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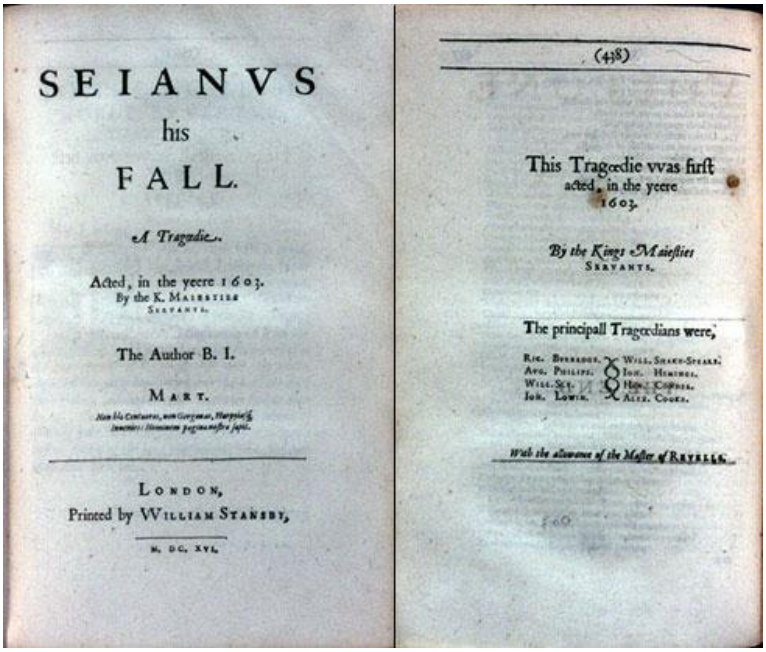
Edited by John Kerr


SEIANVS
his
FALL.

A Tragedie.

Acted, in the yeere 1603.
By the K. MAIESTIES SERVANTS.

The Author B. I.

MART.

LONDON,
Printed by WILLIAM STANSBY,

M. DC. XVI.

(418)

This Tragœdie vvas first acted, in the yeere 1603.

By the Kings Maiesties SERVANTS.

The principall Tragœdians were,

RIC. BVRBADGE. WILL. SHAKE-SPEARE.
AVG. PHILIPS. IOH. HEMINGS.
WILL. SLY. HENR. CONDELL.
IOH. LOWIN. ALEX. COOKE.

With the allowance of the Master of REVELLS.

Foreword

This year's Northern Plains Conference on Early British Literature, the 19th annual, saw a continued extension of two conference trajectories. First, recent years have brought more and more papers from the latter end of the conference's literary time frame. Papers spanned from Anglo-Saxon texts to Blake, Austen, and an examination of Wilde's use of Shakespeare. Second, NPCEBL has become more and more inclusive of young scholarly work. This year several graduate students and a few undergraduates presented papers generated by research at their respective levels. It is always a true pleasure (and a reassurance) to witness the enthusiasm and critical engagement of those who have chosen to devote their careers to advanced literary study. This year also involved an extension of the conference geographically, as it took place at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, the easternmost location in the conference's history, which brought the benefit particularly of enhanced participation from Wisconsin institutions. The selected proceedings presented here reflect the conference's fluidity in all of these areas.

Certainly the highlight of this year's gathering was the keynote speech. Dolores Frese of the University of Notre Dame delivered a typically rich and provocative exploration of Chaucer's employment of Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* in some of his *Canterbury Tales*, part of research conducted for a forthcoming book. Chaucer's use of the *De vulgari eloquentia* is at best controversial; Frese will have made a truly compelling case (the most compelling to date) when the book sees publication.

Naturally, there are a host of people who allowed the conference to come into being. Saint Mary's University of Minnesota generally and the Office of the Dean of Humanities in particular were generous with regard to funding for expenses large and small. Terrie Lueck,

Director of Conferencing and Camps, was essential in arranging accommodations and presentation space at SMU's Alverna Center. Monta May, Director of Website and Web Development, walked me through the creation of a blog that allowed for dissemination of information and ease of registration. Andrew Maus, Executive Ditrector of the Minnesota Marine Art Museum, was generous with time and advice in arranging a wonderful venue for the keynote dinner. Joe Piscitiello, Catering Director for Chartwells, made the convivial aspect of the two days seamless. My colleagues in the English Department, and especially Dr. Carolyn Ayers (Chair), were very supportive, particularly in the days leading up to and during the conference. Lauren Baier, student worker for the department, was admirably efficient and reliable in secretarial duties. Finally, I was the beneficiary of the previous experience of the members of the NPCEBL advisory board, all of whom provided suggestions and consistent encouragement.

Next year NPCEBL returns to Northern State University for its 20th anniversary.

John Kerr, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

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Man Up: The Masculinizing Power of God in *Elene*

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Elene details the story of Constantine's conversion to Christianity, his defeat of heathen barbarians, and his mother Elene's, successful journey to find the holy rood. In this piece, both Elene and Judas become empowered by Christian relics or inspired by the Holy Spirit to work on behalf of God, yet these two characters, both of whom occupy feminized positions, must perform masculinity in order to complete the works God has in store for them. God bestows holy power on both Elene and Judas Cyriacus, giving them divine authority and the ability to perform masculinity.

God's authoritative power bestowed on these two characters makes them perform masculinity to reach their goals. Judith Butler notes in *Gender Trouble* that gender is "…a *corporeal style*, an "act," as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where "performative" suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning" (175). Thus, Butler believes that all actions a character makes reflect gender upon the character, whether masculine or feminine, and all those gender performances create the gender of the character. Gender can never be constant, however, as every individual performs both masculine and feminine actions eventually. Butler says gender performance should not be seen as a project to be incessantly kept up, instead noting "…[t]he term *strategy* better suggests the situation of duress under which gender performance always and variously occurs" (176). "Strategy" is a good word to describe Elene and Judas' actions throughout *Elene*, as they both must perform the gendered function of masculinity to achieve the goals that God has set for them.

Elene uses the authoritative power granted to her by God as a strategy to find the location of the holy rood. As Karkov et al. reflect, "[The] treatment of [Elene] removes all autonomy and action from the human subject…and instead displays heavenly, not earthly, power" (104). God strips Elene of her independence, yet God imbues her with power that enables her to perform masculinity. As Mary Dockray-Miller explains, "Masculinity in Beowulf entails dominance and resolution; no ambiguity of hierarchy, of gender, of decision, is permissible" (3). *Beowulf* certainly defines the Anglo Saxon era, so far as gender goes, and Dockray-Miller's quote exemplifies Elene's mentality: first, she must perform masculinity by dominating the Other characters in the story, and she must then provide resolution in the conversion of the Jewish people, and she does both of these things through the power instilled in her through God.

Finding the rood is obviously of great importance to Elene as well as her son, Constantine, in that he can employ the cross in battle to achieve victory. The text describes that she is, indeed, given this divine authority from God: "…she was filled with grace of wisdom, and the holy, heavenly Spirit abode with her…" (22). Now just as a side note here, I've used the Kennedy prose translation because it readily provides the entire story, although I do wish it preserved the poetic form better. Anyway, here, the text blatantly states that Elene becomes a vessel of the Holy Spirit, and, as that vessel, she commands divine authority with which to perform masculinity and fulfill her purpose.

Elene, a woman, quests for the holy cross throughout this work and leads a group of soldiers on her journey to find the relic: "…over the battle plains with proven band of wielders of the linden shield, with a troop of spearmen, she should seek the [holy rood in the] Jewish land" (7). Physical questing, as will be emphasized in the later Arthurian literature, usually belongs in the domain of men, although spiritual questing can be undertaken by both men and women.

Here, Elene physically quests like a man for the holy rood with her war party, this performance enabled by God's holy power.

God's lending of divine authority to Elene also allows her to command soldiers, another masculine performance. Like Constantine, she, too, leads a group of men into battle, although Elene's battle is spiritual, not literal. As John P. Hermann writes, "…The objective of the powerful array of military force which Elene controls…leads one…to recall the military imagery of Ephesians 6:11-17" (124). The biblical passage referenced here explains how a Christian warrior readies oneself for spiritual warfare, and, by Hermann's description of the scene, Elene performs masculinity using God's loaned-authority to both find the holy rood and to combat evil through spiritual warfare.

To command these men in spiritual battle, however, Elene performs masculinity through God's blessing to become a strong leader. To better understand what qualities a leader should embody during the time period, one must look to other examples of Anglo Saxon literature; Clare Lees describes *Beowulf*'s Scyld Scefing "As a good king and one who demands loyalty and tribute [because he] acts forcefully, rules through territorial expansion and subjugation, and leaves a son" (142). Elene has obviously left a son, Constantine, portraying her as a "good king" from the get-go; in her first encounter with the Jewish wise men, however, she obviously shows force in her interrogation and subjugation of the people there, further showing her masculine performance through borrowing God's divine authority.

Her masculine performance even reaches into her physical appearance, as she displays the authority God has bestowed on her. As she gathers the Jewish wise men to locate the holy rood, she "…bode with splendour on a kingly throne, the kinswoman of Caesar, a brilliant battle-queen all graced with gold" (8). Here, several things point out her masculine performance

through the Holy Spirit. First, she sits on a kingly throne, which suggests her masculine appearance in front of the Jews.

Her clothing and accessories also suggest her masculine performance through God's borrowed power. Dockray-Miller notes that the Anglo Saxon era is one that "…depends on women being defined as commodities to be traded between and passed among men," yet Elene cannot be treated as a commodity, as she performs masculinity through the Holy Spirit; the text describes her to be "graced with gold," so she, in fact, has commodities to be traded like a man would instead of being a commodity, herself. This, once more, shows Elene's masculinity through wealth, equipping her to be the authoritative voice God needs.

To fulfill these wishes, Elene's demeanor as she speaks to the Jewish wise men shows her masculine performance on God's behalf to find the holy rood for Constantine. She addresses them from her "kingly throne" and, as Zollinger puts it, "…harangues them with the loss of this favored identity [the Jews believing they are the chosen people of God], assaulting them with the words of Moses, David, and Isaiah," conducting a "…notorious interrogation of the Jewish people" (187). Again, Clare Lees describes that a good *king* like *Beowulf*'s Scyld Scefing as one "who rules through subjugation," so Elene's performance on God's behalf portrays her as masculine.

In being chosen by God, Elene becomes a dominant, masculine Christian figure during the counsel with the Jewish wise men. Elene shows herself to be both authoritative over the Jews and influential to them as she convenes and questions them; "The masculine characters define themselves against an unfavorable Other: men are strong, noble, and generous; the Other is weak, ignoble, [and] miserly," as Dockray-Miller explains, and the Jews, in this case, become Other, much like Judith Butler explains the position of women in patriarchal society. In this way,

Elene's domination of the Jews can be seen as patriarchy. As Lees explains, "The noble blood of ladies triumphed over their female weakness in competition with men of inferior status" (11). Thus, Elene performs masculinity through God's bestowment of holy power, and, because of her Christian status, proves herself to be more masculine than Jewish men.

The Holy Spirit guides Elene's tirade against the Jews and shows her as more masculine through her anger: "And Elene lifted her voice to them in wrath…" as she interrogates the Jews (12), and the Jews actually acknowledge her masculine anger in their defense, saying, "We [know not] well wherefore thus heavily, O Lady, thou art become so wrathful against us" (9). Lees maintains that "[a]ggression is central to the maintenance of power in the ruling families," so it stands to reason that, for Elene to maintain power over the Jewish wise men, she must be aggressive. Once more returning to Lees, Elene's ire shows her forcefulness and thus portrays her as a "good king" likened to Scyld Scefing in *Beowulf*.

The relationship between Elene's divinely-borrowed masculinity and Judas' Jewish effeminacy is further exemplified later in *Elene*. Upon her interrogation of Judas, the text describes his reaction to Elene: "…He might not turn away that sorrow neither avert the anger of the queen, for he was in her power" (13). Judas submits himself to sorrow, a trait shown by various effeminate characters in Arthurian romance, whereas the text defines Elene here by her anger; Dockray-Miller compares Elene and Judas as "…[having] disrupted the masculine economy, the binary definition of gender" by being a masculine woman and an effeminate man, respectively. This shows Judas as Elene's foil, as they are entirely opposite of one another, Judas being Other, while Elene performs masculinity while enabled to do so by God.

The character of Judas changes completely upon his conversion to Christianity, however, from a weak and effeminate Jew to a courageous and masculine Christian. This change comes

about because of the presence of the Holy Spirit: "The gift of the Spirit may not be separated in any way from conversion," as James Dunn explains, and, thus, the Holy Spirit strips Elene of divine authority and grants it to Judas; now that Judas temporarily owns this divine authority, he performs masculinity enough to find the holy rood.

In converting, Judas now performs in a more masculine manner than Elene, as she relies on him to find the true cross. "Significantly…it is not Elene who finds the Cross but Judas, and it is in Judas Cyriacus that two faiths with a common past are reconciled through a figure of conversion," Zollinger explains. Because the Holy Spirit empowers him with this divine authority, Judas finds the holy rood instead of Elene, thus surpassing her masculinity; furthermore, Elene proves herself once more effeminate as she relies on Judas, a man, to do things for her instead of taking the initiative to find the rood herself, having lost the divine authority that allowed her to perform masculinity to find the cross.

As Judas uncovers the three crosses, we clearly see his change from effeminate Jew to masculine Christian warrior thanks to his conversion, coupled with the Spirit's bestowment of divine authority. Upon finding the crosses, "…with steadfast strength he began to delve for the tree of glory in the earth" (17). Because of the divine authority lent to him by God, Judas now performs masculinity in the form of strength, a stark contrast to his meek semblance seen when Elene interrogates him before his conversion. This, too, suggests that Judas now employs God's divine authority which enables him to perform masculinity as Elene watches this man complete her quest for her.

Judas becomes so empowered by this God-granted authority that he actually wages a battle of words against "the devil from Hell," presumably Satan—often depicted as the leader of the Jews in the pre-modern world. Judas defeats the devil: "But the wise-hearted Judas, brave

man of war, gave answer unto him, for the Holy Ghost was bestowed on him in [fullness], a flaming love and wisdom springing from warrior's craft" (19). Whereas Judas was little more than a slave and informant to Elene earlier in this work, Judas performs masculinity upon gaining God's holy, authoritative power through conversion to become "a brave man of war," though the battle he fights is more intellectual and spiritual than literal.

The divine authority bestowed on Judas leads to his masculine warrior-like performances. Before his conversion, Judas was never given warrior status; yet, having been converted, and, therefore empowered by the Holy Spirit, the text shows Judas to be a Christian soldier doing battle against the devil, his former master. This warmongering is obviously a masculine activity, yet the battle is one of words, not one of swords. In the Anglo Saxon era, warriors were not only strong physically but also strong in mind, best exemplified by the word battle between Beowulf and Unferth. In the same way that Beowulf proves himself more clever, and thus, more masculine than Unferth, Judas performs masculinity to outsmart Satan using the bestowment of God's authoritative power.

Elene, too, sees this great change in Judas as she watches his word battle with the devil, noticing that he is now more masculine in his authoritative speech: "[she] wondered at the knowledge of the man that he…was endowed with so great wisdom" (19). Anglo Saxon warriors were the epitome of masculine performance in that era, and, upon his conversion and subsequent gift of authority from the Holy Spirit, Judas acts exactly like a warrior of the time period. Thus, Judas performs masculinity due to the bestowment of divine authority from God to appear like an Anglo Saxon warrior and defeat Satan.

Elene later shows her return to femininity, having passed God's authority over to Judas during his conversion. Once more, she relies on Judas: "[Elene] charged [Judas] Cyriacus once

again, by the Spirit's might, he accomplish her will in that deed of wonder, reveal [the Crucifixion nails] in his glorious grace" (21). Here, Elene acts femininely, as she depends on a man to do the work for her, putting her in the stereotypically feminine role while Judas comes to her rescue, essentially. He performs masculinity by coming to her aid in what seems a "damsel in distress" situation because of this "glorious grace" bestowed on him from God. He then finds the nails and places himself in a masculine role.

Near the end of this work, Judas performs masculinity to become a great spiritual leader because of the empowerment her receives from the Holy Spirit. Elene charges Judas with finding the Crucifixion nails, and the Jewish people follow him as he searches: "Then the bishop of that folk [the Jews], with kindled soul, made strong his heart, and gladsomely went forth with much people praising God" (22). Here, Judas receives guidance from the Spirit, which makes him act more masculine and confident as he makes "strong his heart." As previously mentioned, the Jews had not yet converted to Christianity, thus making them on equal terms with Christian women in the Other category. As Clare Lees explains, "Masculine claims to inherent superiority were already well grounded in theology. Woman's 'natural' need to be ruled had been given by divine sanction" (2). Thus, Judas acts masculine to become their leader and uphold the laws of his newly-found Christian faith.

The patriarchal order reestablishes itself through God's bestowment of divine authority on both Elene and Judas. As Stacy Klein relates, "Cynewulf uses the queen as an exemplar to naturalize and perpetuate a very traditional and highly conservative social hierarchy…" (6). To naturalize and perpetuate the traditions of Anglo Saxon society, Elene cannot retain her masculinity, and, thus, must return to the effeminate position she held at the beginning of the piece before God grants her divine authority. The men of this piece, Judas and the other Jews,

reestablish their rightful place as masculine upon their mass conversion to Christianity, correcting the patriarchal order where men dominate women, thereby showing that God's power can, in fact, enable the characters in *Elene* to perform masculinity.

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Love, Fate, and Poetic Authority in the Lai of "Guigemar"

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The *Lais* of the 12th century French love poet Marie de France are pervaded by the poet's incredibly varying attitudes towards her main subject matter. Marie's surely deliberate inconsistency illustrates her complex outlook on love's position in humans' lives and her refusal to be reductive or pose as a flawless and irrefutable authority on the matter. The first of the *Lais of Marie de France*, "Guigemar," suggests the poet's views on who has authority and control in matters of love. The lai depicts different relationships of power in regards to love through the passion-driven interactions amongst its characters and puts the characters' assumptions to question. By portraying her own characters' attempts to manage love, the poet implicitly comments on the capacities of her own profession. Taking up the timeless issue of poetic authority, Marie specifically addresses her own role as love's truthful advocate.[1]

The characters in "Guigemar" essentially demonstrate two methodologies regarding love, one employing service and, the other, control. The characters all come either to truly appreciate the actuality of their human condition, which includes their inability to control their fates and love's participation in their lives, or to neglect to observe this obedience to love—represented in the lai as a greater power closely related with fate—and suffer cruel ends that strip the object of their love from them. The main character, Guigemar, attempts to control his life—especially his love life (by disregarding it completely)—and his progression in the tale results in his changed attitude towards love and a newly gained awareness of how to serve it. The lai focuses on humans' lack of control and affirms that authority in matters of love does not come from false assumptions of control but from awareness of the human condition and service (through

conceding and supporting) to the higher powers controlling one's fate. The poet, Marie, expresses clearly her awareness that love is an uncontrollable force that cannot be completely comprehended by even such a poet as herself; but her recognition of the need to serve love rather than try to constrain it gives her the closest resemblance to an authority on love that any love poet can come to on their subject.

Much of the critical debate surrounding Marie de France's *Lais* considers Marie's own sense of poetic authority, especially in light of her culturally inferior position as a female poet during the 12th century. One influential critic to take up the debate over Marie's poetic authority, Robert W. Hanning, argues that Marie asserts her feminine authority in matters of love by utilizing her minor cultural status. Hanning asserts that Marie uses her own externality to empower herself as an author. In his article, "The Talking Wounded: Desire, Truth Telling, and Pain in the *Lais* of Marie de France," Hanning "undertake[s] to argue for the presence in the *Lais* of a distinctive voice, that of the 'truthteller from the margin,' whose message, inseparable from the pain that attends it, gains in authority and poignancy precisely because of its forced distance from loci of institutionalized power" (142). Hanning also contends that by representing herself through the imagery of Venus, Marie attributes to herself a very high and controversial station: "even as she claims authority for herself, through the *persona* of Venus, as a poet of love, Marie suggests the transgressiveness of such a claim" (142).

Although Hanning is correct that Marie appears to gain strength from her recognition of a marginalized position, the inferiority Marie draws on does not appear to be that put upon her as a woman in society but that integral inferiority eternally fixed to the human condition. Marie reservedly upholds the power of her poetic voice through her recognition of her own inferiority as a helpless human trying to write about the uncontrollable, and therefore somewhat essentially

incomprehensible, powers of fate and love. Her disregard for the institutionalized authorities and her condemnation of the arrogance of Ovid (who presumes he can control love) is merely an adherent to her main initiative. It is not necessarily a gender distinction that Marie is trying to make and through which she asserts her authority; rather, the attack on her ancient predecessor and her wariness of male authority stem from her belief that love is not a matter to be controlled and her distaste for any poets that treat the subject matter as such. Perhaps, it could be argued that the male-dominated literary sphere at the time contributed to an automatic pairing of the terms "male" and "control" for Marie and she, as a female poet willing to take a less authoritative stance on a non-concrete subject matter, would then presume to attain some gained insight through her gender. However, as Marie's characters in Guigemar show, this knowledge of love is in no way confined to one gender since the ability to serve love faithfully Guigemar learns himself. Therefore, to confine the poet's commentary on poetic authority to gender distinctions appears to be too reductive.

Following this line of reasoning, Hanning's claim that Marie associates herself with the goddess of love, Venus, is contrary to the views posited by the poet about service to the higher powers of fate and especially Love. In the Lady's chamber, paintings on the wall portray Venus condemning Ovid for his false assumptions of control in matters of love and "excommunicating all those who ever pursued this book [either *Ars Amatoria*/*The Art of Love* or *Remedia Amoris*/*Remedies for Love*] or followed its teachings" ("Guigemar" 242-244).[2] Venus, or Love, speaks against any who have learned from Ovid and instructs "whereby men might learn how to behave in love, and to serve love loyally" (237-238). Again, although the edict is specifically addressed to males, this is likely due to the large majority of male writers to come before Marie, their traditional control over the subject matter and, generally, their treatment of it. It does not

necessarily mean Marie correlates herself with Venus as Hanning contends and qualifies herself as such an ultimate authority on love that she would refer to herself as comparable to the goddess of love herself. It appears that Marie's support of service to the uncontrollable power of love would indicate the exact opposite: Marie in no way equates herself with the goddess but wishes only to observe those edicts set down by her or, more appropriately, by love. Venus symbolizes the higher authority of love, an ultimate authority, which condemns Ovid for presuming to control matters outside the power of his human nature. Following this, as long as Marie does not liken herself to Venus, it would seem that this type of gender-based position is not what she relies on for authority in this text. Rather she gains her powerful poetic voice from her knowledge and recognition of the uncontrollable power looming over men and women alike—fate, which divests men and women of any true control in matters of love.

Marie's attentiveness to her correct position as love poet gives her an increased amount of authority over her predecessors in her text, which exemplifies appropriateness in matters of love by condemning the act of controlling love and focusing on ways to serve this indomitable force. This identifies Marie, as poet, less with the image of Venus and more with that of the servant girl. The attendant girl is presented to the imprisoned Lady in order to serve her; and when Guigemar arrives, she agrees to assist him as well, directly relating to how the girl serves love. The girl appears to be almost omniscient in matters of love. It is she who informs the ignorant Guigemar that he is in love to begin with: "My lord you're in love; take care not to hide it too well" (43). To further the image of the girl's authority in these matters, Guigemar begs the girl, "Advise me, dear friend!", because he cannot understand his own passion. It is also the servant girl who first encourages the lady to go examine the boat where the lady ultimately finds her love. The girl's presence continues to be one of knowledge and service, characterized by her

recognition of the irrepressible and unquestionable nature of love and her continued choice to follow its will. Her authority in these matters mirrors the apparent intentions of the poet, who continuously makes her mind known through her interjections and this type of interplay amongst her characters.

The experiences of Marie's characters reinforce her own poetic authority; throughout the story their lessons in love give them the knowledge that Marie already draws on herself. Those characters who learn how to serve love properly end the story satisfied in their relationships whereas those who do not suffer much less gratifying fates. Fortune actually chooses to shine upon those who serve love rightly. The Lady and Guigemar do not have the same omniscient knowledge in matters of love as the servant girl, but they learn how to serve love through the girl's and each other's assistance. The Lady's first gesture towards Guigemar is an offer of service, signifying both the lady's readiness to serve rather than control, and her role, along with the girl, as healer of Guigemar's imperfect nature: "We'll be happy to put you up, and serve you willingly," she says (40). While the ladies serve Guigemar (and incidentally, love), Guigemar embarks on his journey to understanding love and learns the benefits of service over command from the servant girl.

Previously, Guigemar committed himself to enjoying only those activities which he felt he had control over such as fighting and hunting. He flourished in these activities and he "never gave any thought to love" (31). Guigemar's control in his life lasts until fate steps in and crushes his false senses of control. When Guigemar goes hunting and shoots a hind, the arrow somehow rebounds unexpectedly and the hind prophetically tells him she has given him a wound that can only be cured by a woman, this wound turns out to be not only physical, but ultimately symbolic—seemingly standing for his flawed nature in regards to love and the pain he will suffer

from the stalled fulfillment of his love for the lady. Guigemar loses power over his life during an activity he thought he had full control in. Afterwards, he must attend to his wound or die; he has no other choice then to seek out help from a lady. He is forced to enter into the new world of love in which he is completely lost.

The boat presented to Guigemar shortly after being wounded, can be seen as a symbol of fate and the guiding forces of love. While in the boat, Guigemar is depicted as "frightened" and "upset" (35). All of the "control" Guigemar had previously in his life is relinquished and now he must learn how to thrive in the uncontrollable world of love and fate. When Guigemar first reaches land, he exclaims to the lady, "I can't even steer this ship!" (39). Unknowingly to Guigemar, the boat, or fate, takes off and steers him towards love. The lady undergoes a parallel experience with the boat later in the lai. The lady contemplates suicide thinking she will never see her love again, but the boat takes off unexpectedly not giving her the chance to do so and steers her towards a place where Guigemar will find her.

At first, Guigemar is utterly confused about his wounded state, but he learns how to act in matters of love through the attendant girl's assistance. Through her continued instruction, Guigemar begins to understand the nature of love and develops a willingness to serve it. He gives in to his love for the Lady and does whatever necessary to secure their relationship. As Guigemar begins to learn the ways of love, he is able to give advice to his lady as well. When she is reluctant to succumb to her love—for a time she tries to control her desires—Guigemar convinces her to submit to her inclinations. Guigemar tells the lady that they should be together immediately, saying that it is appropriate for an "inconstant woman" to make a man plead, but "a woman of good character [like the lady]… oughtn't to treat him too disdainfully. Rather she should love and enjoy him" (44). To this, the "lady realized he was telling the truth" and submits

to her desires (45). Thus by yielding to the forces of love and learning how to serve them, both Guigemar and the lady come to a better understanding of love. Guigemar's journey to complete his appreciation of love is finalized when he converts the controlling professions of his previous life to now loyally serve love. After Guigemar experiences love and learns to understand it, he uses his fighting abilities, which before gave him a sense of control, and utilizes them in service when he rescues his lady back from Meriaduc. Although he cannot control love, Guigemar gains power through the knowledge of how to serve love, much like how Marie gains authority as a poet by serving love faithfully rather than trying to assert control over this indomitable force like Ovid.

Two other characters in the story, the old jealous Lord and Meriaduc, contrast with the Lady and Guigemar by exemplifying false assumptions of control over love which they never fully resolve and which indirectly affect their downfalls. Their fates illuminate their error in assuming a sense of power and reiterate that one should try to serve Love and accept fate rather than try to control them. The old Lord tries to control love by keeping his wife locked up attempting to retain Love by force. Despite the old lord's efforts, his wife manages to free herself from his grasp denouncing his control over her and over Love itself. Although the old, jealous lord is not killed for his wrongness, his later actions also reemphasize that fate, not man, controls love and you will not succeed in Love if you fail to observe these standards. When faced with the decision of Guigemar's punishment, the old lord surprisingly allows Guigemar to get back into the boat in which he came. The old lord is again put into a situation where he can attempt to control love—by killing Guigemar right then and there—but this time, surprisingly, he does not endeavor to work against fate and lets Guigemar get back into the boat. As he sees Guigemar off, the lord wishes that Guigemar will drown, but, as a final statement of fate's ultimate control and

the old lord's impotency, Guigemar does not drown and eventually finds his lady again. Similarly, Meriaduc refuses to serve love and denies Guigemar and his lady the ability to be together. Meriaduc tells Guigemar, "I propose to take care of [the lady] and defend her against you," even though the Lady is obviously in love with Guigemar and would readily leave Meriaduc for him. The error of Meriaduc's actions is confirmed when Guigemar, now a loyal servant to Love, leads Meriaduc's enemies to victory in battle, kills Meriaduc and is reunited with the Lady.

The story of "Guigemar" firmly emphasizes that the only way to succeed in love is to succumb to fate's decree, to understand basic human weakness, and especially humanity's powerlessness when it comes to fate. This decree of fate and love extends not only to the characters of the lai, but also applies to the love poet herself, as she makes clear specifically through her condemnation of Ovid who relates to the other figures in her story trying to control love. By returning to the imagery of Venus and Ovid in the lai, it becomes clearer exactly how Marie proclaims her own poetic authority through her text. Hanning finds value viewing the painted chamber as a "rueful pun," contending that the depictions of Venus condemning Ovidian lore on the lady's room—or prison—walls are "indicative of the fact that a woman, whatever her gifts and achievements, whatever her ability to impart knowledge or wisdom, remains, for men, the embodiment of a dangerous sexuality that they must perpetually control, and perpetually distrust" (142). However, there are many other commentaries on the chamber offering divergent interpretations. In her article "'Arte Regendus Amor': Suffering and Sexuality in Marie de France's Lai de Guigemar," Tracy Adams gives a comprehensive account of the critical tradition surrounding the origins and implied meaning in the "Chambre de Vénus."[3] Adams makes a valid point in saying that "some Ekphrastic representations in medieval literature demand no

naturalistic explanation for their presence and represent the state of mind of the main characters of the works," to which it seems necessary to add the state of mind of the poet (311). Hanning's interpretation of the mural would seem to focus on Marie's assumed response to the negative male-dictated worldview exemplified by the old Lord, but it seems doubtful that responding to this obviously ignorant attitude would be the poet's main focus in the inclusion of this scene. Adams pointedly expresses how "the mental state of a jealous old husband is of less interest than that of either of the two lovers […] he is a literary type, self-explanatory within the world of this *lai*" (311). The fact that the chamber imprisons the Lady seems more ironic than rueful expressing the ignorant state of the Old Lord who does not realize he cannot control love and imprisons his wife in a chamber exemplifying that very fact. Marie's voice appears to have more reason to focus on the positive implications of the painting and identify with the characters in her lai who triumph by serving love faithfully. This emphasis indicates her departure from Ovid's ideas of control without suggesting that she is weak or a wounded feminine artist as Hanning contends. Marie is no more "talking wounded" than any other love poet audacious enough to take up the pen; rather, as she makes clear, her particular writings endowed with the knowledge of one who knows the necessity of serving love can hardly be called futile endeavors.

NOTES

[1] Implicitly, Marie makes self-commentary on her own poetic authority through the conflicts with love and power she creates amongst her characters. The indications that she scrutinizes her own authority as poet are seen more explicitly in her Prologue and her commentary on fellow love poet Ovid, which I will cover in depth later in the essay. In Marie's Prologue to her work she makes clear her ability to provide new knowledge, but also her willingness to be glossed, showing strong conviction in her wisdom but also expressing that part of her wisdom includes her recognition of her flawed status as human, which provides her limited knowledge. In this prologue, she also names herself as Marie, which is why I will take the leniency to speak of the poet and Marie interchangeably throughout the rest of my article as most other recent critics also tend to do for presumably this same reason.

[2] Tracy Adams explains in her article "'Arte Regendus Amor'" that the text Venus burns could be either Ovid's *Ars amatoria* or *Remedia amoris* since both books teach how to control love in some fashion and critics have sufficiently argued for both. However, while Adams focuses some attention to this discrepancy, it serves well enough for my article to know that either text would instruct in how to control love instead of serving it.

[3] Adams posits two main sides of critical debate here concerning the origins of the mural: Some critics maintain the painting's origins are ambiguous and therefore see the painting as being solely expressive of Marie's personal attitude towards Ovid and the prospects of controlling love while other critics see the mural as being contracted by the husband who wished for his wife's unrestrained love to be directed towards himself.

