified (i.e., separated from their cumulative effect of "good report"), the more the better, and Volumnia and Menenius imaginatively finger his "cicatrices" like coins.[12] These wounds, and their meaning in this scene and throughout the play, further vex readings that would divide *Coriolanus* thematically into factions, whether those factions are voice and body or citizens and nobles. What value do these wounds have? Menenius uses them to justify Coriolanus' pride to the tribunes; Volumnia values them for the impact they will have on the people when Coriolanus "shall stand for his place" in the market. But Coriolanus does not show his wounds, either to the nobles or to the citizens; the wounds' value remains

explicitly dependent upon their ability to be detached from the referent of Coriolanus' body and circulated rhetorically. The citizens take up the worth of his wounds in the market scene, much as Volumnia and Menenius do in II. i: "For, if he show us his wounds and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues in those wounds and speak for them. So if he tell us his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptance of them" (II. iii. 5-9).

In this strange combination of conditionality and protocol, the body-voice distinction is again effaced. Although Sicinius warns Coriolanus the citizens will not "bate / one jot of ceremony" (II. ii. 40-41), they award him the consulship without being shown his wounds and without being told of his deeds (Coriolanus says only, "Of wounds I have two dozen odd; battles thrice six / I have seen and heard of" [II. iii. 126-27]). In fact, in a moment made significant by its absence of artifice, the first citizen tells Coriolanus the price of the consulship is simply "to ask it kindly" (75); Coriolanus, who has just claimed "I cannot bring / My tongue to such a pace" (52-53), appears so taken aback he does ask it kindly, and responds, "I have wounds to show you, which shall be yours in private" (76-77). Apart from this exchange (which is "something odd," the third citizen will note a few lines later), the wounds lose their ceremonial potency.[13] The remark that the citizens will put their tongues in Coriolanus' wound is jarring because it momentarily subverts the ritual mechanism by which speech and ceremony keep separate tongues and wounds. What the citizen implies ("So if . . .") is that if Coriolanus acts according to custom, the citizens will respond in kind. But these reiterations only highlight the instability of the tongue-wound image. This scene echoes the moment in *Julius Caesar* when Antony addresses the plebeians in front of Caesar's body:

> [I] Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,
> And bid them speak for me. But were I Brutus
> And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
> Would . . . put a tongue
> In every wound of Caesar.[14]

But *Coriolanus* cultivates an underlying perversity such that the third citizen's rhetoric does not put its tongue into Coriolanus' wounds only to speak in their place; the language of barter also drives the exchange and slants the whole scene in the marketplace (e.g., "You must think, if we give you anything, we hope to gain by you [II. iii. 72-73]). The alternative force of "speaking for

wounds" must be figured in: the citizens are speaking to *gain* the wounds, to appropriate them and the abundance they signify.

In receiving Coriolanus' wounds, however, the citizens must be wounded: this divergence from the ceremonial script, by which wounds shown in private will lose their performative force, weakens the citizens' political strength. The confusion following Coriolanus' exit from the marketplace (confusion artfully manipulated by the tribunes) springs from just this divergence. The citizens would resolve Coriolanus' enigmatic temper—was he mocking them, wounding them with his words?—in his favor had he only shown them his wounds in public, only saved them from the play's pathological speech with a literal instance of pathology:

> *Second Cit.* Amen, sir. To my poor unworthy notice
> He mock'd us when he begged our voices.
> *Third Cit.* Certainly,
> He flouted us downright.
> *First Cit.* No, 'tis his kind of speech; he did not mock us.
> *Second Cit.* Not one among us, save yourself, but says
> He us'd us scornfully: he should have show'd us
> His marks of merit, wounds receiv'd for's country.
> *Sic.* Why, so he did, I am sure.
> *All.* No, no; no man saw 'em.
> *Third Cit.* He said he had wounds which he could show
> in private;
> And with his hat, thus waving it in scorn,
> 'I would be consul,' says he; 'aged custom,
> But by your voices, will not so permit me:
> Your voices therefore.' When we granted that,
> Here was, 'I thank you for your voices, thank you;
> Your most sweet voices; now you have left your voices,
> I have no further with you.' Was not this mockery?
> (II. iii. 156-71)

This scene very forcefully positions the reader as a citizen, or vice versa, struggling to interpret Coriolanus, whose wounds lose their "merit" when withheld from public view, and whose refusal to perform according to custom forces the citizens to respond to his tone. Both the first and second citizens voice a plausible response, and the same reasoned speculation will occur in Antium, as Aufidius' servingmen attempt to piece together Coriolanus' identity from clues of face, clothes, and strength; and this market scene seems to confound readings that pit the plebeians against the nobles, even readings sympathetic to the former (those of Jagendorf, Berthold Brecht, and Günter Grass, for example). These interpretations, however carefully

they individuate the citizens or explore their political legitimacy, neglect the indeterminacy animating the relationship between Coriolanus and the citizens, the emotional dependence each has on the other, and the extent to which this relationship, so often dismissed by both parties as futile, still has the power to surprise.[15]

This wounding capability of words is explored at length by Geoffrey Hartman, in a "different turn" on Derridean theories of rhetoric; Hartman attempts a "restored theory of representation" that takes into account the "empirical nearness . . . the moral and mimetic impact" of signified *and* signifying practices: "Literature, I surmise, moves us beyond the fallacious hope that words can heal without also wounding. Words are homeopathic, curing like by like."[16] Hartman's conjecture recalls Eliot's "pathological rhetoric," upon which the "healthy as well as morbid tissues are built." But in *Coriolanus* rhetoric's health and morbidity often run parallel to or are supplanted by its usefulness or lack. "Plenty is then a function of dearth," writes Jagendorf,[17] and I am suggesting that what is plentiful in *Coriolanus* is the rhetoric of hunger; dearth works, in other words. Simultaneously, the rhetoric of *Coriolanus* plays a powerfully reflexive game, one from which Stanley Cavell can extrapolate the "paradox and reciprocity of hungering" exemplified by Coriolanus and Volumnia. But "The circle of cannibalism, of the eater being eaten by what he or she eats," is a phenomenon not limited to son and mother, and Cavell implies as much by pointing to "the active and passive constructions" of the play's "focal verbs" (feeding and suckling) informing the "inevitable reflexiveness of action" in Rome.[18] This "reflexiveness," however, is the play's central activity, of which "cannibalism" is only one instance. The subsumption of eating and being eaten in a single verb, for example, recalls the subsumption of act and motive by violent action posited by Walker.

The mutual banishment of Coriolanus and the citizens epitomizes this reflexiveness.[19] Their competing declaratives neatly express the play's strange narrative drive that insists positive action requires negative presence; in them one can hear Volumnia's desire to efface Coriolanus' nature in pursuit of her political goal, the conferral of tribunes in lieu of corn, and the tactical persuasions and cajolery directed toward Coriolanus once he is in Antium. The banishment, however, is rarely seen as mutual; Coriolanus is, of course, the one who leaves Rome, and criticism typically views the utterance of banishment as emanating from the different positions of political or linguistic strength

occupied by Coriolanus and the citizens: Coriolanus' declaration is an attempt to stake out a new, alternate sociopolitical world, or it functions as critical commentary of the Rome he is leaving rather than as the constitutive authorization of a new state.[20] I do not deny the dramatic tension of this scene created by these different positions, but I want to point out that it is at this moment, in a drama whose forensic style is for the most part a sophisticated version of "did too, did not," and in mutual statements buried within the play's knottiest language, that Coriolanus and the citizens address one another "truly," in words that, in speaking of banishment, actually result in (at least a temporary banishment). John Plotz notes that Coriolanus can't create a "world elsewhere" by simply saying so and taking leave of the world he's lived in thus far, but at this point in the play Coriolanus doesn't yet realize this, and his ignorance gives his declaration of banishment its persuasive power.

Coriolanus *reacts* to Rome, just as everyone in the play reacts rather than sets in motion. What makes the banishment scene so singular is the possibility it seems to present for action rather than reaction, although this possibility remains potential, circumscribed by Rome's political solipsism and by the citizens' language of futurity. The play's tragedy resides partly in a quality of uncertainty; we sense Coriolanus struggling toward something he knows nothing about, but all we know is what Coriolanus knows—that sense of struggle, the grappling to define an alternative—because all we have is its Rome, too.

One cannot then contrast, as Plotz does, the "fraudulent" language of the citizens with the "solipsistic universe" posited by Coriolanus, in which "other human beings are . . . useful only as motives to our actions." To distinguish the "manipulative" talk of the citizens designed to keep them "comfortably numb to their own motives" from Coriolanus' stoic philosophy of "any deed bravely done is its own reward and its own proof of rightness," does not shed any light on Coriolanus' motives, nor explain to what purposes he uses others as motives for his actions.[21] Coriolanus and the citizens serve as mirrors of the other's discontent, in fact, but contrary to Plotz and others, the play does not uphold the truth or falsehood of either position; the play does not divide language into "persuasive" and "true" at all, but erases this division. Coriolanus, whose language of banishment differs so markedly from the citizens, is straitened by the same lexical conflation of signified and signifier. His "I banish you" has the same rhetorical force as the citizens' and tribunes' more baroque utterances of banishment; his decision to appeal to

them, made earlier in counsel with the nobles, partakes of the same grammatical futurity as the citizens in the banishment scene, and of the same indecision that has also been typical of the citizens throughout. Coriolanus is far more aware than the citizens of the fraudulence of this language and equally guilty of the citizens' "uncertainty."[22]

"Action is eloquence," says the maddening Volumnia (III. ii. 76), and her equation and its Plutarchan antecedent might serve as the play's most eloquent synopsis.[23] But what does this equation *mean*, or perhaps I should ask *how* does she mean it? The possibilities are clearly limited if one must decide between this statement's truth value and its persuasive power. Volumnia's rhetoric conflates her statement's grammatical, logical construction with its figurative, aphoristic force; her remark has both illocutionary and perlocutionary status. As Paul de Man asserts, the problem with what seems a "perfectly clear syntactical paradigm" is not whether "we have, on the one hand, a literal meaning and on the other a figural meaning, but when it is impossible to decide by grammatical or other linguistic devices which of the two meanings . . . prevails. Rhetoric radically suspends logic and opens up vertiginous possibilities of referential aberration."[24] In Volumnia's statement one must weigh, for example, the manifestations and manipulation of the Plutarchan ethos infiltrating the play: action privileged over speech; the necessity for speech and action to exist in symbiosis (action expressed in *apt* speech); and the possibilities suggested by a reversal of the variables, to "eloquence is action."[25]

The syntactical paradigm de Man uses for his assertion is the rhetorical question, and not a species of statement; Coriolanus provides such a paradigmatic example, one that, as happens so often in the play when he and Volumnia speak to one another, recontextualizes her own gnomic speech. The interesting rhetorical questions occur early in the scene that also produces Volumnia's "action is eloquence" and after he has been proclaimed consul. I quote the whole of his address after Volumnia's entrance:

> I muse my mother
> Does not approve me further, who was wont
> To call them woollen vassals, things created
> To buy and sell with groats, to show bare heads
> In congregations, to yawn, be still, and wonder,
> When one but of my ordinance stood up
> To speak of peace or war. I talk of you.
> Why did you wish me milder? Would you have me

> False to my nature? Rather say I play
> The man I am.
>
> (III. ii. 7-16)

Coriolanus appears to be answering his own questions, yet that answer is as rhetorical as his questions. As de Man asks of the confusion engendered by this paradigm, "what is the use of asking . . . when we cannot even authoritatively decide whether a question asks or doesn't ask?"[26]

The inflectional possibilities awaiting the interpreter of Coriolanus at this moment are daunting, and one might make a decision in favor of Plotz's belief that (especially in the banishment scene), "only Coriolanus says out loud what others keep under their hats."[27] But Coriolanus seems caught in the same linguistic labyrinth integral—not to his sense of true worth nor the citizens' knowing fraudulence—but to meaning in the play. Coriolanus may be frustrated by not being able to say just what he means, but I think to assert more than this possibility places a burden on him unsubstantiated by the text. True, he will at one point admit, "I flee from words," but when words suit his purpose, he uses them as profitably as the tribunes, the citizens, Menenius, or Volumnia: "so shall my lungs / Coin words till their decay" (III. i. 76-77).

When Coriolanus asks his rhetorical questions, he is talking of Volumnia, musing that his mother does not approve him, although what it is she does not approve remains unclear. The content of his speech seems calculated to win sympathy for his explosion against the tribunes in the previous scene, when he learned the citizens, since granting him the consulship, "are incens'd against him." Yet, so far as Volumnia knows, he is still consul, and his invective might well express shame at her disapproval of one of his "ordinance" standing for the office, despite her desire for it (and her own remarks, through line 31, hardly resolve their respective positions). He is feeling her out, testing her "true" feelings toward himself by testing those toward the "woollen vassals," and using (possibly) her own words (the antecedent of "wont" could be either Coriolanus or Volumnia) to establish a strange intimacy between them. Coriolanus' questions not only foreclose an answer from Volumnia, but also have accumulated the force of the preceding lexical twists. His own answer, if a continuation of his talk "of" Volumnia, might be a rebuke to her, as "you would rather say I play the man I am." If rebutting his own questions, however, he is as much as admitting that the man he is requires performance—that action is elo-

quence.[28]

Keeping the play's relentlessly organic rhetoric in mind, then, what one must weigh in the banishment scene is not only Coriolanus' present language versus the future language of the citizens, not only whatever solipsistic philosophy escapes his lips versus the need for external proof voiced by the citizens, but also the proportions established by the play leading up to the scene. Everything between II. ii and III. iii concerns Coriolanus' consulship and its rescission. The pronouncements of banishment sound striking in isolation, especially Coriolanus' alliterative rant, beginning at line 120 in III. iii, but if one pulls back enough to view them within this larger context of political tug-of-war, they lose a great deal of their cogency and climactic impact. The mix of tenses by which the citizens banish him ("He's banish'd, and it shall be so!"), the tribunes' odd, truncated language ("we, / Ev'n from this instant, banish him our city"), and of course the citizens' reversal, at the urging of the tribunes, of voting Coriolanus into office and then casting him out of the city, provoke his cry, "And here remain with your uncertainty!" But here is Coriolanus responding in the previous scene to the urgings of the nobles that he return to the marketplace: "What must I do? . . . Must I go show them my unbarb'd sconce? . . . Well, I will do't . . . Well, I must do't . . . I will not do't . . . Mother, I am going to the marketplace . . . I'll mountebank their loves . . . I / Will answer in mine honour" (III. ii. 35, 99, 101, 110, 120, 131, 132, 143-44).

Plotz seeks to understand "who's banished" and argues for the impossibility of Coriolanus' authorizing himself sufficiently to "turn the paradigmatic tide." But Plotz also establishes a strong case for the "nonsense" of both declarations of banishment, "though the staging of the dual banishment does *create* sense within the frame of the play."[29] As I've pointed out, however, the banishment scene makes sense particularly as the culmination of an impetus that began in the second act, and while I don't wish to overextend the significance I have established of dearth and abundance in this, the banishment scene does work aptly as a mutual venting by which Coriolanus and the citizens not only voice their discontents but expel linguistically the irksome abundance signified by the other. Both Plotz and Cavell realize that Coriolanus cannot really leave Rome for a world elsewhere; he is too inextricably of Rome to create or function in a place not-Rome (banished, he becomes, in the parlance of the play, a limb that's cut away). But what happens as a result of this "banishment"?

The relationship of the post-banishment Coriolanus to its pre-banishment one has vexed readers who understandably are looking for coherent and particularly tragic meaning. Linda Bamber likens *Coriolanus* to *Macbeth*, claiming "the dialectic in both plays . . . is inconclusive. . . . Macbeth and Coriolanus simply exhaust the possibilities of their mode; they repeat themselves until, like Marlowe's Tamburlaine, they are dramatically played out. Then they die." Jagendorf, eschewing the play's tragedy for its politics, and weaving in the imagery of food, comes to nearly the same nihilistic conclusion: "the body cut to pieces remains an obstinately secular final image. No nourishment can issue from these fragments, and no promise of any coherence that outlives the body is inscribed in them."[30]

This seems to me almost the best that can be done in terms of finding meaning in the play's final two acts without forcing signification on them, especially the kind of "transcendent loss" Bamber ascribes to the other tragedies.[31] I would like, however, to examine the post-banishment play as an annotation, or critical commentary of what has gone before.[32] Aufidius, for example, who in the first three acts remains a very peripheral figure, should provide a clue to the pathology of Rome/Coriolanus; he is usually seen as a projection of Coriolanus, either father figure or sexualized counterpart, or, for Janet Adelman, an invention: "Shakespeare takes pains to emphasize the distance between the Aufidius we see and the Aufidius of Coriolanus' imagination."[33] But while one can see imagination working in Coriolanus' attributing martial worthiness to an opponent he has beaten at every conflict, neither invention nor distance can account for their shared sexualized language and hatred, nor Aufidius' meditation on the nature of his foe, expressed in language that is a refracted version of the Roman citizens' in I. i (IV. vii. 37-47).

Aufidius is not Coriolanus, but he is like Coriolanus, in the same way Antium is not Rome but like Rome. Antium has conspirators rather than tribunes, cryptic servingmen rather than citizens, lords and lieutenants rather than nobles. The play ends in Antium's marketplace. One need only track the permutations of rhetoric to see how the *critical* difference between the two places is wrought. Menenius, for example, tries to explain why Coriolanus has allied himself with the Volsces by pointing out the "differency" between a grub and a butterfly: Coriolanus has metamorphosed similarly; he has "grown from a man to a dragon" (V. iv. 11-13). But the analogy to Coriolanus will not bear scrutiny: butterfly is not to grub as dragon is to man. The

reader has become inured to the rhetorical excesses of Rome and to the mythologizing of Coriolanus by the nobles, because Rome has so successfully contained its hero and been "the world elsewhere." If one takes him out of this world and compares him to Antony, for instance, "whose legs bestrid the world," it becomes clear that Coriolanus is very much a local hero.[34]

Because he is a local hero, his carefully constructed Roman presence is out of place in Antium, hence Aufidius' refusal (or inability) to recognize and call him by name in IV. v, and the effectiveness of his taunt "boy" in V. vi. A more comprehensive depiction of difference occurs between the scene-ending Volscian conversation of IV. v and Sicinius' observation opening IV. vi. The Volscian servingmen are here anticipating the invasion of Rome:

> *Second Serv.* Why, then we shall have a stirring world again.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> *First Serv.* Let me have war, say I. It exceeds peace as far as day does night: it's sprightly walking, audible, and full of vent.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> *Second. Serv.* 'Tis so, and as wars, in some sort, may be said to be a ravisher, so it cannot be denied but peace is a great maker of cuckolds.
>
> *First. Serv.* Ay, and it makes men hate one another.
>
> *Third Serv.* Reason: because they then less need one another. The wars for my money. They are rising, they are rising.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> *Sic.* We hear not of him, neither need we fear him;
> His remedies are tame i'th' present peace
> And quietness of the people, which before
> Were in wild hurry. Here do we make his friends
> Blush that the world goes well; who rather had,
> Though they themselves did suffer by't, behold
> Dissentious numbers pest'ring streets, than see
> Our tradesmen singing in their shops and going
> About their functions friendly.
>
> (IV. v. 225-40; IV. vi. 1-9)

This is an extraordinary juxtaposition, articulating what seems to be a profound difference between the Volscian and Roman ideologies of warfare. War is very much an external threat to Antium, a menace from outside that must be met by unified forces from within. Rome, on the other hand, is already a "stirring world" whose inhabitants "hate one another," although this does not, in Rome's case, preclude their need for those they hate.

Even if one could ignore the ironic unlikeliness of Sicinius' friendly, singing Romans, his speech is still bracketed by the servingmen's anticipation of war and the announcement in Rome that Aufidius is preparing to attack. The construction of these scenes—Rome surrounded by Volscians—makes the "quietness" of the Roman people and the calm of the state claimed by Sicinius feel more like ominous lacunae.

For the Volsces, war's ravishing destruction is preferable to cuckolding peace, but these associations are subtly opposed in Rome, as Cominius accuses the tribunes of helping to ravish their own daughters, and Menenius concludes the imminent invasion is the work of Aufidius, who "Thrusts forth his horns again into the world, / Which were inshell'd when Martius stood for Rome" (IV. vi. 44-45). Antium has inverted the circumstantial markers of war and peace associated with Rome. War is for the former "full of vent," but not a venting of citizens; instead war purges undesirable Volscian traits and makes men "need one another." This practical and as far as possible healthy attitude toward warfare is in contrast to the Roman, whose inhabitants have all they can do to mediate the city's continual state of internal siege.

Rome might be the Orwellian exemplar of a state operating under the banner "war is peace." Not only does Antium provide a different perspective on the value of war, it discriminates between the conditions prescribed by peace and war. These terms seem useless in Rome, whose stability depends upon the proper balance of fomentation. In act one Coriolanus (as yet named Martius), attempting to rouse his troops against the Corioles, insults them with the same zest and language with which he insulted the hungry citizens, going so far as to threaten that unless the soldiers "Mend and charge home," he will "leave the foe / And make my wars on you." Their response: "Foolhardiness! Not I. / Nor I" (I. iv. 38-40; 46). After singlehandedly turning the tide of battle against the Volscians, Martius then whips up the same troops with a remarkable piece of incendiary rhetoric.[35]

Not much critical attention is paid to this lengthy battle scene, probably because it is sandwiched between more rhetorically interesting and revealing exchanges between the nobles and citizens; the battle is business as usual, more about intra-Roman politics than battlefield fraternity. But the scene enriches the complex characterization of Coriolanus; here is yet another instance of the man both fleeing from words and coining them until his lungs' decay. It is nearly impossible to know if Coriolanus is fully in control of his rhetoric at this point; the

tension garnered by the play is such that, although his death will come after Aufidius' refusal to let Coriolanus "purge himself with words," one remains unsure whether Coriolanus' constant verbal aperience is calculated or unconscious. Aufidius will echo him in this, ending the play a typical Roman amnesiac, whose rage evaporates immediately upon the death of his foe, thus obscuring the purgative relationship between motive and act.

In IV. vii Aufidius, in a speech Coleridge thought "the least explicable from the mood and full intention of any in the whole works of Shakespeare,"[36] understands the Roman people "Will be as rash in the repeal as hasty / To expel him thence." This is a key insight into the fragility of the Roman state, enabling Aufidius to prophesy that "When, Caius, Rome is thine, / Thou art poor'st of all: then shortly art thou mine" (32-33, 56-57). It does not matter to Aufidius whether Coriolanus makes Rome his through warring or peaceful means; he knows that Coriolanus and Rome are inextricably bound. Thus, the emphasis Rome had placed on the value of Coriolanus' position in the city as a register of the citizens' and nobles' discontents and on his wounds and reputation as martial and political currency begins to accumulate considerable relevance when issued from the mouths of Volsces. Coriolanus is out of place and valueless in Antium, and it is by manipulating his worth to Rome that Aufidius "devalues" him, turning him into the "kind of nothing, titleless" he becomes.

Once Coriolanus is in Antium and his course set against Rome, Volumnia too relies on her son's relative and malleable worth to save her city. Her lengthy speech in V. iii is a rhetorical *coup de maitre* intricately wedding the expectation of filial duty to the assertion of maternal authority, blurring all bounds between the political and social familial, and attacking Coriolanus' most Volumnia-entrenched beliefs for the purpose of satisfying herself. She says her request is not "To save the Romans, thereby to destroy / The Volsces . . . No, our suit / Is that you reconcile them." Volumnia sweetens her request with the projection that should Coriolanus do so both sides will "Give the all-hail to thee"—the laurel wreath of "good report" Volumnia (and thus Coriolanus) prizes more than his life (V. iii. 233-39). The drama's first three acts, in preparing for the banishment, have demonstrated just what success Coriolanus has made of reconcilement, and Volumnia, as his chief manipulator, knows how critical his role is as Rome's *tabula rasa*; her plea here is an attempt to restore the city's previous (dis)order, to close the gap his absence has opened.[37]

Volumnia's suit is born of desperation, now "all the policy, strength, and defence" Rome has left to it (IV. vi. 128). In I. iii she had derided Virgilia: "If my son were my husband I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour, than in the embracements of his bed." That absence is now a certainty, and Volumnia is pressed to admit to her son her dependence on Rome's insular homogeneity:

> Thou barr'st us
> Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort
> That all but we can enjoy; for how can we,
> Alas! how can we for our country pray,
> Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,
> Whereto we are bound?
>
> (V. iii. 104-49)

Volumnia's anguished emphasis on her bonds to Coriolanus evokes the pain of Rome's protracted tumescence, its inability to discharge its deferrals and postponements.[38]

Volumnia also prophesies to Coriolanus the outcome of his continued alienation from Rome, binding him rhetorically to the citizens, "whose voices might be curses" to themselves (II. iii. 182-83), much as Coriolanus had unknowingly linked the citizens to Menenius in act one. It is certain, she says, "That if thou conquer Rome, the benefit / Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name / Whose repetition will be dogg'd with curses" (V. iii. 142-44). In these few lines Volumnia refers to the major rhetorical images in the play, or—since each of these images in some measure conjures up Rome in its pathological entirety—what Lawrence Danson calls *Coriolanus'* "numerous and striking metonymies."[39]

Volumnia's rhetoric of metonymies, repeating many of the bodily images of the belly fable and representing the destruction of Coriolanus' family as the destruction of Roman society, succeeds with Coriolanus, but it seems to shock him into the awareness, away from Rome, that he cannot do for Rome what it cannot do for itself: "O mother, mother! . . . Behold, the heavens do ope, / The gods look down, and this unnatural scene / They laugh at" (V. iii. 182-85). The "unnatural scene" refers not simply to the specter of the women and son kneeling to Coriolanus, but to the more figurative role reversal: this is a man who has wanted "nothing of a god but eternity" (V. iv. 24), would stand "as if a man were author of himself," and who has accepted the regard of Menenius, who "godded me indeed" (V. iii. 36,11). But Coriolanus has not grown into the expansive autonomy necessary to deserve

these epithets—just as he has refused to brook the reduction of his person into subhuman wounds. Volumnia's speech reminds him of his "place," her metonymies indicative of Rome's parochialism and Coriolanus' "unnatural" presence outside its walls. "The heavens do ope"—a subtle enjambment that fleetingly suggests a metaphorical opening up of Coriolanus' understanding—gives way to his final fragmentation, the realization that he is indebted to Rome for the creation and continuation of his identities. "I am glad thou hast set thy mercy and thy honour / At difference in thee," gloats Aufidius in an aside. "Out of that I'll work / Myself a former fortune" (V. iii. 199-202).

