

Proceedings  
of the  
First Dakotas Conference  
on  
Earlier British Literature

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Edited by  
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*Proceedings of the First Dakotas Conference  
on Earlier British Literature*

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## Preface

The ten essays included in this volume were presented at the First Dakotas Conference on Earlier British Literature, held in Aberdeen, South Dakota on October 16-17, 1992. The conference was the first attempt to establish a network of scholars with similar interests in the northern plains area, and those attending were enthusiastic about continuing the process, endorsing a plan to hold a second conference in the spring of 1994.

The papers here included are arranged chronologically, and represent the variety of papers presented at the conference. They concern a range of British literature from *Beowulf* to the eighteenth century, with comparative studies branching into American and modern Scandinavian literature. Also representative of the conference is the fact that authors of the papers range from graduate students to full professors, and come from eight different institutions in four states.

The conference was funded by a grant from the South Dakota Humanities Council and by Northern State University. Funding made it possible to bring in Shirley Garner of the University of Minnesota to deliver a keynote address on Shakespeare, and Susanna Fein of Kent State University and David Raybin of Eastern Illinois University to perform with me a dramatic reading of Chaucer's "Miller's Tale" in Middle English. Both activities were well received by conference participants.

These funds also made possible the printing of this volume.

JAY RUUD

*Aberdeen, S.D.*

*Murnan or Wrecan:*  
The Idea of Vengeance in *Beowulf*

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University of South Dakota

Day two in Denmark. Grendel is dead. Beowulf, the savior from abroad, is everyone's hero, being compared to Sigemund, the great dragon slayer of Germanic myth (ll. 875-897), and contrasted to Heremod, whose long periods of self-pity had caused *snotor ceorl monig*<sup>1</sup> "many wise men" (l.908) to mourn (*bemearn*—l. 907). Beowulf alone has been able to destroy the monster that has made life for the Danes unbearable for the last twelve years, and that night there is a celebration in Heorot to honor the hero for what he has done. Everyone is happy, though the poet ominously forecasts a future feud between Hrothgar and his nephew Hrothulf (l. 1019). Hrothgar orders wergild to be paid to the Geats for the death of the one man among them who did not survive Grendel's sudden onslaught, signalling his—Hrothgar's—taking on himself the responsibility for ending the feud.

Then, to continue the festivities, Hrothgar's scop sings a long tale about the unexplained attack of Finn's Frisians on the visiting Half-Danes led by Hnæf, brother of Finn's wife Hildeburh. Many are killed on both sides, including Hnæf. His sister has cause to mourn (*bemearn*—l. 1077) the loss of her kin and her honor. A truce is drawn with the new leader, Hengest, and the Half-Danes become reluctant

thanes to Finn. Over the winter, Hengest's thoughts turn to *gyrn-wræce* "vengeance," and

Swā hē ne forwyrnde worold-rædenne,  
þonne him Hūnlāfing hilde-lēoman,  
billa sēlest, on bearm dyde; (ll. 1142-44)

So he did not disdain the "obligation that the world imposes" (Chickering 328) when Hunlaf's son laid the sword in his lap, good battle-flame, finest of blades.

The result: the king was slain and all his men, and the queen was taken back to Denmark. At this point in the poem Wealhtheow, wife of Hrothgar and present queen of the Scyldings, tempers the praise bestowed on Beowulf by reminding her husband that he has an obligation to his own sons and that he should not be carried away by this visitor and promise him more than he should, such as taking him on as his son (ll. 1175-76a). Her diplomacy is palpable and peace is not threatened. She lives up to her woman's role as a keeper of the peace.

But all women are not keepers of the peace. As soon as Wealhtheow finishes her speech, the poet begins to foreshadow that night's chaos, although the men go to sleep satisfied that the threat of Grendel was over. But

Paet gesýne wearþ,  
wīd-cūþ werum, þætte wrecend þā gýt  
lifde æfter lāpum, lange þrāge,  
æfter gūð-ceare. Grendles mōdor,  
ides, āglæc-wīf yrmðe gemunde  
sē þe wæter-egesan wunian scolde, . . . (ll. 1255b-60)

Men came to know—it was soon plain enough—his avenger still lived after that battle, for a long time, in hate,

war-sorrow, Grendel's mother, a monster woman, kept war-grief deep in her mind, dwelt in terrible waters.

The awful she-creature breaks in on the sleeping men, grabs one of Hrothgar's most beloved warriors, and races back to her lair. Hrothgar grieves and sends for Beowulf, who had spent that night in another building. He hears the news and Hrothgar's challenge to seek out Grendel's mother in a place so horrible that a stag will even give up his life on the bank rather than seek refuge in the waters of the pond. Beowulf's response is

"Ne sorga, snotor guma! Sēlre bið æghwæm  
þæt hē his frēond wrece, þonne hē fela murne.  
Ūre æghwylc sceal ende gebīdan  
woroldes lifes; wyrce sē þe mōte  
dōmes ær dēāþe; þæt bið driht-guman  
unlifigendum æfter sēlest. . . ." (ll. 1384-89)

"Grieve not, wise king! Better it is for every man to avenge his friend than mourn overmuch. Each of us must come to the end of his life: let him who may win fame before death. That is the best memorial for a man after he is gone. . . ."

*Murnan* or *Wrecan*—Mourn or Avenge—this is my theme, and I think it is one of the main ideas being developed in this fine epic from the Old English period. Yet, it is an idea which has not been widely discussed in the criticism of the poem. In some ways the topic is self-evident. Most of the action of the poem, as I will demonstrate shortly, is precipitated by the desire for revenge, and most of the critics who have discussed the poem at length have dealt with the topic. Edward B. Irving's book, *A Reading of Beowulf*, devotes a number of pages to the many feuds that take place in the poem, moving from the story of Finn and Hengest, which I have described above, through Beowulf's projection of what will happen to the old feud between the Danes and the

Heathobards after Hrothgar attempts to settle it by giving his daughter in marriage to Ingeld, and finally to the long-standing feud between the Geats, Beowulf's people, and the Swedes, projected by the messenger to resume after the death of Beowulf and to bring about the final destruction of the Geatish nation (Irving 169-91). For Irving, these feuds are "negative images" which stand in contrast to the hero of the poem, who, from what the poet shows us, is never involved in this sort of thing. "Beowulf's energies are directed outward and away from the world of human violence and warfare, . . . with the purpose of preserving human community by fending off threats from the outside" (190).

Another book-length study of the poem is John D. Niles' 1983 *Beowulf: The Poem and Its Tradition*. In a chapter entitled "Reciprocity," Niles places the tradition of revenge in the context of *wergild*, the price "paid in just compensation for a slaying," and in the even broader context of the exchange of gifts and material things for both positive and negative actions, but he says very little about vengeance as a main idea. The most complete discussion of the topic that I have found is an article by Martin Camargo, which appeared in *Studies in Philology* in 1981. Camargo, who reaches many of the same conclusions that I do, even implies that revenge is "the central theme of *Beowulf*" (121). He argues that the Finn episode, often seen as an interesting but irrelevant digression to the main focus of *Beowulf*, is in fact central to the development of the poem. Its importance is in the way that it first sounds "the dark chord of tragic revenge" which builds to an "ominous crescendo" in the second part of the poem (123). More recent articles by Stephen C.B. Atkinson and John M. Hill also touch on the topic. For Atkinson, the actions of Grendel and his mother are dark shadows of the behavior expected of a thane, including the obligation to avenge one's lord, but the monsters have none of the positive qualities associated with thaneship. Hill's article is a psychological analysis that reaches conclusions similar to Irving's, that Beowulf is the only figure in the poem to go beyond simple revenge to attain what Hill calls "superego mastery."

These discussions touch on but do not, I think, finally resolve the questions raised by revenge in *Beowulf*. Irving's is an attractive argument, but it may be too sympathetic to the hero of the poem, who after all, in a poem clearly by a Christian poet, is as much a champion of vengeance as any of the less attractive characters, who it may be noted are often immobilized by excessive mourning. Although I cannot be sure about the attitude and ethical position of the poet, I believe it can be shown that he (or she) finally, by showing the utter futility of the old system of revenge, rejects not only the system but the values of Beowulf himself.

Time does not permit an exhaustive analysis of all of the passages in *Beowulf* that relate to this theme. What follows is a reading of the poem based on a few selections.

The idea of retribution, an approximate synonym for revenge, appears very early. When Scyld Scefing floats mysteriously into the leaderless Danish kingdom, he is a helpless child, but *hē þæs frōfre gebād* (l. 7) "he experienced consolation for that" by becoming a powerful king. His power is revealed in his ability to take away mead benches, exact tribute, and terrify enemy warriors (ll. 5, 6, 11), and his greatness is summed up in a formula which seems to me more negative, as seen from a Christian perspective, than positive: *Þæt wæs gōd cyning!* (l. 11) "That was a good king!" Much later in the poem, the very same formula is used of Beowulf when he becomes king (l. 2390).

Scyld Scefing's great grandson is King Hrothgar, who built the great hall Heorot, whose greatness is qualified by the ominous announcement that Hrothgar's own son-in-law will rise against him in *ecg-hete* "sword hate" and burn the hall (ll. 82, 84). This episode, which does not occur in the time frame of the poem, is projected in more detail when Beowulf returns to his own kingdom and speculates what will happen as a result of Hrothgar's daughter's marriage to Ingeld of the Heathobards as a pledge of peace. Beowulf, in a rare moment of political and psychological insight, suggests,

Oft seldan hwær  
 æfter lēod-hryre lýtle hwīle  
 bon-gār būgeð, þēah sēo brýd duge! (ll. 2029b-2031)

But seldom anywhere, after a slaying, will the death-spear  
 rest, even for a while, though the bride be good!

He then imagines a scenario in which at the wedding an old man of the Heathobards, past the age of fighting, will point out to a young warrior a sword hanging from the belt of a Dane and ask if he remembers that it was the sword of his father, slain by Danes. One thing will lead to another, and slaughter will resume and Ingeld's *wif-lufan* . . . *cōlran weorðað* (ll. 2065-66) "wife-love will grow cool." There is no way, Beowulf implies, to stop the cycle of revenge.

Returning to the early part of the poem, just after the foreshadowing of the events just described comes the first mention of Grendel. His *rēoc ond rēpe* (l. 122) "savage and reckless" attacks on the men of Heorot are without motivation, it seems. He is not moved by vengeance, but the poet credits his evil nature to his lineage; he is a descendant of Cain, whose motive for killing his brother Abel stems more from jealousy than vengeance. Yet the poet reminds us that for Cain's deed God took vengeance: *Scyppend* . . . *þone cwealm gewræc* (ll. 106-07). This, while acknowledging the world's law of retribution, perhaps interjects the Christian doctrine that vengeance belongs only to God, but such vengeance does not root out evil. Germanic society had evolved a wergild system as a means of bridling revenge, but the limitations of that system can be seen in the dealings with Grendel, who for many years has waged a one-creature war against Hrothgar's kingdom. *Sibbe ne wolde* "He wanted no peace," the poet says,

wið manna hwone mægenes Deniga,  
 feorh-bealo feorran, fēa þingian;  
 nē þær nænig witena wēnan þorfte

beorhtre bōte tō banan folmum. (ll. 154b-58)

with any of the men in the Danish host, to put off his killing,  
 settle it by payment; none of the counselors had any great  
 need to look for bright gifts from the hands of the slayer.

From the Christian point of view any solutions that the Danes try are doomed to failure. Least effective are their sacrifices to the pagan gods, which the Christian poet has transmuted into devils (ll. 175-88). Only a great force can deal with Grendel, and it is at this point that Beowulf enters the story.

When Beowulf arrives in Denmark, Hrothgar remembers that Ecgtheow, Beowulf's father, had found refuge with the Danes after his involvement with a feud, which Hrothgar had settled with a payment. He thinks that this is the reason that Beowulf has come to his aid (ll. 457-72), but Beowulf seems not to be aware of this story.

On the night of Day One in Denmark Beowulf and his men take charge of Heorot, and Grendel arrives as expected. What happens next is one of the most troubling episodes in Beowulf's career. He watches calmly as the monster grabs and eats Hondscio (the name appears only in line 2076), one of his close companions. It is possible that this act of sacrifice stems from the revenge motive, in that Beowulf could not justify his own attack on Grendel without a reason, since it is not his nation that has suffered from the monster.

I have already discussed at some length the events that follow the death of Grendel. It should be clear from the pattern that the poet has established that Grendel's mother acted from a sense of revenge when she attacked the hall on the next night, that she had not only the right to avenge her slain son but the obligation to do it. Unlike women in more polite society, she has the option to wreak revenge and not to mourn. In turn, Beowulf, on behalf of Hrothgar, must continue the cycle. The poet, with fearful economy, has shown us the only logical outcome of



vengeance, the total destruction of a nation or a family, though we must admit it is with little regret that we witness the end of the Grendels.

The patterns of vengeance that run through Part 2 of *Beowulf* are extensive and complex. Many of the feuds that appear earlier in the poem reappear with greater intensity, including the long-running and confusing conflict between the Geats and the Swedes. When the messenger announces that the death of Beowulf will cause the Swedes to renew the old feud, because his strength was the only deterrent, we get the feeling that the Geatish nation is doomed to extinction (ll. 2999-3006). But the futility of the whole process is pointed up early in Part 2, when the notion of revenge is reduced to absurdity, for even the dragon displays the emotion. When part of his treasure, a cup, is taken, probably to be used to settle a feud, the dragon reacts in human terms: he seeks revenge by burning down the local houses:

Hord-weard onbād  
 earfoðlice oððæt æfen cwōm;  
 wæs ðā gebolgen beorges hyrde  
 wolde se lāða līge forgyldan  
 drinc-fæt dýre. (ll. 2302b-05a)

The hoard-keeper waited, miserable, impatient, till evening came. By then the barrow-serpent was swollen with rage, wanted revenge for that precious cup, a payment by fire.

The whole Anglo-Saxon notion of justice is reduced to a bestial reaction to the loss of a "precious" one with material value only.

The poet has Beowulf narrate from his own background the most touching instance of the futility of revenge. In his youth he was taken in by King Hrethel of the Geats, father of Hygelac and of two others, Herebeald and Haethcyn. One day Haethcyn accidentally shot and killed Herebeald with an arrow. For the death of a son, a man feels he must

receive some compensation, but he can neither gain wergild from nor take revenge on his own family.

Pæt wæs feoh-lēas gefeoht, fyrenum gesyngad,  
 hreðre hyge-mēde; sceolde hwæðre swā þeah  
 ædeling unwrecen ealdres linnan. (ll. 2441-43)

There was no way to pay for a death so wrong, blinding the  
 heart, yet still the prince had lost his life, lay unavenged.

Hrethel's dilemma is compared to that of an old man whose son is hanged from the gallows; he is powerless to *him helpe . . . ænige gefremman* (ll. 2448-49) "help him at all." In his helpless grief and mourning, Hrethel falls into despair. He can not hate his son, but he can not love him either, and he dies of a broken heart.

Beowulf is a complex character in a complex poem. We find him throughout an admirable character whose motives are never petty and his actions always heroic. I suspect that the Christian poet admired him as much as we do, and he regretted that he could not make of him a Christian, but he (the poet) had too keen a sense of history for that. Beowulf was *mægenes strengest // on þām dæge / bysses lifes* (ll. 196-97; 789-90) "the strongest man in those days of this life," but the poet finally did not believe that he met the standards of a Christian either in behavior or understanding. Because he could not have known the Christian message that salvation not satisfaction is the ultimate end of man, he was doomed to a limited life, his highest aspiration to win fame before death. "That is the best memorial for a man after he is gone," Beowulf says (ll. 1388-89), an attitude that is echoed in the last, slightly discordant, lines of the poem:

cwædon þæt hē wære wyruld-cyninga,  
 mannum mildust ond mon ðwærust,  
 lēodum liðost ond lof-geornost. (ll. 3180-82)

They said that he was of world kings the kindest to his men,  
the most courteous man, the best to his people, and the most  
eager for fame.

### Note

<sup>1</sup> All quotations from *Beowulf* are from the dual-language edition edited by Chickering. Translations are also by Chickering, with some modifications.

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## A World Ransomed: Shakespeare on Video

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I teach an upper-level class in Shakespeare; I have taught it twice to classes of about twenty students, a few more times as directed studies for one or two students. I do not claim to be the most experienced teacher of Shakespeare, and I do not pretend to have all the answers. I wish only to report my experience, hoping to provoke discussion of how we teach Shakespeare and what we want to accomplish.

I taught Shakespeare for the first time in my first year as an assistant professor, two and a half years ago. I relied almost entirely on myself, hoping to dazzle students with brilliant lectures, extracting the last bit of meaning from every scene of the twelve plays we were reading. I used videotape only once, playing a few scenes from *Richard II*. I did not seriously consider any more extensive use of video, dismissing it as a crutch for teachers less dedicated than I was. Despite my devoted preparation and painstaking analyses, students did not show much curiosity or enthusiasm. A few followed my lectures and took extensive notes, doing what I expected of "good" students, the type who would not have complained if I had done nothing but give dramatic readings. The others were much less involved. Confronted with only printed texts and my wayward explications, they seemed uncertain,

confused, bored, listless, even morose. They became more and more passive throughout the semester, responding only to the most obvious questions, with only the simplest replies. I noticed these developments and lamented them, but the extent of my preparation led me to blame the students, who seemed not to be working hard enough, i.e., not as hard as I was. Still, the experience bothered me, and I began to consider ways of altering my approach.

Opportunity came the following year, when my chairman went on sabbatical, and the rest of the department had to decide how to spend the money allotted us. I was able to acquire five tapes: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*. Students' performance in class, on papers, and on exams had led me to believe that most were unable to understand Shakespeare's language, unable to imagine a scene based on simple stage directions and dialogue. I still didn't know how I wanted to use the tapes in class, but I hoped that films of the plays might give students a clearer idea of characters, scenes, and meaning. I also began to relinquish the preconception that the plays are primarily texts to be explicated, puzzles to be solved. Now they seem to me written almost exclusively for performance, and any performance is likely to be more interesting than my analysis of imagery, irony, parallel, or early modern English.

The question was how to use the tapes. When I was a teaching assistant at the University of Michigan, I worked with a course called Composition and Shakespeare. Students could take it as an alternative to Introductory Composition, writing about plays instead of what they did on their summer vacation. Tapes of the plays were shown at night in one of the libraries, so that we could discuss productions without spending any time in class viewing them. Discussions rarely involved more than a few students, since only a few were able to see the tapes before any given class, and since only a few went to see the tapes anyway. The night-time method is attractive, since it keeps class time free, but the students I work with are involved in sports, part-time jobs, extra-

curricular activities, and so forth, too busy to be bothered with additional assignments.

