

**Eighteenth**  
**Northern Plains Conference on Early British Literature**  
**University of Mary, Bismarck, ND**  
**April 23-24, 2010**

**Friday April 23            Benedictine Meeting Room, Benedictine Center**

**Session 1            8:45-10:00**

**Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century**

- Robert J. De Smith    Dordt College  
                                  "Comfort in the *Holy Sonnets*"
- Ann L. D'Orazio        University of Colorado, Boulder  
                                  "Looking for Bede in All the Wrong Places: Mapping the Monk in John Smith's 1722 *Historiae*"
- Rachel De Smith        Creighton University  
                                  "Souls in Community: John Donne, His Preaching, and the New World"

**Session 2            10:30-11:45**

**Gender: Theme and Variations**

- Michelle M. Sauer     University of North Dakota  
                                  "Masculinity & Virginitly: Regendering & Revisioning Gerald of Aurillac"
- Amanda K. Rector     Wartburg College  
                                  "Gender Spaces and Social Anxieties in *The Castle of Otranto*"
- Christopher Lozensky   Independent Scholar  
                                  "Nature, Nation, and Gender in the Romance of *Havelock*"

**Lunch Break 12:00 – 1:45**

**Session 3            2:00-3:15**  
**Shakespeare and Marlowe**

- Eric Furuseth         Minot State University  
                                  "‘This rough magic I here abjure’: Contemplations on Prospero's God-like Power in *The Tempest*"
- Bruce Brandt         South Dakota State University  
                                  "Christopher Marlowe as a Character in Recent Fiction"
- John Kerr             Saint Mary's University of Minnesota  
                                  "Shakespearean Thyestes"

**Session 4            3:30-4:45**  
**Comedy, Comics, and Satire**

- Dominique Hoche     Northern State University  
                                  "Exploring Medieval Visual Theory Through Modern Graphic Narrative"
- Gretchen Cohenhour   Wartburg College  
                                  "Refashioning of Women Through Satire"
- Lysbeth Em Benkert   Northern State University  
                                  "Using the Bugs Bunny Theory of Comedy to Make Sense of Katherine and Petrucchio"

**Dinner: 5:30-7:00, Harold Schafer Great Room**

**Keynote Address: 7:15**

**Political pragmatism or political revenge:  
The function of Royalist translation in  
post-regicide England**

**Christopher Orchard  
Associate Professor of English  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania**

**Saturday April 24 Benedictine Meeting Room**

**Session 5 9:00-10:15**

**The Future of the Organization I: Undergraduate Panel**

Vanessa Perkins Minnesota State University Moorhead  
“Women and Revenge in *Titus Andronicus*”  
Rachael Johnson Minnesota State University Moorhead  
“Milton’s Tree of Knowledge as Highest Providence”  
Adam Heidebrink Minnesota State University Moorhead  
“Gulliver and the Quest for Freedom”

**Session 6 10:30-12:00**

**The Future of the Organization II: Graduate Panel**

Sarah Rude North Dakota State University  
“‘I See a Cherub Who Sees Them’: Olivier’s Treatment of *Hamlet*”  
Rebecca Oster North Dakota State University  
“Ophelia’s Madness in Olivier’s and Kozintsev’s *Hamlet*: Speaking Through Nature”  
Erin Pearson North Dakota State University  
“Shakespeare for the Masses”  
Gretchen Junglas North Dakota State University  
“Dark *versus* Light: Ophelia’s Costuming in Film and on Stage”

**1:10-2:20 Business Lunch**

## Looking for Bede in All the Wrong Places: Mapping the Monk in John Smith's 1722 *Historiæ*

Few early historiographies have enjoyed the longevity and the continuous popularity of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. The most important component to understand Bede's own work in the late seventh and early eighth centuries and its later iterations is that of the intellectual production of the *Ecclesiastical History*. Many studies of Bede turn solely to his sources, manuscripts produced within his lifetime, or later manuscript reproductions of his writing to determine both who he was and the very nature of his work. While these studies are certainly valuable, it is as if they resist looking for Bede in other places – one of these being eighteenth-century print culture. I have found an important representation of Bede's project in John Smith's 1722 dual-language *Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ Gentis Anglorum*. As a whole, Smith's text functions as a metonymic stand-in for Bede's intellectual, cultural, and spiritual work. The interplay of linguistic and aesthetic elements in the *Historiæ*'s [title page](#) and [fold-out map](#) ([Detail 1](#), [Detail 2](#), [Detail 3](#)) create a concentrated, microcosmic version of this relationship. I intend to argue that these two sites in Smith's book artistically and materially embody aspects of Bede's engagement with language, chronicling, and mapping, which results in a contiguous relationship between Smith's text and Bede's work.

Smith's artfully-crafted text physically embodies a work that chronicles over one thousand years of history. The *Historiæ* literally looks less like an edition of previous works and more like a metonym for Bede's work. The volume's imposing size, 38 × 25 cm, makes the breadth and depth of Bede's project into a tangible object. Internally, the book's contents and layout encompass the two primary iterations of the *Ecclesiastical History* – Bede's Latin and

King Alfred's (or debatably an unknown translator's) Anglo-Saxon. In the eighteenth century, dual-language editions of the *Ecclesiastical History* were much less common than fully Latin versions. Before Smith's text, there was Abraham Whelock's 1643 version<sup>1</sup>, which printed the Latin and Anglo-Saxon in parallel columns. Smith's *Historiæ* is the first to present both versions within their own sections, and this presentation creates its own method of reading the work. With one language on each side of a single page, a text like Whelock's would set up a visually comparative reading. Smith's volume, on the other hand, allows each portion of the text to stand upon its own merit by keeping them in separate sections. A comparative reading could come from Smith's text, but it would be much more laborious. Since both sections are integral to Smith's book, both in its physical size and lexical content, a comparative reading of the Latin and Anglo-Saxon versions seems less about languages or versions of the work set in competition and more about a wholeness to the work that depends upon the inclusion of both versions.

The kind of wholeness that Smith's text demonstrates is not simply a clear picture of two languages or iterations being given equal weight or intellectual import, though. The title page of Smith's *Historiæ* announces a Latin text rather than a dual-language Latin and Anglo-Saxon text. The lack of indication that there is an Anglo-Saxon section sets a linguistic power structure in place right at the beginning; Latin retains authority as a spiritual and academic language. On its face, the title page shows Latin's superiority because it is the only language used. Smith was creating a version of Bede's writing, though, and Bede was first and foremost a Latinized Christian. This strategy seems more in keeping with homage, or an effort to retain authenticity. In other words, the title page reiterates the text's source rather than highlighting Smith's own work of placing two versions in one book. There is a sense of Bede's authorship and ownership

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<sup>1</sup> See Higham (33).

in the lines “una cum reliquis ejus Operibus Historicis in unum Volumen Collectis”, which can be translated roughly as “one of his remaining historical works collected in one volume.” Since there was no completely Anglo-Saxon version of the *Ecclesiastical History* until the late ninth century, and Bede likely never anticipated one, Smith’s move seems to foreground the authority of the original Latin version.

The *Historiæ*’s title page underscores how Smith’s tome stands in for Bede’s project through its visual layout. Each word’s individual and relational meanings combine with their physical positions to create a semiotically rich site. The largest word on the page is “Bæda” – the Latinized form of Bede. By placing the word in the center of the page in thick, visually dominating roman capitals, the page performs a monumentalizing of Bede’s name and the language in which he wrote. Words in the book’s title proper are smaller than “Bæda”, but still larger than all other words. They, too, signal a heightened importance because each word gets its own line. Taken one by one, each word indicates the myriad functions of Bede’s work. At the top, “Historiæ” informs the reader that this is first and foremost a historical document; history sits above the rest of the information. “Ecclesiasticæ” signals that the text is written from a spiritual perspective and chronicles the development of the Church through time. “Gentis” indicates the presence of people; this volume is not just about heads of the church or tribal kings, but it tells of the common people as well. “Anglorum” locates the reader ethnically and geographically; this is a history of the English people. In combination, the five aforementioned words meld theme to title and title to author. It is worth noting that “Anglorum” is second in size only to the word “Bæda.” While Bede’s name remains visually dominant, the relative similarity in size makes a visual connection among Bede, Latinity, and Englishness. This illuminates a

fundamental factor of Bede's work. Bede used the tools of Latinate religious knowledge production to write the history of the English church and the English people.

While Latin's authority remains in the foreground of the title page, the trace of Anglo-Saxon does not get completely erased. As I mentioned, there is no indication of the Anglo-Saxon version on this page, but Bede is called "Presbytero Anglo-Saxone" – priest *of* or *to* the Anglo-Saxons. These words bring out Bede's role as converter, but they also subtly assert a relationship between him and the people to whom he ministered. Priest *of* the Anglo-Saxons implies that he belonged with them, and touches upon his understanding of the vernacular and local cultures. Bede was born in Northumbria, and entered the monastery around the age of seven. He was exposed to the Northumbrian dialect, and his writings reflect that. The oldest extant [manuscript](#) and Smith's primary source, *The Moore Bede*, contains three full lines of the Northumbrian dialect of Anglo-Saxon, and the *Ecclesiastical History* acknowledges different dialects of England's inhabitants. I am not implying that "Priest of the Anglo-Saxons" directly shows that the book has a non-Latin section, but I do think that this phrase speaks to Bede's own background in a way that merges his Englishness and Latinity. The page's addressing of Bede as "Presbytero Anglo-Saxone", rather than just Presbyter, suggests Bede's relationship to Anglo-Saxon culture, and his work of acknowledging the power of Latin without devaluing the existence of the vernacular.

The title page sets up a relation between Bede and the Anglo-Saxons through word choice and placement, but other words appear to be related by their type style. Specifically, each word in roman capitals has to do with dominant themes of Bede's work. The creation of history is represented by the book's title itself and the word "historicis." "Auctore", as author, credits Bede with the act of writing, and, as creator or maker, augments his authority. The words

“sancto” (holy or sainted) and “venerabilis” (venerable) glorify Bede and his writing through testifying to his character and his status as a saint. The word “canonici” (canonical or according to the canon) makes an authenticating move to show that Smith produced his text correctly, and connects Bede and Smith through their roles as canons, or churchmen. “Dunelmensis”, the Latinized form of Durham, geographically anchors John Smith and Bede. Durham Cathedral is very close to Wearmouth and Jarrow, where Bede spent most of his life, and it holds Bede’s tomb. Smith was prebendary at Durham from 1704 until his death. John Smith’s role as the text’s compiler and producer correlates to “cura et studio” (care and study); he devoted much of his life to studying Bede’s writings in order to produce a scholarly text. “Typis academicis”, the publisher’s name, tells that this book was part of a group printed in Cambridge and Edinburgh, and places Bede in the company of thinkers such as Aristotle, Cicero, and Eusebius. These phrases, while directly representing Smith’s role as a scholar, also speak to the intellectual labor Bede undertook. Each word or phrase on the title page represents an aspect of the material book itself or what the book signifies. When placed together, the words form contiguous relationships between the facts of Smith’s *Historiæ* and the larger thematic concerns of the *Ecclesiastical History*.

In order to locate the *Ecclesiastical History*’s thematic concerns with peoples, space, and place, we must turn to Smith’s map and its relation to his source. In *The Moore Bede* manuscript, generally agreed to date near to or shortly after the end of Bede’s life, the first chapter begins by detailing the geographic location, topography, and natural resources of England and Ireland. As Peter Hunter Blair writes in his introduction to *The Moore Bede* facsimile, “It formed the basis of the first critical edition of the *History*, that of John and George Smith published at Cambridge in 1722, and so it has remained in all subsequent editions” (11). Since Smith directly reproduced

this first chapter, one may then ask why include a map? Though the map is different media, it still creates contiguity with Bede's investment in physical and cultural geography. The

*Ecclesiastical History's* first chapter begins:

“Britain, an island in the ocean, formerly called Albion, is situated between the north and west, facing, though at a considerable distance, the coasts of Germany, France, and Spain, which form the greatest parts of Europe. It extends 800 miles in length towards the north, and is 200 miles in breadth, except where several promontories extend further in breadth, by which its compass is made to be 3675 miles” (Bede 4).

Smith's map manifests this prose visually. England and Ireland appear in their entirety with detailed illustrations of mountain ranges, rivers, estuaries and minor islands. The map shows over one hundred towns, settlements, and monasteries in England. Less than fifteen locales appear in Ireland, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands combined. Although Ireland's geographical details appear in the first chapter, the country is relatively unimportant to the *Ecclesiastical History*. Bede's writing had little concern with the countries to the east beyond locating which English peoples occupied and later migrated from them. In contrast, England is crowded with names, information, and civilization. Smith's map centralizes England, and illustrates places that were significant sites of battle, conversion, and the miraculous throughout Bede's writing.

Even by itself, the map's image of England can be read metonymically. As Bede's work contains disparate peoples and kingdoms grouped under one title in one book, the map shows disparate peoples and kingdoms housed in one island body. On the map, the names of tribes and dominions are synonymous with the land they occupied. Each group, such as the Northumbrians, Mercians, East Angles, Britons, and West Saxons, was conceptualized according to both who and where they were. Bede begins the *Ecclesiastical History* with a broad survey of the five main groups or nations which occupied the island: the English, Scots, Picts, Britons, and Latins.

The first four of these peoples appear on the map, in print, and the Latins appear linguistically. Bede ends the *History* by giving an account of the present state of “the English Nation, or of all Britain” which details deaths, religious and secular ascensions, political skirmishes, and the appearance of two comets (278). Again, the peoples are synonymous with their provinces, and they are referred to in a cellular manner, that is, events that occurred in Mercia or among the Mercians are not mixed in with a description of events that occurred in Northumbria or among the Northumbrians. Ultimately, the different events are housed together in one chapter – “of all Britain.” Smith’s map visually demonstrates this separation of peoples into their respective kingdoms by both naming them and showing small, dotted borders around their territories. The only solid lines on the map show rivers and represent Britain’s exterior border that encircles all of the kingdoms. Britain’s image on the map shares attributes of Bede’s work in the sense that the *Ecclesiastical History* maps and encircles a singularly named group, Anglorum or the English, through chronicling the disparate peoples that make up said group.

Smith’s map neatly locates and envelops the different groups of native English within the visual border of an island inside of a frame. In examining the map as metonym, it is useful to extend this envelopment to the map’s position in Smith’s book. The map appears after both the Latin and Anglo-Saxon sections, and this placement indicates the relevance of the map to both sections. In other words, the map reinforces the *Historiæ*’s wholeness, and, by virtue of its visual content and position in the text, relates to Bede’s engagement with Anglo-Saxon and Latin culture. One could argue that the map’s use of Latin defies representation of an engagement with both cultures; however, I would assert that this argument cannot stand because Smith’s book includes the Anglo-Saxon text, and the map shows all the native peoples Bede wrote on and encountered. Furthermore, Bede conceptualized his world in Latin, but that did not divorce him

from English soil or custom. Smith's map encompasses this along with its more concrete qualities like topography and geography. As it is surrounded by the two primary iterations of Bede's work and the appendix, the map makes a singular part that represents the whole project.

The map concentrates the *Historiæ*'s wholeness and links up with the cultural and locational dimensions of Bede's work. Smith's map also contains temporal qualities contiguous with the *Ecclesiastical History*. Bede's writing chronicles time from pre-Roman days to his own present. He connected the past to his present by using available technology, in other words, the historical chronicle was set down with the contemporary tools of Northumbrian manuscript production. Smith's strategy is quite similar except that the *written* history does not continue up to 1722, but the visual history does. Smith implemented engraving and eighteenth-century cartography to connect the past to his present. The eighteenth-century map represents Bede's eighth-century conception of peoples and space thereby connecting the newer work to the past work, and orienting the reader by displaying a pictorial representation of Bede's writing and his world.

In conclusion, Smith's book can be interpreted as a metonym for Bede's work. The title page saliently shows a contiguous relationship between Smith's text and Bede's project through its use of Latin, visual layout, and word choice. Smith's map metonymically represents not only Bede's first chapter in the *Ecclesiastical History*, but also Bede's overarching work of locating, naming, and understanding peoples and place. The very materiality of the *Historiæ* disseminates Bede's work approximately 1000 years after its original inception. Within Smith's text, we find metonymy – a part of the monument which stands in for the whole. The very nature of this monument is dependent upon reiterations like Smith's. Without Smith's physical text, Bede's work would not carry the same qualities, and it is within the *Historiæ* that we can map the monk.