The distance Coriolanus achieves from Rome and the seeming objectivity he achieves as a result only hasten the process by which he is destroyed. When he had met Aufidius in battle he always emerged victorious, but when he partakes of and succumbs to the rhetoric of Rome, away from Rome, Aufidius is there to record his and its vulnerability. Coriolanus makes a valiant effort to fit into the "world elsewhere," *reminding* himself, I think, that the linguistic strategies integral to his domestic incorporation are not useful except in the domestic sphere.[40] But Aufidius' Antium, like Rome in so many ways, provides an alternative model of social coherence, one far less reliant on the lexical forcing of signification. When Aufidius calls Martius "traitor," he reads the latter's actions, not his words, lest Coriolanus "purge himself with words" (V. vi. 7), and Aufidius' conspirators similarly concern themselves with this difference:

> Ere he express himself or move the people
> With what he would say, let him feel your sword,
> Which we will second. When he lies along,
> After your way pronounc'd shall bury
> His reasons with his body.
>
> (55-59)

This richly involved statement expresses not only a fear of Roman linguistic infection, but potentially a fear of what Coriolanus' fragmentation represents—the very power to be representative.[41] Rome has, however, demonstrated its representative power in "a kind of nothing," subject to the rhetorical whims and projections of which the city is made. The Volsces are eager to eradicate this threat in much the same way Rome was eager to eradicate its internal threats. The play's final scene, while putting a stop to Rome's tiring redundancy, generates the possibility that Antium may not be significantly different; it is, after all, in many ways a repetition of the first scene of the play—with the difference that

the people actually rather than potentially kill, in a conflict proscribing words and thus producing the meaningless spectacle of Coriolanus' body.

The Citadel

Notes

[1]Cynthia Marshall succinctly summarizes both the central paradox of Coriolanus the character—"vivid physical presence existing simultaneously with an eroding sense of lack"—and recent critical response to the kind of paradox central to the play that I delineate in the opening of this essay ("Wound-man: *Coriolanus*, gender, and the theatrical construction of interiority," in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects*, ed. Valerie Traub, et. al [Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996], p. 95). In "*Coriolanus*: The Tragedy of *Virtus*," Anthony Miller writes, "Coriolanus is probably the most active of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, certainly the one least given to reflection. Yet the play's busyness is not always warlike. Much of it consists of talk, especially the contentious talk of political debate" (*Sydney Studies in English*, 9 [1983], 37-60, p. 37).

[2]Despite the detailed scholarship that has linked the play to the Midlands' economic crisis of 1607, I think the best approach to the play's use of historical events is also one of the first, E. C. Pettet's "*Coriolanus* and the Midlands Insurrection of 1607," *Shakespeare Survey*, 3 (1950), 34-42. Pettet simply asks, "Since the play was almost certainly written just after the 1607 revolt, and since both the problem of corn shortage and the fear of fresh disturbances persisted for some time, is it not possible that Shakespeare was adapting Plutarch's story to give it the topicality of a bearing on recent events?" (p. 37). Pettet does not attempt to draw from this observation a conclusion about Shakespeare's feelings toward the crisis, as, unfortunately, many historical arguments do. The most fruitful arguments attempt to trace Shakespeare's dramatic use of contemporary events; Janet Adelman's work (q.v.) remains among the best of these. Recent scholarship has also noted the complexities of enclosure practices in early modern England, making point-by-point correlations between contemporary documents and Shakespeare's treatment of the nobles and the plebs. See, for example, William C. Carroll, "'The Nursery of Beggary'; Enclosure, Vagrancy, and Sedition in the Tudor-Stuart Period," in *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property, and Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Richard Burt and John Michael Archer (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1994), 34-48.

Shakespeare's own manipulation of his Plutarchan sources suggests a complex interrelationship of plebs and nobles, and a rich interaction between voice and body, and thus a figurative as well as a literal use of dearth. In Plutarch's account, as Pettet also notes, hunger is not the primary cause of sedition, but usury, and the subsequent bondage of debtors to lenders. And in a crucial difference from the play, the people boycott the city and encamp peacefully on a hill outside the city's gate; they are persuaded to return only by the sweet-talking Menenius, who promises to grant them five representative magistrates to "defend the poore people from violence and oppression." Unfortunately, these magistrates "had only bene the causers & procurers of this sedition" (From *Plutarch's Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus*, rprt. in *Coriolanus*, ed. Philip Brockbank, *The Arden Shakespeare* [London: Methuen, 1985], p. 320).

[3]*The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1928),

pp. 30-31. Eliot, of course, considered *Coriolanus*, along with *Antony and Cleopatra*, "Shakespeare's most assured artistic success." *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 47.

[4]For example, Tate writes: "Faction is a Monster that often makes the slaughter 'twas designed for; and as often turns its fury on those that hatcht it." From *The Ingratitude of A Common-Wealth*, quoted in *"Coriolanus": Critical Essays*, ed. David Wheeler, *Shakespeare Criticism* (New York: Garland, 1995), p. 4. See also Zvi Jagendorf in Wheeler, "*Coriolanus*: Body Politic and Private Parts"; Janet Adelman, "Anger's My Meat": Feeding, Dependency, and Aggression in *Coriolanus*," in *Shakespeare: Pattern of Excelling Nature*, ed. David Bevington and Jay Halio (Cranbury, NJ: Associated Univ. Presses, 1978), pp. 130, 131.

[5]In Carole Sicherman, "*Coriolanus*: The Failure of Words," *ELH*, 39 (1972), 189-207, p. 190. Stanley Cavell believes, "The play presents us with our need for one another's words by presenting withholding words, words that do not meet us halfway," in "'Who does the wolf love?' Reading *Coriolanus*," *Representations*, 3 (1983), 1-20, p. 18.

[6]Jarrett Walker, (echoing Brockbank) in his essay on *Coriolanus* as a conflict between voice and body, begins his analysis of the play's first scene by noting that Shakespeare launches "a frontal assault of bodies. . . . *Coriolanus* is the only play of the period to open with public violence . . . [it] is . . . the very first thing we are meant to perceive. The stage direction insists that the armed citizens that have stormed the stage are 'mutinous,' not, as we later learn, that they are, specifically, hungry." Jarrett Walker, "Voiceless Bodies and Bodiless Voices: The Drama of Human Perception in *Coriolanus*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 43 (1992), 170-85, p. 173. See also the first paragraph of Miller's essay (n. 1 above).

[7]I. i. 1-13. *Coriolanus*, ed. Philip Brockbank. Further references to the play will be cited parenthetically in the essay.

[8]See Walker, pp. 173-74.

[9]In the folio this line reads, "what Authority surfets *one*, would relieve us" (my italics). Brockbank notes the folio's "one" as a common variant spelling, but it seems unusually apt in this scene given the distinctions drawn by the citizens (see p. 7 and p. 96 n.).

[10]Walker, p. 174.

[11]Cf. Falstaff in *1 Henry IV*, whose "toasts-and-butter" soldiers are "good enough to toss, food for powder, food for powder; they'll fill a pit as well as better." *The Complete Works*, gen. eds. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), IV. ii. 21, 65-66.

[12]The nobles' miserly hoarding of wounds echoes their alleged hoarding of grain, particularly as the wounds will not be shared with the citizens in the marketplace. Additionally, see David Lucking, "'The price of one fair word': Negotiating Names in *Coriolanus*," *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 2 (1996), 1-19. Lucking notes the attempt of Cominius to "quantify [Coriolanus'] merit" on the battlefield, "to measure it according to the criteria of the market place" (p. 5).

Nearly every scholar of this play understands wounds and wounding to be in some way an essential element of Coriolanus' worth to the people of Rome or to his own sense of identity. See especially Cavell, Walker, and Marshall, the latter of whom often closely follows Coppelia Kahn's interpretation of *virtus*, though Marshall in fact anticipates Kahn's *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, wounds, and women. Feminist Readings of Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 1997).

[13]Shakespeare considerably abbreviates the history behind the standing-for-consul provided by Thomas North's Plutarch. According to North, at the time Coriolanus stood for the office, the ceremony had not yet been corrupted, but "geven then by desert" (quoted in Brockbank, p. 331).

[14]*The Complete Works*, III. ii. 220-24.

[15]In his notes on this play, Coleridge observes "The wonderful philosophic impartiality in Shakespeare's politics." *Coleridge's Criticism of Shakespeare: A Selection*, ed. R. A. Foakes (London: Athlone Press, 1989), p. 177. Of the political differences between the citizens and Coriolanus, John Plotz writes, "this play is striking for its ability to reveal problems with one system without gerrymandering into place a fully formed alternative." "*Coriolanus* and the Failure of Performatives," *ELH*, 63 (1996), 809-32, p. 821.

[16]In *Saving the Text: Literature/Derrida/Philosophy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1981), pp. 121-23.

[17]In Wheeler, p. 231.

[18]For example, Cavell cites the ambiguities of grammar attending Menenius' question in II. i: "Who does the wolf love?" Cavell wants to know whether Menenius means "*whom* does the wolf love," or "who loves the wolf." One's answer will depend upon "what or who you take the lamb to be, hence what the wolf." Cavell intimates that Menenius, "ever the interpretive fabulist," generates a kind of interpretive shock by his image reversal, suddenly posing the patricians, especially Coriolanus, as the lamb. But the image is not really shocking, since these citizens have already been described in the first act as scavenging dogs and rats, eaters of excess, and have, in their attribution of abundance, perhaps already figured Coriolanus as prey (pp. 6-7).

[19]Obviously, I use "reflexiveness" in a broader sense than does Cavell, to connote the play's fundamental mirroring of speech between the citizens and nobles. Although Cavell restricts his use of the word to mean an action directed back onto the agent or subject—the controlling grammar of Rome's "cannibalism"—his essay gestures toward my own argument that Rome feeds on words (pp. 14-15).

[20]Cf. Stanley Fish, "How To Do Things With Austin and Searle: Speech Act Theory and Literary Criticism," *MLN*, 91 (1976), 983-1001; see also Plotz, p. 821.

[21]Plotz, pp. 821, 810.

[22]See, for example, his response to the nobles in act three: "You have put me now to such a part which never / I shall discharge to th'life" (III. ii. 105-06).

The idea that Coriolanus and the citizens mirror one another is Plotz's; relative to my argument about their rhetorical sameness is Plotz's observation that "All the characters in *Coriolanus* [except Coriolanus] are aware, underneath, that the linguistic games they are playing are fraudulent . . . [his] criticism uncovers a *hamartia* that society would just as soon ignore—but his criticism cannot work as a cure" (p. 810). Of course his criticism cannot work as a cure, because there is no world elsewhere to which Coriolanus can go to learn the relative worth of fraudulence. Coriolanus looks inward, but since the play provides no overt opportunity for inwardness—no revealing soliloquy, no alternatives except another Latin community—his inwardness must be expressed in the same language as his outwardness. Plotz refuses Coriolanus the ability to conjure (linguistically or physically, by moving into a non-Roman space) an alternative world, yet he attributes to him the ability to imagine a world of which he can have no knowledge.

[23]Plutarch several times refers to the traditionally Spartan attachment to action over speech, but he also praises the act of speech when it aptly serves a purpose, particularly the purpose of war. Thus, in North's "Life of Paulus Aemilius," Paulus was "a servere captaine, and strict observer of all marshall discipline, not seeking to winne the souldiers love by flatterie, when he was generall in the field, as many dyd in that time." Of Julius Caesar, "It is reported that Caesar had an excellent naturall gift to speake well before the people, and besides that rare gift, he was excellently well studied, so that doubtless he was counted the second man for eloquence in his time, and gave place to the first . . . bicause he was geven rather to

follow warres and to manage great matters . . . And therefore in a booke he wrote against that which Cicero made in the praise of Cato, he prayeth the readers not to compare the stile of a souldier, with the eloquence of an excellent Orator." *Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans, Englished by Sir Thomas North.* The Tudor Translations, ed. W.E. Henley (London: David Nutt, 1896), vol. 2, p. 199, vol. 5, p. 3.

[24]Paul de Man, "Semiology and Rhetoric," *Diacritics, 3* (1973), 27-33, pp. 29-30.

[25]Brockbank cites Bacon's essay "Of Boldness": "Question was asked of Demosthenes, what was the chief part of an orator? He answered, Action. What next?—Action. What next again?—Action." Bacon is in turn citing Plutarch's "Life of Demosthenes." Brockbank, p. 223n. and *Bacon's Essays*, intro. A. Spiers (New York: Carlton House, 1930), p. 103.

[26]De Man, p. 29.

[27]Plotz, p. 810.

[28]Janet Adelman writes that this line reveals Coriolanus' "bafflement"; he "would like to suggest that there is no distance between role and self, but he in fact suggests that he plays at being himself, that his manhood is merely a role," p. 135.

[29]Plotz, pp. 819-20.

[30]Linda Bamber, *Comic Women, Tragic Men: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1987), p. 96; Bamber also notes that Coriolanus (along with Macbeth) manifests "this sense of recurrence rather than forward motion," but in Bamber's Jungian reading, this "compulsion to repeat is a function of the absence of the Other" (pp. 96-97); Jagendorf in Wheeler, p. 248.

[31]Bamber, p. 96.

[32]I have taken this idea of "critical commentary" from Plotz, but while Plotz attributes this critical capacity to Coriolanus, I believe it is a function of his being away from Rome and, as I have already pointed out, I also do not believe Coriolanus does or can function in any truly critical capacity; i.e., he knows something in Rome is rotten, but not what it is.

[33]Adelman, p. 138.

[34]But note the remark of Sicinius that Caius Martius affects "one sole throne, / Without assistance," and Brockbank's observation that "the form of words here shadows the emergence of Caesar" (IV. vi. 32, n. 3). See also the remarks of the Volscian lord in the final scene: "The man is noble, and his fame folds in / This orb o'th'earth"—still a somewhat contrary aggrandizement (124-25).

[35]The speech with which Martius stirs his soldiers to a final attack on Corioles runs from lines 66-85. Brockbank, following the Tucker-Brooke Yale Shakespeare, attributes the line "O me alone! Make you a sword of me!" (76) to the soldiers. The folio, however, attributes the entire speech to Martius, only dividing it at line 76 with the stage direction, "They all shout and wave their swords, take him up in their Armes, and cast up their Caps." Editions which retain the folio assignment and attribute the line to Martius (F's "Oh me alone, make you a sword of me") seem marginally superior (despite the textual cues supporting Brockbank's assignment) since the sentiment, in the context of his eagerness to meet Aufidius, is pure Martius. It is also tempting to imagine that the silence of the soldiers, who perhaps still believe in his "foolhardiness," is born of self-preservation.

[36]Quoted in Brockbank, IV. vii. 28-57, n.

[37]Philip Brockbank makes the provocative observation that in IV. vi, as the Romans anticipate Volscian invasion, Shakespeare "exaggerates the extremity of Roman fear and panic at the return of Martius." Why should Brockbank be struck by an exaggeration of extremity here, as the play to this point is a protracted, precarious balance of extremes? Does he perhaps notice an imbalance in Rome caused by Coriolanus' absence, or symptoms of rhetorical excess unmediated by his

presence? His assertion opens up a pleasing field of speculation for a scene which does not appear to have much more happening in it than the usual blaming, bickering nobles, tribunes, and citizens—except for Coriolanus' absence (see Brockbank's note to IV. vi. 120).

[38]The Freudian model of plot explored by Peter Brooks provides in many ways a wonderful paradigm for the narrative drive of *Coriolanus*, particularly his discussion of the state of repetition in which narrative exists and the problematics of psychic mastery of textual energy: "Repetition in all its literary manifestations may in fact work as a . . . binding of textual energies that allows them to be mastered by putting them into serviceable form, usable 'bundles,' within the energetic economy of the narrative. . . . To speak of 'binding' in a literary text is thus to speak of any of the formalizations, blatant or subtle, that force us to recognize sameness within difference. . . . (T)hese formalizations and the recognitions they provoke may in some sense be painful: they create a delay, a postponement in the discharge of energy, a turning back from immediate pleasure, to ensure that the ultimate pleasurable discharge will be more complete." In *Coriolanus*, however, the final "discharge" of energies feels alien, almost spurious because, while the text has seemed to prepare for Coriolanus' death since its first scene, its narrative impetus has been toward an endless continuation of this state of repetition and deferral. *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), pp. 101-02.

[39]"Metonymy and *Coriolanus*," *Philological Quarterly*, 52 (1973), p. 30.

[40]As Coriolanus hears the disturbance offstage heralding Volumnia's arrival, he asks himself, "Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow / In the same time 'tis made? I will not" (V. iii. 20-21). His "resolution" here conveys a bittersweetness different from the oscillating answers he had given his mother in preparation for the consul ceremony. Here he seems to be abrogating the rhetorical fickleness that would be unacceptable to Aufidius. Even more poignant is his earlier dismissal of Menenius; Coriolanus *has* been wounded by the banishment but is again constrained from "showing" these figurative wounds by the play's limited forensic style: "I say to you, as I was said to, Away!" (V. ii. 105-06).

[41]Danson refers to Kenneth Burke's analysis of representative government as synechdochic, although Danson himself appears uneasy about the extent to which Rome exemplifies a representational ideology: "What Coriolanus denies in himself, he despises in the state and would extirpate—its fragmentary, representative nature, it's at least partial democracy of functions" (p. 34). Insofar as Coriolanus is representative of Rome, however, I think his presence is potentially threatening to the Volsces.

Rhetoric and the Tragedy of *The Winter's Tale*

by Adam McKeown

If it is true that the first three acts of *The Winter's Tale* form a perfect tragedy,[1] it is a tragedy dominated by rhetoric. The play begins its thrust towards the tragic conclusion of act three, scene two when Leontes orders Hermione into a debate with Polixenes ("Tongue-tied our queen? Speak you." I. ii. 27).[2] Hermione wins the debate and establishes herself as a virtuoso rhetorician but reveals in the process "an obsession with her own speech and that of others."[3] Hermione is not alone in this obsession. Leontes, for a complex of reasons it will be the work of this article to make clear, becomes obsessed with speech after he watches Hermione prevail in a debate he could not win. Though Leontes is ostensibly pleased that Hermione convinces Polixenes to stay ("Hermione, my dearest, thou never spok'st / To better purpose." I. ii. 88-89), he quickly reminds her of a time when she *did* speak to better purpose—but it is not a time when she won a debate but rather when she succumbed to Leontes' own persuasive efforts:

> Three crabbed months had sour'd themselves to death,
> Ere I could make thee open thy white hand,
> [And] clap thyself my love; then thou dids't utter,
> "I am yours for ever."
>
> (I. ii. 102-04)

Hermione picks up on Leontes' insinuations and throws them back at him, turning acquiescence into another rhetorical victory from which she walked away with all the spoils: "Why, lo you now! I have spoke to th' purpose twice: / The one for ever earn'd a royal husband; / Th' other for some while a friend" (I. ii. 106-08). In response to these taunts, Leontes comes to the apparently inexplicable conclusion that Hermione has been unfaithful to him with Polixenes.

What precisely triggers Leontes' reaction remains somewhat unclear, but what is certain is that he announces his suspicions after he has been forced to confront Hermione's rhetorical superiority everywhere he looks. The tragedy that proceeds from this point is appropriately saturated with "quite specific rhetorical concerns."[4] Throughout the first three acts there are a number of scenes that could almost pass for rhetorical exercises, and the

tragic finale even takes place in a courtroom—in which Leontes and Hermione square off in a contest of rhetorical skill. The Oracle derails Leontes' onslaughts with a conspicuously candid and unadorned verdict, but Leontes continues to argue, of course, and as a result, Mamillius dies and Hermione turns into a statue or feigns death, leaving Leontes to recognize his error and begin a life of penitence. "Thou didst speak well / When most the truth" (III. ii. 232-33), he bitterly acknowledges to Paulina upon realizing the consequences of his own obsession with persuasive speech.

But Leontes is not entirely to blame for his obsession or for the tragedy it precipitates. Though I do not wish to anger Apollo further by proposing that Leontes is anything but "a jealous tyrant" (III. ii. 133-34), I do suggest that he acts according to certain beliefs innate to the humanist conception of rhetoric that informs the rhetorical concerns of the play. The rhetorician, according to a dominant strain of humanist thought to which Leontes seems to subscribe, is society's guiding light and integrating force. By emerging victorious in a debate Leontes could not win, Hermione compromises Leontes' authority and threatens everything he understands about the relationship of oratory and world order.[5] In response, he begins a rage for *rhetorical* order in which rhetorical success, right to rule, and truth itself are all hopelessly confused. It is this confusion that underlies Leontes' fatal error, authorizes his arrogance, and, ultimately, brings about the tragedy of *The Winter's Tale*.

There is no simple way to describe the relationship of rhetoric to early modern English writers who, like Shakespeare, were the beneficiaries of a humanistic education. The humanist Renaissance, after all, has almost everything to do with the recovery of the great works of classical rhetoric, especially the complete texts of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* and Cicero's *De oratore* in the early decades of the fifteenth century when Aristotle's *Rhetoric* also began to interest rhetoricians and not just moral philosophers, as it had throughout the Middle Ages.[6] Michael Baxandall points out that "when the early humanists wanted a term to describe themselves as a class . . . the word they generally used was *orator*, or occasionally *rhetoricus*."[7] This equation of humanist literary pursuit and oratory cooperates with an "amazing optimism about the innate goodness of speech and rhetoric,"[8] an optimism that shines forth especially in the works of Erasmus, the continental humanist most responsible for establishing the systems of rhetorical training that would lead to the literary Renaissance in England during the latter half of the six-

teenth century.

Thomas Wilson's *The Art of Rhetoric*, the most influential and classically rigorous rhetorical treatise of the English Renaissance, opens with an expression of this "amazing optimism about the innate goodness of speech and rhetoric":

> When man was thus past all hope of amendment, God, still tendering his own workmanship, stirred up his faithful and elect to persuade with reason all men to society. And gave his ministers knowledge both to see the natures of men, and also granted them the gift of utterance, that they might with ease win folk at their will and frame them by reason to all good order.[9]

Rhetoric, which Wilson associates with godliness, reason, and social order, is a gift reserved for the elect whose responsibility it is to enlighten and organize the rude multitude. Rhetoric not only allows an elite few to exercise control over the thoughts and actions of the many but also provides a way for the many to glean the secret workings of the world known only to the elite few. The belief, to put it in simplest terms, is that rhetoric holds society together and leads people toward a reasonable understanding of the world and their position within it. Eloquence, by extension, is a quality that singles a person out as reasonable, godly, intellectually superior, and, in all, fit for the great responsibility of organizing people and guiding them toward morally sound and socially constructive actions.