I decided to use the tapes in class, abandoning another preconception, that the professor's job is to talk. Several options still remained. I could run the whole film through two or three class meetings, then ask students to discuss it and its relation to the play. I have never tried this approach, since it seems likely to be ineffective. Though students seem to prefer tapes to teachers, they also seem mesmerized by too much television. They have a hard time remembering what they have seen the day before, let alone the week before. I wanted to be able to make some points about the film and the play as the production unfolded and I decided to show each tape scene by scene, ten, fifteen, or twenty minutes at a time. This method worked very well. Students could follow the plot from beginning to end, strengthening their sense of what happens and why. I could raise questions about actors' interpretation of characters, directors' conception of scenes, and decisions to delete scenes or lines, encouraging students to analyze video presentations they tend uncritically to accept. Stopping the tape and turning on the lights discourage dozing. Students seemed to grow more confident, more willing to comment on the play or at least the production of it, and some called attention to features of the films I hadn't noticed. Trying to do *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The First Part of Henry IV* without tapes confirmed my suspicion that students were getting little if anything out of the texts, as they refused to participate in discussion and, when questioned more closely, admitted that they just didn't get it. I also did *The Tempest* without a tape, at the end of the semester, and these sessions went a bit better, students trying to imagine how they would film the play. I don't think this exercise helped them to understand the language of the play, but it did help them to understand the actions and characters, their imaginations stimulated by fifteen weeks' study of plays in production. The whole experience was much more enjoyable than the first time I taught the course, and I would recommend using more tape to anyone having trouble teaching Shakespeare.

Positive as my experience was, I recognize the limitations of this approach. Taking time to watch two-hour or two-and-a-half-hour films in class means extending discussion of a single play for two weeks, so that it is possible to study only seven or eight plays in a fifteen-week semester. Reacting to film tends to focus discussion on scenes and characters, not on language. Students have a hard time with Shakespeare's diction and imagery, and more attention to them might better prepare students for reading plays other than those studied in class. By viewing each film scene by scene, I spent too much time on unimportant transitions, time that could have been spent talking about longer, more complicated scenes. It will take more preparation, but getting a precise count for each scene should make it possible to skip some parts without wasting time rewinding and fast-forwarding. Skipping may detract from students' understanding of the play, and it may prove difficult to eliminate scenes, since the director, writers, and editors will already have eliminated whatever they consider superfluous. The laser disc makes it much easier to skip a scene, but these devices have yet to appear on my campus, and I wonder if someone will soon get around to putting the plays on disc.

While I wait, I have been trying to imagine other ways of using tapes in class. I have been able to acquire a few more—*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry V*, a second version of *Hamlet*, a second version of *Macbeth*. My class watched the 1948 and 1990 versions of *Hamlet*, though I think we might have used our time more productively, especially since the students panned Laurence Olivier's production. If you have access to two versions, you might try comparing certain scenes. The graveyard scenes in the two *Hamlets* are, for instance, both interesting and brief, among the best scenes in the films, and I would like to compare them for you now.

The most obvious difference is the black-and-white of 1948 and the color of 1990. Olivier's film seems preoccupied with the heads of the actors, evident in the first glimpse of the Gravedigger and in the way the shadow of Olivier's head falls directly on a skull Hamlet does not yet

know to be Yorick's. Such an effect is uncommon in a color film, and calling attention to it can help to reduce students' resistance to black-and-white, an anachronism in the age of Turner.

Learning about cinematic style is fine, but it is hardly enough reason to teach Shakespeare through video. The productions should also show students something about the characters, the scenes, and the play as a whole. On the simplest level, these scenes help students to visualize what many would otherwise find unintelligible, an important and symbolic moment, when Hamlet goes to the grave to confront first Yorick's death, then Ophelia's, then his own. The actors convey the script's humor and aggressiveness, qualities most students have difficulty recognizing in printed dialogue. The interpretation of character is probably the most interesting aspect of these two scenes. The Gravedigger is irresistible in both versions, cheerful, witty, grotesque, played admirably by Stanley Holloway in 1948 and Trevor Peacock in 1990. Hamlet speaks almost the same lines each time, but Olivier and Mel Gibson manage the role in very different ways. Olivier's Hamlet is cerebral, almost out of this world, picking up the skull before he knows whose it is, then, on finding out, establishing intimacy with Yorick, whispering to the skull, holding it next to his own, almost kissing it. Sticking with Shakespeare, Olivier has Hamlet say that the skull is abhorred in his imagination, but it seems not to be, as he laughs when the dirt, or desiccated brain, falls out on his lap. Fond as he is of the skull, Olivier's Hamlet is also curiously detached, simply tossing it into the grave when the funeral procession appears.

Gibson's Hamlet is more visceral, more amused by the Gravedigger, more moved upon learning the fate of his old friend, more clearly appalled by the skull. Gibson and the director, Franco Zeffirelli, seem to have shot the scene with Olivier in mind, trying to do theirs differently. Someone decided to place the skull on a mound, leaving Gibson free to act in a posture more confrontational than Olivier's. The skull appears beside the face not of Hamlet, but of the Gravedigger, who simultaneously shoves it into the foreground and reveals its identity. The

skull on the mound is a bit awkward, in that Gibson has to point to Yorick's lips, which would seem not to hang but to be covered by grass and dirt. Still, the next shot is effective, skull in the foreground, a close-up of Gibson's face forming the background, the character appropriately sympathetic, nostalgic, and philosophical. Gibson's departure from Olivier is even more striking when the two films are viewed in their entirety, and the different interpretations contribute to the creation of quite different moods. Their differences can be described as strengths or weaknesses, as results of different experiences in acting, or as attempts to play to different audiences, and these judgments can lead students to a greater appreciation of acting and directing. In teaching Shakespeare, it is more important to use different performances to show how complicated Shakespeare's characters are and how variously they can be interpreted.

It would be interesting to compare other scenes from the two versions of *Hamlet*—the encounter with the Ghost, the interview with Ophelia, the soliloquy, the play within the play, the argument in the Queen's chamber, and the sword fight. Actors' handling of other roles could also be compared: Felix Aylmer's Polonius is a doddering old fool in 1948, but Ian Holm gives him a sinister side in 1990. Peter Cushing gives us a conventional Osric in 1948, effeminate and amusing, but John McEnery's in 1990 is much more subdued. Jean Simmons's Ophelia in 1948 is obviously innocent, almost childlike, unprepared for the trauma that awaits her, but Helena Bonham-Carter's in 1990 is sensual, distraught from the beginning, torn apart by the violence of her own impulses as well as the dislocations in her world. These contrasts could be extended almost endlessly, but they depend on having two versions of the same play. I want to shift now to selection of tapes, in case anyone is building a collection, as I have been for the last year and a half.

The BBC has produced all the plays, but I have not been able to identify a distributor in the United States. Productions most widely available here seem to be those that were released from studios, though there are a few from British television. Of the two *Hamlets*, the 1990

version is much more appealing to students, partly because it's in color, partly because it features actors they recognize. It is a fine film with many impressive performances, though Olivier's production is equally fine. Zeffirelli has also directed *The Taming of the Shrew*, with Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, and *Romeo and Juliet*. The former sacrifices a lot of dialogue in favor of action and scenery, but the latter is a faithful production of the play, indulgent in early scenes, a bit rushed toward the end. Thames Television taped a live presentation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1963, the late Benny Hill as Bottom, the production surprisingly good. Kenneth Branagh won praise for his recent *Henry V*, worthy of comparison with Olivier's 1944 film. There have been at least two films of *Julius Caesar*. The 1953 version features James Mason, John Gielgud, and Marlon Brando. Excellent in places, it skims later scenes. The other was finished in 1970, but I have not seen it. Granada Television did *King Lear* in the early 1980s, Olivier in the leading role, in a competent if not brilliant production. *Macbeth* seems to have attracted the most filmmakers, perhaps because it is bloody and short. Roman Polanski could hardly resist such material, in 1971 releasing a film I have yet to see. I acquired Orson Welles's 1948 *Macbeth*, hoping for the best, since he did it only seven years after *Citizen Kane*. I was disappointed by unnecessary stunts, bogus Scottish accents, and liberal rearrangement of text. I have since acquired a more faithful version from Thames Television, Michael Jayston as Macbeth, but I can still use a few scenes from Welles for comparison. I have ordered a film of *The Tempest* Richard Burton did in 1963, but it hasn't arrived yet. Next time I teach Shakespeare I intend to concentrate on these eight plays: *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*. Anyone could argue for other plays, but it happens that these are available in videotaped versions students find accessible. Five of the eight are tragedies, producers' favorite type, comedies a distant second, histories almost untouched. Students might get a distorted sense of

Shakespeare's repertoire from such a course, but I would contend that they get more from video than from reading and lecture.

I am not advocating the replacement of printed texts with videotapes, only greater use of tape to illuminate text. I have never seen an ideal adaptation of a Shakespeare play, and even productions I admire delete scenes, distort action and motivation, and exaggerate the importance of a few lines. The script often differs from what appears on the screen, and the discrepancy can show students something about the difficult art of the film and the variety of problems Shakespeare creates for players and producers. To appreciate the discrepancy, students need some sort of text, and Signet Classics are an appropriate choice for courses using a lot of video. Sylvan Barnet, the general editor, describes each play's production for stage and screen, assessing most of the films I have mentioned. Barnet's judgments are sometimes questionable, and students seem to enjoy disagreeing with an authority. They also enjoy spending little on books, and eight Signets can be had for \$25. Videotapes are also inexpensive, about \$20 apiece, though prices vary widely, and one does well to shop around. A good collection can be built for \$250.

Mentioning money brings me back to my title. The First Gentleman in *The Winter's Tale* reports that Leontes seems to have "heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed," appropriate metaphors for Shakespeare with video, and Shakespeare without. The productions are inherently flawed but often beautiful visions, obtained at the price of having one's imagination conditioned by actors and directors, whose interpretations affect all subsequent reactions to the play. *To ransom* can mean "to save" as well as "to pay," and I really believe videos save some students from abandoning Shakespeare out of frustration. Reading little and understanding less, these students tend to give up, and for them the plays amount to a world destroyed. The camera captures something they have trouble seeing in their mind's eye, as the actors transform abstruse printed matter into powerful emotion and enchanting poetry. From there, a few may even go back to the text of the play, trying to

find the inspiration for such strange characters and actions. Videotaped versions of Shakespeare are far from perfect, and I have no idea how many worlds they ransom, but they do at least help us to present the most influential plays in the English language to students unable or unwilling to appreciate them in any other form.

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## Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*: Argument, Text, and Interpretation

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Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* tells the story of Lucrece's rape by Sextus Tarquinius, which led to the overthrow of the Tarquins and the founding of the Roman Republic. Indeed, there is a sense in which it tells the story twice, for unlike the normal argument to a poem, the Argument to *The Rape of Lucrece* is not a synopsis of the poem itself. Instead, it summarizes the story on which the poem is based, including events both prior to and subsequent to the events depicted within the poem. Moreover, the dry, factual account in the prose Argument focuses on the political context of the rape and its consequences and suggests nothing of the poem's concentration on the psychological and emotional aspects of the rape and its aftermath.

Given such differences, it is no surprise to discover that scholars vary in their assessment of the relationship between poem and Argument. Some, of course, have simply paid little attention to the Argument, and James Talbot has suggested that it is not by Shakespeare, although Shakespeare's authorship is generally accepted. For others, the arrangement is purposive and functional, assuring that the necessary background will be fresh in the reader's mind, and thereby freeing Shakespeare to concentrate within the poem upon the significance and psychological import of the events. Thus, for Harold R. Walley, the

interrelationship constitutes an "artistic scheme" in which "the historical facts in the case are set forth in a preliminary Argument, and the purpose of the poem itself is to make clear their general human purport" (480). Michael Platt is even more adamant: "In the light of the Argument, the significance of the narrated events appears fully, without it obscurely. The Argument is an envelope you cannot throw away because it indicates what lies behind the more vivid parts which catch our eye" (64). Heather Dubrow also insists on the importance of the Argument for an understanding of the poem, but for her the significance rests in their differences. She finds that Shakespeare utilizes the contrasting versions to explore a number of the assumptions of Renaissance historiography, ultimately leading the reader to a profound questioning of "the trustworthiness of any form of history" (*Captive Victors* 165).

The issue that concerns me in this essay is one included in the contrasts that Dubrow explores: the idea that Tarquin had not seen Lucrece prior to his arrival at Collatium on the day of the rape (*Captive Victors* 85-86). The Argument carefully details the traditional story in which the young noblemen at the siege of Ardea put their boasts of their wives' virtues to the test in a surprise visit to Rome, and it indicates that Tarquin was then smitten by Lucrece's beauty. The poem itself, however, makes no explicit reference to this visit, and numerous critics interpret the initial stanzas as suggesting that it did not happen. For some of these critics, the Argument is there precisely so that the reader will be forced to contrast Shakespeare's version with the classical version; others refer to the omitted visit, but otherwise pay little attention to the presence of the Argument.

Nonetheless, it is not clear that the reader of the poem must deny the visit. Shakespeare's own understanding of how art functions is arguably embedded within this very poem. At the point in *The Rape of Lucrece* when Lucrece has resolved to kill herself but is awaiting the arrival of her husband, for whom she has sent to insure that she will be avenged, she meditates upon a "piece of skillful painting" which depicts the siege of Troy. The passage is some two hundred lines long, nearly



one-ninth of the length of the entire poem, and is by far the longest and most complicated of Shakespeare's allusions to art. The reason for the digression is plain; Lucrece sees herself in this depiction of rape and treachery and fatal consequence. However, the description of the painting repeatedly insists upon the artist's skill, especially as evident in his lifelike realism, his ability to suggest the inner qualities of those he depicts, and the "conceit deceitful" of his imagination:

For much imaginary work was there,  
 Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,  
 That for Achilles' image stood his spear,  
 Grip'd in an armed hand, himself behind  
 Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind:  
     A hand, a foot, a face, a leg, a head  
     Stood for the whole to be imagined.

(1422-1428)

The rhetorical device is synecdoche, and what poem more pointedly suggests that the part may stand for the whole, or that knowledge and imagination may be required to flesh out a text, or even more, that good art may be good precisely because it makes such demands upon its viewer or reader? Seeing the spear and hand, the skillful viewer can supply Achilles, and indeed, must do so. The passive viewer, or one unwilling or unable to draw upon a knowledge of the fall of Troy, will not see in the mind's eye what was left unseen, and consequently will not see the whole.

To be sure, Lucrece's "conceited artist" might have chosen to alter or conflate the events presented by his source. Shakespeare often did so in his histories, obviously expecting the viewer to react to events as depicted. But in the absence of cues to the contrary, would not such active viewing be the normal Renaissance response, whether to pictures, plays, or poems? Even without the pointed reminder of the Argument,

would not poet and reader assume that classical learning was relevant to a serious poem upon a well-known classical subject?

From this perspective, at least, the events in the Argument are available to flesh out what is presented within the poem unless they are denied by the poem itself. One example of such divergence between poem and Argument is very clear. The Argument says that two messengers were dispatched by Lucrece on the morning after her rape, but only one appears in the poem. The change alters nothing about either the rape or its consequences, and it is perhaps a sufficient defense to say that the poem is less concerned with how the witnesses to the suicide were assembled than with Lucrece's emotions when writing to her husband. Lucrece's identity is entirely subordinated to her role as chaste Roman wife to Collatine, and in the last analysis, it is to remove the stain upon her husband's honor that she has resolved to die. Hence, it is that letter, and no other, which occupies her, and us, within the poem. We simply know, from the Argument if not from our knowledge of the legend, that others will arrive when Collatine does, and we are not surprised when they do so. Indeed, were this one of Shakespeare's plays, no eyebrows would be raised. Having seen one messenger dispatched in that more fluid medium, we would accept that others had been dispatched offstage, and those who quibbled would be reminded in arch footnotes that what might seem a flaw in the study would not be noticed upon the stage. Unfortunately, *Lucrece* is read only in the study, and there the difference between Argument and poem is indeed more noticeable. Nothing about the omission of the second messenger, however, suggests that Shakespeare is divorcing his poem from the Lucrece tradition as he has depicted it in his Argument. At most, it seems that, as in a play, he is tolerant of a minor inconsistency for the sake of psychological impact.

Of far greater import than the missing messenger is the idea that the poem denies Tarquin's prior visit to Collatium in the company of the other nobles. There are two issues to consider: the chronology of events leading to the rape and the significance of Tarquin's reaction to Lucrece's beauty when she welcomes him to Collatium. In considering

the first of these, it should be clear that we would not expect great detail within the poem. *The Rape of Lucrece* begins in *media res* with Tarquin riding in haste from Ardea, driven by his desire for Lucrece. None of the events prior to that ride are depicted in any detail. Indeed, the entire political context, fully suggested in the Argument, is summed up in the first line's brief reference to "the besieged Ardea." Similarly, once Brutus and the others have sworn vengeance over Lucrece's body, the political consequences of the rape are summed up in one stanza, which refers explicitly only to Tarquin's own exile.

What the poem does suggest about the chronology of events is that the elapsed time between Collatine's boasting and Tarquin's lust-breathed ride to Collatium is very brief:

For he the night before, in Tarquin's tent,  
Unlock'd the treasure of his happy state.  
(15-16)

Apparently perceiving that having Collatine boast on "the night before" does not allow time enough for an intervening visit, Bullough has argued that the first three stanzas "say nothing of the test by which Collatine proved his wife's virtue, but suggest that he boasted of her chastity a second time, on the night before Tarquin stole away from Ardea" (180). In other words, the boasting that put the spur to Tarquin's smoldering desires would be in addition to the young nobles' traditional bout of boasting and ride to Rome. Why this second round of boasting should have been more inflammatory than the first is not clear, and Bullough is also receptive to the idea that there was no initial visit by the young nobles. This simpler and much more common interpretation does away with any reason for assuming more than one night of contention in Tarquin's tent. The real question is whether Shakespeare's "night before" truly eliminates the possibility of the first visit?

In thinking of the classical version, one is apt to picture Tarquin as brooding for several days before his return to Collatium, and this is

precisely what Livy says: "Paucis interiectis diebus" (Book 1.57.1). Ovid, however, who is usually perceived as Shakespeare's primary source, does not specify a definite length of time. Ovid's Collatine brings the drinking and boasting of the young men to an end by saying that it is not too late to put the issue to a test: "nox superest" (*Fasti* 2.722). They ride to the city, make their discoveries, and then return to camp at dawn. There, says Ovid, Tarquin's passion grows in intensity until he takes horse, arriving at Collatium at sunset. Nothing indicates that Tarquin's decision was not made the very day of the return to camp, and this reading of Ovid is consistent both with Shakespeare's saying that Collatine boasted on "the night before" and with the statement in the Argument that Tarquin secretly withdrew "shortly after" the nobles had returned to camp from the visit to their wives.