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Slave, Alien, and Son: Marlowe's Ithamore

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Although scholars such as Roma Gill and Lisa Hopkins have identified a number of details in *The Jew of Malta* that suggest Marlowe was well informed about both the geography of Malta and political events in the eastern Mediterranean, he freely altered historical events in the creation of a highly original story line (Gill ix-x; Hopkins first section). The fast-moving and continually evolving plot is largely Marlowe's own invention, and as T.W. Craik has argued, it "is more important than anything else in *The Jew of Malta*: Barabas's own character is itself important largely because of his vitality, his energy, in contriving and superintending this forward-driving action" (xiv). It is Barabas who dominates the play, and it is only he who provokes speculation about motive, such as his reasons for voluntarily returning Malta to Ferneze. Other characters are stereotypical, interesting for specific and limited reasons.[1] Ferneze is studied for his hypocrisy and Machiavellianism, Calymath for presenting an attractive image of the Turk, an approach now current as scholarship has focused on England's mercantile and political ambitions in the eastern Mediterranean,[2] and Abigail for her filial piety, usually now studied as an aspect of Marlowe's depictions of women or of broader considerations of gender.[3] Ithamore is less written about, but has been identified by Dale Priest as a "zany," "a secondary character who mocks through parodic antics the assertions or machinations of a primary character in the play" (90). Priest's emphasis on mockery reflects his interpretation of the play as one that "drifts from apparent sophistication to near-burlesque" (86-7). What I will argue here is that through his roles as Barabas's slave, fellow alien, and adopted son, Ithamore not only mirrors Barabas, but enriches our understanding of his master.

Ithamore is a slave, one of the Turkish captives whom Martin del Bosco, the vice-admiral of the Spanish fleet, has brought to Malta to sell. Since Del Bosco cannot sell Turkish captives so as long as Malta remains in league with the Turks, he has had to convince the Knights to break the league, promising them Spain's support. While Del Bosco's promise of aid is at some level topical, reflecting Spanish ambition and more generally the European desire to contain the Ottomans, it is clear that his personal motivation to have Malta break with the Turks is his own financial gain. He is driven, in short, by what the Turkish Basso Callapine has described as "The wind that bloweth all the world besides: / Desire of gold" (3.5.3-4).[4] Similarly, although the decision to resist rather than pay renders the original confiscation unnecessary, no money is returned to the Jews. Having taken the gold, the Knights will keep it.

The scene in the slave market when Barabas acquires Ithamore adds another dimension to this assertion of the universality of greed, for it reveals that not only does desire for money motivate each person, but that each person has his or her price. The adage is rendered quite literally: each slave wears a price tag on his back (Godshalk 207). Barabas considers several slaves, bantering humorously with them and the officers selling them, until he settles on Ithamore, the leanest and cheapest of the lot—a bargain at a hundred crowns. An additional irony infuses the scene, for Barabas is not only purchasing flesh, he is selling it. Lodowick, the Governor's son, has met Barabas in the street and accompanied him to the market. Barabas sees an opportunity for revenge in Lodowick's desire to marry Abigail, and their conversation is wittily couched in terms of purchasing a diamond, one that "sparkles bright and fair" and shows well by night. Lodowick believes this unsoiled diamond is his to win and wear (2.3.298); Barabas thinks it worth Lodowick's life (2.3.95). He does not actually intend for Lodowick to

marry Abigail, but he is in effect selling his daughter even as he is purchasing Ithamore. The scene thus foreshadows Ithamore's eventual replacement of Abigail.

When Barabas is selecting his slave, he learns that Ithamore was "Born in Thrace" and "brought up in Arabia." Mark Hutchings has argued from this that Ithamore was likely a Christian from the Balkans who had been forcibly conscripted into military service at an early age by the Ottomans. He suggests that Barabas chooses Ithamore because he relates to him as, like himself, a displaced and stateless person. It is an intriguing if subtle argument, although one should note that whenever Ithamore is referred to later in the play, he is simply called a Turk. However, whether or not their shared statelessness is part of the attraction, Barabas and Ithamore immediately hit it off. In their first conversation after Ithamore is purchased, Barabas learns that Ithamore has no profession or trade and offers to teach him what he needs to know:

> First, be thou void of these affections,
>
> Compassion, love, vain hope, and heartless fear;
>
> Be moved at nothing, see thou pity none,
>
> But to thyself smile when the Christians moan. (2.3.173-6)

Ithamore's response is "Oh brave, master. I worship your nose for this" (2.3.177-8). The nasal reference refers, of course, to the practice of wearing a false nose to portray Jews, an Elizabethan stage convention that may first appear in this play (Bakeless 367, Bawcutt 2). However, the "Oh brave" makes it clear that Ithamore approves of what he is hearing, intimating that he too has little love of Christians.

Barabas then continues with a long speech, depicting himself as performing all of the atrocities that medieval anti-Semitism had attributed to the Jews. He says that he has killed "sick people groaning under walls," poisoned wells, tempted Christians into thievery so that they

would be punished, and driven people into bankruptcy through usury (2.3.179-204). Ithamore tops these claims with ones even more extravagant. He says that he has set “Christian villages on fire,” cut the throats of sleeping travellers, and strangest of all, put a powder on the stones where pilgrims to Jerusalem were kneeling that crippled them, causing them to “Go limping home to Christendom on stilts” (2.3.211-217). Neither speech is meant to be taken at face value. The two are projecting an attitude and taking each other's measure. Even though Barabas is perfectly serious about wanting an accomplice for his revenge and is ascertaining that Ithamore will be suitable, there is a playfulness to their boasting, and the interaction with Ithamore thus brings out a side of Barabas that was not previously evident in the play.

Barabas and Ithamore are both what we now call the Other. Of course, virtually every character in the play would have seemed Other to Marlowe's London audience, which would have defined itself in opposition to Spaniards, Catholics, and the Ottomans. But Ithamore and Barabas, a foreign slave of mean birth and a Jew, are seen as Other within the world of Malta.[5] Indeed, Barabas himself has argued that as an outsider he should not be asked to defray the Turkish demands: "Are strangers with your tribute to be taxed?’ (1.2.59). The answer, as he learned, is that not only will the Jews be taxed, but they alone will be taxed. The justification for this is that Malta's troubles are perceived to spring from its tolerance of the Jews, "Who stand accursèd in the light of heaven" (1.2.64). Othering thus justifies the confiscation. Interestingly, there is no suggestion that the Jews should be exiled from Malta, though in fact that had occurred in the past (Gill xiii), and Ferneze tells Barabas that his life is safe:

> No, Barabas, to stain our hands with blood
> Is far from us and our profession. (1.2.147-8)

Of course, although the play does not say so explicitly, it may be good policy to allow Barabas to seek another fortune. Why, after all, should Ferneze destroy a "cash cow"? No one in Malta seems concerned when Barabas, soon after his goods are taken, appears richer than before and in possession of an even finer house than the one he has lost.

Barabas's use of "stranger" emphasizes that he is an alien, in Hans Mayer's term, an existential outsider, which he sees as a particular focus of Marlovian tragedy (9). Again, there is a sense in which all of the characters are aliens—there are no native Maltese in the play. However, the Knights have been given Malta to hold, and while Calymath and Del Bosco desire it for their respective empires, neither lives nor will live there. As the label "stranger" insists, Barabas may dwell in Malta, but he is neither of it nor from it. Where he comes from we do not know, though we know he has dwelt in at least one other country, where he knew intimately a wench who has since died. Barabas and Ithamore are simply from elsewhere: both are strangers in the land in which they dwell.

Abigail's decision to reenter the convent creates a dual response by Barabas: he decides to kill his daughter, and he tells Ithamore that he will adopt him as his son. Both are mistakes. Barabas's decision to murder Abigail is based on his fear that she does not love him and therefore may betray him. That fear, the audience knows, is unfounded, for in an aside she has specifically affirmed that despite what Barabas deserves for what he has done to her, "Yet never shall these lips bewray thy life" (3.3.81). However, Barabas does not understand love. As J. W. Flosdorf argues, "love to Barabas means awe and respect and compliance more than it means affection" (13). Hence, he eliminates the danger that he mistakenly believes she poses by poisoning the entire convent. However, the failure to understand love or to see the love that another has for one does not mean that one does not desire to be loved. This fundamental need is seen when Barabas

turns to Ithamore immediately upon learning that Abigail has left, addressing him as his "second self" (3.4.15), and then within a few more lines, offering to adopt him as his sole heir (3.4.43). Clearly he hopes to fill the emotional hole left by Abigail's departure.[6] His offer does not mean that he intends to keep his promise to Ithamore. "Spend as myself / Here, take my keys," he says, only to pause and say "I'll give 'em thee anon" (3.4.45-6). Similarly, he suggests new garments for Ithamore, but then adds, "but thou shalt not want" (3.4.47). The clothes, in short, can wait till later. Barabas apparently believes not only that love can be purchased, but that the debt can be deferred, or perhaps not paid at all. The ploy does not work. The promise made when Ithamore was first purchased was sufficient to attract his zeal: "Be true and secret, thou shalt want no gold" (2.3.221). Ithamore needed no more encouragement to assist Barabas's crimes. The offer of adoption, rather than binding Ithamore more firmly to him, has lessened Barabas's hold over his slave, who plunges into his affair with the courtesan Bellamira and, with her pimp Pilia-Borza's help, begins blackmailing his master. His contempt is fully evident when, in the presence of the disguised Barabas, Ithamore derides his diet, his cleanliness, and his clothing. Having poisoned Abigail to protect himself, Barabas now finds that he must poison Ithamore for the same reason. Ithamore's role as "son" thus contrasts starkly and ironically with Abigail's role as daughter. She left her father, but did not betray him, and did not cease to love him, though Barabas could not see it. Nor could he see initially that the "son" he thrust into her place did not love him, and was not loyal. Nonetheless, it is Ithamore, not Abigail, who mirrors the love that Barabas can give. Barabas announces at the play's beginning that he loves his daughter as dearly “As Agamemnon did his Iphigen” (1.1.137). This is not exactly non-love, but it is a love that can be sacrificed when the need arises. As did his roles of slave and stranger, Ithamore’s betrayal of his “father” thus complements and clarifies Marlowe’s characterization of Barabas.

NOTES

[1] Character criticism is being recuperated in Marlowe studies by critics such as David Webb, who sees Marlowe's Barabas and other characters as reflecting the development of naturalism in early modern drama.
[2] See especially the recent studies by Lupton, Vitkus, and Wilson.
[3] Deats provides the first book length feminist study of Marlowe. See also recent work by Draya, and Tambling.
[4] The edition cited is Christopher Marlowe, *The Complete Plays*, ed. Mark Thornton Burnett.
[5] Abigail is also Other, but as Tambling asserts, the issue for her is not Jewishness, but sexual difference (97).
[6] In addition to Flosdorf, see Levin (78) and Ribner (xxxii). Beecher argues against the idea.

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Britomart's Sex Sets "British" on Fire: *The Faerie Queene*'s Queer Britain

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The Faerie Queene makes no effort to hide its political implications, yet Spenser's political focus is a figure and monarchical situation without mimetic precedence. Spenser's attempt to be Elizabeth's Virgil is complicated because he cannot find a homogeneous identity or allegorical figure to account for her multiplicity. This complication results in the poem's continual starting over with the beginning of every book, unlike any of the texts usually cited as his source materials. But *The Faerie Queene's* starting over does not indicate poetic failure.

The poem's instability and desire to continually reinvent itself is theoretically queer, acting much like Judith Butler's separation of sex from gender as an identity forming strategy; in the poem, the British subject-self and nation-self, is always in the act of becoming. If both poet and poem must repeat their identity-creating acts, then invention and improvisation, not mimesis, are *The Faerie Queene's* most prominent features. After all, "the generall end [of *The Faerie Queene*] therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline" (Spenser, 715).

This "person" then may be sexed-male or sexed-female, but will learn throughout the poem how to performatively articulate British identity as it learns to perform its own identity. The proliferation of sixteenth-century physiological texts presents a valuable base for understanding the becoming individual and national identities posited in *The Faerie Queeen's* Book III and Book V. Reading these books alongside *A View of the Present State of Ireland* demonstrates the socio-political problem inherent in *The Faeire Queene's* textual body as

Spenser seeks to conflate and critique the sexed-body's performances in establishing a consistent British identity.

The Faerie Queene's Book III creation of Britomart and its retelling Ovid's tale of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus is an excellent illustration of the textual-body's elasticity and Spenser's understanding of identity formation within the paradoxical correlative of the physical body's private parts becoming more public. Jenny C. Mann has written that the "scholarly conversation in the history of science and gender studies has led literary critics to read certain 'hermaphroditical' poems and plays— texts that thematize transvestism or cross-gendered behavior alongside medical texts about the hermaphrodite, presenting both kinds of texts as part of the same social discourse of sexuality and the body" (67).

"Spenser," as John Quitsland notes, "was an erudite poet without Ariosto's gifts as an entertainer, and a courtier ambivalent about courtliness; in both parts of his life doubleness is inescapable, and analogous to the 'redoubling' fundamental to [Judith] Butler's account of gender" (33). The unsexed-body of the poem is made through its malleability and infinite performances. Spenserian scholars have consistently demonstrated a need to ground Spenser's gender-performative and identity-forming repetitions in terms yielding static identifications, using the modern term "hermaphrodite" as way into gender and identity problems in *The Faerie Queene*. But the modern usage, with its focus on the body's genitalia, exhibits language's deficiency in sufficiently encompassing identity. For Spenser, the term would have had multiple and fluid resonances between the hermaphroditic body and the hermaphroditic psychology.

The Legend of Chastity, then, is problematic from its title plate as the very word "chastity" is linked with "Britomartis." The distance between physical and psychological chastity is both non-existent and infinitely large as Britomart is sexed-female, but problematic in

her performance because she is introduced and will remain sexed, but multi-gendered in a perpetual state of becoming. Kathryn Schwarz's notion that in "*The Faerie Queen,* meeting the same partner in battle and in bed– never an easy transition– is a possibility that does a good deal of imaginative work," is particularly useful here because, like Mann, the argument opens a space for the imagination to work both within the text and as a symptom of Spenser's cultural context Schwarz, 143).

Book III narratively introduces Britomart from afar as Arthur and Guyon are traveling together when "They spide a knight, that towards pricked fayre, / And *him* beside an aged Squire there rode" (III, i, 4, Emphasis Mine). Spenser's patterning strangers and others as immediate threats is a strategy for introducing new characters established in Books I and II. Guyon's response, though uncalculated, is consistent to the established knightly image as well as the narrative's need for such action. Guyon's meeting the knight focuses attention on the impact moment: "They beene ymett, and both theyr points arriu'd, / But *Guyon* droue so furious and fell...Nathelesse it bore his foe not from *his* sell...But *Guyon* selfe, ere well he was aware, / Nigh a speares length behind his crouper fell" (III, i, 6). The pronouns "him" and "his" are consistent with the point of view's assumption that Guyon's foe is sexed-male, yet complicating because Spenser has already introduced Britomart's name on the title plate.

Focusing attention in the negative space of Guyon's dishonor, "For neuer yet, sith warlike armes he bore...He fownd him self dishonored so sore" (III, i, 7), draws the gaze closer to the unnamed foe. Linda Gregerson argues that "in the ceremonial beginning" of Book III "Britomart wins her narrative place from each of her heroic predecessors in turn: from Guyon...and from Redcrosse" (9). While this argument is tenable, Gregerson's continued note that "by means of an orderly succession...the mantle of presiding exemplum passes from

Holiness to Temperance to Chastity, whose virtue, and whose adventures will govern the third book" displaces Britomart's agency in "winning" her narrative place (9). The follow-up statement suggests Britomart's accession to that narrative gaze is predestined. The above suggestion that Spenser knows who the stranger-knight is accords with Gregerson's follow-up and reveals the "orderly succession" and Britomart's "winning" her narrative place must both be present so the textual-body can again begin reconstructing its identity. Spenser's calling attention to the poem as allegory alongside the poem's narrative structure combine in the imagination so the "orderly succession" and Britomart's own agency work fluidly to create a sexed-female protagonist who overtakes not only Guyon, but also the reader in "her" masculine-gendered performance.

Spenser switches to "her" only after revealing "That of a single damzell thou [Guyon] wert mett / On equall plaine, and there so hard beset; / Euen the famous *Britomart* it was" (III, i, 8), in an attempt to correctly identify a Britomart already resisting firmly identifying language. Britomart's identity is never hidden from the reader, the writer, or her character colleagues; rather she identifies how she must in order to survive any given moment within the poem's narrative. Britomart's introduction also includes the note that she "seemd to couch vnder his shield three-square" (III, i, 4). A.C. Hamilton's gloss on this line cites Upton in 1758 who wrote that the shield three-square is "like the shield of our English kings: for Britomart is a British Princess" (FQ, 289). "Britishness," then, is imbued into the figure to be revealed as Britomart. Thus, whatever Britomart does or does not do in constructing and reconstructing her identity from this point on is imaginatively linked with the conception of "Britishness" in regard to the singular self (reader, writer, or Britomart) and the national identity created from these individual selves. The poem supports this reading at Book III's beginning in "At last as through an open

plain they [Arthur and Guyon] yode, / They spide a knight..." (III, i, 4). Spenser's choice "At last" presents a narrative arrival announcing that not only have Arthur and Guyon reached a moment of supreme importance, but also the writer and reader. Hamilton is again useful here in his glossing " Euen the famous *Britomart* it was" (III, i, 8) where he argues the line is "echoing "The famous Britain Prince" (III, i, 1) to indicate her role as the female Arthur" (290). "Her name," Hamilton continues, "suggests Brito-Mart (Mars), the martial Britoness. Hence she is called 'the Britonesse' at Book III, i, 58.5 (a word apparently coined by Spenser. Britain is to Britomart as Britomart is to Britain" (FQ, 290).

Spenser is guiding the narrative and readerly gaze away from Arthur and Guyon toward Britomart. Lauren Silberman's remark that "the story of the Hermaphrodite functions particularly well as an alternative subtext in Book III because it is a myth of sexual identity and gender formation," while glued to the word "hermaphrodite" poses an interesting possibility in Britomart's power to make herself and this "making" becomes central to forging a British individual and national identity (50). Book III presents Arthur, "The famous Briton Prince" as the first four words in canto i stanza 1. Yet neither canto i's argument or Book III's proem mention him at all: "*Guyon encountreth Britomart, / Fayre Florimell is chaced: / Duessaes traines and Malecastaes / champions are defaced"* (III, i, Argument). Silberman's note becomes increasingly interesting in this light because Arthur is himself a myth of identity formation. Guyon's appearance in the argument displaces the narrative need for Arthur, yet the conscious need for him remains. Evidence for this appears when "seeing good *Sir Guyon*, deare besought / The Prince of grace [Arthur], to let him ronne that turn" (III, i, 5). Arthur as identity myth cannot fight Britomart as identity myth and Guyon serves as an interlocutor in the poem's

conversation. Guyon negotiates the turn away from Arthur's mythishness as the poem replaces it with Britomart's.

A return to the letter to Raleigh is needed here because Spenser admits he "chose the historye of King Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many mens former workes, and also furthest from the daunger of enuy, and suspition at the present time" (175). Invoking the "present time" signals Spenser's contextual awareness and exposing his need to put Arthur to bed. Philip Schwyzer follows Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan and Oliver Padel in noting "the sixteenth-century Welsh chronicler Elis Gruffydd asserted that the English were more interested than the Welsh in Arthur" (20). Schwyzer interprets Gruffydd's assertion saying, "thus, it seems, no one "really" believed that Arthur would return—but everyone believed that someone believed it. Arthur's second coming was, almost by definition, the faith of the other" (20).

Susanne Scholz has articulated a difference between the physical notion of chastity and the psychological aspects and effects of chastity in early modern British culture that reasserts common disparity between Elizabeth's body and the image she creates and perpetuates in her contextual cultural climate. Thus, Elizabeth, like Britomart, is her own other. Scholz, like Mann, turns to early modern medical texts demonstrating that physicians had not yet found a physical reason for the blood equated with virginity upon first penetration of the sexed-female body. This allows the psychological aspect of chastity and virginity to become symbols of self and nation because the body is physically and psychologically permeable. Elizabeth's body is, of course, problematic for the British nation, as it is the key to dynastic succession. Yet, Scholz astutely notes that, "while in earlier years the Queen had been pressured to marry and provide an heir at almost any cost, the political climate was changing under the weight of the anti-Protestant

hostilities on the continent." Thus, "there seemed to be a feeling that however great the dangers of an unsettled succession might be, it was still preferable to Catholic domination of the country" (84).

Spenser complicates his own cultural context as Book III's introduction to Britomart as "Britishness" gives way to testing and reformulating "Britishness" in Book V. Spenser's position in Ireland produces the need to separate British from Irish, yet sex and gender complicate this task because Spenser perceives the national divide to be sexed and gendered. As Hadfield and Maley note, Spenser cannot completely turn away from Ireland or England as identity-forming concerns and critiques within the text:

> Willy [to Andrew]: You say Spenser is writing about Ireland even when he is not. My argument would be that he is writing about England even when he is not. But this approach—the text says what it does not say— is another contextual impasse, another way of not reading, which is why I feel the revenge of the textual scholar has proven timely" (21).

In *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, Spenser's Irenaeus notes that for the Irish, "the sword was never yet out of their hand, but when they are weary of warres, and brought down to extreme wretchednesse, then they creepe a little perhaps and sue for grace, till they have gotten new breath and recovered their strength again" (21). The passage is complicated considering the Irish people described here are correlative to Artegall's situation in Radigund's hands. Upon seeing Artegall, Britomart remarks,

> "Ah my deare Lord, what sight is this (quoth she)
> What May-game hath misfortune made of you?
> Where is that dreadful manly looke? where be
> Those mighty palmes, the which ye won't embrew
> in bloud of Kings, and great hoastes to subdew?
> Could ought on earth so wondrous change have wrought,
> As to haue robde you of that manly hew?
> Could so great courage stouped haue to ought?
> Then farewell fleshly force; I see they pride is nought." (V, vii, 40)

Britomart's reaction to Artegall's condition is complicated by the fact that her sexed-female body is also an image of "wondrous change," as she performs both masculine and feminine genders throughout her stay in the poem. Here, Artegall has been wearied of war, defeated, and is the very picture of wretchedness. Britomart must revive him: "Thenceforth she straight into a bowre him brought, / And caused him those vncomely weedes vndight; / ...In which when as she him anew had clad, / She was reuiu'd, and ioyd much in his semblance glad" (V, vii, 41). Artegall is creeping a little and suing for grace, which is granted him by Britomart and only then can he get new breath and recover his strength. But Spenser has positioned Artegall as the future husband of Britomart and help-meet to the production of the British nation. It is interesting to note, though, that Artegall is conveniently absent from this position.

Artegall "accepting well, as he could weete," (V, iv, 51.4) agrees to Radigund's terms in one on one battle. Accepting Radigund's terms places the two on an equal and mutually accepted plane. The text favors neither character based on sex as the fight begins. The battle performance will determine the outcome and Artegall's performance reveals identity weakness as he yields his knightly identity/performance and is lost in his own senses: "when as he discouered had her face, / He saw his senses straunge astonishment" (V, v, 12.2-3). Then "At the sight thereof [Radigund under his blade] his cruell minded heart / Empierced was with pitiful regard, / That his sharpe sword he threw from him apart" (V, v, 13.1-3).

If power is fluid, as Foucault posits, and sex and gender are historically linked to power, then "degendering" is necessarily regenerative because gender, like power, cannot be destroyed, only reconfigured. Silberman's note that "Spenser emphasizes improvisation as a principle both of individual self-fashioning and of narrative" is helpful here because Artegall is not able to

improvise (21). Yet many scholars read Merlin's prophecy as a patriarchally reinforcing caveat in this situation.

Merlin's prophecy, however, doesn't impede Britomart's ability to improvise, nor does the prophecy denigrate Britomart's self-agency or identity formation because it never specifies that she will remain safe. Merlin never tells Britomart how to proceed in her quest or how the adventure will allow her to eventually identify as the one from whose

> "wombe a famous Progenee
> Shall spring, out of the ancient Troian blood,
> which shall revive the sleeping memoree
> Of those same antique Peres, the heauens brood," (III, iii, 22.5-9)

and this brood, Merlin goes on to say will include "Renowmed kings, and sacred Emperours...Braue Captains, and most mighty warriours" (III, iii, 23.1-3). Merlin, rather curiously, also notes that Britomart must "submit [her] wayes vnto his [Artegall's] will, / And doe by all dew means thy destiny fulfill" (III, iii, 24.8-9). Scholars often read this moment like the moment when Britomart "changing all that forme of common weale, / The liberty of women did repeal" (V, vii, 42.4-5) as an instance of patriarchal reordering or re-empowering masculine identity and its place in the social hierarchy. But Britomart's displacing Arthur as the model of British identity exposes that Elizabethan England's political culture was far from univocal; a fundamental point about Elizabethan England that remains insufficiently appreciated by literary scholars (Montrose, 938).

Spenser, the poem, and the reader must trust and rely upon Britomart's continually recreated multi-gendered performances to navigate the poem. Trusting the text, then, is also learning to trust and work within context. Britomart's negotiating the literal poem-text and her multiple contexts within the poem-text provide an opportunity for the individual subject-self

within the national-self and visa-versa to identify as a continually-becoming "British" fueled by the power inherent in improvisational self performance.

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Love, Revenge, and the Mess in Between in *Romeo and Juliet*

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The greatest and most tragic love stories of all time often portray the relationship between star-crossed lovers, which is seemingly apparent in *Romeo and Juliet*. However, the multifaceted interaction between Tybalt and Romeo is also of note. Notions of Courtly Love and the chivalric code help readers and viewers interpret Romeo's actions concerning both Juliet and Tybalt throughout the entire play. As in *Romeo and Juliet,* Courtly Love can also be traced in *Two Noble Kinsman, Two Gentleman of Verona*, and *Troilus and Cressida.* I will be exploring the driving forces of Courtly Love and chivalry in *Romeo and Juliet*, and how we see them affect Romeo.

Although Tybalt loathes Romeo from the beginning and challenges him against Capulet's wishes, Romeo refuses to fight Tybalt. Romeo does not refuse to fight Tybalt because of cowardice, but because his love for Juliet prevents him from harming her kinsman. In this instance, we see aspects of Courtly Love and chivalry affect Romeo's actions; he could not harm Tybalt without breaking his pledge to Juliet. The temperamental Tybalt, therefore, is the tool Shakespeare uses to contrast the roles of Courtly Love and chivalry. The best example of how Shakespeare uses Tybalt to contrast the roles of the two codes is when Tybalt cuts short Romeo's camaraderie with Mercutio, which is arguably a bond stronger than any other in the play. Chivalric duty and Courtly Love come into conflict when Romeo is forced to choose between upholding the rules of Courtly Love and his vow to Juliet, and casting aside all else to follow the chivalric code to avenge the death of a friend, thus seeking Tybalt's demise in retribution for Mercutio's death. The role of Courtly Love and the chivalric code in the play helps develop our

understanding of the fine line between love and revenge, and helps us to determine the significance of Romeo's decision to avenge Mercutio despite his declaration to Tybalt that "[I] love thee better than thou canst devise" (3.1.70). Analyzing Romeo's actions in terms of the codes of Courtly Love and chivalry changes our perspective on how much value Romeo places on his love for Mercutio in comparison with his true love for Juliet, as well as alters our interpretation of the themes of love and revenge in the play. More specifically, we will examine how Romeo chooses chivalric duty over Courtly Love, or more simplistically, revenge over love.

The relationship between these codes and themes can also be traced in the various film adaptations. Franco Zeffirelli's Romeo and Juliet (1968) and Baz Luhrmann's Romeo + Juliet (1996) are two examples which portray the impetus behind the enmity between Tybalt and Romeo in different lights. However, Courtly Love, chivalry, and themes of love and revenge continue to bind Tybalt and Romeo despite the variations on the catalyst which leads to Tybalt's demise. An analysis of the adaptations of the play and Romeo's actions, specifically, can lead us to a better understanding of the complexity of Romeo's situation and helps us determine what conclusions we can draw about his relationship with Juliet.

Since Romeo is bound to Juliet and the code of Courtly Love, I will provide a brief overview of the rules of Courtly Love. Andreas Capellanus outlines the "Rules of Courtly Love" in his *De arte honeste amandi, The Art of Courtly Love* written between 1174 and 1186, which is considered the foundation for the theory of Courtly Love. All 31 rules Capellanus lists concern the behavior and characteristics of a lover. While many of the 31 rules are applicable to *Romeo and Juliet*, there are three specific rules that are most central to my paper: "A new love puts flight to an old one," "A true lover is constantly and without intermission possessed by the

thought of his beloved," and, "Every act of a lover ends in the thought of his beloved" (Capellanus 41). We will examine these three rules through examples in the play.

Since the most prominent example of Courtly Love exists between Romeo and Juliet, it is useful for us to first examine how it affects their relationship. When we first meet Romeo, he is pining after Rosaline, who has rejected him. Romeo acts depressed and dejected, which worries Lord Montague. In an attempt to spur Romeo out of this melancholic state, Benvolio convinces Romeo to attend the Capulet's ball although uninvited. When Romeo meets Juliet, she very quickly and thoroughly chases all thought of Rosaline from Romeo's mind. Romeo becomes enamored of her, and in keeping with the first of Capellanus' three rules of Courtly Love we are focusing on, "A new love puts flight to an old one". From this point Romeo strives to fulfill Juliet's every wish and desire, and she becomes his top priority. During the balcony scene, Juliet asks, "Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?" He appropriately responds, "Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike" (2.2.63-64). Romeo is consumed with her.

We have briefly discussed how Courtly Love impacts Romeo's relationship with Juliet but we have yet to establish how it affects the interaction between Romeo and Tybalt. As a kinsman of Juliet, Romeo cannot harm Tybalt without causing harm to her in turn, and breaking the rules of Courtly Love. We see this in the play when Romeo acts in accordance with the rules of Courtly Love and extends a chivalric gesture when he refuses to accept Tybalt's challenge, stating,

> I do protest I never injured thee
> But love thee better than thou canst devise
> Till thou shalt know the reason of my love
> And so, good Capulet, which name I tender

As dearly as mine own, be satisfied. (3.1.69-73)

After Mercutio's death, Romeo's claim is put to the test as Tybalt's actions force Romeo to make the choice between taking revenge for the slaying of a dear friend, and allowing the love and forgiveness due to a kinsman to offset the atrocity. For the first time, we see Romeo act rashly and kill Tybalt, wh he no longer considers a kinsman but an enemy. Furthermore, we see him fight and slay Tybalt without having one single thought of his beloved, Juliet. Romeo thus breaks two of the three rules of Courtly Love we considered. Because of Romeo's failure to consider the impact of his actions will have on Juliet, we can infer that the chivalric duty of avenging a wrongfully slain comrade outweighs the duty he owes to Juliet as bound by the rules of Courtly Love.

In Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet,* we see Courtly Love and chivalry impact Romeo slightly differently. Romeo and Juliet's relationship is very close to the relationship represented in the text. Tybalt is also little changed from the character Shakespeare crafted: dignified and prideful, he harbors the same ill will toward Romeo expressed in the play. Tybalt considers Romeo a villain and his unwelcome presence at the Capulet feast an unforgivable intrusion, and he refuses to tolerate his presence: "What, dares the slave come hither covered with an antic face to fleer and scorn at our solemnity?" (Zeffirelli). Lord Capulet chastises him: "I would not for the wealth of all this town here in my house do him disparagement. Therefore, have patience. Take no note of him" (Zeffirelli)**.** Unlike in the play, Tybalt is forbidden to challenge Romeo, but during their chance encounter in the plaza, Tybalt confronts Romeo despite Lord Capulet's warning**:**

TYBALT. Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford no better term than this: thou art a villain.

ROMEO. Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee doth much excuse the appertaining rage to such a greeting. Villain am I none. Therefore farewell. I see thou knowest me not.