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Souls in Community: John Donne, His Preaching, and the New World

Jeanne Shami, discussing John Donne's 1622 "Sermon Preached to the Honourable Company of the Virginian Plantation," presents Donne as "profoundly...humane, and personal" toward the native peoples of the New World ("Love" 90). Such a humane attitude was unusual in Donne's day; earlier in the year 1622 these natives massacred several hundred English settlers, prompting calls for retribution from many of Donne's contemporaries ("Love" 99). Shami notes that Donne, far from endorsing the all-too-common attitude of revenge, refers to native peoples as "'men,' 'persons,' 'soules,' and 'names'"—individuals who need the gospel, not retribution ("Love" 90). In contrast to Shami's emphasis on Donne's love for individuals, Thomas Festa sees Donne's sermon as furthering a common imperial cause, turning individuals into "commodities" (93). Festa reminds readers that Donne compares the souls of natives to trade goods and objectifies both the natives and London's criminals in a discussion of labor. Thus, Donne promotes, in Festa's words, "the Crown's ambition to increase its dominion" over individual well-being (90). In Festa's view, Donne subsumes personal good in the communal goals of colonization. Shami, in contrast, presents Donne as intensely focused on the individual.

Despite Shami and Festa's urging to take sides on the issue, other critics present Donne as profoundly aware of both individual and communal demands on his audience, and as aware of the balance needed between these demands. In particular, Gary Kuchar's discussion of "conscience" in Donne's preaching and Marla Hoffman Lunderberg's examination of Donne's

“discretion” (a topic influenced by Jeanne Shami herself) provide a context in which Donne’s views of individual and community balance. In this context, I propose that Shami’s and Festa’s arguments may be seen as mutually beneficial rather than mutually exclusive. Each emphasizes valid aspects of the Virginia Company Sermon, but their fellow critics demand that we acknowledge Donne’s multifaceted view of both his English audience and the New World.

While we cannot ignore Donne’s propensity, of which Festa so eloquently reminds us, to turn the New World into a commodity, neither can we ignore Donne’s love for the native peoples, as Shami points out. Recognizing that Donne consistently strove to balance the demands of individual and community makes the central question of the Virginia Company Sermon a question not of opposition but of balance. Readers do not have to choose Festa’s community-minded Donne over Shami’s individual-focused one, but can see the author of the Virginia Company Sermon as profoundly concerned with both sides of this complex issue.

I will begin by examining the scholarly discussion treating Donne’s focus on individuals in community. Critics including Gary Kuchar, Marla Hoffman Lunderberg, and Jeanne Shami examine Donne’s discourses on individuals in community; in light of their comments Shami and Festa’s debate may be seen as the next step in the discussion, applying this focus to a particular, and difficult, sermon. Then I will delve into Shami’s and Festa’s views on the Virginia Company Sermon; their discussions are not as one-sided as I have implied, and both deserve fuller treatment in light of the balance of individual and community. With these critics as guides, Donne’s view of the individual (English or Virginian) in community emerges as a central part of the Virginia Company Sermon, and integrates the ideas of individual and community more thoroughly than Shami and Festa initially imply.

Discussions of Donne's sermons strive to take into account Donne's attitude toward both the individual and communal aspects of his preaching. Gary Kuchar, in his article "Ecstatic Donne: Conscience, Sin, and Surprise in the *Sermons* and the Mitcham Letters," uses the idea of conscience to examine Donne's preaching methods. In Kuchar's view, Donne measures the effectiveness of his sermons by how directly he speaks to the consciences of his listeners (631). In fact, Kuchar sees Donne the preacher as taking on the actual role of the conscience, seeking to "surprise" his listeners and "pierce" their hearts by making them aware of their sin in the way that the conscience does. The effective preacher achieves this surprising awareness of sin by cultivating what Donne calls (and Kuchar quotes) "nearnesse" to his listeners (631). This nearness is the effect of the preacher's acting like the conscience—knowing the details of sin and presenting them as from an external agency. Obviously Donne did not know the particulars of all his listeners' sins, but he sought to appear, almost theatrically, as if he did know the gory details (Kuchar 632).

However, Donne was only human, like any preacher, and thus knew several details about individual sin—his own. Kuchar sees Donne bringing his listeners to an "uncanny" awareness of their own sin by acknowledging that the preacher too needs to face his conscience, effectively making himself a listener to his own sermon (643). Kuchar brings together his analyses with a quote from a 1620 sermon in which Donne talks about preaching and the individual soul, making the discussion at once communal and personal. He says, "It is not the depth, nor the wit, nor the eloquence of the Preacher that pierces us, but his nearenesse; that hee speaks to my conscience, as though he had been behinde the hangings when I sinned, and as though he had read the book of the day of Judgement already" (qtd. Kuchar 643). Here Donne balances preaching in general with its effect on the individual—including Donne himself. Throughout his analysis, Kuchar

illustrates a Donne who preached to a community as individuals, striving to reach each person's heart with a realization of personal sin and responsibility.

Jeanne Shami's article "Donne on Discretion" and Marla Hoffman Lunderberg's article "John Donne's Strategies for Discreet Preaching" both explore Donne's preaching to the individual in the community via the term "discretion." The term, which Lunderberg borrows from Shami, denotes a balance between zeal and caution—both of which, when carried to extremes, make the preacher less successful, either because the listeners are offended or because they cannot see the point. Shami writes that Donne's ultimate goal is to make his congregants aware of their place in God's plan of salvation, but in order to accomplish this goal Donne must arrive at "nearness," the same term Kuchar quoted for making sermons apply to all hearers (49). As Donne developed this nearness, he was particularly concerned with what Shami calls "the problem of despair"—he worried that in making his congregation aware of their personal sin he might drive some of them to despair rather than to seek reconciliation in the message of the gospel (50). Thus, as he preached, Donne continually struggled with the balance between making his listeners aware of their personal sin and keeping them firmly within God's overarching plan of salvation and grace.

Lunderberg sees Donne as a "discreet preacher"—keeping to the boundaries of discretion—because of the way he balanced encouragement and criticism in his sermons. She lets this idea stand in a general sense but is most interested in tracing what she calls "discreet radicalism or radical discretion" to situations where Donne preached before monarchs (Lunderberg 100). When Donne preached at court he had to strike a balance between complimenting the monarch (in order to stay alive and in favor) and preaching honest, if difficult, gospel truth. Lunderberg presents Donne as a "careful, thoughtful—yet questioning—

supporter of his monarchs” (100). While Donne often sees a direct connection between the king and God (in essence supporting the “divine right theory,” as Lunderberg calls it) he also presents the king as subject to the law, suggesting that only the king’s lawful acts are sanctioned by God (100). In one sermon, Donne speaks of the importance of the preacher’s audience, including the king, and, as Lunderberg says, of its “responsibility to allow forthright preaching to occur” (108). However, to avoid repercussions for any perceived criticism, Donne follows these remarks with effusive compliments toward King James and his court—flattery that Lunderberg points out may trouble today’s readers but that demonstrates Donne’s assert-and-retreat method of critique.

These explorations of discretion have drawn us slightly away from our focus on individuals within community, and from the “Virginia Company Sermon,” but the concept of discretion is an important one in many critical discussions. By means of discretion, as Shami and Lunderberg demonstrate, Donne sought to balance the demands of his preaching with the needs of his audience—an extension of the emphasis Donne placed on the balance needed in preaching to individuals in community, which Kuchar illustrates in his discussion of conscience. And indeed, the critics mentioned here comprise only a sampling of those who address Donne’s awareness of individuals and community. Those who explore Donne’s poetry, especially his Holy Sonnets, note Donne’s deep awareness of the individual’s spiritual struggle—the poems beginning “Oh my black soul!” and “Batter my heart,” for example, suggest extremely personal journeys. Murray Roston grounds these and other such poems in the meditative tradition of the Roman Catholic Church because they reflect the inward, personal focus of Catholic meditation (50). Anthony Parr notes that in Donne’s poems about traveling (like “Good Friday 1613”) the landscape is secondary to “self-discovery” and the affairs of the soul (76). Other critics draw more fully on John Donne as communally minded—Adam Potkay, for instance, who in

exploring the concept of joy in Donne's sermons mentions an emphasis on "corporate rejoicing" (60). John Stubbs, in his introduction to *John Donne: The Reformed Soul*, emphasizes Donne as part of a historical community—as the originator of that famous statement, "no man is an island" (qtd. Stubbs xxiii). Thus, in the critical discussion currently underway, scholars see Donne as both intensely aware of the individual soul's concerns and as focused on those of the broader community.

Kuchar and Lunderberg, along with these other critics, have illustrated that Donne strove to balance the demands of individual and community in his poems and preaching; through Shami's and Festa's examinations of the Virginia Company Sermon we see Donne striving (perhaps with limited success) toward that same balance. While Shami and Festa each focus on one of the two aspects, both admit the blending of individual and community in Donne's sermon. Shami examines Donne's presentation of natives as both individual souls and common humanity; Festa presents Donne's treatment of individual natives and Londoners in light of the communal focus of the British Empire. By allowing these analyses of the Virginia Company Sermon to inform each other in light of the rest of the critical dialogue, we see the sermon as a venue where the individual (native or English) exists in community (that of nation or of common humanity).

As we have briefly seen already, Shami's analysis privileges Donne's care for individuals, particularly native Virginians. Shami's title is "Love and Power," and she insists that the discussion she enters emphasizes power at the expense of Donne's love for others. She prefers to emphasize the "personal" aspect of Donne's message—personal both in terms of his presentation of the natives as individuals and in terms of Donne's awareness of his audience, illustrated in the final paragraph of the sermon. Here Donne acknowledges that not all of his listeners are directly connected with the Virginia Company, and says to the Company's

members, “I have, indeed, but told the Congregation, what hath beene done already” (206). Shami emphasizes Donne’s love for the native peoples in the way he characterizes them as “soules”—that is, individuals—and also in the way Donne presents the “possibility of trade” with the Virginians (97). Donne calls the plantation England’s “little Sister” and promotes a hypothetical exchange of goods for the gospel (Donne 201). This “assumption of trade” presents trade itself as a dialogue of sorts rather than an imperial mandate (Shami 98).

Shami also, as mentioned earlier, notes that Donne’s care for the natives would have been striking in the wake of massacres that had taken place earlier that year in Virginia. She reminds us, “Colonialist characterizations of natives as inviting their own destruction find no parallel in Donne; nor do we see ambivalent fears of natives” (100). Donne’s only remark on the massacres, his oblique phrase “a *Flood of bloud*,” is in the center of an argument for patience on the part of the Company—patience that would spare the native “souls” (197). Furthermore, in an earlier sermon, Donne had emphasized what Shami calls the “contiguity”—we might say community—between England and the New World by proclaiming, “a Virginian is thy neighbor, as well as a Londoner” (qtd. Shami 100). Thus while individuals are her primary focus, Shami also draws attention to Donne’s communal awareness. She ends her article by noting the important task of “bearing witness,” which, to quote Shami, “will be effective only through the agency of particular human beings: John Donne, members of the Virginia Company, and ultimately native Virginians themselves” (106). In this analysis, Donne promotes the common humanity of the natives with his listeners, thus grounding all people in community—but a community made up, as Shami reminds us, of individual “soules.”

In speaking about the New World, Donne displayed an extraordinary love for the native peoples and did indeed designate them as individuals, “soules” in need of people to “bear

witness” to them, as Shami emphasizes. And yet he promoted the corporate goals of the English empire, sometimes at the expense of individuals, as Thomas Festa notes. In his article “The Metaphysics of Labor in John Donne’s Sermon to the Virginia Company,” Festa turns this communal focus toward the way Donne’s sermon ignores some individual concerns. Donne’s blend of individual and community may be disturbing to the modern reader, as Festa highlights in Donne’s tendency to endorse the colonial cause. Festa argues that Donne, in the imperialist mindset of his day, loses sight of the individuality of both the native Virginians and the criminals of London. These people, Festa argues, become “commodities,” souls to be converted and labor for the plantations of the New World (93). While Festa does not deny Donne’s “exceptional” compassion toward the native peoples, he sees the scales tipped toward a far less humane attitude when Donne “implies the connection between the quantification of souls and commodities” (84, 93). For example, Donne proclaims, in one of his more troubling analogies, “O, if you would be as ready to hearken at the returne of a *Ship*, how many *Indians* were converted to *Christ Jesus*, as what *Trees*, or *druggs*, or *Dyes* the *Ship* had brought, then you were in your right way, and not till then” (195). Festa sees this argument as a commodification of souls that dehumanizes in favor of a kingdom, earthly or otherwise. Festa is reluctant to accuse Donne outright of inhumanity or insensitivity, but he is deeply disturbed by this quantification of souls. He is no less distressed at Donne’s subsuming the “horrors of transportation” into something that can, as Donne preaches, “sweep your streets, and wash your dores, from idle persons” (Festa 97, Donne 198).

Festa does not ignore Donne’s focus on the individual, though even here his analysis is not complimentary. Insofar as Donne recognizes those being transported as individuals, Festa argues, Donne presents a connection between “spiritual regeneration and financial productivity”

that asserts good for these criminals only as they are useful to the English empire (99). Thus Festa, while acknowledging Donne's compassion toward the native peoples and making note of an awareness of individuals, does not allow these factors to outweigh the commodification of natives and criminals, the obscuring of individual souls in the grand communal goal of empire-building.

Nor, as most readers of Donne's sermon would agree, should Festa do so; the imperialist mindset and its subsequent treatment of native peoples have a lot to answer for. However, as we have seen from numerous other critics in the discussion, Donne was intensely aware of the importance of individual souls and of bringing each struggling conscience (his own included) in line with God's communal plan of salvation. Rather than choosing one side of the issue over the other, perhaps we as readers can acknowledge both—as the points of overlap between Shami and Festa may be expanded into a greater view of Donne's emphasis on both individual and community. Donne strove constantly to balance the demands of individuals in community, especially in his sermons; Shami and Lunderberg's idea of "discretion," as well as Kuchar's analysis of preaching and conscience, carry out this notion of balance. Neither Shami nor Festa entirely excludes the opposite side of their position; Festa, in his discussion of empire, mentions individual good for both natives and criminals (although he protests Donne's application of this individual good). At the same time, Shami, while emphasizing Donne's love for individuals, presents Donne as aware of the communal aspect of his preaching, since the natives share common humanity with his audience. In this way, both Festa and Shami—as well as the other critics discussing Donne—allow a glimpse of the complexity of this issue in Donne's Virginia Company Sermon; despite their privileging of one side or the other, Shami and Festa allow both aspects to emerge. And we, by allowing Shami's and Festa's views to relate to one another, gain

a critical view of John Donne as intensely aware of the individual soul, firmly grounded in community.

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## Christopher Marlowe in Recent Fiction

Because of my long-term interest in the study of Christopher Marlowe, I have often been intrigued by his portrayal in popular fiction. In 1994 at the second of these conferences, then called the Dakotas Conference, I read a paper commenting on four novels that had appeared in 1993, the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Marlowe's death: Anthony Burgess's *A Dead Man in Deptford*, Judith Cook's *The Slicing Edge of Death*, Stephanie Cowell's *Nicholas Cooke: Actor, Soldier, Physician, Priest*, and Lisa Goldstein's *Strange Devices of the Sun and Moon*. Today I will be looking at a cluster of five novels that appeared between 2002 and 2005 in which Marlowe appears as a major character, if not necessarily the main character. These are Harry Turtledove's *Ruled Britannia*, Martin Stephen's *The Conscience of the King: Henry Gresham and the Shakespeare Conspiracy*, Leslie Silbert's *The Intelligencer*, Louise Welsh's *Tamburlaine must Die*, and Rodney Bolt's *History Play: The Lives and Afterlife of Christopher Marlowe*.

*Ruled Britannia* is an alternate history, a literary subgenre that posits a different outcome to some key historical event and builds its story on the hypothetical history resulting from that change. In *Ruled Britannia* the Spanish Armada had been successful in conquering England, and by 1597, when the novel is set, Philip II's daughter Isabella and her Austrian husband Albert are maintained on the English throne by an occupying Spanish army, Queen Elizabeth is imprisoned in the Tower of London, Catholicism has been restored, and the Inquisition pursues those who continue to uphold Protestant beliefs or practices. The novel focuses primarily on William Shakespeare and Lope de Vega, who in actual fact had sailed with the Armada, and who is depicted here as part of the occupying army. The plot centers on two plays that Shakespeare is writing. King Philip is dying, and the Spanish have recruited Shakespeare to write a

commemorative play to be performed upon his death. At the same time, Burghley and his son Robert Cecil believe that Philip's death will provide the opportunity for a revolt against Spanish rule, and they ask Shakespeare to secretly prepare a play that will arouse the patriotism of the English populace. The subject is to be Queen Boudicca's fight against the Roman conquerors of England. Turtledove's inspiration is obviously Essex's sponsoring of a performance of *Richard II* in hopes of gaining support for his revolt against Elizabeth, but the ploy is more effective in the novel than it was for Essex.