If the timing of the visit is thus possible, albeit with a briefer interregnum than envisioned by many readers of the poem, what of Tarquin's first sight of Lucrece's beauty? Does the poem itself contradict the Argument's specific description of the prior visit? The crucial lines come immediately after Tarquin's arrival at Collatium:

Now thinks he that her husband's shallow tongue,  
The niggard prodigal that prais'd her so,  
In that high task hath done her beauty wrong,  
Which far exceeds his barren skill to show.  
(78-81)

The contention is that these lines indicate Tarquin's first discovery of Lucrece's beauty, which would mean that he had not seen her before. However, what these lines actually say, in part, is that despite Collatine's lavish praise of Lucrece, Tarquin thinks her more beautiful than her husband's description. Such a statement might indeed be uttered by a Tarquin who until now had only heard of Lucrece's beauty, but it could equally well be said by one who had seen her previously. One may be ravished by beauty on second sight as well as first. The passage, in fact,

reveals as much about Tarquin's attitude toward Collatine as it does of his appreciation of Lucrece's beauty. The opening stanzas have suggested that Collatine's boasting is in itself a goad to Tarquin, and now that this "proud issue of a king" has come to seize the "golden hap" enjoyed by a "meaner" man, it is small wonder to find that he regards Collatine as unequal to, and hence undeserving of, such beauty. Had Tarquin said only, "She is more beautiful than her husband said," we would learn only, and once more, that Lucrece is beautiful. What Shakespeare's lines reveal is Tarquin's conviction that he is superior to Collatine.

Of course, if Tarquin had said either "She is more beautiful than I remembered" or "She is more beautiful than I had anticipated," there would be no dispute over the unmentioned visit. Still, the insistence that no previous visit exists of necessity assumes that the Argument is either not a part of the text confronted by the reader, or that it serves primarily to highlight Shakespeare's creative departure from the tradition. Are there rewards for such a reading? The significance attached to this perceived omission varies greatly. Charlotte Porter felt that having Tarquin "fall in love by hearsay" brings the opening of the poem into better accord with "the moody broodings of consciousness that characterize the plan and substance of *Lucrece*" (ix). T.W. Baldwin sees Shakespeare as simply having dropped "the narrative of the nocturnal visit as unnecessary in the motivation of his story" (114-15). Geoffrey Bullough suggests that presenting Tarquin as inflamed only by Collatine's praise of Lucrece allows the poem to "stand on its own feet without the Argument" (180). R. Thomas Simone feels that the omission helps "shift the story away from history toward tragedy" (36).

Those who have most strongly insisted that there was no prior visit to Collatium advocate readings which they perceive to be strengthened by the omission. Roy Battenhouse, who is concerned to argue that the poem presents the guilty Lucrece of the Augustinian tradition rather than the chaste and innocent Lucrece of the Roman tradition, suggests that Shakespeare thus presents a Lucrece whose reputation for chastity has never actually been tested (7). Nancy Vickers,

whose essay emphasizes the effect of the *blazon*, especially as applied to the female body, finds that having Tarquin respond to the description of beauty, rather than to the experience of it, is central to the experience of the poem (100). Richard Lanham thinks that the omission eliminates sexual attraction as a motive for Tarquin's behavior, revealing that the subject of the poem is the rhetoric with which the characters define and explain themselves (96-101). Dubrow argues that "by omitting Tarquin's initial visit, the text foregrounds the competition between the king's son and Collatine, transforming it into the primary motive for the rape" (*Captive Victors* 86).

Each of these four positions merits lengthier response than there is time for here. I would suggest, however, that despite the emphasis that they place upon the omission of the visit, none of these readings in fact depends upon it. Whether the visit is present in Shakespeare or not, the Augustinian perspective applied by Battenhouse arose in response to the classical version in its entirety, and D.C. Allen's espousal of an Augustinian interpretation does not insist on the omitted visit. Dubrow's exploration of the historiographical implications of *Lucrece* may be strengthened by the presence of one more discontinuity between poem and Argument, but it does not need it, and in fact, her earlier exploration of this thesis did not invoke the missing visit ("Rape of Clio"). Similarly, the rhetorical competition of men over women's bodies which Vickers analyses is manifestly a part of the poem, which rebukes Collatine for being "the publisher / of that rich jewel he should keep unknown" (33-34). In short, we need not defer Tarquin's first sight of Lucrece to the time of the rape to find that Shakespeare forces us to address the implications of Collatine's boasting, whether it be of her chastity, as emphasized in the Argument, or of her beauty, as in the poem. Of course, one's case may be stronger, or at least less complicated, if one excludes the visit, in the way that Lanham's focus on self-definition may be heightened by the exclusion of any sexual impulse in Tarquin's motivations. In short, those arguing most strongly that the visit did not occur find that theme or motivation is thereby more tightly focused.

Does *Lucrece* really invite such exclusivity in its interpretation? What Shakespeare found in his sources was a variety of motivations for Tarquin's behavior. As Baldwin makes clear, Collatine may not explicitly boast of Lucrece's chastity in Livy or Ovid, but Marsus's commentary on Ovid interprets chastity as being the specific claim; envy is implied in Ovid; and Lucrece's beauty motivates Tarquin in both Ovid and Livy, although only after he has seen her (114). Within the poem, Shakespeare introduces beauty sooner, making it part of Collatine's boasting. The opening stanzas of *Lucrece* explicitly explore all of these possible motives for Tarquin's behavior and focus on none. It may be Lucrece's reputation for chastity that excites him, or that she is beautiful, or the very fact that she is boasted of, or envy that a man of lesser rank should be so blessed. Far from rejecting any of these possibilities, the poem refuses to settle the problem of motivation, allowing only that "some untimely thought did instigate / his all untimely speed, if none of these" (43-44). Shakespeare raises the problem of evil; he does not explain it away.

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## Collaborative Authorship and *Two Noble Kinsmen*: Computer Assisted Research Tools

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When I began searching for a topic for this presentation, I decided that I should consider some kind of computer assisted literary research. Since Dakota State's mission is specifically to integrate computers into all areas of the curriculum, this combination seemed quite natural to me. And since I had used a computer extensively in preparing my own doctoral dissertation, I was familiar with some of the power it brings to the literary researcher.

For a specific subject, I was interested in three programs which my dean, Dr. Eric Johnson, had prepared. One program, "Pickwick," allowed me to place any part of a play into a separate text file. A second program, "E," compared the word lengths in two text files; the third, "Function," compared the frequency of a list of "common" words in two text files. These programs seemed ideal to help me investigate the problem of collaborative authorship in Shakespeare/Fletcher's *Two Noble Kinsmen*.

## BACKGROUND

The Oxford *Complete Works of Shakespeare* is one of the few texts brave enough to even include *Two Noble Kinsmen*. Other "complete works" do not include this play, nor do they place it in an appendix of collaborations: one editor dismissed the play, saying that "the only justification for [its] exclusion is that . . . (in the view of many readers) [it is] more predominately Fletcherian than Shakespearean" (Bevington [i]).

According to the Oxford editors, "Studies of style suggest that Shakespeare was primarily responsible for the rhetorically and ritualistically impressive Act I; for Act 2, Scene I; Act 3, Scenes I and 2; and for most of Act 5 (Scene 4 excepted), which includes emblematically spectacular episodes related to his other late plays. Fletcher appears mainly to have written the scenes showing the rivalry of Palamon and Arcite along with the sub-plots concerned with the jailer's daughter's love for Palamon and the rustics' entertainment for Theseus (1225).

Thus traditionally, attributing parts of this play to one author or the other has hinged on verbs such as "suggest" and "appear." If a scene is "rhetorically impressive," the assumption is that that particular scene would be Shakespeare's. Or to perhaps oversimplify the argument, anything that "sounds like" Shakespeare is assumed to be Shakespeare.

Analogically, musicologists face similar problems in attributing newly discovered works, or in re-attributing works long known. Did Purcell or Clarke write the popular "Trumpet Voluntary"; did Haydn really write "his" oboe concerto? To add to this kind of problem, certain composers sound distressingly alike: only the most critically discernible ear can distinguish Haydn from Mozart, or Bach from Handel. And I could not imagine the debates should we discover a collaborative work by Haydn and Mozart. Would it be possible to definitively attribute sections to everyone's satisfaction? Is it safe to rely on one's "ear"? Do

"suggest" and "appear" satisfy all readers? Could the computer provide a more objective approach to the problem?

One approach to stylistic analysis states that a writer's style can be measured by the pattern of word lengths—that the percentage usage of words would provide a fingerprint for a given author, and that no two authors would have the same fingerprint. Differences of at least one percent are considered statistically significant. Certainly this theory can produce some amusing results: it can be proven that Shakespeare did not write Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*; nor did Hemingway write *Macbeth*. This theory is sound, but it works best on large samples, being most reliable on samples of at least 100,000 words. A single play might not be a large enough sample; a single scene would almost certainly be too small. Nonetheless, I was determined to investigate.

The second program, Function, provides a computer model for a different approach. This theory states that a given writer would have a decided preference for certain "common" words, and that the pattern of these words would also produce a kind of authorial fingerprint. This theory has the advantage of being valid on much smaller word samples. Indeed, Dr. Johnson has demonstrated this program using newspaper editorials written by a father and his son, and has correctly identified the authors in each case. This program has the further advantage of being customized: it can use any common words file you specify, such as only personal pronouns, only modal auxiliary verbs, or coordinating conjunctions. This program seemed to hold the most promise.

## METHOD

The most available machine readable version of Shakespeare's works is the *Shakespeare on Disk*, distributed by Oxford University Press. This is a modern reader's text, with the spellings normalized. I began naively enough by comparing *Two Noble Kinsmen* to Shakespeare's *Complete Works*. In this way I was able to see

Shakespeare's "fingerprint" for word length usage and to see if *Kinsmen* varied, and if so, by how much. Not surprisingly, *Kinsmen* showed significant statistical variation on two-letter and three-letter words.

My problems began when I decided to see how much Shakespeare varied from his own pattern. Thus I compared *The Winter's Tale*, one of Shakespeare's late plays, with his own *Works*. These results were less than satisfactory and also showed some "significant variations." Ironically, the reconstructed collaboration *Pericles* (Shakespeare and Wilkins), fits the fingerprint of *Works* much more closely than the undisputed *Winter's Tale*.

Undaunted, I plunged forward, comparing each scene of *Kinsmen* to the *Works*. As one might guess, the results were chaotic: of the twenty-seven separate scenes in *Kinsmen*, I could only conclude that the play was written by twenty-seven different authors, none of whom was Shakespeare!

That's when I learned about Standard Deviation.

I do not pretend to be a statistician; nor do most English professors have a passion for numbers. But a statistically oriented colleague in sociology suggested a different approach to my numerical data. Since the scenes not only were small, but also showed a wide variation in their length, using the standard deviation for each length word would tend to be more reliable. Thus I called on SPSS-PC, a statistical software package that I had used previously in another research project.

To establish a benchmark, I generated the word length data for each scene of *Winter's Tale*. As a late play, *Tale* should give me a more accurate measure of Shakespeare's mature style. Then, because two of the scenes of this play were extremely long, I developed the standard deviation from a "trimmed mean": I omitted the two longest and two shortest scenes and let SPSS calculate the answers. This procedure gave me the first glimmer of hope. Shakespeare was very consistent in *Winter's Tale*: all word length usage fell within 1.5 standard deviations

of the trimmed mean. Thus any word length data in *Kinsmen* that fell outside 2.0 standard deviations would be highly suggestive.

Armed with the sense of security that Macbeth's witches warn us about, I fell eagerly to work on *Kinsmen*, subjecting its text to the analysis of SPSS. To my chagrin, I discovered that *Kinsmen* was also consistent: all word length usage fell within 1.5 *Winter's Tale* standard deviations of the mean.

I can draw only three conclusions from this phase of my research. 1) Perhaps the original theory is flawed. Perhaps an author's word length fingerprint is no more unique than ear lobe shape. Or, to return to our musical analogy, we may use such a fingerprint to distinguish Haydn from Stravinsky, but not Bach from Handel. 2) The theory works best on large samples of text. Or to use the statistical terminology of my colleague, "You have insufficient 'n.'" 3) Shakespeare actually wrote the entire play!

Because these results were unsatisfactory, and because the date for the conference was rapidly approaching, I turned to the second program, Function. This program held out the most hope, since I already knew that it was accurate on relatively small samples of text. Also it seemed to make more logical sense. As writers, we all tend to prefer certain words or certain patterns. President Bush seems to have an affection for "thing"; I like "ancillary" and "obviate."

The program itself asks for the file of words you would like to use as a basis of comparison. The default is "COMMON.WDS" a list of the 44 most commonly occurring words in Shakespeare's *Works*. To this list I added the "transitional" words "doth," "hath," "dost" and "hast." The program first shows the comparison words file name and then the two text files being compared and the word count for those two files. Next it shows the word being compared, the number of occurrences in the first file and in the second file, the percentage that those numbers represent, and the difference in percent.

It is also easy to create your own file of words using any ASCII-based word processor or editor. Just for fun, I created a file of modal auxiliary verbs and the coordinating conjunction "and."

Generating the data is a quick and easy process: on a 386-based processor, each comparison takes about two minutes. Interpreting the data is another story.

### RESULTS

At the time I began generating data, I had purposely not studied the textual introduction to *Kinsmen*. I wanted to see if I could form any hypothesis purely as a result of the comparisons. Once I had formed my own conclusions, I wanted to compare them with the "traditionally accepted" attributions for the play.

Interpreting the data was now the problem. When examining the Total Differences, how much of a difference should be considered significant? For example, when compared to Act I, Scene 1, the program yielded these results:

Act/Scene	Total
3/2	28.06
3/3	23.73
3/4	34.37
3/5	21.89

Traditionally, Act 3, Scene 2 has been attributed to Shakespeare, while Scenes 3, 4, and 5 have been attributed to Fletcher. Act 3, Scene 3 has the lowest Total of the four scenes; yet "Shakespeare's" Scene 2 has the second highest total of any scene in Act 3.

Thus I tried another method of interpreting the numbers. I posited that, even though writers may vary somewhat from their own usage pattern, they would tend to have few wide discrepancies (greater

than 1.0 percent) while exhibiting a good deal of agreement (less than .03 percent). For each text file I produced a table of "misses and hits," expressed as a ratio. A ratio of 3:1 would indicate three divergences higher than 1.0 percent and 1 agreement of lower than .03 percent.

Again, when compared to Act I, Scene 1, the same scenes yielded the following results:

Act/Scene	Ratio M:H
3/2	7:2
3/3	5:1
3/4	8:0
3/5	5:4

This, too, was unsatisfactory, as it did not provide convincing evidence—at least not in all cases.

Again, the traditional approach has attributed Act 4 to Fletcher, as well as Act 2, Scene 2. Comparing the three scenes of Act 4 with Act 2, Scene 2 provided the following results:

Act/Scene	Total Diff	Ratio M:H
4/1	13.86	0:8
4/2	13.68	1:2
4/3	15.68	1:4

The consistency of these data would suggest that the same author wrote all four scenes.

And a comparison of Act 5, Scenes 4 and 5 was perhaps even more puzzling. When comparing to Act I, Scene 1, I found the following:

Act/Scene	Total Diff	Ratio M:H
5/4	25.02	4:4
5/5	14.56	0:0



And when comparing to Act 2, Scene 2, I found the following:

Act/Scene	Total Diff	Ratio M:H
5/4	16.29	2:4
5/5	12.32	1:5

Were it not for the Misses:Hits ratio, it would seem as if Act 5, Scene 4 was written by the author of Act 2, Scene 2. But what should we make of Act 5, Scene 5?

The most promising data seem to be coming from the transitional words "hath," "doth," "hast," and "doth." Shakespeare's *Works* include fairly significant usages of these words: 0.22, 0.12, 0.07, and 0.05 percent respectively. And many of the scenes of *Kinsmen* contain similar percentages of at least two of these words. But Act 4 contains no occurrences of either "doth" or "dost." The potentially problematic Act 5, Scene 4 contains no occurrences of any of these transitional words.

I do not suggest that attribution is as easy as looking for a series of four transitional words. But I believe that transitional words may ultimately be the answer. Not only was Shakespeare a linguistic innovator, but the language of the late Renaissance was in a state of flux. It's possible that Shakespeare, as the "older" author, might be more conservative, using more of the older forms.

But computer analysis may also suggest that the collaboration on this play, or indeed, on any play, may not be a simple matter of an individual author writing whole scenes. Perhaps one or the other author made final revisions to individual scenes, or to the work as a whole. Perhaps some of these revisions were stylistic. Perhaps . . . .

In the words of one statistician, "We just massage the data until we get the numbers we want. Then we quit." And since numbers can be made to provide just about any answer we're looking for, some would see the justice in this method. But my purpose was not to definitively attribute various parts of *Two Noble Kinsmen* to Shakespeare or Fletcher.

My purpose was to show how the computer can aid traditional literary study.

Scholars can easily examine word usage in the works of any author whose works are available on disk. These texts may be purchased, typed directly into the computer, or scanned. The works of Shakespeare and Milton are available from Oxford Press and the Gutenberg Project promises a staggering variety of texts in machine readable form. As scanners and optical character recognition (OCR) software become less expensive, scholars can easily put almost any text into machine readable form.

My project used three "home grown" SPITBOL programs. A variety of commercial textual analysis software is also available. Concatenation programs create unique combinations of files; concordance programs provide the occurrences of words along with their contexts. Using "fuzzy pattern matching," scholars interested in the number of times the word "mercy" and its various forms occurs in *The Merchant of Venice* can obtain that information with a few simple keystrokes. Computers can provide textual as well as numeric information about literary texts. It needs only the imagination and experience of literary scholars to interpret and apply that information.

## EPILOGUE

Perhaps at this point, the reader may ask, "Did you find the secret of Shakespeare's collaborative method?" To answer, I would like to refer to an episode of the television show *M\*A\*S\*H*. In this episode a combat weary bombardier believes that he is the reincarnation of Jesus Christ. Father Mulkahey, the camp priest engages him in a theological discussion. In the course of this discussion, the priest asks "Is it true that all prayers are answered?" Whereupon the bombardier answers, "Yes—but sometimes the answer is 'no.'"

**NOTA BENE**

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"My Father Had A Daughter Loved A Man"  
A Psychoanalytic Examination of  
*Twelfth Night* and "All Fur"

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It is often frustrating for a critic with even a small background in folklore to read essays, Shakespearean and otherwise, by non-folklorists that incorporate folklore because they often neglect basic folklore principles and ideas or simply rely on listing of folklore analogues, without an attempt to relate interpretations of the folklore to the text. As the occasionally controversial folklore critic Alan Dundes writes:

In Shakespearean criticism, one does find awareness of the relationship of several of his plots to folktales, but typically these relationships are described in the vague, imprecise language of critics apparently ignorant of folklore scholarship. It is clear, for instance, that *Cymbeline* is related to tale type 882, The Wager on the Wife's Chastity; *The Taming of the Shrew* to tale type 901, Taming of the Shrew. . . . but they [Shakespearean Critics] rarely, if ever, stop to consider the psychological implications of the folktale plot lying at the base of a given work of literature. In short, they do not always properly identify possible folktale sources; and without such identification, they are in no position to make a judicious

psychological or, for that matter, any type of interpretation of literature derived from folklore. (Dundes, "To Love My Father All" 212-3)

Although Dundes may be overstating the case regarding the validity of previous criticism, he nevertheless is correct in the assertion that an incomplete exploration of folklore aspects can result in an incomplete reading of a play. One of the major failings he points out several times is a lack of reference to the tale type index, which was available after 1910 (Dundes, "To Love My Father All" 212, 213). The tale type index is essentially a master guide to the various types of known tales, in which broad categories, like Cinderella, or Sleeping Beauty, are listed and named.