TYBALT. Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries that thou hast done me. Therefore turn and draw. (Zeffirelli)

Romeo attempts to keep the peace by refusing to fight for the same reasons stated in the play—his marriage to Juliet literally makes Tybalt his kinsman, therefore Romeo owes him the love and respect due to a kinsman**.** So far, Romeo adheres to the rules of Courtly Love. When Romeo refuses to fight, Mercutio challenges Tybalt to a dual in Romeo's stead, the tone of which differs from the play. Jennifer Martin is correct in her assessment of the duel between Tybalt and Mercutio in the Zeffirelli version; the fight more resembles playful bantering as the two express mutual admiration and respect for each other (43). After Mercutio expires, Romeo's rage and sudden desire for revenge overshadow his professed love for his new Capulet kinsmen. The rules of Courtly Love would require Romeo to forgive Tybalt as his wife's cousin and his kinsman, and perhaps he could have had Romeo considered Mercutio's death an accident**.** Romeo knows that Mercutio was wounded fighting on his behalf:

My very dear friend, hath got this mortal hurt
In my behalf. My reputation stained
With Tybalt's slander—Tybalt, that an hour
Hath been my cousin! O sweet Juliet,
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate
And in my temper softened valor's steel. (3.1.115-120)

Romeo realizes that it was his love for Juliet that prevented him from fighting Tybalt and caused Mercutio's death. Ruth Nevo argues that it is this realization that leads to Romeo's own submission to violence (245); Romeo breaks the code of Courtly Love as all thoughts of Juliet leave his mind while he steels himself to kill Tybalt. Furthermore**,** no playfulness exists in the fight between Tybalt and Romeo, because Romeo is fulfilling his chivalric duty in the service of a friend. Again, no thoughts of Juliet consume Romeo while he fights Tybalt and the latter falls, therefore chivalric duty overrules Courtly Love for a second time. There is a question, however, of Romeo's need to kill Tybalt in this instance. Because Tybalt is portrayed as a more sympathetic character and as Martin pointed out, Mercutio's death more an accident than a murder, we perhaps question Romeo's decision to choose chivalric duty over Courtly Love and revenge over love. This revelation challenges our perception of who Romeo is.

The biggest triumph of chivalric duty over Courtly Love in the three versions exists in Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996). Clare Danes' portrayal of Juliet is much more forward and playful than Olivia Hussey's performance in Zeffirelli's adaptation. On the other hand, Paris has more of a presence and we temporarily label him as the competition for being Lady Capulet's favorite for Juliet's future husband. The presence of a viable competitor places Romeo and Juliet's first meeting more in the spotlight, during which their physical intimacy heightens more quickly than in either the text or the Zeffirelli film. In this adaptation, every aspect seems to be more intense and progress faster than in the other versions. We can partially attribute this to Luhrmann's alteration of Tybalt's character from a dedicated Capulet family member to a psychotic gun-slinger always in search of an adrenaline rush. Tybalt is unbelievably territorial and restless which adds tension to every situation, and even his devil costume at the Capulet ball seems to reflect his inner-turmoil and unquenchable bloodlust. When Tybalt spots Romeo, who

is symbolically dressed as a knight, he immediately tells Lord Capulet, I'll not endure him." Capulet, however, is well aware of the consequences of such a brawl taking place in his own home and orders that "He shall be endured" (Luhrmann). Lord Capulet will not allow Tybalt to "make a mutiny" among his guests even if Tybalt thinks "tis' a shame" (Luhrmann). This act of restraining only angers Tybalt more and increases his desire for revenge for the inability to "strike him dead," at the time. Mercutio caused more of a disturbance at the Capulet ball than Romeo yet Tybalt still seeks out Romeo. As Tybalt assaults Romeo while the latter professes his love for his new kinsman, Romeo in turn becomes victimized.

Returning to Courtly Love and chivalry, up until Mercutio's death, Romeo has upheld every aspect of both Courtly Love and chivalry. Even when Tybalt is beating him to a pulp, Romeo still maintains that he loves Tybalt as a kinsman, which only seems to infuriate Tybalt more. It is when fiery Mercutio steps in to fight for Romeo that the situation escalates. Jerry Weinberger suggests that in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Mercutio drew first and Tybalt killed him in a fair fight, meaning Romeo acted out of revenge for the aggressor's death (358). However, in *Romeo + Juliet* (1996), although Tybalt and Mercutio's initial interaction at Verona Beach is a brawl, once Romeo intervenes it is less a fight than a clear-cut murder. Tybalt stabs Mercutio with a shard of glass after Mercutio appears to yield, replacing the accidental aspect of the assault with that of a murder. Romeo forgets about Juliet in favor of Mercutio, whose bitter farewell inspires Romeo's hot-blooded pursuit of Tybalt ending in a car-wrecking assault. Romeo is very vulnerable, and his rage and grief overwhelm him and he kills Tybalt in the heat of the moment with the Prince of Cats' own pistol. The long camera shot that follows shows Romeo's face with "a sense of bewilderment, regret, and disillusionment" (Martin 44). It is in this moment that Juliet's face flashes in Romeo's mind and he realizes the gravity of his actions. At

this point, Romeo has broken the rule of Courtly Love concerning "A true lover [being] constantly and without intermission possessed by the thought of his beloved" (Capellanus 41). In this adaptation, there is substantial evidence that Romeo's slaying of Tybalt does "end in the thought of his beloved," because her face flashes in his mind. Even if Romeo does not break the third law of Courtly Love we considered, Romeo still chooses to uphold his chivalric duty to avenge Mercutio, regardless of Tybalt's connection to Juliet, and fails to consider how his death would impact her.

By reading *Romeo and Juliet* and viewing Zeffirelli and Luhrmann's films through the lens of Courtly Love and the chivalric code, we can more easily interpret Romeo's actions and their deeper meaning and significance. Despite the extreme differences in the Tybalt character, the foundation of the Romeo-Tybalt relationship and interaction is still very much based in revenge despite the variation on catalysts (the circumstances of Mercutio's death) between Shakespeare and Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet,* Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996). Throughout the play and the two adaptations, the one constant is that Romeo chooses revenge over love in every case, making us consider the possibility that Romeo values Mercutio more than Juliet. This challenges the perception that *Romeo and Juliet* is first and foremost, a love story.

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"The Inversion of Gender Roles: Elizabeth I and the Female Characters in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*"

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Like many of Shakespeare's plays, *Twelfth Night* was written for the people of the time. Queen Elizabeth was the first woman on the throne for a significant period and still managed to maintain her independence without breaking under the pressure that the men of the period forced upon her. Few literary critics recognize the powerful impact that Elizabeth had on the literature of her era. Many critics focus on the obviously social and gender criticisms of the text, which some argue is only an internalization of current cultural anxieties. Few focus on the historical context in which the play was written and whom it was written for.

Shakespeare created the female characters of *Twelfth Night* as reflections of the qualities of Elizabeth that are to be admired and applauded in an era of gender and class bias. When looking at the life and accomplishments of Queen Elizabeth and analyzing the lives and accomplishments of Olivia and Maria, comparisons are readily obvious between the fictional characters of *Twelfth Night* and the very real Queen of England. Analyzing the public speeches and private poetry of Queen Elizabeth and comparing them to the speeches and soliloquies of Viola it becomes quite clear that both women know how to use their wit and intelligence to communicate the messages that they believe the men in their environment want to hear. Likewise, in comparing the behaviors of Maria and Olivia to Elizabeth, there seem to be too many coincidences to believe that Shakespeare wasn't using Elizabeth as a model for his female characters in *Twelfth Night.*

Elizabeth was constantly harassed to get married and have children to provide for the succession of the crown after her death. Like Elizabeth, Olivia resists marriage and maintains her position as head of the household. Each of the women were placed into their positions of authority after the deaths of their fathers and brothers. Elizabeth also managed to rise out of a sea of male political power and transform into an authority figure in her own right through her intellect and wit. Likewise, Maria rises above her social status as an employee to become the leader of a practical joke in which all of the other participants are male. Finally, Elizabeth adopted a masculine identity to cloak her femininity when the occasion warranted it, especially when speaking in public arenas. Viola also creates a male persona to protect her feminine identity when she is thrust into a new and unfamiliar environment.

Queen Elizabeth I, reigning monarch in England from 1558-1603, is notably one of the most independent women in history. She was also well known for her writing, rhetoric, and her gift as a role-player within her own political sphere as well as her refusal to marry. The "Virgin Queen," Elizabeth played many roles in her life that enabled her to become as close to perfect as a ruler can be, including donning a masculine identity to cloak her femininity when the occasion warranted such measures. A play in which women have the power and the men are passive, *Twelfth Night* reflects nearly every aspect of the queen's life, from her refusal to marry to her family, and from her attainment of power to the androgynous persona that Elizabeth adopts.

Throughout her life, Elizabeth was in the spotlight in the political sphere. Surrounded by men, she knew how to take charge and maintain her independence without upsetting the delicate balance of the social order. Unlike the role Elizabeth adopts for herself, the women in the play all fulfill their expected Elizabethan duty as women and marry respectably. Shakespeare uses

this play to satisfy the desires and needs of the people of England who needed to feel secure in their lives after their Queen's reign ended.

The majority of critics who discuss *Twelfth Night* focus on the struggle between the two different social classes—the nobles or gentry and the working class—as well as gender conflict. Critic Nancy Lindheim explores the probability that most critiques of the text are little more than current cultural anxieties that have been projected onto Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night,* including "underlining subtexts of unfulfilled homosexual longing and unappeasable class conflict" (Lindheim 679). Throughout her criticism of the play, Lindheim continues to disprove current societal beliefs that Shakespeare was detailing expected social and gender roles of the Elizabethan era. Few critics look, like Lindheim, beyond class and gender conflict to a deeper portrayal of the Elizabethan era such as the commonalities of Elizabeth I and Shakespeare's characters.

Leah Marcus focuses on the blending of female bodies with male spirits in her article "Shakespeare's Comic Heroines, Elizabeth I, and the Political Uses of Androgyny." She claims that "a number of Shakespearean plays do seem to…play with questions of sexual identity in ways that set the male actor apart from his female role" (Marcus 135). She focuses her writing on the androgynous characteristics of both Elizabeth I and the main female roles in Shakespeare's comedies. Elizabeth successfully uses the theory of the king's two bodies in her rhetoric. That is, she adopted the appearance of being both a king and a queen. Marcus ends her argument by claiming that "Queen Elizabeth's self portrayal as both man and woman, a ruler dressed as a woman but acting with the force and leadership of a man, perpetuated a complex of attributes associated with misrule and disorder" (Marcus 147).

Both Marcus and Lindheim follow the belief that historical, cultural, and social contexts are important in understanding a text. The knowledge of the era in which the text was written strengthens the understanding of the reader in regards to that text, in this case a play called *Twelfth Night.* Stephen Greenblatt claims in the introduction to "The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance," that, "one hopes to find, through historical research, a stable core of meaning within the text, a core that unites disparate and even contradictory parts into an organic whole," (Greenblatt 2253). Using Greenblatt's ideology in understanding a text, it is vitally important to analyze every part of the play no matter how small and insignificant something may seem. Knowing the time period of the play and the historical and political contexts of the text are the first major factors in using the New Historicism form of criticism.

New historicists tend to search for forms of dominant power within a text and how it is utilized throughout. These critics tend to look for signs of struggle within the text that display the group in power and the group that is controlled. This idea usually takes the form of two different types of "voices" within the text called the hegemonic and the subaltern or the dominant and the weak respectively. This idea can also be demonstrated through the analysis of the main plotline and a subplot that permeates the text. Traditionally, the hegemonic voices in the play belong to those of the male upper class while the feminine voices become the subaltern voices. Because there is a switch in the female roles in *Twelfth Night*, the women have more power than they would traditionally while the men are pawns in the ambitions of the women to survive on their own terms.

The women in the play are the characters who create the action and make the plot progress in a forward manner. While they are the instigators of all of the major action in *Twelfth Night*, the men take a less aggressive role. They sit back and while they inadvertently place

pressure on the women, the men are not in the spotlight except as secondary characters. In much the same way, Elizabeth was in the spotlight throughout her entire reign and the men were only present to act as a form of pressure for her to do what they wished. In both situations, the women resist and get their own way regardless of the men's opinions on the matter.

A character analysis of Viola, Olivia, and Maria results in a deeper understanding of the depth of character that Queen Elizabeth I displays. William Shakespeare's level of respect for Elizabeth is shown in this play through his demonstration of Elizabeth's exceptional ability to invert gender roles and order and still not destabilize the social structure with her brilliant use of language and identity: switching from masculine to feminine. Elizabeth is able to escape the socially enforced gender roles because of her exceptional brilliance while Olivia, Maria, and Viola aren't capable of escaping from the rigid structure and must eventually follow gender norms and marry.

Elizabeth's birth right to the throne was consistently contested as a result of the ill favor that her father, Henry VIII, brought upon the throne during his reign. Many viewed his marriage to Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn as bigamy because they didn't recognize the self-granted divorce of Henry and his first wife Catherine. As a result, Elizabeth was not viewed as eligible for the throne. She would constantly fight against the religious, legal, and political consequences surrounding her birth for her entire reign (Montrose 12).

Elizabeth was forced to walk a fine line between two opposing factions the entire duration of her reign as Queen. Religiously she forged a delicate balance between Catholicism and Protestantism, legally she was not the only royal-blooded heir to the throne (many believed her cousin Mary Stuart should have inherited the title), and politically Elizabeth was forced to create a balance between her own desires and needs and those of everyone else. As a result,

Elizabeth led a double life and though publicly she was a well-made authority figure who called herself "King" and "Prince," privately Elizabeth was just like any other woman who flirted and entertained herself in nearly every conceivable way.

Elizabeth's public speeches in front of the people of England and the Parliament display a certain level of her command of language and rhetoric in conjunction with her self-assigned masculine identity and persona. In her "Speech to the House of Commons, January 28, 1563," Elizabeth responds to the Parliament, more specifically the House of Commons, who raised the matter of their concern over her single state and the end of the Tudor succession of the throne. Elizabeth responds in an interestingly androgynous way (Eliade 9).

She begins her reply to the House of Commons by stating that, though she is a woman, she is still the ruler of the country and her womanly attributes mean nothing in light of that fact. She says, "The weight and greatness of this matter [marriage and children] might cause in me, being a woman wanting both wit and memory…a thing appropriate to my sex. But yet the princely seat and kingly throne wherein God hath constituted me, maketh these two causes to seem little in mine eyes" (Greenblatt, Abrams 690). In one sentence, she claims the female body she was given and acknowledges the limitations of her feminine characteristics and in the next, she claims that her female body means nothing and she assumes masculine authority over the people she is addressing.

Perhaps Elizabeth's most well-known speech is simply titled, "Speech to the Troops at Tilbury." In 1588, there was an anticipated invasion of the Spanish Armada sent by Philip II who was married to former Queen Mary I. Elizabeth appeared in front of her troops in full armor and claimed that she was "resolved in the midst and heat of the battle to live and die amongst you all. I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart

and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too" (Greenblatt, Abrams 700). The strength required to fight beside and die with her troops evokes a strong paternal and masculine quality while the evocation of a "weak and feeble woman" balances the identity of the Queen. Elizabeth rallied her troops during a time of great need, both by her physical presentation of her masculine side with the wearing of full armor and willingness to die with her men and by her strong mental presentation as a woman who is more than worthy to be named a king of England.

These qualities that Elizabeth portrayed throughout her reign were strangely artistic in the ability of the Queen to evoke specific images that she wanted her people to see at the most opportune moments. Similarly, Shakespeare used the imagery of the stage to physically manifest the artistic qualities that Elizabeth had. Throughout *Twelfth Night,* there are only three female characters in the entire plot and each has some portion of the Elizabethan characteristics. The characters Viola, Olivia, and Maria embody the important characteristics of Queen Elizabeth's life; they *are* the Elizabeth of Illyria. Shakespeare uses his opportunity to satisfy the people of England in a way that their Queen could not or would not. They wanted their Queen to marry and give birth, ensuring the line of succession through the Tudor family. Shakespeare recognized this desire in the people of England and set out to placate them in this one small way. Olivia, a countess in Illyria, most resembles the pre-Queen Elizabeth.

The privileges of wealth and social class displayed by Olivia were much like those that the Queen herself was given as she grew up before she was put on the throne of England. Eventually, both women become the heads of their own households despite gender bias that would have persevered in most cases to allow close male relatives to become the caretakers of less able female relations.

Both women, too, have a disregard for men and marriage. The first time Olivia is mentioned in the play, Viola is questioning the man who saved her about the country in which she has landed: Olivia is the love interest of the Duke of Illyria. The captain describes the situation that Viola finds herself thrust into:

> A virtuous maid, the daughter of a count
> That died some twelvemonth since, then leaving her
> In the protection of his son, her brother
> Who shortly also died; for whose dear love,
> They say, she hath abjured the sight
> And company of men. (1.2.36-41)

Olivia, a count's daughter, has lost both her father and her brother—her protectors—to death. It is assumed then that she has no desire to marry because she loved her family so much. Interestingly, Elizabeth, too, lost her father and her brother, to both of whom she was very close. Elizabeth also refused to marry—she played the flirting game and seemed to pretend to pursue an advantageous match for her country. Many literary critics and biographers claim that part of the reason that Elizabeth never married was because of the "love," i.e. multiple marriages and executions, her father had for his many wives.

Other critics claim that it is because Elizabeth was worried about her loss of power to a husband that she never married. Had she married, the credit for her image and policies would have gone to the man of the house (her husband) rather than be attributed to the Queen who created them. Olivia also seems to have an aversion to losing power in her own household. Her kinsman, Sir Toby, claims of her that "She'll not match above her degree, neither in estate, years, nor wit; I have heard her swear't" (1.3.102-104). Olivia refuses to marry a strongly masculine

man because she refuses to lose the power of her title. This is only one of the many types of power that Olivia, especially as a woman, holds throughout the play.

Olivia is the unattainable—she is the woman in the play that nearly every man wants to marry; in fact, there are three who wish to marry her. The highest ranking in terms of social class, the Duke, is the only one who claims to love her, while the other two men, Sir Andrew and Malvolio, only look at marriage to Olivia as a means to attain for the prestige and wealth that her position can offer. Olivia cannot marry the Duke because she does not love him and he is too masculine for her. He is not in love with Olivia as evidenced by her final rejection of him. As soon as the Duke finds out that his servant Cesario is really a young woman named Viola, he throws caution to the wind and commands a marriage. Likewise Elizabeth cannot be sure of who she can or cannot trust. Foreign royals wish to marry her to expand their own kingdoms and Englishmen wish to marry her to become king and ruler.

The only safe outlet for both women, it seems is to not marry at all which is an unsatisfying idea to Elizabethan theatre-goers. Shakespeare, then, must come up with a way to keep the balance of the characters and the desires of the crowd. His solution is simple, but can only be accomplished through a complex means. Throughout the play, Viola mourns the loss of her twin brother, Sebastian who, it turns out, is not really dead. The twins are alike in many ways: appearance, speech, etc. and through the androgyny of Viola, it becomes obvious that Sebastian is an androgynous figure, as well. They are so alike in appearance that a disguised Viola is thought to be Sebastian and Sebastian is thought to be the disguised Viola. Olivia can safely marry Sebastian, not only because she loves him, but because he is the perfect blend between masculinity and the gentle qualities that women are praised for. Marriage, in all of its

complexities and simplicities is the solution that Shakespeare seeks; of course, leaving a woman single at the end of the play will not suffice and so there must be three marriages.

Just as Olivia achieves marriage, Maria, too, acquires a marriage as a reward for the Elizabethan qualities she displays. In her first appearance on stage, Maria seems to have an affection for Olivia's kinsman, Sir Toby. However upon further inspection, she is only looking after her own welfare.

Throughout the play, Maria continues to display her wit and cunning to the male characters of *Twelfth Night*. Both Sir Toby and Sir Andrew become tired of listening to Malvolio's arrogance and they plot to find a way to get rid of him. Their first idea, quickly put aside, is to challenge him to a duel of which Malvolio has no hope of winning. Maria intervenes and sets up a master plan to play a trick on Malvolio to conquer his pride. She tells Sir Toby, "For Monsieur Malvolio, let me alone with him. If I do not gull him into a nayword, and make him a common recreation, do not think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed" (2.3.124-127). She knows that she is intelligent and this is her chance to prove it to the men as well. Though they have some idea from a previous encounter (Act 1, Scene 3), they have not been exposed to her truly devious and ambitious personality. She calls the entire scheme "sport royal" (2.3.160) and truly shows her more devious nature of her character.

Maria understands exactly what it is that Sir Toby wants and needs and she knows how to deliver. She takes charge in a scene of seemingly bumbling fools and becomes the master of the situation. As the first part of the mischievous trick is about to play out, Sir Toby calls Maria his "metal of India"—his own piece of gold (2.5.11-12). Maria's further conniving is shown through her response. After telling the witnesses to hide, she claims, "for I know this letter will make a contemplative idiot of him . . . for here comes the trout that must be caught with tickling"

(2.5.16-20). Toying with Malvolio is simply a game for Maria, she doesn't care about what happens to him; she only wishes to further her own ambitions and there is no sympathy for those who get caught in the cross hairs in the process.

Her mastery of wit and trickery seems to accomplish what she wants; as the trick plays out, she garners the attention of not one or even two, but three men. Sir Toby calls her an "excellent wench" (2.5.105) while another male servant, Fabian, acknowledges her devious mind by saying, "What dish o' poison has she dressed [Malvolio]" (2.5.108). Both Sir Toby and Sir Andrew claim that "I could marry this wench for this device" (2.5.173-174) and be satisfied with no other dowry but more tricks. The scene ends when Sir Toby gives her a new title, "most excellent devil of wit" (2.5.196). After gaining the respect of the men for her wit, deviousness, and willingness to play tricks on others, the men begin to take orders from Maria as she further demonstrates her cutthroat tendencies.

Much as Maria had to rise through the ranks of men to become recognized for her skills in wit, Elizabeth also had to prove to the Parliament and the country that she was capable of doing whatever it took to ensure that she was the better person for the job of sovereign ruler, even when it meant destroying any threat to her power, especially foreign and domestic threats. Both Elizabeth's appearance and rhetoric were important in maintaining the public favor of her countrymen. Similarly, Viola finds that both her appearance and skill with words will be useful to her as she finds her way in a world she is not familiar with.

Viola, a young woman of noble birth, finds herself in a difficult situation. She has been rescued at sea by a captain and it is assumed that her brother is dead. She is without money, family, and anything familiar as the ship she is on finds its home berth in Illyria. Asking about her new environment, she learns that there is a Duke who is in love with a Countess. Viola

makes the decision to serve in the Duke's household, and she asks the captain, "Conceal me what I am, and be my aid . . . present me as an eunuch to him . . . I can sing / And speak to him in many sorts of music . . . shape thou thy silence to my wit" (1.2.53-61). It's interesting that she chooses to be disguised as a eunuch, already attempting to make herself into a more feminine male. It appears as though she knows that she will not be able to pass muster as a regular servant, but must instead appear as a eunuch which is for all intents and purposes a feminized version of a male servant. It is also obvious that she isn't being arrogant when she claims a vast wit.

Viola has managed to use her wit to act the role that she has chosen to such an extent that after merely three days she is already the favored servant of the Duke who proclaims, "Cesario / Thou know'st no less but all. I have unclasped / To thee the book even of my secret soul" (1.4.12-14). She has managed to captivate the Duke so far that he sends Cesario on the important task of wooing Olivia for him. While Viola speaks to the Duke as Cesario, she proves an adept master of language by being able to manipulate the words she uses. When she speaks in asides or soliloquies she reveals her true feminine nature.

The youthful appearance of Cesario does much to garner the attention of Olivia and her household. Her youthful looks seem to persuade Olivia that Cesario is not harmful and Malvolio's opinion only adds to the level of comfort that Olivia feels when she allows Cesario to speak with her. Malvolio claims that the messenger at the gate is, "Not yet old enough for a man nor young enough for a boy; He is very well-favored and he speaks very shrewishly. One would think his mother's milk were scarce out of him" (1.5.151-156). Upon entrance into the house, Viola's mastery of masculine language allows Cesario to compliment Olivia in such a way that she cannot help but to fall in love with him.

As evidenced by the sheer amount of success that Viola has experienced, she is a character of high intelligence and wit. Her own twin brother proclaims about her, "A lady, sir, though it was said she much resembled me, she bore a mind that envy could not but call fair"(2.1.22-27). Further resemblance between the twins is evidenced by the mistaken identity of Sebastian's friend Antonio. Viola reveals,

> He named Sebastian. I my brother know
> Yet living in my glass. Even such and so
> In favor was my brother, and he went
> Still in this fashion, color, ornament,
> For him I imitate. (3.4.364-368)

When the moment of truth arrives, Sebastian's friend, Antonio, is not able to tell the difference between the twins who are dressed, speak, and act in a similar fashion. Sebastian is even confused by the resemblance between himself and the stranger before him, "Do I stand there? I never had a brother" (5.1.221).

Just as Viola found herself in a difficult situation and needed to preserve her position, so too, did Elizabeth. Elizabeth's defense against any challenge of her authority was a mixture of masculine and feminine. In some instances, she appeared in masculine forms of attire and in others she appeared with such an aura of authority that there was no doubt that she was the ruler. To combat any chance of excess masculinity, Elizabeth didn't wholly negate the fact that she was still a woman. In fact, she too used her femininity when it suited her to do so.

Elizabeth was never seriously mistaken as a man, while on the Shakespearean stage Viola would have been played by a young boy. The mistaken identity of Viola is further confused by the idea that a young boy played the part of Viola who as a character was playing the part of a

young man. This complex structure on the stage results in a confusion of just who the character Viola really is. While Elizabeth proclaimed as a woman that she was not really a woman but a prince or a king, Viola as a man proclaimed, "I am not that I play" (1.5.177) and "I am not what I am" (3.1.140). Elizabeth denies her weak and feeble nature as a woman while Viola denies the masculine identity that she has assumed.

Similar also to Viola is the inability to separate their feminine identity with their masculine characteristics. Marcus notes that Elizabeth "was 'king and queen both'" and questions that if this were true, how could she be expected to marry? (Marcus 141). However this problem is not quite so difficult for Viola to overcome. The Duke loves both Cesario and Viola who are in fact the same person. He is not able to separate two halves of the same whole.

The idea of the feminine role being divided into two categories: the angel and the monster, becomes much more important in light of a new historicist reading of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (Gilbert, Gubar 2033). The angel is the woman who does what she is told and stays out of the spotlight by following specified gender roles. Each of the women in this play, however, displays monster qualities by inverting or switching those roles. The men in the play seem to sit back and allow the women to take all of the action. Maria seems to trick Sir Toby into marrying her while Olivia pursues Cesario instead of being pursued and Viola single-mindedly goes after what she wants in the form of the Duke.

The inversion of the hegemonic and subaltern voices along with the gender roles of men and women reinforce the image of Elizabeth as a mixture of the male and female identity. Her success as such shows the stability of the hierarchical structure and the ideal of renewal.

The true feelings of Shakespeare about his belief in Queen Elizabeth's magnificence isn't truly realized and placed center stage until she is compared to his female characters of *Twelfth*

Night. The female characters, Viola, Maria, and Olivia, fail to maintain their independence and a permanent inversion of the hierarchical structure in which their collective voice is prominent in the text. While each of the characters is able to achieve some sense of greatness, they cannot measure up to Elizabeth's permanence. Viola, Maria, and Olivia all have a portion of the qualities that make up Elizabeth's ability to achieve an exalted state and this is why they fail in their quest for magnificence. It is also the reason that Elizabeth succeeds.

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"Sick of Self-Love": Narcissism within the Self and its Debilitating Effects in the Context of Romantic Relationships as Evidenced through the Characters of *Twelfth Night*

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William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is a comedy that presents a series of relationships that are initially thwarted by narcissism. All of the characters display some level of narcissism and this conceit dictates the course of their romantic involvement. Self-love is a component of this romantic love, and it surfaces in these romantic relationships in varying degrees. In an effort to quantify this narcissism, it is best to picture its existence within the framework of a spectrum, showcasing the polarity of selfishness and selflessness. Narcissism certainly can coexist with love, but when it reaches a certain degree, only the beloved or the self can truly be loved. The principal characters in *Twelfth Night* exemplify this range and the effects it threatens to the stability of a romantic relationship.

The play begins with a shipwrecked Viola, unsure of the fate of her twin brother, Sebastian. She consequently disguises herself as a man in order to become a servant to the duke, Orsino. Viola takes on the name Cesario for her male alter-ego. Orsino employs his new servant to woo Olivia, a noblewoman. While Orsino loves Olivia, Olivia finds herself falling in love with Cesario. This series of admiration becomes increasingly complicated with the progression of Viola's interest in Orsino. These three characters are the most actively involved in the tangled web of romantic interaction. Malvolio, Olivia's steward, and Antonio, Sebastian's friend, are the two characters that exemplify the extremes of the spectrum and are isolated from this romantic interaction. Although they love, no one else reciprocates their feelings.

The characters of *Twelfth Night* present an array of narcissistic indulgence. The presence of narcissism, however, does not necessarily imply the disintegration of one's social life; they are not socially crippled by a mere self-interest. Although it is traditionally viewed as a psychological impediment, some degree of self-interest is healthy in a relationship. A spectrum of narcissism is perhaps the best way to properly analyze *Twelfth Night*'s characters in relation to each other and their level of self-interest. At one end of the spectrum resides the traditional view of the socially crippling full-blown narcissism where Malvolio and Orsino begin. At the other end of the spectrum lies Antonio, the only selfless character. Although selflessness is usually hailed as a virtuous trait, this can be equally dangerous to the self as its polar opposite. Olivia and Viola reside close by each other in the middle of the spectrum. These two maintain the healthiest balance between self-interest and selflessness. It is most useful though, to analyze Malvolio and Antonio, the two extremes, to recognize the dangers as well as the surprising merits of their self image. Rather than remaining stagnant, most of the characters fluctuate throughout the play. As they grow and discover, their placement on the spectrum alters.

Theoretical Applications

My analysis of these characters begins with a definition of narcissism told through its psychological applications as presented by Laura Mulvey and W. Keith Campbell. Numerous theories are applicable to this realm of research. Some feminist theory also elaborates upon Freud's theories and delves into how this narcissism functions.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a young, attractive hunter is romantically pursued by Echo, a nymph along with many young virgins. Echo is told by Tiresias, a prophet, that Narcissus will live a long life if he does not ever get the opportunity to know himself. Echo pursues Narcissus

regardless, and he cruelly rejects all of the women who seek him, insisting that they are not worthy of his love. One of the scorned virgins prays that Narcissus experiences what it feels like to "love and meet no return of affection" (Mythology Guide). Nemesis, "the spirit of divine retribution", intercepts this prayer and ensures punishment, fulfilling Tiresias' prophecy. Narcissus comes across a body of water as he walks in the forest. When he kneels down to take a drink, he sees his reflection for the first time in his life. Narcissus becomes enamored with this image, and deprives himself of food and rest in an effort to not break the gaze. Narcissus was tormented; his tears obstructed the vision, as did his attempts to touch it. Narcissus dies there, agonizing, unable to have his love reciprocated.

This myth serves as a model for theories regarding narcissism. The story of Narcissus is a prime example of scopophilia, the "pleasure in looking" (Mulvey 2184). This pleasure is indeed sexual, and the object of the gaze is usually unaware of the admirer's affections. Narcissism begins with self-recognition that is initiated by the mirror phase. This phase occurs in infants when they see their reflection for the first time. Their idea of self is largely framed in the mirror, and they recognize the figure in the mirror as a complete, fully realized entity. The infant recognizes the reflection as superior because the child can absorb this image all at once, but cannot be entirely cognizant of his or her own self at once. The mirror image then is seen as separate and is established as an ego. Mulvey asserts, "Recognition is thus overlaid with misrecognition: the image recognized is conceived as the reflected body of the self, but its misrecognition as superior projects this body outside itself as an ideal ego, the alienated subject which, reintrojected as an ego ideal, prepares the way for identification with others in the future" (Mulvey 2185). As the child grows up, he or she will struggle with the balance of the self and the self-image.

What Mulvey presents here is one of her two constructs of pleasure. Scopophilia is the first construct. This phenomenon "arises from pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight" (Mulvey 2185). The second construct is much more self-involved. Narcissism surfaces here when one identifies his or her self with the image seen. The ego libido is activated. The ego libido is in reference to the "pleasure derived from idealizing the self" (Mulvey 2185). Both of these constructs deal largely with sight and the interpretation of the desirable object seen.

Malvolio: The Sickest of Self-Love

Malvolio is the prime example of narcissism in *Twelfth Night.* He lies at the far end of the aforementioned spectrum of self-interest. This position debilitates him and renders him incapable of a romantic relationship despite his pursuit of one with Olivia, the noblewoman he serves. Malvolio consistently proves himself to be hindered by his self-interest. Indeed, this hindrance is apparent to all of the characters. Shakespeare establishes Malvolio's relationships with the other characters early in the play. In his first scene, Malvolio insults Feste, the fool, for his musings despite their wit and truth. Olivia chastises him, "O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste/ with a distempered appetite" (1.5.86-87). Within his first few moments of dialogue, Malvolio is branded as a narcissist.