Martin Stephen's *The Conscience of the King: Henry Gresham and the Shakespeare Conspiracy* and Leslie Silbert's *The Intelligencer* both fall into the mystery-thriller category. Martin Stephen's *The Conscience of the King* has very little to do with actual history, though the historical color is quite rich. It is part of a series set in Renaissance England featuring the fictional Henry Gresham, a gentleman spy. In this novel he must solve two related mysteries. One involves the recovery of love letters written between King James and Robert Carr, Viscount Rochester. The second is the recovery of two play scripts stolen from the Globe Theater. Leslie Silbert's *The Intelligencer* involves a dual plot, one set in the present, and one in 1593. The first features Kate Morgan, an erstwhile Ph.D. student who has left academia to become an investigator for a high-powered private detective agency that works for private clients while simultaneously doing intelligence-work for the U.S. government. The second plot involves Marlowe's work as an investigative spy. The two plots are cleverly intertwined. Solving the mysteries that Kate is working on in the present requires her to translate a bound set of documents left by Thomas Phelippes, breaking a code created by Christopher Marlowe, and recovering a treasure that Marlowe had hidden four centuries earlier. Louise Welsh's *Tamburlaine must Die* adheres almost as closely to history as Turtledove departs from it. Her

novella opens on May 29, 1593, with Marlowe writing a chronicle of recent events. He has been summoned to a meeting at Deptford on the next day and is apprehensive about the outcome. If he does not return, the friend with whom he will leave his document is to secrete it away where it will not be found until far into the future. The last of these books is Rodney Bolt's *History Play: The Lives and Afterlife of Christopher Marlowe*. His title is intended to indicate that he is playing with history. His is a fake biography, complete with phony footnotes (mixed in with real footnotes), that assumes that Marlowe faked his death at Deptford, escaped to the continent, and supported himself by writing the plays that were smuggled back to England and presented as being written by Shakespeare. The last part of the book, where Bolt creatively imagines Marlowe's post-1593 meetings with a variety of historical figures and his participation in notable historical events on the continent, is the most satisfying part of the novel.

Back in 1994 I remarked how pleasing it was that none of the novels I was discussing presented Marlowe as Shakespeare, and I will confess that Bolt's premise irritates me, although his claim is that he is simply using this anti-Stratfordian theory imaginatively without trying to prove it. However, while only Bolt pushes the authorship question, the idea of Marlowe having survived Deptford turns out to be surprisingly popular among these novelists. Indeed, only Welsh avoids it. Her Marlowe heads for Deptford not knowing precisely what will happen. Turtledove's Marlowe is forced to flee when the Spanish begin arresting sodomites. He goes to Deptford, where he catches a ship to safety. Pursuing but not catching him, Lope takes a stoup of wine at Eleanor Bull's, the site of Marlowe's actual death. Having thus teased the reader with the possibility of a death at Deptford, Turtledove has his Marlowe return to London in disguise. Lope recognizes him and in the resulting fight stabs him above the right eye, killing him instantly, a wound that recalls Marlowe's actual death. Stephen's Marlowe not only faked his

death in 1593, with the help of Gresham, but he had done it again in 1602, this time fooling Gresham. Now, dying and demented by syphilis, he has returned to England to force the performance of a new play that he has written and to revenge himself on all of those he perceives to be his enemies, which includes Gresham. Silbert's plot could well have ended with Marlowe's death, and her "Author's Note" indicates that this was her original intention. However, she says that she was influenced by Marlowe's decision not to kill Leander in his "Hero and Leander" and decided to spare her Marlowe. His savior is Robert Poley, who orchestrates things so cleverly that Skeres and Frizer, the other men present, don't even realize that Marlowe is not dead.

To be sure, few novelists would be happy to conclude with a death that was the result of an unmotivated brawl over the dinner tab. Questions about the coroner's report have been raised ever since it was first unearthed by Lelie Hotson Poley, but Welsh and Silbert both refer to Charles Nicholl's 2002 revised edition of his very popular and very readable *The Reckoning*. Nicholl there moved away from his earlier thesis that the Earl of Essex was strongly implicated in Marlowe's death, but he continued to argue that Marlowe was murdered as a consequence of a plot against Raleigh. Bolt cites the 1992 edition, which could have affected the 1993 novels, though its influence is not clear. What is clear is that in the earlier novels Marlowe's death was real, not faked, and political intrigue and fighting was evident in three of them. The current emphasis on Marlowe's survival may suggest that we have become more fascinated with the idea that history does not tell the truth.

Of course, the idea that Marlowe's death may in some way be mysterious relates to the understanding that he was a spy. I tend to agree with Constance Kuriyama that we ought to be cautious about the inferences we draw from the documentary record, but that record does contain some tantalizing details, including the letter from the Privy Council affirming Marlowe's service

to his country and intelligence-gathering connections of those present at his death. It is precisely these connections that Turtledove exploits. In a series of mysterious meetings, Marlowe introduces Shakespeare to Thomas Phelippes (best-known now for his role in uncovering the Babington plot and helping to convict Mary Queen of Scots). Phelippes then sends Nicholas Skeres to take Shakespeare to a meeting with Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who proposes the play on Boudicca. Ingram Frizer, the man who actually stabbed Marlowe at Deptford, appears in order to eliminate two men who threaten the plot. In short, Marlowe and individuals we associate with him create the novel's background of intrigue and violence.

Silbert's vision of Elizabeth politics and intelligencers also forms a complicated web. On one side is Robert Cecil, who because of an urgent need for money has tried coining (which involved Marlowe) and is selling arms illegally to the Barbary pirates through the Muscovy company. Robert Poley and Ingram Frizer work for Cecil, and when Marlowe starts investigating the arms deal (done through the Muscovy company), Cecil wants Marlowe killed. On the other side is Cecil's foe, the Earl of Essex, who is served by Thomas Phelippes. It is Phelippes who had hired Marlowe to investigate the Muscovy Company, but not expecting anything to come of it, he was also setting up Marlowe to be tortured into informing on Cecil by creating the Dutch Church libel and arresting Kyd. Richard Baines and Nicholas Skeres work for Phelippes. Stephen's Gresham is aware of undercover work undertaken by Marlowe, and Bolt creates additional spying adventures for him. Only Welsh, limiting herself to the events of his final days, creates no elaborate James-Bond-like adventures for Marlowe.

What Welsh does is to weave a tale that connects the actual events of Marlowe's final days. She begins with Marlowe's being called before the Privy Council to answer charges that a heretical document in Thomas Kyd's possession was actually his, that he is an avowed atheist

who has converted others to atheism, and that he was the author of a libel signed Tamburlaine that had been attached to the door of the Dutch church. Marlowe determines that to clear himself he must learn the identity of Tamburlaine. This sleuthing is, of course, Welsh's contribution to Marlovian history, and to help in his search she gives him a best friend, an actor named Thomas Blaize. It becomes clear that powerful people want Raleigh's death and that the Dutch Church libel, the allegations tortured out of Kyd, and the Baines note were all designed to force Marlowe to betray Raleigh in order to save his own life. However, John Dee warns Marlowe that taking sides against Raleigh would be as dangerous as aiding those who are plotting against him. It is no wonder that Welsh's Marlowe is uncertain about what will befall him at Deptford.

In Turtledove's novel, Marlowe actually contributes nothing to the plot once he has introduced Shakespeare to Phelippes. His appearances are solely for color: he smokes his pipe and praises tobacco, he chases young men, he blasphemes, and he is incautious about expressing his opinions. This is a far remove from Welsh's focus on the actual events of Marlowe's final days, yet to a large extent this is what these five novels have to tell us about the role that Marlowe plays in our cultural imagination. They confirm that Marlowe fascinates most people not because he was very arguably the best playwright of his day (which ended before Shakespeare came into his full strength as a writer), but because of his reputation for religious and sexual heterodoxy, because of his apparent connections to the world of Elizabeth intelligencers, and because of his violent death. If Shakespeare appears, it is because he is a writer, or someone who is pretending to be a writer. Marlowe is always Tamburlaine, daring the gods out of the heavens.

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## Shakespearean *Thyestes*

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Seneca's *Thyestes* sits in the background of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* much as, say, Gascoigne's *The Supposes* stands in relation to *The Taming of the Shrew*: clearly, in each case, the predecessor was formative for certain aspects of plot in the successor, but scholars have not devoted much energy to positing any deeper intertextual conversation. Robert S. Miola has made the most sustained case for Shakespeare's reception of Seneca, and this has led to further work particularly with regard to *Macbeth and Hamlet*.<sup>1</sup> Complicating matters is the fact that revenge tragedy more broadly took much from Seneca, so Shakespeare may have been incorporating trends in the subgenre. My intention in this paper is fairly modest: namely, to provide a compelling sense that Shakespeare did not merely borrow bits of plot and language from Seneca, nor did he simply let the cultural river of literary revenge tragedy flow into his pen, but rather sustained a close dialogue with Seneca, and in particular Seneca's *Thyestes*, much as he did with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Virgil's *Aeneid*.<sup>2</sup>

In *Thyestes*, the familial and political conflict between Atreus and Thyestes—the latter having usurped Atreus' turn at kingship in their alternation of the throne—threatens not only the

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<sup>1</sup> Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy: The Influence of Seneca* (Oxford ; New York : Clarendon Press, 1992). See also Brian Arkins, "Heavy Seneca: His Influence on Shakespeare's Tragedies." *Classics Ireland* 2 (1995) 1-8. For *Macbeth and Hamlet*, see Yves Peyré, "'Confusion now hath made his masterpiece': Senecan resonances in *Macbeth*", and Erica Sheen, "'These are the only men': Seneca and Monopoly in *Hamlet* 2.2", in *Shakespeare and the Classics*, ed. Charles Martindale and A. B. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 141-155 and 156-167 respectively.

<sup>2</sup> The attention to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (with a focus on the Lavinia-Philomela connection) has obviously been considerable. See, for example, Jessica Lugo, "Blood, Barbarism, and Belly Laughs: Shakespeare's *Titus* and Ovid's Philomela", *English Studies*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (August 2007): 401-417; Charles Martindale and Michelle Martindale, "Philomela in *Titus* and *Cymbeline*", in Charles Martindale and Michelle Martindale, *Shakespeare and the Uses of Antiquity: An Introductory Essay* (Routledge: 1990), 47-56; and Grace Starry West, "Going by the Book: Classical Allusions in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*", *Studies in Philology* 79.1 (Winter 1982): 62-77. For the *Aeneid*, see Danielle A. St. Hilaire. "Allusion and Sacrifice in *Titus Andronicus*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 49.2 (2009): 311-331.

brotherly bond, but also the social order of the town, as represented by the Chorus. When Atreus seduces Thyestes back to Mycenae with false forgiveness, Thyestes' son Tantalus declares the reunion a joining of the body: "Thy brother returns to thee with wrath given o'er, gives thee back half the realm, unites the members of thy sundered house, and to thyself restores thee".<sup>3</sup> The same imagery is used in *Titus Andronicus* in the opening competition between the brothers Saturninus and Bassianus for the rulership of Rome.<sup>4</sup> Marcus Andronicus, suggesting that his brother Titus assume the throne instead, entreats, "Be candidatus then, and put [the robe of office] on, / And help to set a head on headless Rome" (I.i.185-86). The political dismemberment out of which the play begins finds its culmination in Marcus' words to the citizenry at the play's close, when Lucius is to be advanced as candidate for emperor:

You sad-faced men, people and sons of Rome,  
By uproar sever'd, like a flight of fowl  
Scatter'd by winds and high tempestuous gusts,  
O, let me teach you how to knit again  
This scatter'd corn into one mutual sheaf,  
These broken limbs again into one body . . . (V.iii.67-72)<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "ira frater abiecta redit / partemque regni reddit et lacerae domus / componit artus tequem restituit tibi" (II. 431-433), 126-127. Translations and Latin from *Thyestes* come from *Seneca's Tragedies*, Vol. II, tr. Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library Volumes (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953).

<sup>4</sup> This fraternal conflict is deepened by the heated argument between Tamora's sons Chiron and Demetrius, and more subtly by the exchange of Tamora's sons' deaths for the deaths of Titus' sons. In Seneca's *Thyestes*, this brotherly and political infighting has specific resonance with regard to the household of Tantalus. So, too, in *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare emphasizes the household of Andronicus from the outset with the burial of Titus' sons in the family crypt; the play returns to this locus at its close: "My father and Lavinia shall forthwith / Be closed in our household's monument" (V.iii.193-194). It is perhaps significant in this regard that Shakespeare was shortly after this time devoting his energies to *Romeo and Juliet*, with its focus on two households. Passages from *Titus Andronicus* are taken from *Titus Andronicus*, ed. J.C. Maxwell, *The Arden Shakespeare* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1961).

<sup>5</sup> This passage also hearkens back to the violation and mutilation of Lavinia, prior to which Demetrius proposes, "First thrash the corn, then after burn the straw" (II.iii.123).

Within this larger framework of disjuncting, there are the many concrete acts of dismemberment for which *Titus Andronicus* is so infamous. Right away, Tamora's son Alarbus is sacrificed in stark fashion: "Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths, / That we may hew his limbs, and on a pile / *Ad manes fratrum* sacrifice his flesh" (1.1).<sup>6</sup> Thence, Lavinia has her tongue and hands cut off, Titus cuts off his own hand, Titus' sons Mutius and Quintus are beheaded, and Titus cuts up Tamora's sons Chiron and Demetrius to bake them in a pie to be served to their mother. These more literal moments of vivisection of course echo the sacrifice of Thyestes' children in preparation for the feast at the end of Seneca's play. We first hear an account from a Messenger:

When with the victims he has satisfied himself, he is now free to prepare his brother's banquet. With his own hands he cuts the body into parts, severs the broad shoulders at the trunk, and the retarding arms, heartlessly strips off the flesh and severs the bones; the heads only he saves, and the hands that had been given to him in pledge of faith.<sup>7</sup>

Later, Atrous himself details the proceedings, as he glories over his brother:

With the deep-driven sword I smote them; I slew them at the altars; with their offered blood I appeased the sacred fires; hewing their lifeless bodies, into small scraps I tore them, and some into boiling cauldrons did I plunge, and some before slow fires I set to

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<sup>6</sup> Lucius reports back, "See, lord and father, how we have perform'd / Our Roman rites: Alarbus' limbs are lopp'd, / And entrails feed the sacrificing fire, / Whose smoke, like incense, doth perfume the sky." (I.i.142-45)

<sup>7</sup> "Postquam hostie placuere, securus vacat / iam fratris epulis. ipse divisum secat / in membra corpus, amputat trunco tenus / umeros patentes et lacertorum moras, / denudat artus durus atque ossa amputat; / tantum ora servat et datas fidei manus" (759-764), 154-55. For "ora", Miller translates "heads", which is obviously the literal intention, but Seneca's synecdoche ("mouths") is a nice touch, emphasizing the speech-bearing capacity of the boys, who are distressingly silent in this scene; Shakespeare may have considered the appropriateness of the preserved but de-orialized heads for the parallel attack on Lavinia.

drip. Their limbs and sinews I rent asunder while still they lived, and their livers,  
transfixed on slender spits and sputtering I saw, and with my own hand I fed the flames.<sup>8</sup>

Note that within both these passages Atreus' acting "With his own hands" receives emphasis. The word "hand" recurs an impressive number of times in Seneca's play. Here, hands hold a special status with respect to agency: Atreus saves the hands of Thyestes' sons (and later presents them to him), and his own commission of the crime is emphasized in terms of his hands. Similarly, *Titus Andronicus* is replete with references to hands, both as severed body parts and as instruments of human action.<sup>9</sup> The powerful and the helpless are fused in Titus' response to seeing Lavinia after her mutilation: "Speak, Lavinia, what accursed hand / Hath made thee handless in thy father's sight" (III.i.66-7). Titus goes on to suggest divesting himself of his own manual agency: "Give me a sword, I'll chop off my hands too; / For they have fought for Rome, and all in vain" (III.i.72-73). We should recognize, then, that in Lavinia's torture "It is not just that Shakespeare is imitating, and trying to outdo, Ovid by 'improving' on the Philomela story";<sup>10</sup> rather, he is weaving Philomela into his larger examination of human responsibility.