When we look at *Twelfth Night* by first of all examining readings of its fairy tale cousins, we can use those readings to better understand the characters of the play. We may see relationships in the characters of Viola, Sebastian, Orsino and Olivia that either parallel their fairytale analogues or grow out of that reading. The specific tale I will be dealing with here will be a variant of "Cinderella" called "All Fur," the version found in the Grimm's *Kinder- und Housemarchen*.<sup>1</sup>

Both "All Fur" and *Twelfth Night* fall under the very broad category of Cinderella tales, tale type 510, in which a young woman loses or hides her true identity in order to survive in a new situation, and it is only at the end of the tale that she is able to regain her true identity because she has somehow come to grips with that new situation. Most people are familiar with a version of Cinderella not unlike that of Walt Disney's movie, but there are other variants of the tale with different individual motifs. "All Fur" falls into the Catskin or unnatural father variants, type 510B. In the Catskin tales, a young girl is subjected to advances from her father which cause her to hide her true identity by taking a menial position. In that position, she is able to win the love of a prince or king, thus escaping her father. Marian Cox describes the Catskin variant as a heroine who is "an originally brilliant being reduced

to a state of temporary obscurity or eclipse, but eventually restored to her pristine splendour" (xxxvii). While this is, of course, a very rough outline of divergent tales, it can already be seen that *Twelfth Night* fits at least this broad outline, in that Viola must raise herself above her position as Page to the Duke, a false identity, to ultimately become his bride. Certainly her true identity is "eclipsed" in that her sexuality is changed from female to male, and only at the end of the tale is her true being revealed.

While there are as many different schools of folklore criticism as there are Shakespeare criticism, one of the best for examining relationships between characters is the psychoanalytic. In order to examine the motivational forces behind such actions in "All Fur," we can use the idea of projection, in which "I hate you" is twisted so that it becomes "You hate me," and similarly "I love you" becomes "You love me." Or as Alan Dundes writes, "Projection obviates any feelings of guilt inasmuch as the original crime is displaced onto the object of the initial guilt producing wish" (Dundes, "To Love My Father All" 217). When we approach the Catskin variant from a psychoanalytical viewpoint then, as both Alan Dundes and Bruno Bettelheim<sup>2</sup> do in discussions of the Cinderella tale type, we might see that the father's desire to marry his daughter is merely a projection of the young girl's own Electra like complex in which she desires to replace the mother and love her own father; note that the mother must die, or be out of the picture before this can happen. But All Fur still realizes this is wrong, because she stalls in her acceptance of the proposal, and demands certain gifts from him first. For our purposes in this paper, we will concentrate on the coat of fur. By donning this coat, and essentially becoming an animal, All Fur punishes herself for not only her love for her father, but also her newfound sexual feelings.

All Fur becomes an animal, not truly human, in an effort to repress her sexuality. We should note that the King did not desire his daughter immediately after his wife died; it was only after she reached puberty and began to resemble his wife. We might even say that the fur

coat could be representative of the increased pilatory growth that marks the onset of sexual maturity. It may also be that she in fact realizes that it is her own lust that draws her to her father, and thus the cloak is a sort of self punishment, i.e., if I think like an animal, I must become one.

To resolve her Electral conflict, we see All Fur marry a father substitute, for she moves from her father the King to another King, the relationship emphasized by the fairytale's simplistic use of names, so we only know both men as "the King." Thus, although she knows society does not allow her to marry her father, with the marriage to the father substitute, we see her resume human form, an acknowledgement that this marriage is sanctioned by society, that it is safe and proper, as well as the acknowledgement of her own sexuality and self worth. Although some may argue, and rightly, that her self worth should not be defined by marriage, the marriage ceremony is at least an acknowledgement she is prepared to accept the more adult role that her body's new development allows her.

There can be no denying that there are other sources for *Twelfth Night*, and of course its connections with *The Comedy of Errors* through the Plautine play *The Brothers Menaechmus*, which is one of the sources for the twin confusion. Charles Prouty feels that the play has as its sources "Plautus' *Menaechmi* and the Italian *Inganni*. Modern scholarship has added to the list another Italian *Gi'Ingannati* . . . , Italian novelle, French and English translations of the latter, Sidney's *Arcadia* and the play of *Sir Clyoman and Clamydes*" (305). There is no denial that these are sources for *Twelfth Night*, but it must be remembered that these plays contain the same sort of motifs that are present in the tales. And once we have identified some of the similarities to a fairy tale source, we can apply the interpretation of that fairy tale to the play *Twelfth Night*.

First, we should deal with the question of Shakespeare's knowledge of the tale, or at least a reasonable variation. It must be acknowledged that there is no hard proof of this knowledge. However, it is reasonable to make an assumption that like all of us, Shakespeare was acculturated into his society, and certainly that society knew the

tales. It would be foolish to think that he could have lived without hearing this or a similar tale, for that would mean that he had little contact with people. By the same token, we can probably never know if he had one of the variants specifically in mind when he wrote the play, but we can fairly safely assume that it was in the back of the mind, in his subconscious. Also, simply because one does not know the tale of All Fur does not mean that that tale type could not be used for a source. This tale is type 510B on the Arne-Thompson tale type index, which designates it as a variant of Cinderella, one of the most widespread tale types. Indeed, it would be nearly impossible to find someone who was not conversant with this tale type. As Cox points out, "The 'unlawful marriage' opening which characterizes the second group of the Cinderella variants [510B Catskin] has been utilised in the legendary histories of Christian saints, in a number of mediæval romances, and in the Mysteries based on the same" (Cox xliii-xliv).<sup>3</sup> So even if this particular tale was not known, its motifs certainly were.

Cinderella itself can, and has, in Alan Dundes' "'To Love My Father All' A Psychoanalytic Study of the Folktale Source of *King Lear*," been interpreted in much the same manner as All Fur, but All Fur is perhaps a better example to use for examining *Twelfth Night*, because the incest theme is openly a part of the plot, rather than subdued, and the transformation to animal parallels Olivia's transformation into a male, although Cinderella as well undergoes a transformation and similar suppression of her sexual identity when she is in effect dehumanized by her position among the ashes.

While the relationship between "All Fur" and *Twelfth Night* is not obvious at first glance, it must be noted that many of the structural elements of both stories are similar. In both, we see a young woman who must use disguise to protect her sexuality, and who, while disguised, falls in love with a man who knows her only through her disguised form. The conflict for the young woman then becomes one of identity, in which she must somehow reconcile the two aspects of her identity, true and false, so that she can wed the man she loves. Of course, *Twelfth Night* is a

literary (using the word in its more traditional sense) treatment of that theme, but nevertheless, does owe much to its more humble origins. As Vladamir Propp, in his discussion of the plot structure of Russian folktales, tells us, regardless of the specific motif used, we can see "that a tale often attributes identical actions to various personages. This makes possible the study of the tale *according to the functions of its dramatis personae* [emphasis his]" (Propp 20). Thus we can look at two stories with similar plot structures, although with different individual motifs and see that they are related, as we can see that there is a basic relationship between certain elements of the Catskin variant of Cinderella and certain elements of *Twelfth Night*.

Once we posit at least a passing knowledge of the tale and its variants, we can begin to examine the play itself, and in doing so, the interpretation becomes very much centered on Viola.

Viola is shipwrecked on the island, born again from the sea into a new identity, a motif that occurs in several variants, including one "related of the wife of King Offa II" (Cox xlix). This would seem to indicate a wish on her part to fulfill the role of a mother figure, in that she is able to birth herself into a new role after being reborn from the sea. This has several connotations in developing Viola's role as the Electra character to Orsino's role as surrogate father. The first is her replacement of the mother by assuming the role as giver of life through her creation of Cesario. The second is the denial of a mother in her own life, thus freeing her father figure from any commitment to that mother; like Lear's wife, Viola's mother is conspicuous by her absence. In discussing the hero pattern, Alan Dundes points out that "a son who is born of a virgin can deny that his father ever had sexual access to his mother" (Dundes, "The Hero Pattern and the Life of Jesus" 239). Although he is speaking of a male protagonist, the same is true for a female, although as already noted, she must eliminate the mother entirely. "In comparable daughter-centered tales, the girl would like to eliminate her mother and marry her father" (Dundes, "To Love My Father All" 217). The sea itself plays an important role in the story, as

William Carroll points out. "Water—the central element of transformation—engulfs most of the characters in *Twelfth Night*" (Carroll 81), and thus all of the characters, as players in a drama that allows Viola to work through the Electral entanglements of youth, are under Viola's control, because the play becomes centered on her, and can be seen as a way for her to work through and deal with her Electral feelings. Orsino compares himself to Acteon in Act I scene i line 22, "That instant was I turned into a hart," and we remember that it was because Acteon saw Diana rising from her bath; although Orsino is referring to Olivia, we can see that in reality it is Viola who captures him, and we note that later in the play Orsino compares Ceasario to Diana. "Diana's lip / Is not more smooth and rubious" (I.iv. 31-32).<sup>4</sup>

When we first see Viola, she must conceal her identity for her own safety, "Conceal me what I am" (I.ii. 54). As she specifically states, it is because of her sexuality that she must hide, and what better way to suppress that sexuality than by becoming for all purposes a man.

But she is taken in by the Count, a replacement father figure, with whom she falls in love, and then her repression becomes a liability, so that she must eventually regain her sexuality. As Coppélia Kahn feels, "The dramatic device of identical opposite-sex twins allows Orsino and Olivia to navigate the crucial passage from identification to object choice, from adolescent sexual experimentation to adult intimacy, from filial ties to adult independence, without even changing the object of their desires" (45). We can elaborate on this interpretation by realizing that both Viola and Sebastian, through their combined identity as Ceasario, are able to develop normally by breaking the Electral and Oedipal ties that bind them to their parents, while at the same time pairing with the object of their affections. Viola almost immediately associates the Duke with her father, in the only line that mentions either of her parents. "Orsino . . . I have heard my father name him" (I.ii. 28). This link helps to explain why Orsino becomes a father substitute, thus allowing Viola to in a sense, marry her father, as is common in fairy tales with Electral themes.

If the Count can be seen to represent her father, then we might also see Viola as her symbolic mother, realizing that kings and queens in tales are very often representations of parental figures. "There are so many kings and queens in fairy tales because their rank signifies absolute power, such as the parent seems to hold over his child" (Bettelheim 205). Thus, in a typically Electral pattern, we see the daughter working to replace the mother. In the tale of All Fur, the mother dies at the child's birth, symbolic of the daughter's wish to eliminate the mother, and a motif seen in countless tales. Indeed, there is no mention of Viola's mother in the play, and her only mention of her father immediately links him to Orsino in her mind. The very act of creating a persona, Ceasario, may be an attempt on her part to show that she is capable of producing new life, symbolizing that she is ready to take up the responsibilities of the mother she wishes to replace. And yet with a doubling that is typical in Shakespeare, the name of her creation, Ceasario, implies that this individual was not truly born of a woman, as Caesar was supposedly born through the first Caesarian section, and from which we get the word; in the sense that Viola is Ceasario, she was not born of woman, thus denying the existence of her mother.

Her disguise is not just a rejection of her feminine sexuality, but since Ceasario is also a double for the male Sebastian, he loses all sexuality, as the Captain says to Viola, "Be you his eunuch" (I.ii. 63). Although he embodies the twins' sexuality, at the same time Ceasario is a completely sexless creature, a repression of both Viola's sexuality and her brother Sebastian's. Later in the play, when she is finally able to deal with her new sexuality, she then wishes for it, in the outward form of a beard. "I am almost sick for one- (aside) though I would not have it grow on my chin" (III.i. 44-45). Eric Partridge points out that "Viola and the Clown pun, rather obscurely yet with obvious bawdiness, upon *beard* in its ordinary sense and upon *beard* as 'hair growing upon the *mons Veneris*,' or, rather, 'pubic hair', especially in the words 'being kept together and put to use'" (Partridge 63).<sup>5</sup> This would seem to be her wish that she now put down the mantle of disguise, and take up her

proper role as a mature woman, capable of dealing with her desires for Orsino, because he is an acceptable substitute for her father. But she can not change back yet, for she has yet to completely disentangle herself from the Oedipal/Electral complications of the play.

Interestingly enough, Shakespeare shows his true mastery in the doubling of the fairy tale plot by bringing in a brother for Olivia, whereas in fairytales there is usually only one protagonist. Sebastian also has a small physical part in the play, although his presence is felt almost from the second scene, when we see Olivia grieving for her lost brother, as Viola grieves for Sebastian. He too fits in with typical fairytale patterns. If, as already discussed, we take the Count and Viola to be substitute parents, as is almost always the case in the tales, then Sebastian ends, in effect married to his mother. Although the Count did not adopt him as a page specifically, rather his twin sister in male guise, it is because of that disguise and similarity, evidenced through the confusion of Sebastian for Ceasario in the episode with Toby and Andrew, that we can say that Sebastian has been adopted into the family. Indeed, at times, the twins seem to operate symbolically as one entity, which may be an indication of their closeness, and may be a literal interpretation of the idea of two becoming one in marriage. In any event, as in most Oedipal situations, the father must be disposed of, and in this case that surrogate father is the count, whom Sebastian, in the sense that Ceasario is Sebastian as well as Viola, works to actively remove the Count from the prospects of marrying Viola. In fact, we may think of Ceasario as a third character in the play, a character who embodies both Viola and Sebastian, and who is the agent of their combined wills.

Thus what we see is something that is almost classic in the interpretation of fairytales, the idea of doubling of characters, although with a typically complex Shakespearean twist. For example, a young girl who is playing through the Electra role sees her mother both as an evil influence, out to block access to her father, and a good influence, the mother who has cared for and loved her since birth. The evil side must be disposed of, hence her death early in the child's life, but reappears

represented usually by an evil step-mother, or a witch of some kind. But the girl also realizes that her mother is a helping force as well, and this too turns up in fairytales as the fairy godmother which most people are familiar with, or helping animals, like cows, or trees that have grown on the mother's grave. Thus the fairytales allow us to see the same character in two different manifestations, each as opposite aspects of the original. Or, we may see that the princess must leave her father the King, as in "All Fur," only to marry another King, both which are nameless, and are in fact aspects of the same father figure.

In *Twelfth Night* then, we see the same thing, allowing us to uncover a new level of doubling of characters, and a new level of sophistication to the play. The Duke begins to double as a father figure for Sebastian and Viola both; Sebastian must eliminate him to gain access to Olivia, who doubles as a mother figure to the pair, while the reverse is true for Viola, who must eliminate the mother figure, Olivia, to gain access to the Duke/Father. But Shakespeare doesn't stop there, he expands the dual nature of the characters, for Viola and Sebastian are essentially the same characters, made even more clear because of Viola's disguise.

And it continues, for we note Olivia at first refuses the Duke's overtures of matrimony because *she is grieving for a lost brother*. Thus we see her reject her sexuality as a way of mourning for her brother, which parallels Viola, who must reject her sexuality and take up the guise of a man because she has lost her brother.

Interestingly enough, there is a reversal of a scene from "All Fur," in which Olivia plays the role of All Fur, with Ceasario as the King of that tale. Olivia offers Ceasario her ring, telling him it is his, just as All Fur drops a golden ring into the soup of the King she wishes to marry. By looking at an analysis of that ring motif, we can see exactly what Olivia is offering. Using several different folklore sources, Alan Dundes explains that the ring symbolizes the female genitalia, and reminds us that the ring exchange in a modern wedding ceremony is a survival of this idea which "suggests that marriage allows the man and

woman to manipulate each other's genitals" (Dundes, "The Maiden Without Hands" 136). Thus, Olivia is offering herself sexually to Ceasario, in much the same manner as All Fur offered herself to her King. Ceasario, acting as an agent of Sebastian, refuses the ring, indicating that like his sister, Sebastian is not yet prepared for a mature relationship.

A final note on characterization in the play surrounds Antonio, whose exclusion from the multiple marriages of the finale may bother some readers. Critic Philip McGuire discusses Antonio's silence during the final scene of the play, and we must ask ourselves, is there any way that a fairytale interpretation can help to account for the exclusion of Antonio at the end of the play? The answer is a qualified yes. Because Antonio acts as a helper role to Sebastian, we might see him as a manifestation of the parental figure that is common in the tales. Thus, if we think of each of the main four characters, Olivia, Viola, Orsino, and Sebastian, as being made up of three aspects, parent, sibling, and outsider (someone to whom marriage is socially acceptable), Antonio becomes the repository of those incestuous elements of the doubling, and tripling, that has occurred in the play. In him, we see the friendly aspects of the parents and siblings, and thus he must be excluded from the marriage scenes. Often in fairy tales, when the mother is dead her role of a helper toward the child is transferred to an animal. "In many European and Eastern variation it is a calf, cow, goat, or some other animal into which the dead mother is transformed to become the heroine's magic helper" (Bettelheim 257). This is a rather convoluted and tenuous assessment of his character, for there are very little clues to it in the text itself, but it does help to explain why he must be left out.

In the end, though, we must come back to the question of whether or not looking at the play in this manner has in fact given us a better understanding of the play. It does show us some of the psychological elements that are subtly, and not so subtly, presented in the play, and allows us to see the play as an expression of Viola's inner growth, and the development that allows her to take on a mature role in

society, so the answer to the question should be a definite yes. We can also see that by looking at not just the folktales, but also the criticism around them that our understanding of the play is expanded, allowing us to see an interaction between oral and literary tales that is normally eclipsed.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> While some folklorists may criticize me for referring only to one tale, indeed Dundes does exactly this in his *King Lear* article, I feel that because of the nature of this paper, with its emphasis on the overall structure of *Twelfth Night*, I need only refer to one version, as the interpretations I am using as a basis for my reading of that tale do in fact take into account different versions of the Cinderella tale type. In addition, I am not making a detailed analysis of that tale, in which case different tales with different motifs may influence my reading (There is much criticism of any reading of a tale from the Little Red Riding Hood cycle which places emphasis on the red cap, since it does not always occur in different versions.) Rather, I am using a broad interpretation of the Cinderella cycle, which may be said to be a reading of the tale in its larger sense, while each individual version may have different wrinkles to that interpretation.