In this idyllic vision, rhetoric becomes the invisible hand of benevolent control, the orator the good leader whose superior wisdom and divine right are both established and affirmed by his eloquence. For this reason, oratory is often spoken about in terms that recall and reinforce the necessity of absolute authority. As Wilson says, "Such force hath the tongue, and such is the power of eloquence and reason, that most men are forced even to yield in that which most standeth against their will."[10] Henry Peacham puts it even more succinctly in *The Garden of Eloquence*: the orator is "the emperor of men's minds and affections."[11]

Many classical authorities provide the foundation for this belief,[12] but there were compelling practical reasons for Renaissance society to conceptualize rhetoric as an instrument of just and necessary government. As Charles Nauert has argued, the popularity of a humanistic education "rested on its suitability to the political and social needs of the time";[13] formal training in eloquence and persuasion, both in speech and writing, was

thought "to provide rhetorical skills that would help . . . young men participate effectively in political life. It also provided an emphasis on moral training and moral obligation which seemed directly relevant to the ruling elite."[14] Eloquence came to be viewed thus as the fundamental quality required of statesmen, a belief Wilson reflects in the epistle dedicatory to *The Art of Rhetoric*: "no man ought to be without it, which either shall bear rule over many or must have to do with matters of a realm."[15]

Of course, politicians of today continue to rely on eloquence to gain and maintain their positions. Within the humanist belief, however, the connection between rhetoric as a socializing force and rhetoric as a way of acquiring knowledge and making correct moral choices was assumed (where today almost the opposite is true). It is clear from Wilson that eloquence is essential not only to aspiring political leaders but to the whole world, for it is only through eloquence that the common people can act in accordance with the divine plan. This association of rhetoric with the ability to understand God, the human condition, and the world underlies rhetoric's longstanding relationship with logic, dialectic, and jurisprudence, the systems of thought and language through which, from classical antiquity, truth and morality could be asserted and evaluated.[16] It might be difficult to gauge which participants in the classical-medieval tradition are more logical and which are more juridical, for then (as now) the two are intricately bound. What is important is that rhetoric arrives in the Renaissance still closely allied with systems of philosophical inquiry and epistemological speculation. It made sense to the pedagogue Peter Ramus, for example, to merge rhetoric and logic in order to reduce duplication in the classroom.[17] The association of logic and oratory is especially palpable in Richard Rainolde who offers a protracted simile, attributed to Zeno, in which logic is like "the fist" and rhetoric is like "the hand set at large."[18] Logic and rhetoric are different means to the same socially constructive and morally sound end, and the effectiveness of either depends on the validity of the matter under consideration, the reasonableness of the speaker, and the sensibility of the audience to reason.

Humanists, however, were not naïve. Francesco Petrarca admits in *Secretum*, a fictional and highly reflective dialogue between himself and Augustine, "It is vain to have confidence in [eloquence]. What does it matter that your audience perhaps approves of what you have said, if in your judgment it stands condemned?"[19] However, Augustine serves ultimately as a straw man here, raising objections that only clarify the humanist belief

in rhetoric, which, in *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, Petrarca sums up his way:

> The essentials required for an orator and his eloquence are goodness and wisdom, which, however, suffice only if accompanied by rhetorical skill and a copious vocabulary. Thus the first two only make a man good and wise; the others, alone, make him neither good, nor wise, nor genuinely eloquent, just full of talk. But all of them, joined together, bring about the true orator and his art.[20]

Though Petrarca and the humanists who followed him were not oblivious to the potential problems with rhetoric (as I will discuss briefly in conclusion), the flourishing of the language arts during the humanist Renaissance relies on what Brian Vickers describes as a basic "connection between speech, reason, and order."[21] It is with this connection in mind that I want to return to the tragedy of *The Winter's Tale*.

The central questions *The Winter's Tale* seems to ask—how people are held together and how they are led to an understanding of the world in which they live—are questions for which rhetoric, according to the humanist belief, is supposed to provide an answer. The problem, however, is that rhetoric does not live up to its billing and leads not to truth but to error, bringing about not social cohesion but social disintegration. *The Winter's Tale* is not the only play in which Shakespeare demonstrates a pointed dissatisfaction with rhetoric,[22] but *The Winter's Tale* is unique in the way it turns on the continuous opposition of rhetorical and what I will call anti-rhetorical exchanges. As every Renaissance writer, including Shakespeare, derives considerable vocabulary and nearly all compositional strategies from classical rhetoric, I want to define these terms very carefully.

By "rhetorical exchanges" I mean speeches that, within the scope of the drama, aim solely at persuasion and that conform in no uncertain way to one of the three species of oratory—deliberative, epideictic, and forensic—first enumerated by Aristotle.[23] By "anti-rhetorical exchanges," I mean speeches in which rhetorical intentions are either cast aside or avoided entirely, in which reasonable speech becomes inadequate, in which, indeed, the characters involved will demonstrate or even admit that they do not know how to speak their minds at all. A piece of literature as complicated and dynamic as *The Winter's Tale* resists easy reduction of any kind, of course, but to make my point clear I want to suggest that the first scene of each of the first three acts features a hopeful and intimate anti-rhetorical

exchange which is blown up subsequently by a rhetorical exchange (introduced by each time by Leontes) that throws the drama increasingly into confusion and disorder, culminating in the silence of Hermione, the play's most capable rhetorician. When in the final scene Hermione redeems the drama with an anti-rhetorical exchange, a prayer that does not attempt to persuade anyone of anything, the drama confirms what the anti-rhetorical exchanges hint at all along—that people can be led to better understanding and united in concord but that rhetoric is not capable of doing so.

The opening scene of the play abounds with rhetorical potential. Standing face to face and in the middle of some discussion, Archidamus and Camillo seem almost figures from an emblem depicting a rhetorical debate. Appropriately, not long after Camillo suggests that a visit to Bohemia might be imminent, Archidamus embarks on what promises to be lavish rhetorical praise: "Wherein our entertainments shall shame us we will be justified in our loves: for indeed—" (I. i. 8-9). His effort is interrupted, but he persists, ostensibly drawing on one of the well-established rhetorical devices Ernst Robert Curtius calls the "inexpressibility topoi," the emphasis of which is on the "inability to cope with the subject."[24] Archidamus declares, "Verily I speak in freedom of my knowledge: We cannot with such magnificence—in so rare—I know not what to say—" (I. i. 11-13).

But Archidamus' inability to cope with his subject proves more than a practiced rhetorical topos. When he resumes, it is not with a rhetorical device but a strange, oblique metaphor. "We will," he says, "give you sleepy drinks, that your senses (unintelligent of our insufficience) may, though they cannot praise us, as little accuse us" (I. i. 13-16). Any rhetorician would know from Aristotle that metaphor enlivens eloquence, but these vague "sleepy drinks" do not stand in for anything as much as they relate to feelings that cannot otherwise be expressed. Hypnotic and magical, they suggest an induced irrationality, a forfeiture of intelligence and reason. Rhetoric depends, as I have discussed above, on precisely intelligence and reason, so, not surprisingly, one under the spell of these drinks is unable to "praise" or "accuse," the two purposes of epideictic rhetoric. More than an inexpressibility topos, Archidamus' confession of knowing not what to say represents, if not an abandonment of rhetoric, then at least an acknowledgment of its limitations. Formal praise and accusation (and its underpinnings—reason and intelligence) are insufficient to convey the feelings

Archidamus has toward Camillo as the two contemplate the past and future of their friendship, a friendship they discuss in the larger context of the bonds that hold friends and kingdoms together.

The scene casts a shadow of irony over the next, in which Leontes, Hermione, and Polixenes, embark upon an exercise in deliberative rhetoric, which, as Aristotle says, "is hortatory or dissuasive."[25] Armed already with the suspicion that rhetorical exchanges must give way to "sleepy drinks" when the bonds that hold people together are under discussion, we watch with dismay as the three cajole one another. Polixenes' opening gambit attempts to dissuade his friend from dissuading him to leave, but his flattering address clearly serves to challenge Leontes' rhetorical abilities. "Press me not, beseech you, so," urges Polixenes. "There is no tongue that moves, none, none I'th'world, / So soon as yours, should win me: so it should now, / Were there necessity in your request, although / 'Twere needful I denied it" (I. ii. 19-23). Leontes cannot match steps with Polixenes' agile tongue, and so he turns the game over to Hermione. She does persuade Polixenes to remain, but in so doing she sets the tragedy in motion.

Leontes' misprision, stemming from this fateful act of persuasion, is more than the demon of a grudging and generally unremarkable mind. Playing games of deliberation in which one detaches oneself from and argues *in utramque partem* ("in both directions") on even the most important social, theological, and political issues was an ability that for educated Renaissance people "permeated virtually all areas of intellectual life."[26] That Leontes should treat this deliberative exchange as an amusing contest of rhetorical skill—a game to be "won" (I. ii. 86)—is consistent with the habits of mind an early modern gentleman would have developed in grammar school and refined in university.[27] But if Hermione's flirtatious deliberation with Polixenes is an intellectual exercise or even a "creative pastime"[28] separate and separable from its subject matter, Leontes has no way of knowing whether Hermione's wedding vows, which resemble her pleas to Polixenes, were not similarly frivolous. Essentially, Leontes discovers the same problem Petrarca tries to work out above—the problem of distinguishing a "true orator" from someone who can speak well but without wisdom or faith. If Hermione is a "true orator" then she speaks in good faith (which raises suspicions regarding her feelings for Polixenes). If she is "just full of talk," then Leontes has to revise his opinions about everything she has ever said (namely, her wedding vows). On top of it

all, the king is supposed to be the one whose wisdom and right to rule are established and confirmed by rhetorical skill. Beset with confusions which he has no way of settling, Leontes begins a rage for rhetorical order.

The second act, like the first, begins with a still point, another anti-rhetorical exchange that emphasizes the problems with rhetoric and hints at alternatives. This time Hermione and two ladies take turns conversing with young Mamillius, who only partially understands them. The adults talk, as T. G. Bishop observes, "almost over his head,"[29] reserving part of their meaning for private jokes too mature for a boy. Mamillius responds by pitting the ladies against one another, but his words do not precipitate jealous tension (as do Hermione's comparisons of Leontes and Polixenes in I. ii); rather, they promote affection and intimacy.

The exchange thus looks back to the very first scene in which Archidamus turns to the obscure metaphor of "sleepy drinks" in order to say something about friendship that cannot otherwise be expressed. In the language of intimacy employed by Mamillius, Hermione, and the ladies, meaning corresponds not to what is said but to passions understood beyond words. Hermione is delighted, not exasperated, with Mamillius though she tells her waiting woman, "Take the boy to you: he so troubles me, / 'Tis past enduring" (II. i. 1-2). Likewise, Mamillius affectionately chides his first waiting woman, telling her "I'll none of you" (II. i. 3), and then baits her into a competition with the second whom he assures, "I love . . . better" (II. i. 6). The sexual implications of the scene find refuge in the anti-rhetorical exchange, in part because they are too subtle for Mamillius to grasp (though he surely senses them—he learns things from "women's faces," II. i. 12) and in part because the erotics of familial intimacy are always unsettling to speak about or even to think about (as Leontes discovers in trying to interpret the attraction between his wife and the man whom he continually calls his brother). Mamillius remains oblivious to the suggestion that one lady shall be his "play-fellow" (II. i. 3) or that he should soon wish to "wanton" with her (II. i. 18) or that his mother's affection must eventually give way to that wish. Both the lady's half-formed and implicit fantasy and Mamillius' half-expressed and innocent understanding of that fantasy emphasize the depth and complexity of the emotions that bind them. Each offers words that flutter around those emotions, never alighting upon what they are exactly. The moment culminates in a the telling of a tale "for winter . . . [one] of sprites and goblins" (II. i. 24-25). It is the

kind of tale, as Lady Macbeth reminds her husband, that should be dismissed as irrational, fantastical, and pointless—everything oratory is not:

> O, these flaws and starts . . . would well become
> A woman's story at a winter's fire
> Authoriz'd by her grandam.
>
> (III. iv. 62-65)

The tale, of course, is never told.

Leontes interrupts the seductive exchange with a call to epideictic arms. Bringing with him an audience of lords, he snatches Mamillius and embarks without hesitation on a speech that, to borrow Aristotle's words, "has for its subject praise or blame" and aims at establishing "the honorable and disgraceful."[30] Leontes delivers a textbook epideictic oration concerning Hermione's culpability, anticipating the points where an opponent may trump his blame with praise, emphasizing throughout the explicitly Aristotelian concerns of honor and dishonor, calumny and praise:

> You, my lords,
> Look on her, mark her well: be but about
> To say "she is a goodly lady," and
> The justice of your hearts will thereto add
> "'Tis pity she's not honest, honourable":
> Praise her but for this her without-door form
> (Which on my faith deserves high speech) and straight
> The shrug, the hum or ha (these petty bands
> That calumny doth use. O, I am out,
> That mercy does; for calumny will sear
> Virtue itself).
>
> (II. i. 64-74)

Leontes' draws on the supposed ordering power of rhetoric to shape the way others understand Hermione and, by extension, understand what is true about the state of the kingdom. His rage for rhetorical order may thus be seen as a rage to regain control of a society he fears is slipping into chaos—or at least slipping out of his hands. The play, however, has already enacted the failure of rhetoric to lead to understanding or promote cohesion among people—the deliberative exchange in the first act ushers in a fatal mistake that divides friend from friend, husband from wife, and kingdom from kingdom. But Leontes, in his rage, cannot recognize his error and, instead, becomes more insistent on the power of rhetoric to lead his troubled kingdom (and

troubled mind) back toward stability.

In a telling moment during this epideictic exchange, Leontes utterly confuses correctness of judgment with good rhetorical style:

> You have mistook, my lady,
> Polixenes for Leontes. O thou thing!
> Which I'll not call a creature of thy place,
> Lest barbarism (making me the precedent)
> Should a like language use in all degrees,
> And mannerly distinguishment leave out
> Betwixt the prince and beggar. I have said
> She's an adult'ress, I have said with whom:
> (II. i. 81-88)

A "barbarism," which, as Erasmus describes it, is "anything which is abhorrent from the unsullied purity of the language of Rome."[31] One kind of barbarism is the use of an "inappropriate word" (in Erasmus' example, "*mortalis*" instead of "*homo*" in the phrase "*quid sibi vult hic homo?*").[32] It is a similar kind of barbarism, inappropriately using a base term in reference to a person of high station, that Leontes is solicitous to avoid (i.e. he uses "thing" instead of the absent word, presumably "whore," in reference to his wife, a queen). His ostensibly rhetorical concern reveals, however, his deeper concern with social order; the barbarism, if committed, would authorize the confusion of "prince and beggar." As a show of deference to the authority of rhetorical precision, he pretends to avoid such a dangerous but inescapable barbarism by declaring the facts plainly: "I have said." But this is no simple declaration but a reminder that the rulers of society are endowed with eloquence and, transversely, eloquence (which he has demonstrated by avoiding a barbarism) is a marker of the right to rule. What he says, therefore, must be true. He will even emphasize this point when his audience expresses doubts about his judgement: "What?" he asks, "lack I credit?" (II. i. 157). Again, Leontes' blindness is obvious to the audience on- and offstage, but it is crucial to locate part of the cause of this blindness in his faith in rhetoric to reinforce and affirm social position, to lead people to understand what is true, and to promote social stability. He may be a tragically flawed character, but the humanist belief in rhetoric in which he places his faith is also tragically flawed. The third act will make both of these flaws even more apparent.

But first there is another reprieve, and like the first two it intensifies the conflict between the rhetorical and the anti-rhe-

torical. Act three opens with Cleomenes and Dion describing their experiences at the Oracle of Delphi by *not* describing them. Cleomenes seems aware that the spectacle he has witnessed should trigger some lavish epideictic oration, but all he can say is that the expected praises (which we never hear) are insufficient: "The temple much [surpasses] / The common praise it bears" (III. i. 2-3) is all he says. Dion, echoing Archidamus' confession of "[knowing] not what to say, "follows by admitting that he lacks the words even to name the dress of the oracle keepers: "I shall report, / For most it caught me, the celestial habits / (Methinks I so should term them)" (III. i. 3-5). Cleomenes then attempts to characterize the voice of the oracle, but as he too searches for words he can only recount the details of the dumbfounding experience in terms of his reaction to it: "But of all, the burst / And the ear-deaf'ning voice o'th'Oracle / Kin to Jove's thunder, so surprised my sense, / That I was nothing" (III. i. 8-11). The scene, like act one, scene one, gestures toward inexpressibility topoi but the rhetorical goals of those topoi are never realized. Inexpressibility is not, in other words, a setup for expression, because Cleomenes and Dion never get around to describing what they have witnessed. Instead, they confess that the Oracle has rendered them all but speechless, but, importantly, their inability to talk about the miracle is no barrier to their mutual understanding of each other's wonder at it. Description and praise of the Oracle are superfluous, inappropriate, perhaps even impossible. The experience has affected them like sleepy drinks, and they respond, fittingly, by not attempting praise.

This scene shifts abruptly to a courtroom, the domain of forensic oratory, which "is either accusatory or defensive" and "is always in reference to things done that one party accuses and the other defends."[33] Although Leontes is the accuser and Hermione the defendant in this forensic debate, Leontes reveals in his opening remarks that he and not Hermione is the one on trial. A forensic debate conducted "openly . . . in justice" (III. ii. 5-6), he says, will clear him "of being tyrannous" (III. ii. 5). This remark shows the extent to which Leontes is aware of his eroding credibility as a ruler and the extent to which he is convinced that winning a rhetorical debate will reestablish his authority. He could, after all, sentence Hermione without trial, but he insists on "due course, / Even to the guilt or the purgation" (III. ii. 6-7). The choice of *purgation* over *innocence* is a strange one for a man so concerned about barbarisms. While *purgation* does denote exculpation, its early modern usage is more closely tied to puri-

fication of the body and the soul.[34] The trial Leontes orchestrates will, the word choice implies, either yield a guilty verdict or serve physically and spiritually to purify Hermione (which implies, of course, that she is corrupt). Clearly, the trial is not designed to give Hermione due course but to allow Leontes a chance to beat her in a rhetorical contest.

We know, however, from act one that Hermione and not Leontes is the premier rhetorician in this play, and so she enters the forensic debate without hesitation. She takes Leontes' prejudgment head on, turns it back on itself with a virtuoso display of *occultatio*, the rhetorical device of insinuation or concealment:[35]

> Since what I am to say must be but that
> Which contradicts my accusation, and
> The testimony on my part, no other
> But what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me
> To say "not guilty"
>
> (III. ii. 22-26)

But, of course, Hermione is saying precisely that she is "not guilty," and the *occultatio* allows her to pretend that she is not doing so. The suggestion is that, as the trial begins, Hermione remains confident that she can through rhetoric arrive at justice, a confidence not only supported by her past successes in rhetorical debate but also validated by the belief that inaccurate or immoral arguments will not be effective:

> But thus, if pow'rs divine
> Behold our human actions (as they do),
> I doubt not then but innocence shall make
> False accusation blush, and tyranny
> Tremble at patience.
>
> (III. ii. 28-32)

However, Hermione's rhetorical ploy does not work as she hopes because it cannot avoid playing into a game that only Leontes, the sole authority over justice and rhetoric, can win. He easily catches her rhetorical salvo and fires it back at her: "I ne'er heard yet / That any of these bolder vices wanted / Less impudence to gainsay what they did / Than to perform it first" (III. ii. 54-57).

Hermione comes to recognize that to engage Leontes in debate is to reinforce his power. She begins, in response, to renounce rhetoric altogether. Her candid assertion that Leontes' accusation (III. ii. 54-57, cited above) is "true enough, / Though

'tis a saying, sir, not due to me" (III. ii. 57-8), recognizes a division between what is rhetorically and actually true. Leontes' accusation is not merely false; it is rather true as a rhetorical construction but untrue as an interpretation of reality. As Hermione distances herself from oratory, the language Leontes uses to establish his control over the debate becomes incomprehensible: "You speak a language I understand not" (III. ii. 80). She turns instead to a heartfelt appeal to Leontes' reason and decency ("My life stands in the level of your dreams" III. ii. 81). "Your actions are my dreams" (III. ii. 82), is his answer. More than blind and jealous rage, Leontes' response is in accordance with Wilson's maxim, "good will not speak evil and the wicked cannot speak well."[36] Leontes—a king playing and winning a rhetorical game in which the fate of the kingdom is at stake—has every reason to believe that he is good and his cause just. Hermione recognizes his mistake, declaring that his judgment is "rigor and not law" (III. ii. 114). Abandoning rhetoric altogether, she appeals to the gods, and the gods answer with one of the flattest, most unvarnished, and least rhetorical passages in all of Shakespeare: "Hermione is chaste, Polixenes blameless, Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant, his innocent babe truly begotten" (III. ii. 132-34).

The decree does what all the rhetoric could not: it answers questions about bonds of intimacy (Hermione is chaste), friendship (Polixenes blameless), and the relationship of the rulers to the ruled (Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant). But the decree does not deter Leontes. He presses his rhetorical suit, and when he does, Hermione becomes silent. Whether she dies, feigns death, or turns to stone at this point matters little; what is important is that the person established early in the play as the premier rhetorician will utter no more words until the final scene, when the pastoral romance has cleared away the tragedy brought on by misplaced trust in rhetoric.

In the very midst of the tragedy of *The Winter's Tale*, Paulina presents Leontes with his newborn daughter. Her reason for doing so, she says, is that "the silence often of pure innocence / Persuades when speaking fails" (II. i. 39-40). That silent innocence is more touching than rhetorical force might seem to modern readers something of a given—mistrustful as we are of any deliberate act of persuasion. For a Renaissance poet who learned to read and write by practicing and mastering rhetoric, the idea is considerably more revolutionary, especially since the obligation to teach is fundamental to all Renaissance poetry, and rhetoric, as we have seen, is fundamental to teaching. If *The*

Winter's Tale suggests that overconfidence in rhetoric can have disastrous consequences and that silent innocence (or, as often, emotionally charged speechlessness) is more persuasive than rhetoric, the play would seem to interrogate the basic relationship of rhetoric to writing and invention that Renaissance poets presumably took for granted.[37]

At stake is the question of how poetry teaches, how, indeed, it can impart knowledge and lead people toward morally sound decisions. This very question was a source of great anxiety for humanists, who often found it difficult to convince ecclesiastical authorities that the works of pagan authors could be morally instructive. "The almost universal acceptance [among humanists] of the classical-medieval identification of rhetoric and poetic," as Brian Vickers terms it, offers one solution to this problem.[38] Seductive and enticing, poetry attracts the attention with hypnotic, frivolous, and even irreligious delights, but it maintains its moral value as long those delights support the rhetorical project of the poem—which is to say, the poem must appeal ultimately to reason and deliver a sufficiently persuasive moral message.

No such reasonable appeal concludes *The Winter's Tale*, and if there is an extractable moral message, it is that rhetoric is dangerously misinformed and that people's minds are most profoundly moved not when they are persuaded, but when they are confronted with something beyond words and even beyond comprehension. Rhetoric and, indeed, all speech within *The Winter's Tale* is ancillary to the evocative power of the overall poem, not the other way around (and it almost goes without saying that the overall poem, in this case, is the winter's tale Mamillius never finishes). It is not insignificant that the second part of *The Winter's Tale*, the pastoral romance that redeems the tragedy, becomes increasingly concerned with visual wonders (dancing satyrs, bears, festivals) and with the proper relationship between poetry, speech, and visual perception (most of the fifth act is a retelling in prose of actions involving people who are too emotionally overwrought to speak). It is not insignificant either that the next time Hermione appears following the tragic first part of *The Winter's Tale* it is as a piece of visual art, purely innocent and utterly silent. And when, at last, she speaks again, it is not to answer questions but to ask them, not to solve mysteries but to heighten them, not to persuade but to pray.

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Notes

[1]Many critics have seen fit to separate the tragic first three acts of *The Winter's Tale* from the pastoral/romantic final two. See J. V. Cunningham, *Woe or Wonder: The Emotional Effect of Shakespearean Tragedy* (Denver: Univ. of Denver Press, 1951), Peter G. Platt, *Reason Diminished: Shakespeare and the Marvelous* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1997), Donald A. Stauffer, *Shakespeare's World of Images: The Development of His Moral Ideas* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1949), and R. S. White, *Let Wonder Seem Familiar: Endings in Shakespeare's Romance Vision* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1985).

[2]All quotations from Shakespeare are taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. C. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

[3]Leonard Barkan, "Living Sculptures: Ovid, Michelangelo, and *The Winter's Tale*," *English Literary History*, 48 (1981), p. 658.

[4]Lynn Enterline, "'You Speak a Language that I Understand Not': The Rhetoric of Animation in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48 (1997), p. 18.

[5]It is worth noting here, apropos of the sexy opening of act two, that Leontes' rage for rhetorical order and his doubts about Hermione's chastity are linked in another important way upon which there is simply not space to enlarge in this discussion. Lynn Enterline, op. cit. 17-44, suggests that "the first hint that something is amiss in this marriage is this seemingly minor quibble over who speaks to better purpose and who is the better rhetorician" (p. 17). Indeed, it only *seems* a minor quibble. As Cheryl Glenn, points out in *Rhetoric Retold: Regarding the Tradition From Antiquity Through the Renaissance* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1997) "the art of rhetoric was not seen as a fit practice for even an educated Renaissance woman, though rhetorical training dominated a male education. It was seen as too active" (p. 115). Hermione's rhetorical prowess emasculates Leontes, and so the zeal for impugning Hermione and banishing her threatening, hyperbolically female presence (she is nine months pregnant) get absorbed within his rage for rhetorical order.

[6]James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), pp. 359-361. For comments on Aristotle, see p. 29.