This is not to belittle Shakespeare's use of Ovid. There can be little doubt that Shakespeare turned to the *Metamorphoses* in incorporating the rape and cannibalistic aspects of the Philomela story. Not only does *Titus Andronicus* center its action on the rape of Lavinia, but Lavinia herself points to the story of Philomela in a copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in order to reveal the truth behind her own violation and mutilation. But even at its most explicitly Ovidian

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<sup>8</sup> "ferro vulnera impresso dedi, / cecidi ad aras, caede votiva focos / placavi et artus, corpora exanima amputans, / in parva carpsi frustra et haec ferventibus / demersi aenis, illa lentis ignibus / stillare iussi. membra nervosque abscidi / viventibus, gracilique traiectas veru / mugire fibras vidi et aggressi manu / mea ipse flammam" (1057-1065), 176-77. Atreus' actions are foretold/inaugurated by the Fury at the opening of the play: "Now set o'er the flames let cauldrons foam; let the rent members one by one pass in" ("ignibus iam subditis / spument aena, membra per partes eant / discerpta" ll. 59-61, pp. 96-97).

<sup>9</sup> See Katherine A Rowe, "Dismembering and Forgetting in *Titus Andronicus*", *Shakespeare Quarterly* Vol. 45.3 (1994): 279-303, and Gillian Murray Kendall, "'Lend me thy Hand': Metaphor and Mayhem in *Titus Andronicus*", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Autumn, 1989): 299-316.

<sup>10</sup> Martindale and Martindale 54.

moments, *Titus Andronicus* retains its engagement with Seneca. The play's most notorious scene, in which Tamora's sons violate Lavinia, then cut away her tongue and hands so that she can not reveal the crime, re-enacts directly Tereus' brutalization of Philomela. But Shakespeare places this action in a wood modeled in part on the grove where Atreus sacrifices Thyestes' children.<sup>11</sup> The "barren, detested vale", devoid of sunlight, full of hideous noises serves as an intertextual environs in which Lavinia's limbs are cut off and Titus' sons are dropped in a pit (rather than a pot) ultimately to be beheaded.<sup>12</sup> Even when the Philomela story is explicitly invoked, Seneca is not far removed. The one direct (or nearly direct) quotation of Seneca (which comes from the *Phaedra*) occurs precisely at the climactic moment when Lavinia has divulged the crime and the perpetrators. Titus, having reached the breaking point, calls out

Magni Dominator poli,

Tam lentus audis scelera? tam lentus vides?

("Lord of the great heaven, why are you so slow to hear wickedness, why so slow to see it?")<sup>13</sup>

It is rarely noted that Shakespeare took his clue for this blending of the Philomelan and Thyestean strands from Seneca.<sup>14</sup> Atreus, determining what crime could possibly fulfill his need for revenge, invokes Procne and Philomela as guiding spirits:

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<sup>11</sup> In *Thyestes* the grove constitutes a site where the gods give forth oracles; I shall discuss below the absence of the divine in the play, for the present will observe that the Senecan backdrop supports Helga Duncan's suggestion that the grove is Tamora's profanation of the sacred space of the Andronicus tomb. (See note 20 for citation.)

<sup>12</sup> The murderous scene from *Thyestes* is of course more directly replicated in the concluding banquet when Chiron and Demetrius are butchered and subsequently fed to Tamora, but it should be noted that, just as II.iii develops out of the Senecan vale reference, so, too, does the climactic scene. When Tamora appears to Titus as Revenge, she says, "There's not a hollow cave or lurking-place, / No vast obscurity or misty vale, / Where bloody murder or detested rape / Can couch for fear, but I will find them out" (V.ii.35-8), recalling the vale, the secrecy, the murder and the rape of II.iii. We have both the dismemberment and decapitation of *Thyestes* with Titus as fatherly victim of revenge; this position is of course reversed when Titus becomes Atreus and butchers Chiron and Demetrius in order to feed them to Tamora. Titus is shown his sons' heads just as Thyestes is shown his sons' heads, hands, and feet; Shakespeare plays a bit with this revelation, having Titus contribute his own hand to the tableau.

<sup>13</sup> My translation.

<sup>14</sup> None of the editions of *Titus Andronicus* I have examined makes this attribution.

The Odrysian house once saw a feast unspeakable—'tis a monstrous crime, I grant, but it has been do; let my smart find something worse than this. Inspire my soul, O Daulian mother, aye and sister, too [i.e., Procne and Philomela]; my case is like to yours; help me and urge on my hand.<sup>15</sup>

To return to the site of Lavinia's horror, Marie Rutkoski has pointed out the emphasis in that scene on the legitimization of lineage.<sup>16</sup> Tamora's children prove themselves hers by murdering Bassianus. In *Thyestes*, Atreus expresses anxiety over "my wife seduced, our pledge of empire broken, my house impaired, my offspring dubious". In *Titus*, this fear becomes reality, as Aaron cuckolds Saturninus, leading to the production of an illegitimate heir. Atreus proposes an interesting act of demonstration of his children's true descent when he considers bringing them in on the revenge plot:

Let Agamemnon be the witting agent of my plan, and Menelaus wittingly assist his father. By this deed let their uncertain birth be put to proof: if they will not wage the war of hate, if they plead he is their uncle, he is their sire.<sup>17</sup>

Ultimately, Atreus decides against this knowing participation. Titus demonstrates no such qualms, inviting his grandson Lucius to play a key role as messenger fully cognizant of Titus' intentions. Shakespeare emphasizes young Lucius' intellectual buy-in, having him first proclaim he would like to put a knife in the bosoms of Lavinia's assailants, then jeer in an aside that he

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<sup>15</sup> "vidit infandas domus / Odrysia mensas—fateor, immane est scelus, / sed occupatum; maius hoc aliquid dolor / inueniat. animum Daulis inspira parens / sororque; causa est similis; assiste et manum / impelle nostram" (272-77) , 114-15. It seems to me almost certain that Seneca draws not only his theme but also his language from the parallel moment in Ovid's story when Procne builds herself up to commit the crime.

<sup>16</sup> Marie Rutkoski, "'Arm the minds of infants': Interpreting Childhood in *Titus Andronicus*", *Criticism* 48.2 (2006): 203-226.

<sup>17</sup> "consili Agammenon mei / sciens minister fiat et patri sciens / Menelaus assit. prolis incertae fides / ex hoc petatur scelere: si bella abnuunt / et gerere nolunt odia, si patrum vocant, / pater est" (325-30), 118-19.

understands the coded message delivered to Chiron and Demetrius even though the two Goths don't.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps the most striking resonance with and adjustment of Seneca's play involves the re-casting of evil forces. In *Thyestes*, Atreus acts alone, in a wholly grand manner. In *Titus*, Aaron and Tamora share out the plotting and, as indicated earlier, the role is further multiplied by Titus' revenge. Most obviously, this fragmentation and repetition call into question the virtue of Titus' code and indeed, on some readings, the butchery and cannibalism of empire.<sup>19</sup> I want to emphasize, though, the most profound thematic shift from *Thyestes* to *Titus Andronicus*, the loss of the divine in the world. In a provocative exploration, Helga Duncan suggests that the play's emphasis on sacred spaces speaks to the Elizabethan loss of such spaces through the Reformation.<sup>20</sup> (Titus' opening tribute to the dead at the tomb of the Andronici becomes reformed by Tamora in the vale already mentioned in this paper, with the pit serving as tomb and the murder of Bassianus and mutilation of Lavinia standing in sacrificially.) I would add that Tamora's recall of *Thyestes* at this point helps to position the site as founded upon the sacred—since in Seneca's play the gods deliver there their oracles—and simultaneously empties that space of its supernatural force, since the gods are not evoked in *Titus* and, indeed, rather than oracle we have an insistence on silence, from Tamora's "I will not hear her speak" (II.iii.137) to Chiron's "Nay, then I'll stop your mouth" (II.iii.185) to the eventual cutting out of Lavinia's tongue.

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<sup>18</sup> IV.ii.4-17. It is worth pointing out that the knowing participation of Tamora's children in the murder of Bassianus and rape of Lavinia has already enacted this shift from *Thyestes* (and thereby furthers the parallels between Tamora's and Titus revenge acts).

<sup>19</sup> See David B. Goldstein, "The Cook and the Cannibal: *Titus Andronicus* and the New World", *Shakespeare Studies* 37 (2009): 99-133.

<sup>20</sup> Helga L. Duncan, "'Sumptuously Re-edified': The Reformation of Sacred Space in *Titus Andronicus*", *Comparative Drama* 43.4 (2009): 425-453.

Even in the opening tomb scene, though, we can see a distancing from the supernatural.

Deborah Willis, in her trauma theory approach to *Titus Andronicus*, observes that “Titus and his son Lucius return as combat survivors, carrying coffins and haunted by ghosts”, Titus seeing “his sons ‘hover[ing] on the dreadful shore of Styx’” and Lucius anticipating “‘prodigies’ the ghosts will send if their anger remains ‘unappeased’”.<sup>21</sup> Willis’s anchoring of this turmoil in the worldly psychological *response* to the warriors’ deaths is useful, for we do not in fact see the ghosts, nor any vision of the underworld to which Titus’ sons are apparently bound, beyond the imaginings of Titus and Lucius. *Thyestes*, on the other hand, commences in the underworld, with Tantalus bemoaning his punishment, only to be called forth by a Fury to go into the upper world and help spread further hideous criminal offense. Seneca clearly establishes two important premises at the outset: the afterlife, rewards and punishments included, does await after the earthly experience, and supernatural entities have direct influence on the events of the world. Shakespeare offers no such window to the extra-human in *Titus Andronicus*. Hell and Heaven are referenced frequently, but neither lends any tangible hand in the events which occur.

In fact, Shakespeare insists upon human usurpation of divine roles. Early in the play, Titus compares Saturninus to the nourishing sun, anticipating his “virtues will, I hope, / Reflect on Rome as Titan's rays on earth / And ripen justice in this commonweal” (I.i.225-27). Aaron positions Tamora similarly (in a speech that effects both the human taking on of a divine status and the female encroachment of male territory):

Now climbeth Tamora Olympus' top,  
Safe out of fortune's shot; and sits aloft,  
Secure of thunder's crack or lightning flash;

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<sup>21</sup> Deborah Willis, "The gnawing vulture: Revenge, Trauma Theory, and *Titus Andronicus*", *Shakespeare Quarterly* Vol. 53.1 (2002): 21-52. P. 35.

Advanced above pale envy's threatening reach.

As when the golden sun salutes the morn,

And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,

Gallops the zodiac in his glistering coach,

And overlooks the highest-peering hills;

So Tamora . . . (II.1.1-9)

This motif culminates in Titus and his family shooting arrows at the gods, the arrows falling in the palace of the Emperor. When Titus, ruing the departure of Justice from earth (“Terras Astraea reliquit: / Be you remember'd, Marcus, she's gone, she's fled” (3.5.4-5), bids someone dig down to Pluto to ask for assistance, Marcus’ son Publius responds,

. . . Pluto sends you word,

If you will have Revenge from hell, you shall:

Marry, for Justice, she is so employ'd,

He thinks, with Jove in heaven, or somewhere else,

So that perforce you must needs stay a time. (IV.iii.37-41)

With no help forthcoming from the underworld, Titus bids the group beseech heaven’s aid by firing arrows at the constellations:

'Ad Jovem,' that's for you: here, 'Ad Apollinem:'

'Ad Martem,' that's for myself:

Here, boy, to Pallas: here, to Mercury:

To Saturn, Caius, not to Saturnine;

You were as good to shoot against the wind.

To it, boy! Marcus, loose when I bid.

Of my word, I have written to effect;

There's not a god left unsolicited. (IV.iii.53-60)

Despite Titus' dismissal of Saturnine, Marcus makes clear where the real power lies:

Kinsmen, shoot all your shafts into the court:

We will afflict the emperor in his pride. (IV.iii.61-2)<sup>22</sup>

Shakespeare fulfills this humanization of the divine in the failed deception that sets up the conclusion. Chiron and Demetrius accompany their mother in the guise of Revenge, Rapine, and Murder. Attempting to seduce Titus to further victimization, Tamora plays up her pseudo-supernatural status:

Know, thou sad man, I am not Tamora;

She is thy enemy, and I thy friend:

I am Revenge: sent from the infernal kingdom,

To ease the gnawing vulture of thy mind,

By working wreakful vengeance on thy foes.

Come down, and welcome me to this world's light . . . (V.ii.28-33)

In *Thyestes*, the Fury *does* send Tantalus to earth to spur Atreus' revenge; here, hell has become an earthly masque. While this absence of otherworldly intervention is not unique to *Titus Andronicus*, it is worthy of remark. We might note the somewhat dramatic difference in this respect of *Titus* from *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Both of the later tragedies incorporate supernatural influence into the action; to be sure, in each case doubt is cast upon the otherworldly presences, and this may be something of a legacy of Shakespeare's early exploration of this area in *Titus*.

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<sup>22</sup> The motif of the human ruler as sun culminates in the sparring between Lucius and Saturninus in the meeting at Titus' house. Saturninus asks, "What, hath the firmament more suns than one?" to which Lucius replies, "What boots it thee to call thyself a sun?" (V.iii.17-18). Atreus and Thyestes each expresses this inability for two to share the throne.

Be that as it may, *Titus* is an arena of human agency; no ghost of king or comrade visits the stage to haunt the tragic hero, nor does one comment from the sidelines. This is not to say that doubt about the gods existence is not expressed in *Thyestes*; Titus growing sensation that “Justice has fled the earth” finds its origin in Thyestes’ parallel laments that “the gods have fled away”<sup>23</sup>. But in *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare pares away any potential for attributing our crimes to forces beyond our own making, paving the way for Hamlet’s revelation (in a different key) that humans are corrupt flesh creating more corrupt flesh. As Jonathan Bate suggests, “By representing Revenge as a character’s device rather than a ‘reality’ outside the action, as it is in Kyd’s frame, [Shakespeare] suggests that retribution is a matter of human, not divine will.”<sup>24</sup> The survival of young Lucius and Aaron’s baby are important: with the legacy of Atreus in the background—Thyestes’ son Aegisthus surviving to murder Atreus’ son Agamemnon—we must assume that the political and familial conflict will continue. Without Athena and Apollo to step in, we must wonder if this strife is to continue into human perpetuity.

To add one dismal final layer onto this utterly pessimistic view of human existence, we should make the obvious point that Shakespeare has consumed the crimes of past texts—Seneca, Ovid, Virgil, etc.—and released them in a new cultural expression that preserves and perpetuates them. As several scholar shave noted, *Titus Andronicus* is not merely replete in its references to classical texts; rather it is ostentatious in their presence as determining the structures out of which atrocities are committed and responded to. Aaron plots Lavinia’s rape with Philomela in mind. Titus cannot think of killing Lavinia to relieve her of her shame without evoking Virginia and Virginius; even after slaying her, he is “as woeful as Virginius was” (V.iii.50). Texts themselves, and their handing down—the words “learn” and “teach” occur with some frequency

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<sup>23</sup> “fugere superi” (1021), 172-73.

<sup>24</sup> *Titus Andronicus*, ed. Jonathan Bate, Arden Shakespeare, 3rd edition (London: Routledge, 1995), 22.

in the play—become a cycle of violence. (And the same can be said of performance, as most obviously manifest in Tamora’s role-playing of Revenge.) It has been suggested that the feminine presence in *Titus Andronicus* challenges male textual authority. In some sense Lavinia’s silence may be the most promising outlook, which is to say no hope of a future doomed to perpetuation of verbal and physical atrocities. Unfortunately, just as young Lucius is schooled into the Roman way—which has of course become blurred with the Gothic or the early modern British way—Lavinia is drawn back into communication, writing the names of her attackers and of the crime, leading rapidly to her death at the hands of her father, in a moment that replays the original violence even as it rescues her from further suffering.