<sup>2</sup> In his essay, "To Love My Father All': A Psychoanalytic Study of the Folktale Source of *King Lear*." The summary of the psychoanalytic interpretation of the tale is a combination of the work in this essay, Dundes' essay "The Psychoanalytic Study of the Grimms' Tales with Special Reference to 'The Maiden Without Hands' (AT 706)" and the Bruno Bettelheim book, *The Uses of Enchantment*. For a survey of alternative interpretations of the various Cinderella tale types, see *Cinderella, A Folklore Casebook*, Alan Dundes Editor.

<sup>3</sup> It must be noted that in her listing of various versions of Cinderella, there are no Catskin variants from English sources. There are however two from Scotland and one from Ireland, so there is some

documentation for that variant's existence in Great Britain, if not in England itself. It must also be remembered that she is listing only variants that have been published, and only those from before the year 1892, so it is more than likely that a variant was known in England, and simply not recorded.

<sup>4</sup> Although her study is exclusively devoted to the Grimm's tales, published from 1812-1857 in various editions, it is worth noting that Ruth Bottigheimer points out that "water (or at least certain kinds of water), appertains exclusively to women. Wells, springs, brooks, and streams seem peculiarly under feminine sway" (29). Unfortunately, until someone is hardy enough to take such an in depth examination of all known tales, a project that could take several lifetimes, it is impossible to say that such an association exists for all tales.

<sup>5</sup> We may be reminded of Chaucer's Miller's tale, which came from a folktale source, where we see Absolom, who "thoughte it was amys, / For wel he wiste a womman hath no berd" (ll. 3736-37), after kissing Alison's "naked ers" (l. 3734).

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## The Survival of a Rational Soul: Sir Robert Boyle's Answer to Mutability

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As an age of scientific inquiry and achievement, the seventeenth century fostered a new breed of thinkers who searched for true knowledge through rational deduction from natural fact. Among these "natural philosophers" was Sir Robert Boyle, best remembered for his discoveries in pneumatics and for his impetus in founding the Royal Society. Yet, Boyle's voluminous writings indicate that his interests extended far beyond systematization of natural laws. As he commented in his Preface to "The Christian Virtuoso,"

. . . I do not think the corporeal world, nor the present state of things, the only or the principal subjects that an inquisitive man's pen may be worthily employed about; and that there are some things, that are grounded neither upon mechanical nor upon chemical notices or experiments, that are yet far from deserving to be neglected, and much less to be despised, or so much so as to be left uncultivated. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Like other virtuosi of his day, Boyle did not limit his interests to scientific pursuits and "did not remain cloistered in his laboratory, poking his head out only occasionally" (Fisher 4). He was also a part of

the religious, political, and literary worlds of his century and attempted to dispel the conflicts which inevitably arose as "the New Philosophy" made inroads against orthodoxy and established order. The feeling that conflict must exist between science and religion persisted among non-scientific divines (Hall 33), and chemists considered natural philosophers as "unpractical theorizers" while natural philosophers saw chemists as only "useful to the physician or apothecary" (Boas 266). Harold Fisch's assumption that Boyle's primary goal was to reconcile these warring factions is valid in regard to the chemist's pacifistic temperament and deep religiosity.<sup>2</sup> But the same assumption seems to place him outside the mainstream of thought among leading literary figures of his day who wrestled with the problems of mutability and immutability. Yet, Boyle's essays and meditations reveal his efforts to assure himself of the ability to defeat those forces which the New Science "proved" to be beyond human control. For Sir Robert Boyle, victory over the changeable and not always comprehensible world lay not in progeny, love, fame, or verse but in orthodox Christianity.

J.F. Fulton's contention that Boyle's effort to combine theology and science was not only a weakness of his age but also a weakness of his character (78) is unjustified in light of the philosophic problems which confronted Boyle and his contemporaries. Boyle did not simply cling to the most acceptable and traditional solution by which humankind might triumph over mutability and finiteness. Embracing this intellectual dilemma was a conscious choice worthy of admiration; it was not a sign of weakness. Biographical studies illustrate that, as a young man, Boyle reluctantly pursued experiments in natural philosophy because they took him away from ethical and theological studies to which he was drawn (Hall 47). The tension he felt in focusing his intellectual pursuits reveals his profound effort to abandon neither science nor religion but to link these studies, while maintaining a rational approach to both. His membership in the Invisible College coincided with his intensive study of Biblical texts in their original languages (Fisch 253), but such diverse

interests better typified the spirit of Boyle's Renaissance forbears than an attempt to counterbalance alchemy with faith.

The specific chemical qualities in which Boyle showed the greatest interest—volatility, fixedness, corrosiveness, and corrosibility (Boas 266)—point to his concern with the transience of all things. As a scientist, Boyle accepted, without question, the mutability of the sublunary world governed by immutable natural laws: "our Inferior & Ignobler World, is the stage whereon Inconstancy (perpetually) acts her part in 1000 various Postures . . ." ("Aretology" 59). Even the sight of his ancestral home, ruined by time and war, led him to write "that it serves only for an instance and a lecture of the instability of that happiness, that is built upon the uncertain possession of such fleeting goods as itself was" (1: xii-xiii). In the most delicate of creations Boyle also clearly saw the results of time's destructiveness. In his reflection "Upon His Distilling Spirit of Roses in a Limbick," Boyle recognizes that the "pleasing and sprightly scent, that makes the rose so welcome to us, is as short-lived and perishing as the flower that harbours it is fading . . ." (*Occasionall Reflections* [OR] 3). Like Shakespeare, who envisioned the defeat of decay through distillation of the rose's perfume (Sonnet 54), Boyle sought a method of thwarting time's decay in "the Nobler and abstracted quintessence; which pure and lastinger portion of them, will be more highly fragrant than ordinary roses are wont to be" (OR 3). Yet, the preservation of the rose's odor in no way defied the laws of nature which Boyle believed God imposed.

Whereas worldly possessions were transitory from either "their perishing or ours" (OR 4), physical laws continued unchanged, making nature not far different from the Strausborg clock whose intricate mechanisms recorded unerringly the progress of time.<sup>3</sup> Although Boyle first introduced the metaphor of a clock-work universe, his conception did not imply the next century's image of a disinterested clock-maker deity who, having once fashioned the machine, removed Himself from the world and left the mechanism to run itself. The clock image was, rather, "a way of characterizing the uniformity and coherence of nature

as expressed in physical laws" (McGuire 537). The only discoverable constant for Boyle was law, dictated by God: "Nothing [is] more unalterable than God's decrees, or more un-vary'd than the Motions of the Spheares" ("Aretology" 59). When, however, God chose to change His decrees, the world, as the seventeenth century knew it, would come to an end. This apocalyptic change, as revealed in Scripture, confirmed for Boyle "The Excellency of Theology Compar'd with Natural Philosophy":

And as for the Duration of the World, which was by the old philosophers held to be interminable . . . Theology teaches us expressly from Divine Revelation, that the present course of Nature shall not last always, but that one Day this world (or at least this Vortex of ours) shall either be Abolished by Annihilation or (which seems far more probable) be Innovated, and, as it were, Transfigur'd. . . (22)

As a scientist, therefore, Boyle could not dispute the fact of the world's mutability. As a devout Christian, neither could he disregard the ultimate change which his contemporaries believed might come within their lifetimes. Thus, the "mutability of worldly conditions" made it folly to trust in anything but God:

. . . sure, since a few minutes can turn the healthiest bodies into breathless carcasses, and put those very things, which we had principally relied on, into the hands of our enemies, it were little less than madness to repose a distrustless trust in these transitory possessions, or treacherous advantages, which we enjoy but by so fickle a tenure. (OR 113-14)

Unlike many of his fellow writers, though, Boyle went on to reject love of another person, progeny, and renown as means of breaking free from the bonds of death and mutability. He turned instead to the constancy of God's providence as the primary defense against mutability.

In *The Excellency of Theology Compar'd With Natural Philosophy*, Boyle insists that only benefits of religion "reach beyond the End of Time it self," and all philosophies "devis'd for the service of the Body" will, within a short time, not concern man at all (137-38).

Not only did Boyle contend that the benefits derived from theology surpassed all man-made philosophies, but they also surpassed the benefits "that accrue from Physicks" (*Excellency* 135). Such a stand might seem unexpected from a natural philosopher, but, true to the method of scientific inquiry, Boyle would not ignore facts. Boyle notes that even the most knowledgeable scientist of history, Paracelsus, could not prolong his own life with the cures of his science and died before the age of fifty (*Excellency* 136). Observing the clouds of the sky, Boyle could not refrain from concluding that even the most exalted might fall down as does the rain or might disappear as quickly and completely as a cloud does in the dome of heaven (*OR* 42-43). In addition, his dissections of cadavers had done more than amaze him with the complexities of human anatomy. These investigations also made him more conscious of the individual's finite nature:

. . . within no great number of years, (a little sooner, or a little later) all the Remedies, and Reliefs, and Pleasures, and Accommodations, that Philosophical Improvements can afford a man, will not keep him from the grave, (which within a very few days will make the body of the greatest Virtuoso as hideous and as loathsome a Carcass as that of any ordinary man;). . . (*Discourse* 7)

Such a thought is neither pessimistic nor ghoulish; Boyle had merely come to accept what every person must sometime face—the inevitability of one's own death. Boyle wrote to his sister that his studies in physiology and the onset of his disease made him no longer amazed at the vulnerability of humans to death (*OR* 15). The body was, after all, a very complicated machine that could easily get out of order:

. . . I could not have been surprised that so curious an engine, that consists of so many pieces, whose harmony is requisite to health, and whereof not any is superfluous, nor scarce any insensible, should have some or other of them out of order; it being no more strange that a man's body should be subject to pain or sickness, than that an instrument with above a thousand strings (if there were any such) should frequently be out of tune. . . . (*OR* 15)

Boyle, then, accounts it a human fault to be surprised at one's demise, for "if we consider death only as the conclusion of life, and a debt all men sooner or later pay to nature; not only a Christian, but a man may entertain it without fear . . ." (*OR* 36).

The fear of death Boyle attributed to our failure to recognize the limitations of human reason. In *A Discourse of Things Above Reason*, Boyle divides into three classes the so-called "Privileged Things"—those things rightfully belonging to God but surpassing human understanding: (1) the Incomprehensible, including the nature of God, (2) the Inexplicable, such as the infinite divisibility of matter, and (3) the Unsociable, characterized in moral considerations like the reconciliation of free will to God's prescience (7). The finiteness of the human mind prohibited comprehension of such things in both the macrocosm and in the newly discovered microscopic world. In both directions lay an infinitude of space beyond human conception. Boyle writes that "we may by trial perceive that we cannot conceive them [the dimensions of space] so great, but that they may be yet greater. . . ." The "duly instructed" mind would "discern that some objects are disproportionate to her" (*Discourse* 68-69). Besides the dimensions of space, an understanding of eternity was closed to human understanding. In the words of Sophronius, Boyle expressed this idea:

But I will propose somewhat that cannot be denied, which is, that some substance or other, whether, as I believe, God, or as the Peripateticks say, the World, or as the Epicureans

contend, Matter, never had a beginning, that is, has been for ever. But when we speak of an eternity a parte ante (as they call it) we do not speak of a thing whereof we have no conception at all . . . and yet this general notion we have is such, that when we come attentively to examine it, by the same ways by which we judge of almost all other things, the Intellect is non-plu'sd. (*Discourse 42-43*)

This state of confusion, which results from contemplating eternity, manifests itself in two ways—confidence in one's ability to unravel the mysteries stretching back into time and fear of one's inability to comprehend the mysteries which lay beyond death. The only consolation available was a trust in the unchanging love of God and an acceptance of humankind's finity:

. . . for we men mistake and flatter Human Nature too much, when we think our faculties of Understanding so unlimited, both in point of capacity and of extent, and so free and unpreposset, as many Philosophers seem to suppose: For, whatever our self-love may incline us to imagine, we are really but created and finite Beings. . . . (*Discourse 19*)

In Boyle's opinion, therefore, a reasonable person cannot fear the death of the physical being, for that is the consequence of nature. What one fears in death is the finitude of the soul.

In order to stave off this fear, Boyle first advocates that the individual live virtuously so as to be among the "Many that would not fear to be put out of the world, [but] will apprehend to be let into eternity" (*OR 36*). Boyle would conclude that to live virtuously is to provide a model by which one may transcend temporal confinement, even if life proves to be short:

. . . since we must all die, and the question is not whether or not we will live for ever, but whether we will endeavor to lead

a life mean and unprofitable a few more days, or a glorious life for somewhat less number of them; I should rather chuse to spend my life quickly than uselessly. (*OR 154*)

Men involved in constant diversion, Boyle writes, seek to lengthen their lives and "make their lives thereby useless, but not at all immortal" (*OR 152*). But, proper utilization of those "little fragments, or parcels of time" which fill our days will also remove the fears of total annihilation (2: 337). Boyle abhorred the squandering of time, the earthly allotment of which was so limited, and believed that through meditation the "devout soul may not only rescue these precious fragments of time, but procure eternity with them" (2: 338). Meditation on death served as a spy-glass whereby the subject of death was clarified and the individual made more ready to receive it. Yet, death was not drawn any nearer (*OR 12*). Although Boyle admits that he has "yet a pretty stock of sand in the upper part of [his] hour glass" (*OR 13*), he insists that a greater familiarity with the unknown makes it less fearful:

. . . for though most men as studiously shun all thoughts of death, as if, like nice acquaintances, he would forbear to visit where he knows he is never thought of, or as if we could exempt ourselves from being mortal, by forgetting that we are so; yet does this meditation bring death nearer to us, without at all lessening the real distance betwixt us and him. (*OR 12*)

Meditation about death could not, of course, make our limited reason capable of fully understanding eternity, but it could enlighten us about the souls we so fear to lose.

Boyle argues in "The Christian Virtuoso" that the soul is separate from the rational faculties and is peculiar to human beings. Through scientific hypotheses, Boyle convinces himself that this soul must be incorporeal and neither divisible nor transposable (5: 518). The soul, he proposes, exists simply as one of the six functions of the brain, but he

makes a clear distinction between a corporeal and rational soul. The corporeal soul, mechanical in nature and corpuscular in character, manifests itself in common sense and imagination (6: 741) This aspect of the brain, as assuredly as the animal spirits, memory, and the senses, perishes with the body. The immaterial rational soul, however, survives the death of the body since it houses the understanding, perfected by knowledge, and the will, perfected by goodness (2: 5). The development of this "rational soul" offers the only chance of defeating death and is intricately bound up with meditation (to obtain understanding) and virtuous living (the assertion of the will toward goodness). The rational soul, as the highest function of the brain, is equated with the mind (as opposed to the physical grey matter called "the brain"), and, since its essential activity is thought, death cannot end its power of thinking:

. . . the rational soul is a being of a higher order than corporeal; and consequently, that the seat of these spiritual faculties, and the source of these operations, is a substance, that being in its own nature distinct from the body, is not naturally subject to die or perish with it. (5: 517)

Boyle insists that the natural philosopher should most readily accept the immortality of the soul and the resultant immortality of thought because, more than the ordinary individual, the natural philosopher knows the "real causes of putrefaction, and other physical kinds of corruption" (5: 517), none of which can affect an immaterial spirit. Thus, the person who is attentive to the Scriptural promise of God and who cultivates a rational soul has nothing to fear in the finiteness of human existence, and even less to fear when contemplating eternity.

On the subject of resurrection, though, Boyle was less confident that theorizing from natural fact was sufficient to confirm what theology clearly taught: "bare Natural Reason will scarce be pretended to reach to so abstruse and difficult an Article as that of a Resurrection" (*Excellency* 23-24). Yet, in his discourse "Some Physico-Theological Considerations

about the Possibility of the Resurrection," Boyle develops, from natural phenomena and "bare Natural Reason," a defense of resurrection. He seems far less concerned that the body and soul should be reunited than that individual identity should be preserved. The impulse underlying this concern is certainly a human one, for even belief in the survival of a rational soul could not guarantee that an entity identifiable as Robert Boyle would exist beyond death. Having studied cadavers, Boyle knew and admitted that some parts of the body became integrated with the air, and some soft parts underwent decay until no trace was left of them (4: 195). How then could a human being retain identity beyond death?

The answer for Boyle lay in the distinction between "identity" and "sameness." He argues that the identity of a single entity is independent of its change in form, as is easily discoverable in the natural world. For example, a flame consumes matter continuously and constantly changes its form, yet it is still flame. In a larger context, Rome continues as the city in spite of the rise and fall of generations of conquerors. Boyle's analogy is perhaps most effective when extended to the Thames River since a river is the conventional motif for life's flow:

Thus the Thames is said to be the *same* river that it was in the time of our forefathers, though indeed the water that now runs under London Bridge is *not the same* that ran there an hour ago and is quite other than that which will run there an hour hence. (4: 193)

Boyle, therefore, unlike some of the poets of his day,<sup>4</sup> found a permanence within the inconstancy of the material world. The transformation of forms, but retention of identity traits, was a chemical fact which Boyle considered applicable to the spiritual world. If acidic weeds eaten by cows retained their acidity even in the milk, if gold was recoverable from its compounds in which no trace of the metallic substance was visible (4: 196-97), why could not identity be recoverable after death had altered the human form? Boyle concedes that the

resurrection of which he speaks is not the reuniting of parts in the same way they had previously existed in the human body, but a man is still a man whether he is an embryo, baby, adult, or decrepit old man (4: 196). Boyle's hypothesis implies yet another step—a man is still a man beyond death. "Sameness" is not requisite to "identity." To assume such would be to deny the fact of the body's mortality:

And first, I consider that a human body is not as a statue of brass or marble, that may continue as to sense, whole ages in a permanent state; but is in a perpetual flux or changing condition, since it grows in all its parts, and all its dimensions.

... (4: 196)

It is only expected that Boyle should discuss resurrection from a "physico-theological" standpoint since he was convinced that these approaches were neither mutually exclusive nor in opposition to one another. The resurrection toward which both modes of thought pointed would be accomplished through the reuniting of an immortal, rational soul with a metamorphosed body. Defeat of death, then, was in the immutability of identity, a thing which would continue to exist prior to, as well as after, the apocalypse promised in the Book of Revelation.

Robert Boyle's confidence in both science and religion thereby provided him with a unique method by which he grappled with the philosophic problems of his age. He did not stand apart from those poets who devoted much of their verse to the transitoriness of the sublunary world and who searched for a way in which we might transcend temporality. Boyle's similar concerns with the sway of fortune, the use of limited time, and the survival of the soul were significant, although they are often overlooked or hidden beneath the vast scientific treatises he composed. Boyle was confident that, in spite of our finite reasoning and the incomprehensibility of eternity, a belief in orthodox Christianity would propel the individual beyond the confines of time and the threat of mutability. Thus, the leading chemist of the seventeenth century

envisioned the individual rising phoenix-like from the ashes, not the same as before but still the individual that was before.