Olivia implies that this self-orientation is an ailment that negatively affects his outlook on the world. It impedes him from having a realistic perception of himself and of others, considering he views himself as the moral compass to those around him. Although he is merely a steward, he scolds Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek's drunken revelries. Edward Cahill, author of "The Problem of Malvolio," highlights the steward's hypocrisy when he

pretends “to protect Olivia from Toby’s debauchery while simultaneously entertaining sexual and matrimonial thoughts about her” (Cahill 7). This false virtue serves as a thin veil protecting Malvolio from any sort of judgment and renders him free to live his contradictory lifestyle.

However, the other characters are aware of this Puritanical façade and detest Malvolio for his hypocritical virtue. In fact, Shakespeare takes special care in his very construction of this character. Malvolio’s name is derived from the Italian word *malvoglio*, which literally means, “I dislike.” This disliking has dual meaning. It can simultaneously refer to the other characters’ negative view of him, as well as Malvolio’s scorn for anything that does not correspond with his false morals. Additionally, the prefix of his name, *mal*, is “synonymous with evil or sickness,” further validating Olivia’s claim that he is afflicted with the vice of self-love (Elam 158).

Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabian’s aversion to Malvolio culminates in their collaborative efforts to dupe him by fabricating a letter that leads him to believe that Olivia is in love with him. Before Malvolio even reads the letter, he is already lost in a wild, self-serving daydream. He fantasizes, “To be count Malvolio” (2.5.32). Malvolio elaborates by losing himself in his extreme delusions, imagining himself being socially elevated upon marrying Olivia. His wild supposing merely accentuates his narcissism. His language furthers his own importance in the fancy: “Having been three months married to her,/ sitting in my state— . . . Calling my officers about me, in my branched/ velvet gown, having come from a day-bed where I have/ left Olivia sleeping” (2.5.41-46). Malvolio diminishes Olivia’s importance as an object of desire by placing emphasis on his material possessions, appearance, and social rank. Even in his wildest fantasy of marriage to Olivia, Malvolio abandons Olivia, highlighting his true concern.

Malvolio is presented with more opportunities to inflate his sense of self when he reads the fabricated letter. Malvolio deconstructs every sentence and supposes it to be in reference to

himself. In Act 2 Scene 5, he reads the note aloud while Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian eavesdrop as he interprets each line to be directed at him. Malvolio reads a portion of the note, "*I may command where I adore.* Why, she may command me. I serve her, she is my lady" (2.5.113-114). This "discovery" not only shows Malvolio's desperate attempts to link the note to his personage, but the audaciousness in these attempts by emphasizing the vast class difference between the two. The following section of the forged note is the most cryptic and gives Malvolio the freedom to make his most unfounded, intrepid presumption. Malvolio supposes, "And the end—what should/ the alphabetical position portend? If I could make/ that resemble something in me! Softly—[*reading] M.O.A.I."* (2.5.116-119). Here Malvolio makes the clear admission that he will attempt to link anything in the note to himself. The cryptic "M.O.A.I." proves to be a difficult riddle to solve. However, Malvolio immediately comes up with a solution. He postulates, "'M.' Malvolio. 'M'—why, that begins my/ name!" (2.5.123-124). This elementary supposing displays his incapability to think critically as result of his debilitating narcissism. While the conclusion itself is not necessarily narcissistic, considering M, O, A, and I are all in Malvolio's name, it is how the conclusion is drawn that displays Malvolio's self-interest. Malvolio isolates the letter "M" and ponders it for a brief moment. He then makes the connection that his name does indeed begin with the letter "M." Malvolio does not take into account the entirety of the riddle and throws a conjecture at the first facet that could possibly resemble him. He ensures that the riddle is in reference to himself by analyzing it in the most simplistic terms.

Malvolio becomes the textbook example of a full-blown narcissist according to W. Keith Campbell's two-part definition in his article, "Narcissism and Romantic Attraction." "First, narcissistic relationships are in the service of self-enhancement" (Campbell 4). By immediately

considering his own impending power and influence, Malvolio disregards Olivia. She becomes a means to his self-improvement and empowerment. Not only is Malvolio a narcissist, he also has the vice of stupidity impeding him. When Maria writes the note, she takes into consideration how tasteless Olivia finds yellow stockings and crossed garters and makes sure she urges Malvolio to wear them in her presence. Malvolio later wears this ridiculous attire in an effort to woo Olivia. Malvolio assumes he is seducing her with his style and sophistication, but he is unaware that cross-garters "were worn chiefly by old men, Puritans, pedants, footmen, and rustic bridegrooms" (Elam 47). Malvolio, through his attempts to become a part of the aristocracy, worsens his presentation because he looks like an ignorant member of the servant class.

Malvolio also fits into Campbell's subsequent definition of the loveless narcissist. "Second, narcissists lack the ability to experience genuine intimacy" (Campbell 4). Although Malvolio is perpetually pursuing Olivia, he does not seem to care for intimacy as evidenced by his patterns of isolation. Maria comments when she sees him approaching, "He has been yonder i'the sun/ practising behavior to his own shadow this half-hour" (2.5.14-15). Clearly, Malvolio is concerned with his appearance and uses it to aid in his aspirations to elevate his social standing. Additionally, when he dreams about his possible social promotion, he removes Olivia from his mind. The romance becomes entirely self-oriented. Although it is not a literal mirror, the note serves as one for Malvolio as he is able to see himself in the note. He is consequently able to imagine a "more perfect" version of himself (Mulvey 2185). Through this, Malvolio is likened to a child entering the mirror stage. He misrecognizes the clues in the note to be in reference to a different, better Malvolio. He then fits into Laura Mulvey's second construct of the mirror phase. She articulates, "The second, developed through narcissism and the constitution of the ego, comes from the identification with the image seen" (Mulvey 2185). Like Narcissus,

Malvolio sees his image, a grandiose version, and is consumed by it, cutting Olivia out of the fantasy of which she was the catalyst. Anthony Brian Taylor, author of "Narcissus, Olivia, and a Greek Tradition," also likens Malvolio to Narcissus. He does highlight an interesting difference between the two as well. He explains, "Yet the steward is a mere pastiche of Narcissus: he possesses comparable pride and vanity but he is conspicuously lacking in the grace and personal beauty that went towards explaining the boy's fascination with himself" (Taylor 3). Malvolio seems to have an unfounded self-love. Even more curious, Malvolio seems to be worse off than the archetypal representation of narcissism. He has the same ailment as Narcissus, but none of the redeeming qualities.

However, if we continue to follow Malvolio's story arc, he becomes a pitiable character. Malvolio himself does not change; rather, it is his circumstances that make him suddenly sympathetic. Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian are endlessly frustrated by Malvolio's delusions and punctuate his speeches with insults and angered interjections. Shakespeare utilizes these characters as a gauge for audience reaction. The audience also finds Malvolio initially annoying and the interruptions of his speeches provide comic relief in the juxtaposition of Malvolio and his critics' reactions to the letter. However, when the critics/forgers attempt to convince Malvolio that he is mad by locking him in a dark chamber, the audience's alliances are challenged. Modern audiences are uncomfortable with the association. Malvolio remains convinced that he is indeed sane. Perhaps it is Malvolio's parting words that are the pinnacle of the audience's discomfort: "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you" (5.1.371). This threat seems to include the audience in its intended targets. The joke has gone too far and the narcissist is justified. Malvolio is suddenly in the right. Although he was a source of annoyance to his peers, Malvolio never caused any harm to others. His faults were inward exaggerations that were

made public through provocation. In fact, when Malvolio is locked in the chamber it is the first moment where he is not inflating his self worth. The dark chamber obstructs Malvolio's ability "know himself." His absence of sight hinders his capability to misrecognize. The ego libido, or "pleasure derived from idealizing the self," is muted (Mulvey 2185). Although the conspirators briefly got what they wanted, they are not satisfied, as they intended to harm Malvolio. While narcissism is a vice, Malvolio represents an instance where extreme self involvement leads to damage to the self. Not only does Malvolio end the play without a bride, he also has no real alliances.

Antonio: A Cautionary Tale

Antonio, at the far end of the continuum, is undoubtedly the most selfless character in *Twelfth Night.* He seems to serve as a cautionary character, what Viola could turn into if she never asserted her own desires and identity. Antonio's selflessness is rooted in his unyielding commitment to Sebastian. In fact, Antonio's only connection to the action of the play is through his assistance to Sebastian. However, his devotion is tragic in its effects on his person. Selflessness is often associated with low self-esteem as it often results in unrequited love. This unrequited love is especially disastrous because the non-narcissist seems to love the other passionately. When Antonio and Sebastian are first introduced, Sebastian informs Antonio that he is leaving. Antonio beckons, "The gentleness of all the gods go with thee./ I have many enemies in Orsino's court,/ Else would I very shortly see thee there./ But come what may I do adore thee so/ That danger shall seem sport, and I will go" (2.1.40-44). He begins by giving Sebastian his blessing. He initially excuses himself from joining Sebastian in his quest in order to avoid imminent danger as a result of the enemies he has made. This connection to Orsino is

mysterious and is vaguely referenced later in the play. However, it seems that Shakespeare largely uses this piece of information to emphasize Antonio's loyalty because he promises to accompany Sebastian since the degree of his adoration makes the possibility of violence a mere game. This omission of Antonio's history marks how marginalized he is in the text as a result of his selfless demeanor and his inability to assert his identity because it is intrinsically linked with Sebastian's. In an article by W. Keith Campbell, Craig A. Foster, and Eli J. Finkel, the concept of love is divided into six different types of love. The last kind of love is agape, "characterized by a selfless regard for the well-being of the romantic partner" (Campbell, Foster, & Finkel 342). Even in the study of non-narcissists, their definitions are found in the opposition of the narcissist's. One such discovery states, "Narcissists also report less commitment in their dating relationships than do nonnarcissists" (Campbell, Foster, & Finkel 342). Therefore, as one might expect, the non-narcissist is committed to the significant other just as Antonio is to Sebastian. It is indicative of the non-narcissist's plight that little has to be said about them and when findings are made, they are only in relation to the narcissist and never the subject of the sentence, but instead a mere afterthought. This is because they have not established their identity as a separate entity from those that they serve.

While Antonio is initially completely selfless, he does not remain that way. When Antonio finds Viola, he assumes that he has found Sebastian. Antonio is about to be arrested and beckons Viola to give him the purse and money he lent him. Having never seen Antonio before, Viola confesses that she does not know what he is talking about. She pities him, and offers him some of her own money. Antonio is shattered and refuses the money, agonizing, "Will you deny me now?/ Is't possible that my deserts to you/ Can lack persuasion? Do not tempt my misery,/ Lest that it make me so unsound a man/ As to upbraid you with those kindnesses/ That I have

done for you" (3.4.344-348). Antonio feels betrayed, and ensures that Viola knows it. For the first time Antonio's needs and desires are his own. He is able to separate his needs from Sebastian's. While this is hardly narcissistic, it is a rare moment of self-involvement and concern. Antonio still has difficulty in asserting himself, as he was willing to be arrested for Sebastian, but again, Viola provides a brief moment of self-realization for Antonio. He realizes all of the sacrifices he has made and when they are challenged and he himself is denied, he is able to voice his displeasure for the first time.

Narcissism's Slipping Chokehold

Although narcissism and selflessness are polar opposites, they can coexist in one's identity in fluctuation. Both elements can be present in romantic relationships and maintain a healthy relationship. However, when the extent to which either narcissism or selflessness persists reaches a certain degree, the love becomes polarized. If narcissism peaks, then only the self can truly be loved, isolating the lover from any potential beloved. This cripples the individual socially, as was Malvolio's fate due to his inability to look outside of himself. Conversely, if selflessness reaches its maximum then the individual loves only the other and even risks losing their sense of identity and desires because they are so immersed in their beloved's, as was the initial case with Antonio. Even Shakespeare seemed to marginalize him in the text because he was getting lost in Sebastian's identity.

Shakespeare's device of coupling his characters at the end of *Twelfth Night* can prove to be troubling after the realization that these people are so self-involved. Rather, this representation of successful courtship shows the possibility of narcissistic reform. Orsino and Olivia, in particular, are partnered with their beloveds because they exhibit redeeming qualities.

They began as narcissistic creatures and Viola's androgynous beauty enlightened them to a realm outside of themselves. Their capability to see themselves through the image of another human being is already a step away from narcissism. Malvolio, on the other hand, the irredeemable narcissist, finds himself alone at the end of the play. His tendency to see himself in objects, rather than in others, marks him as incurable. This representation fascination is inescapable because he cannot appreciate the company or beauty of others through this self involvement. Antonio, although Malvolio's opposite, experiences the same fate. Antonio's unrequited love stems from his inability to assert himself. Shakespeare seems to utilize these romantic links as a reward system for those who are capable of maintaining a balance between their strong narcissistic tendencies and their selflessness. Selflessness, however, only seems to be an issue for Antonio and Viola to overcome. Viola not only maintains this balance, but is the reason for this harmony in others.

Viola's role of enlightenment catalyst proves to be a difficult one. Although Viola acts as the perfect synthesis of narcissism and selflessness, she struggles with hurting others and denying her desires and identity. Viola provides an example of the painful balance that exists in the middle of the narcissism spectrum. Narcissism and selflessness are both important aspects to identity and romantic relationships. However, a balance must be struck and one should not favor one or the other in the interest of a healthy well-being. The effects in the extreme are clear, and present a far more ambiguous and uncomfortable balance in the middle range of the continuum.

Shakespeare represents narcissism through a series of physical barriers. Malvolio's inability to see for a short time rendered him incapable to misrecognize. The removal of Olivia's veil allowed her to recognize herself through Viola. When Viola reveals her true identity, she not only asserts herself, but Orsino recognizes the interest he had for Cesario was love for Viola.

Antonio expresses his own needs when Viola serendipitously makes him experience betrayal. Although Malvolio and Antonio do not completely overcome their extremes, they both encounter a glimpse of what a healthy balance between narcissism and selflessness might resemble. Shakespeare structures these impediments this way to show that they are indeed possible to overcome. He merely utilizes Malvolio and Antonio as cautionary characters by making them laughable, pitiable, and ultimately unable to maintain the balance. However, it is a construction of encouragement that narcissism is only a thin barrier between one and their health and happiness. Narcissism's initial impending chokehold is slipping. The narcissistic barrier can be broken, and one can maintain a balance between self-love and love for others.

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Corruption and Light: The Slave and the Individual in Jonson's *Sejanus His Fall*

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In his introduction to *Between the Middle Ages and Modernity: Individual and Community in the Early Modern World*, Charles Parker notes that the emergence of the individual has long been regarded as a function of the rise of humanism out of the medieval period and into the Renaissance. He observes as well that the Protestant Reformation and capitalist expansion within and beyond Europe parallel this increased awareness of the individual's place within the communal. Recently, historiographic paradigms have shifted, resulting in a trend toward discussing this period as "early modern Europe" as opposed to Renaissance-Reformation. This change in terminology notwithstanding, a greater focus on the spread of economic, political, and religious beliefs and the effects on those to whom they were introduced, either peaceably or otherwise, has complicated the issue of the individual (1-2).

Owing partly to the evolution of the political, economic, and religious spheres in the sixteenth century, and partly to the popularity of the theatre as a means of entertainment for anyone who could afford the price of admission, there emerged a growing awareness of the capacity for the theatre to influence popular views on political questions. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth note that in Ben Jonson's day, the monarchy both enjoyed plays and recognized their power to speak on issues of political importance and, despite the built-in censoriousness of the office of the Master of Revels to temper the content of drama, the theatre served as an important vehicle for expressing civic opinion (3). This situation, too, contributes to the difficulty of understanding the place of the individual within the system as large groups of people from all stations of society began regularly to congregate in the same place.

Certainly an analysis of one tragedy from the early modern period does not resolve the complexities of the rise of individualism. However, my reading of Ben Jonson's *Sejanus His Fall* indicates that there is a strong correlation between the imagery of corruption and decay and the imposition of slavery and loss of self-determination. Similarly, although to a lesser degree given the relative lack of optimism Jonson offers concerning his subject, there is a correlation between imagery of light and fire and past assertions of individual identity.

Other studies of this play focus on Jonson's use of language. Alexander Sackton discusses Jonson's uses of hyperbole as a rhetorical device in the play (134-37), and Daniel Boughner identifies several examples of dissembling in the speeches of Tiberius as well as the bird imagery near the end of the play that he associates with potential freedom (89-112). John Palmer identifies Jonson's gravity of style as revealing his scholastic learning (132-37), while Esther Dunn notes Jonson's reliance on classical sources and forms (62-65). None of these studies provides extensive analysis of image patterns and their associations with the individual self. In citing text from the play, I will provide page numbers parenthetically from the Gregory Doran edition of Jonson's play, unless otherwise noted.

The atmosphere that pervades Rome during the imperial reign of Tiberius is evident immediately. Sabinus, a noble Roman of a patrician family and Silius, a general of similar social position, comment that Rome "is not [their] sphere," that they do not possess "cleft tongues," and thus they conclude "We are no guilty men, and then no great" (5). This is a Rome not consistent with its republican history wherein men of position such as these would feel their worth. Instead it is a Rome which encourages, if not, indeed, rewards, duplicity in men and their reliance upon a tenuous status as someone's favorite. The current scene in Rome is so foul that Jonson loads up on the language of abjection. Silius observes that men must:

Laugh when their patron laughs; sweat when he sweats;

And true as turquoise in the dear lord's ring,

Look well or ill with him – ready to praise

His lordship if he spit, or but piss fair,

Have an indifferent stool, or break wind well; (5-6)

These images of coarse bodily functions suggests not only the putrid conditions of the current state in Rome, but, because they are corporeal and metabolic, they indicate the importance of the lower elements of the physical rather than the higher concerns of the intellectual when one attends to his patron. Within a brief introductory section, Jonson produces a picture of Rome that is, or ought to be, "prepared for servitude" (6). In fact, there are numerous references to slaves and servility in the play's opening lines. An immediate equating of this prevailing servitude with death is suggested in Sabinus's line "Tyrants' arts / Are to give flatterers grace, accusers power, / That those may seem to kill whom they devour" (6).

It had not always been thus. The glib senator Arruntius, whose insights Jonson often provides to us by means of asides, contends that the baseness, poverty, and degeneracy of the day is a falling off from the heroic actions of Brutus and Cassius toward Caesar. Unlike these noble men, the contemporary Romans have "fled the light" (7). Far from possessing "their eternal fire," Romans, now, are so much "blaze / Flashes, and smoke" (7), suggesting that is it the external, the ostentatious, and the ephemeral which now is rewarded. Jonson's associations of light and fire imagery with bygone days contrasts starkly against the associations of decay and mere appearance he draws for the present. Irrespective of the outcome of the actions taken against Julius Caesar, these actions represent to Sabinus, Silius, and Arruntius an attempt at self-determination which they believe men of their own time are not equipped to make. Because they

fear the repercussions of asserting their individual wills, Romans of the Tiberian age are destined for subjugation and slavery. Waiting for each decision to be made for them, they live in a state of fear.

Throughout Act One, Jonson constructs the contrast, eventually offering one of the sources of Roman fear up to scrutiny. Sejanus enters with two of his flatterers and Silius alerts Arruntius to "Now observe the stoops, / The bendings, and the falls," actions about which Arruntius adds, "Most creeping base" (9). The play is built on the Sejanus/Tiberius conflict with each man using Rome as their battlefield of wits and wills. Therefore, not only do Sejanus's followers bow to him to indicate their allegiance, but Jonson's language suggests that these shows are a descent for Romans, lowering them to the place of animals, perhaps snakes. When Silius and Arruntius witness the transaction of flattery and puffery that takes place, the outcome of this exchange is again described in terms of loss for Rome. Arruntius mourns for the state: "Seest thou this, O sun, / And do we see thee after? Methinks day / Should lose his light, when men do lose their shames" (10). Jonson's rhetorical skill with tropes is illustrated in Silius's follow-up line: "Sejanus is now our court-god. 'Tis he / Makes us our day, or night: Hell and Elysium / Are in his look" (10). This chiasmus of light and dark, hell and heaven is clearly aligned with the consequences of following Sejanus. Romans are choosing their own enthrallment and the light of the earlier republic days is going out.

These contrasts, shifts, and inversions are not merely the subjects of those who fear the climate of Rome, but of the principals themselves. While yet in Act One, Sejanus resorts to the imagery of the scatological in plying the trust of his newest minion, Eudemus (13-14), and calms the concerns of Eudemus by assuring him that all information he provides to Sejanus regarding Tiberius's daughter-in-law, Livia, will be rewarded. Sejanus promises that the "coarsest act /

Done to my service I can so requite, / As all the world shall style it honourable" (14). Further assuring Eudemus that his betrayals of Livia will be seen by Sejanus as "Only the best, I swear" (14), Sejanus distorts the virtuous and the corrupt and adds blasphemy to the perversion. There is a strong sense in which Jonson binds Sejanus's politically motivated followers to their master by making them take all of the risks and doing all of the foul work for Sejanus's advancement. Later, when any necessity to condemn his followers' actions arises, Sejanus will destroy them with little concern, since they are clearly beneath him as evidenced by their choice of deeds.

In the final scene of Act One, the second factor in the conflict equation, Tiberius, asserts his presence. In contrast to those of Sejanus, Tiberius's words are public and official. They, therefore, mimic the republic's rhetoric even if they do not support it. Tiberius condemns flattery and associates his place as Caesar with human nature, lower than the gods, and in service to the Senate (16). Silius, in an oft-quoted and thematically-loaded line, nostalgically philosophizes, "If this man / Had but a mind allied unto his words, / How blest a fate were it to us, and Rome" (16). Caesar *is* but a man, but one whose attitude toward, and treatment of, the Senate belie any claims to service; rather, the inverse is true. For Tiberius, the virtue of his words is undone by the corruption of his actions. The purity of Tiberius's motive for his official refusal to erect a monument to himself, despite the requests of his flatterers, is called into question when he adds parenthetically that he wants to be certain history remembers his modesty (17). But Tiberius's great stroke in this scene is to announce honors to Sejanus which virtually mirror those he has himself refused. He praises for Sejanus's growing pride all which he had disclaimed about himself:

> Blush not, Sejanus, thou great aid of Rome,
> Let us not force thy simple modesty

With off'ring at thy praise. No man here,

Receive our speeches as hyperboles,

For we are far from flattering our friend

(Let envy know) as from the need to flatter. (18)

Tiberius juxtaposes the language of modesty and flattery and calls the Senate's attention to the hyperbole of this speech so as to contrast the desire of Sejanus for that flattery with Tiberius's own claims to modesty. He may thus satisfy his desire for monumentalizing himself – Tiberius erects the monument to Sejanus – without appearing to be monumentalized. Caesar's mind and his words are ever far apart. Tiberius, the servant of the Senate, is, in this way, served by it.

It is worth noting that, for the most part, neither Sejanus's nor Tiberius's speeches are laden with imagery. They tend to speak most literally of all the characters. Perhaps Jonson allows them this freedom to speak their unadorned words because of their power. It is more likely, given the artistic weight that the imagery possesses in the play, that Jonson has placed the more direct, plot-forwarding language in the two combatants' mouths and the more evocative, thematically important language in the lines of the other Romans. This trend continues in Act Two. Sejanus speaks very directly to his paramour Livia of poison and the corruption of the eunuch Lygdus so that he may destroy Tiberius's son, her husband, Drusus. However, when the physician, Eudemus, speaks with Livia about her new attachment to Sejanus, he references the utility of the cosmetics he has prescribed for her. This is an example of how Jonson makes an artistic accomplishment from what appears to be mere dialogue. Livia longs for her face to be beautiful and complains, "Methinks 'tis here not white" (23). Eudemus placates her at length:

Lend me your scarlet, lady. 'Tis the sun

Hath given some little taint unto the ceruse;

You should have used of the white oil I gave you.

Sejanus, for your love …

. . . . . .

A lady cannot be

Too curious of her form, that still would hold

The heart of such a person, made her captive, (23, 24)

Jonson's reintroduction of the sun motif, this time as the spoiler of Livia's whiteness, suggests that the nobler, individualistic elements of the Roman past are void in her. She desires whiteness and is prescribed ceruse and white oil. But this whiteness is not emblematic of Livia's sanctity, but instead aligns her with pallor and death, because if the sun had earlier been life-giving, the absence of the sun connotes absence of life. This set of images culminates in the outcome of her toilette – her captivity into the destructive world of Sejanus. This world devoid of light and morality is one that Sejanus himself describes: "All the demand of sceptres quite doth perish / If it begin religious thoughts to cherish: / Whole empires fall, swayed by those nice respects" (27). Their shared vision of such a world is what temporarily binds Sejanus and Tiberius. They hope this vision will help them weather a looming storm from the supporters of Germanicus's sons; therefore Sejanus convinces Tiberius to "[un]mask" himself; since "wolves do change their hair, but not their hearts" (29). What small amount of metaphoric language each uses shows their mutually deceptive and predatory nature.

Indeed, this imagery of predation carries over into the final scene of Act Two where the rumored poisoning of Drusus provides a harbinger of deaths to come. The Romans Sabinus, Cordus, and Arruntius, protectors of Agrippina and the late Germanicus's sons, liken the spies of the Empire to "beagles" who "hunt," offering false "baits" for the hunted Romans to "bite" (32-

33). The deception of one of the spies, the orator Afer, is equated to the actions of a crocodile, whose tears appear as a ruse to lull the unsuspecting into its jaws (33). As always, this set of images is closely associated with the removal of freedom as well as life. Sabinus warns, "Contemn the slaves; / Their present lives will be their future graves" (33).

The graves of those whose freedoms are being encroached upon begin to fill in Act Three. Not only does the imminent death of Drusus inform the Senate, but the first of the accused Romans is called to answer to charges of treason. Arruntius perceptively compares the scene to a spider's web, fashioned to snare and imprison flies. He seems also to understand the powerlessness of the entire Senate when he describes them as "good-dull-noble lookers-on / […] only called to keep the marble warm" (36). Here Jonson complicates the place of the Romans in their own self-determination. While surely they are caught in the web conjointly spun by Sejanus and Tiberius, they are in part complicit in their own capture. Jonson seems to be suggesting that as long as the senators believe that the erosion of freedoms does not directly affect them, they become enmeshed in the very system that will eventually deprive them of their own liberty. For all of his cleverness—in this scene he offers cynical, yet insightful aside after aside—Arruntius is himself a mute spectator in the further deterioration of the situation.

When the old general Silius first defends himself, he extends the web imagery, rightly identifying the accusation against him to be "A net of Vulcan's filing, a mere engine, / To take that life by a pretext of justice / Which you pursue in malice" (42). He also conjures up the ghosts of the past noble Romans and his own past selfhood when he recalls his exploits on the field:

> Have I for this so oft engaged myself?
> Stood in the heat and fervour of a fight,

When Phoebus sooner hath forsook the day
Than I the field? Against the blue-eyed Gauls?
And crispèd Germans? When our Roman eagles
Have fanned the fire, with their laboring wings,
And no blow dealt that left not death behind it?
When I have charged, alone, into the troops
Of curled Sicambrians, routed them, and came
Not off with backward ensigns of a slave,
But forward marks, wounds on my breast and face,
Were meant to thee, O Caesar, and thy Rome? (42)

The days of Silius's glory – and those of the republic – are conceived of in terms of the sun god Phoebus and the fire of noble Roman eagles. Unwittingly, however, Silius undoes this self-assertion by describing the reason for these glorious past days: he was willing to battle alone, if necessary, and face the enemy's blows. He did not retreat into slavery, as the current Senate has, and though he stands up to the tyrant now, it is too late. Therefore, while in glorious past days Silius had taken blows for Caesar and Rome, he now takes them from Caesar and the Rome that has conceded its freedom to him.

Yet Silius is not thoroughly defeated. He does stand up to Caesar and to Sejanus. Perhaps hoping to inspire others; certainly, at least, to reconvene his own self-determination, Silius pinpoints the imperial agenda: "It is your nature to have all men slaves / To you, but you acknowledging to none" (43). He argues that he may follow the way of the coward or be valiant; either way to fall. This much stands within his power. Offering his action as a model for other Romans, Silius takes his life. Momentarily, there appears a pivot point, as the accusations against

Cordus reassert the place of the past Romans against Julius Caesar. Yet, for all his words "Freely and nobly spoken" (46), Cordus is easily escorted to his doom, while Arruntius and Sabinus save their indictments of senatorial impotence for an empty stage. The Silius model has evaporated.

The imagery that attends the introduction of Sejanus's nemesis Macro elevates the level of the self-destructive nature of the Sejanus and Tiberius conflict, especially as that destructive impulse affects the Roman polity. Immediately after Tiberius flatly refuses to consider Sejanus's request for Livia's hand, a match that would effectively join the men in a familial relationship, each principal privately resolves to destroy the other. Tiberius employs for this purpose the opportunistic Macro, whose soliloquized allegiance is promised thus:

> We, whom he works by, are dumb instruments,
> To do, but not enquire, his great intents.
> Nor must he look at what or whom to strike,
> But loose at all; each mark must be alike.
> Were it to plot against the fame, the life
> Of one with whom I twinned; remove a wife
> From my warm side, as loved as the air;
> Practise away each parent; draw mine heir
> In compass, though but one; nay, even make
> The gods all guilty: I would undertake
> This, being imposed me, both with gain and ease. (52-53)

Macro embodies the descent of the enslaved Roman populace in his mute (and ignorant?) acquiescence wherein all tasks and targets are the same. Whether by killing brother, spouse, parent, or child, Macro's willing dismemberment of family highlights the non-alliance of family

between Sejanus and Tiberius, the in-fighting among family, with Tiberius conspiring against Germanicus's heirs, and the state of Rome in general, as each citizen looks over his shoulder to determine from whom the next accusation will arise.

Even the most powerful families have reason to fear, as Agrippina makes manifest in her speeches to open Act Four. However, it is those closest to her who must be most wary. Sabinus is flattered into revealing his distaste, not only of Sejanus, who holds mighty sway in Caesar's absence, but of Tiberius as well. The spies know how to reach Sabinus: through the well-loved associations of light and freedom. Latiaris tempts Sabinus to a response with:

> Methinks the genius of the Roman race
> Should not be so extinct, but that bright flame
> Of liberty might be revived again,
> And we not sit like spent and patient fools,
> Still puffing in the dark at one poor coal,
> Held on by hope, till the last spark goes out. (58)

He ends the speech with a plea to "meet t'enforce those glorious fires again / Whose splendour cheered the world, and heat gave life / No less than doth the sun's" (58). How disingenuous are the spies to align themselves with the seekers of the flame of liberty? How degenerate are they in their appeals to those who hold out for freedom, that they would use the established language of freedom to entrap? This perversion of the light of self-determinacy eventually leads to the permanent loss of liberty for Sabinus, as he is promptly arrested. Perhaps the last spark has gone out in Rome.

This deceptive inversion of the imagery of fire and light receives its comment from the loquacious Arruntius in the final scene of Act Four. Jonson artfully transfers the language which

only Sabinus is trapped by into the repudiations of another character to illustrate the near conflation of the corrupt and the noble in his tragedy. Imagery that had once been clearly the domain of the hope of the Romans is suddenly appropriated by those who would dash those hopes. Arruntius challenges the gods to respond to the sacrilege of the oppressors by combining the ill-used fire imagery of the spies and the righteousness of the sacrificial burnt offering:

> Will no flame,
>
> No heat of sin make thy just wrath to boil
>
> In thy distempered bosom, and o'erflow
>
> The pitchy blazes of impiety
>
> Kindled beneath thy throne? (60)

Virtually despairing of any response, he concludes with a near-sacrilegious "Well! Snore on, dreaming gods" (60). The desperation of his language mounts as Arruntius rails against the Emperor Tiberius and his consul in absentia, Sejanus. He calls them variously "wild," "night-eyed," "mongrel," "monster," "loathed," and accuses them of "forge[ry]," "vice," "crime," "lust," "tortures," all leading to the worst condition for Romans, that of "captives," "spintries" (male brothels), and "slaves" (62-64). Even Tiberius himself is characterized by Arruntius as being in sexual thrall to his creation, Sejanus: "the ward / To his own vassal, a stale catamite" (64). The nadir of repugnant imagery in the play precedes the final act and marks the near-abandonment of individual assertion of place within the Roman state.

The play's culmination complicates without clear resolution the question of the individual. Certainly, Sejanus, of all characters in the play, may be seen as asserting his place within a society that ordinarily would have been closed to someone of his birth. By dint of his masterful manipulation of Caesar, his use of his sanctioned power to control his minions and

spies, and the seeming impotence of the Senate and other well-placed Romans to effectively quell his rise, Sejanus projects his autonomy as strongly as anyone in history or literature. By illustrating this type of self-determination, Jonson may be commenting on the rise of the individual as being anything but an unqualified good. Of itself, the self-interested projection of the individual will may be destructive of both the individualism of others and of the necessary communal elements that bind those individuals together for the strength of the state. Therefore, the portrayal of Sejanus at his apex in terms of great foulness may be seen as consistent with this complex view of the value of individualism.