Emphasizing the afterlife of language is one of the most satisfying of Shakespeare’s adaptations of *Thyestes*, the incomparably nefarious Aaron. While Tamora shares with Titus the roles of Atreus and Thyestes, Aaron is more properly to be aligned with Tantalus and the infernal Fury of Seneca’s play. As with those two characters, Aaron spurs others on to crime. As suggested already, though, this motivation remains human. Called by his victims “devil” and “diabolical”, this Satan is a man who fathers a child; Aaron may be drawn *in extremis*, but he never leaves the ambit of human existence. As if to drive the point home, Shakespeare creates Aaron as an atheist; while Aaron’s status as Moor allows the play to respond to cultural anxiety, projecting the hellish onto the non-Western, internally Aaron operates outside of the religious systems of Roman or Goth, locating hell fully within the range of human possibility. So, near the conclusion, Aaron is subjected to a worldly version of Tantalus’ punishment:

Set him breast-deep in earth, and famish him;  
There let him stand, and rave, and cry for food;  
If any one relieves or pities him,

For the offence he dies. This is our doom:

Some stay to see him fasten'd in the earth. (V.iii.179-83)

We do not witness Aaron's death (unlike Tamora's) and so the illusion of perpetual tantalization exists simultaneous to his earthly fate. It is characteristic of Shakespeare's re-writing, indeed inversion, of other texts that the play concludes where *Thyestes* begins. Aaron goes right on speaking his poison to the end:

Some devil whisper curses in mine ear,

And prompt me, that my tongue may utter forth

The venomous malice of my swelling heart! (V.iii.11-13)

This is a direct counterpoint to the vale scene, in which Lavinia has her mouth stopped precisely when she is about to utter a curse.<sup>25</sup> Aaron vies with Lucius for the last word. Fury will not cease to speak, and the verbal act of repentance comes only as rejection of the good:

O, why should wrath be mute, and fury dumb?

I am no baby, I, that with base prayers

I should repent the evils I have done:

Ten thousand worse than ever yet I did

Would I perform, if I might have my will;

If one good deed in all my life I did,

I do repent it from my very soul. (V.iii.184-190)

We speak through the same mouth with which we consume. We tear apart, consume, and then utter forth from the womb of the mind patterns for further malignity.

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<sup>25</sup> "Confusion fall . . ." (II.iii.184).

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NPCEBL Conference 2010

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Women and Revenge in *Titus Andronicus*

Shakespeare constructs Tamora and Lavinia to fill harmful patriarchal social roles: Lavinia a strong woman victimized by a patriarchal society, and Tamora the object of male desire; as well as a misogynistic archetype of the passion driven female villain. Why does Shakespeare fashion Tamora as so evil? Because she fills a role that she should not? This paper will analyze the ways Shakespeare represents Tamora and Lavinia, and how each affects their own and one another's acts of revenge. In other words, why did Shakespeare choose to exclude any sort of redeeming female character in *Titus Andronicus*?

Lavinia and Tamora threaten the dominance of the male hero in *Titus Andronicus*. Douglas Green in fact, claims, "Certainly Lavinia and Tamora, as utter victim and as consummate avenger, threaten to usurp Titus' centrality" (Green 319). Shakespeare uses Lavinia to further escalate the fashioning of Tamora as evil. Shakespeare's use of Lavinia makes it hard for audiences to look past Tamora's brutality. Shakespeare gives his audience what they want regarding acceptable social roles. Does Shakespeare think unmarried female monarchs should rule? Probably not. However, I definitely think he questions the norms of his society in *Titus Andronicus*.

As Queen of the Goths, Shakespeare characterizes Tamora by "othering" her, allowing the audience to identify her as barbaric and unlike themselves. Shakespeare portrays Tamora as a villain from the beginning of the play because of her non-Roman origin. Shakespeare turns this

binary of the Roman Empire and the Goths against itself when Saturninus takes Tamora as his queen. Shakespeare actively characterizes Tamora when she first begs Titus for her son's life. "Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge. Thrice-noble Titus, spare my first-born son" (1.1 ln. 119-120). The "mercy" Tamora begs remains important throughout the rest of the play. In this, Tamora sets up the non-noble or unmerciful Titus. Her line is ironic precisely because Titus does not wear "nobility's true badge" when he fails to evoke mercy.

Shakespeare uses Tamora as a physical representation of Titus's emotional upheaval and fall to revenge. Green argues that Tamora is Titus' "mirror image" while she also acts his adversary (Green 320). Tamora acts as an example for Titus to follow. She facilitates and fashions Titus's revenge as well as parallels it.

Shakespeare uses Aaron, Tamora's Moor lover, to accentuate the fashioning of Tamora as a villain. Aaron's characterization and representation aligns him with the devil, which by association aligns Tamora with the devil as well. When Tamora gives birth, the Nurse tells her sons and Aaron of "Our Empress' shame and stately Rome's disgrace" (4.2 ln. 60). Tamora's illegitimate child reinforces the characterization of Tamora as lascivious. The Nurse also indicates that Tamora has brought "disgrace" onto Rome, threatening Tamora's political power and Machiavellian masks.

Tamora embodies a Machiavellian renaissance self-fashioning when she wears different masks to manipulate others. From the control she has over her body to the unmerciful revenge ploys she enacts, Tamora embodies masculine characteristics throughout the play. This is why Tamora remains so threatening politically. The Machiavellian chameleon ability she possesses correlates with politicians, men, and personal power itself, threatening the integrity of patriarchy.

Tamora exhibits Machiavellian fashioning when she puts on a sexual mask to manipulate

Saturninus:

For I can smooth and fill his aged ears  
 With golden promises that, were his heart  
 Almost impregnable, his old ears deaf,  
 Yet should both ear and heart obey my tongue (5.1 ln. 95-98)

Tamora objectifies herself when she speaks to Saturninus, to manipulate him and also to convey that she will use herself physically to trap Titus. Tamora uses feminine words and images to trick the men. For Tamora, feminine language and identity becomes useful when whispering trickery into men's ears. Tamora can "smooth" and "fill" Titus' "aged ears" with "golden promises".

Tamora represents herself here with masculine images. Shakespeare's audience would have believed only men could "fill" someone's ear. The dominant ideology being that women cannot say something with enough substance to "fill" anything, let alone another's mind. Tamora uses hyper masculine imagery to fashion herself as overtly masculine. The heroic discourse emphasizes honor and fulfilling quests; the "golden promises" Tamora whispers to Titus align her with royalty and honor.

Tamora takes this masculine identity even further when she emasculates Titus, insinuating that he could become "impregnable" from her voice. If Titus's "heart" were "impregnable" then he becomes feminine, both physically and emotionally (Birth and Motherhood). Tamora thus becomes the masculine filler of "golden promises". We see further bombarding gender representations when Tamora represents Titus with masculine "aged ears", aligning him with wisdom, and reinforcing a masculine connotation. Tamora creates a binary when she then labels them as "old deaf ears," aligning Titus with wisdom but also implying he has no ability to listen or reason with others, because of his deteriorating "aged ears". Tamora on the other hand has the ability to affect both Titus's "ear" and "heart". Titus's "ear" linked with

his conscious thought, reason, and intelligence, and his “heart” being his passion and anger.

Tamora will control his body and mind with her “tongue” and in this she fashions herself completely masculine; she evokes the feminine images as tools to demean and subordinate Titus.

Shakespeare’s representation and subordination of Lavinia conflicts throughout the play. Tamora, in fact, uses phallic imagery to fashion Lavinia. When speaking to her sons in 2.3, Tamora tells them, “But when ye have the honey ye desire Let not this wasp outlive, use both to sting” (2.3 ln. 131-132). In these lines, Tamora captures the fluidity of Lavinia’s gender. Lavinia has “honey” representing her female sex organs. “Honey,” conveys sweet, feminine traits associated with utopian paradise. In biblical utopian discourses heaven is often referred to as the “Land of milk and honey”. The “sting”, however, also acts as a phallic symbol defining Lavinia’s quick wit and ability to foil Tamora. A wasp’s sting, which is straight and sharp, parallels a sword. Such a phallic image implicates, that Lavinia’s wit and strength could impale Tamora and her sons. The binary of Lavinia having both a wasp’s “sting” and sweet “honey” signifies her interchangeable gender identity. Since wasps do not produce honey, Tamora herein represents Lavinia as two opposite gendered insects, a male wasp and a female honeybee. Lavinia’s strength threatens Tamora’s hierarchy of power.

Tamora sees the depth and threat in Lavinia; the men in *Titus Andronicus* do not. Lavinia’s invisibility among the men directs the way she is moved around like a doll: pretty, but without agency of her own. Lavinia’s mutilation and pain is not her own in *Titus Andronicus*. At her most vulnerable state, Lavinia is represented as a tool for Titus’s revenge. Since Lavinia’s mutilation and shame is not her own but Titus’s, it is logical that he would consume and portray it as his own dramatic sentencing from Rome.

Give me a sword, I’ll chop off my hands too,  
For they have fought Rome, and all in vain;

And they have nursed this woe in feeding life;  
 In bootless prayer have they been held up,  
 And they have served me to effectless use.  
 Now all the service I require of them  
 Is that the one will help to cut the other.  
 'Tis well, Lavinia, that thou hast no hands,  
 For hands to do Rome service is but vain. (3.1 ln. 72- 80).

Titus parallels Rome with those individuals who have mutilated Lavinia. He thus parallels his useless “hands” to Lavinia’s dismembered ones. By paralleling these “hands” Titus deploys Lavinia’s suffering as his own. Shakespeare’s audience would have identified the family-based discourse of identity that Titus evokes. The ownership Titus places over Lavinia’s honor, pain, and body, overshadows the love he reflects in his revenge. By owning Lavinia’s pain and shame, Titus becomes a model of Christian revenge opposed to a model of violent avenger. We see an example of justification from Titus when he claims, “For worse than Philomel you used my daughter, And worse than Progne, I will be revenged” (5.3 ln. 193-194). Titus evokes a common Elizabethan archetype from Ovid’s *“Metamorphoses”* as justification for his revenge in *Titus Andronicus*.

The audience sees Tamora and Lavinia as opposing throughout the play. Lavinia becomes the victim of Tamora’s revenge and Tamora becomes the prosecutor of Lavinia’s fate. However, the characters do connect to one another. Tamora begins the play pleading for her sons’ life, later to become more powerful than most of the men in the play. Lavinia begins as a defiant witty woman, later to become victimized by most of the men in the play. Tamora and Lavinia, are furthermore responsible for one another’s end, both directly and indirectly.

The interaction between Tamora and Lavinia in Act 2 is complex. In Act 2 we get a glimpse of the woman Lavinia was before tragedy befalls her. Lavinia’s words exhibit blatant irony when she tells Bassianus that he should “let [Tamora] joy her raven-colored love” (2.3 ll.

83). Tamora then kills Bassianus and turns Lavinia over to her sons. Tamora's language drips with phallic connotations and masculine self-fashioning to represent herself as a powerful Empress. When addressing Lavinia, Tamora exudes a cold demeanor, claiming she does not understand Lavinia saying, "What begg'st thou then, fond women? Let me go." (2.3 ll.171). Tamora subordinates Lavinia by referring to her as "women" instead of a given name. Tamora also uses irony when calling Lavinia a "fond women" mimicking the irony Lavinia shows earlier in the scene. In this scene Tamora fashions herself as a masculine dictator and forces Lavinia into the role of victim. In this dialogue, we see Tamora blossom into complete tyrannical and political glory.

Tamora and Lavinia represent two misogynist portrayals of women in Elizabethan England; one as a helpless victim dependent on men and the other as a lustful temptress. The text fails to provide any positive representation of a reasonable female. Shakespeare, however, represents men more flexibly in *Titus Andronicus*. Titus parallels Tamora because of their passion driven revenge plots, and Lavinia parallels Saturninus, because he allows Tamora to manipulate him. Although there are depictions of dependent and passion driven men, many of the men remain reasonable and would fit into the heroic paradigm better than Titus, such as Marcus and Lucius.

The parallels between Tamora and Titus are central to the reading and understanding of *Titus Andronicus*. Lavinia facilitates the revenge that drives both Tamora and Titus, making the most compelling parallel between the two. Shakespeare fashions Lavinia not so much as an actual person, but as a prop used by Tamora and Titus to alleviate their own grief and antagonism. When plotting his revenge Lavinia simply walks around with Titus and Marcus.

Titus uses her as a prop; if anyone questions his revenge he can physically refer to Lavinia as justification.

Building on this parallel, Titus displays a lack of Christian mercy when he denies Tamora's plea for her son's life. Tamora parallels this lack of Christian mercy when she tells Demetrius and Chiron to rape and mutilate Lavinia. Tamora's actions are seen as more barbaric than the unmerciful judgment of Titus in Act I. Though Tamora and Titus ignore the dominant ideology of Christian mercy in political ruling, they both enforce the biblical ideology of revenge: "an eye for an eye". Both characters feel justified in seeking revenge as biblical discourse commands.

Within a Christian context, Shakespeare's audience could have felt justice concluded the revenge and tragedy of the play. In the last scene, in fact, Titus is mourned as a hero and his revenge against Tamora justified. Herein lies the problem. If Titus's revenge seems justified, why not Tamora's? Tamora enlists her sons Chiron and Demetrius to rape and mutilate Lavinia. Titus murders Chiron and Demetrius, bakes them in pies, serves them to Saturninus and Tamora, and murders his daughter Lavinia.

Tamora and Titus's revenge and actions paralleled each other; however when the play comes to a close Shakespeare represents Tamora as the ultimate villain. These two characters, so similar in motive and action, befall two contrasting ends. The audience's expectations of performative identity contribute to the end of *Titus Andronicus*. We expect Titus to seek revenge, not Tamora.

Shakespeare's paralleling of Saturninus and Lavinia contrasts the paralleling of Titus and Tamora, both in sentiment and political hierarchy. Saturninus, as the Emperor, should be at the top of the political and social hierarchy. However, Tamora, as his Empress, is fashioned as more

influential than he in the power hierarchy. Tamora manipulates Saturninus throughout the play. Which parallels the manipulation of Lavinia by Titus to aid his quest for revenge. In the Julie Taymor film adaptation of *Titus Andronicus*, Taymor costumes Saturninus as overtly feminine. Alan Cumming, who portrays Saturninus, wears an excessive amount of flamboyant makeup. The resulting accentuation of feminine features on his face, symbolizes the feminine features of his character. This feminine quality also reads through his use of language in the text, and his submissive regard to most of the action in the play. We see evidence of this when Tamora fashions men as weak and “impregnable” as she manipulates Saturninus in Act 5. Lavinia also embodies such femininity, and thus the parallel between Saturninus and Lavinia showcases the hierarchy of power associated with feminine characteristics. Saturninus as Emperor has no power over his queen or the play, signifying to playgoers that he has no political power. Lavinia, on the other hand, has power but loses all autonomy by Act 2.

Lavinia and Saturninus both convey the ability to embody certain feminine and masculine traits. Tamora uses femininity as a tool in Act 5. By contrast, Lavinia and Saturninus’s femininity is part of them. Lavinia and Saturninus are fluid in their gender identities. Lavinia’s submissive identity after her mutilation parallels Saturninus’s submissive identity, which we see after his union to Tamora. Lavinia and Saturninus’s submission facilitates the domination and power used to represent Tamora.

Deborah Willis provides a feminist response to *Titus Andronicus* stating that “The Rome of *Titus Andronicus* is an almost exclusively male world; its two female characters, their roles sharply circumscribed by patriarchal norms, are both dead by its end, and few other women are even referred in passing” (Willis 22). Tamora, born of Gothic birth, and Lavinia, daughter of a battered war general, are two representations used for the female roles in *Titus Andronicus*.

Shakespeare characterizes Tamora in control of her sexuality and intellect. This characterization is threatening to Shakespeare's audience. Shakespeare represents Tamora as an archetype for a woman in power. For Shakespeare's audience Tamora is seen not only as a powerful ruler, but as a powerful individual as well. This paper is not trying about downplaying Tamora's brutality, but more questioning why Shakespeare chooses to fashion her so barbarically. Reading *Titus Andronicus* the first time, we see Shakespeare crafting the perfect anti-female power play; paralleling modern day sexist stereotypes regarding PMS and politics. More than that though, Shakespeare was commenting on gender identity, changing the interpretation of Tamora's evil fashioning as political fear.

In Shakespeare classes around the world students are studying plays produced hundreds of years ago. Why? Shakespeare is and will continue to be popular because our society still deals with the emotional and political issues addressed in his plays. The representations of Tamora and Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* matter to students in 2010, because these conflicting models of women are still seen in our society today. The "Tamora" in our society is the independent career driven female, a woman in charge of her own sexuality and unafraid to push against the sexist oppressions of her society. The fact that we have yet to elect a female president speaks volumes in agreement as to why Shakespeare is relevant. The same patriarchal ideology seen throughout his work and lifetime facilitates much of our culture.