## Stone Walls, Iron Bars, and Liberal Political Theory: Lovelace's "To Althea, from Prison"

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. . . political language is by its nature ambivalent . . . any text or simpler utterance in a sophisticated political discourse is by its nature polyvalent; it consists in the employment of a texture of languages capable of saying different things and of favoring different ways of saying things . . . (Pocock 8-9)

Generally conceded to be a minor poet in contrast to his great contemporaries, Richard Lovelace nevertheless produced some of the most memorable individual *lines* in English poetry, recognized by people who have little knowledge of or interest in poetry and who certainly know nothing about the man who wrote them. The pithy memorability of such lines as "I could not love thee half so much / Loved I not honor more" and "Stone walls do not a prison make / Nor iron bars a cage" have insured the poet's continued representation in anthologies for 300 years. But just what is it that Lovelace communicates through his poetry?

Both "To Lucasta, Going to Wars" and "To Althea, from Prison," the sources of Lovelace's famous lines, seem to epitomize the

"Cavalier spirit," associated by most critics with a stoic or epicurean attitude toward life (Anselment 104; Hartmann 45; Weidhorn 58). Weidhorn states that both poems "celebrate man's dignity through the triumph of spirit over flesh" (97-98). My particular focus in this essay will be on "To Althea, from Prison," in which Lovelace, himself imprisoned twice for opposing parliament, presents a persona<sup>1</sup> who is resigned to his fate, determined to bear all and not to despair. This speaker asserts that bodily imprisonment does not confine his spirit, which remains free to enjoy the pleasures of women, wine, and song in the first three stanzas. Read in this manner, the poem seems indeed to sustain the epicurean world view attributed to the Cavaliers.

Having said this, we seem close to having exhausted the possibilities of the poem, a staple of survey courses but rarely the subject of extended scholarly analysis. For instance, the complete analysis of "To Althea, from Prison" as it appears in the most recent (though more than 20 years old) book-length study of Lovelace's poetry and career, occupies one paragraph:

The greatest of prison poems, 'To Althea. From Prison' defies analysis. As with all great art, its essence is simplicity, seeming artlessness obtained from polish and care. Built on a Cavalier antithesis of bodily confinement and spiritual liberty, it comes to express 'the triumph of mind over matter' in words 'simple and profound, limpid and musical.' The first three stanzas examine the theme in three different ways, each one concluding with the paradox that the imprisoned man has greater liberty than have the free creatures and forces of nature. 'Know no such liberty' is the refrain. The three prison pastimes, the means to spiritual freedom and happiness, are the standard ones—women, wine, song—celebrated by hedonists from Anacreon through Goliard and Burns to the latest 'Beat' poet . . . (Weidhorn 60)

However, read against the history of ideas, Lovelace's poem appears to

express neither stoicism nor epicureanism, to be more than the last gasp of the courtly, chivalric world view as it yielded to a more bourgeois, less genteel England after the civil war. As much as it may derive from a collapsing sociopolitical world, the poem also reflects the emerging political philosophy that was to develop over the next century or so into classical liberalism.

Lovelace's poem begins as a celebration of love. In the first stanza, the only one to specifically address Althea, love, which itself captures the cavalier's heart, remains free, and thus prison cannot reduce his spirit:

When I lie tangled in her hair  
And fettered to her eye,  
The gods that wanton in the air  
Know no such liberty.

The second stanza is an anacreontic, again a mark of epicurean philosophy as it celebrates the freedom that comes from drink.

It is the third stanza that specifically situates the paradox of imprisoned freedom within a political context. This stanza does indeed celebrate song, which Weidhorn calls a "prison pastime" universally celebrated by hedonists as a means to spiritual freedom (60). But it is not just *any* song that Lovelace employs to free his mind from its cage; it is a song in praise of the king—the very king who is himself imprisoned and soon to be executed by the parliamentary forces. His verse celebrates "The sweetness, mercy, majesty, / And glories of my King." Freedom comes from the speaker's continued ability to "voice aloud how good / He is, how great should be"; that is, freedom does not derive not from song alone, but from a specifically political song, a song opposed to a state authority that does not want to hear its message. It is indeed ironic that the state authority in this case belongs to a nominal republic, but that irony does not diminish the fact that the song celebrates an independent conscience in opposition to repressive force.

The final stanza makes its powerful claim, "Stone walls do not a prison make, / Nor iron bars a cage," in the specific context of spiritual freedom. Prison becomes a refuge for "minds innocent and quiet," as the speaker asserts his continued freedom *to* love and *in* his soul. The body may be captive, but the mind and soul are free; and in that freedom, the mind celebrates a different political order than that which imprisons the body.

From the perspective of 20th-century America, it is difficult to envision Lovelace as a proponent of "liberal" values. Did he not, after all, serve the monarchy, in opposition to a "democratic" parliament? Liberalism, of course, opposes monarchy, primarily because of its inherent fear of state tyranny. In supporting the King, isn't Lovelace espousing an essentially conservative social philosophy? How, then, can he be "liberal" in any recognizable sense? On the other hand, what is to be the position of "liberalism" when the tyranny comes from a nominal republic?

Although liberal thought prefers a limited democracy as long as it provides safeguards against the tyranny of the majority, it is suspicious of unlimited democracy as a potential threat to individual liberty, property, and culture (Arblaster 78). There is thus at least a theoretical justification for a liberalism that accepts monarchy, provided that the monarchy is more protective of the essentially private liberties than the alternative democracy would be. From this principle, we get the 20th-century preference for dictators who safeguard private property over more popular, democratic movements that seek to nationalize industry or to redistribute wealth.

Hobbes, though not typically associated with liberalism, bases his argument on empirical premises and assumptions about the nature of humanity consistent with liberalism. Although his conclusions supported monarchy, monarchists of his time attacked his process of reasoning (Arblaster 132); his conception of liberty as the absence of external impediments to individual satisfaction of their desires has been approvingly cited by liberal thinkers down to the present (Arblaster 137).

Hobbes's problematic status in the history of what was to become liberalism proves nothing about Lovelace's position, of course, but it does at least suggest that the possibility of monarchist and "liberal" ideas coexisting.

Sams has described the development and spread of a new political philosophy emphasizing the freedom of the individual—what we would today recognize as liberalism—as "[p]erhaps the most important single development in seventeenth-century England" (65). The emphasis on individual freedom, in particular freedom of conscience, affected all spheres of intellectual life. Correlated with this movement was a distaste for what the 17th century was apt to perceive as stoic apathy, resulting from classical stoicism's de-emphasis on feeling (Sams 65-67).

As Sams notes, this general anti-stoicism certainly doesn't preclude elements of stoical philosophy from making themselves felt in English thought (77-78), but it should make us very cautious about attributing Lovelace's expression of paradoxical freedom while in prison to a kind of stoic endurance. Furthermore, insofar as stoicism sought to escape from emotions<sup>2</sup> in the interest of greater intellectual rigor, it seems opposed to the underlying impulse behind the Cavalier philosophy, which Hartmann identifies as an emotional rather than a reasoned attachment to king and country (55). Indeed, many Cavaliers supported the king despite their intellectual adherence to principles of consent more aligned with republican government.

Epicureanism, which sought to avoid excessively strong emotions as impediments to the pursuit of pleasure, seems a more likely source for Lovelace's dissociation of the imprisoned body and the liberated mind; but epicureans, unlike stoics, specifically sought disengagement from the political world (Weidhorn 50). Such disengagement, it has been argued, is also a strain in liberal thought, particularly after the disillusionment of the French Revolution. However, Lovelace's claim for liberty of *political* conscience, the right to apply individual judgment to the state, belongs to early liberalism, which sought political reformation rather than simply individual autonomy. His imprisoned persona does not seek

disengagement, but rather wishes to continue political engagement through the praise of God and king.

In the early documents of what might be called proto-liberalism, we find Lovelace's prison imagery anticipated.<sup>3</sup> No less a figure than Descartes used the image of prison to advocate contentment with our physical condition, provided we have a free mind:

. . . our will tending naturally to desire only what our intellect represents to it as in some way possible, it is certain that, if we consider all of the goods that are outside us as equally beyond our power, we should have no more regrets about lacking what seems owed to us. . . . Thus, making a virtue of necessity, as they say, we shall no more desire to be healthy if we are sick, or to be free if we are in prison, than we would desire to have a body made of matter as incorruptible as diamonds. . . . (*Discourse on Method* 14)

Arblaster finds in this Cartesian fatalism<sup>4</sup> "one of the philosophical roots of the tendency within liberalism towards withdrawal from public action into the private world of meditation and resignation" (127). Descartes's use of this prison figure tends as much toward stoicism as Lovelace's poem; but we are accustomed to see the one as the precursor of a new world view, the other as the remnant of an older, and so attribute the thought to different ideologic structures.

Arblaster argues that a key move in the development of liberalism was to separate the idea of "liberty" from its historically civic tradition—i.e., freedom within the state—and to recast it as a private, spiritual freedom—as freedom *of thought*—a freedom that cannot be abridged by mere bodily incarceration (99). Descartes's use of the prison image fits within this newer tradition, but so does Lovelace's, once we recognize the focus of poetic energy as political independence rather than mere stoic endurance.

It is, of course, impossible to establish the philosophy underlying

the poet's lines from his choice of imagery alone. Weidhorn notes that the concept that the mind, not external reality, controls human happiness is common to several belief systems, including Buddhism and Christianity as well as stoicism (but he does not specifically connect the idea to *any* realm of political thought), and is a common subject of poetry; the claim has never been that Lovelace's ideas were original, only that they were extraordinarily well expressed in this poem (Weidhorn 61-62).

Liberalism itself remains an extremely slippery philosophy, a shifting rather than a fixed ideology that has moved from one pole to another on more than one issue in its long history. Nevertheless, its history can be traced through specific common features, of which individual freedom and independent conscience have been described as "the twin foundations of Liberal philosophy and the element of continuity in its historical development" (Alan Bullock and Maurice Shock, *The Liberal Tradition*, qtd. in Arblaster 11). Liberalism appears as a kind of secular religion in which "conscience alone" has moral standing (Arblaster 17). Early in its evolution, Pocock argues, liberalism adopted a perspective of political life centered on "individual as a private being," with government primarily to protect private, individual rights (60). Government that threatened individual autonomy was to be opposed; monarchy or any rule by a small number tended to be more threatening to this autonomy than a limited democracy.

Paradoxically, Lovelace's claim for individual liberty of thought would lead to a seemingly anti-liberal social order: the restoration of the king. But the significance of terms such as "liberal" or "conservative" during the early 17th century is problematic, at best. To the liberal, when that elusive historic personage was to appear, "[t]he individual must have the right to believe what he chooses to believe, to express those beliefs publicly and to act in accordance with them, in so far as such rights are compatible with others holding and exercising the same rights, and with the existing framework of laws and lawful institutions" (Arblaster 58). Choosing between the court and parliamentary parties in

the early 17th century, it seems fairly clear that the *court* was more supportive of independent thought than were the Puritans, who suppressed religious expressions they disapproved of during their rule and sought to impose a rigidly Calvinist moral code. Certainly, the tolerance that was to become another of the liberal virtues was more evident in the Stuart court; many of the king's supporters were far more "protestant" in the key area of religious conscience than Charles himself, but sided with the crown out of institutional loyalty to the throne rather than ideology (Weidhorn 18; Hartmann 23,33).

In 1649, the newly established Commonwealth required that all adult males make a positive statement of loyalty to government (Pennington 308)—allowing no room for individual consciences that might be offended by the execution of the king and conclude that a government constructed on such a foundation had no legal basis. Indeed, it was to counter such concerns that Milton published, in the same year, his justification of tyrannicide, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (Pennington 309). But loyalty oaths are anathema to the liberal concept of individual freedom.

If liberalism is associated with progress or change and the rejection of tradition, as it has tended to be throughout its intellectual history, then a case can be made that the Cavaliers were in fact far more "liberal" than the parliamentary party. Coward argues that, to understand 17th-century politics, "one has to make a great mental leap from the prevalent current assumption that new ideas and ways are better than old, to an age in which old ideas and ways were automatically thought to be better than new ones" (Coward 21). He traces the conflict between crown and parliament to Charles' proposed changes, necessary (from the royalist point of view) to maintain the state, and notes that many eventual adherents to the Roundhead party swore loyalty to the king right up until the Civil War. It is noteworthy that the members of the Long Parliament of the 1640s claimed that *they* were the conservatives, the court party the "revolutionary" side; however, few believed them then or since (Coward 22). For example, Hill has argued that widespread censorship in the

period leading up to the Civil War made many opponents of the crown reluctant to express their true sentiments in writing, even in private: "The views which could be expressed were not the only views which were held" (51). Thus, expressions of support for the king may have been less solid than first appears. Coward, though, suggests that the Long Parliamentarians may have had it right: "The English Revolution in 1648-9 was led by men who were conservatives in social and political attitudes but who were religious radicals" (30).

It is probably not possible or even advisable to attach a "liberal" label to Lovelace or, indeed, any political or literary figure of the time; the term "liberal" itself was not used to describe a particular political position for another 150 years. But this poem's emphasis on freedom of thought and of conscience certainly is consonant with other philosophical and literary texts from the period that *are* included in the history of liberal ideas. At the least, Lovelace's poem must be read against the full range of ideas that were circulating in 17th-century England, not just as one of the last expressions of a dying world.<sup>5</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Weidhorn suggests that the poem may not reflect Lovelace's own documented prison experience, but rather that the prison imagery is an imaginative construction to express the philosophy that underlies the poem (59).

<sup>2</sup> "For the Stoics, the criteria of conscience were internal and reasonable, arrived at by a delicate intellectual process which emotion would render impossible" (Sams 67).

<sup>3</sup> Descartes's *Discourse on Method* appeared in 1637, while "To Althea, from Prison" was published in 1649.

<sup>4</sup> "Fatalism" here in the sense that only our thoughts are within our own power, and all other events and actions are contingent on other conditions.

<sup>5</sup> The ideas presented in this paper were in part developed with support from the National Endowment for the humanities through its Summer Seminar program.

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## Mary Rowlandson and 17th Century Meditational Literature

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I must confess, that I feel like an interloper at this conference in more ways than one. Not only am I from that faraway alien place called Connecticut, but I am about to attempt to push the definition of "Early British Literature" by incorporating a writer usually considered one of America's own. With the on-going revision of the canon, scholars have scratched and scrambled to find women they can insert into the discussion. Mary Rowlandson and her compelling narrative of captivity by the Indians certainly deserves a place. But in the rush to make the canon more co-ed, so to speak, I think scholars are in too big a hurry to isolate and "feminize" Rowlandson and ignore British literary roots and traditions that may have helped to shape her story.

Mary Rowlandson was probably born in Somerset, England in 1637 and was the child of John and Joan White. Kathryn Derounian and David Greene suggest the family immigrated to New England in 1639. According to Greene, Joseph Rowlandson, a clergyman, and Mary were probably married in 1656 in Salem, Massachusetts and had four children, one of whom died in infancy before the events of the narrative.

Joseph, a ministerial colleague of the Mathers was assigned to the frontier near Lancaster where a small colony was established.

In February 1676 a war party of Narragansetts struck Lancaster,

Massachusetts, in apparent retaliation for a colonist attack on an Indian warrior in Swansea. After the Indians plundered the settlement, killing many, Mrs. Rowlandson and several of her children were taken captive for 11 weeks before they were ransomed. Rev. Rowlandson escaped the fate of the rest of his family because he had returned to Boston for supplies and fortifications and was absent when the settlement was attacked. He, along with the influential Mather family, played a key role in arranging the ransom of his loved ones.

The narrative was written and published at least six years later after the family had moved to Wethersfield, Connecticut, where Rev. Rowlandson took up a new pastorate. It was apparently originally appended to the minister's final sermon, "The possibility of God's forsaking a people, that have been visibly near and dear to him, together the misery of a people thus forsaken," and published in 1682 by his grateful congregation after his death. While a complete first edition of the entire work printed in Massachusetts does not survive, in the second, third and fourth editions printed in London the same year, the narrative is sandwiched in between her husband's lengthy sermon and the highly rhetorical and religious "Preface to the Reader" written by "Per amicum" and generally credited to Increase Mather.

Although the title page, printed in London, clearly sensationalizes the captivity, I believe the tenor of the work taken in its entirety was intended to form a protestant meditation made popular by Richard Baxter in *The Saints Everlasting Rest* published in 1650 and others. Meditation, long a Catholic practice, was also practiced widely by both Puritan men and women to assist in their salvation. There is a close link between sermons of the day and the more personal meditation often viewed as a form of preaching to oneself. I would like to argue these meditative techniques influence the way Mary perceives and writes about her experience and the way she describes her surroundings and captors. Some scholars chose to consider Mary's narrative as an entirely separate entity divorced from the men's writing that accompanies it. These critics such as Derounian and Breitwieser credit nuances in the work to

"survivor syndrome" and other 20th century psychological phenomena. I think, however, Mary's story must be considered as an integral part of the works that surround it and in light of the meditative tradition.

Louis Martz in his seminal work *The Poetry of Meditation* and later Barbara Lewalski in *Protestant Poetics in the Seventeenth Century Religious Lyric* set forth paradigms that may be useful in the examination of the three-part work as a whole. Martz suggests that meditation is an "intense, imaginative process that brings together the senses, the emotions and the intellectual faculties of man; brings them together in a moment of dramatic, creative experience" (Martz 1). Third generation New England Puritans may have needed such an experience. Backsliding was prevalent and pastors were afraid they were losing control of their flocks. In his sermon, Joseph Rowlandson warned that God will forsake those who forsake him adding, "the Lord is wont to give warning"(40). Taken in the context of the tripartite work, Mary's story is that vivid and sensational warning. Audiences may have become inured to the hundreds of polemic admonitions issued by clergyman and the prominence of Mary's tale in the 1682 title page may have been an effort to stimulate new interest in a fairly routine religious message.

Besides serving as an exemplum, Mary's tale makes use of a variety of seventeenth century meditative techniques. Meditation, according to Martz, commonly touched a variety of subjects which not exclusively included: knowledge of ourselves and sin, the miseries of life, the hour of death, the Day of Judgement, the pains of Hell, the glory and felicity of the kingdom of heaven, the benefit of God and the Passion of Christ. In addition, Lewalski identifies two more elements that especially characterize Protestant meditation—the use of the Bible and a "particular kind of application to the self"(148).

Most of these elements can be identified in Mary's work, although time permits me only to focus only on a few in this discussion.

First, most seventeenth century meditations start with an attention grabbing, startling statement. Mrs. Rowlandson dramatically starts her tale in the midst of an ardent battle—"On the tenth of February 1675 came

the Indians with great numbers upon Lancaster."