Throughout Act Five, the images that are associated with Sejanus anticipate his fall from power. Though Dio Cassius offers an account of the snake-infested statue of Sejanus in his history (205), Jonson imbues the serpent with a vileness that could not be construed as anything other than a reference to the Biblical story of humanity's fall in the garden. Sejanus reviles notions of divine justice coming out of the numerous fearful auguries he receives and, as he had in Act Two, he spurns religious belief, contending that only Fortune rules the lives of men (70). Further evidence for Sejanus of the role of fate is the news that he is to be named Caesar's heir, despite all of the natural and supernatural portents to the contrary. Of course, this promised honor is merely a ruse to ensure his presence in the Senate where his undoing will be completed, just as it had been for Julius Caesar. Meanwhile, similar to the way that Shakespeare does in his play about the earlier Roman ruler, Jonson inundates the stage with images of the fantastic, the monstrous, and the bestial. Sejanus receives reports of meteors and lightning; he calls upon monsters, scorpions, and lions. Later, vultures and vipers are evoked to indicate the imminent death of Sejanus. Within this environment of fear and sudden reversal of fortune, an ironic change of association occurs: Sejanus begins to see himself in terms that suggest his own

enslavement. On three separate occasions, Sejanus hints at his fate. While the sense of the lines does not indicate that Sejanus thinks he will be made servile, the language is unmistakable: "I, the slave / And mock of fools (scorn on my worthy head)" (75); "Now, my dear, noble and trusted friends. / How much I am a captive to your kindness" (78); and in reference to Tiberius, "How fares it with our great and royal master" (80). The rhetorical shift is underway, providing some evidence of the opinion Jonson may hold of unchecked ambition as a manifestation of individualism.

However, Jonson does not follow up this apparent transposition of fates with a complete reversal. Where we might expect the sun and the light to pour down on a redeemed Rome, instead he leaves the Senate in the hands of Macro, about whom Arruntius offers this jeremiad: "That this new fellow, Macro, will become / A greater prodigy in Rome than he / That now is fall'n" (94). Indeed, the citizenry, perhaps in an act of ultimate catharsis, rends Sejanus's body into unrecognizable pieces, permits the violation and strangulation of his children, and then, as impetuously, scorns itself for its violence. There are no heroes; there are no insights gained. Tiberius yet wields power from afar and the flow of blood appears not to have been stanched. There are few indications that anyone in Rome at this time could save the people from their tyrannical ruler, from an ineffectual Senate, or from themselves. The hopeful imagery of light and sun is dominated in the play by imagery of corruption, base corporality, and decay which is strongly aligned with subjugation.

It may be impossible to ascribe political motives to the message of this play's outcome. Jonson wrote the play in 1603, and is, by tradition, believed to have had a collaborator on this first version. The quarto version of the play, published in 1605, is believed to contain Jonson's work exclusively, the lines of the previous partner having been replaced by Jonson's own

(Summers and Pebworth 111). Does Jonson write a play in the last year of the life of Queen Elizabeth, whose final years were fraught with intrigue about a successor, as a comment on the politics of her lengthy reign? Does he revise the play in the early years of James I, when, considering the early plots against the king, the tenuousness of the Stuart dynasty is still very much a reality? Is the play about James's theories on the divine right of kings which parallel so well with Tiberius's autocracy, and upon which Jonson now offers an opinion, couched as it may be in a work of historical art? We cannot be certain. Yet, there can be no avoiding the care with which Ben Jonson crafts the conflicting imagery of his regrettably neglected tragedy, *Sejanus His Fall.*

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The Imagination's Response to Chaos

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In Shakespeare's masterpiece, *The Tragedy of King Lear*, the demise of the king represents an entire country's plunge into chaos. Entropy spreads from the political, to the familial, and at last to the personal realm where each member of Lear's ragged band of supporters suffers his own alienation from reality, whether through blindness, madness, or false identities. To complete the chaotic effect, the structure of the play itself starts to crumble. Instead of the neatly scripted interchanges of the opening acts, the dialogue is jumbled and the plot dissolves, becoming a helter-skelter psychological experiment in which the characters' imaginations take center stage.

Shakespeare's exploration of chaos and the power of the imagination delves into themes that were widely discussed during his era. As E.M.W. Tillyard describes in *The Elizabethan World Picture*, the concept of order permeated Shakespeare's society, especially the notion that everything in the known universe was ranked. This "Great Chain of Being" stretched from God himself to humans to the very elements (Tillyard 26), and in the Elizabethan mindset, upsetting any part of this order risked universal dissolution (Tillyard 11). Thus, the dichotomy between order and chaos became an underlying tension of society. Shakespeare, however, recognizes the intricacies of this relationship that Tillyard neglects, and demonstrates that the chaos of the mind (i.e. the uncontrolled imagination) actually reveals a deep, innate sense of order superior to that of society's artificial structure.

According to the concept of "The Great Chain of Being," the body itself was ordered, and furthermore excessive imagination was symptomatic of a breakdown in this order (Tillyard 70).

Milton expounded upon this theory when he wrote *Paradise Lost*, explaining that dreams and the imagination arise from the "lesser faculties" as vapors, which can then cloud the rational mind (Milton 5.101). Robert Burton, author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, claims that the imagination is stronger in melancholy individuals, and cites sleepwalkers as instances in which the fantasy overtakes reason (Burton 1.3.2). He also links the imagination to an imbalance in the bodily humors and the rising of animal spirits (Burton 1.3.2).

Not only was the imagination considered chaotic, but its capabilities were thought to be immense. Montaigne, whose works many scholars believe may have influenced Shakespeare, entitled one of his *Essays* "On the Power of the Imagination," wherein he discusses the mind's ability to affect the body. He cites many personal anecdotes as evidence, such as sicknesses cured by the placebo effect or brought about by belief in false causes. Furthermore, he claims that the imagination is not merely a matter of the mind's power over one's own body, but that the imagination can extend its effect to other people, such as in stories of women who could kill with a look (Montaigne 45).

While many critics have examined chaos in the structure and themes of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and many others have discussed the role of the imagination in this play, it is the link between the two that gives *King Lear* its poignancy.[1] Shakespeare answers the chaos of the exterior world with the chaos of the mind: the unbridled imagination. With Lear and his companions adrift in the entropy of his fallen kingdom, the imagination provides the means for them to redevelop a sense of justice and purpose, an understanding which mere rationality can no longer offer. The very removal of characters from conventional reality—through blindness, through madness, through false identities—puts them in a unique position to perceive underlying truths, as they are less easily misled by outer appearances.

It is arguable that villains like Goneril, Regan, and Edmund also possess highly imaginative qualities. But their imaginations are deceptive rather than perceptive, and however creative their schemes, they are nonetheless yoked to a constricting rationality. When Lear and his companions cross over into the irrational and even the insane, their wild imaginations are freed from all conscious motives. It is then that they can serve as pure manifestations of each character's inner conflicts. When Lear's internal state is given an external form, he can attempt to piece together his chaotic world like a child manipulating puzzle pieces, and through the process he discovers many incongruities regarding his previous notion of justice. Likewise, his subplot counterpart Gloucester is thrust into the chaos of blindness only to be led by his imagination to a new sense of purpose. As their realities are stripped of society's artificial order, it is through the imagination that an innate sense of justice and purpose—a deeper order—emerges.

The collapse of order begins in the first and second acts of the play. When Lear divides his kingdom between his daughters while he is still alive, he disturbs the political hierarchy because his act raises the question of who is in charge. Furthermore, he disowns his youngest daughter, Cordelia, and this violates the natural bond between father and daughter. In the second act, Edmund also rebels against the established order by allying himself completely with natural law (rather than following the rules of society) and plots against his own father. The effect of these transgressions on the prevailing order is well illustrated in the following quote from Thomas Elyot's *Governor*: "Take away order from all things, what should then remain? Certes nothing finally, except some man would imagine eftsoons chaos…[He] himself of necessity must then perish; whereof ensueth universal dissolution" (Tillyard 11).

To the Elizabethan, order was a divinely ordained system of classification, a Great Chain

of Being stretching from "the foot of God's throne to the meanest of inanimate objects" while ranking everything in between (Tillyard 26). This system of organization also had its applications to human society, with the king at the top and the meanest of peasants at the bottom (Tillyard 30). As Elyot states, usurping this order was a formula for universal dissolution.

Lear first introduces discord into the play, although he does so unknowingly. When he disowns Cordelia, this act upsets the natural order by violating the "bond" that Cordelia speaks of: the connection between father and daughter (1.1.95). Lear invokes "all the operation of the orbs" in disowning her (1.1.113), but ironically he is later at the mercy of the celestial forces that he disrupts by this act. Kent also remonstrates Lear for calling on Apollo, saying "Thou swear'st thy gods in vain" (1.1.163) since after committing an unnatural deed Lear has no right to appeal to the top of the natural order.

In the midst of the chaos that he helped create, Lear appeals to previous symbols of order. The fictitious trial of Goneril and Regan (3.6) represents Lear's longing for justice, as well as his inability to obtain it—even within his own imagination. Through a unique combination of characters, this scene produces a helter-skelter, surreal representation in which the imaginary transcends reality. In the storm scene, Lear appeals to the gods for justice but to no avail, so in this spectacle Lear tries to enlist the authority of society's justice system instead. Once again he sets up a potential cathartic release through the satisfaction of punishing imaginary daughters, but unlike his previous empowering experience this time the fantasy can be nothing more than pitiful self-indulgence. Instead of envisioning himself becoming more powerful, he expects an unreliable third party to step in (namely the Fool, Edgar, or an invisible justice). What prevents him from sinking into useless delusion is his imagination's curious adherence to the truth. His crumbling conception of order seeps into his fantasy, and his delusions reveal a loss of faith in

his previous notions of justice.

The surreal nature of the trial is uniquely the product of the individuals present, and the trial itself could not exist without such a combination. During Lear's previous appearance in the storm scene, the fact that his sole companion is the Fool suggests a reversal of power as well as Lear's relative isolation. Here, however, the collection of fantasy-prone individuals facilitates Lear's cathartic rampage while also implying that chaos is the new norm.

Every character present is in some way abstracted from reality, and their abstraction allows them to glean meaning from madness. The Fool is accustomed to pantomime and fantasy, and his very personality seems to be an act, which is mandated by his profession. His cryptic manner of speaking circumvents conventions and further distances him from others, as in comments like, '"Prithee, Nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman"' (3.6.9). Yet he is also adept at infusing his words with double meanings, creating a humorous spectacle while at the same time including poignant comments that reveal truth through make-believe. His aforementioned riddle, for instance, is also a subtle chastisement to Lear for giving his daughters total control. Because of his double-sided nature, he can see the value of indulging Lear's madness, for just as he sometimes teaches Lear through jest, so too can Lear learn about justice through fantasy.

Edgar and Kent also embrace fictions, and both take on a fake identity to avoid capture. Edgar, however, goes a step further than Kent in impersonating a madman named Poor Tom. His feigned psychosis makes him even more predisposed to accommodate imaginary situations as if they were real, and the fact that he tends to describe demons and devils creates a hellish ambiance that suits the trial of two such evil women.

The structure of the trial in Act 3, Scene 6 also helps produce its overall haphazard effect.

Focused on their own perspective, characters often do not directly respond to each other's comments. Instead, each contributes erratic statements that follow no logical sequence. The lack of transition between phrases such as Edgar's "Poor Tom, thy horn / is dry" (3.6.73-74) and Lear's next statement, "Then let them anatomize Regan. See what breeds / about her heart" (3.6.75-76) produces a chaotic, confused sensation. Yet there is another significant feature of their interactions: with the exception of Kent, the characters present never once act as if the trial were imaginary. It is as if they all truly do see the same thing—as if the imagined reality were a concrete fact—and their jumbled descriptions merely reflect what part of the scene they happen to focus on. They are at once all in separate worlds yet all present in the same imagined court. Even though the Fool and Edgar most likely know that the scene is imaginary, they let themselves become swept away in the pantomime.

This unconventional structure is an abrupt deviation from the neat turns of phrase that mark the opening and closing acts of the play. When characters are immersed in the structure of society, they pay close attention to each other's comments so that they can subvert and redirect their words for the sake of wit and/or manipulation. This capacity allows Goneril and Regan to say exactly what Lear wants to hear when they flatter him in Act 1. Then in Act 2, while they speak as though they are still acting out of love, they are actually plotting his demise. For instance, Regan says, "O sir, you are old, / … You should be ruled, and led / By some discretion that discerns your state better than yourself," which is treason masquerading as daughterly affection (2.4.145-149). Words are therefore the medium through which society facilitates its own brand of chaos, for the instability of language is inherently chaotic. The coercive power of Goneril, Regan, and Edmund takes the form of flattery, feigned innocence, and warped logic, and as *King Lear* proves, these functions of language are weapons for overturning an entire

kingdom.

The difference between the verbal chaos of society and the complete dissolution portrayed in the imaginary trial is that the language changes from well-crafted wordplay to a cacophony of disjointed voices. In the latter, the conventional bounds on language are removed, and thus characters' comments are profoundly erratic yet purely representative of their internal state. This can be seen as an interesting twist on Ferdinand de Saussure's theories of linguistics, for he proposes that words ("signifiers") point not to objective realities but to mental constructs ("signifieds") (Saussure 964). Whereas society perverts this notion by linking signifiers to multiple signifieds (i.e. people imply one thing and actually mean another) while acting as if they intend to refer to a single, objective reality, Lear and his companions do not engage in this nefarious wordplay. Their words obviously point to mental constructs because the entire scene is imaginary, and they waste no concern over what is "actually" happening—each has his own interpretation. Once society's lie that things are precisely what they seem is dispelled, Lear and the others are able to use language in a way that embraces its uncertainties.

This loss of structure is fertile ground for the imagination, and as is the case in the other surreal scenes, the trial does not need to be real to serve its purpose for Lear. It still communicates truths about justice, both for society as a whole and Lear individually. In a world that has ceased to be just, the mere longing that is expressed for the wicked to be punished and the blameless to be vindicated points to a moral ideal that still persists, though it resides in the minds of the characters rather than in the structure of society. The king is usurped, loving children are banished, the wicked prosper, and yet there is still right and wrong; the catch is that right and wrong have become functions of the imagination, and moral depravity is reality.

Although right and wrong still exist as mental constructs, their disappearance from

society begins to infiltrate Lear's perceptions in the imaginary courthouse. As a symbol, the court setting suggests a return to order, a stronghold of stability wherein the chaos of crime is typically forced to adhere to a higher power. Lear seeks such an authority to restore justice, in the same manner that he earlier appeals to the gods (2.4.270-277). Despite all the crimes in the play, this is the only legal proceeding mentioned, and it occurs as a delusion. The fallen king hallucinates the trial out of a desire for a cathartic release, providing a deluded semblance of justice that he devises to cope with the wickedness around him. It is also an attempt to return to his previous role, as Lear presides over the trial in much the same manner that he might have done during his kingship. Yet the setting deviates from a conventional, orderly courthouse, and in the end justice does not prevail, impossible even in Lear's fantasy. This is because he uses the imagination to reveal truths about reality rather than indulging in delusion, and in reality his daughters' cruelty will go unpunished by society.

The imagined scene is not a realistic courthouse, but one with warped, surreal aspects. Lear does not seem concerned that he has a madman and a Fool for judges, referring to them as a "robed man of justice" (3.6.36) and "his yokefellow of equity" (3.6.37). Although such individuals are completely unfit to judge by conventional standards, they are perfect for the role in Lear's imaginary court. The Fool, after all, has been acting as an aloof, third-party judge throughout the entire play, such as in Act 1, Scenes 4 and 5 when he makes comments to Lear like, "Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst / been wise" (1.5.44-45). Edgar's persona as Poor Tom is likewise fit to judge because, being mad, he can fully imagine the spectacle and has a unique understanding of Lear's plight. At the same time, Edgar himself may have a vested interest in justice, since he has personally suffered great injustice. This is also a dark parody of judges in real courts, suggesting that they too are fools and madmen.

The proceedings of the trial further reveal its elements of fantasy. Dogs bark at Lear, Edgar throws his own head, demons are spectators, and the physical appearances of Goneril and Regan are manifestations of internal evil. Regan's "warped looks proclaim / What store her heart is made on" (3.6.53) and the Fool initially "[takes Goneril] for a joint stool" (3.6.51), which suggests she appears less than human. Yet if any court should be capable of doing justice, it should be Lear's imagined court because he has special means to determine guilt. He commands, "Then let them anatomize Regan. See what breeds / about her heart" (3.6.75-76). This image of cutting her open to reveal the deformity within not only makes her seem like an infected, subhuman species to be studied, but also projects a horrific picture of live dissection. But for Lear this is a useful measure. He is searching for the cause of evil, and longs to pinpoint some physical characteristic to blame. Doing so would simplify the entire judiciary process to a physical examination. Before, he refers to his daughters as "unnatural hags" (2.4.277), but now he seems to rethink nature's scope and asks, "Is there any cause in nature that / make these hard hearts?" (3.6.76-77). Thus, during the trial Lear abandons the conventions of law and is concerned with the physical anatomy of Regan, as if her natural body produced her evil personality. Yet this line of reasoning is also inconclusive since he gives no answer to his own question. The reason for this is that Lear senses the complexity of justice and life's lack of such easy answers, so the trial ends without a verdict, without justice.

Although the former king has the satisfaction of bringing his treacherous daughters to trial, it is a failed solution, an attempt to impose the order of the judiciary system on an uncontainable chaos. Even in the freedom of his own imagination, Lear cannot delude himself with justice because his faith in the legal system has begun to collapse. This demonstrates that Lear's use of the imagination in this scene is not the comfort of a fantasy but a revelation of

reality. The exterior world has no justice to offer him, and any sense of right and wrong must come from his own mind. The imaginary trial demonstrates the usefulness of the imagination in *King Lear*—not as a cure for chaos, but as a means to make sense of a mad world.

At this point, the plot leaves Lear and does not return to him until he has formed a completely different notion of justice. Focus shifts to the subplot, although because it so closely parallels the main action it has implications for Lear as well. Gloucester and Lear both trust the wrong children and punish their innocent offspring. Both likewise suffer terrible consequences for this mistake, and eventually lose faith in everything that once provided their lives with order and meaning. Goneril and Regan are not sentenced at the end of the imaginary trial, yet the next scene details the eye-gouging punishment that might have been fitting for these wicked daughters, but which they rather enact against Gloucester. In a way, this is a further violence against Lear too, flouting his efforts at justice by inflicting further atrocities on Lear's parallel persona. Gloucester's subsequent suicide attempt magnifies the sorrow that Lear endures because his motives in doing so are akin to the torments also afflicting Lear.

Gloucester's blindness and suicide attempt also extend the thematic relationship between chaos and the imagination, demonstrating the latter's antidotal properties. Blindness is inherently chaotic. It turns the entire world into an unknown, while rendering the subject less mobile and therefore less safe. It also represents a return to the pre-creation world of Genesis, before God brought light and therefore order to the universe. Blindness, however, does not affect Gloucester as one might expect. He himself admits, "I stumbled when I saw" (4.1.19), and only mourns the mistake he made in turning against Edgar. Pertaining to the loss of his eyes, he says simply, "I have no way and therefore want no eyes" (4.1.18). For Gloucester, being blind does not suddenly prevent him from seeing reality, but rather reveals that what he has been

looking at all along has been a lie, forcing him to rely more heavily on his imagination. Gloucester even seems strangely glad that he is blind because it exposes that he has relied on false sight, saying, "Full oft 'tis seen, / Our means secure us, and our mere defects / Prove our commodities" (4.1.19-21). He is even more right than he realizes, since immediately afterwards he is unknowingly reunited with his loyal son Edgar, who leads him under the guise of a madman.

Once they reach the fields near Dover, Edgar tests the limits of the imagination in an attempt to save his father by letting him try to kill himself. Edgar assures the audience "Why I do trifle thus with his despair / Is done to cure it" (4.6.33-34). Yet his methods are curious: why does he not merely reveal his identity to his father? Gloucester himself says of his son, "Might I but live to see thee in my touch, / I'd say I had eyes again!" (4.1.23-24), and surely this joy should be enough to drive out his suicidal impulse. It is possible Edgar worries that this would be too overwhelming for his father, and indeed when he finally does reveal his identity Gloucester's heart "[bursts] smilingly" (5.3.201). But in the fields near Dover, Edgar has another intention that underlies his approach. Gloucester has a particular need to think that his life is directed by higher forces. His adherence to astrology in Act 1 reveals this desire, especially because he so quickly references the influence of heavenly bodies as an explanation for his son's supposed treachery. This is also why he is so susceptible to both the villainous suggestions of Edmund as well as the imaginative guiding of Edgar: he wants to be led. After his eyes are gouged out, however, Gloucester loses his sense of direction (literally and figuratively) and says dejectedly, "As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' gods, / They kill us for their sport" (4.1.36-37).

Edgar realizes that to truly restore his father he must reestablish a sense of order and

purpose for Gloucester, and this entails recreating gods that care. But in doing so, Edgar does not merely describe the gods—he essentially *becomes* a god. He forms an entire world in the imagination that is nonetheless completely real to Gloucester, right down to "The crows and choughs that wing the midway air" and "The fishermen that walk upon the beach" (4.6.13, 17). Then, Edgar further creates people for his new world: both the persona of Poor Tom and the man on the beach. His ability to change his identity with such ease and rapidity suggests a power of shape shifting not unlike that of the gods of Greek mythology.

But the most significant godlike quality that Edgar demonstrates is his control over Gloucester's life and death. Because Edgar convinces him that his suicide attempt and miraculous survival is real, it has the same significance in Gloucester's mind as if he had really jumped off a cliff and been saved by a heavenly power. Every stage in Gloucester's experience is facilitated by Edgar. He convinces his father that they are on a cliff, recounts how Gloucester "perpendicularly fell" (4.6.54), and supplies Gloucester with the idea that his surviving is the will of the gods, saying, "Thy life's a miracle" (4.6.55) and "Think that the clearest gods, who made them honors / Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee" (4.6.74). He even gives Gloucester cause to think that his decision to commit suicide was the doing of the demonic, claiming that Poor Tom was really "some fiend" (4.6.72) with "a thousand noses, / Horns whelked and waved like the enridgèd sea" (4.6.71). The ploy works perfectly on Gloucester: he follows Edgar's every word, and at last declares, "[Henceforth] I'll bear / Affliction till it do cry out itself / 'Enough, enough,' and die" (4.6.75-77).

But one uncertainty remains: yes, Gloucester's sense of meaning and purpose is restored, but is it unstable because it is based on a lie? Or, put another way, is an imaginary miracle truly as powerful as a real one? Edgar is testing the limits on the imagination's ability to make

meaning out of chaos.

Gloucester's newfound purpose for living may seem flimsy and delusional, but if examined more closely, Edgar's lies contain elements of truth. Is Gloucester's belief that the gods care about his existence all a delusion? If so, it is certainly no more delusional than his original views from before he was blinded. His loss of faith in the gods is brought about by bitterness at his personal misfortune, but with this bitterness removed he can easily return to his old conception of the universe. This doesn't mean that his original idea was necessarily true, but Edgar conveys the truthful sentiment that a brief period of tragedy may be an inadequate reason to disregard a lifetime of belief. Additionally, the fact that Edgar intervenes to save his father may be just as much the rescuing act of the gods as the imagined miracle would be. The essential facts of the matter are unchanged: Gloucester intends to commit suicide, by some miracle comes across his son, and is rescued from death. It is easy to pinpoint a feat like jumping off a cliff and landing unscathed as divine intervention, but having a loving son who was lost and regaining that son at precisely the right moment is significantly miraculous.

At this point in the play the subplot rejoins the main action, as Lear stumbles upon Gloucester and Edgar in the field. Lear's absence during several scenes is unexplained, nor is it clear why he became separated from the companions that surrounded him when he was last seen. But he too appears to have reached an epiphany, and in accordance with the close parallels of the double plots, he also stands at the edge of a precipice—into pure madness. Naked except for flowers, incoherent one minute and uncannily wise the next, Lear has put together the fragmented notions of justice that troubled him during the imaginary trial of Goneril and Regan.

Lear gives a tirade on justice and injustice, in which he denounces the corrupt legal system for pardoning those who are truly guilty because they are in power, whereas the poor who

commit minor offenses meet brutal sentences. He says, "The usurer hangs the cozener. / Through tattered clothes small vices do appear; / Robes and furred gowns hide all" (4.6.165-167). Lear has been stripped of his reliance on external systems of justice, and instead expounds upon his newfound internal awareness of right and wrong. His vivid imaginings of the usurer, the cozener, the whore, and all the other sinful characters demonstrate that he recognizes true wrongdoing regardless of external appearances (4.6.152-175). Here he is skirting the edges of what is really on his mind, his personal injustice, and more importantly the injustice that he enacted against Cordelia. In the midst of his mad imaginings, he finally appears to comprehend the culpability of his own wrongdoing, since all of his examples feature a guilty authority figure abusing those in his power. At last he repents of the action that first enabled chaos to reign, and is therefore ready to be reconciled with Cordelia.

After this scene, the influence of the imagination fades, the characters reenter society, and tragedy mounts. In the end death claims its victims, taking the good and the bad indiscriminately, and society is further thrust into universal dissolution with none of the royal family left alive, no justice, and no reason why. Furthermore, all the deaths seem senseless, as most of the characters died unnecessarily. The efforts of the imagination to counteract this chaos actually exacerbate the final sorrow, since it allows the characters to piece together their broken world only to see it ultimately shattered.

But this is precisely what prevents the ending from dissolving into nihilistic meaninglessness. There is no justice in society, but Lear recognizes injustice and discovers an internal sense of right and wrong, what the world *should* be. Gloucester dies for seemingly no good reason, but until then he lives with a sense of purpose. It is the imagination that bestows this knowledge upon them, and its unconventional wisdom has merit even after their deaths. If

they did not try to understand their world, did not glimpse the heart of human nature, and did not discover through their imaginations an internal sense of justice and meaning, then the audience might be apathetic towards these characters in the final scene. It is their internal struggle to right the upended world that gives the play a pervasive sense of meaning.

This concept has implications beyond the scope of this single play, for literature, art, and especially the theater. Plays, as imaginative devices, explain the trials of life as logic never could. As the audience empathizes with Lear or questions the justice of their own lives, what does it matter that the story is not real? It resonates with the audience on a deeper level. Just as Lear, Gloucester, and their companions discover that removal from reality actually lets them see into its underlying truths, so too does the audience peer through this same window. The freedom of the imagination is the only response to a crumbling world in both *King Lear* as well as everyday life, for rather than trying to restore society's false order, it unearths true justice and purpose. The untamed imagination—in all its mad uncertainties—is therefore the only stability in chaos.

NOTE

Critics such as Jan Kott and G. Wilson Knight uplift the imaginative power in *King Lear*, but note the potential grotesque elements in the play's portrayal on stage. Kott maintains that the imaginative scenes must be depicted through miming rather than props and sets, and Shakespeare's words will paint the picture in the mind's eye (Kott 144). Yet because of the mimicry required, scenes such as Gloucester's attempted suicide and others take on a grotesque similarity to clowning (149). Knight also recognizes this disjunction, noting that the fantastically imaginative can easily be seen as disturbingly comical (Knight 108).

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The Argumentative Structure of "L'Allegro" and "I1 Penseroso"

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E. M. Tillyard in 1932 noted the connection of Milton's companion poems to the Prolusions, undergraduate exercises in which the student was expected to be able to argue equally either side of an issue. That connection has influenced many critics to emphasize the balanced presentations of the poems. This notion that the poems are to be considered as symmetrical parts was stated by C. W. R. D. Moseley in 1991, who concludes: "Penseroso and Allegro, the voices of men dominated by a single humour, have no proper complexion, no proper balance or moderation. While each has some substantial part of a truth, neither has it whole or recognizes the need for balanced cooperation between absolutes; and the weaknesses of each are revealed both by the contrasting poem and by the internal discourse of each" (140).

Barbara Lewalski in 2001 takes the opposing position when she discusses the genre of the poems and explains that there are multiple genres employed in contrasting the alternative lifestyles. She sees the similarity to Elegy VI and argues that, while Milton does not reject the lesser forms of poetry, he "contrasts kinds of art and life and sets them in some hierarchical relation. A progression is implied from the genres L'Allegro enjoys to the higher kinds Il Penseroso delights in: from folk tales to allegorical romance, from comedy to tragedy; from Lydian airs to bardic and Christian hymns" (6).

Tillyard has argued for connection to the early academic exercises on the basis of tone, diction, and imagery, but later critics point out that the parallels to the Prolusions on these grounds occur early in the poems and are most noticeable in "L'Allegro" (Nicholson citing Sprott

62). Marjorie Hope Nicholson moves the connection to the Prolusions one step further, however, by considering the overall structure of the works.

It is clear that the imagery, ably analyzed by Rosemund Tuve, J. Cameron Allen, and others, provides structure to some sections of the poem. The overall structure, however, is based on an argumentative form consisting of five parts in each poem which can be called the rejection, invitation, exemplum, generalization, and conclusion. Tuve, among others, has called attention to the fact that "each poem begins with a banishing of the travesty of what is praised in the other" (24) and which is clearly differentiated from the rest of the poem by a change in rhythm and rhyme scheme.

In "L'Allegro" as in "I1 Penseroso" the second section, the invitation, is characterized by the repetition of vocatives addressed to the Goddess being invited. There are four such addresses in "L'Allegro:"

> But come thou Goddess fair and free (11)
>
> Haste thee nymph, and bring with thee (25)
>
> Come, and trip it as ye go (33)
>
> Mirth, admit me of thy crew (38);

and four in "I1 Penseroso:"

> But hail thou Goddess, sage and holy,
>
> Hail divinest Melancholy (11-12),
>
> Come pensive Nun, devout and pure (31),
>
> Come, but keep thy wonted state (37).

These addresses maintain the mood of the invitation by reminding the reader that the Goddess is being invoked in direct contrast to the rejections which begin with "Hence."

Following the invitation or the unit of direct contrast with the rejection is the third part or exemplum. This middle section consists of an ideal day or night, for it continues the argument by presenting the model activities of the way of life that has been proposed in the invitation.

In each poem the beginning of the exemplum is marked by the song of a bird which signals the start of the model day. In "L'Allegro" it is the lark:

> To hear the Lark begin his flight,
> And singing startle the dull night,
> From his watch-tow’r in the skies,
> Till the dappled dawn doth rise. (41-44)

It is the song of the nightingale that commences the list of activities for the melancholy man in "I1 Penseroso."

> 'Less Philomel will deign a Song,
> In her sweetest, saddest plight,
> Smoothing the rugged brow of night,
> While Cynthia checks her Dragon yoke,
> Gently o'er th'accustom'd Oak;
> Sweet Bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,
> Most musical, most melancholy! (56-62)

The exemplum is also differentiated by placing the speaker in space and time. The speaker in "L'Allegro" locates himself in his chamber just before dawn, and the speaker in "I1 Penseroso" locates himself on the green as the moon is "Riding near her highest noon" (68).

In "L'Allegro" the day progresses through its periods, each period has its own activities, and each activity has its own music. The song of the lark precedes the day, the morning has the whistling of the plowman and the milkmaid's song, the afternoon has the music of the "merry Bells" and "jocund rebecs," and the evening has the "native Wood-notes wild" of a Shakespeare comedy. There is not merely a movement from one type of music to another; there is a controlled progression up the scale from the natural song of the lark, to the simple tunes of the milkmaid or plowman, to the instrumented music of the dancers, on to the climax of the refined music of Shakespeare.