"Lavinia" can model women in our society as well. The rape culture we live in attests to that. Jessica Valenti, for example, writes about the "rape schedule" women subconsciously adhere too in her book Full Frontal Feminism. Much like our cultural practices of blaming rape victims based on their attire or previous sexual experiences, Lavinia is seen as the culprit for shaming her family. The parallels between our modern stereotyping and the oppression women

faced in Elizabethan England are significant. Though Shakespeare's audience may have seen some of the play through a slightly different lens, most of the stereotypes and fears are still reinforced and functioning today.

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Rachael Johnson

### Milton's Tree of Knowledge as Highest Providence

In *Paradise Lost*, Satan uses the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil to mislead Eve and indicate the hierarchal structure of power in the Tree. Milton deploys satanic logic to misrepresent the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge within a Christian context in order to construct the necessity of knowledge for mankind. This type of logic begins with a false premise and follows logically to a false conclusion. Milton's Satan represents the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, in opposition to the trees in Heaven, as more powerful and authoritative than God, thus deifying the Tree to further deceive humanity.

In his *De Doctrina Christiana*, Milton defines "Providence," providing a progress-based theology according to the discernment of scripture. In the chapter "Of the Providence of God," Milton writes that "His general government is that whereby God the Father preserves and governs the whole of creation with wisdom and holiness according to the conditions of decree" (199). For members of Milton's early modern English audience, this would be a typical mindset. Milton's interpretation of Christian Doctrine defines "Providence" as God governing all the events within creation. In opposition to Milton's theism, Satan attributes these qualities to the Tree of Knowledge of

Good and Evil throughout *Paradise Lost*. As we shall see, given God's providential power as described in Milton's *De Doctrina*, Satan's language fashions the Tree of Knowledge as holding authority over God, leading to its deification.

In order to represent the fruit's power, Satan personifies what gave it life: the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Satan's arboreal deception begins:

O Sacred, Wise, and Wisdom-giving Plant,  
Mother of Science, Now I feel thy Power  
Within me cleere, not only to discern  
Things in thir Causes, but to trace the ways  
Of highest Agents, deemed however wise.  
(Book IX, ll. 679-83)

This personification fashions the Tree as a "mother," and like any mother, it gave life to its offspring: the fruit. This suggests that much like a child being born from a mother's womb, the fruit naturally originates from within the Tree. In this sense, knowledge is rooted from the Tree itself, and the Tree holds the power to reveal it through the growth of the fruit. Given that knowledge is gained through consuming the fruit suggests that this knowledge is subordinate to the Tree's authority as a mother. Because children are below a mother's authority, they are logically subject to the mother's bidding. The Tree therefore holds the authority to reveal the fruit to others in its superiority over knowledge. According to such satanic logic, this indicates that God and his agents remain subordinate to the tree in the sense that they have knowledge only because the Tree allows them to have it.

The image of the "wisdom-giving plant" further constructs the power of the Tree in this deception. The word "giving" provides the tree with an active role in the distribution of knowledge. Like any plant, the Tree is rooted in the ground and produces harvest through the earth's nourishment. Knowledge is thus fashioned as a creation of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, being distributed to others at the discretion of the Tree. As the Tree holds the power to allocate knowledge regardless of God's authority, Satan fashions the Tree as a more powerful alternative to God. This language describes the Tree's authority as exceeding all else, implying that it alone holds the power to actively give knowledge.

Milton uses the term "deemed" in the phrase "highest Agents, deemed however wise" to discredit God's divinity, thus elevating the Tree of Knowledge higher in authority. The word "deemed" connotes regard, suggesting that God is merely considered wise, which leaves room for subjectivity. In constructing God's power as questionable, this term thus undermines His validity rather than indicating a natural wisdom. Satan's language fashions the Tree as being naturally sacred and wise, while "highest Agents" are simply *regarded* as wise without validity. This strengthens the wide contrasts between the two, representing the Tree as sacred by implying that it is wiser, and in turn, more powerful and authoritative than God.

The term "discern" in the statement "to discern/ Things in thir Causes" also provides this deceptive logic with seemingly positive connotations. Discernment suggests a distinct understanding of truth,

which further constructs the divinity of the Tree of Knowledge in its authority. Discernment is associated with understanding, but also suggests understanding something *through* gaining intellect or knowledge. This implies a dichotomy between ignorance and experience. Whereas ignorance becomes a state of darkness and lack of knowledge, experience correlates with enlightenment. Truth and knowledge convey the ideal, expressing a desire for its attainment. This satanic logic indicates that discernment can only be achieved through obtaining knowledge, and because Satan accredits this authority to the Tree, he represents it as the source of divine and thus true knowledge above God.

Milton fashions the trees in Heaven much as one would expect to find on earth in comparison to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In Raphael and Adam's conversation, Raphael states that:

though in Heav'n the Trees  
of life ambrosial frutage bear, and vines  
Yield Nectar, though from off the boughs each Morn  
We brush mellifluous Dewes, and find the ground  
Cover'd with pearly grain (Book V, ll. 426-30).

The language used to illustrate the fruit that these Trees of Life produce significantly differs from the depiction of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The term "ambrosial" is indeed associated with divinity, but only as a source of nourishment for deities. In contrast to the "Wisdom-giving Plant" in Satan's description, Raphael fashions this tree as merely giving nourishment. The fruit on these trees provide sustenance for godlike figures, but there is no evidence of the tree being godlike *itself*. By comparison,

this construction suggests no distribution of knowledge to sustain the angels' intellect, thus lacking authority over these deities.

For context on Milton's interpretation of the angels, he not only offers a definition of providence in *De Doctrina* but also "of the special government of angels." Milton notes that angels "angels are upheld by their own strength no less than man himself was before his fall that they are called elect in the sense of beloved or excellent" (218). Milton understands angels through scripture as only "elect" because God appoints them as such. Milton chooses to exclude an indication that angels somehow *achieve* their position. They are merely "choices" of God's judgment. This reflects Milton's version of the trees in Heaven in that the angels do not receive additional knowledge or become "elect" from the fruit the tree bears. God appointing the angels is the source of their title. Accordingly, these trees provide the angels with no sense of divinity because God's authority provides their power.

The phrase "yield nectar" in Raphael's speech is reminiscent of the language Satan uses to describe the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The term "yield" also implies a distribution, but in this case, it is of nectar rather than knowledge. Classical mythology recognizes nectar as a life-giving drink for the gods, reiterating that these trees are a source of nourishment. This tree, although able to sustain life of the divine, does not produce a life with knowledge. The trees in heaven, as observed by Raphael, preserve the ability to give life, but the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil holds the authority to

select which life should be that of ignorance or of enlightenment through knowledge. In comparison, the tree in Heaven maintains a subordinate role in the sense that the life that it sustains is subject to the bidding of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, as represented by Satan. Given a model for the trees in Heaven, the reader is, by comparison, able to recognize the authority that Satan implies of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Milton also briefly addresses the Tree of Life in his *De Doctrina* within the context of the Fall, much like the trees in Heaven portrayed in the epic poem. He writes "The tree of life, in my opinion, ought not be considered so much a sacrament, as a symbol of eternal life, or rather perhaps the nutriment by which that life is sustained" (228). This distinction references Milton's protestant iconoclasm, which rejects images of the sacred as idolatrous. The worship of an image or depiction rather than the actual deity is considered an immense sin according to a protestant Christian such as Milton. *De Doctrina* reiterates the concept that these trees offer only nourishment for the divine in this passage. Milton's *Paradise Lost* also claims that the fruit from the Trees of Life hold no exceptional authority, but simply provide sustenance in the statement "ambrosial frutage bear." The Tree of Life, according to Milton, was not a sacramental object because it was not a "a seal of the covenant of grace" (444). Unlike Satan's representation of the Tree of Knowledge, the trees in heaven were no more than symbolically representational of eternal life.

In his examination of the scriptural Tree of Knowledge, Milton writes that it "was not a sacrament as it is generally called for a sacrament is a thing to be used not abstained from but a pledge as it were and memorial of obedience" (227). Just because the Tree of Good and Evil was not a sacramental object, does not mean that it shares no qualities with a one. Much like sacraments are a "seal of covenant grace," the Tree of Knowledge becomes the less strict form of a covenant: a pledge. This distinction of a "covenant" evokes an image of a more concrete contract. If broken, contracts often have severe repercussions resulting in a loss of trust. Seen as more of an oath taken on the word of another, a "pledge" assumes trust without the need for a concrete assurance. In this sense, Milton understands the Tree of Knowledge as a symbol of God's trust in humanity's obedience.

Satan uses such deification to represent the Tree as providential in order to shift Eve's focus from God to the forbidden Tree. Satan goes on to flatter Eve by declaring:

Queen of the Universe, doe not believe  
Those rigid threats of Death; ye shall not Die:  
How should ye? By the Fruit? It gives you Life  
To Knowledge, By the Threat'ner, look on mee.  
(Book IX, ll. 684-87)

The use of "rigid threats" creates negative connotations of malice and harsh punishment. Rigidness and threats are often associated with severe and unyielding behavior. By suggesting that God's threats are severe, Satan fashions him as a merciless punisher. Using the blunt word "threat'ner" as a formal title to portray God extends Satan's negative representation in further characterizing the Tree as more

powerful. A threat is often viewed as a harsh and severe intimidation mechanism that will result in discipline. As Satan characterizes God as a ruthless punisher, He therein embodies mercilessness. Being that the Tree has already been personified as a nurturing mother and a caregiver, it logically provides mercy to its subordinates. This representation contrasts greatly to the construction of God as a merciless punisher, thus giving the tree a gentler and preferable image. Within a Christian context, Milton and others have defined "Providence" as merciful and forgiving. Because Satan represents the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil as such and fashions God as merciless, the Tree surpasses God in true divinity.

In order to further designate the Tree as embodying highest providence, Satan presents its dominion over all else. Through describing his condition as a serpent, Satan intrigues Eve by presenting her with the question, "Shall that be shut to Man, which to the Beast / is Open?" (ll. 691 - 692). The binaries "shut" and "open" create a strong image of permission and control in this satanic logic. The term "shut," connotes something restricted and without opportunity for circulation. According to satanic logic, knowledge is needed to open a door. Satan cannot be saved because of this self-feeding and, in this sense, a shut door needs knowledge to become available. On the other side of Satan's rhetorical spectrum, the word "open," suggests a sense of accessibility, allowing for knowledge to enter through providence. Because Satan implies that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil alone allows for the circulation of

knowledge, this binary provides the Tree with the power to choose those capable of receiving enlightenment.

Satan's binary of "Man" and "Beast" also constructs an image of power and dominance in order to represent the divinity of the Tree. The word "beast" has been associated with a wild and brutish animal. In contrast, the word "man" suggests a much gentler, civilized, and intelligent creature. As God created man with authority over the beasts, Satan proposes that because beasts receive knowledge from the Tree, man can obtain such knowledge as well. The wide contrast between these two extremes provides the reader with an image of the Tree's authority. The use of these terms also appears in the majority of Christian creation stories, which state that, in essence, Providence has power over all, including man and beast. Within this binary, Satan emphasizes an inversion of traditional Christian roles in scripture, giving beasts this knowledge over mankind. The Tree is thus given providential authority with the Christian definition of "Providence" in its knowledge and superiority.

Satan's use of biblical imagery effectively deceives mankind by constructing an authoritative and godlike character out of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The satanic logic in conjunction with Milton's understanding of scripture in *De Doctrina Christiana* creates a dichotomy between the trees in Heaven and the Tree of Knowledge. Raphael's description of the trees in Heaven also provides a model by which Satan fashions the authority of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil as providential. In a sense, the Tree of Knowledge of Good

and Evil experiences its own fall: from being represented as highest providence and deified in Milton's *Paradise Lost* to being associated with sweet earthly fruit in modern society.

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Adam Heidebrink

### Chasing Liberty: Gulliver's Search for Freedom

In 1726, Jonathan Swift completed one of the most complicated and multifaceted satires in literature: *Gulliver's Travels*. Raging with religious and political turmoil, Eighteenth century England provided Swift with numerous opportunities for social commentary. The seventeenth century concept of liberty became a dominant social discourse in Swift's England. First enunciated by Hobbes in *Leviathan* (1651), and reiterated by John Locke (a contemporary of Swift) in his *Second Treatise of Government* (1690), they both define liberty as the natural state of man. Using selected works from Hobbes and Locke, I will examine *Gulliver's Travels* as an individual's journey towards the ideal state of liberty. In each of the four worlds, Gulliver encounters a major roadblock to obtaining a natural state of liberty. The four worlds—Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa, and Houyhnhnm—illustrate and dissect the complex social dynamics of liberty, respectively, into four separate segments: social, natural, scientific, and philosophic. Gulliver asks the question: *is there an ideal, natural liberty?*

Before Gulliver's travels even begin, his financial trouble suspends his natural freedom. Locke states that "natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth" (Locke 127). Gulliver, with a failing business and a wife to support, is at the mercy of society. With few options before him, he sets sail to overcome his financial constraints; however, in Lilliput, Gulliver encounters a second form of social constraint. The Lilliputians capture Gulliver with "several slender ligatures," confining him to his place (Swift 5). Gulliver soon realizes how these several and slender constraints obstruct his pursuit of liberty. Consequently, he makes "a sign with [his] hand...to signify [he] desired [his] liberty" to the Emperor of the nation (8). Even without understanding the Lilliputian language, Gulliver declares his want of liberty. His being

understood, suggests—to Gulliver and by extension, the reader—that liberty is a universal idea, a concept that is naturally developed, as is indicated by Locke stating that the law of Nature “teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions” (Locke 119). During Gulliver’s stay at Lilliput, all four violations occur. In order for Gulliver to break the physical bonds of enslavement, the Lilliputians force him to swear to a series of “Articles and Conditions” meant to “restore [his] liberty” (25). These articles, however, are no more liberating than his previous physical constraints. Invisible ropes still restrict his movement and unseen arrows still haunt him as a symbol of his pledge to attack the opposing force. Under oath, Gulliver agrees to these social restrictions. In the eighteenth century, essentially all Englishmen sign a similar contract at birth. That is, being born a citizen means adhering to the laws in place, which means that the government had the authority to deny many personal liberties. Locke reconciles this sacrifice of individual liberty by stating that “society is made by a voluntary compact,” like that made between man and woman (Locke 155). Society is a marriage of individuals into a collective whole. Thus, like a marriage, society ought to have “mutual support and assistance, and a communion of interests too” (155). A mutually supportive relationship in society ensures an open path of communication between the parts. Man and society, together, strive to achieve a high standard of living, which is, according to Locke, is “comfortable, safe, and peaceable” (164). Ideally, these goals sufficiently justify man’s inclination towards living within society; however the union between man and society rarely achieves such success.

Society often undermines personal liberty. In Locke’s *Treatises*, his doubt quickly becomes apparent, signifying that “whenever any number of men. . .enter into society to make one people one body politic under one supreme government. . .this puts men out of a state of

Nature” (160). Once a society splits into a ruling and a subordinate class, the comfort, safety, and peaceable living of the latter depends entirely upon the laws and regulations of the former.

Paralleling the British Parliament and its laws, Lilliputian laws intended primarily for the comfort and safety of the population, neither preserve nor please the people. Instead, many laws quickly become weapons in a war for control between two rival parties. The Principle Secretary of Lilliput tells Gulliver of the “two struggling Parties in [that] Empire” (30). Each party believes that a specific height of heel is more “agreeable to [their] ancient Constitution” (30). Each side fights to get their representatives elected to office and thus Lilliputian party politics is born. The low- and high-heeled governments of Lilliput parallel the warring Whig and Tory political forces in Swift’s England. Swift suggests that the Englishmen argue over politics as trivially as Lilliputians bicker over shoes. In this state of political warfare, the true end of government, liberty, is lost.