There are a plethora of biblical quotations. In her 20,000 word narrative, Rowlandson draws on Scripture more than eighty times in the form of direct quotations, allusions to biblical characters, or echoes of biblical phrases and reduces "a complex of religious beliefs, philosophical concepts, and historical experiences to a single, compelling, symbolic ritual drama" (Slotkin 101). Throughout the narrative, Rowlandson follows the protestant meditative tradition of applying scripture to her personal situation. Near the beginning of the narrative, one of the Indians gives her a Bible he has taken in plunder in a raid on a white settlement. Mrs. Rowlandson immediately starts reading Scripture, first of trials and curses then, by finding verses that promise mercy for those who "return to him by repentance, and, though we were scattered from one end of the earth to the other, yet the Lord would gather us together and turn all those curses upon our enemies" (41). She concludes her thoughts on the Bible by saying "I do not desire to live to forget this scripture and what comfort it was to me."

Mary knows herself very well and provides a thorough examination of her conscience. Her work takes on an almost confessional tone when she writes

Before I knew what affliction meant, I was ready sometime to wish for it. When I lived in prosperity, having the comforts of the world about me, my relations by me, my heart cheerful, and taking little care for anything, and yet seeing many whom I preferred before myself under many trials and afflictions, in sickness, weakness, poverty, losses, crosses, and cares of the world, I should be sometimes jealous lest I should have my portion in this life. . . . Affliction I wanted and affliction I had full measure, I thought, pressed down and running over.  
(Vaughan 75)

There is no question that Mary is focusing on the miseries of life in her section of the work. Her story of everyday life is a violent one



that in some ways reflects the trials in the life of Christ as detailed in the Passion. If Mary's work is considered a part of a whole, her story takes the place of the Passion in the meditative structure. Protestants, while perhaps unwilling to meditate on the more Catholic Passion and life of Christ, were encouraged to detail the suffering in their own life as a parallel to Christ's suffering by earlier meditative writers such as Baxter. Like Christ, Mary suffers atrocities that are almost beyond endurance. Her God tests her in harsh and brutal ways. Her God is the God of the poet John Donne who asserts in the Holy Sonnets, "Batter my heart three person'd God; for, you / As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend; / That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee,'and bend / Your force to breake, blowe, burn and make me new" (ll. 1-4). Donne calls for his Lord to take him captive and to "Divorce mee,'untie or breake that knot againe' / Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I / Except you 'enthral mee, never shall be free, / Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee" (ll. 11-14).

While Rowlandson carefully notes she was never sexually violated by her captives, she almost seems to exult in her captivity, refusing to flee until she is officially ransomed by her husband. She clearly sees her experience as an expression of the divine and as a chance to look beyond "present and smaller troubles and to be quieted under them." She ends her narrative by quoting Moses in Exodus "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" (14.13, KJV).

During the course of her captivity, Rowlandson is cold, hungry and watches with horror as her child dies after suffering for nine days. The death of her child provides yet another vehicle for meditation. Rowlandson relates how she sits with the child and bears the ordeal only after contemplating the Psalms. She details how the Indians threaten to "knock the child in the head" to end her suffering immediately. Rowland sits in a wigwam "with the picture of death in my lap. After two hours in the night my sweet babe like a lamb departed this life. . . ." Rowlandson confesses that she has an aversion to dead bodies but in this case, "I must and could lie down by my dead babe side by side all the

night after. I have thought since of the wonderful goodness of God to me in preserving me in the use of my reason and senses in that distressed time that I did not use wicked and violent means to end my own miserable life." Such thoughts seem to echo Jonson's description of his mental state on the demise of his children.

While he is not usually closely associated to the formal, Christian, meditative tradition, Ben Jonson none the less contemplates and mourns the loss of his children in several poems including, "On My First Son" and "On My First Daughter." Rowlandson's description of her daughter's burial echoes Jonson's experience in the death of his child. Rowlandson writes "I asked them what they had done with it. Then they told me it was upon the hill. Then they went and showed me where it was, where I saw the ground was newly digged, and there they told me they had buried it. There I left the child in the wilderness and must commit it and myself also in this wilderness condition to Him who is above all" (39). It seems somewhat hard to believe that moments after the Indians who are described as "barbarians" they are able to replicate a traditional Puritan burial in which the deceased are placed in a grave on the top of a hill so they can be closer to God. While the Jonson poem is not expressly Christian, Rowlandson's narrative seems to reflect Jonson's lines when he describes a grave that "partakes the fleshly birth. / Which couer lightly, gentle earth" (ll. 11-12).

Finally, Rowlandson uses her section of the narrative to meditate and explicate the meaning of pride after her husband warns of its perils. In his sermon, Joseph warns against the sin of "horrid pride" stating "It serves to admonish us not to bear ourselves too high on account of priviledges." In the Preface, Mather carefully notes that while the narrative is one "of the wonderfully awful, wise, holy, powerful and gracious providence of God towards that worthy and precious gentlewoman," he quickly adds that she had no part in its publication seeking no self aggrandizement. Instead, "Per Amicum" explains that it is

altogether unmeet that such works of God should be hid from present and future generations: and therefore through this gentlewoman modestly would not thrust it unto the Press, yet her gratitude unto God, made her not persuable to let it pass, that God might have his due glory and others benefit by it as well as her selfe.

During her captivity Mary finds the Indians a very proud lot and uses the example of the wife of the sachem to make her point. She describes the squaw as a "severe and proud dame" who every day dressed herself "neat as any of the gentry of the land, powdering her hair and painting her face, going with necklaces, with jewels in her ears and bracelets upon her hands." The squaw's job was to make jewelry and ornaments, an occupation Rowlandson seems to hold in some disdain. Rowlandson carefully notes that while she engages in the commerce of the community, she keeps herself employed in a trade suitable for a Puritan "Good Wife." Rowlandson knits socks and sews a shift in exchange for a serviceable hat, handkerchief and an apron. She describes herself as attired in a "poor and distressed and beggarly condition."

There are many other correlations between the text of Rowlandson's narrative and the more expressly religious preface and sermon of the 1682 edition. They deserve further study and I am in the process of completing this analysis as part of my doctoral dissertation at the University of Connecticut. My study will trace the importance of the narratives in the development of American Literature. Although I am still very much that Americanist interloper at this delightful conference, I think the British roots of these works cannot be ignored. As for Mary Rowlandson, for a time, scholars believed she died shortly after her husband, Joseph. A review of Connecticut Historical society documents and town records in Wethersfield, however, have revealed she lived many years after the publication of her narrative. She married Captain Samuel Talcott and believed to have survived until at least 1710.

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## Woman Satirists of the Eighteenth Century: Towards a New Aesthetic?

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In her poem, "To the Same: On her desiring the Author to write a Satire upon her," Mary Jones (d. 1778) pretends to try, unsuccessfully, to write a satire about her friend in order to write a satire on satire. The poem begins with the author mocking the imagined satirist's motives:

Full of myself, resolv'd to rail  
I summon'd all my pride;  
Ill-nature form'd th' invidious tale,  
And rage its aid supply'd.

By the poem's end, Mary Jones has shifted from the position of satirist to one of informal panegyrist, with the latter role implied to be a more satisfactory and fitting one for the author:

Keen satire now, with softened gaze  
Unbends her wrinkled brow;  
And looks serenely generous praise,  
Who never praised till now.

Although the mock role of satire in these lines works to highlight the degree of praise the poem offers, the poem also clearly comments on the problem of satire as a genre. In this age in which many women writers found themselves battling blatant misogyny, Mary Jones may be subtly questioning her role as a wit. But even clearer is her questioning of a dominant genre of the time, one that we today associate primarily if not exclusively with male writers of the early century. Just as Mary Jones was not alone in defending her role as a writer and wit, so she was not alone among the women writers of her time in self-consciously questioning the purposes and effects of the satiric mode, often even as they write in it.

Now, satire may be, by definition of its intentions, the most self-conscious of literary forms for all writers, for the very purpose of satire—to attack vice or foolishness—sets out a potentially antagonistic and thus divisive relationship between the writer and the imagined or real audience. We are familiar with the elaborate fictions which authors of satire employ to narrate their texts, fictions that often further the satire and at the same time distance and protect the author from a potentially irate audience. Early eighteenth-century writers had access to particular forms of these fictions, whether those which looked to earlier literature, as in the mock heroic, or those which employed current conventions such as disguising fiction as nonfictional writing.

Although the authors of satire at this time who were also women use similar fictions to structure their satires, these structures in the satires I have examined often allow ways for the reader—if one assumes for purposes of this argument that the reader is the person being satirized—to stand in close proximity to the satire and thus to the author. The women satirists appear to have as their end less an attempt to take cover from and deflect an angry, aroused audience than to maintain a connection to that audience even as faults and follies are exposed.

Those who are familiar with Carol Gilligan's research on women's moral development in our own century may not be surprised at the attempts by these early women satirists to minimize the divisive effects

of the satire they write. Carol Gilligan's research has explained that unlike the impersonal model of justice employed by men in solving moral dilemmas, females tend to approach the same moral dilemmas "from the recognition of relationship" and a "belief in communication as the mode of conflict resolution," a stance Gilligan labels "an ethic of care" (30). Gilligan offers that the reason behind this difference by gender in responding to moral situations is that males see themselves as "defined through separation" while females view themselves as "delineated through connection." While the former "measure" their definition of self "against an abstract ideal of perfection," women "assess" themselves "through particular activities of care" (35). Women, Gilligan found, often respond with "the wish not to hurt others" (65), together with a "reticence about taking stands on 'controversial issues'" and a "reluctance to judge" (66), all qualities that seem not to fit the satirist as we know him.

Even if one is unable to apply with certainty Carol Gilligan's research findings to women outside her time or culture, one recognizes the disparity between Gilligan's description of the "care" ethic and the generally accepted account of the relation between satirist and audience in critical theory about satire. Although most critics of satire indicate the elusiveness of definition of the mode or genre, those definitions that most often surface imply a violent severing of relationship between satirist and audience. Satire is seen as "militant irony" (Frye 233), as synonymous with "attack" (Kernan 7), "aggression" and its various forms of "weaponry of violence" (Test 15), even with killing (Elliott 4). Although David Worcester explains how satire's sharpness is moderated by the very elements it employs to satirize its subject and that the satirist must appear "amicable" to his audience, he describes the audience of satire as the "enemy" to whom the satirist must be "hostile" and offers the alternatives only of "direct rebuke" or "impersonal logic" as ways to convey the satire (16).

Definitions of satire held forth during the early part of the eighteenth century also cast satire as a severely separating form. Robert C. Elliott

refers to Pierre Bayle's definition of satire (1697) as a form of murder. Bayle refers to a specific satirist whom, he explains, is "neither the first, nor the only person who forced people to make away with themselves by their invectives," and Bayle sees the satirist as "no better than a mad dog whose motive is to kill: a satirist who attempts upon the honour of his enemy with libels, would attempt upon their life with sword or poison, if he had the same opportunity" (quoted on 268). Even John Dryden, whose views on satire are moderate,<sup>1</sup> favors the "more vigorous and masculine wit" of Juvenal over Horace's "faint," "insipid" satire (130).

One might argue that one cannot apply either the same definitions of satire to the writing of men and women satirists of the eighteenth century simply because the circumstances of their authorship and relationship to audience were so widely different. Indeed, many women typically had an already close connection between themselves and their audience, writing as they often did to small, closely contiguous audiences, for example, to their children, as in the case of Mary Barber or to a single friend, as is typical, for instance of Mary Jones' work. An example of the latter occurs in Mary Jones' "Elegy: On a Favourite Dog," in which Jones employs subtly the mock heroic in order to gain through irony perspective on the death of her friend's dog, and in this way to offer comfort to her friend.

Even in those cases where women authors of satire imply a more extended audience, however, one can identify a number of qualities in their satire that suggest that these writers were indeed concerned about their connection to their audience in ways that seem less prominent in the male satirists of the time. These qualities together suggest an aesthetic of satire that includes definitions and values not currently prominent in the definitions of the genre.

That eighteenth-century women satirists value their relationship to audience over the point of the satire shows up first of all in the direct statements about satire that appear in their texts. In a short poem, "Verses sent to a Lady, who took delight in ridiculing a Person of very

weak Understanding, whom she reliev'd from Want," Mary Barber addresses directly another author with the advice that although ridicule may be a "meritorious" and helpful response to vice or "tow'ring vanity," it is inappropriate to aim ridicule at the "native fool" or those "whom pity claim." In the instance alluded to in this poem, the economic dependence of the people being attacked on the author who is attacking them makes the ridicule even more inappropriate ("nor, while the wretched you maintain, / Tinture their cup with gall").

These authors often develop in their texts a more complex relationship than usual in the canonical satire of the time with the person who is the object of attack. One example of this complexity in relationship occurs in Mary Barber's "To a Lady," a satiric poem about the difficulties the poet has experienced in having her writing supported. In the poem, Barber demonstrates, within a satiric portrait of an unnamed man who is waiting to attack her writing with spiteful vengeance, that it is not appropriate to respond to attack with attack ("Go on, display your treasur'd rage; / Invectives shall not blot my page"). In fact, Barber suggests that she will learn from her attacker ("What real faults you note, I'll mend: / Proceed your efforts I attend"). In these lines Barber is simultaneously achieving several ends not often associated with one another in satire. For at the same time as she satirizes her critic by describing his lack of control over his negative emotions ("In the Furies temple bow'd") and deflates his hostile criticism before it arrives by ignoring it ("Malice thy rancour I expect, / And shall return it—with neglect"), she honors the critic as mentor by promising to learn from the part of his criticism that is helpful! Thus Barber manages in a single brief satiric portrait both to open herself to connection with the person she is satirizing and to subtly heighten the satire by deftly shifting roles from attacker to the person being attacked.

Barber's quiet, even obliging approach in her satire, together with the familiar discourse she uses to deliver it may seem to strike wide of the mark of the more rigorous, formal, even sublime discourse that characterizes much of the satire of this time. Barber's approach,

however, appears to be shared by most of the women satirists. A direct articulation of this ideal occurs in Mary Leapor's "The Way of the World," a poem about the effects of false flattery. In the single positive portrait of the poem, Leapor characterizes the ideal person as one who is moderate in being, action, and speech—and in the way the person uses satire:

With native manners as with sense endu'd,  
Not soft as Cynthio, nor as Damon rude;  
Not basely humble, yet a foe to pride:  
Whose tongue ne'er promis'd what his heart deny'd.  
Whose satyr charms, nor mirth offends the ear;  
Tho' wise not froward, just but not severe.

Thus, to Leapor, satire, like other qualities, is not effective in the extreme. This, of course, leaves one with a seeming contradiction or aesthetic "flaw" in the texts of many of these women authors of satire.

Even in the instances among these authors in which they do not practice moderation in their attacks, as for instance in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's satires directed against Alexander Pope ("To the Imitator of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace," "An Epistle from Pope to Lord Bolingbroke"), one still finds, if indirectly, a concern for the objects of satire. Montagu's primary charge against Pope is his own indiscriminate and unfeeling use of satire:

Neither to Folly, nor to vice confin'd;  
The Object of thy Spleen is Human Kind:  
It preys on all, who yield, or who resist;  
To Thee 'tis Provocation to exist.

Thus, though her tone is sharp, her invective direct in her assaults on Pope, she would protect others, along with herself, from Pope's murderous assaults:

For tho' in Law, to murder be to kill,  
In Equity the Murder's in the Will:  
Then whilst with Coward Hand you stab a Name,  
And try at least t'assassinate our Fame;  
(*Other Eighteenth Century 249-51*)

With the exception of her attacks against Pope, Montagu, in the pattern of the women satirists of her time, tends to choose generalized portraits over lampoons of specific persons as a way to convey her satire away from a specific human target. One finds Montagu generalizing the 'subjects' of her satire, for instance, in her several poems that satirize the hypocrisies and pretensions of social life, as for instance in the doubly false lovers, "Dancinda" and "Strephon" of "Wednesday: The Tete-a-tete" or the empty, boasting braves, Silliander and Patch of "Tuesday: St. James's Coffee-House." Such generalized portraits, while a typical technique of much satire, dominate almost entirely over lampoon in the texts of these women satirists. Mary Chudleigh, Mary Barber, Jane Collier, Mary Jones, Laetitia Pilkington, and Mary Leapor all regularly employ the generalized catalog in their texts.

Even in exceptions to the practice of generalizing the object of satire, for example in Mary Chudleigh's "The Ladies Defence," a response to an actual sermon on women's roles by a particular clergyman, Chudleigh deftly divides the single negative portrait into three characters as a way to shift the most negative attack away from the clergyman and on to the generalized fictional characters, "Sir John Brute" and "Sir William Loveall." Chudleigh uses these two characters to carry the bulk of the negative statement, with the 'real' parson left to convey primarily accepted tenets about women's roles. In fact, Chudleigh goes so far as to apologize in the introduction for what Sir John Brute and Sir William Loveall say about the clergyman, explaining, without obvious irony "that I do not speak my own Thoughts, but what one might rationally suppose a Man of his Character will say on such Occasions" (Ferguson 217).

Yet another tendency in these women satirists, one that not only

protects the relationship of author with subject/audience but indeed closes the distance between the two is that of including themselves in some form within the text in a manner that makes them more accessible to their audience. A literal instance of the author stepping into a text occurs in Mary Jones' satiric essay, "Abstract of an Order of Convocation in relation to Melissa's taking of Medals." After sustaining the irony throughout this essay that describes the grand process by which "Melissa" is being granted an "HONORY DEGREE" by the dignitaries of a university, the author steps into the essay in a final footnote, offering to hold Melissa's fan during the ceremony. In this move, Jones is literally showing up to support Melissa and at the same time to inform the reader directly of the joke of the text. Another form of the author making herself accessible in the satire occurs in Jones' "Treatise of Demoniacs," in which Jones takes on the role in her own text of the object of ridicule. In the satiric essay, Jones suddenly steps out of her third person narrative about madness to acknowledge in a second person discussion with the reader that she may indeed be afflicted with the very disorder she has been describing:

You sometimes tell me (as little credit as you seem to give to these things) that I am either mad, or possessed myself; and, as I said before, I am myself often astonished at a number of things I say, and do—I don't know why or wherefore, unless at those times I am under the power of some or other of these capricious agents.

Jones satirizes herself further in the essay by admitting that even her authorship of the present text may be attributed to her madness:

And what are thus poetic fits I am frequently troubled with, but the violent and tumultuous influx of some demon, upon my blood and spirits, agitating all within? For I feel my breast of a sudden prompted and influenced, my eyes sparkle and look wild, like the Pythoness when she had caught inspiration; and,

in short, for the time am full of the Larvae [goblins or spectres that cause mad behavior].

A more subtle instance of the satirist entering into her own satire as the object of its attack occurs in Mary Leapor's "Myra's Will," a verse satire that imagines the reading of the author's will upon her death. The author becomes part of the satire both as the writer of the will (the pun, "compos'd in mind" at the poem's end implies this entry into the poem) and as her dead "body," whose characteristics while still alive are distributed to the people around her. In this second role, the satire aimed at the catalog of characters who either "inherit" a quality or follow the funeral procession, is partaken in as well by the author's body, which forms the center of the procession. At the poem's opening, the narrator directly offers up her name "to publick censure" and sets out her "vice and folly" as being ready to be given over to "oblivion." Only at this point of allowing her own vices does the author move through the satiric catalog of others' failings, with her presence remaining all the while in the ironic form of a corpse.