As this musical climax is reached, the exemplum comes to a close. Previously the speaker has used the words "oft" and "some times" and has proposed alternate activities so that there is a sense of repeated or typical activities, but now in line 135 the word "ever" occurs turning the movement of the poem from a typical day to a generalization for all of his life:

> And ever against eating Cares,
>
> Lap me in soft Lydian Airs. (135-36)

From line 135 to line 150 the generalization, the fourth part in the argumentative structure, occurs in which the mirthful man now gives a generalized view of life as further evidence. This view of the mirthful life is completely in terms of music. It has its basis in the musical climax of the Shakespeare songs and moves on further until the mirthful man claims that Mirth can provide her company with songs more wonderful than even those of Orpheus. Her songs could have set Eurydice unconditionally free, that is without the condition of Orpheus not looking back. The speaker has made his final and climactic argument for the mirthful life, and his conclusion is brief and definite:

> These delights if thou canst give,

Mirth, with thee I mean to live. (151-52)

The structure of "Il Penseroso" again parallels that of "L'Allegro," but there are certain deviations most clearly revealed in the treatment of music. Once again there is a series of various kinds of music, each appropriate to the time of day and activity and each ascending higher than the previous. The beginning is still the song of a bird, this time the nightingale, but the next step is not a simple rustic ditty but the songs of four of the greatest poets. There is a progression among these poets from Musaeus, an early, semi-mythological Greek poet to Orpheus, the greatest of the legendary Greek poets, then upward to the Christian poets and Chaucer, and culminating in the "sage and solemn tunes" of Spenser. The musical climax of the exemplum in "L'Allegro" was the songs of Shakespeare, and in the generalization the ultimate that could be said for the music of Mirth was that it exceeded Orpheus. In "I1 Penseroso" the first step goes beyond the furthest reaches of the music of Mirth, and the next step, the music of the daytime scene, is divine music:

And as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or th'unseen Genius of the Wood. (151-54)

This music is only to be heard by good mortals, those who are pure. The idea is certainly similar to if not identical with that of the Second Prolusion, "On the Music of the Spheres," in which Milton says, "If our hearts were as pure, as chaste, as snowy as Pythagoras' was, our ears would resound and be filled with the supremely lovely music of the wheeling stars" (604).

With this climactic mention of divine music heard only by the dedicated and sanctified few, the exemplum ends. As in "L'Allegro" "Som time" and "oft" were used in the exemplum to

typify the activities. Now in line 155 "never" occurs signaling the beginning of the fourth part, the generalization: "But let my due feet never fail." The sense of time vanishes, but the scene remains well defined. First the scene of the "studious Cloister's pale" and then the scene of the "peaceful hermitage" for his old age are defined. There is a further change from "L'Allegro" in that the generalization is not expressed solely in terms of music. There is a parallel to the musical culmination of "L'Allegro" in:

> There let the pealing Organ blow,
>
> To the full voic'd Choir below,
>
> In Service high and Anthems clear,
>
> As may with sweetness, through mine ear, Dissolve me into ectasies, And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes. (161-66)

But once again "I1 Penseroso" not only parallels the elements of "L'Allegro" but goes beyond them: Melancholy has more to offer than the effect of her music:

> And may at last my weary age
>
> Find out the peaceful hermitage,
>
> The Hairy Gown and Mossy Cell,
>
> Where I may sit and rightly spell,
>
> Of every Star that Heav'n doth shew,
>
> Of every Herb that sips the dew;
>
> Till old experience do attain
>
> To something like Prophetic strain. (167-74)

Melancholy offers not only a worldly wisdom, but a divine wisdom. Through her the speaker has heard divine nature speak, and through her he has the opportunity of becoming a seer. The last two lines again form the conclusion of the argumentative structure.

> These pleasures Melancholy give,
>
> And I with thee will choose to live. (175-76)

Both the mirthful man and the melancholy man stand as representatives of ways of life which were highly approved by Milton. The invited forms of Mirth and Melancholy are alternative ways of life against which no word is spoken. But the parallel structure forces the reader to be aware of the differences between these alternatives, and these differences reveal to the reader that in Milton's mind the melancholy life of solemn, purposeful, religious living would yield greater rewards and therefore is more highly valued. Just as in the Sixth Elegy Milton compares the elegaic and the epic poet as alternatives for Charles Diodati and himself, so in these poems he compares two ways of life. But in that elegy Milton mentions his work on the "Nativity Ode," the poem in which he dedicates himself to God as a poet-priest, or as he says in the Sixth Elegy, "For truly, the bard is sacred to the gods and is their priest" (52). Milton was committed to the life of Melancholy from December of 1629, if not earlier. There is certainly no disparagement of the life of Mirth just as there is no disparagement of the elegaic poet in the Sixth Elegy, but Milton's plans for his own future were toward the life of Melancholy and the "Prophetic strain" of an epic poet.

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Epistemological Limitations on Human Knowledge in *Paradise Lost*

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The discussion regarding Milton's moral viewpoints in *Paradise Lost* begins with identifying and developing appropriate attitudes towards Milton's "knowledge of good and evil" (Milton 493.7.543). What sort of "knowledge" does Milton intend in that phrase? Many scholars have discussed the significance of "good" and "evil," regarding the fall; however, the concept of epistemological limitation—what a human ought to know and what knowledge ought stay unknown—remains largely unconsidered. Such a study of *Paradise Lost* requires an epistemological approach to the text, an analysis of Milton's use of the term "knowledge." Milton boldly identifies his primary goal of *Paradise Lost* early in Book 1, determined to "justify the ways of God to men" (295.1.26). Such a claim lends itself to a philosophical appraisal of Milton's self-identified design. Does Milton, in fact, provide his audience with a sound definition of moral knowledge? And, furthermore, does he offer sufficient justification to support these claims? Milton introduces contrasting representations of moral understanding through two perspectives: first, through the moral teachings of Raphael, and later through Satan's temptations of Eve. Milton, furthermore, fosters a complex dialogue between these two models of knowing by establishing Adam and Eve as interpreters of both the divine and the demonic persuasions. Since Adam and Eve's moral knowledge develop chronologically, this study will approach the text in the same manner, preserving Milton's original dramatic sequence, and arriving—ultimately—at mankind's limited understanding of the knowledge of good and evil.

Milton introduces the first direct discussion of knowledge in Book Seven. Raphael introduces the concept with great caution, stating, "this also thy request with caution asked / obtain: though to recount almighty works / what words or tongue of Seraph can suffice, / or heart of man suffice to comprehend?" (480.7.111-114). Raphael begins his speech on knowledge with a rhetorical question suggesting the inadequacy of both the teacher and pupil to engage into such a conversation with perfect accuracy. Emphasizing such a level of difficulty suggests the absolute complexity of "almighty works" and establishes early on that full divine knowledge is unobtainable, and best left unquestioned. There is little, I think, to dispute in this matter.

The more interesting argument, however, is defining where in fact the line between obtainable and unobtainable knowledge lies according to Milton's philosophy. Raphael describes this branch of obtainable know as:

> Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve
> to glorify the Maker, and infer
> thee also happier, shall not be withheld
> thy hearing, such commission from above
> I have received, to answer thy desire
> of knowledge within bounds. (480.7.115-120)

Raphael indicates certain distinct limitations on the variety of knowledge that Adam may pursue. By stating "what thou canst attain," Raphael explicitly defines the level of human comprehension as limited. Within this pragmatic boundary, then, Raphael sets two additional qualifiers on knowledge: first, knowledge ought to "serve to glorify the maker" and, secondly, should that "infer thee [Adam/mankind] also happier." Thus, the twofold moral restriction depends first upon the knowledge's relationship to God and his glory, yet also it depends on one's individual

happiness—such are the justifying principles of "knowledge within bounds" according to Raphael.

The angel continues his speech with knowledge by addressing that which is out of bounds, so to speak. He describes this body of knowledge as something to avoid:

> . . . beyond abstain
> to ask, nor let thine own inventions hope
> things not revealed, which th' invisible King,
> only omniscient, hath suppressed in night,
> to none communicable in Earth or Heaven:
> enough is left besides to search and know. (480.7.120-125)

Raphael warns Adam to remain content with knowledge within bounds on several grounds. The angel suggests that Adam may feel provoked to allow his "own inventions," or his imagination, to fill the void of "things not revealed," and furthermore asserts to Adam that "th' invisible King" leaves such knowledge "suppressed in night" for a reason known only to God. In fact, Raphael's command, "abstain," foreshadows the future harm deep-rooted in pursuing knowledge beyond man's need; for, Adam and Eve's disobedience stains the human race with original sin. To illuminate Raphael's final claim, he introduces a food simile, which develops over the course of *Paradise Lost*, which grows as the temptation grows nearer:

> But knowledge is as food, and needs no less
> her temperance over appetite, to know
> in measure what the mind may well contain,
> oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
> wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind. (480.7.126-129)

In this simile, Raphael establishes the importance of self-restraint and awareness. Comparing knowledge to food suggests an inherent need for knowledge. The need for mental sustenance appears as basic as that for physical sustenance. Such a hunger for knowledge, however, "needs no less her temperance over appetite." Like the stomach, the mind possesses a distinct limitation to how much sustenance is required, or can even fit, for that matter. Thus, since such a limitation exists, it remains in the best interest of the individual "to know in measure what the mind may well contain." Raphael here explains perhaps the most important knowledge to pursue is the capacity of the human mind. Such knowledge enables one to discern the necessity of all other knowledge: either a bit of knowledge follows Raphael's regulations defining "knowledge within bounds," or the bit of knowledge is "surfeit," and is best oppressed. Just as victual nourishment sustains life, mental nourishment sustains wisdom; however, as Raphael asserts, an excess of either form of nourishment no longer provides benefits to the individual—consuming too much knowledge ends in "folly," in the same was as consuming too much food causes "wind." Considering the strong emphasis on acknowledging the line between enough and too much, Raphael seems to suggest that "the knowledge of good and evil" depends primarily on the conscious recognition of a thought or behavior and one's ability to discern which of those are good, and which evil.

Raphael further justifies his understanding of the knowledge of good and evil in Book VIII through his continued dialogue with Adam. As Adam inquires deeper into the mysteries of the universe, Raphael finally advises him that:

> To ask or search I blame thee not, for heav'n
> is as the book of God before thee set,
> wherein to read his wondrous works, and learn

his seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years: (499-500.8.66-69)

Milton views man's journey to find truth as a process in which the individual must "ask or search" for the answers. Raphael admits no blame that mankind possesses such an inherent desire to pursue the answers to life's many mysteries; rather, the angel justifies the search by drawing a parallel between nature and books, through which, according to Milton, God set heaven before mankind "wherein to read his wondrous works, and learn." The wondrous works of nature create an acceptable system of inquiry from which the individual may learn the magnificence of God to better glorify the Maker. The colon that concludes the passage above acts as a monumental transition in the angel's speech. The inherent search for truth Raphael explains prior to the colon exemplifies "knowledge within bounds;" however, the passage directly following the colon represents the type of knowledge best left unexplored. This latter passage reads:

"this to attain, whether heav'n move or Earth,
imports not, if thou reckon right; the rest
from man or angel the great Architect
did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
its secrets to be scanned by them who ought
rather admire." (499-500.8.70-75)

Raphael addresses a particularly seventeenth-century scientific discovery, whether heav'n move or Earth, and claims that such bears no actual importance if one happens to "reckon right." Such a discovery neither better glorifies the Maker nor infers one happier, and thus does not fulfill the requirements set by Raphael to be considered "knowledge within bounds." Raphael further contends that neither man nor angel has the authority to "divulge [heaven's] secrets." In fact, knowledge plays a similar role for angel and mankind alike. Both creatures "ought rather admire"

God's architecture and take joy in the greatness of His complexity. Raphael restates the limitations of the human mind and adds further insight, reiterating the importance that some knowledge is best left undiscovered:

> God to remove his ways from human sense,
> placed heav'n from Earth so far, that earthly sight,
> if it presume, might err in things too high,
> and no advantage gain. (501.8.119-122)

Raphael now advises Adam that if he attempts to solve the mysteries of the universe with his limited "earthly sight," he "might err in things too high and no advantage gain." This warning, specifically, bears a heightened significance as, I believe, Satan's fall, as well as Eve's fall, derives from erring in things too high. Human and divine thought can only attain a certain level of knowledge. Finally, Raphael concludes his justification of knowledge within bounds by definitively stating the appropriate capacity of human thought:

> Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid,
> leave them to God above, him serve and fear;
> of other creatures, as him pleases best,
> wherever placed, let him dispose: joy thou
> in what he gives to thee, this Paradise
> and thy fair Eve; heav'n is for thee too high
> to know what passes there; be lowly wise:
> think only what concerns thee and thy being;
> dream not of other worlds, what creatures there
> live, in what state, condition or degree,

contented that thus far hath been revealed

not of Earth only but of highest Heav'n. (502-503.8.167-178)

The first several lines of this passage reiterate the two qualities that signify what knowledge lies within bounds. The added significance in this passage, however, appears in the continuation of the height imagery introduced in the previous passage. After asserting now twice that "heav'n is for thee too high to know what passes there," the angel introduces a new concept, instructing Adam to "be lowly wise." Through Raphael, Milton establishes a class of knowledge fit for human thought, and suggests that such wisdom should prove humbling to the human condition. Raphael advices Adam to "think only what concerns thee and thy being" because to dream of other worlds or consider alternative states, conditions, or degrees, as we will soon see in Eve's considerations leading up to the fall, ultimately opens the door to temptation.

As Raphael's pupil, Adam becomes the student and representative of the divine image knowledge within bounds and through his reply shows a clear understanding of the importance of epistemological limitations. Adam's summarizes his interpretation of this perspective, stating:

God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,

and not molest us, unless we ourselves

seek them with wand'ring thoughts, and notions vain.

But apt the mind or fancy is to rove

unchecked, and of her roving is no end;

till warned, or by experience taught, she learn,

that not to know at large of things remote

from use, obscure and subtle, but to know

that which before us lies in daily life,

is the prime wisdom; what is more, is fume,
or emptiness, or fond impertinence,
and renders us in things that most concern
unpracticed, unprepared, and still to seek. (503.8.180-197)

In the first sentence, Adam addresses how God does not wish to disturb, or "molest," mankind with distant "anxious cares," which appears to correctly interpret Raphael's teaching that God purposely removed his ways from human sense. Additionally, Adam recognizes the inherent pull to seek with wand'ring thoughts the complexities of heaven, for—as he says—"apt the mind or fancy is to rove unchecked." In stating such, Adam has consciously identified the ambitious thoughts "which might err in things too high." Accordingly, Adam follows a pattern of logical similar to Raphael's and ascertains that "to know that which before us lies in daily life, is the prime wisdom." Furthermore, Adam indicates his understanding that there is, indeed, an epistemological limitation to the human mind. He is able to discern between good knowledge, which leads to better glorify the Maker and infer happiness, and bad knowledge, which "is fume, or emptiness, or fond impertinence." Adam's response to Raphael suggests that he now possesses a semantic knowledge of good and evil, which enables Adam sufficient to defend himself against temptation.

Eve, however, had not the same advantage of Raphael's in-depth, semantic seminar on the knowledge of good and evil. Lacking such extensive training, Eve experiences the unbounded curiosity about the world without yet knowing that such wandering thoughts are those that lead to error. Thus unprepared Eve unwittingly encounters a false tutor, Satan, who leads her in his seminar on knowledge beyond the limitations of divine knowledge. Eve's initial response to the strange talking serpent reveals mankind's innate curiosity:

What may this mean? Language of man pronounced
by tongue of brute, and human sense expressed?
The first at least of these I thought denied
to beasts, whom God on their creation-day
created mute to all articulate sound;
the latter I demur, and in their actions oft appears.
I knew, but not with human voice endued;
redouble then this miracle, and say,
how cam'st thou speakable of mute, and how
to me so friendly grown over to rest
of brutal kind, that daily are in sight?
Say, for such wonder claims attention due. (533.9.553-566)

Against Raphael's divine theory of knowledge (of which, of course, Eve is ignorant), Eve divulges into concerns beyond her and her own being. Eve immediately questions the meaning of a talking brute rather than seeking what glory she could find in this mysterious encounter, and as foreshadowed by Raphael's dialogue, such a high line of inquiry does indeed lead to error. In desiring an explanation to this strange phenomenon, Eve's imagination entertains several false beliefs. Eve misperceives the experience, first, by believing that the serpent speaks, which is not entirely accurate. It is not the serpent who can speak, but the embodiment of Satan. Additionally Eve too-hastily suggests that the serpent's use of language alone affirms human sense. From these initial misperceptions, Eve continues to follow a line of now-erring logic until she outright disagrees, or "demurs," with what she once thought she knew about the beasts and their creations. The ambiguity between her imagination and her previous knowledge of creation causes

skepticism in Eve and she approaches the serpent with an exaggerated desire to understand "this miracle." In the final line of Eve's first response, she explicitly disregards the boundaries of knowledge and unknowingly allows Satan another chance to speak and corrupt her.

Eve's second response to the serpent, however, provides evidence that suggests that she, like Adam, possesses sufficient education to discern knowledge within bounds. For, though she had not the privilege of learning directly from Raphael, she is a pupil of Adam, who has the task of presenting Eve with the necessary concerns of his conversation with the angel. After hearing the excessive flattery of Satan for a second time, Eve shows thorough understanding of these principles, responding:

> "Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
> the virtue of that fruit, in thee first proved:
> but say, where grows the tree, from hence how far? (535.9.615-617)

The first two lines, Eve identifies the serpent's "overpraising" as an indication of dubious virtue, which suggests that she possesses some moral knowledge, can detect lies, and knows to doubt such claims. Eve appears to distinguish true virtue from false and thus possesses sufficient agency to discern good knowledge from bad; however, Eve oversteps this boundary again and continues to pursue bad knowledge from a false tutor, even while admitting her skepticism. Just as the colon in Raphael's speech to Adam indicated the transition between good and bad knowledge, so too does Eve's colon after "proved" indicate the moment in which Eve inquires after bad knowledge.

Eve's unwarranted pursuit of knowledge without bounds provides an opportunity for Satan to reveal a false, Satanic perspective on knowledge. Contrary to Raphael's divine theory of

knowledge, Satan's epistemology encourages an absolute pursuit of knowledge without restraint. He begins his explanation of knowledge through a sort of distorted invocation to the tree:

> O sacred, wise and wisdom-giving plant,
> Mother of science, now I feel thy power
> within me clear, not only to discern
> things in their causes, but to trace the ways
> of highest agents, deemed however wise. (537.9.679-683)

The serpent idolizes the Tree, calling it at once "sacred," "wise," and "wisdom-giving." Satan, like Eve, bases his statements off of false beliefs, though in his case he does so intentionally. Neither Eve nor Satan know for certain what, if any, knowledge the Tree actually confers, for no one, to this point, as yet tasted the Fruit. Regardless, Satan assures Eve that he feels the Tree's "power within [himself] clear," and furthermore addresses that such powers include discernment ("discern things in their causes") and divine knowledge ("tracing the ways of highest agents"). Eve's previous speech suggests she already possesses the first and Raphael's epistemological limitations address and warn against the latter. Thus the question should remain if the fruit contains any knowledge whatsoever, or if the tree stands wholly as a symbolic disobedience to God. Lastly, Satan undermines the concept of "lowly wise" by asserting that Eve may ascend to whatever level and be equal to those angels "deemed however wise." Thus Satan positions the Tree falsely to lead Eve's untrained imagination further into unbounded curiosity, and directs his attention back to Eve, questioning her beliefs in doubt and encouraging her mind to rove unchecked:

> Queen of the universe, do not believe
> those rigid threats of death; ye shall not die:

How should ye? By the fruit? It gives you life

to knowledge . . .

. . . Or will God incense his ire

for such petty trespass, and not praise

rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain

of death denounced, whatever thing death be,

deterred not from achieving what might lead

to happier life, knowledge of good and evil;

of good, how just? Of evil, if what is evil

be real, why not known, since easier shunned? (537.9.684-699)

Using Eve's own false beliefs against her, Satan convinces her that as the fruit did not kill him, it should not kill her either. As is characteristic of Satan, he fills his language with subtle, misguided, false interpretations of the world through eloquent verbiage. The serpent reduces what is in truth the divine command of God to merely "those rigid threats," which obviously undermines the importance of God's order. Satan, furthermore, purposely dismisses the effectiveness of semantic knowledge and replaces it with a desire for empiricism. By representing the fruit as a thing that "gives life to knowledge," Satan engages Eve into a discussion wherein he asserts the best type of knowledge necessarily comes from experience. Raphael argues the only knowledge necessary to abstain from evil is knowledge that such a boundary exists, and thus one should not feel compelled to explore knowledge beyond the set limitation. Satan, however, rejects this divine counsel and demands experiential "knowledge of good and evil." In addition to knowing the knowledge within bounds, Satan wants Eve to question the foundation of the two moral categories: "of good, how just?" "Of evil, if evil be real,

why not known, since easier shunned?" Milton plays off the double-entendre of the word "known." It means, at once, "knowledge of," as well as "experienced." Such ambiguity leads Eve to a more accepting response to Satan's proposal: in believing that she will acquire the knowledge of evil, she accepts Satan's perspective on knowledge; however, in truth, Satan's knowledge leads not to knowing evil, but rather experiencing it.

Eve's final speech before tasting the fruit, in fact, employs rhetorical techniques not unlike Satan's, which suggests that prior to the moment of Eve's disobedience, she is already experiencing an epistemological fall, wherein she accepts the twisted explanation of Satanic knowledge. Eve opens her speech by declaring "Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits" (539.9.745). This phrase overtly contradicts her initial reaction towards the questionable virtue of the fruit when her better judgment could still discern that "[Satan's] overpraising leaves in doubt / the virtue of that fruit." The absolute inversion of Eve's belief suggests the entirety of her transformation has already occurred; she no longer displays even a rudimentary understanding of Raphael's epistemology. Eve attempts, rather, to justify her foreboding disobedience through professing several linguistic distortions of the situation. Eve now interprets Satan's "overpraising" entirely different than before. The miracle that "gave elocution to the mute, and taught / the tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise" now acts as sufficient justification for Eve to experience the tasting of the fruit for herself (539.9.748-749). Eve's use of twisted logic advances to a new high as she exclaims:

> . . . but his forbidding
> commends thee more, while it infers the good
> by thee communicated, and our want:
> for good unknown, sure is not had, or had

and yet unknown, is as not had at all.

In plain then, what forbids us to be wise?

Such prohibitions bind not. (539.9.753-759)

Eve outright denies God's judgment of the forbidden tree and asserts that the act of "his forbidding commends [her] more." This passage indicates the severity of Eve's epistemological corruption. According to Raphael's teachings, a restriction set by God should never commend an individual to break such a restriction. In following Satan's advice and "tracing the ways of highest agents," Eve errs, just as Raphael warns would happen if one attempts things "too high." Proof of Eve's (or any human's) inadequacy to understand divine secrets appears in her justification of "good unknown." She claims such unknown good "is not had, or had and yet unknown, is as not had at all." As Adam points out after her confession, this is not the case. In that later scene, Adam demands that "some cursed fraud / of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown" (543.9.905-906). By stating thus, Adam contends that a "cursed fraud" or evil act committed "yet unknown" remains an evil act all the same. Similarly, contrary to Eve's speech, "good unknown" surely *is* had. Since in actuality God pronounces Eve's goodness at her creation, she has—in one sense—always "known," or experienced, good since the beginning. Eve's misinterpretation of God's command leads to her ultimate claim that God "forbids us to be wise;" however, this too contradicts reality. Raphael has already explained the benefits of asking and searching for knowledge, and contends that mankind should be "lowly wise." Convinced of these faulty rhetorical statements and imagined truths, Eve falls to Satan's temptation and tastes the fruit.

The fruit, however, does not alleviate Eve's growing lack of discernment; rather, similar problems occur post-consumption. Eve struggles to discern whether or not she enjoys the taste of the fruit, contemplating whether she:

> intent now wholly on her taste, naught else
> regarded, such delight till then, as seemed,
> in fruit she never tasted, whether true
> or fancied so, through expectation high
> of knowledge, nor was Godhead from her thought.
> Greedily she engorged without restraint,
> and knew not eating death. (540.9.786-792)

Milton uses inexact language to describe the experience Eve has while consuming the fruit. Eve *seems* to have "never tasted" such delight till then; however, the word "seemed" suggests some level of doubt regarding the any actual delight during the experience. Furthermore, Eve cannot discern between whether the taste is "true or fancied so." Such continued discernment problems argue that the fruit gave, in fact, no useful knowledge of good and evil. Had it done so, Eve could have identified the act as evil; however, her fancied thought and high expectations convolute the actual experience with—as Raphael states it—"dreams of other worlds." Eve dreams of "Godhead" and through this momentary lapse of reality she "engorges without restraint" her appetite for knowledge.

The corruption of evil infiltrates paradise further as Eve returns to Adam and attempts to justify her actions through Satanic empiricism. Her argument follows:

> . . . But I feel
> far otherwise th' event, not death, but life

augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys,

taste so divine, that what of sweet before

hath touched my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh.

On my experience, Adam, freely taste,

and fear of death deliver to the winds. (545.9.983-989)

Eve fuels her argument with pathos and experiential knowledge of evil. Accordingly, she emphasizes the newness of the experience just had, and asserts that it has "opened eyes, new hopes, [and] new joys." Such a retelling of the consumption seems far-removed from the actual experience where she in fact could not even discern whether the delight was true or fancied so. Regardless of this inaccuracy, however, she continues to assert the divinity of the fruit. The final two lines of this passage attest to Eve's fallen condition. Eve asserts her new-found authority over Adam: she is a direct experiencer of the forbidden fruit, and Adam is not. At this moment, Adam must decide whether the semantic knowledge of Raphael or the empirical testimony of Eve holds a heavier philosophical attachment to truth. His decision, however, betrays his own better judgment. While Raphael had trained Adam well to identify and dismiss surfeit knowledge, he lacks the forbearance to follow through with his own true understanding in face of the competing loyalties of fallen Eve and God. Adam acknowledges his understanding that Eve has fallen, stating "how art thou lost, how on a sudden lost, / Defaced, deflow'red, and now to death devote" (543.9.900-901). Yet, despite Adam's proper discernment here, he still avows "me with thee hath ruined, for with thee / certain my resolution is to die" (543.9.906-907). Thus, the significant difference between the two falls appears in their unbalanced imaginations: Eve over-imagines the potential of knowledge without restraint whereas Adam under-imagines his ability to live without Eve in paradise. The two individuals in this moment subscribe to vastly different

epistemological perspectives: Eve's is far too unrestricted, and Adam's, in contrast, proves too restricted. Each fail in drawing the appropriate line between good and bad knowledge and, thus, they fall alike.

Adam, awaking on the first post-lapsarian day, identifies the epistemological variances that lead to their respective falls. In this explanation, Adam describes to Eve that they are:

> . . . true in our fall,
> false in our promised rising; since our eye
> opened we find indeed, and find we know
> both good and evil, good lost, and evil got,
> bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know,
> which leaves us naked thus, of honor void
> . . . of the first
> be sure then. (548.9.1069-1080)

With opened eyes, Adam asserts that they "find [they] know both good and evil." This passage introduces the epistemological concept of *meta-knowledge*, or knowledge about knowledge. Theoretically, an individual does not need to know that he or she knows something to consider it knowledge. In this scene, Adam awakens to the meta-knowledge that he and Eve already possessed sufficient knowledge of good and evil prior to eating the fruit. Additionally, he realizes the empirical discovery of evil offers to them no new knowledge of good and evil, but rather brings about only the feeling of nakedness and honor void. Evil is, simultaneously, the "bad fruit of knowledge" and also the "fruit of bad knowledge." In the first sense, then, one may expect that just as there is "bad fruit of knowledge," there also exists that which is the good fruit of knowledge. The latter interpretation suggests that evil is the byproduct of knowledge without

restraint. In either reading, Adam's elocution suggests the emptiness of the fruit's promise wherein no "rising" actually occurred through their consumption of the fruit.

Any redemptive qualities of Adam and Eve's post-lapsarian existence appears after a second semantic teaching, this time delivered by the Archangel Michael. Adam responds to the history (or future) of the world with a new-found devotion to knowledge within bounds:

> Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,
> greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
> of knowledge, what this vessel can contain;
> beyond which was my folly to aspire.
> Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
> and love with fear the only God, to walk
> as in his presence, ever to observe
> his providence, and on him sole depend,
> merciful over all his works, with good
> still overcoming evil, and by small
> accomplishing great things, by things deemed weak
> subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
> by simply meek; that suffering for truth's sake
> is fortitude to highest victory,
> and, to the faithful, death the gates of life;
> taught this by his example whom I now
> acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest. (627.12.557-573)

There is no longer any doubt of the righteousness of Raphael's original epistemological method,

nor any lingering desire to search beyond "what this vessel can contain." His response suggests a thorough understanding of what is meant to be understood and a contentedness not to aspire further. Adam demonstrates his lowly wisdom by observing "good still overcoming evil, and by small accomplishing great things." Such knowledge exemplifies the "simply meek" qualities and "fortitude" Milton expects from a true Christian spirit. If Satan disguises the bad fruit of knowledge, evil, through Satanic empiricism, then Michael offers the good fruit of knowledge through divine semantic teaching. This new fruit, then, is the acknowledgement of the "Redeemer ever blest," and the experiencer of this far greater fruit "shalt possess a paradise within thee" (627.12.587-588). Thus, the initial corruption of paradise as well as the ultimate redemption of mankind are intimately linked to the epistemological developments concerning Adam and Eve's knowledge of good and evil.

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"'A Lower Flight': Astronomy and Narrativity in *Paradise Lost*"

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Many Milton scholars have tried to discern where the poet sits regarding the question of science in the 17th Century. His cosmography, for example, has been viewed as Ptolemaic. However, modern scholarship has worked toward a mixed view, noticing Milton's sensitivity to the emerging Copernican theory.[1] In *Paradise Lost*, the tension between the old and new science is never greater than in Book 8. When Adam observes that the Earth is "serv'd by [heavenly bodies] more noble then herself," he asks "how Nature wise and frugal could commit / Such disproportions" between Heaven and Earth (26-27, 34). Raphael implores Adam to "solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid" and to "leave them to God above" (167-168). Both the narrator (whom I call "the Bard" from here on out)[2] and Eve concur—"by his count'nance [Adam] seemed / Ent'ring on studious thoughts *abstruse*, which Eve / Perceiving where she sat retired in sight…" (39-41).

What are we to make of this word *abstruse?* In *Of Education*, Milton supports an increase in "the principles of arithmetic, geometry, [and] *astronomy*" (975), yet in the epic the Bard suggests astronomy's futility. I argue that the Bard calls Adam's astronomical inquiry abstruse because Adam is trying to understand Heaven *as* Heaven, whereas Raphael tells Adam that understanding Heaven is achieved by understanding Earth. In effect, Raphael creates a metaphor between Heaven and Earth. Raphael prepares Adam for interpreting this metaphor by giving him the tools for creating metaphor, which I see as practicing something I will call "obvious empiricism." I define obvious empiricism as the process of understanding what is readily at one's disposal. For Adam, the readily available elements are twofold: first is matter (I

focus on the example of food); and second is memory (I focus on the example of Adam's creation). By illustrating the development from matter to metaphor, and from memory to narrative, I figure metaphor and narrative as culminations of the process of obvious empiricism. These culminations are disrupted by Adam's astronomical inquiry, which instead attempts to build theory.

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Prior to the War in Heaven narrative in Book 5, Raphael stresses the similarities between Heaven and Earth. Raphael compares the two in order to temper Adam's curiosity about Heaven and to quell his inferiority complex. When Adam offers the angel food, he fears it may be "unsavory…perhaps / To spiritual natures" (401-402). After eating, Adam expresses appreciation that Raphael even enters his "lowly roof" (463). And finally, when Raphael hints at a divine war narrative, Adam is eager to hear "the full relation, which must needs be strange, / Worthy of sacred silence to be heard" (556-558). Raphael's answers stress the idea that Earth is not too dissimilar to Heaven, or, that Earth can become heavenly. With regards to the food of Eden, Raphael celebrates how God has "varied his bounty so with new delights, / As may compare with Heaven" (430-432). With regards to the "lowly roof," Raphael outlines the possibility of ascent in which man may become all spirit, like angels, and thus "may at choice / Here or in Heav'nly paradises dwell" (499-500). And finally, Raphael solves the problem of relating "th' invisible exploits / Of warring spirits" by "lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms" (565-566, 573). He justifies this creation of metaphor, fittingly enough, with a metaphor: "though what if Earth / Be but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein / Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought?" (574-576). Thus, Heaven and Earth become the two objects of a complex metaphor.

To understand how metaphor operates in *Paradise Lost,* we must first understand how metaphor operates in general. In *The Rule of Metaphor,* Paul Ricoeur elevates the rhetoric of metaphor from the level of the word to the level of the sentence. In a simple example like "nature is a temple," the referents of the metaphor are the words "nature" and "temple." These referents thus constitute a trope of resemblance, in which nature is understood as resembling a temple and vice-versa. When taken as a figure, the metaphor becomes grounded in a theory of substitution, in which nature is being substituted with a temple and vice-versa. Ricoeur claims that this substitution theory is largely based in semiotics, in which the unit of the word carries the primary meaning (3-8). This primary level of metaphor comprehension implies that physical resemblance legitimizes substitution.