Analogous to the religious disputes of eighteenth century England, Lilliputians also create disorder in debating over which side of an egg is proper to break. A previous Emperor of Lilliput, according to Gulliver, “published an Edict, commanding all his subjects, upon great Penalties, to break the smaller End of their Eggs” (Swift 31). Similarly, in 1673 the publication of the Test Act demanded that all English citizens conform to the Church of England, under severe punishment. In both cases, however, this breach of liberty causes severe unrest in the population. In Lilliput, “the People so highly resented this [small-end] Law, that [Lilliputian] Histories tell us, there have been six Rebellions raised. . . [and] at several Times suffer Death, rather than submit to break their Eggs at the smaller end” (Swift 31). When the Government forces the population to conform to one hegemonic belief system, the people often fight back against such oppression. In Swift’s England, a similar pattern occurred. The Church of England

demanded it was more accurate to consider God as the Trinity, whereas Dissenters avowed God was singular. This small difference in counting resulted in harsh Dissenter persecution. The Toleration Act of 1689 stated that Dissenters who “accepted thirty-six of thirty-nine articles. . . could obtain licenses as ministers or schoolmasters, although these had to be registered with a bishop or at the Quarter Sessions, tasks which posed problems for both” (Black 131); however, these articles contained propositions that directly conflicted with the Dissenters’ religious beliefs. Thus, rather than an act of toleration, the law required Dissenters to publically denounce their religion before they were offered social benefits.

The low- and high-heeled, and Small -and Big-Endians dichotomies represent unnecessary restrictions on liberty. These trivial arguments and laws in no way affect the comfort or safety of the population. Swift, through Gulliver, describes this as the present, fallen state of society. A society that bickers over nonessential restrictions fails to achieve Locke’s ideal level of comfort, safety, and peace. Like Reldresal, the Lilliputian Principle Secretary, Swift suggests that personal decisions, such as choice of religion, should be “left to every Man’s Conscience” (Swift 31). Furthermore, Locke states that “the law of Nature be plain and intelligible to all rational creatures, yet men, being biased by their interests, as well as ignorant for want of study of it, are not apt to allow of it as a law binding to them in the application of it to their particular cases” (Locke 180). When “men, being biased by their interests,” influence laws for selfish gain, the liberty of the nation suffers. Swift suggests that human biases and ignorance cause Lilliputian’s distorted and restricting laws. Gulliver departs from Lilliput knowing well the shortcomings of society. In the unnatural state of man ruling over man, liberty is compromised. Excessive restrictions limit individual freedom, and thus, searching for a more natural existence, Gulliver leaves Lilliput.

Dissatisfied with social constraints, Gulliver arrives in Brobdingnag. In this fictive country, Swift severely exaggerates nature in order to illustrate the impossibility of man, the animal, surviving outside of society. Nature itself poses a threat to a man's liberty. In the primordial state of existence, prior to the introduction of society, the Law of Nature, according to Hobbes, states that "man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive to his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same" (Hobbes 72). In this maxim, Hobbes' declares that Nature provides fundamental laws of existence, a law of self-preservation; however, without a society organized to protect and provide, all animals—including humans—exist in "a condition of Warre of every one against every one" (Hobbes 72). Gulliver abruptly discovers this universal condition when two oversized rats attack him. In Brobdingnag, Gulliver must often resort to physical strength and cunning to survive. Wild animals have no restraint and thus, Gulliver confesses "that if I had taken off my belt before I went to sleep, I must have infallibly been torn to Pieces and devoured" (Swift 72). His belt and sword—manufactured goods—represent society and its tools of protection. Without social order, moreover, humans remain ill-equipped to survive. Every day in Brobdingnag Gulliver overcomes near-death experiences with animals: rats, birds, monkeys. These life-threatening interactions with nature illuminate the disadvantages of a world without social constraints. The hunt for food, protection from predators (including other animalistic humans), and warm shelter remain serious concerns so long as the individual lacks basic social guidelines of communal protection.

In nature, necessity governs liberty. One must unavoidably secure survival first, before one may pursue any other activity. At the Brobdingnagian court, by comparison, the Majesty's scholars "all agreed that [Gulliver] could not be produced according to the regular Laws of Nature; because [he] was not framed with a Capacity of preserving [his] Life, either by

Swiftness, or climbing of Trees, or digging holes in the Earth” (82). Here, the Brobdingnagians critique Gulliver and thereby define him as an animal. The scholars all decide that, considering his size and composition, Gulliver lacks necessary survival skills. Similarly, the physical qualities of the human form give our species no distinct advantage in the wilderness; humans’, however, possess psychological and intellectual advantages. Thus, reason and social aptitude provide humans with survival skills; yet, in nature, instinct often mutes or overshadows these attributes. Animals act with natural impulses, which underdetermine the necessity for intellect in the wilderness.

This intellect/instinct dichotomy introduces a philosophical problem in relation to the search for liberty: if the human species falls into a primal, instinct-based existence, does liberty even exist? According to Hobbes “there be in animals, two sorts of *Motions* peculiar to them: One called *Vitall*...the other is *Animall motion* otherwise called *Voluntary motion*” (Hobbes 30). Vital motions are the inner workings of the body: circulation, breathing, etc. Voluntary motions, as labeled, consist of motions performed by choice. For Hobbes, these two forces work in tandem in every animal. But because of the constant state of natural war, voluntary motions never rise out of the basic cycle of life. Stuck in this primordial state of existence, nature prevents any higher mental pursuits. Man without social support would inevitably return to the same recurring cycle and a base existence of: birth, reproduction, and death. In such a state, the liberty to pursue pleasure, desire, and love are all lost. Thus, both Lilliput and Brobdingnag illustrate serious constraints placed on the “natural liberty of man.” So, again, Swift—through Gulliver—sets sail on his search for liberty, whereupon he explores two alternative societies: the scientific culture of Laputa and the philosophic tradition of the Houyhnhnms.

In Laputa, Swift imagines a society in which science becomes the foremost concern of the Government. Here, self-expression is absent. Often, “intense Speculations” distract Laputians, and Gulliver observes “that they neither can speak, or attend to the Discourses of others, without being roused by some external Taction upon the Organs of Speech and Hearing” (Swift 132). Concerned primarily with their own speculations, Laputians lack the ability to communicate effectively with others. Hobbes declares that a primary use of speech is to signify “what [individuals] desire, feare, or have any other passion for” (Hobbes 20). Laputians disregard the fundamental ability of speech, which accounts for their lack of human expression. Furthermore, the concepts of “Imagination, Fancy, and Invention, [Laputians] are wholly Strangers to, nor have any Words in their Language by which those Ideas can be expressed” (Swift 137). Since those ideas of imagination, fancy, and invention are the basis of artistic thought, the Laputian society does not understand how a subjective field such as art could benefit their race. Thus, predisposed to scientific speculation, they even dismiss practical art, like architecture, as Gulliver observes, “their Houses are very ill built” (136). Instead of being practical, Laputians try to merge architectural design with complex intellectual blueprints, which leads to “clumsy, awkward, and unhandy people” (136). Due to the disconnect between conventional life and scientific speculation, Laputians are incapable of carrying out the most basic duties. Ironically, scientific knowledge should be practical. Hobbes defines science as the “knowledge of Consequences, and dependence of one fact upon another” (Hobbes 29). Knowledge of this sort would lead to well-built houses and provide more comfort to the Laputian public; however, they miss this logical end of science. Rather, they pursue illusionary and theoretical knowledge bordering on mysticism. Thus, self-expression and practicality dissolve and, moreover, the population loses all appreciation—or even creation—of art and literature.

Like the machinery they create, Laputians live in a state of stasis, devoid of even the thought of liberty. Although Gulliver admires Laputian industry in science and mathematics, he still indicates that [he] never met with such disagreeable Companions” (Swift 147). Laputa—the society of science—knows no companionship. Disapproving Laputians’ lack of sociability and human connectedness, Gulliver descends from the floating isle.

After three failed attempts to find ideal liberty, Gulliver arrives on the Houyhnhnm shore. Here, he discovers a society governed by an adherence to philosophy. Yet, the Houyhnhnms appear to be completely ignorant of the term *Law* and, as Swift indicates in passing, that Gulliver “had already explained the Meaning of the Word” (Swift 215). This need to explain the meaning of *Law* suggests that the Houyhnhnms lead a less restricted life. It seems as though Houyhnhnms, using reason alone, decipher good from evil. Gulliver’s recollection of Houyhnhnms and falsehood represents this logical ability greatly. He states that “*Doubting* or *not believing*, are so little known in this Country, that the Inhabitants cannot tell how to behave themselves under such Circumstances” (207). In such a country where all persons believe in one collective ideal and it is naturally understood and obeyed, written law becomes redundant. On the contrary, Hobbes’ philosophy implies that an alternative form of law governs the Houyhnhnms. Hobbes declares that there is a fundamental flaw in philosophy because it “extend[s] the power of the Law, which is the Rule of Actions onely, to the very Thoughts, and Consciences of men” (Hobbes 243). By constant philosophical inquiry, Houyhnhnms consistently restrain thought and conscience. Logically, if an ill thought can be prevented, then it necessarily prevents the misdeed it foreshadows as well; however, Hobbes concludes his previous statement by asserting that “to force [a man] to accuse himself of Opinions, when his Actions are not by Law forbidden, is against the Law of Nature” (243). Opinions represent

perhaps the most personal and private affairs of an individual, and the Houyhnhnm philosophy forces members of their society to embrace one, collective ideal. Restricting thought in this way quickly transforms into psychological oppression. During his stay, Gulliver states that his Master “daily convinced [him] of a thousand Faults in [his] self, whereof [he] had not the least Perception before, and which with [Englishmen] would never be numbered even among human Infirmities” (Swift 224). In response to the Houyhnhnms’ constant reiteration of minor faults largely unregarded in England, Gulliver starts to believe that humans engage behaviors as crude as the Yahoos. By degrees, the Houyhnhnms’ philosophy exacerbates Gulliver’s scorn for social corruption. Thus, instead of pursuing liberty further, Gulliver returns to England, stuffed up the nose with rue, and receives his family with “Hatred, Disgust and Contempt” (Gulliver 253). For Gulliver, the search for liberty has failed.

Swift, too, felt Gulliver’s resentment of vain society. During and after the writing of *Gulliver’s Travels*, traces of contempt surface throughout Swift’s *Correspondences*. In his letter dated September 29, 1725, Swift describes the purpose to *Gulliver’s Travels* to Alexander Pope: “the chief end I propose to my self in all my labors is to vex the world rather than divert it” (Swift 264). Swift and Pope, as satirists, were no strangers to vexing the public; however, reading the letter of Sept. 29 alongside a follow up letter of on November 26 of the same year indicates the depth of his contempt. He begins the letter to Pope with: “Drown the World, I am not content with despising it, but I would anger it if I could with safety” (265). Swift appears to deify himself by repeating the biblical punishment that God commands in Genesis. Similarly, the allusion suggests that—once again—“the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). Here, it seems as though Swift’s disgust with humankind parallels Gulliver’s contempt at the end

of his *Travels*. These passages have generated multiple misanthropic readings of *Gulliver* and—more generally—all of Swift’s work; however, in the same November letter, Swift writes: “I tell you after all that I do not hate Mankind” (266). These seemingly contradictory statements in Swift’s *Correspondences* complicate his view on humanity. Swift seems to struggle with the same concepts of liberty that Gulliver encountered in his travels. So instead of focusing on the sources of Gulliver’s misanthropy, we might, rather, explore why Swift continued to write in spite of his own contempt.

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### **“I See a Cherub Who Sees Them”: Olivier’s Treatment of Hamlet**

From the beginning of the play *Hamlet*, the title character tells his comrades and the audience that he “shall think it meet / to put an antic disposition on” (1.5.180-81). He implies that from that point on, although he may appear mad, he will actually be entirely in control of both himself and the situations in which he participates. Indeed, the symptoms of his madness are completely sane jibes, jokes, and threats, obscured by seemingly mad language. Just such a sane Hamlet is found in Laurence Olivier’s 1948 film version of the play. Despite his intent to portray an exclusively Oedipal Hamlet, a more illuminating description of Hamlet is as a man who “sees a cherub who sees [the intentions of others]” (3.4). Olivier’s use of creative camerawork and staging proves Hamlet to be more of a distrusting, melancholic detective than anything else.

With his 1948 *Hamlet*, Olivier hoped to utilize the contemporary theories of psychoanalysis and the perception of Hamlet as a procrastinator who “could not make up his mind.” He says in an interview, “I thought it was the absolute resolution of all the problems concerning Hamlet. At least, it gave one a central idea which seemed to fill the great vacuum left by all the crossed ideas about whether he was a man of action” (Tynan 83).

However, if the story of the film is that of a man who cannot make up his mind, Olivier’s depiction of Hamlet is certainly not one of a man who has *lost* his mind. Instead, Hamlet is a participant in nearly all the scheming that occurs in the film. At times, he is the conspirator, as with Horatio when they plan to trap Claudius during the play-within-the-play scene. Most of the time, however, he is a passive participant, silently spying on other plotters without their knowledge. The camera often watches over Hamlet’s shoulder as he listens to conversations he is

not meant to hear, and the audience feels reassured that the hero will not fall victim to the traps laid for him.

The first, and probably most important, scene in which Hamlet collects this type of intelligence is when Polonius describes the cause of Hamlet's affliction as love for Ophelia. The text does not mention Hamlet lurking barely off-stage, listening to the conversation; but in the film, the shot unexpectedly shifts to a view of the hall from behind a pillar, where the audience discovers Hamlet doing just that—lurking. The shot moves on Claudius's line, "How may we try it further," emphasizing the important intelligence that in the coming scene, he should suspect hidden ears to his confrontation with Ophelia (2.2.159). This information gathered, Hamlet leaves the scene to make his entrance with his book. In the ensuing scene, Polonius presents Ophelia with her own book before hiding behind the arras with the King. Ophelia notes where they have gone. Hamlet enters, remarks on Ophelia's presence ("Soft you now, / the fair Ophelia" 3.1.189-90), and looks up and away from Ophelia as he remembers what her presence in the hall most likely means. On his way toward her, he checks the doorway to see if the Claudius and Polonius are hidden so poorly that they might be just around the corner. After checking Ophelia's mild reaction to this behavior, he purposely carelessly brushes the arras with his book. Ophelia reacts strongly to this, confirming for Hamlet both the hiding place of his enemies and Ophelia's knowledge of the plot. Ophelia does not help the cause of the two hidden men by glancing over at the arras several times during her confrontation with Hamlet. By the end of the scene, Hamlet is so sure of the location of Claudius that he dramatically points to the arras on the line "all but / one—shall live" (3.1.150-51). When Claudius and Polonius emerge from the arras after Hamlet's departure, they only begin to suspect Hamlet's knowledge of the plot, despite this dramatic gesture.

Until this first arras scene in the film, Claudius's concern for Hamlet's sanity has seemed mostly paternal. The king has not made any suspicious comments or looked suspiciously at Hamlet; even his request that Hamlet stay in Denmark instead of returning to school seems genuinely familial. However, after the Ophelia confrontation, he begins to feel Hamlet's madness as a threat to his authority. With "madness in great ones must not unwatched go," Claudius announces his concern for his kingly authority and his shift toward mistrust of Hamlet (3.1.191). Like Polonius, he feels there is some sort of threatening method to Hamlet's madness, and this method frightens Claudius, who politically and personally has everything to lose (Coddon 61).

With scenes like these, the film's audience comes to expect an omnipresent Hamlet, one whose talents for musing are rivaled by his aptitude for espionage. In contrast to them, however, Oliver's presentation of Claudius and Laertes' plot to murder Hamlet becomes one of the most tragic, if not the most tragic, scenes in the entire film by emphasizing their conspiracy and Hamlet's unawareness of the trap (Manvell 42). While Claudius and Laertes plan the demise of Hamlet, the camera slowly zooms out diagonally, an action that may at first confuse audiences as it is a technique new to the film even at this late stage. However, when a pillar comes into the shot, the audience is reminded of the first plotting scene when Polonius and Claudius agreed to be behind the arras for Ophelia's conversation with Hamlet. The audience is relieved to know that this pillar will reveal Hamlet lurking as before. However, this time, the camera comes to rest on the back of a pillar where Hamlet is conspicuous only by his absence. The shot cuts back to Claudius and Laertes, who are adding back-up plans and safety nets to their scheme. The camera zooms out diagonally again, and the audience feels sure that this time Hamlet will be there, that the first time was just an accident. Again, viewers are disappointed when the until-now

successful spy does not appear. The shot once more cuts back to Claudius and Laertes who have decided that in the proposed sword fight Laertes will have a sharpened sword, the blade will be envenomed with an unction Laertes bought from a mountebank, and Claudius will be waiting with a cup of poisoned wine for Hamlet to drink if Hamlet is successful in the fight. The plight of Hamlet appears desperate, and as the camera frantically zooms out looking for him one more time, the audience knows he will not be found. Indeed, the camera turns many corners and must travel up a flight of stairs to find Hamlet, who tragically remains ignorant of the one plot that undoes him.