[7]Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition 1350-1450* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 1.

[8]Brian Vickers, "'The Power of Persuasion': Images of the Orator, Elyot to Shakespeare," in *Renaissance Eloquence*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983), p. 423.

[9]Thomas Wilson, *The Art of Rhetoric* (1560), ed. Peter E. Medine (University Park, Penn: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1994), p. 41.

[10]Wilson, *Art of Rhetoric* p. 42.

[11]Henry Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence* (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1954) from "The Epistle Dedicatorie" to the 1593 edition (unnumbered). Wayne Rebhorn uses this phrase as the title of his important work, *The Emperor of Men's Minds: Literature and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1995). The entire series of which this book is a part and for which Rebhorn was the general editor offers many invaluable perspectives on the relationship between rhetoric and conceptualization of power during the Renaissance.

[12]Cf. Cicero, *De oratore*, 1.8.36; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 1.Pr.9-10; and Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.2.3-7 (references are to the editions of the Loeb Classical

Library. *Rhetoric* cited in full below).

[13]Charles Nauert, Jr., *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), p. 16.

[14]Nauert, *Humanism*, p. 15

[15]Wilson, *Rhetoric*, p. 36.

[16]In assessing the classical traditions of rhetoric, Murphy notes this connection between rhetoric, logic, and law: "The rhetorical works (of the ancient world) may be divided into two schools or traditions: the Aristotelian rhetoric, which has a philosophical and logical tone, and the Ciceronian rhetoric of Cicero, Pseudo-Cicero, and Quintilian, which has a pragmatic tone closely associated with Roman law" (*Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, p. 42).

[17]Brian Vickers argues that "Ramus reformed the relation between logic and rhetoric. Whereas both arts had traditionally overlapped by sharing the first two processes of composition, Invention and Disposition, Ramus hived off these two for logic, leaving rhetoric with the remaining three parts: Elocution, Delivery, and Memory. As logic and rhetoric were to be studied together under his scheme, this step simply reduced duplication" (*Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry* [Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1970], pp. 40-41).

[18]Richard Rainolde, *The Foundation of Rhetoric* (1563), ed. R. C. Alston (Menston, England: The Scolar Press, 1972), chapter entitled "The foundacion of Rhetorike" (unnumbered).

[19]Francesco Petrarca, *Secretum*, trans. Davy A. Carozza and H. James Shey, (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), p. 67. Here and throughout I refer to "Petrarch" in the Italian.

[20]Francesco Petrarca, *Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul: A Modern Translation of* De remediis utriusque Fortunae, trans. Conrad H. Rowski, 5 vols (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1991), 1: p. 27.

[21]Brian Vickers, "The Power of Persuasion," p. 416.

[22]*Love's Labors Lost* is all but a spoof of rhetoric and rhetorical training. The wooing scene between Viola and Olivia in *Twelfth Night* also makes a point of exploding mannered epideictic as a way of winning a lover's heart. *Troilus and Cressida* continually exposes the gap between various characters' grand rhetorical conceits and their trivial and mundane deeds. *Julius Caesar* is deeply concerned with the function of rhetoric in a struggle for power among morally ambiguous political opportunists. It is also a play in which Cicero, the most important rhetorician of all time, is silent except for a few perfunctory lines. The list could go on.

[23]Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. J. H. Freese (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1939), I. iii.

[24]Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1953), trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), p. 159.

[25]*Rhetoric*, I. iii. 1-5.

[26]Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1978), p. 34.

[27]As Altman, *Tudor Play of Mind*, explains of the grammar school, "Here young boys were confirmed in Christian ethics and at the same time taught to look for at least two sides in every question—an ideological conflation that left its peculiar mark on much of the literature of the period" (p. 48).

[28]Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind*, p. 32.

[29]T. G. Bishop, *Shakespeare and the Theatre of Wonder* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), p. 128.

[30]*Rhetoric* I. iii. 3-6.

[31]Erasmus, *Copia: Foundation of the Abundant Style*, trans. Betty I. Knott,

Collected Works of Erasmus: Literary and Educational Writings, vol. 2, ed. Craig R. Thompson (Toronto and Buffalo: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1978), p. 304.

[32]Erasmus, *Copia*, p. 306.

[33]*Rhetoric*, I. iii. 2-6.

[34]OED, s.v. "purgation."

[35]Many students of rhetoric are as yet more comfortable with the term *occupatio* for the device of concealment or insinuation. For a brief history of the two terms see Richard Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991), s.v. "occultatio."

[36]Wilson, *Rhetoric*, p. 244.

[37]Michael Bath has argued that "there is no writing, no invention, in (the early modern) period that is not rhetorical." *Speaking Pictures: English Emblem Books and Renaissance Culture* (New York and London: Longman, 1994), p. 253.

[38]Brian Vickers, *Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1970), p. 36.

Shakespeare's *Tempest:* The Awareness of Death as a Catalyst to Wisdom

by Lisa Marciano

Of all of Shakespeare's plays, *The Tempest* is perhaps the one most in need of rethinking. Granted, it has received a great deal of attention in recent years. In considering the drama, some critics have drawn correspondences between Prospero, who abjures his magic, and Shakespeare, who probably wrote no more plays unassisted after *The Tempest*; examined the issue of colonialism in *The Tempest*, which entails disparaging Prospero as a cruel oppressor; or have taken the feminist perspective, which entails disparaging Miranda as an ineffectual character.[1] Clearly there are merits to all of these approaches, and their very existence indicates the vitality of Shakespearean drama; however, many of these views, upon closer scrutiny, seem to exaggerate or underestimate the text. Although Prospero's refusal to employ his unusual powers does parallel Shakespeare's farewell to the theater, we can certainly admire the development of this character without assuming the magician is a thinly veiled depiction of the bard. The New Historicist and feminist readings, too, often come across as skewed. The playwright does not, at least in my reading, give us reason to denigrate either Prospero or Miranda. Prospero has faults, but he becomes a more vigilant and prudent ruler by the end of the play, and Caliban, who conducts a vicious plot against Prospero, does not and should not elicit our unmitigated sympathy, a point that the New Historicist reading overlooks.[2] And Miranda, whose very name indicates that she elicits wonder, clearly should not be seen as pathetic but as a representative of feminine virtue. There is, then, need for a reconsideration of this text—particularly of one important dimension that has received little notice from the critics. Throughout the course of the play, Prospero repeatedly brings others to wisdom by making them aware of their own or others' mortality, and it is this didactic technique, a technique that has largely escaped critical attention, that I wish to examine here.

Now, a careful reading of the play indicates that there is a dark side to this drama that certainly ought to be acknowledged. As Charles Forker indicates, "[C]onsciousness of [death] . . . suffuses *The Tempest* in a hundred details from the first until the final scene."[3] Indeed, death is a strong presence in this drama. Prospero and Miranda, for example, survive the elements twelve

years before the action of the play begins when the King of Naples and Prospero's usurping brother conspire to dethrone him. Rather than being murdered, Prospero and his three-year-old daughter are set adrift at sea, ultimately arriving on the island where the play takes place. At the opening of the drama, the shipwrecked party also survives disaster, although Miranda believes all aboard have drowned:

> A brave vessel
> (Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her)
> Dash'd all to pieces! O, the cry did knock
> Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perish'd.
> (I. ii. 6-9)[4]

But the response of Prospero indicates that something good will come from this encounter with death. He first reassures Miranda by saying, "Be collected, / No more amazement. Tell your piteous heart / There's no harm done" (I. ii. 13-15). He then repeats this consolation by remarking:

> The direful spectacle of the wrack, which touch'd
> The very virtue of compassion in thee,
> I have with such provision in mine art
> So safely ordered that there is no soul—
> No, not so much perdition as an hair
> Betid to any creature in the vessel
> Which thou heardst cry, which thou saw'st sink.
> (I. ii. 26-32)

The shipwrecked party is, in fact, so well provided for that their garments are even fresher than before the storm. As the drama continues, more confrontations with death occur; Sebastian and Antonio plot to kill Alonso and Gonzalo but are stopped by Ariel. The spirit's words underscore that the lives of all will be preserved: "My master through his art foresees the danger / That you, his friend, are in, and sends me forth / . . . to keep them living" (II. i. 297-99). And Alonso and Ferdinand each think that the other has drowned. As Elton D. Higgs has commented, in this drama "death is suspended"[5]; that is, though many people are threatened in this play, they all survive their encounters with mortality.

The presence of death, then, pervades this work; however, few critics have structured their assessments of *The Tempest* (or of Shakespeare's other comedies and romances, for that matter) around the theme of mortality. Theodore Spencer refers in passing to the comedies and romances in his 1936 study *Death*

and Elizabethan Tragedy, which explores how the medieval tendency to disparage this earthly life clashed with the Renaissance tendency to find satisfaction in it. This clash between opposing modes of thought, Spencer says, was quite evident during the period 1588 to 1620.[6] He adds, "The vision of all its [this conflict's] implications contributed to the greatness of Shakespeare and the greatness of the literature which surrounded him. It was a literature which was aware of the central emotional problems of human life, and this means that it was a literature which, at one period in its development at least, made much of death."[7] More recently, the work of Marjorie Garber has begun to address this issue. Her 1980 essay "'Wild Laughter in the Throat of Death': Darker Purposes in Shakespearean Comedy," for example, asserts that "Shakespearean comedy is really about death and dying . . . about the initial avoidance or displacement of the idea of death, the cognition and recognition of one's own mortality—and then, crucially, the acceptance, even the affirmation, of that mortality."[8] She then goes on to observe that "the subject of death [in the comedies] is there and will not be denied. . . . [K]nowledge of death, and its inevitability, the way in which it shapes and informs life, are essential to the workings of Shakespeare's comedies."[9] Her thoughts certainly apply to *The Tempest*, which, we recall, was labeled a comedy in the First Folio; however, her essay differs from mine in that it does not provide a sustained treatment of any one of the plays but, rather, a brief commentary upon a number of dramas. Michael Neill's "'Feasts Put Down Funerals': Death and Ritual in Renaissance Comedy" looks at funeral scenes in a number of Renaissance dramas, including those of Shakespeare; in the process he discusses the blend of comedy and tragedy that often comprises these works.[10] But without a doubt a systematic, detailed look at how death moves characters to wisdom in Shakespeare's comedies and romances is warranted. This assessment lays the groundwork for such explorations in the future by examining *The Tempest* in this light.

Clearly there is reason to use this dark dimension of the play as the foundation of our reconsideration of *The Tempest*—but where do we go from there? We can take a cue from Prospero, who throughout the work deliberately brings characters to a sudden awareness of death that causes them to change profoundly as a result. By examining how Prospero moves others to wisdom in this manner and how he himself has been moved to wisdom likewise, the audience can come to a greater appreciation of Prospero's character throughout the play, discern how to

construe his actions at the end of the drama, and understand this play's affinities with other Shakespearean works as well.

To confirm that Prospero does, indeed, move others to reform by forcing them to confront mortality, one need look no further than Prospero's interactions with Alonso, Ferdinand, and Miranda. For instance, Prospero makes Alonso believe Ferdinand has drowned as punishment for Alonso's own sinfulness. When Ariel, disguised as a harpy, accuses Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio of wrongdoing, the sprite directs these words especially to Naples' king:

> Thee of thy son, Alonso,
> They ["the pow'rs"] 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's sorrow,
> And a clear life ensuing.
>
> (III. iii. 75-82)

This seeming death of his son moves Alonso to acknowledge his guilt and to repent of his actions, a repentance that probably would not have occurred without the apparent loss of Ferdinand.

Initially Alonso responds by succumbing to despair, but as the play progresses, he changes in response to this confrontation with death. When Prospero reveals himself, Alonso gives proof of his transformation by saying, "Thy dukedom I resign, and do entreat / Thou pardon me my wrongs" (V. i. 118-19). This contrition on the part of Alonso might never have occurred had not the "death" of Ferdinand provoked him to examine his past actions: indeed, Shakespeare gives us no reason to assume that Alonso has ever shown regret for the act in the twelve years that have elapsed since the usurpation. Alonso certainly has a close relationship with the usurper, for Antonio is included among those making the voyage for Claribel's wedding in Tunis; such familiarity hardly speaks of a change of allegiance. Alonso's repentance, therefore, is spurred on by the knowledge of death. Theresa Coletti observes how the death of his son moves the father to contrition: "Alonso will believe that Ferdinand is dead, and in that belief he will undergo the madness, the 'sea change' of grief and humility, from which he will emerge transformed."[11] Ironically, Prospero, whose life was imperiled in coming to the island but who seems to have learned from that experience,

chooses this very method to enlighten one of his enemies: he makes Alonso think Ferdinand is dead, which causes the king to reflect upon his own life and the wrongs he has committed. And this reflection sparks his reform. Like Prospero, Alonso has a second chance to respond to the usurpation of the dukedom and to do so correctly this time. He can express sorrow for the usurpation and surrender the kingdom, rather than continuing to condone the act, and he can do so without forfeiting his son, although he does not yet know it.

Ferdinand, too, has an opportunity to display wisdom because of his encounter with death. Prospero subjects the prince to the same treatment as Alonso, making the young man think his father is dead, which forces him to reflect. Ariel sings to Ferdinand:

> Full fadom five thy father lies,
> Of his bones are coral made:
> Those are pearls that were his eyes:
> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange.
> Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell. . . .
>
> (I. ii. 397-403)

Because he thinks his father is dead, Ferdinand must make an independent decision about his feelings for Miranda, who clearly is worthy of him. Had Alonso been there, however, the king might well have attempted to prevent the match because of the political intrigues between the two families in the past. Ferdinand's experience with his father's seeming death, though, leads him to give in to his true feelings for this worthy girl. When he introduces Miranda to his father, the King of Naples, at the end of the play, Ferdinand's words indicate how his experience with death has led him to select his mate:

> I chose her [Miranda] when I could not ask my father
> For his advice, nor thought I had one. She
> Is daughter to this famous Duke of Milan,
> Of whom so often I have heard renown,
> But never saw before; of whom I have
> Receiv'd a second life. . . .
>
> (V. i. 190-95)

A third instance in which Prospero employs this strategy comes when he arranges the masque in honor of Miranda and Ferdinand's nuptials. In the middle of the masque, Prospero

abruptly dismisses the spirits and instructs the two young lovers about the brevity of life. D. G. James calls this moment "the high dramatic moment of the play":[12]

> Our revels now are ended. These our actors
> (As I foretold you) were all spirits, and
> Are melted into air, into thin air,
> And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And like this insubstantial pageant faded
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on; and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.
>
> (IV. i. 148-58)

We do not exist; we live; we die—such is the cycle of life. Death cannot be avoided, though we sometimes forget about it, especially in times of festivity. To ignore this fact is to live an illusion; to act upon this fact is to make the best possible use of the time one has left. Let us examine how Shakespeare makes this point.

The performance that Prospero stages for Ferdinand and Miranda is an extraordinary pastoral display. Throughout the masque spirits play the roles of Iris, Ceres, and Juno, and the images associated with these goddesses are those of never-ending fertility and springtime. Iris describes Ceres, for example, in terms that suggest the fecundity of the harvest. She addresses the goddess by saying,

> Ceres, most bounteous lady, thy rich leas
> Of wheat, rye, barley, fetches, oats, and pease;
> Thy turfy mountains, where live nibbling sheep,
> And flat meads thatch'd with stover, them to keep.
>
> (IV. i. 60-63)

Ceres, in turn, addresses Iris in terms that suggest springtime:

> Hail, many-colored messenger . . .
> Who with thy saffron wings upon my flow'rs
> Diffusest honey-drops, refreshing show'rs,
> And with each end of thy blue bow dost crown
> My bosky acres and my unshrubb'd down,
> Rich scarf to my proud earth . . . .
>
> (IV. i. 76, 78-82)

The song of Juno and Ceres follows in this same vein. It presents

images of fecundity, springtime and plenty:

> *Juno.* Honor, riches, marriage-blessing,
> Long continuance, and increasing,
> Hourly joys be still upon you!
> Juno sings her blessings on you.
> [*Cer.*] Earth's increase, foison plenty,
> Barns and garners never empty;
> Vines with clust'ring bunches growing,
> Plants with goodly burthen bowing;
> Spring come to you at the farthest
> In the very end of harvest!
> Scarcity and want shall shun you,
> Ceres' blessing so is on you.
>
> (IV. i. 106-117)

Yet the masque does not present a true picture of humankind because it never depicts death or those things associated with it, want and winter, as having any power over the young lovers. The only overt reference to death occurs when Ceres recalls how Dis kidnaped her daughter. Unlike other depictions of life throughout the literary tradition, which tend to present a full and complete view of human existence and thus include death among their portrayals (the shield of Achilles and Feste's concluding song in *Twelfth Night* are two preeminent examples), the masque presents only one side of life. The problem with the presentation, then, is that it implies that the unpleasant things in life—including death—are difficulties these lovers will never face. Granted, the masque is in celebration of the happy occasion of marriage, which could perhaps explain why Prospero makes no mention of mortality. But only seconds later the magus calls attention to the "baseless fabric of this vision" and terms the performance an "insubstantial pageant" (IV. i. 151,155). Although Prospero may be referring to the spirits that perform the masque (who thus have no substance), we could also read his words another way—the masque is "insubstantial" and "baseless" because it is over-idealized in its portrayal. Prospero's interruption of the masque, an interruption prompted by his memory of the plot against his life, then fills in what the masque so carefully leaves out—that death is an unavoidable part of human life.[13] Ferdinand's indication that he would be content to live in such an illusory pastoral world that ignores death is likely one reason why Prospero chooses to dispense with the performance for Prospero's present circumstances clearly show the impossibility of acting upon such a desire. Death cannot be ignored. As Douglas Peterson notes, "Death . . . is a future

certainty. Before spring, birth, and renewal, there must be winter; and always within the circle of human life there will be Calibans with whom to contend, intractable in their perversity and persistent in their desire to destroy the good."[14]

Now that we have seen how Prospero employs this strategy to change others, we are in a better position to see how he himself has changed as a result of his encounters with death. And by so doing, we will be in a better position to interpret Prospero's actions at the end of the play. To see how Prospero has become a better steward as a result of his awareness of mortality, however, one must see how he was once a poor one. Prospero himself gives clues to that effect in telling Miranda about the usurpation of his kingdom twelve years before the drama begins. Prospero admits he shoulders part of the blame for all of the events that have occurred to him and his daughter, and his explanation helps the audience diagnose his weaknesses as a ruler. He has paid more attention to his books, he says, than to the management of his kingdom, putting his brother in charge of affairs of state and devoting ever greater time to his studies. Ultimately, this exchange of power has awakened Antonio's ambition, causing him to plot against his brother and take over the dukedom. Prospero confesses to "neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated / To . . . the bettering of my mind" (I. ii. 89-90) and acknowledges that his "library / Was dukedom large enough" (I. ii. 109-110). Prospero's own retelling of the tale, therefore, suggests that he was guilty of poor stewardship when he was Duke of Milan. This flaw Prospero exhibited is, therefore, a weakness with which he must contend if he is to be a better ruler. The key to overcoming this defect is vigilance, and Prospero indicates he is working to become a more vigilant ruler as the play progresses.

Later on in the drama, Prospero is confronted with the possibility of his own demise, a moment that has clear parallels with the story of his exile. But this time Prospero suggests he has become wiser as a result of his prior encounter with death; he has begun addressing the flaws that plagued him as ruler of Milan and is attempting to become a better steward of his domain, though he may always have to guard against his weaknesses. We turn once again to act four, the masque which he orchestrates to celebrate the impending nuptials of Miranda and Ferdinand. Prospero suddenly recalls that Caliban intends to harm him and dismisses the revels, saying:

> I had forgot that foul conspiracy
> Of the beast Caliban and his confederates

> Against my life. The minute of their plot
> Is almost come.
>
> (IV. i. 139-42)

Some critics contend that, because Prospero lets this plot temporarily escape his attention, he has demonstrated an incapacity for change and this scene is yet another illustration of the neglect that landed him on the island in the first place. Gerald Schorin is just such a critic. He states, "It is indeed a legitimate question to ask what will happen to Prospero back in Milan, and there are tragic possibilities. The tragedy of a renewed usurpation is possible, perhaps even likely."[15] And Howard Felperin, commenting on Prospero's neglect of his affairs, says in "Romance and Romanticism," "The passion for theatrical magic that Prospero displays on the island is wholly continuous with the passion for magic and the liberal arts that caused him to lose his dukedom in the first place."[16] These critics would thus give Prospero little credit for attempting to overcome his weaknesses and become a more prudent leader.

But Shakespeare has included several details that would argue against such an interpretation, for in fact the character's attitude and actions throughout the play suggest he is working to become a less neglectful, naive man and a more prudent ruler. The first indication of this change in Prospero is here in his response to Caliban's plot. The Prospero who lost his dukedom was so passive that he allowed himself to be ousted from his own realm and imperiled at sea. This Prospero, however, becomes angry when recollecting the conspiracy against his life, exhibiting an anger such as Miranda has never seen before in her father. The Prospero we see now would never say his library is dukedom large enough; rather, this Prospero is vigilant enough to perceive the danger he is in and leaps into action to protect his life and his interests. He takes immediate steps to prevent the plot from coming to fruition, marshaling the spirits at his disposal to pursue and discomfit his would-be assassins. Elton Higgs thus views Prospero's response with approbation:

> The reason that Caliban's plot raises a disturbance in Prospero's mind out of all proportion to the actual danger it poses is that Prospero is faced once again with the same kind of situation that had toppled his dukedom in Milan; he runs the risk of refusing to exercise necessary power in the physical world because he is immersed in the private world of his learning. In this instance, however, he meets the test and exercises his supernatural power so thoroughly that he can afford to lay it aside and pick up those

responsibilities which are his as a mere man.[17]

As Douglas Peterson discovers, this is the only point in the present action of the play where he fails in his vigilance.[18]

Prospero's response to the others on the island also shows that he has moved toward active involvement in the world around him, an involvement he was lacking as Duke of Milan and that almost cost him his life once before. Had he continued to be immersed in his magic, unconcerned with the events transpiring around him as he once was, he would not have had the foresight to monitor the actions of Sebastian and Antonio or to prevent the sacrifice of Alonso; his watchfulness, however, leads to the destruction of a second conspiracy. Douglas Peterson notes that this situation is reminiscent of the usurpation of Prospero's throne but credits Prospero with foiling a repetition of that past action: "Once again while a governor [Alonso] neglects time a brother [Sebastian] prepares to seize his power; only Prospero's alertness, his readiness to assume the duties he had formerly neglected, prevents the conspirators from carrying out their plan."[19]

Prospero's reaction to Ferdinand during the masque also demonstrates his new attitude of involvement in political affairs. In *Shakespearean Romance*, Howard Felperin points out that Ferdinand seems to share the same predisposition to escapism that Prospero once displayed. In watching the masque, Ferdinand says, "Let me live here ever; / So rare a wond'red father and a wise / Makes this place Paradise" (IV. i. 122-24). Felperin explains, however, that Prospero does not encourage Ferdinand in his romantic dream, but rather silences him sternly, indicating that "Ferdinand cannot live 'ever' with his wife in the seeming paradise of their father's making, but . . . must return from this ideal vision to historical reality, to the continuing labor of governing Naples and himself. The spirit Ariel may sport endlessly after summer in an ideal landscape at the end of the play, but its human beings may not."[20] Certainly Prospero's rejection of the magic that has absorbed his attention, a decision that will be considered at greater length below, indicates a new desire to be involved again in the outside world. And the timing of Prospero's recollection of Caliban's plot to kill him—*right after* Ferdinand expresses the desire to live forever in the illusory world of the island—is also proof that the magician is working to be a more prudent ruler. As Robert Uphaus interprets the scene, the magician remembers his own past failings and the new threat to him precisely at this moment because he disapproves of

Ferdinand's escapism:

> To attempt to sustain such a vision [as Prospero created in the masque], in fact, would replicate Prospero's past preoccupation with the supernatural which cost him his dukedom twelve years before. Such an awareness may be the reason Prospero suddenly remembers Caliban's "foul conspiracy," for it was at the time of Prospero's peak interest in magical visions that his throne was usurped.[21]

Although Uphaus is speculating here, his reading has merit for as we have seen throughout the drama Prospero has many opportunities to redress the errors he once had made, this time choosing the right response to the threat against him. It is entirely possible, then, that Uphaus is right in seeing this scene as the culmination of a chain of events in which Prospero rejects a former erroneous way of thinking.