When he compares Heaven to Earth, Raphael is thus subscribing to the substitution theory of metaphor, replacing Heaven with Earth. In response to Adam's felt inferiority for human food, Raphael illustrates Heavenly fruit's resemblance to Earthly food:

> Though in Heaven the trees
> Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines
> Yield nectar, though from off the boughs each morn
> We brush mellifluous dews, and find the ground
> Covered with pearly grain… (5.426-430)

Raphael uses the resemblance of Heavenly fruits, for example, as grounds for a substitution theory, which only requires an understanding of the word-units in understanding the metaphor. The word-unit Adam needs to understand is "Earth." Raphael works to create this understanding through the aforementioned practice of "obvious empiricism." I see matter, particularly food, as the element most readily available to Adam.

Food creates a link between Heaven and Earth in *Paradise Lost*. Raphael begins his education of Adam by informing him that angels do in fact eat. "Whatever was created, needs / To be sustained and fed" (5.414-415), says the angel to the human. About two-and-a-half books later, Raphael uses eating in a metaphor meant to further temper Adam's desire for the Creation narrative: "but knowledge is as food, and needs no less / Her temperance over appetite, to know / In measure what the mind may well contain" (7.126-128). Raphael champions this temperance because Adam is trying to learn of "things not revealed…to *none communicable in Earth or Heaven*" (122-124). Knowledge is thus like food because over-indulgence "soon turns / Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind" (129-130). In this metaphor and its explanation, the impossibility of knowing certain "things," for both Adam and Raphael, creates a link between angel and human, between Heaven and Earth. Choosing to voice it as a food metaphor is appropriate because both Raphael and Adam, angel and man, need to eat.

In Book 8, Raphael stresses the practice of obvious empiricism. As a general rule, Raphael says that Adam should "think only what concerns thee and thy being" (174). Instead of soliciting his thoughts "with matters hid" by God, Raphael suggests Adam take joy "in what he gives to thee, this Paradise / And thy fair Eve" (167, 170-172). Despite Raphael's attempts to keep Adam on a straight and narrow path of obvious empiricism, he cannot fully temper Adam's curiosity. When informed that angels eat, Adam asks Raphael for something to compare to heavenly food. In a sense, Adam is asking for a second word-unit in the metaphor "heavenly food is." Raphael does not respond with a metaphor but rather with the foundation of metaphor: the "one first matter all" that is God (5.472). Raphael then poeticizes the scale of nature, which resembles Milton's material monism:

> ...flow'rs and their fruit

Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual, give both life and sense,
Fancy and understanding, whence the soul
Reason receives, and reason is her being,
Discursive, or intuitive… (5.482-488)

Milton's monism thus becomes an appropriate metaphor for the way in which the practice of obvious empiricism informs the higher faculties of mind at work in creating and understanding metaphors. In the previous passage, fruit begins as physical nourishment and ends in the faculty of reason. This "rational substance of human life" arises from the "form which actualizes the sensible as well as the intellectual potentialities in matter."[3] The form that actualizes these potentialities is the human "body," not to be confused with the corporeal material of the human being. As a material monist, Milton believed that matter and spirit were not physically separate but only abstractly separate; spirit and matter coexist. The human "body," in this sense, is the human "form," the totality of corporeal material and spirit.[4] To say that matter has "intellectual potentialities" supports Raphael's desire for Adam to be an obvious empiricist. Though matter has these potentialities, understanding matter *as* matter provides a solid bedrock for the latent intellectual potentialities to be activated by the human "body," the human "form."

Clay Daniel says that Raphael's explication of monism is "an inappropriate response to a simple question" (177). However, one can argue that Adam's question of what compares to heavenly food is not simple at all. In lieu of an answer, Raphael imbues Adam with the *ability* to make comparisons for himself, and not necessarily the object of the comparison he seeks. As has been discussed, Raphael continually stresses the metaphor that Heaven can be understood

through understanding Earth. So, conventional wisdom says that the answer to what can compare to heavenly food is human food. But this would make it a simple question. Raphael's explication of monism recognizes the question's complexity by outlining the connection between the corporeal fruit and the high matter of reason.

Here, we see the substitution theory of metaphor being replaced with an interactive theory. When Ricoeur elevates metaphor to the level of the sentence, semantics, and not semiotics, becomes the basis of meaning. A theory of tension then replaces, or conflicts with, the substitution theory. To refer to the prior example, meaning is not created by substituting "nature" for "temple," but rather by noticing how these two words oppose each other on a literal level. Metaphor thus operates on the two levels of substitution and interaction. Ricoeur does not suggest that one replaces the other, but rather that substitution theory is the ground-work for the tension theory of metaphor.[5] Semiotics is the bed-rock of semantics.

Monism allows Raphael, the Bard, and Milton to see all material items as related, as influenced by and influencing one another. But, the interaction here is not specifically tense. In the prelapsarian context, the connection between all material items is harmonious. If Adam wants to find a word to complete the metaphor "heavenly food is," Raphael suggests that he must understand that any material object he puts in this metaphor is from God, the "one first matter all." Thus, any word-unit can be apropos. Metaphor has yet to undergo its fall; pure substitution, pure resemblance, is sufficient. When metaphor falls in the poem, as everything falls, interaction and tension theory take over. All the potential objects of comparison are no longer easily appropriate. Instead, an interpretive process becomes necessary. But in the prelapsarian context, a purely physical understanding of food, for example, will allow Adam to create his own metaphors.

And create his own metaphors he does. In Book 8, after Raphael admonishes Adam of his astronomical inquiry, Adam deigns to relate the story of his own creation. His desire to become the narrator is motivated by the effect Raphael's discourse has had on him: "for while I sit with thee, I seem in Heav'n, / And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear / Than the fruits of palm-tree pleasantest to thirst / And hunger both" (210-213). In the first line, he explicitly compares his company with Raphael to Heaven, thus signifying an understanding of the Heaven-Earth metaphor. In the last three lines, Adam creates a metaphor, fittingly enough, comparing Raphael's discourse to the palm-tree fruits in Eden. And finally, when Adam begins the narrative of his own creation, he prefaces it with a metaphor:

> …as new waked from soundest sleep
> Soft on the flow'ry herb I found me laid
> In balmy sweat, which with his beams the sun
> Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed. (253-256)

This shows Adam's ability to understand and craft metaphor, and it displays an understanding of material monism. Adam's sweat is dried by the sun, and the resultant vapors feed the sun, signifying the connectedness of Adam and the sun, and thus, the interconnectedness of all matter. Monism not only becomes great material for metaphor, it becomes a primary means from which metaphor is understood.

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Monism also relates to the second readily-available process in Adam's quest to become an obvious empiricist: memory, which leads to the narrative process. D. Bentley Hart goes so far as to qualify Milton as a "narrative monist," in which the metaphysical, theological, and even material conceptions of monism are superseded by Milton's poetic instincts. The fruits of Eden,

for example, are elements within "the endless successiveness of the divine narrative" which "lies open to the advances of the poet." Hart cites God, the "one first matter all," as the impulse behind Milton's strategy as a narrative monist. He is the "God of event, action, story, [and] presence." In this way, Milton parts from doctrinal Christianity. God's role in the War in Heaven and the begetting of the Son, for example, are not traditionally considered story, but are instead accepted vis-à-vis their original scriptural descriptions. Milton, however, either makes these things into narratives or else uses them mostly for narrative purposes.[6] God is alpha and omega in an unfolding monist narrative.

In *Time and Narrative,* Ricoeur outlines a circular theory of narrative. Ricoeur's thesis is that narrative disciplines, fictional or historical, share the function of explicating the temporal character of human experience; time is humanized through narrative organization, and temporal experience legitimizes narrative organization (3). Ricoeur's division of time foregoes past, present and future because he claims that the present is the only one of these three modes that actually ever exists. So, he uses present as an adjective, changing the three modes into the present-past, the present-present, and the present-future. Each can be further subdivided through a three-fold mimesis. For the present-past, the first mimesis is the actual or "real" past. Second, we have the "image" of the past, which exists in the memory. And third is the "representation" of the past, which is embodied by discourse. Memory is thus the first instance outside of the actual, "real" past in which the past is available to human sense and understanding. This is why Ricouer calls memory the "present of past things."[7] Memory is thus posited as the most authoritative means from which the "real" past is embodied, even more so than historical discourses. Though much historical discourse uses a participant's memory as an authoritative source, the memory itself, the image it engenders, is more authoritative than this discourse.

Adam picks up on Raphael's cue and displays an understanding of memory's role in narrative representation. After the Creation narrative, Raphael claims he has fulfilled Adam's request of knowledge by relating "*what before thy memory* was done" (7.637). Adam reiterates this knowledge and takes it one step further: "Thee I have heard relating what was done / *Ere my remembrance*: now hear me relate / My story" (8.203-205). Once Raphael gives Adam the complete narrative of existence, Adam takes the next logical step and begins a new narrative, one beginning with his first memory. In this way, Adam claims to "descend / A lower flight, and speak of things at hand / Useful" (8.198-200). On the surface, this seems to contradict my claim of a Ricoeur-ian primacy of memory. But we must not consider this narrative practice "low" in the sense that it is crass or base. Rather, it is "low" in the sense that it is close to the ground. Memory is the most obvious facet at Adam's disposal if he wishes to construct a narrative of his creation. Just as Adam was an obvious empiricist in turning matter into metaphor, he continues to be an obvious empiricist in this new way, turning memory into narrative.

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The question of why the Bard calls Adam's astronomical inquiry abstruse still remains. As it relates to the argument I have made, I see this inquiry as abstruse for two reasons: one, it forgoes observation of the "obvious" for that of the "far-away;" and two, it disrupts the logical flow of narrative from Book 5 to Book 8.

We have seen how Raphael implores Adam to only think of what concerns his existence and to take joy in what God has provided in Eden. Raphael is instructing Adam's eyes and mental faculties downward, towards the things and processes closest to him. But in his astronomical inquiry in Book 8, Adam's eyes and mind aim high. When Adam says he beholds

"this goodly frame, this World / Of Heaven and Earth consisting" (15-16), it appears as if he has absorbed Raphael's theory of metaphoric substitution, that Heaven and Earth are similar parts of one world. But, he begins to compute their magnitudes. Adam notices that Earth is small and the Heavens are large and nobler. This creates an incongruity in Adam's mind; why would these nobler bodies of Heaven "merely officiate light / Round this opacous Earth" (22-23)? Raphael does not answer Adam's question outright, but reminds him that he should be concerned with Earth: "though in comparison of Heaven so small…may of solid good contain / More plenty than the sun that barren shines, / Whose virtue on itself works no effect, / But in the fruitful Earth" (91-96). To know the sun in and of itself is of no great import until Adam learns that the sun's greatest effect is in animating the fruitful earth. The choice of the adjective "fruitful" directs Adam towards the obvious materiality of the Earth. Raphael's response is strikingly similar to a famous quote by C.S. Lewis, who says he believes in the sun, "not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."[8]

Adam's inquiry also acts as a disruption to the flow of narrative between Books 5 and 8. First, the War in Heaven narrative is told not only because Raphael has been commanded by God to warn Adam of Satan, but also as an explanation of what obedience is. When Raphael tells Adam that his body may "at last turn all to spirit" (5.497) only if he is found obedient, Adam asks what is meant by the phrase "*if ye be found / Obedient*" (513-514, my emphasis). This leads Raphael to explain to Adam how his continual happiness in Eden relies on his free will, and that some of the angels in Heaven have fallen because of their disobedience. This leads to Adam's curiosity for this divine narrative. After Raphael relates the full narrative, he reiterates its purpose as a lesson in obedience, employing irony—"let it profit thee to have heard / By terrible example the reward / Of disobedience" (6.909-911).

Next, Adam predicates his desire for the Creation narrative with a desire to know the cause of the Earth's creation after the fall of the angels. Adam seeks a causal relationship between the lengthy narrative he has heard and God's creation of the Earth, and by extension, God's creation of Adam. Though the cause of the creation is a debated subject,[9] the poem indicates that there is at least a rationale behind God's creation of Earth. It involves the dispeopling of Heaven, the damage done to God the creator, and the extension of God's goodness as a free act rather than a necessitated act.[10] Raphael complies with Adam's request to know this cause, but further cautions him to limit his inquiry, because "enough is left besides to search and know" (7.125). This word "enough" likely refers to Earthly food, for example.

I have argued for the logical basis of Adam's narrative; that the War in Heaven and the Creation are events before Adam's memory, and that Adam's narrative of his creation is the beginning of his memory. Adam's astronomical inquiry in Book 8 becomes abstruse by virtue of sitting in-between the Creation narrative and his own narrative. As the poem moves from each narrative, Adam shows an awareness of moving downward, of moving to matters more pertinent. Adam "deign[s] to descend now lower" when he asks about the creation of Heaven and Earth, just as he descends "a lower flight" when he agrees to relate his memory of his own creation as a narrative.

Raphael posits the alternative as theory-building. Those who attempt to "model Heaven / And calculate the stars," those who attempt to "build, unbuild, [and] contrive" the appearance of Heaven will be met by the laughter of God (8.75-84). Perhaps Milton felt the same way regarding the radical changes occurring to sciences in the 17th century. The emerging Copernican theory of a sun-centered universe was yet to hold the unequivocal authority it does today, but the practice of cosmography, of building a theory of the structure of the cosmos, does

not utilize the most obvious empirical means at the human's disposal. Eve's reaction justifies this abstruseness in favor of obvious empiricism. After Adam asks his questions, she "went forth among her fruits and flowers, / To visit how they prospered, bud and bloom" (8.44-45). Adam can learn something about being an obvious empiricist through Eve. Theory will always be abstruse in the face of obvious empiricism because to empirically prove a theory of cosmography requires a God-like vantage point. When Adam deigns to move to "a lower flight" in telling Raphael of his own creation, he is agreeing to forego the high process of theory-building in favor of his more readily available memory in order to create a narrative representation. Adam humbles himself before the narrative process, no small feat in itself.

NOTES

[1] See Gimelli Martin, "'What If the Sun Be Centre to the World?': Milton's Epistemology, Cosmography, and Paradise of Fools Reconsidered," 231-265.
[2] In *The Two Poets of Paradise Lost*, Robert McMahon distinguishes between the historical Milton and the Miltonic narrator, whom he calls "The Bard."
[3] See Donnelly, "'Matter' versus Body: The Character of Milton's Monism," 82.
[4] Ibid, 78-82.
[5] *Rule of Metaphor,* 3-8.
[6] See Bentley Hart, "Matter, Monism, and Narrative: An Essay on the Metaphysics of *Paradise Lost,*" 82.
[7] See *Time and Narrative,* "The Aporia of the Being and Nonbeing of Time," 7-12.
[8] "Is Theology Poetry?" in *The Weight of Glory,* 116-140.
[9] See Kent R. Lehnhof, "Paradise Lost and the Concept of Creation," 15-41.
[10] See *Paradise Lost,* 7.139-173.

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Wigglesworth's Day of Hope

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The Puritan world view was woven with variegated, dichotomous threads. Since the 1960's, Puritan literary critics have demonstrated the black and white thinking associated with these early American writings. Generally speaking, critics have noted such bifurcations in Puritan thinking as: good and evil, frugality and excess, the world present and the world to come. Specifically, Karen Rowe has demonstrated how Puritans viewed their place in the world in terms of type and antitype ("Prophetic Visions"). Cheryl Walker has shown how Puritans cordoned off the world for both genders: men's lives were public; women's lives were private ("In the Margins"). Robert Daly has drawn attention to the Puritan's preference for symbolic language versus that of the sensual when speaking of ultimate realities (*God's Altar*).

Puritan polarizations with regard to public versus private types of poems were also common. For instance, in what might be called the 'golden age' of Puritan literary criticism, Harrison T. Messerole affirmed a rather obvious idea that "some poets had no audiences at all or wished [for] one" (*American Poetry of the 17th Century xxi-ii*).[1] Messerole agreed with this with regards to Edward Taylor: For forty three years...Taylor was satisfied that God alone be the audience of the *Meditations.* He composed and reworked his poetry until their final form was acceptable to him.*"* Messerole also saw this public/private demarcation in the poetry of other Puritans: "The verses that John Saffin scribbled into his notebook were not intended for an audience"; and the poetry of Anne Bradstreet "might not have been published at all if her brother-in-law had not spirited it away and seen to its publication in London" (*American Poetry,* xxi). For Messerole, "these poets were not writing for an audience, but for themselves

and their God at the urging of their consciences" (*American Poetry*, xxi).

Years later, Agnieszka Salska claimed in her 1984 article "Puritan Poetry: Its Public and Private Strain" that the polarization of public and private modes of cultural expression… remains strikingly clear in poetry" (108); and that the works and careers of three major early American poets—Bradstreet, Taylor and Wigglesworth— markedly demonstrate the particular polarization of both public and private selves in these writers. For Salska, this pattern was more than just a creative choice. It evidenced a "cultural polarization [of the] private and public self (117).

It seems that the clear demarcation of public and private selves in Early American poetry is not an issue. It is a given. Poets speak privately. Poets speak publicly. But perhaps an issue not more frequently addressed to my satisfaction, at least—25 years removed from yesterday's 'golden age' of Puritan literary criticism—is this.

Just how much "cultural polarization of the public and private self" truly exists? It seems Salska's distance might at times be too wide. Indeed, Edward Taylor privately addressed God as in the case of his *Preparatory Meditations.* But even his private meditations envisioned a public moment. His written private meditations prepared him to celebrate a public Eucharist. And then there was Anne Bradstreet. The expression of her private self in her public poem "Upon the Burning of Our House is poignant because of the private grief that inspired it. And then there were the Puritan epigraphs. Those public poetic announcements were sourced in private sentiments which celebrated the life of the departed.

So then, Salska's great divide seems to be narrower than originally suggested. But what was the historical cultural situation that can presently aid one's understanding of the relationship of a Puritan poet's public and private selves? And how can this knowledge shed light on the ways Wigglesworth's private *Diary* and public poem *Day of Doom* were interrelated?

The Relationship of a Puritan Poet's Public/Private Selves.

Many times, Puritan poets reflected a Renaissance understanding of the public and private self. Generally speaking, Puritans associated public space with community responsibility. According to Phillip Aries, the Renaissance had previously created a public space which prized the value of community. An individual's primary mission was to "acquire, defend, or increase his social role within the limits of the community's toleration" ("Introduction" 3). This was also true for the Puritan community. By necessity, a strong sense of interdependence characterized these Early Americans. They banded together to survive all the vicissitudes of life in their new wilderness, and out of this camaraderie grew their sense of social responsibility.

The Renaissance, also affected a poet's public persona. According to Jean Marie Goulemont, before the Renaissance movement lyricism had been "filtered through the subjectivity of the poet; after the Renaissance, however, poetry proceeded "directly to the universal, to a level of generality". Private pain and suffering became "dissimulated behind a veil of dignity and resignation" ("Literary Practices: Publicizing the Private" 374). This obsession with veiled dignity, the abstract, the universal, and the general, especially as regards human failings, can be seen in Wigglesworth's poem "Day of Doom". It is even seen in his "Diary". And just as Puritans inherited Renaissance understandings about public space, they also were affected by its concepts of private space.

According to Phillip Aries, the invention of the printing press and the dissemination of books increased literacy. Many persons learned to read silently. Solitary reflection became possible ("Introduction" 4). As a result, many people began to write private diaries, confessions, and biographies. They did this in order to set themselves apart from the public.

> They wrote to know themselves, but not necessarily to communicate that knowledge to anyone, except perhaps their own children. [These parents hoped their children] would keep their memory alive. People did not necessarily write only about themselves but they wrote for themselves and no one

else.(“Introduction” 5)

Wigglesworth fulfilled this pattern .The public poet was also the private confessor. His diary filled with private confessions reflected a Renaissance influence, especially when he couched his misdeeds behind a veil of dignity, or told of his human failings in mostly abstract, universal, or general ways.

The public and private dimensions of early American poetry also often intertwined in Wigglesworth’s poem. It is my belief that public and private selves, while discernibly distinct were more like two circles often overlapping with tangent lines porously drawn. They were flood gates, not flood walls that allowed the private to flow into the public dimensions of a poet’s life

Consequently, the more important question to ask might not be: “Is this a private or a public poet speaking?” Or, in the words of Salska: “How can the public self and private self be culturally polarized?” Rather, it seems that the far more interesting question might be: “How did the poet’s culture-bound concept of the private self influence the public self in the creative process?”

This essay will attempt to ask and answer this latter question with regard to the “Day of Doom” in its historical context, a 17th-century Early America cultural milieu where distances between public and private selves were shorter, symbiotic, and tangential. A significant cultural and historical reference point for establishing this context will be “The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, 1653-1657.” This essay will demonstrate the reciprocity of Michael Wigglesworth’s private and public selves as seen in the creative processes associated with his jeremiadic ballad the “Day of Doom”.

The Relationship of the Public Self to the Private Self in Michael Wigglesworth’s *Day of Doom*

The “Day of Doom”, composed in 1662 by Michael Wigglesworth was the best selling ballad of its time. Eighteen hundred copies were made available in its first printing, and they quickly sold out within the first year.

This poem remained true to the Puritan intent for most creative arts. It served a catechetical purpose. Quite often read by Puritans alongside the Bible itself, its second edition published in Cambridge (1666) glossed Bible references in its margins. Its vivid imagery and driving fourteeners allowed it to be grasped and memorized even by children. Written as a ballad—a form that served the common person quite well—and written as a poem which according to Bosco “dealt with dramatic monologue and dramatic debate” (*The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth,* xviii), the poem was written as as a pastoral encouragement for Wigglesworth’s readers.

Faithful to a Renaissance understanding of public space, Wigglesworth the poet spoke to a social setting which historically valued and rigidly enforced the importance of Puritan persons living in vital accountability with each other. According to Charlotte Gordon in *Mistress Bradstreet,* Puritans lives centered around a moral code which was a serious and unavoidable requirement. Gordon points out how almost 30 years before Wigglesworth’s birth, all misdeeds against one’s neighbors were immediately reported so that Winthrop and other officials could take “fast and cruel action against these culprits” (“New World New Manners”). Because of this commitment to public morality, this meant that in the 1630’s a Puritan person’s life was probably more public than private.

Nevertheless, there is evidence to support the notion that this kind of public-mindedness was in decline for descendants of the original settlers who did not appreciate their forefathers’ sacrifices, goals, or community requirements. The second generation lived in ways that did not honor their historic faith. In fact, according to Bosco,

> “droughts, storms, pestilence, a high mortality rate, political tensions between the

> authorities of old England and New, a rising crime rate, and, by the end of the century, the presence of witches, all suggested… that God was not ignorant of New England's backsliding" (*The Poems of Michael Wigglesworth*, xx).[2]

Still, though, even in the 1660's, the public dimension of private living remained important for many; and it was for this more-public-than-private cultural context that Wigglesworth wrote his sermonic ballad. Having already received a sign from God regarding a specific vice, he felt it his public pastoral duty to also delineate that sign's meaning for his pastoral public. In this way, he tied the private confessions of his diary to the public address of his poem.

So how did Wigglesworth the private confessor use the dignified, mostly abstract, general, and universal approach to spirituality found in his diary to write a public poem for Puritans who approached their personal piety quite similarly? His public poem will now be interpreted in light of a specific context from his diary.

The Relationship of the Private Self to the Public Self in Michael Wigglesworth's *Day of Doom*

Wigglesworth privately struggled with his own issues. This is evident when one views his *Diary.* Yet surprisingly, even in his most private moments he kept his self at a distance from himself. He described the challenges to his Puritan spirituality in dignified, abstract, and universal ways, but he did not describe them concretely. He would later do similarly in his poem. Aside from the moment where he recorded at least one specific sin, a casual reader of his diary might deem Wigglesworth's misdeeds as very uninteresting. Perhaps a Renaissance influence impacted even his private presentation of his self to himself in his diary. Or, maybe his early American Calvinistic perspective was responsible for his use of language which seemed to make humans abstractly culpable. Perhaps his language in both works reflected an imported

theological doctrine from his Homeland, that belief which said "All humans everywhere are totally depraved in all aspects of their lives".

Whatever the situation, and it could be a case of both reasons, in the diary context closely associated with his poem, he lists only one concrete misdeed. He regretted namely his personal estrangement from his parents. On October 14, 1653, at the age of 52, he confessed and requested Divine pardon for his own lack of compassion for them:

> God brought to my mind in special (being at a private meeting) my want of love and dutifulness to my parents, which I beg'd pardon of (*Diary* 50).

Then later on a sorrowful day (October 15, 1653), he spoke of how his confession to God was followed by the news of his father's death (October 1, 1653).

> And the very next morning news is brought me of my father's death. Whereupon I set myself to confess before the Lord my sins against him in want of all naturall affections to, and sympathy with my afflicted parents, in my not prizing them and their life which god hath graciously continued so long. My greatest request is for pardon of all former sins, and present deliverance from a stupid frame of spirit unsensible of gods visitation and my owne loss in losing such friend. My humble supplication is to the Lord to sanctify his hand to me and all of us whom it concerns and to become a father of the fatherless and husband to the widow. My father dyed the first of October. (*Diary*, 50)

As a Puritan he probably interpreted his father's death as a sign from God, seeing this loss as a private call to contrition. His diary entries evidence how not long before he composed the *Day of Doom* Wigglesworth struggled with his own physical desires—albeit, once again, abstractly. Just a few days after his father's death (October 1, 1653), he wrote an October 18, 1653 entry about a concrete sin, "a vile dream" for which he "loath[ed]" himself. On Wednesday

October 19 after a trip to Watertown, and a time studying and preaching in Charlestown and Martha's Vineyard, he returned home and there

> the Lord awakened me with the sence of that monstrous vileness of my heart that cannot desire heaven and communion with Christ" (*Diary* 50).

The abstract desires he loathed, coupled with his concrete lack of care for his parents and death of his father ,were immediately followed by a dream the next night. Wigglesworth had a dream which James Miller claimed as the occasion of inspiration for Wigglesworth's poem (*Heritage of American Literature,* xxi). In his diary, Wigglesworth wrote:

> On the 2d day at night in my sleep, I dreamed of the approach of the great and dreadful day of judgement; and was therby exceedingly awakened in spirit (as I thought) to follow god with tears and crys until he gaue me some hopes of his gracious good wil toward me. The next day I found myself unable to make any work of it at my studys. Pride prevailing. (*Diary* 51)

Immediately after this dream, Wigglesworth responded with even more contrition. He confessed he was not worthy to take of the Lord's Supper (Diary 51).He, furthermore, saw himself guilty of at least 10 more vices, and many of these would be directly or indirectly alluded to in the *Day of Doom.* All but one of these ten vices would be stated abstractly:

> 1. a blind mind 2. Carnal security and hardness of heart all sence of want and misery gone, when I approach to the fountain of mercy, especially in haring the word, 3. whoarish affections apt to rest in the bosom of creatures, 4. want of dear love to the Lord Jesus and his appearing, a British swinish heart that cannot savour heavenly things and spiritual ordinances. 5. Pride. 6. Slouth. 7. Vain distractions in holy dutys. 8. Want of sence and sorrow for my father's death, o

> Lord forgiue! 9. Want of heart to seek God's glory. 10. Unfruitfulness under so many means of grace, and daily visitations of gods spirit; who having the like would not bring forth more fruit? (*Diary* 54)

In this list, only one concrete and specific vice existed. In number eight he mentioned the "Want of sence and sorrow for my father's death".

As a Puritan he was probably adept at attaching Divine significance to events, and so he composed a jeremiad. But it was one that kept its respectful distance from his readers. As in the journal, so in the poem. He maintained the voice of veiled dignity when referring to the miscreants, and he never detailed concretely the failings of his pastoral public. These characters of his dramatic monologue were very much like him.

They were generally culpable. They were guilty of vice #1:"a blind mind". They have stopped their ear and would not hear when Mercy warned them, But took their course without remorse (ll.19-20). These persons were volitionally blind to the truth: they heard "all Christ knocks" and "withstood like blocks and would not be advised" (231-232).

This second generation, like Wigglesworth, was guilty of abstraction #2: "carnal security and hardness of heart." They had become so comfortable with their material wealth that the reality of the Second Advent no longer motivated them:

> Calm was the season, and *carnal reason*
> Thought so would last for ay.
> Soul, take thine ease, let sorrow cease,
> much good thou hast in store:
> This was their song, their cups among,
> the evening before. (3-8)

On the fateful evening of the Lord's unexpected return, these "men sleep fast in their

security" (29-30). The carnal security and hardness of heart had truly anesthetized them.

Like Wigglesworth, the characters of this poem were generally guilty of Vice #3:"whoarish affections apt to rest in the bosom of creatures". Their reason was "carnal" (2). They "wallow[ed] in all kind of sin" (9), full of "sloth" and "frailty" (16), and lacking "remorse" (21). They had "giddy heads" (41), and were undone by their own "fool hardiness" (71-72). For "self ends" they pretended to be "Christ friends" (211), but indeed they were "apostates" (217) who "sinned with spite" (223), whose "stubborn hearts" God could not "tame" (1089-900). In the harshest terms possible, Wigglesworth declared them to be "Happy dogs and swine and frogs yea [a] serpents generation" (1469-70). Their state was "desperate" (1473). They were filled with "vanities" and "villanies" (1475).

They like Wigglesworth generally "lacked a dear love to Jesus and His appearing" (Vice #4). Instead of anxiously, lovingly, anticipating the Lord's return, they were spiritually asleep during the "still", "serene" and "bright" night of their existence (1-2):

> Wallowing in all kind of sin,
> Vile wretches lay secure:
> The best of men had scarcely kept then
> Their lamps kept in good ure.
> Virgins unwise, who through disguise
> Amongst the best were numbered,
> Had closed their eyes; yea and the wise
> Through sloth and frailty slumbered. (9-16)

They, like Wigglesworth, had "put away the evil day and drowned their care and fears" (25-26).

Like Wigglesworth his readers were guilty of Vice #5: "Pride". "The sons of men that durst contemn the threat'nings of God's word" (57-58) were also those who possessed "Stout

Courages (whose hardiness could death and hell out-face) (59), they were "haughty and defiant souls" (*Day of Doom* footnote 9, 220). Pride was their downfall.

This Second Generation, like he, was guilty of Vice #6: "Slouth. Their torpor of soul was only interrupted by the sign of the second coming, a flash of light at midnight, and a cry of their dismay (33-35)

> Sinners awake, their hearts do ache,
> Trembling their loins surpriseth;
> Amazed with fear, by what they hear,
> Each one of them ariseth. (39-40)

They were also guilty Wigglesworth of Vice #9: "a want of heart to see God's glory"(*Diary* 50-1). The Goats on Christ's right hand were "all whining hypocrites", "who for self-ends" not God's "did seem Christ Friends, but fostered guileful sprites" (209-211). "Their hearts were not sincere" (214). They saw themselves, not God.

And Like Wigglesworth they also knew "10. Unfruitfulness under so many means of grace, and daily visitations of gods spirit; who having the like would not bring forth more fruit?" (*Diary* 54). The second generation had experienced "many visitations of gods spirit"(*Diary 54)* they were like persons in Noah's day who "stopped their ear and would not hear when mercy warned them" (18-20). Indeed, one group of the doomed group intended to "amend and reform" their ways and to "make [their] peace" with a returning Lord, but never responded to the "many means of grace"(*Diary* 50-51). They did not respond to the visitations of God's Spirit.

Finally, Wigglesworth confessed a vice that I have purposefully not mentioned until now. *In Vice #8, Wigglesworth admitted he had a "want of sorrow for my father's death, O Lord forgive*"(*Diary* 54*).* This, of course, was the only concrete wrongdoing mentioned in the diary context linked to this poem. And just immediately preceding this list, Wigglesworth seemed to equate this lack of personal care for his parents with "profaning God's name":

> But ah! Ungrateful heart, I take god's name in vain in my nearest approaches to him, and profane his ordinances for this I am not able to stand before him. God brought to my mind in special (being at a private meeting) my want of love and dutifulness to my parents, which I beg'd pardon of. (*Diary* 50-51)

Later, in his poem Wigglesworth would place "idolaters, false worshipers, and profaners of God's name" (238-9) in the group of "goats" located at "Christ left hand" (20). Is it possible that Wigglesworth might have viewed his personal disregard for his own parents as his personal profanation of God's name? Perhaps this sin might have caused him to fear for his own placement among the goats.