One of the unfortunate aspects of Hamlet's detective role in Olivier's production is that he finds he cannot trust anyone. Elsinore is full of mistrustful characters like Claudius, who Hamlet's prophetic soul suspects even before the appearance of the ghost, and Polonius, whose oily attempts at favor-gaining Hamlet rejects outright, but Hamlet also loses faith in people who are already close to him. For example, following the first scene with the ghost, he demands secrecy from Horatio and the guards, not trusting them to stay quiet about what they have heard. He questions their confidentiality several times before making them swear on his sword to not tell what they've seen this night. Even after they swear to this and Hamlet's further demand that they not give away his antic disposition, he leaves them with no further information about what the ghost has said. Horatio, Bernardo and Marcellus must leave the battlements with no more information than they already had and find they must trust young Hamlet to take care of the situation. In a play that has been dramatically reduced from the original text, Olivier keeps this scene nearly intact to emphasize Hamlet's mistrust of others. Also, as discussed earlier, Hamlet loses faith in Ophelia after the first arras incident where she clearly knows where her father and the king are hiding. Hamlet does trust Horatio throughout the play, although it is unclear to what

depth Horatio understands the situation. Shakespeare never writes a scene in which Hamlet reveals the ghost's information, but Horatio must be somewhat informed to make a judgment in the Mousetrap scene. Finally, supporting the claim that Hamlet is a man who cannot make up his mind, Olivier's Hamlet seems to mistrust himself in his soliloquies, interrupting the voiceover to contradict what he was just thinking himself. The audience must wonder whether they can trust Hamlet as a sympathetic protagonist if he cannot trust himself.

Hamlet is not the only character who is sparing with his trust in Shakespeare's play and Olivier's film. On one early occasion, Olivier has Polonius check the door before telling Ophelia to stop seeing Hamlet. This turns out to be a good move on Polonius's part because Hamlet is in fact seated just down the hall from where he and Ophelia stand, and Polonius is able to turn her around before ordering her not to be so liberal with her affections. In another scene, Polonius asks Claudius if he has ever known him to have "said 'Tis so,' / When it proved otherwise," and Claudius's reply of "Not that I know" may be interpreted as mistrust, especially in Olivier's production when Claudius pauses momentarily before his response. Later in the play, Claudius and Polonius do not trust Gertrude to speak with Hamlet unaccompanied, and Polonius assigns himself to be her spy. As with his first plot to hide behind an arras to listen in on Ophelia, Polonius's plan backfires, this time resulting in his death, which ironically occurs behind an arras with an image of a king on it even as Hamlet assumes it is the king himself behind the arras.

By wisely suspecting other castle inhabitants, Hamlet proves himself a worthy adversary in the political espionage of Elsinore. Although other characters try continually to overthrow him, they do not succeed until Claudius takes the drastic measure of sending Hamlet to England for his secret execution. Hamlet even thwarts this design by substituting Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and escaping on a pirate ship. After Hamlet's return home and confrontation with

Laertes over Ophelia's grave, Hamlet leaves the graveyard. This time, Claudius takes control of the situation and tells Horatio to go watch Hamlet. Then he assigns Gertrude to set a watch on her son, and everyone else in the graveyard disperses, leaving Claudius and Laertes alone. Instead of cutting to act 5 scene 2 with Hamlet and Horatio at this point, however, Olivier extends the scene to include Claudius's conspiracy with Laertes. With Hamlet being closely watched by Horatio, Gertrude, and what seems like most of the population of the castle, Claudius and Laertes are free to plot without Hamlet lurking in a corner or behind a pillar. Although the camera searches for Hamlet throughout the scene, especially once they enter the hall where Hamlet does his best surveillance, Hamlet misses the vital information about the scheme until it is too late and Laertes has already drawn blood with the poisoned sword.

While Olivier's Hamlet proves himself quite sane with his secret operations, he quite rightfully does have a lot on his mind: his father has died, his mother has remarried, a ghost of his dead father tells him that his uncle murdered his father, and his relationship with Ophelia is being strained by her father and brother. Any one of these items would be enough to make a person sad or angry, but Hamlet must deal with all of them simultaneously. Instead of falling into an irretrievable madness, however, Olivier's Hamlet comes much closer to what Carol Thomas Neely describes as "melancholy" in her book, *Distracted Subjects*. Olivier captures her description of the humor-induced malady nearly to the letter with his Hamlet "presented as fashionably introspective and melancholy" (54). Between his reconnaissance missions through the castle, he muses to himself in dramatic voiceovers interrupted only by himself as he proclaims the occasional line out loud. He is also serious and thoughtful, joking only when making fun of other people, such as Polonius and Osric. Furthermore, Neely emphasizes that early modern "sufferers of mental distress were viewed as divided, diverted, disassembled—as

beside themselves—*temporarily*” (3). She claims that in contrast to Ophelia’s incurable madness, Hamlet is “freed from melancholy and passivity” by the end of the play (55). Olivier once again matches this portrayal of Hamlet. When he returns from his encounter with the pirates, he has finally “cast [his] nighted color off” (1.2.68), most likely because he has been literally “set naked on [Claudius’s] kingdom” (4.7.44). He appears in loose-fitting, obviously borrowed clothing, and his spirits seem high upon meeting Horatio. Even after the emotional set-back of witnessing Ophelia’s burial, he appears in lighter colors, lighter moods and lighter lighting until the end of the film. He even manages to treat the foolish Osric with a more good-natured version of the ridicule he had previously thrown at Polonius. It would seem that he has been cured of his temporary melancholy, although it comes too late, as he has missed the vital information about Claudius and Laertes’s plot. To heighten his sense of victory over both his illness and his enemies, however, Olivier allows Hamlet a triumphant death in the king’s throne with the whole court bowing down to him.

In Olivier’s *Hamlet*, Polonius could not have been more wrong when he tells Gertrude and Claudius, “Your noble son is mad... / That he’s mad, ‘tis true; ‘tis true ‘tis pity, / And pity ‘tis ‘tis true” (2.2.92, 97-98). Olivier’s Hamlet may be a self-described man who cannot make up his mind, but he has not lost it. He proves himself a canny player in the spy game of Elsinore; indeed, Claudius and Laertes are only able to “win” because Hamlet is preoccupied with his homecoming and subsequent guarding as they lay their plot. Furthermore, Olivier’s Hamlet fully recovers from his temporary bout of melancholic disposition and becomes a more forceful, purpose-driven figure because of his introspection. The only pity the audience feels at the end of the film is that for a talented, feeling man killed ruthlessly by his uncle and lover’s brother after seemingly overcoming all the occasions that did conspire against him.

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Erin Pearson

<http://prezi.com/sitr4vyqhqy1/shakespeare-for-the-masses/>

North Dakota State University

NPCEBL presentation

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### Shakespeare for the Masses

Following these ladies' brilliant discussions of film adaptations of Hamlet, and using them as grounding in the tradition, I am going in a slightly different direction, outward into the more general, and maybe toward the future? This is a presentation of my study of Shakespeare's texts in recent popular culture. As a graduate student in literature and casual observer of modern pop culture, I consider it an occupational hazard to note references to Shakespeare and his body of work, even in obscure and highly unlikely places. Indeed, it is nearly impossible to live in today's society without at least a superficial knowledge of William Shakespeare's lasting influence. Attitudes toward this impact and whether it is well-deserved vary, but his words and works are irrevocably embedded in our consciousness.

These references are as vastly varied and sometimes surprising as the reactions they cause. The sheer quantity of adaptations, allusions, and other more oblique nods to Shakespeare is both striking and fascinating. Whether they are labeled plagiaries, interpretations, or innovations, the countless ways in which Shakespeare's work has so entirely permeated American culture are awe-inspiring. These observations imply a question: what does it mean? What is to be made of the tension between textual accuracy and the "anxiety of influence"? Between traditionalists and media producers who take liberty with Shakespeare's texts for their own purposes? Are authors and directors including more Shakespeare in their work because his

texts are more readily available with the advent of the internet? Are young people sick of having it shoved down their throat, and showing their dissent by including the high culture champion in their arguably objectionable material? Will the ‘dumbing down’ of Shakespeare’s work ensure that his legacy continues, however altered or abbreviated? Maybe more importantly, is this desirable?

I will begin with a brief examination of three films which are based on Shakespeare’s plays. In descending order of textual and thematic accuracy, I will discuss *O, Ten Things I Hate About You*, and *Strange Brew*. Tim Blake Nelson’s *O* is a modern reimagining of *Othello* aimed at young audiences. In *O*, the screenplay does not coincide with Shakespeare’s text, but basic storyline and character names maintain intact. The action of the film has been moved to a private school and its basketball team. Anachronisms abound, of course. Franco Zeffirelli, a Shakespeare film director in his own right, comments on the tastes of a generation: “Apparently the pseudo-culture of young people today wouldn’t have digested the play unless you dressed it up that way, with all those fun and games” (Brook et al 54). While these updates, or non-updates according to Zeffirelli, may offend some scholars, they preserve the suspense and angst of the originals. In addition, modernizing the setting may disrupt the purity, by which I mean textual accuracy, but it enables the story to be told to a much wider audience. These themes can be taken in by a younger, more contemporary audience, whose culture differs greatly from that of the Shakespearean era.

Next, I will examine *Ten Things I Hate About You*, Gil Junger’s modern adaptation of *Taming of the Shrew*. Kat is the horrifying and undateable older sister, while her younger sister Bianca just wants to go to her prom. The film too, is a rendition meant mostly for teenagers. One refreshing aspect is that Kat, even while falling in love, maintains her personality. She is

able to be romantically happy in her relationship even while she continues to be an intellectual, authority-questioning feminist. In Shakespeare's version, Katherina's happiness necessitates absolute obedience. Another major departure *Ten Things I Hate About You* takes from Shakespeare's text, as noted by Deborah Cartmell, is that "[The film] makes no attempt to recreate Kate's final speech. [This fact] suggests that the play's sexual politics are far too complex and problematic for a cinema audience at the end of the twentieth century" (214).

*Strange Brew* is indeed a strange brew of a film, produced by and starring Rick Moranis and Dave Thomas. Moranis and Thomas play Doug and Bob MacKenzie, Canadian brothers who have a public access sketch series on SCTV (Clamen). They work at Elsinore Brewing Company, and are roughly equivalent to the characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in *Hamlet*. However, their primary interests are drinking beer and having unlikely, silly adventures, so it seems a very curious choice to borrow from the plot of perhaps the most tragic and profound of Shakespeare's plays. Are Moranis and Thomas attempting rebellion, inclusion, or merely irreverence by this choice?

As a kind of transition between these full length feature film adaptations, however loose, and the next set of cultural icons, I have a movie trailer to show. Another treatment of Hamlet's two friends came out last year. Jordan Galland has created a hybrid tale of zombies on Shakespeare's stage in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Undead*.

I would like to shift now from film to the adult cartoon. This has been a curious development in the genre in recent decades. Animation is no longer a clear signal for a family friendly program, just as a Shakespeare reference does not necessarily mean high culture. *The Simpsons* and *South Park* are two exceedingly popular examples of the adult cartoon. Both combine intelligent political and social commentary with less sophisticated and more potentially

offensive humor. Both would also, on the surface, be unlikely candidates for Shakespeare's iambic pentameter.

*The Simpsons'* Sideshow Bob is a genius thespian, and has served as Bart's nemesis on the show. In the episode "Funeral for a Fiend," Bob has rigged a bomb to explode and kill the entire Simpson family. He quotes some relevant dialogue from *Macbeth*, then starts to leave the room triumphantly. Lisa points out an error in his quotation, however, and he uses the laptop which is the functioning trigger for the explosive to check Wikipedia. Despite his training as an actor, Bob is still less capable of memorizing his Shakespearean tragedies than Lisa Simpson. In fact, with his dying breaths Bob says, "Ah, hoisted on his own petard." Lisa corrects him immediately: "Actually, it's hoisted *with* his own petard." Again in the 20<sup>th</sup> and most recent season, the writers of *The Simpsons* pay their own peculiar version of homage to the bard when [Homer plays Macbeth](#).

Perhaps because of the considerable success and longevity of *The Simpsons*, adult themed cartoons have become more and more popular in the last twenty years. One such success is *South Park*, created by Matt Stone and Trey Parker. In *South Park*, Terrance and Phillip had been the boys' favorite comedians before their not-so-amicable split. Their act had previously consisted primarily of flatulence, but Phillip decides he wants to become a serious actor, and takes up with a [Canadian troupe playing "Hamlet."](#) This is a textually accurate recreation of *Hamlet's* final scene, aside from the supplementary "buddy" and "guy," included to make even clearer the fact that the actors are Canadian. (explain- Canadians can be identified on the show by their speech, saying "buddy," or "guy," as well as their Pacman-looking heads and mouths) The exclamation of "bleh!" as each character dies is another addition. The single abridgment is of the dialogue presumably taking place during Stan's interpolation of "Jesus tap-dancing Christ is this thing

ever gonna end?” Dialogue from *Hamlet* also makes an appearance two seasons later, in the boys’ new Mormon classmate Gary’s “[family home evening](#).” An allusion is fairly useless if the audience fails to realize its origin, and *South Park* and Shakespeare audiences wouldn’t logically overlap, so what is the purpose?

One place where such an overlap would be much more expected is in the audience of the BBC Next, I will examine a source with just that audience. *The Black Adder* is an historical sitcom starring classically trained British stage actors, which eventually aired on BBC. Even these sketches however, show a great deal of irreverence, even contempt for the renowned playwright. The clip from *Blackadder Back and Forth* is a blatant undermining of Shakespeare’s lasting impact, a total rejection that his reputation is deserved, and the unleashing of physical anger as a passerby [punches Shakespeare](#).

Finally, I would like to include examples of Shakespeare being truly absorbed into what some may consider one of the lowest forms of mass media: video sharing websites.

The next two clips come from a video sharing website created by Will Farrell, Adam McKay and Chris Henchy, comedians and members of the George Sanchez Production Company. They allow any video to be posted on the site, until it is deemed un-funny by voters, when it will be sent to “die” (Funny or Die). When faced with the decision about what subject will yield the most positive votes, two men thought of Shakespeare. “[Secret Shakespeare Man](#)” is a Hungarian swordsman on a mission to get the audience to read all the sonnets. The clip includes a secret agent tune, swordplay, and a mask, oh my! The second, posted by a “[Canadian guy in a Toque](#)” claims that it is heavily abridged, but the clip is still relatively long for the site. He is reading *Hamlet*, after all, so it is to be expected. These men could choose anything funny that could get a visceral response from a majority of viewers: slapstick, toilet humor, or anything

vulgar and not so cognitively demanding as a spoof on Shakespeare. What does it indicate that Shakespeare is even present in these, perhaps the lowest of the low media?

What does this mean for Shakespeare scholars? Why include brief, vague allusions such as *Hamlet*'s address to Yorick's skull in an obnoxious adult cartoon? Why bash Shakespeare when your audience may be some of the last individuals who truly appreciate his work? Why make plays into flashy, fluffy movies for teenagers? Maybe an answer can be discerned by one last scene, from *Clueless*, itself a recreation of Jane Austen's *Emma*. When the ditzy main character, Cher's step-brother's elitist girlfriend mistakenly identifies Hamlet as the speaker of "to thine own self be true," she is quickly corrected. The girlfriend scoffs, and says she thinks she remembers *Hamlet* accurately. Cher says: "Well I remember Mel Gibson accurately, and he didn't say that. That Polonius guy did."

Is Zeffirelli speaking truth, then? Are these repackagings of Shakespeare the only ones young people can grasp? Or is Shakespeare getting more obscene and insipid because print is unable to keep up with the exponential growth of electronic media? Is he in fact, as Burt projects, yet against all previous indications, mortal? Or "just another dead white male, soon to be obsolete?" (Burt 1). I believe the gift that mass media has given is a greater appreciation for quality entertainment from any genre, and more eclectic tastes. Maybe the "nerdy" English major can laugh at the antics of Kenny and Kyle. Maybe the "stuffy" academic can see the validity of non-canonical literature. Or maybe there will always be tension between the purist Shakespeare scholar and an opportunistic entertainment industry. What can be discerned absolutely, however, is that Shakespeare is everywhere, in some form or another, and he will not be disappearing anytime soon.

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