Prospero's rebuke when Antonio fails to reform sufficiently also indicates that he has become a more prudent leader. Interestingly, Prospero has tried to move his brother to repentance through the same mechanism he used on Alonso and Ferdinand. When Ariel, at Prospero's bidding, drives Antonio, Alonso, and Sebastian almost to madness, the sprite implies that Prospero and Miranda drowned upon their expulsion from Milan:

> But remember
> (For that's my business to you) that you three
> From Milan did supplant good Prospero,
> Expos'd unto the sea (which hath requit it)
> Him, and his innocent child; for which foul deed
> The pow'rs, delaying (not forgetting), have
> Incens'd the seas and shores—yea, all the creatures,
> Against your peace.
>
> (III. iii. 68-75)

As a result of this revelation, all three, in the words of Gonzalo, "are desperate: their great guilt / (Like poison given to work a great time after) / Now gins to bite the spirits" (III. iii. 104-06). But apparently the three have not been moved to contrition to a degree satisfactory for Prospero. At the end of the play, Prospero therefore addresses his brother by saying, "For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother / Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive / Thy rankest fault—all of them" (V. i. 130-32).

Finally, Prospero's treatment of Caliban indicates that he is becoming a more active, competent leader. He chastises Caliban for plotting murder, calling him

> [a] devil, a born devil, on whose nature

> Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,
> Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;
> And as with age his body uglier grows,
> So his mind cankers.
>
> (IV. i. 188-192)[22]

And his closing comment about the creature—"this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine" (V. i. 275-76)—indicates that Prospero recognizes at some level a responsibility for Caliban and Caliban's deeds. Though he has failed to educate Caliban as he had hoped, Prospero nevertheless realizes his duty toward this raw, poetic, childlike savage. Read in a different light, though, Prospero's words may well mean that after his exercise in retribution he has also discovered the tendency to evil in his own soul, and thus his kinship with the creature. In either case, Prospero has started to move beyond the attitude he formerly exhibited, in which he contributed to his own overthrow by his inattention to political matters and his naiveté about human nature. He has begun the process of turning outward to be a more circumspect ruler of his state. The Epilogue confirms this change, indicating Prospero's dissatisfaction with his former passivity and his desire to rejoin the society he once had neglected:

> Let me not,
> Since I have my dukedom got,
> And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
> In this bare island by your spell,
> But release me from my bands
> With the help of your good hands. . . .
> As you from crimes would pardon'd be,
> Let your indulgence set me free.
>
> (Epilogue. 5-10, 19-20)

Robert Grams Hunter thus accurately characterizes the lesson the audience and certainly Prospero learn from this play:

> More than any other of Shakespeare's plays, *The Tempest* insists strongly upon indestructibility of evil. Only a rigid and unceasing control of the sort that Prospero has exercised over Caliban and will, we assume, exercise over Antonio, can keep good in its natural ascendancy. The relaxation of such vigilance inevitably results in a spread of sin, hatred, and disorder. Evil cannot, however, be finally and completely destroyed. Antonio, in some form, will always exist and can only be forgiven for existing.[23]

Though Hunter does seem to overstate the case in calling Prospero's governance "rigid and unceasing," he does make an

important point: Prospero did not have such understanding when he came to the island. When Prospero first arrived, Robert Egan says, his project was "no less than to purge the evil from the inhabitants of his world and restore them to goodness,"[24] using Caliban as his example. But when Prospero confronts the death plot, says Douglas Peterson, "the passion that works so strongly within him is the anger of an old man forced to admit to himself the futility of an idealistic enterprise to which he has devoted nearly a lifetime. In spite of his patient efforts, evil has proved intractable."[25] Now he has learned that he must be vigilant about these sinful dimensions of the human soul, and, significantly, he has learned this lesson in a timely manner. Prospero claims that many of those present in Italy are "worse than devils" (III. iii. 36), so a virtuous leader clearly is needed. But a prudent one is needed as well, for, as Prospero tells Miranda, Antonio has brought his dukedom to its knees. Once his state was "[t]hrough all the signories . . . the first" (I. ii. 71), but, in exchange for Alonso's help in deposing Prospero, Antonio began to honor and compensate Naples, thus weakening Milan (I. ii. 124). By regaining his dukedom, Prospero will return to power at a time when he is sorely needed.

At the close of the play, when Prospero renounces his magic, he not only exhibits a wisdom spawned by an awareness of mortality, but schools the audience as well. Prospero says,

> I have bedimm'd
> The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
> And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault
> Set roaring war; to the dread rattling thunder
> Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
> With his own bolt; the strong-bas'd promontory
> Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck'd up
> The pine and cedar. Graves at my command
> Have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth
> By my so potent art. But this rough magic
> I here abjure. . . .
>
> (V. i. 41-51)

Prospero controls even the dead, a power that we normally attribute only to God Himself (or, in the classical world of this play, to the gods). Through his art, then, Prospero enjoys a superhuman status in which he takes obvious pride. But with this reference to death, Prospero refuses to succumb to the temptations of this power. In so doing he reinforces for the audience the supreme importance of mercy. Let us explore the implications of these actions further.

This scene first of all indicates Prospero's movement away from pride toward humanity and humility. Comparing *The Tempest* to the other romances, Joan Hartwig notes that deities appear directly to men in the other late plays, but that here "there is no such direct manifestation. . . : Prospero, the magician and the man, incorporates the power and the presence of divinity."[26] Prospero, it would seem, sees himself in this way as well. Throughout the drama Prospero rejoices at being able to control the characters and elements, and even the dead, with such dexterity. When Ariel works his spell on Alonso and Antonio, for instance, Prospero exults, "My high charms work, / And these, mine enemies, are all knit up / In their distractions. They now are in my pow'r. . ." (III. iii. 88-90). Again, when he hinders the plot against his own life, he muses with satisfaction upon the fact that he is close to omnipotent: "At this hour / Lies at my mercy all mine enemies" (IV. i. 262-63). He seems to enjoy this power so much that Ariel, though a spirit, must appeal to Prospero's humanity on behalf of the very humans he has helped torment:

> *Ariel.* . . . all prisoners, sir,
> In the line-grove which weather-fends your cell;
> They cannot boudge till your release. The King,
> His brother, and yours, abide all three distracted,
> And the remainder mourning over them,
> Brimful of sorrow and dismay; but chiefly
> Him that you term'd, sir, "the good old Lord Gonzalo,"
> His tears runs down his beard like winter's drops
> From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works 'em
> That if you now beheld them, your affections
> Would become tender.
> *Prospero.* Dost thou think so, spirit?
> *Ariel.* Mine would, sir, were I human.
> (V. i. 9-20)

Prospero is here close to excess. What begins as an effort to educate those who wronged him has the potential to mushroom into prideful malice as the play continues. Robert Egan makes a good case for the near excess of the magus' efforts. He notes that Prospero's

> relation to the rest of the characters—manipulating their lives, judging their flaws, and setting standards of goodness for them—is . . . close to godhead. Through Ariel he equates himself with the "Destiny, / That hath to instrument this lower world / And what is in't" (III. iii. 53-55); and Ferdinand, in the presence of "So rare a wond'red

> father and a wise" (IV. i. 123) thinks himself in Paradise.[27]

Egan goes on to note that Prospero is "in constant danger of mistaking his own passionate resentment of the wrongs he has suffered for righteous indignation, thereby perverting his own goodness and wreaking havoc on those over whom he has power. This element of vindictiveness and vengeful passion is never far from him, and it threatens constantly to overwhelm the nobler ends of his project."[28]

The moment that Prospero breaks his staff and drowns his book, a gesture suffused with references to death, is therefore profound. Prospero's art easily can be used to destroy others, but the magus *rejects* his skill in favor of forgiveness, demonstrating a humility and an emergent acceptance of his humanity. As Robert Uphaus comments, in this scene, "Prospero . . . descends from his supernatural appearance and dissolves his art (Ariel being the primary vehicle of that art); and he does so to reinforce his basic humanity."[29] In *Coming of Age in Shakespeare*, Marjorie Garber concurs, indicating that at this and other moments in the play, such as when Prospero releases Ariel, the magician is rejecting his godlike status and embracing humility. "Through these actions he reclaims his mortality," Garber says, and reclaiming one's mortality entails accepting death.[30]

Of equal importance, the scene makes a tremendous argument about the value of forgiveness. Prospero could utterly destroy his enemies; in fact, that temptation is likely another reason he abjures his magic. He does, after all, just before vowing to break his staff and drown his books say,

> Though with their high wrongs I am strook to th' quick,
> Yet, with my nobler reason, 'gainst my fury
> Do I take part. The rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance.
>
> (V. i. 25-28)

Mercy and magic seem to be mutually exclusive, since one is likely to be tempted to use such power for destruction rather than renewal. But when he is forced to choose between forgiveness and the capacity to manipulate elements, spirits, human beings, and even life itself, Prospero selects forgiveness. By declining to use, and finally rejecting, such incredible powers, Prospero implies that forgiveness is at least as valuable as the potent art he has perfected and abjured. Shakespeare, by juxtaposing death, magic, and forgiveness in this scene, thus rein-

forces the message that forgiveness is a precious or, as Prospero calls it, a "rare" thing. Indeed, the power over life and death is one that no mortal man possesses, yet here that power is of a lower order than forgiveness.

Looking more broadly at the communal impact of his action, one sees a third significance to this scene: Prospero, who confronted death in making his way to the island, now wisely refuses to destroy the very people who once had harmed him:

> They being penitent,
> The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
> Not a frown further. Go, release them, Ariel.
> My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore,
> And they shall be themselves.
>
> (V. i. 28-32)

Had Prospero pursued his punitive actions further, he would have eliminated the political leaders of both Naples and Milan, imbuing the play with a tragic outlook. But unlike the characters in *Hamlet*, for instance, who carry out retributive justice, Prospero, by forgiving his enemies, stops the cycle of bloodshed before it even starts. His act keeps the play from moving toward destruction and allows the parties involved to step back from the events in Milan twelve years before and, once and for all, to restore things to the proper order. As Douglas Peterson puts it, "Prospero, by rejecting revenge and choosing forgiveness, not only decisively shapes his own future, but the future of those over whom in the closing minutes of the play he has the power of life and death. By forgiving he becomes an agent of renewing love."[31]

The Tempest is, therefore, a wondrous play for many reasons. Andrew Solomon is thus right to view Prospero as one of Shakespeare's greatest creations:

> Whatever Prospero may be, he is certainly unique in many ways. Dramatically there has been no one quite like him in the earlier plays, particularly in the other romances. No character before him (except in a far different way and lesser degree, Iago) has ever so controlled the circumstances of the plot and the destinies of the other characters. Nor has there ever been a character with a nature quite like Prospero's, that magnificent mixture of majesty, studiousness, crustiness, and affection.[32]

And, as we have seen, Prospero often "control[s] the circumstances of the plot and the destinies of the other characters" by making them (and himself and the audience) wiser in light of the inevitability of death. After seeing how this mechanism operates

consistently in *The Tempest*, which was classified in the First Folio as a comedy, we are now in a better position to discern a prevalent dimension of many Shakespearean comedies—characters become aware of death and reform before destruction can occur. Indeed, in *Much Ado About Nothing* and *All's Well That Ends Well*, Hero, Helena and their advisers circulate false news of the women's deaths to provoke Claudio and Bertram to repentance; the ladies' actions thus operate on the principle that the finality of the women's "demise" will prompt the erring lovers to reflection and reform. In *Twelfth Night*, too, Feste and Viola, who thinks her brother has drowned, spend the majority of the play trying to school others about the brevity of life in order to improve their fellow citizens. Thus this same technique Prospero employs successfully in *The Tempest* actually operates in a number of other Shakespearean dramas as well.

In Shakespearean tragedy this mechanism generally fails to operate in a timely manner. In *Shakespeare's Pastoral Comedy*, Thomas McFarland outlines the many parallels between *King Lear* and *The Tempest*: "[B]oth plays have as their central figure an aged man; both plays emphasize the relationship of that aged man to a loved daughter; both plays explore the idea of human wrongs, especially familial wrongs perpetrated against reverend age."[33] But in *King Lear*, the ruler learns his lesson only after he has set in motion a chain of events that will devastate nearly everyone in the play. Prospero, in contrast, reforms in time to prevent disaster. We could make a similar case regarding *The Tempest* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Andrew Solomon has observed that in both dramas two young lovers from warring families are united in their desire for matrimony, but that Ferdinand and Miranda relive the actions of Romeo and Juliet with a happier result.[34] In *Romeo and Juliet*, the young couple's love begins a downward spiral toward destruction; in *The Tempest*, however, that love leads to the restoration of the families and of Prospero's dukedom. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the hatred that has sprung up between their families causes the young lovers to undertake actions that will lead them to catastrophe. The members of the disputing families thus learn the great price of their quarrel only after the demise of their children. In *The Tempest*, by contrast, enemies, moved by their experiences with death, undertake reform rather than revenge, and they do so before the young lovers can be caught up in a cycle of destruction. As a result, Ferdinand and Miranda will marry and revitalize the kingdoms.

At the close of *The Tempest*, Prospero states his intent to retire to Milan, where "every third thought shall be my grave"

(V. i. 312). And while we once might have let the comment pass without notice, we now receive it with approval, in light of this interpretation. If Prospero becomes more mindful of death, as he tried to make others during the course of the drama, he will likely make wise choices as he resumes control of his domain. In fact, making wise choices in light of the inevitability of death seems to be a key project in Shakespeare's comedies, but one doomed to failure in the tragedies. Prospero's comment thus seems to crystallize a starting point for a reassessment of *The Tempest* and of many other comedies and romances, for that matter. Few critics examine the power of death in this play, and even fewer point out that death, which pervades the drama, is often a catalyst to knowledge here. But by examining this issue carefully, we can build a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of this Shakespearean work and of the canon as well. To ignore this underlying pattern, which emerges again and again in this and in other comedies and romances, is to miss the depth and richness that permeate the plays. To acknowledge this pattern is to begin seeing *The Tempest* in a new light and to illuminate the many merits of Shakespeare's comic form.

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Notes

[1]There are numerous examples of these perspectives. Douglas Peterson's *Time, Tide, and Tempest: A Study of Shakespeare's Romances* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1973) and Howard Felperin's *Shakespearean Romance* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1972) both see links between Prospero and Shakespeare. Critics exhibiting the New Historicist view, which emphasixes the victimization of Caliban, a representative of the colonized, and his manipulation by Prospero, a representative of the colonizer, are Jonathan Baldo's "Exporting Oblivion in *The Tempest*," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 56 (1995), 111-44; Paul Brown, "'This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine': *The Tempest* and the Discourse of Colonialism," *Policitical Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialsim*, ed. Jonathan Dilimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Meanchester Univ. Press, 1985), 48-71; and Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1992). For a feminist perspective on the play see Ann Thompson's "'Miranda, Where's Your Sister?': Reading Shakespeare's *The Tempest*," *Feminist Criticism: Theory and Practice*, ed. Susan Sellers et al. (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1991), 45-55. Here the author states that "twentieth-century female students . . . find Miranda an extremely feeble heroine and scron to identify with her" (p. 47). She then takes a dim view of Prospero and Ferdinand, whose discussion of the importance of chastity, she says, indicates that "the minds of both men are dwelling in morbid detail on the possibilities of completing Caliban's attempted violation [of Miranda]: the image of Miranda as a rape victim interferes disturbingly with the

image of Miranda as a chaste and fertile wife" (p. 49).

[2]For an insightful critique of the New Historicist reading of this play, see Brian Vickers' *Appropriating Shakespeare: Contemporary Critical Quarrels* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1993).

[3]Charles Forker, "Immediacy and Remoteness in *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare's Romances Reconsidered*, ed. Carol McGinnis Kay and Henry E. Jacobs (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1978), p. 144.

[4]All quotations of Shakespeare are taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

[5]Elton Higgs, "Post-Creation Freedom in *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare's Late Plays: Essays in Honor of Charles Crow*, ed. Richard C. Tobias and Paul Zolbrod (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1974), p. 203.

[6]Theodore Spencer, *Death and Elizabethan Tragedy: A Study of Convention and Opinion in the Elizabethan Drama* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1936), p. ix. This insightful study discusses the sources of evidence (e.g., jewelry, paintings, and literary works) supporting his assertion that the awareness of death was prevalent in Shakespeare's day.

[7]Spencer, p. ix.

[8]Marjorie Garber, "'Wild Laughter in the Throat of Death: Darker Purposes in Shakespearean Comedy," *New York Literary Forum*, 5-6 (1980), p. 121.

[9]Garber, p. 125.

[10]Michael Neill, "'Feasts Put Down Funerals': Death and Ritual in Renaissance Comedy," *True Rites and Maimed Rites: Ritual and Anti-Ritual in Shakespeare and His Age*, ed. Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1992), 47-74. For related studies, see James Calderwood, *Shakespeare and the Denial of Death* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1987), which focuses on humankind's perennial desire for survival and outlines numerous methods (e.g., disguise, sex, art) Shakespearean characters employ to achieve a figurative immortality in the comedies, histories, tragedies, and romances. Kirby Farrell, *Play, Death, and Heroism in Shakespeare* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1989), examines instances in which Shakespearean characters simulate death, assessing dramas from the histories and tragedies as well as the comedies. Patricia Carlin, *Shakespeare's Mortal Men: Overcoming Death in History, Comedy, and Tragedy, Studies in Shakespeare* 1, ed. Robert F. Wilson Jr. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993) argues that the effort to survive an encounter with death is essential to Shakespearean drama, though her study examines the comedies, histories, and tragedies. All of these analyses are thought-provoking and insightful but do not emphasize the cognitive action that occurs when characters encounter death.

[11]Theresa Coletti, "Music and *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare's Late Plays: Essays in Honor of Charles Crow*, ed. Richard C. Tobias and Paul Zolbrod (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1974), p. 193.

[12]D. G. James, *The Dream of Prospero* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 133.

[13]Here my interpretation differs from that of Mike Frank, "Shakespeare's Existential Comedy," *Shakespeare's Late Plays: Essays in Honor of Charles Crow*, ed. Richard C. Tobias and Paul Zolbrod (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1974), pp. 142-65. Although Frank acknowledges that mortality is the theme of this speech, he nevertheless says that the problem with the masque is that it ignores the earthy, Caliban-like dimension of human life and overemphasizes spirit. While Frank's essay is helpful in pointing out the associations of Caliban and earth and Ariel and spirit and in pointing out that something is, indeed, wrong with the masque, his interpretation of this scene seems to ignore the more deep-seated problem with the masque, its refusal to acknowledge death, a problem that the context of the play (the

juxtaposition of the masque and the death plot) substantiates.

[14]Peterson, pp. 241-42.

[15]Gerald Schorin, "Approaching the Genre of *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare's Late Plays: Essays in Honor of Charles Crow*, ed. Richard C. Tobias and Paul Zolbrod (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1974), p. 180.

[16]Howard Felperin, "Romance and Romanticism: Some Reflections on *The Tempest* and *The Heart of Darkness*, or When Is Romance No Longer Romance?" *Shakespeare's Romances Reconsidered*, ed. Carol McGinnis Kay and Henry E. Jacobs (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1978), p. 64.

[17]Higgs, pp. 207-08.

[18]Peterson, p. 239.

[19]Peterson, p. 230.

[20]Felperin, *Shakespearean Romance*, p. 267.

[21]Robert Uphaus, *Beyond Tragedy: Structure and Experience in Shakespeare's Romances* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1981), pp. 111-12.

[22]Critics must exercise caution in interpreting the relationship of Prospero and Caliban. Caliban clearly is capable of baseness and evil; in the course of the play his thoughts focus chiefly on murder, rape, liquor, and the worship of drunken crewmen. His plot against Prospero is one of extraordinary violence; he threatens to steal Prospero's books because the magus prizes them, and he plans either to bash his master's head in with a log, impale him, or slit his throat (III. ii. 89-92). Caliban's heritage, too, suggests reason to mistrust him; as D.G. James points out, Caliban is "the child of witch and devil" (72), and, I would argue, his misshapenness may well symbolize the caliber of his intentions. But Caliban also indicates some understanding as well; he is capable of perceiving extraordinary beauty, he sees the foolishness of his fellow conspirators, he comprehends the majesty of Prospero, and he rightly concludes that he will "seek for grace" at the end of the play (V. i. 296). James correctly points out the dichotomy in Caliban, therefore, when he asserts that "the deep evil of our nature, resentful of continence and submission, goes along, in Caliban, with a sense of transcendent glory.... He is the natural man" (121). This dichotomy indicates that Prospero is right to mistrust Caliban, who is capable of violence and evil, but that Prospero is also wrong in concluding that Caliban is incorrigible.

[23]Robert Grams Hunter, *Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 240-41.

[24]Robert Egan, "This Rough Magic: Perspectives of Art and Morality in *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 23 (1972), p. 175.

[25]Peterson, p. 241.

[26]Joan Hartwig, *Shakespeare's Tragicomic Vision* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1972), p. 137.

[27]Egan, p. 175.

[28]Egan, p. 177. Though I disagree with Egan's view that Prospero is passionately resentful, rather than righteously indignant, I nevertheless concur that there is a dangerous dimension to Prospero's enterprise.

[29]Uphaus, p. 113.

[30]Marjorie Garber, *Coming of Age in Shakespeare* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1981), p. 243.

[31]Peterson, p. 16.

[32]Andrew Solomon, "A Reading of *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare's Late Plays: Essays in Honor of Charles Crow*, ed. Richard C. Tobias and Paul Zolbrod (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1974), p. 228.

[33]Thomas McFarland, *Shakespeare's Pastoral Comedy* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 170.

[34]Solomon, p. 225.

"The taller is his daughter" in *As You Like It*

by Rodney Stenning Edgecombe

In act one, scene two of *As You Like It*, to help Orlando grasp which of the two women he has just met is the current Duke's daughter, Le Beau informs him that Celia is "the taller." This has produced a flurry of emendations throughout the centuries—"shorter," "smaller," "lower," "lesser," and "less taller"[1]—on the very good grounds that it contradicts later references to the respective heights of the heroines. In the next scene, for example, Rosalind describes herself as "more than common tall"[2] and therefore better suited to disguising herself as a boy, while in act four, Oliver characterizes Aliena (Celia) as a "woman low, / And browner than her brother."[3] It seems likely to me that, given the binary pitting of tall and fair against short and dark in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* five years or so earlier (Hermia herself is called a "tawny Tartar" in act three, scene two), Shakespeare would have been writing *As You Like It* with the same boys in mind, and would probably not (with this sense of physical distinction in mind) have mistaken their respective heights, even in the heat of composition. Since an emendation is necessary to make the line cohere with the play as a whole, and since the proposed emendations relating to height bear no resemblance to the Folio epithet—leaving aside "smaller," which Agnes Latham rejects as being an unlikely measure of stature—I would propose "tawnier" as an alternative to "taller," differing in only three letters. It anticipates Oliver's sense that Celia is "more brown" than Rosalind. As an adjective applied to complexion, it has, in addition to Lysander's insult to Hermia, the idiomatic endorsement of Philo's "tawny front"[4] in *Antony and Cleopatra* I. i.

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Notes

[1]William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ed. Agnes Latham (London: Methuen, 1975), 22.

[2]*As You Like It*, 28.

[3]*As You Like It*, 108.

[4]William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. M. R. Ridley (London: Methuen, 1954), 3.

"Words, Words, Words": ACTER and Shenandoah Shakespeare Perform for Clemson Shakespeare Festival 2000

by John R. Ford

The theme for the Clemson Shakespeare Festival's ninth season, January 31-February 1 and March 1-10, 2000, was "'What's Past Is Prologue'—Shakespeare: Writing and Playing History." Appropriately, both ACTER and Shenandoah Shakespeare rewrote performance history by staging some brilliant productions of plays not frequently performed. Except for Shenandoah's *Much Ado About Nothing*, the remaining plays the week I attended (March 4-9, 2000)— *All's Well That Ends Well, Dr. Faustus*, and *Richard II*—rarely make their way into festival repertories, damned by the conventional wisdom that they may be caviar to the general. But, as both the performances and the enthusiastic audience response amply demonstrated, these three plays were most assuredly not. Either that or our culinary taste in performance had improved. Moreover, all of these performances celebrated an important strength in both these companies: for despite the unfamiliar and at times finely wrought language of these works, there was such a clarity and immediacy to the performance of language that even those in the audience who had not read the plays were fully engaged auditors and actors, too perhaps, if they saw cause.