Yet another form of making the author accessible to the audience occurs through allowing spaces in the irony for the reader to enter. Mary Chudleigh employs this device in the above-mentioned "The Ladies Defence," in which she brings her own voice into the dialogue, without irony, in the character of Melissa. Thus, for nearly half the poem, the reader has access to the author's direct statement of values, making the author both vulnerable and accessible. At the same time, by using the fiction of Melissa's name, Chudleigh is able to weave her voice into the several other deliberately ironic voices of the narrative. The irony in the poem, then, occurs at several levels: it is blatant in the voices of Sir John Brute and Sir William Lovall, as their names imply; it is milder but still present in the voice of the Parson, and it retreats in the character of Melissa, allowing the reader to stand in the place of the author or to directly attack the author, both instances of access.

It is interesting that John Dryden uses sexual images to define the

difference between Horace and Juvenal. Juvenal possessed the "risibility" necessary, according to Dryden, for both the writing of satire and for manhood. For Dryden, Juvenal was the better writer, for "his thoughts are sharper, his indignation against vice . . . more vehement." Although one may be tempted to apply this familiar distinction between the two Roman satirists to the distinction between the men and women authors of the first part of the eighteenth century, I think the latter distinction a more complex one than the level of formality or rigor or "manhood" that each displays in their satire. I did find evidence in this brief look at some eighteenth-century women authors of satire of the presence of a "care" ethic in their writing. The care ethic in this context seems to result in more complex relationships between the author and her audience. Yet it doesn't necessarily follow that women writers are necessarily "nicer" or even less critical, that their points are less serious, or that their satire does not affect the audience. We need to take a far closer look at these early women authors of satire, whom our own century seem to value even less than their own, and reexamine, along with this larger study the definitions of satire that continue to shape our assumptions about aesthetic value in this genre.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Dryden cites Heinsius' definition of satire as one he largely agrees with: "Satire is a kind of poetry, without a series of action, invented for the purging of our minds; in which human vices, ignorance, and errors, and all things besides, which are produced from them in every man, are severely reprehended; partly dramatically, partly simply, and sometimes in both kinds of speaking; but for most part figuratively, and occultly; . . . by which either hatred, or laughter, or indignation, is moved" (*Dramatic Poesy* 143).

Dryden also acknowledges at one point his concern with his relationship with a person he satirizes, John Ketch, who appears as Zimri in *Absalom and Achitophel*. Dryden describes this satiric portrait of Ketch as "not bloody" but "ridiculous enough" (137) and assumes that Ketch is "too witty to resent it as an injury," noting that in his satiric portraits he avoids "the mention of great crimes" and instead depicts the "blindsides, and little extravagancies" of the people he satirizes.



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## Shakespeare and Dinesen

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How many writers have not in some way been influenced by *Lear*, *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or *The Merchant of Venice*? Literature has long been a global, intertextual soup. Just what do I mean by suggesting a more than ordinary Shakespearean influence on the life and work of one of this century's best-known and widely-read Scandinavian authors? It is easy enough to find instances where Dinesen makes Shakespearean references. We find, for example, Baron Guildenstern in "The Dreamers"; Frederick Lamond, who is greeted with "Upon my life, Lamond" (*Hamlet* IV.viii) in "The Heroine"; the Danish poet Johannes Ewald who takes the role of Yorick in "Converse at Night in Copenhagen"; or Old Knudsen whom Dinesen calls "a Puck grown old and blind and very malicious" in *Out of Africa* (189). There is no dearth of allusion in the authorship. Yet I hope to show that Dinesen's debt to Shakespeare is deeper than the run-of-the-mill allusion we commonly associate with writers who indulge in literary pastiche. In fact, I argue that Dinesen had a life-long love affair with Shakespeare in part because she found confirmation in him of how art and life intersect on the stage. She found a code of honor based on egalitarian feminism and a recipe for humanity in Viola and Portia that is rooted in the idea of play in both its senses of gaming and dramatics. She assimilated a world where boys could be boys . . . and girls, and where women are the creators and arbiters of human existence.

At the age of fifteen the then Karen Dinesen discovered Shakespeare. As she later explained to her Aunt Bess in a letter from 1924, she came to Shakespeare through Georg Brandes, one of the great foundation-layers of modern comparative studies. As she recalls it, "I had been immersed in Brandes's books for a long time and I can say that it was he who revealed literature to me. My first *personal* enthusiasm for books, —for Shakespeare, Shelley, Heine,—came to me through him" (*Letters from Africa* 209). For Dinesen, this discovery of Shakespeare was one of the great events of her life (Migel 13).

Early tangible evidence of this passion came immediately. In 1950, the Danish newspaper *Berlingske Aftenavis* published a series of drawings that Dinesen sketched around the turn of the century. Dinesen said of them that they bore witness to an entire life's true love for Shakespeare (Lasson 19). Frans Lasson, who edited a collection of Dinesen's graphic art, suggests that Shakespeare spoke to the adolescent Dinesen because he offered a vision of life that mirrored a fundamental split in her life:

The sketchbooks from her youth are filled with burlesque fairytale figures, impressions of landscapes, portraits and drawings with motifs from her broad reading, first and foremost from Shakespeare's plays. At fifteen, she illustrated *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, whose picture of human life on the border of two worlds she had special reasons for making her own. (Lasson 12) (My translation)

In other words, as a very young woman Karen Dinesen was looking for a vision through which she could make sense of the conflicts she felt between, on the one hand, her mother's side of the family and with Danish bourgeois society in general, and on the other, the free and adventurous side of her father's aristocratic family.

Given this early and affective passion for Shakespeare, it is not surprising, therefore, that when we look at Dinesen's collected letters

from her years spent in Kenya, from 1914 to 1931, we see that she refers to Shakespeare in all kinds of circumstances. During these years she matured into a forty-six-year-old woman who had faced more than her share of conflicts and disappointments, including isolation from her family, a failed marriage, a tragic love affair, bankruptcy and syphilis. Throughout them all she turns to Shakespeare as a touchstone for words of wisdom. She cites him as others cite scripture. For example, when she tries to comfort her mother about her brother's amorous adventures, she allies herself with her father's side of the family whom she associates with Sir Toby Belch:

I think that to a certain extent all of your family lack the ability to "amuse themselves,"—or, to express it symbolically: "to enjoy the *wine* of life," and are inclined to think that happiness is to be found in a diet of bread and milk. But the greater part of humanity needs *exitement* [sic], some slight intoxication, pleasure, and danger too; I think that if it were in my power to do anything at all for humanity I myself would want to *amuse them*. I think it is wonderful that such delightful, peaceable people as you exist; but there is need for more than this, and I shall allow myself to make use of Shakespeare's words: "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale: Yes, by Saint Anne, and ginger shall be hot i' th' mouth too."— (*Letters* 202)

Twenty-four years after her sketches Dinesen has adopted what she considers to be Shakespeare's lust for life. It is no wonder that the childhood nickname of Tanne was transformed by Dinesen's lover Denys Finch Hatton into the more apt Titania. And as late as 1960, Dinesen was still casting herself in the role of the fairy queen, for in her introduction to the Danish edition of Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, she quotes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to suggest that she and Capote are a pair who live a life inspired by and lived in fantasy

(even though Capote must play Bottom to her Titania) (Blixen, "Truman Capote" 9). Apparently, Dinesen continued to see life and art, or reality and fantasy, as two sides of the same coin.

Furthermore, besides linking Falstaff's appetite for life and Titania's fantasy, Dinesen found in Shakespeare a belief in a kind of human freedom she associated with the new conditions of existence for modern women. We see this connection alluded to in her correspondence with her Aunt Bess. In a letter from 1925, she contrasts the English character which she sees as free, human and natural with the French, which she considers conventional, claiming that an English park presents nature "invested with dignity, and the noble with naturalness" (*Letters* 235). Whereas a French park is set up according to rules and regulations, an English park "is a matter of intuition and instinct" (235). She continues, "I also think that when throughout the ages Shakespeare has been taken up and performed again after, for instance, Racine, he has represented humanity and freedom" (235). This freedom and naturalness of behavior based on intuition and instinct Dinesen extrapolated into her discussions about the role, place and power of women in modern society. And again she uses Shakespeare to bear out her argument.

We see as much in yet another letter, this one from 1927, after she had gone through a mid-life crisis of her own when she had had to reconcile her need for commitment with her love for a man who refused such commitment. In the letter, she counsels her brother about what she euphemistically calls "the difficulties of 'marriage'" (*Letters* 321). She urges him to read Strindberg, Shaw, and "old Shakespeare" adding, "Othello was a perfectly respectable person, with an unusually *generous* nature in the bargain; nothing on earth would have induced him to suffocate a defenseless person in bed except for one reason,—and you will see the shoe pinches the one who wears it!" (321). For herself, jealousy is not an issue. She tells her brother that her marriage was ended "by the sort of thing that could have brought about the breakup of a friendship or a company and not the sort of passion that . . . drove Othello to murder" (321). Furthermore, in this very telling letter in

which Dinesen restates her attitude towards sex and marriage, she makes claim to a very unromantic view of love affairs:

What has captivated or infatuated me, or however you like to put it, has been a human personality or some kind of mutual interest that we have shared,—or else the whole relationship has been, if I may so express it, like a game or a dance. I don't think I am capable of treating a sexual relationship in itself with any great seriousness. And although I think it is delightful to go out hunting or to the ballet or to travel with a person I am in love with, I find it intolerable to "be an object." Never in my life have I been able to sit and gaze adoringly into somebody's eyes; I just don't think I could do it. I do not in the least like being caressed, I just can't stand being called by pet names and *made a fuss about*. (*Letters* 321)

Where does she have this modern sensibility from? She certainly hasn't bought into Desdemona's example or Othello's jealous passion. Clearly, Dinesen interprets Othello as a morality play where Desdemona is the victim of a code that holds women as possessions. More to her liking, surely, was the kind of sparring on more equal terms that we witness between Oberon and Titania.

Nonetheless, can we expect for Dinesen to find a model for a progressive twentieth-century feminism in Shakespeare? Judith Thurman, Dinesen's second biographer and the consultant for the film version of *Out of Africa*, briefly discusses Shakespeare's influence on Dinesen, and her remarks suggest how Dinesen reconciled her love for Shakespeare with a resolutely modern attitude towards sexual relationships. Thurman writes:

She was extremely drawn to the epicene sexuality of the comedies without knowing why; she longed for the freedom to dress as a boy and in such a guise to demonstrate her gifts as

a courtier, which she secretly began to cultivate. Her "favorite female character in all of literature" was Viola. (Thurman 51)

This interest in epicene sexuality has long been recognized, and homosexuality and androgenous characters pop up throughout Dinesen's authorship. We need only think of Prince Pozentiani in "Roads Round Pisa" or Emmanuelson in *Out of Africa* or Boris in "The Monkey" to name a few. But the most significant characters to bring out a Shakespearean vision of humanity and, more specifically, of the artist, are women like Alkmene, whom Dinesen compares to Perdita, of Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*, and whose story is told in Dinesen's collection, *Winter's Tales*. Or Malli who plays the role of Ariel in Herr Soerenson's traveling production of *The Tempest* in Dinesen's story "Tempests" in *Anecdotes of Destiny*. Indeed, it is the heartless rejection of the kind of fuss being made about her that Dinesen wrote of in her letter to her brother that causes Malli, as it did Dinesen, to give up a normal life of conjugal bliss in favor of the tragic and lonely life of the actor/artist.

Curiously, however, the most potent expressions of Shakespearean crossdressing occur not so much in direct allusions in *Seven Gothic Tales* or *Out of Africa* or any of her other stories but rather in her letters and essays. From the letters written from Africa and the essay written around 1924, "Modern Marriage, or What You Will" to the mature essay written thirty years later, the "Oration at a Bonfire, Fourteen Years Late," we see Dinesen maintaining a vision of what it means to be a man or a woman and an artist that is rooted in her reading of Shakespeare.

Dinesen wrote "Modern Marriage, or What You Will" in part to clarify for herself what she wanted out of her life and, in particular, what she wanted out of her relationship with Denys Finch Hatton. In this essay she argues that modern marriage has become a fig leaf; it is actually no more than a romantic love relationship sanctioned by a church and rituals that no member of the cultural elite, or what she calls "the smart set,"

still seriously believes in. This hollow vision of marriage has no other ideal behind it than eroticism, which is "a dangerous and unreliable force" (*Letters* 323) on which to base one's life. In turn, she suggests eugenics as a substitute ideal for marriages of the future, a proposal that to post-holocaust critics has since landed Dinesen in hot water. Nonetheless, Dinesen's point is that in marriage as in other relationships people's choices and actions are determined by their perception of an ideal. All things are possible if only people have the will and desire for them.

This post-Lamarckian view of human social change is hinted at in the essay's subtitle: "What You Will." The allusion is to *Twelfth Night*, and as Georg Brandes pointed out, the title of Shakespeare's play alludes to a game played at Christmas time where he who finds the bean baked in a cake becomes the Bean King and gets to choose a Bean Queen. Thus, as far as love and marriage go, the play represents a game of chance wherein the characters in fact do not get "what they want" (Brandes 8: 268), for Orsino does not get Olivia but Viola. And Olivia does not get Cesario/Viola but Sebastian. And Malvolio gets nothing but cross-gartered. In alluding to *Twelfth Night*, then, Dinesen underscores the uncertainty and the unpredictability of love relations. She also strikes a blow at puritanism and ridiculous moral pretention. For in "Modern Marriage, or What You Will" Dinesen argues that in matters of the heart, as we learn at Malvolio's expense, there is no accounting for taste (Blixen, *Modern Marriage* 52-53). In other words, Dinesen finds the moral laxity of the 1920s reflected in Shakespearean romance.

In addition, the allusion to the element of play and its role as matchmaker in *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* foreshadows both Dinesen's judgment of modern marriage and her predictions for marriage as an institution in the future. After slamming modern marriage as both hypocritical and bankrupt of any ideal except that sanctity of home wherein is practiced "mutual mental cannibalism," Blixen reintroduces the concept of play. In short, she argues that after having conquered the necessities of life, human beings will find in the love between men and

women the best game that life offers.

If we remember that Viola was Dinesen's favorite character in all of literature, we can't help but notice that the essence of her game is in dressing as a man and making love to another woman because of her love for the man whose suit she is making. Moreover, the plot revolves around the assumption that Sebastian and Viola are as alike as two peas in a pod. Shakespeare asks us to accept that Viola and Sebastian can be one and the same person. It is this epicene quality of the text that Dinesen obviously enjoyed because it gave her a character model based on human characteristics and not just male or female traits. In her essay "Oration at a Bonfire, Fourteen Years Late," Dinesen defines what it is to be male or female or simply human. In it, she uses Portia from *The Merchant of Venice* to drive home her feminist ideal.

Given in 1953, when Dinesen was sixty-eight, the essay is supposedly a belated response to an invitation to present the bonfire oration at the final meeting of a large international women's congress which she had chosen not to attend, preferring instead to spend her time at the Shakespeare festival with John Gielgud, who was playing Hamlet at Kronborg Castle. The essay has until recently been written off by feminist scholars as hopelessly reactionary, since Dinesen identifies manliness as doing and womanliness as being. Certainly, the essay is confrontational; the tone is set by Dinesen's admission that she'd rather spend time with John Gielgud's Hamlet than as the guest speaker at a women's congress. But at the core of essay is a rejection of confrontational sexual politics. If Dinesen does not reveal herself as a radical feminist, she does urge that a woman's self, her honor, and her opportunities in life be based on an independent, human code rather than on the basis of her sexual charm.

Dinesen claims that it is time to lay down the weapons of militant feminism, including the adoption of living in the masculine mode and wearing masculine clothes, to put aside the male disguise, and to seek humanity's salvation in feminine power. This feminine power is none other than feminine intuition, or the power to see clearly, even

clairvoyantly, and to act with duplicity. Dinesen chooses Portia as an illustration of the alternative to a world governed by masculine law for two reasons. First, a figure from the world of art best fits the feminine power, since women are, in essence, creators whereas men are merely manipulators of existence. And second, Portia manages to solve the play's conflict which has been devised by men and which they cannot resolve by themselves: "And her magic lies precisely in her duplicity, the pretended deep respect for the paragraphs of the law which overlies her kind heart and her quite fearless heresy" (Blixen, *Daguerreotypes* 83). Portia first appeals to mercy and to the spirit of the law, and then proves herself capable of manipulating its letter. She turns the unreasonable male law against itself and "takes a cruel revenge on the cruel avenger" (84). Dinesen sees Portia's performance as a jurist as perfectly in keeping with the feminine mode, the mode of creative duplicity.

Portia, then, represents an ideal human being because she can both act and perform in the masculine mode while acting and performing—themselves feminine modes of artistic production—in the service of what she instinctively feels is right. As the arbiter of the conflict who bends the letter of the law to its spirit, she creates the conditions for justice and reconciliation at the expense of the patriarchal Shylock. This dual power to act with duplicity and to know mystically what is right makes the female character more perfect; she can better unite in one identity "*being and force*" (85). Thus, Dinesen claims, Portia combines masculine and feminine traits into a unity that resembles a relationship "contrary to nature."

By pointing to the androgenous or rather homosexual and yet quintessentially feminine nature of Portia, Dinesen identifies herself with the kind of homosexuality that exists in the relationships between men and women artists à la George Sand, or we might add Isak Dinesen. For homosexuality is the ultimate experience of mutual inspiration and interplay which sets free the individual's power to realize him or herself. It is play that is divine or Luciferian in the sense that it is a creative and rebellious illumination. And it is this idea of homosexuality defined as

homogeneity, as "sincere friendship, understanding, delight shared by two equal, 'parallel moving' beings" (*Letters* 264), that Dinesen weaves throughout her fiction. It is this controlling image of an androgenous and yet mostly female creative power that Dinesen takes from Shakespeare.

In closing, let us recall the section from *Out of Africa* called "Farah and *The Merchant of Venice*." In it Dinesen tells how she once told to her Somali major domo the story of how Portia succeeds in besting Shylock. Farah's sympathy, however, is for the Jew:

"Look, Memsahib," he said, "he could have taken small bits, very small. He could have done that man a lot of harm, even a long time before he had got that one pound of his flesh."  
(260)

And Dinesen explains Farah's reaction by pointing out that he is different from us:

Coloured people do not take sides in a tale, the interest to them lies in the ingeniousness of the plot itself; and the Somali, who in real life have a strong sense of values, and a gift for moral indignation, give these a rest in their fiction.  
(259)

If one of the central tenets of *Out of Africa* is that the natives of that continent are closer to fulfilling what God meant for human beings to be, then Dinesen here is asking us to look upon life and art as a game or as a play. For all the world's a stage and if we are to fulfill our destiny on it, then we must act our parts with an eye for the plot and for the spirit of the law.

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