No one balances modesty and cunning quite like ACTER, a five-person theatrical company that performs nearly whole-text versions of Shakespeare's plays. The sheer technical virtuosity such tripling and quadrupling requires, the extraordinary clarity and range of their vocal and bodily expression, a precipitate of their minimalist staging and costuming, is astonishing. Yet these remarkable talents are always effaced, suffused, and transported into the peculiar style and energy that define each play. In a performance of *The Tempest* in 1992, an actor would suspend his or her role as one character, not by exiting, but by falling asleep on stage until seemingly "reawakened" by the language of his next character.[1] In that production, the island was truly a place of dreamy metamorphosis, where the constant requirements of changing roles—and the gaps between one role and another—created a world of incessant sleep and awakening. In 1998, ACTER performed another *Tempest*, this one much more violent.[2] The actors in that production would shake and twist

themselves from one fictional body into another. No one was himself, but each was alternately possessed by a succession of personages. The audience felt the actors' pain of empathy, the difficulty of accepting oneself as "one of their kind." In their *Twelfth Night*, rather than mute the logistical nightmare of so much multiplication of roles, often within a single scene, ACTER foregrounded and amplified the busyness until all of Illyria seemed to spin like a parish top.[3]

All's Well That Ends Well creates a world obsessed with preserving the "natural" integrity of gender and class, "birthright" and "shape," yet is held together by theatrical conventions that playfully subvert those certainties. The play's structure is that of an inverted romance, in which women leave for foreign lands in pursuit of heroic deeds and romance, and men are to be restored to health, or wooed and won. Similarly, the language of *All's Well* is of a mingled yarn that weaves together discourses of martial and sexual conquest as well as those of heroic valor, romantic quest, and holy pilgrimage. This is not entirely new, of course. But what is different is that these words and actions, usually securely encoded in a masculine ethic, are here the ambivalent signs of men and women. We are in a world of fluid social definitions, where "[t]he mightiest space in fortune nature brings / to join like likes, and kiss like native things" (I. i. 193-94).[4]

Appropriately, the theatrical conventions on which these five actors most relied in their several impersonations were the social conventions of clothing and voice.[5] All the actors wore reversible outfits: black or green exteriors that marked the Rossillion household could be pulled back and pinned, revealing a bright red interior. Thus, in the folds of a garment the Countess (Vivien Heilbron) would discover a Lord Dumaine, and we were suddenly at court in Paris. As Lafew (Eunice Roberts) says of Parolles, "the soul of this man is his clothes" (II. v. 38). Parolles too (Paul McCleary) wore his personage like a chev'ril glove. Turn his costume inside out, and he became the King of France. These minimal "costume changes," often executed with a comically exaggerated flourish, were very effective. They certainly got at the arbitrary flimsiness of the playworld's social distinctions, on which, notwithstanding, so many of its inhabitants rest assured. But these sartorial changes, while clear enough for the audience to recognize a new character, were just translucent enough to allow the audience to see and hear one character in the clothing and language of his "double," as when Bertram (Roger May) doubled as Lavatch. Thus, when the clown performed his

wonderfully varied comic demonstration of the many social uses of the phrase "O Lord, Sir," the only words a courtier ever needs to learn, we could hear Bertram's hollow courtly language echoing like a drum. In fact, this linguistic moment further connected Bertram with his mirrored self, Parolles. When Parolles, who earlier in the play had promised Helena that he would "return perfect courtier" (I. i. 180), faces his execution, he merely pleads, "O Lord, sir, let me live" (IV. iii. 259).

These reverberations of doubling and speech were especially strong in the scene of Parolles' unmasking. Parolles, fittingly, was undone by clothing and language. When captured, he was bound by his own garish wardrobe. His hands were tied with his orange-sherbet colored scarf, while a bright red kerchief covered his eyes. But the red kerchief, the color of the French court, also gestured disturbingly toward the king. It was, of course, wryly appropriate that Parolles, this "man of words" should endure such linguistic exposure. Trapped by "linsey-woolsey" gibberish, he would also be punished with words. As his "interpreter" made clear, when Parolles does return to France, "[w]e shall speak of you there" (IV. iii. 275-76). That the interpreter (Polly Pritchard) also doubled as Helena created a pleasing irony, for in "her" unmasking of Parolles' masculine "honor," we could hear an echo of Parolles' earlier interrogation of Helena's virginity (I. i. 98-140).

The many cross-gendered doublings in the play also had a cumulative effect. All but one of the cast played both male and female characters. But as *All's Well* is a play so stridently self-conscious of the social codes that define and evaluate sexual difference, so *all* cast members were *always* impersonating gender. Particularly in scenes of masculine bonding, there was a sharp and comic contrast between image and actor, as when the soldiers gathered to set their trap for Parolles or when Helena, leading Diana and her mother to the king for redress, parodied the manly image as the three women galloped along the provincial countryside on invisible steeds.

Polly Pritchett's Helena was both powerful and suggestive. You sensed her feeling her way out of doubts and into her own clarity and self-possession, whether speaking to the Countess about her status, or to Parolles about her sexuality, or to the King about her strange powers. Helena has not always fared well with critics, including those who might have wished that this "Doctor She" had better known her place. This Helena almost lost heart at the king's long dismissal of her "art." But at the thought of the strange power invested in weakest ministers, she became changed.

And even as the king dismissed her, she knelt before him, charged with a new sureness of soul and spoke an ambiguous truth she could only now intuit: "I am not an imposter that proclaim / Myself against the level of mine aim, / But know I think, and think I know most sure / My art is not past power, nor you past cure" (II. i. 151-54). Polly Pritchard's strong performance underscored a central tenet of this production: that whatever reservations we might have about her "bright, particular star," this is Helena's play and Helena's journey. You go, girl.

Shenandoah Shakespeare, founded by Ralph Alan Cohen and Jim Warren, has been a part of the Clemson Shakespeare Festival since CSF's inception in 1992. Their theatrical philosophy is to re-discover Shakespeare's theatrical energies and truth by re-discovering the spirit and, if not the letter, at least the alphabet of his dramaturgy. They perform on a bare stage that thrusts into the audience's space under universal lighting that allows the audience as much visibility as the actors. Such stage practices, more presentational than illusionary, require a much greater interaction between actors and audience than proscenium spaces allow and indeed a much greater and more varied role for the audience. Like ACTER, though not to the same extent, the company is known for its imaginative doubling and, most important, for the clarity, the energy, and the speed of its performance.

Those three qualities, clarity, energy, and speed, characterized all three of their productions: *Dr. Faustus*, *Richard II*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*.[6] *Dr. Faustus* began with two songs, first sung separately and then in competition, that would define both the equivocal psychomachia and the theological axis of this play. Dr. Faustus himself (John Michael Macdonald) began by singing "Amazing Grace," reminding us of the chance that grace may yet find even "a wretch like me." But then a chorus of singers moved on stage, and we heard another song, a deterministic ditty about the inevitable fall of great, presumptuous men: "the duke of York, he had 10,000 men . . ." The chorus of singers surrounded Dr. Faustus, then sang another song, a strange incantation of infectious death: "Ring Around the Roses." As the sounds of the children's nursery rhyme faded, Dr. Faustus fell asleep, surrounded by book and drink, his two intoxicants. And the play proper began.

For Ralph Alan Cohen, *Faustus* is a play both in and out of history. The play acts out the promise and the presumptions of the very idea of a "renaissance." In the printed program, Cohen notes that the year 1564 was not only the year of Shakespeare's and Marlowe's birth, but also of Galileo's; that Wittenberg

schooled not just Faustus and Hamlet, but also Martin Luther. But the play also belongs to histor*ies*, acting out "the questions that define the boundaries of being human."[7] Whether those questions are asked by a Renaissance doctor of his books or by a graduating senior in college, they point to the magnificence and tomfoolery that shape the ambiguous language of this play. And all of these contradictions, in Cohen's production, took root in our opening image of the young Faustus, seated in his chair, drunk and asleep after graduate revels, his book and his bottle to comfort him as he guards the gates of learning. When he awakened, he would eventually notice the audience and invite us into the play, like another drunken porter. For Marlowe, as he allows us to participate in both the imaginative expansiveness of Faustus' desires as well as the imaginative poverty of desire's performance, may be said to be an equivocator with both Faustus and us. This play will set us on, and take us off.

Shenandoah Shakespeare is celebrated for its attentiveness to an audience's role in creating a play. That collaboration took on a special urgency in *Dr. Faustus*, where the stakes are metaphysical. In Cohen's production, our role, like so much else in this play, was equivocal, damnably ambiguous. We were judges. Faustus' good and bad angels pled as much to us as to him. But we were also to be wooed, cajoled, argued with, mocked, as if the angelic and demonic voices that reverberated throughout the play were wrestling for our soul as well as Faustus'. When Faustus wonders why his blood should congeal at the words, "Faustus gives to thee his soul," he answers, "[w]hy should'st thou not? Is not thy soul thine own?" (II. i. 67-68).[8] Faustus delivered these lines with a terrifying ambiguity. He may have been addressing his resisting blood, but he was looking at *us*. It was our question too.

In fact, from the play's earliest moments, Faustus cultivated an important relationship with the audience, something like genial contempt. This was our play too. His famous opening speech, in which he expresses the vanity and futility of all human knowledge and power, was spoken not to himself but to us. This was not a personal search but a classroom exercise conducted by a weary professor who knew we hadn't done the reading. Still he asked us, "*[b]ene disserere est finis logices*—," quickly scanning the audience. We waited, hoping that the smartest among us would know the answer. Silence. Finally Faustus turned to us and translated, with laconic disgust: "is to dispute well logic's chiefest end?" (I. i. 7-8).

It is a critical commonplace to speak of the fragmentary

nature of *Dr. Faustus*, a loose structure of magnificent speeches and spectacles, an integrity made even more problematic by textual uncertainties. But Cohen, drawing from both the A and B texts, gave these episodes a metatheatrical power that allowed the audience to participate in the spiritual psychology of Faustus' seduction. Whenever Faustus asks a question or makes a judgment that motions toward truth, Mephistopheles' strategy is to divert with pleasant spectacle, to "fetch him somewhat to delight his mind" (V. i. 82). So Marlowe does to the audience, Cohen suggests. For these visions offer a special promise to playgoers. These are more than theatrical pleasures; they offer us a new kind of theatre, moving beyond the orality of, say, a Shakespeare play into a spectacular voyeurism we have never known. This performance simultaneously reminded us of the dangerous power of theatre while trivializing that power. What would you like to see on our stage, Marlowe might be asking. The Seven Deadly Sins? Alexander the Great and his paramour? A man having his leg pulled "quite off"? Shall we glut the longing of our heart's desire to see Helen of Troy in the act of "sweet embracings" (V. i. 91)? Such a feast of spectacles might let us "live in all voluptuousness" (I. iii. 92). We had two hours to enjoy them.

Because these spectacles will require our active participation, they implicate us even more in Faustus' psychomachia. In the parade of the Seven Deadly Sins, each sin claimed a special relationship with us. Envy looked at the house with contempt, resenting the very presence of an audience: "But must thou sit, and I stand?" (II. ii. 130-31). Lechery toyed with a man in the audience, pausing a moment before noticing the "inch of raw mutton" (II. ii. 160). When Covetousness addressed the audience, we became like Everyman, surprised by the contempt of such a trusted ally: Wrath scrutinized all of us, searching for his kin: "for some of you shall be my father" (II. ii. 137-38).

Perhaps the most intoxicating, and most disturbing, spectacle for the audience was that of Helen of Troy. When Mephistopheles (Chaon Cross) announced the appearance of Helen, we all waited expectantly. But no actor emerged. Then Mephistopheles began to disrobe, revealing underneath his monk's habit and hood a full-length red dress and long golden hair. It was Helen. When her kiss sucked forth Faustus's soul, we felt our most expansive desires collapse into Mephistopheles' tight circle.

But *we*, the play reminds us, are not quite damned. In the very next scene, as the Old Man was being tortured, we once

more heard "Amazing Grace." The play will spare us. As we watched Faustus disappear into a circle of demons, when the actors turned for their bow, all that was left of Faustus was the litter of his clothing. We left the theatre, dismissed to happiness.

Merely by putting *Dr. Faustus* and *Richard II* in the same repertory, Shenandoah Shakespeare invited us to see both of these plays in a new light. *Dr. Faustus* is often linked with plays like *Richard III* or *Macbeth.* But here we were invited to discover an unlikely connection between two protagonists usually thought miles apart. Both of these figures are undone not so much by their desire for power as by their desire for the *language* of power. There is an actor's and a poet's thrill to the sound of incantation and ritual, the very repetition of "Mephistopheles," the breath of kings. Performed with *Faustus, Richard II* sharpened our awareness of the *passivity* of Faustus, the boyish infatuation with forbidden sounds and symbols of power. "Down, Down I come, like glist'ring Phaeton / Wanting the manage of unruly jades" (III.iii.178-79) suddenly became a cry as proper to Faustus as to Richard.[9] Neither Faustus nor Richard knows quite what to do with the Promethean fire each has invoked. Faustus wastes his on practical jokes, while Richard indulges the secret thrill of violated ceremony, whether of trial by combat or deposition, the impotent power of unsaying. In the trial by combat scene, Richard (David Loar) waited until the last possible moment to throw his warder down.

Jim Warren's production brillliantly represented the *theatre* of Richard's early scenes. Richard wore a gold speckled tunic over a white shirt and white cape, a fashion statement that seemed designed to set off his long blond wig. Richard walked upstage, took up his crown, mockingly offered it to Hereford. Then Richard put on the crown with a flourish, spreading his cape as he took the throne. The rest of Richard's court was similarly bright and elaborate, like "gilded loam or painted clay." In sharp contrast Hereford and Mowbray were dressed in black although Mowbray had a touch of gold embroidery that slightly echoed Richard's.

From time to time in this production, Warren invited us to see an upstage empty throne or an idle crown, an ironic comment on either of these pretenders. Bolingbroke (Jason Stiles) seemed almost embarrassed in Act IV, as he stood before the throne, literally upstaged by its presence, and attempted to preside over Aumerle's treason trial. Nervous audience laughter, which often attends Richard's stratagems, here haunted Bolingbroke, quietly at first, then increasingly openly as, for example, when

Aumerle searched the audience for "some honest Christian" to lend him a gauge. If this scene is sometimes staged to legitimize Bolingbroke as a ruler by presenting itself as a foil to Richard's judicial failures in I.i and I.iii, as some critics suggest it should, there was not a hint of legitimacy here. Later, when King Henry IV attempted to preside over yet another treasonous charge against Aumerle, the audience's laughter at the quarreling Yorks became so boisterous that the new king looked ruefully at us as he admitted, "our scene is altered from a serious thing, / And now changed to 'The Beggar and the King'" (V. iii. 78-79).

Such kingly gestures toward an audience were interesting here. Miracles were chastened, to be sure, in this production. We seemed to be on the edge of a new order, wherein divine authority would be replaced by the powers of political theatre. And certainly we were invoked by all parties in this production. When Richard in the deposition scene complained of "a sort of traitors here" (IV. i. 245), he pointed to *us*, as if to condemn us for our very inaction, as if we were, as another Richard might put it, so many dumb statues or breathing stones. And when the newly crowned King Henry asked, "can no man tell me of my unthrifty son" (V. iii. 1), he looked, not at the lords around him, but at us. As this was one of the few times in this production where Henry actually wore the crown, his hapless appeal to us almost unkinged him. Richard and Henry are both right to sense the enormous power an audience possesses; but neither knows how to use it. We will need to wait for an unthrifty son for that kind of efficiency.

Still, the play's final scene offered hints of theatrical power to come. The scene was one last attempt by Henry to create a ceremony of legitimacy. But every moment of the ritual was undermined by dramaturgy. The end of V. v blurred into the beginning of V. vi. For a moment Exton (Sean Michael O'Donnell) and Henry shared the same stage picture. Henry entered the stage at the same point at which the body of the murdered Richard was being dragged off. This could not have been the iconography of the king's two bodies Henry had in mind. Henry then made one final attempt to secure his legitimacy. After he exiled Exton, sending him "[w]ith Cain [to] wander through shades of night" (V. vi. 43), Henry announced his own kingly baptism: "I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land / To wash this blood off from my guilty hand" (V. vi. 49-50). But even as he spoke his holy vow, we saw Richard rising from his coffin to take his place for the final applause, directly behind—upstage of—Henry. Then the audience thunderously, equivocally, applauded.

While Shenandoah Shakespeare has mounted a number of successful tragedies and histories in this and past years, the company is most in its element performing Shakespeare's comedies. There may be many reasons for Shenandoah's genius for that genre, the youth and energy of the cast being one. But more than that, Shenandoah has a rare sense of that wonderful unruly range of voices that make up the tonal alchemy of a Shakespearean comedy: the profanation and divinity that discover—perhaps "recognize"—their unlikely harmony in *Twelfth Night*; or the dark mortality that finds accommodation in the bright, quick-motioned verbal play of *As You Like It* or *Love's Labour's Lost*. Shenandoah's talent is to find the concord in this discord, or, to go beyond Theseus, to find the discord that gives to comic harmony its life and truth.

Much Ado About Nothing is a play that, in a sense, acts out its own rehearsal as, in scene after scene, it moves improvisationally toward finding its proper key. It is a romantic comedy with a scene at the heart of its design—a wedding no less—that threatens to undo and unsay everything comedy promises to the comic commonwealths it creates on either side of the stage. It is a spirited celebration of the redemptive powers of language—Beatrice's and Benedick's wit, the power of a lyric to transform "all your sounds of woe into hey, nonny, nonny"—that becomes infected with a virus of words, only to be "condemned into everlasting redemption" by a constable too cunning to be understood. In what key shall we take this play to go in the song?

Nick Hutchinson's production of *Much Ado* acted out this play's elusive harmonies, the doubling of major and minor keys, in a wonderful, transforming moment. Don John (John Michael Macdonald) had just darkened the playful verbal banter between Don Pedro (Jason Stiles) and Claudio (Clinton Brandhagen) about Benedick's sudden discovery of love by interjecting his own verbal construction of Hero's disloyalty: "Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero" (III. ii. 78).[10] As the talk continued, their language grew toward the tragic, although the hint of declamation would, we would learn, keep on the windy side of care:

> *Don Pedro.* Oh day untowardly turned!
> *Claudio.* Oh mischief strangely thwarting!
> *Don John.* Oh plague right well prevented! So will you say, when you have seen the sequel.
> (III. ii. 97-100)

As Don John spoke his lines, he moved downstage and shifted

his attention from Claudio and Don Pedro to the audience. His last words, now charged with an odd metatheatrical play, were spoken to *us*. As we began to adjust to these strangely altered signals, Don John began to take off one uniform and put on another, the army browns and baton that marked the Constable of the Watch. The actor's muscles, then his carriage, relaxed and altered. A rigid chest fell into a paunch. Don John had become Dogberry before our very eyes! The doubling found the key, as Dogberry would now, in his inimitable voice, for comparisons *are* odorous, set about to convert all our woes.

In this production both Benedick (James Ricks) and Beatrice (Tymberlee Hill) were marked by a vulnerability and an otherness that lent as much poignancy as humor to their ironic poses. Benedick, a half foot shorter than most of the male actors, used his wit as he used his crumpled uniform: an outward carelessness toward social decorum that, paradoxically, earned him his rank among the men while protecting him from his affection for Beatrice. He revealed a slight comic awkwardness with both men and women. When he allowed himself to think that Beatrice might indeed love him, he responded by ironing his military uniform, combing his hair, and mysteriously acquiring a new medal or two. It was a nice touch that looked forward to his equally hapless attempts to write a sonnet. This mocker of conventions was just not sure *how* to act, *what* to say. That comic uncertainty not only counterpointed the sureness of his wit, but made his eventual commitment to Beatrice at the wedding scene all the more moving. He had to *decide*. While his sympathies were clearly with Hero and Beatrice in that scene, nonetheless, when the men turned to leave, he seemed to think momentarily of joining them, even taking a hesitant step in their direction. Just before Don Pedro exited, he looked back toward Benedick, catching his eye. His message was clear, an echo of an earlier bantering exchange between the two soldiers but now in a different key: "I charge thee on thy allegiance" (I. i. 154). After a moment's hesitation, Benedick turned away and returned to the women, engaged, affianced.

Beatrice, too, occupied an ambivalent position between men and women, convention and irony. In the eavesdropping scene, Beatrice attempted to escape the notice of women by losing herself among men. At first she hid behind a group of male actors. Another time, she jumped into the lap of a surprised young male spectator, who quickly shielded her with his program. When Benedick and Beatrice finally "examine" one another on the genesis of their loves, their wit told one story, their

bodies another. As if eager to try out the postures of lovers, the two lay side by side on their backs, propped up on elbows, looking skyward as they inventoried one another's bad parts.

It is not that this inclusive spirit was without limit. Like many recent productions of *Much Ado*, this one elided some of the play's more uncomfortable words. Benedick's "[i]f I do not love her, I am a *Jew*" (II. iii. 212, my emphasis) became "a *fool*." Similarly, Claudio's commitment to marry an unseen bride, "I'll hold my mind were she an Ethiope" (V. iv. 38) discreetly erased the last clause, perhaps in part because Beatrice's part was played by an African-American actor. And, as a former student, Georgia Rushing, has reminded me, this production further protected Benedick by following the quarto version rather than Theobald's generally accepted emendation by assigning "Peace I will stop your mouth" (V. iv. 96) to Leonato rather than to Benedick.

Nevertheless, throughout the performance characters were allowed to speak in inconsistent keys. By allowing Don Pedro, for example, to hold on to the sharp disappointment of Beatrice's rejection (II. i) into the early moments of his announcement of a plan to bring together Beatrice and Benedick, Hutchinson suggests the hint of a connection between antithetical emotional states. We observed Don Pedro in the act of transforming the woe of his rejected proposal to Beatrice into the artistic excitement of helping Beatrice and Benedick accept their love. Hey, nonny, nonny! The art of the poet is indeed "honest slander." In the same scene, Hero's (Chaon Cross) response to Don Pedro's request was read in such a way that allowed an interesting and unusual balance of innocence and worldly irony to Hero's character. When Hero declared that "I will do *any modest office*, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband" (II. ii. 283-84), her emphasis on "modest office" brought together both her innocence as well as a Beatrice-like ironic skepticism that such a Herculean labor could ever be achieved through modest office.

As always, Shenandoah Shakespeare used the audience to great effect. In *Much Ado*, both the crime and the penance are public and social, and this production deeply implicated us in the social offense. When Claudio proclaimed, "Would you not swear / All you that see her, that she were a maid, / By these exterior shows?" he dragged Hero, not before the on-stage assembly, but before the audience. We more than witnessed her shame. We *created* it. Beatrice certainly believed so. As Beatrice cried out her rage to Benedick at Claudio's slander, she once again acknowledged our role: "and then with public accusation,

uncovered slander . . ." (IV. i. 294). As she spoke, she took us in with the sweep of her arm. In the universal lighting of the theatre, there was no place for us to hide. Her words stabbed.

We were also part of the restoration. When Leonato required of Don Pedro and Claudio that they "[p]ossess the people in Messina here, / How innocent she died" (V. i. 248-49), he too nodded to us. We would ratify her restoration as much as we had amplified her shame. We too needed to find a key that could accommodate both these notes. We brought up the end of the procession to Hero's tomb merely by remaining in our seats. As part of a congregation of sinners, we, along with Claudio and Don Pedro, felt the hauntingly mixed tonal harmonies of Wyckham Avery's *a cappella* setting of "Pardon, goddess of the night." Claudio was especially moved, made helpless by an emotional violence as wild as his passionate outbursts at the wedding. It was the same voice. Indeed, Claudio's emotional chaos, so destructive in the wedding scene, nonetheless defined itself here as a badge of human vulnerability. We recognized the mingled yarn. We were all redeemed in that production, indeed, in all four of these performances, by the very language that defined our crimes, condemned into everlasting redemption by the sounds of human voices.

Delta State University

Notes

[1]*The Tempest*, ACTER, performances by Clive Arrindell, John Dougall, Peter Grayer, Stephen Jenn, and Katherine Schlesinger, Memphis State University, 2 and 4 Oct. 1992.

[2]*The Tempest*, ACTER, performances by Mairead Carty, Paul Greenwood, John Kane, Patrick Miller, and Stephen Simms, University of Memphis, 24 and 26 Sept. 1998.

[3]*Twelfth Night*, ACTER, performances by Geoffrey Church, Richard Cordery, Eunice Roberts, Hugh Sullivan, and Suzan Sylvester, Brooks Theatre, Clemson University, 15 and 16 Mar. 1994.

[4]*All's Well That Ends Well*, New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. Russell Fraser (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985). All quotations are from this edition and cited parenthetically in the text.

[5]*All's Well That Ends Well*, ACTER, performances by Vivien Heilbron, Roger May, Paul McCleary, Polly Pritchett, and Eunice Roberts, Brooks Theatre, Clemson University, 8 Mar. 2000.

[6]*Doctor Faustus*, Shenandoah Shakespeare, directed by Ralph Alan Cohen, Brooks Theatre, Clemson University, 7 Mar. 2000; *Richard II*, Shenandoah Shakespeare, directed by Jim Warren, Brooks Theatre, Clemson University, 6 Mar. 2000; *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shenandoah Shakespeare, directed by Nick

Hutchison, Brooks Theatre, Clemson University, 5 and 8 Mar. 2000.

[7]Director's Notes to *Doctor Faustus*, in "'What's Past is Prologue'—Shakespeare: Writing and Playing History," Clemson Shakespeare Festival IX Program, no pagination.

[8]Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, New Mermaids, ed. Roma Gill (New York: Norton, 1965). All quotations are from this edition and cited parenthetically in the text.

[9]William Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. Andrew Gurr (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984). All quotations are from this edition and cited parenthetically in the text.

[10]William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. F. H. Mares (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988). All quotations are from this edition and cited parenthetically in the text.

The 2000 Ashland Shakespeare Festival
by Michael W. Shurgot

The 2000 Ashland Shakespeare Festival offered its usual mix of comedy, history, and tragedy. On the outdoor Elizabethan Stage, the company presented an Elizabethan *Taming of the Shrew*; an exotic, vaguely middle-eastern/north African *Twelfth Night* ("A Night in Tunisia," with a nod to Dizzy Gillespie?); and an energetic, nearly full-text (three hour, thirty minute) *Hamlet*. In the indoor Bowmer Theatre the company presented *Henry V* to complete its staging of the second tetralogogy.

Kenneth Albers, who directed *Shrew*, explained in a "Noon Talk" that Shakespeare's Kate is a naughty, rude, selfish child who needs to be taught proper manners so she can function in an adult, "civil" community. During questions and answers after his talk, Albers dismissed several questions about feminist criticism of the play and asserted that *Shrew* was primarily a "love story" about how a man and woman learn to be civil with each other and thus establish a loving (read "traditional") relationship, political correctness be damned. After listening to Albers' talk, I half expected a reincarnation of Jonathan Miller's infamous BBC *Shrew*. Despite his fairly traditional take on the Petruchio-Katherina story, and extensive farce, Albers' production included some striking moments.

Richard Elmore's Baptista seemed annoyed at the marriage conventions he insisted on following and angry at the set of daughters fate had sent him. Robynn Rodriguez's Katherina was furious at these conventions and at her father, while Tyler Layton's Bianca was a spoiled brat who thoroughly enjoyed making her sister's life miserable as well as all the attention she received, even from old Gremio toddling about with an Elizabethan walker. Petruchio, in flamboyant red cape and hat, obviously wanted to marry strictly for money.

Despite his anger at society's customs, Baptista knew that Kate's love must be "well obtained," for "that is all in all."[1] Petruchio's initial dismissal, "Why that is nothing, for I tell you father, / I am as peremptory as she proud-minded" (II. i. 130-31) was crucial to this production. Jonathan Adams' Petruchio was brash and boastful among his mates and before Baptista, but Hortensio's entrance a moment later with his head smashed tempered Petruchio. His following soliloquy, on wooing Kate with some spirit, was spoken directly to the audience as if he

were improvising all this as he went along, sensing that his youthful belligerence and ironic plan might not succeed with Kate. Given Kate's battle with Bianca moments earlier, during which she violently whirled the tied-up Bianca around stage with a rope thick enough to hang her, Petruchio's uncertainty seemed justified.

In their initial confrontation, Kate walked slowly towards and then around Petruchio, stopped, looked him over, and then walked away. Petruchio's earnest greeting "Good morrow, Kate, for that's your name, I hear," elicited Kate's curt dismissal: "Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing. / They call me Katherina that do talk of me" (II. i. 182-84). But Petruchio's improvised, ironic word game, calling her "Kate" eleven times in ten lines, obviously intrigued her. For the next several minutes they argued face to face before Kate's anger erupted on Petruchio's bawdy "What, with my tongue in your tail? (216)" She promptly wrecked the place, hurling servants' platters, beer mugs, plates, utensils, three-legged stools, anything she could get her hands on. Petruchio picked up the large platter she threw first and used it as a shield against the incoming missiles. When Baptista entered, he was terrified, having heard all the racket, and nearly shook himself apart when Kate screamed, "Call you me daughter? (278)." Yet, when Petruchio proclaimed that "upon Sunday is the wedding day," she screamed her promise to see him hanged while clinging to her father, as if the parent she ostensibly detested, who had arranged this fiery siege, were suddenly her shield against a mad man whose verbal power Kate feared because it challenged the only role she had ever known.

The wedding was hilariously farcical. Petruchio rode in on a beer keg wearing an outlandish yellow clown suit and a huge feathered hat, in deliberate contrast to Kate's formal wedding gown. When she refused to leave the feast, Petruchio grabbed her and, as they rode off stage on the beer keg, Kate's a-textual scream "Father" was simultaneously funny and poignant. This "child," as Albers termed her, genuinely feared leaving her father's house.

The most complex moments in Albers' production occurred in acts four and five. Grumio, and then Petruchio and Katherina, arrived at Petruchio's estate, exhausted, filthy, and hungry. The sheer irrationality of Petruchio's actions on the road, as narrated by Grumio, continued as Petruchio, obviously imitating Kate from II. i, threw the hastily prepared food, along with plates and cups, all over the stage. As the food landed, Kate tried to gather the crumbs, and he became absurdly enraged when she coun-

seled him that the "meat was well." However, in his long, notorious soliloquy, "Thus have I politicly begun my reign" (IV. i. 177-200), again spoken directly to spectators, Petruchio obviously wished there were another way to "tame" Katherina. Albers' direction signaled a less egocentric, less boastful, less malicious Petruchio who valued Kate's wit and energy. In Albers' version, Petruchio wanted a genuinely loving and mutually enjoyable relationship with a spirited woman who, he realized, needed to learn some civility and could learn it only by having incivility thrown in her face. This approach made dramatic sense of Peter's "He kills her in her own humor" (IV. i. 169) while minimizing the brutality that many feminist critics find in Petruchio's character.

But Kate resisted Petruchio's instruction. Kate's "I thank you, sir" (IV. iii. 47), after Petruchio requests thanks for his poor service was screeched in his face, mostly in anger at having to say "Thank you." After the farcical demolition of the tailor's cap and gown, Petruchio returned her original wedding dress, newly washed and pressed, with its accompanying cap. She accepted both grudgingly, surprised at this thoughtful touch, circled him twice, and then stamped off stage, hanging onto the last vestiges of her defiant anger. On the road again, Petruchio emphasized the verbal game he was playing with broad, clownish gestures about the heavens and the age and sex of old Vincentio. Assured of the utter, deliberate madness of her husband's word games, Kate gently took his hand as they left the stage. Their kiss in V. i. 147—"Nay, I will give thee a kiss"—after they have viewed the unraveling of the Vincentio plot, was soft and gentle, fulfilling Petruchio's fantasy (and prediction) from II. i that the "kindest Kate" with kisses "won me to her love."

Albers' "love story" ended curiously. Rather than confronting Kate's final speech within the love story he had created, Albers had Katherina overhear Petruchio's bet, so that her final speech became perhaps less problematic for modern spectators, as it was now clearly a "performance" for Petruchio, perhaps her version of his verbal gymnastics throughout the play. Kate and Petruchio now appeared as a "team," working together to embarrass (and bilk) those, especially the widow, who had earlier prejudged their marriage: "He that is giddy thinks the world turns round" (V. i. 20). Robynn Rodriguez paused deliberately at "*if* he pleased," and Petruchio gently raised her hand. As they started off stage Kate picked up the cap she had earlier thrown down, and then they skipped away arm in arm. Their mutual performances had become, and would be, quite pleasing.

Timothy Bond's *Twelfth Night* wore motley: literally. Duke Orsino, the sultan of melancholy in colorful, flowing robes, presided over an Arabic court complete with a harem of scantily dressed dancers who apparently could not rouse him—in any sense—from his romantic lethargy, even while he was in his Turkish bath. Olivia, continents away, wore a classic, black head-to-toe gown, while Sir Toby pranced in a plaid Scottish kilt and Andrew wore a purple Elizabethan doublet and orange hose and carried golf clubs on stage. Maybe Sir Dim-wit thought Olivia wanted to learn golf, as Hortensio thinks Kate might want to learn the lute. Malvolio, played with marvelous pathos by John Pribyl, suffered in a twenty-button black Victorian coat, while Viola's pants and jacket suggested the American revolution. Feste wore, well, motley, which was perhaps Bond's point: this was another "never-never land" *Twelfth Night*, which Bond placed in some "exotic seacoast sovereignty" (program note) where the operative word is "delirium." Fair enough, but so much motley undermined dramatic credibility.

Armando Duran's languid Orsino seemed incapable of the passion he claimed attends all men's love, and thus heightened a central question of this play: why does Viola love him? In his scenes with Vilma Silva's sprightly Viola, he swooned constantly, and his grand, operatic gestures undercut everything he said about the strength of men's love. Perhaps, as Feste says, this Orsino should have been put to sea, or confined to his bath, thus saving Viola lots of romantic grief. Olivia's obvious appreciation of Feste's wit and her fierce condemnation of Malvolio's self-love, demonstrated a mental energy that seemed wholly incompatible with her absurd, prolonged mourning. After her second scene with Cesario (III. i), Olivia appeared in a more revealing dress, obviously symbolizing the awakening of a sexual self-awareness of which Duran's Orsino was not capable.

Ray Porter as Toby, Dan Donohue as Andrew, and especially John Pribyl as Malvolio dominated this production. From II. i on Porter's Toby was drunk and rude, and his performance showed clearly the real danger in the unbridled Dionysianism that many critics see in him. Everything was to him "mere matter," as Fabian says, including friendship, and his vicious rejection of Andrew's offer of help in act five was painful. Dan Donohue played a pathetically earnest Andrew terribly afraid of his own emotions. Every time he proposed an idea to Toby, or tried, as in the caterwauling scene, to be just "one of the guys" his upper body bent forward even as his lower body bent backward (or the other way round), so that his body constantly resembled the

letter "S" on stage. Donohue mastered this movement which became hysterical even as it indicated his pathetically divided mind, and he modulated his voice to mimic the forward/backward movement of his body: one sentence would sound "masculine" and assertive, and the next would squeak in childish fear of what he was saying. In his "fight" with Cesario he tried to use one of his golf clubs as a sword. While this scene was hysterical, it was also alarming: the more pathetic Andrew, the more vicious Toby. Andrew's "I was adored once, too" suddenly seemed improbable, yet for that very reason pitiable.

In his initial scenes with Olivia and Feste, John Pribyl as Malvolio was in perfect control: all neat and tidy, each phrase and button in its proper place. In II. iii he entered in a purple velvet gown and night cap with ear flaps tied in a string under his chin; all tidy, thank you, even in sleep. As the revelers sang drunkenly and hurled insults at him, he pulled the flaps tighter over his ears, lest indecorous words and discordant rhythms enter his head. But like Olivia, Malvolio seethed inside with repressed passion, and Pribyl danced around stage giddily when he convinced himself that Olivia loved him. One saw in Pribyl's Malvolio the irony of restraint: the longer one represses emotions, the better they feel once they are released.

Malvolio's clothing change was predictably exuberant: a white shirt, gold vest, black tights, and yards of yellow ribbons round his legs. Pribyl twisted his face into impossibly exaggerated smiles and held them for several seconds, much to the spectators' delight. However, his convoluted expressions convinced Olivia that he was indeed mad. For his prison scene, the house lights dimmed, and he appeared in a cage, lit from the bottom, which rose from under the stage. Eerie lighting accentuated the ghoulish, subterranean location of his prison; and, with the theatre lights off, the "house"—i.e., Ashland's Elizabethan stage—was indeed dark. Despite Feste's jumping on and around Malvolio's cage, obviously enjoying humiliating his former tormenter, there was little laughter in the house. Here Bond evoked a sustained image of mental torture, emphasized as Malvolio tried to thrust his chained hands through the bars of his cage, vainly begging for the pen and paper to prove his sanity. No motley here; this scene was brutal.

Act five stressed the tensions in Shakespeare's script. Orsino seemed no more convincing as a lover here than he did earlier, thus heightening the paradox of Viola's loving him. His threat to kill "what I love" was entirely plausible, given his rage at learning of Olivia's marriage. Viola's reunion with Sebastian was

emotionally convincing; they initially stood on opposite sides of the stage, and upon turning toward each other froze for several seconds before walking slowly toward center stage while reciting their common past. Olivia's joy was unbounded when she realized she wasn't married to a maid, but, like most Olivias, she never reflected on not having married the man—Cesario—she had so passionately desired. The sense of a miracle inherent in these revelations was smashed by Toby's unruly entrance and his cruel dismissal of Sir Andrew, who was desperate for someone to care for him. Andrew limped off stage alone, trying vainly to keep pace with the man who had so viciously rejected him.

Malvolio, deranged, bloodied, his clothes shredded and missing a sock, stumbled among the wedding guests, despising them for being happy. His recitation of his torments recalled the precise diction of his earlier speeches, and his promise of revenge was a muffled, repressed anger that silenced everyone else. Feste, who in his motley seemed to belong to all and none of the variously clothed actors on the stage, recited his final song from the upper stage, indicating his aloofness from the chaotic emotions he saw beneath him.

Norman Rabkin's essay "Either/Or: Responding to *Henry V*"[2] elucidates the multiple images of Henry that Libby Appel's direction and Dan Donohue's acting reproduced. Donohue's Henry was insecure in his own court, brutal in war, and utterly charming in his courtship of Katherine. His understated yet exasperated "Can any of your neighbors tell, Kate?" (V. ii. 198) was hysterical, while with the traitors at Harfleur, and especially in battle when he sees the slaughtered boys, Donohue's Henry was maniacally violent.

Appel's staging successfully combined Elizabethan and modern techniques. Robin Goodrin Nordli as the Chorus, in white pants and a long white coat, and followed by a bluish spotlight, darted about speaking from several positions on the mostly bare stage, rather like a reporter covering a war. Her occasional assumption of a minor role, as in helping to bury the English camp boys, suggested the pervasiveness of war's violence. Initially a single spotlight focused on a huge "Henry V" banner on the upper stage, and throughout Robert Peterson's lighting created fascinating stage "pictures," especially during the final battle at Agincourt, where darting lights bouncing off mirrors highlighted groups of slow moving soldiers in a pantomime of medieval warfare. Equally compelling was the hanging of Bardolph. He was dragged across the stage, his hands tied, then put in a cart which was wheeled under a steel scaffolding. The

cart was then suddenly pushed away, and Bardolph's neck, with an audible crack, broke. He hung there, spotlighted and swinging, as the Chorus gazed up at him. When Henry entered at III. vi. 87, at Fluellen's "God bless your majesty," Henry walked under the swinging thief, his former tavern companion; and never looked up.

The tavern group was truly ragged and, in II. i, violent; without Sir John, whose death was tearfully narrated by Dee Maaske's Mistress Quickly, they became dispirited vagabonds. Piston, Nym, and Bardolph carried rusty weapons and ragged linen hardly worth wearing. Their reluctant exit to the wars, during which Bardolph returned several times to kiss Mistress Quickly goodbye, poignantly symbolized the human cost of war, especially among the poor.

Henry's viciousness emerged with the traitors in II. ii. During his long speech beginning at line 79 ("The mercy that was quick in us but late"), he circled the traitors, moving ever closer as the irony and intensity of his words increased. He then suddenly drew a knife which he held to their heads and watched calmly as they were pushed back stage where a hooded executioner stood silhouetted. At Harfleur in III. iii, his claim that a refusal to yield would lead "blind and bloody soldier[s]" to "Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters" (III. iii. 35) was not a threat. Henry meant every word, and Donohue gave us a tyrant who would rape young girls to gain victory and eagerly turn his soldiers into a murdering mob rather than lose even one battle. Donohue's Saint Crispian speech, delivered towards the spectators who thus became his soldiers, was as stirring as his "I was not angry since I came to France / Until this instant" (IV. vi. 54-55) was enraged. His soldiers rejoiced loudly at the freedom to cut the throats of their prisoners, indicating again Henry's maniacal determination to be as vicious as necessary in order to conquer France. Among the boys killed by the French was the one who accompanied Bardolph, Pistol, and Nym from the tavern, his death symbolized by the drawing out of a long, red cape on stage. When the French herald entered at IV. vii. 65, Henry grabbed him and pushed his face into the symbolic blood of yet another innocent victim of war's brutality. One sensed that Henry almost wished he had unleashed his soldiers to rape and maim the French girls at Harfleur. In this context, the English army's "Non Nobis" was hideously ironic, which is certainly the point.

Yet Donohue's Henry was compelling as the tense, frightened young King of IV. i. Moving slowly about in a bluish light,

Donohue employed just enough hesitancy in his speech to indicate the King's insecurity, so that his insistence that "war is [God's] beadle, war is his vengeance" (IV. i. 169) became a trick of language to absolve the King from what he knew was his responsibility. His soliloquy after the soldiers' exit, during which he sees ceremony as the only balm of royal power, was a weary confession of the hollowness of power. Donohue brilliantly suggested a king who, like Macbeth, has through his own actions murdered not only innocence and innocents, but also sleep.

Hamlet was the season's most provocative play. Libby Appel's production featured Marco Barricelli's robust Hamlet, who spent most of the play either in his pajamas, suggesting that Denmark was an asylum and he an inmate tottering on the edge of madness; or wearing a heavy black coat, suggesting he could not tell whether he was inside or outside the castle. Conversely, the court party wore sumptuous early twentieth century clothing, indicating a wealthy regime determined to look quite royal.

Appel reversed scenes one and two, so that we saw first the self-congratulatory and merry court. The initial set was two regal chairs and a huge red banner bearing Claudius' name across the back of the stage. Claudius and Gertrude entered arm in arm, quite lovingly, and in his black garb Hamlet stood out sharply against the effusive red of the court. Laird Williamson's Claudius protested too much about the paradoxes of rule, suggesting immediately that this was a performance designed to convince the Danish court—especially Polonius and Hamlet—that all was well. Barricelli's first soliloquy, spoken with a fierce, angry intensity, indicated immediately the tension between powerful emotions and the need to control them that animates Hamlet throughout the play.

The "other mystery"[3] of this play entered after the first court scene following Hamlet's first soliloquy (I. ii. 159). The ghost was initially shafts of light emanating from above the upper galleries, and when it spoke to Hamlet, its voice bellowed from speakers surrounding the stage, suggesting its omnipresence in Denmark. Appel moved the entrance of Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo from I. ii. 160, where they tell Hamlet of the ghost, to after I. iii, Polonius with Laertes and Ophelia, so that Hamlet's lines "Foul deeds will rise / Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes" (I. ii. 257-58) introduced I. iv, Hamlet's scene with the ghost. This structure placed the scene with the Polonius family immediately after Hamlet's concluding line "But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue" (I. ii. 159), and ironically juxtaposed Hamlet's attempt at silence and repression

with Ophelia's eagerly collecting the pieces of his letter which Laertes shredded. As she urged Laertes towards the chastity he insisted she pursue, she played impishly with the hilt of his sword, laughing eagerly as he finally grasped the sexual play in her words and actions. This small gesture suggested a sexually healthy Ophelia who clung desperately to Hamlet in the nunnery scene and whose own repression turned to bizarre sexual violence in act four. Indeed, when Ophelia entered in II. ii with one of Hamlet's letters, Polonius first ordered her to read it, but she was already so distraught that she fumbled the words, and Gertrude grabbed it from her and read it herself.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, well dressed and jovial, drove Hamlet, disheveled in his white pajamas, absolutely crazy. He stood irreverently on the king's throne on the upper stage, toying with them and smiling at their transparent, obsequious lying. When the players entered, Hamlet invited them to ascend the upper stage. At Hamlet's invitation, Ken Albers spoke the player's speech also standing on the throne, so that his tale of Pyrrhus became a royal pronouncement of the antic Hamlet's craving for revenge. Barricelli then spoke Hamlet's third soliloquy from the throne, thrashing about while clinging firmly to the arms of the king's chair, the symbol of both the power he desired and its corruption. Only on "Why, what an ass am I" (II. ii. 589), which Barricelli made wonderfully funny, did he regain control and appear at all regal. He remained royal in III. i as the King and Queen interviewed Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, confirming his suspicions about them. This knowledge contributed to his violent treatment of Ophelia in the nunnery scene.

As Hamlet spoke the "To be" soliloquy, Ophelia was stage right, listening and obviously frightened. When he turned to her, he initially embraced her, obviously comforting her. But as his suspicions about her grew, he turned vicious, throwing her down and hitting her repeatedly as she cowered in a fetal position. He picked her up, and pulled her violently to him on "It hath made me mad" (III. i. 147-48), accentuating loudly every syllable. He again struck her repeatedly as he shoved her towards the nunnery (i.e., brothel) he imagined somewhere off stage (his mother's closet?) in Claudius's court. After this scene, Ophelia's depraved madness in act four was not surprising.

Appel cut the dumb show, but the mousetrap was riveting. Hamlet, wearing institutional white pajamas, pranced nervously around stage, biting his fingernails and gesturing wildly as he spoke to the players, like Claudius's court dressed in bright red "costumes." As he welcomed the royal party, singing his lines to

them, he lay down on the couch that would be used by the sleeping player king, suggesting again that this Danish "prison" was a mental hospital and Hamlet its prime patient. As Lucianus spoke of poisoning, Hamlet circled behind him and grabbed the actor's knife which he then pointed at the King and Queen as he finished Lucianus's lines. Hamlet spoke his fifth soliloquy wearing an actor's death mask, and he left stage carrying the actor's knife which he would dangle over his praying uncle and use to kill Polonius. With the "actor's" tools of revenge, this Hamlet seemed to be fulfilling the first player's image of Pyrrhus seeking "hot blood."

With his mother, Hamlet was alternately tender and threatening, showing again the divided self evident with Ophelia in III. i. He initially circled behind her, then violently grabbed her as she tried to leave. After killing Polonius with the actor's (i.e., Pyrrhus's) knife, he daubed the wound with his handkerchief and then tied the bloody napkin around his head, suggesting the bloody avenger he wished himself to be. He threw himself into Gertrude's lap to show her the twin portraits, one around her neck and one around his, and his long tirade on her sexuality became madness indeed, so that the reappearance of the ghost really did seem the coinage of his brain. Realizing that he had lost control, Hamlet suddenly became tender as he held Gertrude to him and begged her not to tell Claudius that he was not truly mad. When they parted, Polonius' blood was on Gertrude's nightgown. When he greeted Claudius in IV. iii, Hamlet was still wearing the bloody headband, almost like a badge of honor, and he kissed Claudius goodbye upon departing for England. During Hamlet's "all occasions" soliloquy, Fortinbras stood above him on the upper stage, a kind of alter ego judging Hamlet's persistent failures to "act" honorably.

Ophelia's madness emerged as raw, repressed sexuality. Her face bloody and heavily painted, she first approached Claudius and put his hand on her breast, and then, as she sang, moved his hand to her crotch and held it there. When he pulled himself away, she tackled him and threw him down, and then moved her body over him, putting her hands on his crotch and trying to move his again over her body. The "flowers" that she strewed about the stage after Laertes entered were scraps of paper, presumably from another of Hamlet's letter, which she then picked up and tried to eat, as if "consuming" her former lover. What she didn't ingest Gertrude slowly picked up after Ophelia's exit. Then, quite drunk, as she would be for the rest of the play, Gertrude stumbled towards Claudius and threw the remaining

scraps in his face. In his ensuing dialogue and mock sword-play with Laertes, Claudius now knew that Laertes was now his only remaining ally in court.

Though grossly offended by its smell, Hamlet caressed Yorick's skull, holding it aloft and examining it until it became not only an image of every man's (and woman's) death, but also an image of the death of an entire kingdom—his father's—which Hamlet now realized could never be reclaimed. Thus, Barricelli's violent raving at Laertes and his howling leap into Ophelia's grave were not just antic histrionics but rather a young man's fury at the irretrievable loss of everything he had known and loved as a child. Osric's foppish entrance in V. ii, carrying top hat, gloves, and cane, crystallized this loss.

In the final court scene, Hamlet was initially courteous, apologizing humbly to Laertes and eagerly engaging him in their fencing match. Gertrude's drinking of the poisoned cup, "I will, my lord: I pray you pardon me" (V. ii. 293) was a snarled, drunken defiance of Claudius and his kingdom. Once Hamlet realized the King's treachery, he grabbed Claudius and stabbed him, and then, upon the Queen's "talk of poisoning," threw him down and jammed the poisoned chalice into Claudius' mouth. The violence of Barricelli's last action emphasized how much human energy murder and madness had corrupted in this doomed kingdom.

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Notes

[1]All textual references are to *The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare*, ed. Sylvan Barnet (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1963).

[2]Norman Rabkin, *Shakespeare and the Problem of Meaning* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981).

[3]Robert H. West, *Shakespeare and the Outer Mystery* (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1968).

Katherina (Robynn Rodriguez) size up Petruchio (Jonathan Adams) in the Oregon Shakespeare Festival production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, 2000

Hamlet (Marco Barricelli) learns that he and his mother, Gertrude (Demetra Pittman), have been poisoned as Attendants (Jeff Pierce, left, and David A. Lewis, right) look on in the Oregon Shakespeare Fesitival production of *Hamlet*, 2000

The 2000 Alabama Shakespeare Festival's *King Lear*

by Craig Barrow

The day after *King Lear* opened at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Kent Thompson, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival's Artistic Director and the director of *King Lear*, gave a lecture in the Theatre of the Mind series on his experience directing the play in 1992 and for this season. Since I was going to see the play later that day and had seen and reviewed Thompson's 1992 *King Lear* as well as all previous productions of *King Lear* that the ASF had done, I was curious about what he thought of the play and his shaping intent in determining his production's qualities. The lecture was given in the Octagon, a theatre that seats approximately 200 in a U-shaped configuration about a thrust where *King Lear* would be performed later that evening. This would prove handy, since Thompson could point out features on the stage throughout his hour-long talk.

The background of the stage was filled with a cloudy sky made larger than the room's physical limits by mirrors flanking the rear of the performing area. The air and clouds, said Thompson, were part of an emphasis in the production of the four classical elements of earth, air, wind, and fire. In coming to grips with the meaning of the play, Thompson narrated a personal experience about his father who had suffered a breakdown about the time that Thompson was directing the 1992 *Lear*. Nearly every weekend Thompson would visit him in Louisville. He had retired at that time because his wife was beginning to suffer from Alzheimer's disease. A Baptist minister with a Ph.D. from Edinburgh, Thompson's father's smallest church boasted five thousand parishoners, and in the last years of his career he had taught in a Baptist seminary in Louisville. His loss of position in the world and his own growing physical decline coupled with his wife's increasing illness precipitated a breakdown. This experience, which "marked the beginning of his decline toward death,"[1] gave his son an insight into what Lear experiences when he renounces his kingdom. The experience, filled with "painful, contentious struggle,"[2] also gave Thompson an approximation of what being the child of a Lear or a Gloucester would be like. Interestingly, although we sometimes think of Cordelia and Edgar as innately good, and Goneril, Regan, and Edmund as innately evil, Thompson asked his audience to imagine what it

would be like to have a father as rash as Lear in his terrible curses of Goneril in I. iv and his judgment of Cordelia in I. i. or ascrude as the Gloucester who cavalierly says to Kent that he "had good sport at his [Edmund's] making" (I. i. 23)[3] when his son is standing in front of him. As Thompson imagines these characters, he speculates that Goneril, Regan, and Edmund may have become corrupted by the fathers' actions in the past. Thompson sees all the characters in the play as either ascending or descending fortune's great wheel; in keeping with this idea the costuming, designed by Christine Turbitt, is either simplified, stripped, or made more ornate as the play's action unfolds. The designs for the costumes are a combination of medieval and oriental, perhaps Japanese, and the scenic design of Karen TenEyck suggests an eastern minimalism, as do other elements of the staging, so that Lear's "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks!" (III. ii. 1) speech during the storm is more mental than physical; no actor is shouting at the top of his lungs over the thunder of rippling sheet metal. In keeping with this economy, Don Tindall, the sound designer, and Maurice Arnaud-Benoir, the composer, render the sounds of the storm distortions of the voices of Goneril and Regan, while Cordelia is suggested by a simple, brief melodic movement at appropriate moments throughout the play. The bare stage itself, with so many characters journeying across it, seems a metaphor of the world itself.

More than an hour of the text was cut from the 2000 *King Lear*, with most of the omissions coming in the second half of the play, so that the production, with its two intermissions, took approximately three hours. Thompson sees the matter of the play as "Shakespeare's remarkable psychological and artistic insight into aging"[4] accompanied by "the often destructive struggle over legacy within families, and the terrifying consequences of denial."[5] While Thompson appreciates the bleakness of the play, he thought that productions such as Peter Brook's in 1962, influenced by phenomena such as the Holocaust, Hiroshima, assassinations, and mass suicides, have overemphasized the theme of despair in the play. While the death of Cordelia is especially hard to bear, Thompson believes that "the painful journeys of Lear, Edgar, Cordelia, and Gloucester contain a redeeming element."[6] In the play of different kinds of qualities of love, friendship, and service, Thompson focuses on Edgar's struggles more than those of any other character, seeing him as the hero in the play, perhaps echoing Thompson's own response to his painful difficulties in dealing with his own father.

Sadly, of all the productions of *King Lear* done by the Ala-

bama Shakespeare Festival, the 2000 production was the weakest. The problem for the play is Barry Boys who plays Lear. Although Lear is supposed to be in his eighties, Boys looks like a man in his sixties, and unlike Charles Antalosky in the ASF *Lear* of 1976 and 1983 and Philip Pleasants in the ASF Lear of 1992, Boys seems unable to communicate Lear's painful journey through madness to wisdom. Too often Boys' Lear seems merely crazy or infirm; the poetry of Lear's mad insights into his being and his world and its justice are too often omitted. With their loss, the loyalty of Kent and the love of Cordelia seem almost misapplied.

While the casting of Boys was unfortunate, particularly with Pleasants, successful as Lear in 1992, playing the Fool in the 2000 production, all the other major roles in the production were performed with distinction. Greta Lambert, the most forceful and accomplished actress in the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, was a strong and passionate Goneril in red, while Monica Bell, talented herself, was convincing in turquoise as the imaginatively cruel Regan. Her kiss of Oswald in IV. v in order to obtain Goneril's letter to Edmund—either her choice or the director's—seemed her only false move. It stunned the audience. Jennifer Tucker as Cordelia is attractive but emotionally cool. She is convincing in the play's first scene and in her reunion with Lear at play's end. John Preston as Edmund is capable, but too often he plays the role for comic effects and seems to miss Edmund's viciousness. Rodney Clark is effective as Kent, but he seems older than Lear in appearance, which is bothersome. Ray Chambers is a black presence as Cornwall, but someone with his talent should have played a more significant role. The same can be said for the talented Greg Thornton as Albany who handles the domination of Goneril well but still has convincing strength at play's end when both Goneril's and Edmund's evil is unmasked.

Paul Herron performs the role of Gloucester with imaginative control; upstaging Lear himself at times. Gloucester's movement from callousness, anger, and fatalism, to a modulated acceptance is nicely done. Philip Pleasants, looking old and frail as the Fool, gave his usual excellent performance, although a more responsive Lear would have better complemented the strengths of Pleasants' acting. Still, the lines and the wit were clear.

Brian Kurlander as Edgar wound up being the focus of the production, partly because of the weakness of Barry Boys, but also because of Kurlander's strength as Edgar. Gloucester's attempt at suicide could easily look laughable on stage if done inappropriately, but both actors are up to the task. With the future in Edgar's hands at play's end, the mild optimism that

Kent Thompson seemed to be looking for is carried off by Kurlander who is drained but accepting of his new role in the world.

On the whole, I liked Kent Thompson's lecture better than I did the performance of *King Lear*. I agree with him that every time we experience *King Lear*, "we discover something new."[7] I suspect that the something new for Thompson was the experience of the children of Lear and Gloucester. With a weak Lear, the play seems, as Lisa Hopkins asserts, a history as much as a tragedy.[8] What is clear is that the talented Mr. Thompson needs to make better casting choices for major roles such as Lear.

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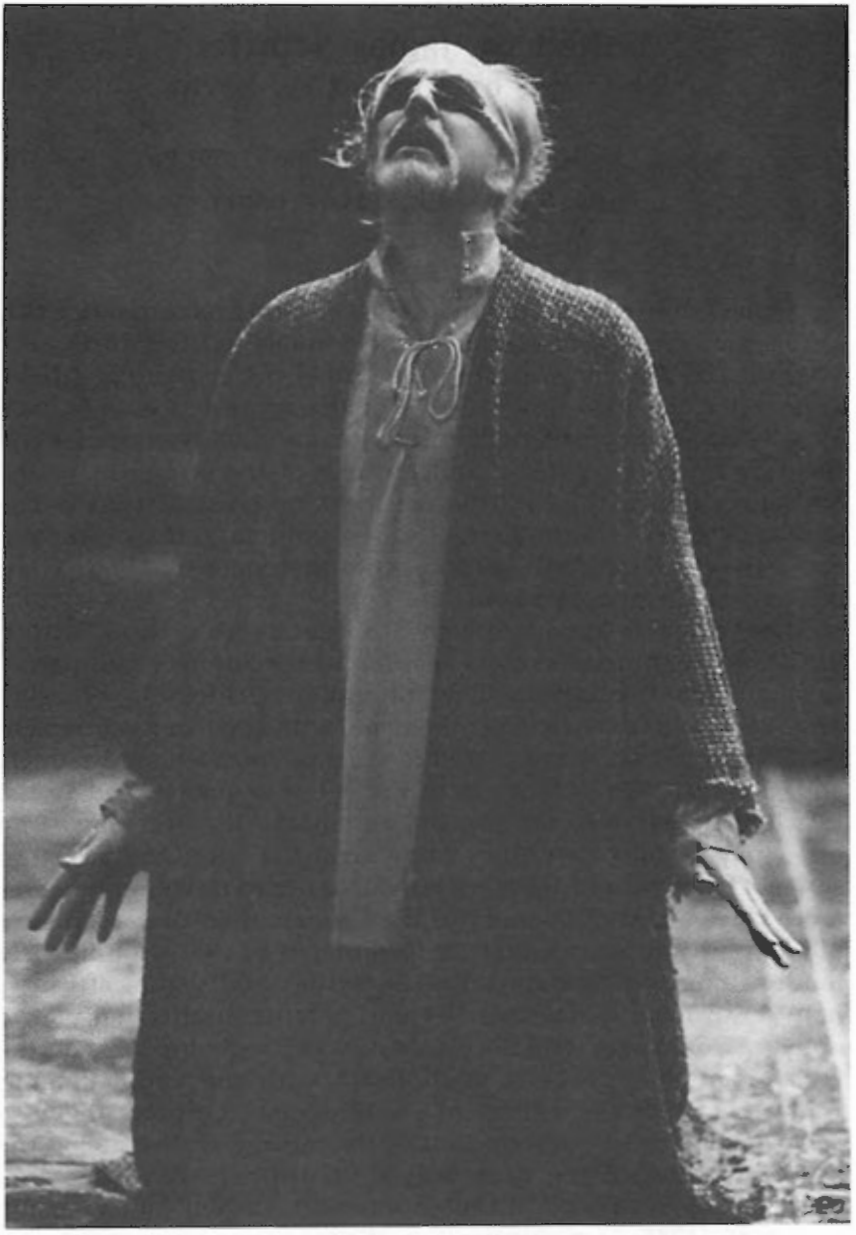
Notes

[1]*Cast List: Alabama Shakespeare Festival* (Montgomery, 2000), p. 6.
[2]*Cast List*, p. 6.
[3]Quotations accord with *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).
[4]*Cast List*, p. 6.
[5]*Cast List*, p. 6.
[6]*Cast List*, p. 6.
[7]*Cast List*, p. 6.
[8] List Hopkins, "Lear, Lear, Lear!: Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the Third," *The Upstart Crow: A Shakespeare Journal*, 16 (1996), p. 113.

Barry Boys and Philip Pleasants as Lear and the Fool in the Alabama Shakespeare Festival Production of King Lear, 2000



Paul Hebron as Gloucester in the Alabama Shakespeare Festival Production of King Lear, 2000

Shakespeare's Sonnets: Critical Essays
Edited by James Schiffer
Reviewed by Richard A. Levin

New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999. Pp. xvi + 474. Illus. $110 cloth, $24.99 paper.

James Schiffer's anthology in the Garland Shakespeare Criticism series consists of essays on the Sonnets written during the 1990's. The first four are reprints while the remaining fifteen appear for the first time. Three of the reprinted essays have already exerted considerable influence, and the new articles use them as reference points. Indeed, one of the strengths of the anthology is that the contributors focus on issues raised in one another's work. More generally, the volume gains power because the essays address controversies that were that were well-defined as the decade began.

Just when it appeared that Stephen Booth's New Critical brilliance might extend close reading of the Sonnets into perpetuity, the winds of change blew through the profession, bringing race, class, and gender to center stage, with clear implications to the field of sonnet study. Attention turned from isolated sonnets and small groups of sonnets to the entire sequence and to the relationship between the two subsequences—the first consisting of sonnets to and about the young man, the latter comprised of sonnets to and about the dark lady. No broad development was more consequential to study of the Sonnets than the acceptance of Alan Bray's thesis, which he formulated in 1982, that in early modern England modern sexual identities and sexual attitudes had yet to form, homosexuality and heterosexuality had yet to appear. Congruent with Bray's thesis was Eve Sedgwick's notion (1985) that the speaker's relationship with the young man is consistent with the values of "homosocial" culture; likewise consistent were her descriptions of the misogyny directed at the dark lady and of the dark lady's subordinate role as a link between the speaker and the young man. When Joel Fineman proposed (1986) that idealization of the young man was superceded by passion for the dark lady, the scene was set for lively debate.

The first two essays are complementary and together develop a compelling homosocial reading of the Sonnets. In "Editing as

Cultural Formation: The Sexing of Shakespeare's Sonnets," Peter Stallybrass (acknowledging Margreta de Grazia's influence, as she acknowledges his) argues that the Sonnets have long been read through a lens developed in the late-eighteenth century, when the Sonnets were enrolled in the effort to establish heterosexuality as normative in the culture. Until this time, the Sonnets were commonly read in a form based on John Benson's 1640 edition. Though Benson changed a few masculine pronouns to feminine, we have been wrong to think his alterations were an attempt to obscure male-male intimacy. But when Edmond Malone edited the Sonnets in the late-eighteenth century, he drew a clear line between sonnets 1-126 about the speaker's non-sexual friendship, and the rest of the sonnets about the speaker's sexual desire for a woman. Stallybrass detects "moral panic" (77) in Malone's interpretation, a suppressed recognition of homosexuality. In the nineteenth century and beyond, the Sonnets continued to provoke readers to affirm a heterosexual norm, or, in the instance of Oscar Wilde, to bring the suppressed reading to light, as part of a defense of homosexuality. According to Stallybrass, we have been reading the Sonnets as a modern text; he implies they would be better understood if approached from an early modern perspective.

Margreta de Grazia, in the "Scandal of Shakespeare's Sonnets," builds on her earlier *Shakespeare Verbatim*. After reviewing the editorial tradition, she attempts to recover Shakespeare's historical context in order to show that the scandal of the Sonnets was not the speaker's possible homosexuality but his involvement with the dark lady. (Both de Grazia and Valerie Traub mention Jonathan Goldberg's prior formulation of this point.) De Grazia aligns herself with those who believe that current concepts of homosexuality and heterosexuality had not yet appeared in early modern England. She argues that sexual boundaries were set in a way designed to support social values and that the young man sonnets are "conservative" (whether or not the relationship is sexual) in that they uphold social distinctions, by, for example, praising the young man and urging him to marry and perpetuate his lineage. It is the dark lady, with her lust and seductions, who confounds social distinctions. She may even suggest racial blackness and miscegenation, de Grazia writes. Her presentation of the homosocial interpretation of the Sonnets is elegantly formulated. Yet the very care with which she sets the young man sonnets in a social context prompt us to consider dimensions of the relationship which she largely ignores. That the speaker and young man are of widely disparate

social rank makes the intimate association difficult to maintain. The speaker resents his friend's privileges, and resents even more his friend's abuse of those privileges. Moreover, the speaker refers to scandal attaching to both of them, scandal not obviously connected with the dark lady.

The next essay is Heather Dubrow's "'Incertainties now crown themselves assur'd': The Politics of Plotting in Shakespeare's Sonnets," a challenge to the view, widely accepted in recent years, that the Quarto ordering of the Sonnets is substantially correct. Dubrow, applying Occam's razor, finds reason to doubt the sequencing of apparently sequential sonnets; she suggests that sonnet 126 might not conclude the fair young man sonnets, and sonnet 127 might not begin the dark lady sonnets. She even sees reasons for rejecting the division of the sonnets into two subsequences. Dubrow speculates about remote possibilities instead of seeking out and interpreting the cues which link sonnets with one another and which tend to confirm the Quarto ordering. Nevertheless, her strategy productively leads her to appreciation of the intricacy of the Sonnets and to a valuable warning against reductive readings: "In Tudor and Stuart England the ideologies of gender are consistent in almost nothing save their inconsistency; the careful reader of texts in which such ideologies are expressed finds not a monolithic and hegemonic position but rather a series of contradictions . . ." (125). Dubrow says of the purported misogyny of the Sonnets that it is "often part of a never-ending cycle in which respect, admiration, and attraction generate reactive distancing and vice versa" (125). Dubrow's radical nominalism, the expression of a deep and careful sensibility, can lead, if used wisely, to clarification of the often obscure coherence of the Sonnets.

The fourth and last of the reprinted essays, George T. Wright's "Silent Speech of Shakespeare's Sonnets," develops his belief (adumbrated in *Shakespeare's Metrical Art*) that the Sonnets create a "ruminative, private voice" that conveys a sense of the speaker's "inner self" (147). Wright adds that the speaker's words seem to issue from a "personal consciousness continuously wording its thoughts" (148). He relates his point to recent debate over the nature of early modern subjectivity; he clearly sides with those who trace modernity back as far as to the sixteenth century. This ambitious and learned essay offers a sweeping theory of two alternative paths taken by the lyric since the time of Sidney, one seeming to follow the flow of consciousness, the other declamatory. Though rarely cited by the other contributors, Wright can help us to understand how the speaker's

voice gives unity to the Sonnets.

I will remark in some detail on four of the new essays and more briefly on several of the others. Valerie Traub, in "Sex without Issue: Sodomy, Reproduction, and Signification in Shakespeare's Sonnets," qualifies the homosocial reading of the Sonnets by modifying its underlying assumption of near-complete discontinuity between early modern and modern sexuality. She suggests that whereas in the sixteenth century the term "sodomy" was employed to identify and disparage any non-reproductive sexual act, during the seventeenth century it came to be used in legal and social discourses in a narrower and more derogatory sense. "Sodomy" stigmatized sexual relations between men. While Traub does not go so far as to suggest gay culture and anti-gay sentiment in Shakespeare's England (that these existed, even if not in their modern form, is a possibility worth exploring, I believe), she does seem to say that Shakespeare fends off social pressure against his male-male relationship. He portrays this relationship as fully consistent with essential patriarchal values, and he disparages the dark lady by deploying standard misogynist tropes. Whereas the prevalent homosocial reading of the Sonnets takes them to be expressions of dominant cultural values, Traub allows us to see in them rhetorical manipulation, or so I would suggest. If rhetoric of one kind is deployed in order to defend the speaker's relationship with the young man, then perhaps another rhetoric justifies the speaker's choice of the dark lady. Whether this is so or not, Traub valuably theorizes about the relationship between early modern misogyny and male-male desire.

Like Traub, Bruce R. Smith, in "I, You, He, She, and We: On the Sexual Politics of Shakespeare's Sonnets," qualifies the homosocial reading of the Sonnets. He begins by considering one of their recognized stylistic oddities. They use personal pronouns more frequently than do other sonnet cycles. These pronouns make it seem as if the personages in the triangular drama are as familiar to us as are our contemporaries. Smith wants us to remember to historicize, and he provides guidance. As in his *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England*, he is here admirably alert to the artistic traditions through which sexuality has been represented. Literary convention suggests that a male's male beloved should be a "passive object" and never "an active subject" (421). But in Shakespeare's Sonnets, we discover—and the speaker, to his chagrin, discovers also—that the beloved "can have sex with the mistress as readily as the speaker can" (421). Smith's remarks on sonnet 126 show how he sheds new

light on the speaker. Many have seen a trace of anger in this, the sonnet closing the young man sequence; Smith sees more. "Boy" and "minion" are "erotically charged words of contempt" (422), "thou" an instance of the second person singular functioning as a "term of disdain."

Smith also opens up new possibilities for sonnet 144. He suggests that the "he," "she," and "I" of the sonnet all exist in relation to one another: "they have no independent existence" (424). Smith draws the conclusion that the "he" and "she" of the sonnet help us to historicize the "I" and to see him as possessing an early modern sexual identity that does not recognize the "rigid . . . distinction" between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Yet it might be better to infer only that the speaker is refracted in both relationships. If this is the case, then the Sonnets may not endorse the speaker's tendency to praise the friend and demonize the dark lady. To suggest this is to question the central tenets of the homosocial reading of the Sonnets. Smith should not be interpreted as doing so, but, like other contributors, he makes the male relationship a troubled one in its own right.

The essays by Joseph Pequigney and Ilona Bell help us to limn out an individualized speaker (even if we have more reservations than they have about identifying this speaker with Shakespeare). Pequigney begins "Sonnets 71-74: Texts and Contexts" by showing how each sonnet in this group develops from the one that precedes it. He then draws attention to the artistic superiority of sonnet 73 ("That time of yeeare") over its two predecessors. He follows this unsurprising observation with a surprising one: in the next sonnet, 74, the speaker implies his recognition of the greatness of sonnet 73, for now he mentions his art with renewed confidence (295). Having shown the speaker to be self-referential, Pequigney pursues evidence of an association between the speaker and Shakespeare. Some of his arguments are familiar, such as ones based on the puns on "Will" and the inclusion, unprecedented in any sonnet sequence, of the author's name in the title, SHAKES-SPEARES SONNETS. I keep the capital letters on the title page because Pequigney includes in facsimile the Quarto pages showing his group of sonnets, and asks us to notice the headers: on the left page, SHAKE-SPEARES, on the right page, SONNETS. Pequigney also draws attention to "my poore name" on the left (71.11), and to "my name be buried" on the right (72.11). The "boughes which shake," also on the right, are in a kind of chiastic relationship with SHAKE-SPEARES (boughs and spears are both made "of elongated wood" [300]).

Pequigney is inclined to interpret his evidence as Shakespeare's hints that we should identify the speaker with him. Others might conclude that Shakespeare is no more than coyly allusive. Pequigney remarks that in these sonnets the speaker discreetly hints at an intimate, romantic relationship between himself and the male friend by making repeated reference to the "love" that they share. Even more strongly than Traub, Peguigney implies, as he also does in *Such is My Love*, that the sonnets anticipate modern attitudes.

Only a few of the other essays also engage the question of riddling disclosures. One is Ilona Bell's "'That Which Thou Hast Done': Shakespeare's Sonnets and *A Lover's Complaint*." Bell's approach to the Sonnets derives from a theory, which she develops briefly here and more extensively in *Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship*, about sixteenth-century sonnet writing. She believes that the sonnet vogue had much to do with the role of sonnets in real-life courtship. Sonnet sequences themselves were often based on autobiography and written for small audiences before they found their way into print. Bell interprets Shakespeare's Sonnets as intended for both an intimate circle and a wider public. For the latter audience, Shakespeare praises the young man and represses criticism. To his select audience, Shakespeare obliquely offers more stringent judgments of the friend. Yet Shakespeare offers his wider audience an important hint. Bell follows John Kerrigan and others in seeing *A Lover's Complaint* as part of an integrated volume that includes the Sonnets. The harsh portrait that the female complainant draws of her seducer retrospectively describes the young man of the Sonnets. Bell suggests that *A Lover's Complaint* might also shed new light on the dark lady sonnets but she does not develop that argument. In any event, she distances herself from the homosocial account of the Sonnets by suggesting that praise of the young man is more than matched by subtextual dispraise.

The limitations of space account for my mention now of only some of the other essays in the volume. Joyce Sutphen delicately traces both consistency and change in ideas about the power and purpose of memory in the first sequence of sonnets; she then sees collapse of confidence in the efficacy of memory, signaled in the first dark lady sonnet and continuing to the end. Challenges to the notion that the young man sequence is free from the disillusionment of the latter sequence are put by Peter C. Herman in "What's the Use: Or, The Problematic of Economy in Shakespeare's Procreation Sonnets?" and Olga L. Valbuena, in "'The dyer's hand': The Reproduction of Coercion and Blot in

Shakespeare's Sonnets." Herman points out that in early modern England usury was associated with the least attractive aspects of the marketplace; he draws the inference that in the early sonnets, the use of images of usury to urge procreation taints the speaker's endeavor. Valbuena shows that the speaker doubts the accuracy of the praise that he offers; she supports her thesis with innovative identification of imagery associated with the material implements of writing and print. Her essay includes bold speculation on the interdependence of the young man and dark lady sequences.

Lisa Freinkel, in "The Name of the Rose: Christian Figurality and Shakespeare's Sonnets," asserts that the rhetoric of praise that Fineman identifies in the young man sonnets is eclipsed by their acute awareness of the passage of time and of human failings. In "Playing 'the mother's part': Shakespeare's Sonnets and Early Modern Codes of Maternity," Naomi J. Miller, draws on discussions of maternity in the early modern period and astutely shows how maternal imagery permeates the portrayal of each of the three main characters. Several essays limit their focus to one or to very few sonnets. In "The Matter of Inwardness: Shakespeare's Sonnets," Michael Schoenfeld defends the speaker's praise of self-containment in sonnet 94; the praise is acutely noted but it is perhaps more equivocal than the critic acknowledges. Lars Engle, in "'I am that I am': Shakespeare's Sonnets and the Economy of Shame," develops the important argument that the speaker in sonnet 121 respects the values of the community as he has fashioned them within himself but he is unwilling to be swayed by direct social pressure.

Schiffer's introduction provides background information comparable to that offered in scholarly editions of the Sonnets, while giving particular attention to issues pertinent to the anthologized essays. The volume is physically attractive and apparently durable (I have the cloth edition). I came across only one misprint. The lack of an index is partially compensated for with excellent notes at the end of each chapter, including the introduction. The volume is a comprehensive guide to current scholarship on the sonnets, and is of value to the specialist and the common reader alike.

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About anyone so great as Shakespeare since 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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