Conclusion

Not long after the dream which brought Wigglesworth's repentance, he wrote in his diary about a reconciliation and restitution with his mother. In 1655, he wrote how his mother and sister had arrived from New Haven and:

> how I haue no hous to put my head in much less room for them. Which is discouraging unto them whom I have brought from a settled
> to an unsettled state" (*Diary* 93)

At the end of the diary, readers see a different son. They read about one who who did more than make abstract mistakes. They see an abstract wrongdoer who eventually behaved in concrete, caring, ways towards his then widowed family.

Was this the direct result of his dream? One may never know for sure, but perhaps he desired that his generally culpable readers would respond in concrete, soul-searching ways to his sermon so that that their *Day of Doom* could be transformed into their Day of Hope.

NOTES

[1] Jeffrey A. Hammond in his historical survey of Puritan literary criticism, "Where Are We Going, Where Have We Been" indicates that between 1960-1985 "the Puritan poet [became] a respectable object of scholarly attention"; and how in this period "major critical assumptions of the field" had been overturned (114).

[2] It also interesting to note Bosco's claim that between 1660 and 1679 the churches of New England called for 171 days of fasting and humiliation. Based on the practice found in the Old Testament, which was designed to bring erring Israel to repentance, "the New England Israelites put the process to extensive use, hoping that humiliation for sin and a return to the ideals of the founders would be sufficient to achieve the restoration of God's favor towards them" (Bosco xx).

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Playing Dress Up: Identity Construction through Disguise in *The Rover*

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In her book, *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity Through the Renaissance*, Cheryl Glenn describes one of the primary patriarchal traps for women: "once a woman violates one convention of her traditional domestic role (silence, confinement, or obedience), she automatically falls into orgies of lust and vanity (and violates the third convention of chastity)" (134).[1] Glenn emphasizes the social necessity for women to do as they are told, usually at the behest of their families since women were generally confined to domestic settings. Even though during the Restoration women as a whole began to participate more regularly and more successfully in public life, women were still incredibly limited in the modes of public participation in comparison to men. Harold Weber has done a rather thorough comparative study of women's situation in the real world during the Restoration in *The Restoration Rake-Hero.* He explains how "the years up to 1714 have been called an 'Age of Transition,' for no definitive changes in the position of women in society can be defined for the seventeenth century" (Weber 143), suggesting that many of the supposed "improvements" in women's status were contradictory at best and stagnant at worst. His analysis of contradictory historical sources—some saying women's position improved and others that it worsened—indicates that the *perception* of women's rights, freedoms, and social standing differed from the rights, freedoms, and social standing women actually experienced.[2]

Navigating the world and their personal lives was a difficult task for women who wanted to express and fulfill their own desires since they were trapped by social and familial conventions. Such expression usually requires that women leave the domestic sphere, but as

Glenn points out, if a woman were to leave the domestic sphere she enters into a "double bind: she would not only have to break through socio-cultural restrictions and expectations but resist the models and worldview of various fictional stereotypes as well. Her resistance would be read against the gendered threat of female monstrosity, which could only end badly" (Glenn 136). Glenn describes how leaving the domestic sphere was risky for women who wanted to establish their own identity since women who wandered outside of the norm were considered "monstrous" in their acquisition of male traits. Weber reinforces Glenn's point about women who pushed the boundaries of acceptable behavior: "Men have rarely accepted with equanimity women's attempts to participate in the freedoms and pleasures of the male world. The prospect of women's usurping the roles of men has usually produced the most emphatic accents of male rage" (160-61). Faced with such violence it is no wonder that women had a difficult time improving their situation. What Weber's and Glenn's respective historical difficulties suggest is that social change is slow and painful as individuals embrace change while larger social and familial structures resist it.

The limitations real women suffered are illustrated on the stage as well; Pat Gill's "Gender, Sexuality, and Marriage" describes the themes Restoration drama explores regarding gender, sexuality, and marriage (as the title explicitly states) in comedies. The chapter describes how, "In comic fashion, the plays broach and endeavor to resolve serious cultural concerns, such as the definition of gender roles, the regulation of sexual behavior, the characteristics of class, and the compatibility of marriage partners. Despite the profligate activities of their heroes, a number of whom espouse a nonchalantly libertine creed, these comedies are socially conservative" (Gill, "Gender" 191). What Gill implies is that male playwrights continued to write women in such a way that good women (who nicely fit into social norms) are rewarded

with marriages to desirable men (who are usually "reformed" libertines) while bad women (who defy social norms or demand their needs be fulfilled) are punished.[3] In her own book, *Interpreting Ladies,* Gill argues that Aphra Behn's plays represent a unique approach to gender relations during the Restoration because her plays distinctly avoid many of the themes her male counterparts pursued (such as nostalgia for an oppressive male-dominated political past) in favor of "feminine desire, knowledge, and moral concerns" (Gill, *Interpreting* 140). She argues that Behn did not actually write comedies of manners because she does not represent a "nice" world in her plays, Behn's world is much more realistic and makes a deliberate move away from male-centered sexual and social discourse towards a more equal discourse that represents potential realities.

Gill's position that male-authored plays are divergent from reality in significant ways is supported by Weber who says that "In many Restoration comedies young women possess far greater economic security than the rakes who woo them. Many witty virgins owe their popularity not simply to their intellectual and physical charms, but to their attractive fortunes. …when money is a consideration of the love game [in drama], usually a woman has it" (Weber 145). Female characters having fortunes at their disposal is wonderful to read about or see in a play, but fictional heroines having money and using the money as a tool to gain independence enough to construct their own identities does not help real women, who may or may not have money, much less control over it. In *The Rover*, one of the Restoration's most popular plays written by the late 17th century playwright, poet, and novelist Aphra Behn, who is noted for being the first female playwright to make a living by her pen. *The Rover* was originally published anonymously in 1677 but it was not until after it was successful that Behn added her name to it. *The Rover* is a disguise comedy, which is a common genre in Restoration drama and

represents a unique site of identity construction and exploration. In *The Rover*, Behn provides several different examples of how women from several of backgrounds can successfully construct their own identities in a variety of ways. For this paper, I want to examine how Hellena, *The Rover*'s protagonist, uses disguises as a method of agency assertion and identity construction, outside of the limitations imposed on her by others.

The Rover opens with Hellena, a young woman who is supposed to take orders as a nun in a few days but who does not want to live her life in a convent so she decides to don a disguise and explore carnival—which just happens to be going on. Assuming various disguises is a way for Hellena to express herself in ways that are normally forbidden to her, either because her brother or father has expressly prohibited it or because of larger social restrictions on women, especially women of the higher classes. She does not want to be the obedient daughter who faithfully takes her vows because that is what is expected of her; if she decides to take vows she wants to do so because it was her own decision. It is the process of exploring and creating her own identity and future that is important for Hellena, not necessarily what she decides to do. Thus, Hellena sets out to explore the world and construct her own identity and plan her own life. She wants to determine who she will be and what life she will lead and not simply accept what her family has laid out for her. Hellena takes on a variety of traits represented by her disguises to construct her own identity that, by the end of the play, gives her what she wants. Throughout the play she observes the kinds of lives available to women and decides that she wants a traditional marriage. Yes, this is a conventional, conservative choice, but she chooses it herself and it is a very different life than that of a nun. Marriage is the life that she wants and it is the process of self-fashioning and choosing that is important. What she ultimately decides to do with herself is secondary to having the chance to make that decision at all. By wearing disguises and assuming

the traits they represent, Hellena has enough freedom from her family to learn what her life could be and to make decisions about her life without her family interjecting and making decisions on her behalf.

To understand Hellena's construction of identity by wearing disguises, it is important to understand the nature of disguises themselves. It might seem counterintuitive to dress up as someone else to construct one's self but it is a logical move for Hellena because disguises provide anonymity and protection while in the public sphere, effectively allowing her to move freely in a world she is not supposed to enter alone. She can leave the restrictive interior spaces of her home in a disguise that provides her with a new public face and the ability to construct an (initially) temporary identity that is relatively free from social consequences. The two disguises that Hellena assumes are that of a gipsy woman (who is low enough to be almost unnoticed) and of an upper class man (who is high enough to be virtually untouchable). She finally has the space to be whomever she wishes—a novel experience since her life had been constructed based on the desires of others, especially her father and brother. Her new "disguise identity" affords her the freedom to speak without fear of ramifications—not just because the play is set in carnival, when all of the traditional rules are turned on their heads—but because she cannot be identified as a specific, individual woman who is subject to particular men. In my analysis, I will deliberately use "identity" instead of just "disguise" to describe the gipsy and man costumes because Hellena actively assumes the traits of the costume she is wearing.

Lloyd Davis, in his book, *Guise and Disguise*, explains that disguises are always central to one's identity in some way. He argues that "Within a traditional semiotics of character, disguise might be held to refer eventually to a 'real' identity" (5). What this means in the context of his argument is that disguises are chosen because that specific identity is a hidden

facet or deficit in one's existing identity. By putting on a specific disguise Hellena is able to express these dormant or missing traits that would have displeased her family. Davis continues his point by suggesting that once someone puts a disguise on it is impossible to fully take it off again; it is now a permanent part of one's identity. He says, "once a disguise has been donned, its wearer can never simply take it off, either to return to an original self or to attain an ultimate one. Its unpredictable effects remain in force for the wearer and observers" (6). He argues that the disguise becomes a part of one's self, whether that was the intention or not. Using Davis's ideas we can see how it is impossible for Hellena to *not* change after so thoroughly assuming her disguises. Both of the identities Hellena takes on have qualities that Nun-Hellena would not be allowed to have: the sexual liberty to flirt with or marry whomever she chooses, the social freedom to behave in whatever manner she pleases, and the freedom to be in public without being questioned are a few. After exploring the world that each disguise represents, Hellena moves on to the next one, slowly constructing her own identity by keeping particular traits from each disguise. For example, when dressed as a gipsy Hellena tells fortunes (168), and when dressed as a man she takes on the authority that a brother has over his sister (216). She actually pretends to be her own brother at one point. By assuming the social, class, and personality traits of each group's guise, she works towards constructing a whole identity, rather than behaving just as she was raised despite how she is dressed. She wants her behavior to be congruent with her clothing.

Hellena's disguises and newly constructed and consolidated identity figure prominently in the play's ending: during the unmasking of all the characters in the last act Hellena enters dressed as a man, even though she had previously been dressed as a man and been identified by others as a man, here Hellena is instantly recognized as the self she constructs throughout the

play. The stage direction says, "Willmore goes to follow [Belvile and Pedro]. Enter Hellena as before in boy's clothes and pulls him back" (241). When Hellena grabs Willmore, he responds, saying, "Ha! my gipsy: [even though she's in men's clothing, he knows it's Hellena]—now a thousand blessings on thee for this kindness. Egad, child, I was e'en in despair of ever seeing thee again" (241). This is the first time he has seen Hellena without a mask and he still does not know her name, yet he instantly recognizes her. Even though Willmore does not know who she is in terms of her family or any previous identities, he knows that this person is the one he has been interested in for the duration of the play because she now comes to him as a fully self-constructed subject. The other characters (who had known her previously—including her sister Florinda and brother Pedro) only know this person is Hellena because she is wearing the clothes that Hellena had been wearing previously; they do not seem to be able to identify the *person* in the clothes, just the figure is familiar.

As Hellena and Willmore discuss their future relationship, Hellena is still dressed as a man and explicitly expresses her desires—a trait that is usually reserved for men. The assumption of traits from her disguise identities into her own identity give Helena the tools she needs to express and attain her desires. She has deliberately and carefully decided that she wants to be with Willmore, but she has no delusion about the kind of man Willmore is. She knows about his previous and consistently libertine behavior: he has only been interested in finding women to have sex with in any way he can, either by seducing them (Angellica), raping them (Florinda), or marrying them (Hellena)—though it is quite clear in his final lines with Hellena that he is opposed to marriage and prefers to get his satisfaction in the first two ways if possible. When Hellena suggests that they get married before they "retire to [Willmore's] chamber" (242), Willmore balks: "no, no, we'll have no vows but love, child, nor witness but the lover …

marriage is as certain a band to love as lending money is to friendship: I'll neither ask nor give a vow" (242). Willmore does not want to get married because marriage will "band" love—restrain it, limit it to a definition imposed on love by outside forces. Willmore's protestations suggest that he wants to redefine love (and how to express it) and does not want to love in the conventional ways—just as Hellena does not want her culture to impose a definition of who she is onto her. Instead of understanding Willmore as he wants her to, Hellena reads his rejection of marriage as a rejection of faithful and exclusively committed love. She knows that without the formal, legal bond of marriage she will end up alone with "a cradle full of noise and mischief, with a pack of repentance at [her] back" (242). Her suspicions about Willmore's shifting stance on marriage are understandable (he is a libertine, after all!) but Willmore does defend Hellena against her brother Pedro, who is furious with Hellena, when he roughly grabs her. Perhaps Willmore is not a completely heartless sleaze after all, or at least he does not want his potential sex partner damaged before he enjoys her.

In the final scene, Hellena, now dressed as a man, demands that Willmore, her love interest (also a man), marry and be faithful to her, "such [severe] usage you must still look for, to find you all your haunts, to rail at you to all that love you, till I have made you love only me in your own defence" (241). Hellena will chase away all his admirers and find out all his secrets so that he cannot be anything other than an honest man. Willmore recognizes her firm stance: "I see we are both upon our guards, and I see there's no way to conquer good nature, but by yielding" (242), so he gives into Hellena's demands for marriage. Even though he agrees to marry her, his libertine past taints Hellena's apparent happy ending. Instead of rejoicing in her self-constructed identity and marriage to a man she has chosen, there is doubt about how happy

she will actually be since Willmore still seems to be focused on immediate pleasure rather than permanent affection.

In any case, Hellena rejects Willmore's offer of love without demands or restrictions, instead insisting that he marry her. Before dismissing the ending as a cheap resolution for a comedy, it is worth considering that the ending is actually a skillfully maneuvered and successful ending for Hellena—she is not just demanding marriage because that is what a woman of her status should do, but instead is a deliberate choice on her part. She has spent the play learning what her options are and deciding what life she actually wants, instead of just blindly accepting what is given to her. Marriage to Willmore is also a very different kind of life than what her family had planned for her; in fact, married life and life as a nun are mutually exclusive and antithetical. Hellena and Willmore go on to detail the contract of their relationship before they divulge their names and social status. Arguably, not knowing the other person's complete identity is a sign of their strong connection since they do make plans to marry, and Hellena and Willmore's relationship appears to be everything one could want: a love match between equals (although Willmore does not know that Hellena is at least his social equal, if not his social superior), but it seems unlikely that Willmore is reformed in just a few lines as completely as Hellena would like.

Before Hellena insisted on marriage Willmore was merely trying to have sex with her and now he argues against marriage before he grudgingly relents. There could be many reasons for his hesitation: he might not want to marry a gipsy (he seems to think that this is Hellena's "natural" identity), he might not want to marry a person of unknown birth, status, and fortune, or he might just want the freedom to sleep around without legal complications. Ultimately though, Willmore does agree to marry Hellena and while it is impossible to know with certainty, he

could agree because Hellena now appears as a man and has shed, what Willmore considers to be, her irritating female traits. It is impossible to predict if he will treat Hellena faithlessly, as he has other women, or if he will be loyal to her, as he is to his male friends. (And he does have a close and dynamic group of male friends but they have been deliberately cut from this paper for brevity.) Perhaps Hellena will be able to navigate a homosocial sort of relationship with him so he will remain loyal to her: Hellena must be woman enough to keep him in her bed and man enough to keep him as a friend and husband.

Hellena's mixing of class and gender traits to explore and create her own identity and sexuality allows her to attain a life she wants. Each disguise she assumes adds to or revises her own construction of herself and in each scene her disguise is paired with a mask that hides her identity from her family and acquaintances. The mask is important because it prevents her from being identified as Hellena and so she cannot be held accountable for her actions. In her final disguise (and the last version of herself) she is dressed as a man and it is in this male guise that she and Willmore make vows to each other and (finally) learn each other's names. By shedding the identity her family and the convent had constructed for her, she is able to build a new identity that is more free and explicit in her desires, speech, and actions (especially compared to her life within the nunnery). By the end of the play she actively pursues her sexual desires (she literally chases Willmore through the streets), she speaks candidly about what she wants out of her relationship with Willmore, and she does all of this while dressed as a man. She successfully passes as a man but is able to wear the clothes and be recognized, not as a woman, but as herself, Hellena.

NOTES

[1] An especially telling moment in rhetorical history is that *Classical Rhetoric*, George A. Kennedy's canonical textbook, lists only three women who were educated (and writing) during the English Renaissance: Queen Mary, Lady Jane Grey, and Queen Elizabeth I (231). While there were obviously other educated women at the time, Kennedy only finds three that are worth discussing. It is an unlikely coincidence that all three women were nobles and two out of the three were Queens, one of whom reigned without a king. Kennedy has equally little to say about English women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (262-63).

[2] Weber's discussion is heavily researched via primary and secondary sources; it includes women's wealth (since women could inherit, but they did not have the appropriate education to know what to do with their funds) (145-46), economic shifts (household industry vs. mass industry) (150), and a series of contradictions in attitudes towards women. The major contradictions are those of the libertines whose beliefs emphasize "the naturalness of the passions that people shared with beasts, might seem applicable to women as men. Yet the men who fashioned such doctrines reveal a hostility and ambivalence towards women that appears little different from the misogyny of society at large" (146-47). Apparently the libertines operated on a principle that everyone is entitled to those passions, but some are more entitled than others.

[3] A telling example is Thomas Shadwell's *The Libertine*: all of the female characters are dead by the end of the play, most of them killed by the male characters for various offences. One specific, and tragic, example is that Leonora is killed by Don John just because she loves him and actively pursues him.

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Refashioning the Rake, Rewriting Desire: Mary Davys's *The Reform'd Coquet*

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Often, Mary Davys's 1724 novel, *The Reform'd Coquet,* is read as a moral guide that, through the narration of its flighty female protagonist's reform, serves to instruct women and mold their characters. I would like to put forth a different reading of this important piece of women's fiction, however, and will argue that Davys, illustrating in her novel the battery of male interests and intentions her heroine, Amoranda, must confront, uses it as an arena in which to place various forms of masculinity in contest with one another. By showcasing the ideal form she teaches her readers, the majority of whom are female, how to recognize the modern gentleman. While Davys was among the first of novelists to do so, she was not the last. As eighteenth-century fiction moved from amatory to domestic so too did portrayals of the male protagonist. From the pleasure seeking Beauplaisir of Eliza Haywood's imagination to Frances Burney's effeminate Lord Orville and Jane Austen's reserved Mr. Darcy, changing representations of masculinity can be charted within the century's novels. That the two developed concomitantly is not surprising considering women were charged with cultivating both.

Not just a fantasy acted out in the pages of popular fiction, however, by most accounts it is in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that notions of gender and sexuality began to solidify and settle into a system in which heterosexuality was privileged and prowess divorced from penetration.[1] Whereas the Restoration rake once ruled the streets and the stage, the parkway and the page, by the 1700s the rake, though still very much alive, was well on his way to social impotence. His fall from unquestioned virility and impunity left open a space in which

competing models of masculinity began to emerge. From her depictions of Formator and Alanthus to Biranthus and Lord Lofty, Callid, Froth and a host of others, Davys renders a veritable spectrum of these burgeoning and, in some instances, withering forms of masculinity.

While ostensibly about the reformation of Amoranda, a girl resistant to marriage and thus resistant to the defining principles of patriarchy, Davys's novel is as much an indexing of male sexuality as it is of female sexuality. In fact, Davys herself acknowledges this in her opening rehearsal of "Mankind" (11). After defining and then dispensing with the "Pendant," the "Philosopher," and "the Dogmatical Puppy," Davys singles out the specimen to be placed under her literary microscope, the "Man of Gallantry" (11). Although she makes clear in her dedication that *The Reform'd Coquet* is a novel penned for the edification of "The Ladies of Great Britain," her focus is on the opposite sex and her story seemingly at odds with her program of reform (3). Proposing to draw a character "worthy of imitation," Davys does the exact opposite, instead drawing the coquette, a woman prey to her own vanity (3). Curiously, once Amoranda transforms into the titular character, the reformed coquette, the novel ends. Her final silence, vexing to those who wish to impose upon the story a feminist reading, throws into relief Amoranda's earlier, wittier self. The imitable character is thus further effaced and the questions of who and what are to be imitated and how, are heightened.

Theresa Braunschneider argues that most early coquette narratives depict the reorientation of desire; while her contention is useful in the main it only tells half of Davys's story (102). Davys's parting advice in the preface, to "chuse a Man with fine Sense, as well as a fine Wigg, and let him have some Merit, as well as much Embroidery," suggests that what her novel really is about is choice (3). And, the most important choice an eighteenth-century woman will make is who her partner will be. In addition to reforming the coquette's desire, Davys is

funneling it toward an acceptable model of masculinity and in doing so is exploring what that model might look like. By bringing Amoranda to the brink of disaster on several occasions, she allows readers to see over the edge without pushing them off the cliff. Davys contrasts what could have been—a forced marriage to Callid or Froth, an intrigue with Lofty, ruin by Biranthus and so forth—with what becomes—marriage to Alanthus—so as to render one's choice of marital partner as important, if not more so, than the marriage itself. And it is no wonder. As marriage laws became increasingly relaxed marriages hastily entered into by contract and without parental consent became increasingly possible; consequently, the protective family fortress became increasingly easier to breach. Choosing a husband was thus doubly important as well as doubly perilous, both for the bride-to-be and her family.

This ease in marriage, seen in both literary and lived life, taken in conjunction with strict settlement, a principle that, according to Natasha Sajé, protected children's inheritance by "reduc[ing] the arbitrary control of the father to distribute his wealth," was cause for much concern (168-69). As dowry, land, and all the mercenary accompaniments of the eighteenth-century union shifted into the hands of the young, unmarried woman, so too did the semblance of control, spurious though it may be. That mid-way through the novel Davys's Lord Lofty could unwittingly marry Altemira in place of Amoranda speaks to the apprehension this new freedom brought about. The unmarried woman, supposed to be in a position of power, and even more so the coquette who clings to that state, in actuality, is in great danger. Davys's preface thus becomes more understandable as the context of the "service" she desires to put her "Pen" to becomes more defined (5).

Just as Steele and Addison did for the coquette, satirically dissecting her in the *Spectator*, Davys does for the fop, the rake and the rogue. Armed with words rather than a scalpel, she

anatomizes and catalogs old models of masculinity, exposing the problems inherent in them for the benefit of her readers. *The Reform'd Coquet* is a story of failed patriarchy; Davys makes that apparent from the novel's opening pages to its dénouement. By beginning the tale of Amoranda's untamed and unrestrained upbringing with her grandfather's story, Davys suggests that the principles of primogeniture and masculinity, exemplified by the "whoring and drinking" of Amoranda's grandfather who leaves his son "no more than his Honor to live upon," are not only outmoded but have also failed the family (12). Exploiting what Michael McKeon describes as the "early modern disenchantment with aristocratic ideology," Davys renders the bankrupt baronet—titled and because of it supposedly entitled (to the ancient family estate)—both ineffectual and inept, a mere figurehead (297). The patriarch is re-established on the family estate only by the goodness and, of course, the business acumen of his younger brother.

Uncle Traffick, a man of the middling sort and a staunch supporter of the gentry, thinking "nothing so despicable as Honour and Poverty join'd," proves to be an amalgam of conflicting principles (12). Although he is representative of the busy, successful London merchant, Traffick, a touchstone on the way to the modern gentleman, is *not* where Davys ultimately stops. While she commends him for a "Deed of so much Goodness and Generosity" she renders his inability to leave London and care for Amoranda worthy of condemnation (12). By sending Formator in his place, in effect abdicating his position, Traffick becomes yet another version of the absent patriarch. Notably, Davys refers to the period during which time Amoranda has no guardian as the "Interregnum" (15). Rife with political connotations, Davys's allusion is also highly relevant in the context of a constructed masculinity as Charles II was critical to the rake's perpetuation and elevation. Even more germane, however, is its broad reference to and rewriting of a changing of the guard. With precious few pages to go, Formator, up to this point disguised as an

old man, transforms into Alanthus, a marquis and Traffick's choice for Amoranda. He, unmasked and unmarried, weds Amoranda and re-establishes the family under a new reign.

Before Amoranda can recognize Alanthus as worthy of her attention, however, she must first learn to distinguish the "Bees" from the "Wasps" (23). Davys, signifying two forms of masculinity in her metaphor, one that "stings and steals," and the other that does not, redefines and naturalizes the characteristics of the eighteenth-century hero on domestic lines. After all, it is the bee not the wasp that is the natural inhabitant of the hive (23). Although Davys privileges this construction of male honor, she puts forth numerous other (faulty) possibilities as the story unfolds.

She continues to render Lofty the indisputable rake and Formator's foil throughout the novel's beginning and picks apart his honor, ostensibly a given, quite purposefully. As Erin Mackie points out, in addition to his unsociability, a rake is defined "by the self-consciously outrageous opposition he pose[s] to this new code of gentlemanly conduct" ("Boys" 4). In defining Lofty as deviant, then, Davys defines his opposition, almost always Formator, as not. She emphasizes the villainy inherent in Lofty's conquests rather than the conquest itself and underscores her point, that Lord Lofty is anything but honorable, by having Lofty himself voice the truth. After reading Amoranda's private correspondence, something she believes a "Man of too much Honour" would never do, Lofty acknowledges that the author, who tells of his rapacity, has "drawn him so much to life" (18, 16).

Amoranda's assessment of Lofty as a "Man of too much Honour" is almost comically wrong; not only is Lofty not a man of *too* much honor, he is a man of no honor—which, of course, is the impetus behind the letter. Lofty's words, said to issue from a "bewitching Tongue," are put into competition with the letter's author, Altemira, who is telling a story in some ways

parallel to Davys's—after all, marital choice is central in both (38). By interpolating Altemira's story with Amoranda's, Davys presents, as Altemira's name suggests, an alternative (and opposing) view. Just as Amoranda learns from Altemira, readers are to learn from Davys. Whereas Altemira at first refuses to take Lord Lofty at face value, telling him: "your Quality will stand for very little in my esteem," Amoranda is content to do just that (38). Judging him not by merit but by pedigree, pained to think of "losing a Lover of his Title and Figure without some Emotion," she refuses to cast him as dishonorable (29).

However, because the story of Altemira's ruin is told by Altemira who begins it "with a flood of Tears," readers are aligned with her point of view and it becomes a tragic tale of seduction rather than the denunciation of a fallen woman (35). This invitation for compassion, both asked for by Altemira and demanded by the narrative descriptions of her despair, emphatically depicts Lofty's deceit as predation rather than privilege. Significantly, Lofty's coat of arms that he and Amoranda think "sufficient to justify *all* his Actions" do not cloak him in impunity (21, emphasis mine).

Lofty, who has lured Altemira into his bed under the pretences of an ensuing marriage, redeems his self only after he fulfills his promise to her. Through their wedding Davys contains Lofty's sexual potency by domesticating it and thus reins in the novel's rake. Significantly, Lofty is the one to voice his redemption and does so in terms of a newly iterated version of honor, and one counter to *The World's*, "a mid-century periodical, [that] defines the man of honour as one who can seduce women and cheat tradesmen, but would never cheat at cards" (McGirr 29). The way in which Lofty gives voice to his reform is revealing and central to it is a surrender of sorts. Because the rake's power lay in his ability to perform, his dress and verbal dexterity are important aspects of his persona and work to set him apart and above the criminal types he

otherwise resembled.[2] Confessing to "an *inward* remorse, for what [he] was about," Lofty, in bed and presumably in a state of dishabille, is wholly stripped of his performative power—verbal and visual (49, emphasis mine). As such, he is refashioned in opposition to, rather than in line with, the rake. In a scene reminiscent of death-bed repentance and echoing the conversion of Lord Rochester, the previous century's most infamous rake, Lofty disavows his former lifestyle. His resurrection as a gentleman occurs not because of his marriage but because of his self-conscious admission and reference to an internal sense of virtue.

Whereas Lord Lofty hangs up his sword voluntarily, other characters in Davys's madcap masquerade need a bit more convincing. By eliding verbal dueling with actual sparring, Davys deflates the power of both while simultaneously painting Callid and Froth, though villainous, harmless. Already bested by Formator, the two are finished off by Amoranda; she interrupts Callid's proposition to get "some Satisfaction" from detailing "how [he] wou'd have us'd [her]," only to detail it herself (32). If, as according to McGirr, "verbal jousting stands in for real violence but establishes the same hierarchy of characters," between Amoranda and Formator, Callid and Froth are exposed as inferior (30).

Problematic though Lofty, Callid and Froth may be, they are represented as manageable—either bested by wit or strength—likely because they, evocative of a dying monarchy, are characters born out of nostalgia. With the introduction of Biranthus in the second half of the novel, however, knavery gives way to violence and the necessity of being able to make socially salient distinctions between men is voiced by Amoranda in pragmatic terms: "Nature denied us Strength to revenge our own Wrongs" (59). In his disguise as highway robber and first attempt to kidnap Amoranda, Biranthus is bested by Formator's arm as were Callid and Froth. Asking Formator to demonstrate his "Prowess" in his fight against Biranthus, Amoranda

links it to protection rather than conquest (27). And Davys, writing strength, particularly of the sort that works to maintain civility, as tantamount to manhood, gelds Biranthus metaphorically while simultaneously criminalizing him. Garbed in both the dress and the behavior of the highway robber, he is aligned with the base and so too is his suit. Whereas Herbert Klein suggests that by the early eighteenth century masculinity was transitioning from an "older type…defined by sexual prowess [to a] yet to be formulated new type whose manliness will have to find a new basis," I suggest that Davys is, through Formator, formulating that new basis on domestic lines (149).

By contrasting the way in which Formator and Biranthus treat Amoranda when she is at her most vulnerable, Davys differentiates what Mackie has described as a "*restrained,* and polite masculine ideal" from a kind of "illicit and extravagant masculinity" ("Boys" 2, emphasis mine). And as Biranthus's kidnap of Amoranda moves from attempted to accomplished, his use of her does indeed turn from vilely criminal to extravagantly so. Like Lofty, Biranthus voices the truth of his own character; his threat, "by the help of thy own Servant, I will enjoy thee; and then, by the assistance of my Arm, he shall too," betrays him as the ultimate transgressor (59). As such, he is condemned to die most dishonorably by eighteenth-century standards. Whereas Davys earlier invokes the duel in order to mock it, here she travesties it. Normally between gentlemen, this particular show of steel is enacted by Biranthus and one of Alanthus's men. Still disguised as Berintha, a defeated Biranthus is left to languish in the very clothing that signifies his enervation.

Although, ultimately, Biranthus is emasculated and Formator re-masculated, because both are in masquerade the two are, as is voiced by Amoranda, reminiscent of one another. In a move that uncomfortably pairs the two she rebukes Biranthus saying: "Had you come like a Gentleman, as such I would have received you; but a disguised Lover is always conscious of

some Demerit" (57). Ostensibly, Alanthus disguised as Formator comes in much the same manner as does Biranthus as Birthana. As the motivations and machinations impelling their respective disguises unfold, however, it becomes apparent that Davys is again drawing Alanthus's superiority through contrast. Although the disguises allow both men access to Amoranda, Biranthus wears the garb of a woman so that he may force himself upon her whereas Alanthus, in his infamous beard, suffers "a long time of Self-denial" (83). Moreover and paradoxically, Alanthus's disguise works to reveal rather than to hide. Through it, Davys unmasks Alanthus's virtue rather than his body (or his title) which speaks to her preoccupation with anchoring masculinity on an intrinsic morality wholly distinct from performance. Ironically then, disguised or not, Formator *does* come to Amoranda "like a Gentleman" (57).

By casting two figures as heroes, Formator and Alanthus, and allowing one to subsume the other, Davys seamlessly reconciles the split between them because as she writes it, their (his?) essence is not a physical one. Because it is not, embodying masculinity without conflating it with the body becomes all the more difficult to express and discern clearly. Even Amoranda cannot convey what sets Alanthus apart, other than to say: "he is too God-like to be an Inhabitant of this World, something so very foreign, to what I have observ'd in the rest of his Sex, a *Je-ne-sçay-quoy* in every word" (62). Davys does try, however, and in Alanthus's plea to Amoranda: "Believe me a Man of a regular Conduct, one that was never ashamed to own his Maker, or to keep his Laws" (70), is Davys's version of a good husband and an articulation of what will evolve into Klein's late eighteenth-century bourgeois gentleman who is "modest, sober, and considerate of others" (Klein 146).

In conclusion, by holding taut the tensions between the dual figure of Formator/Alanthus and Amoranda's other suitors, Davys defines through contrast, exposes through comparison and

puts forth, however tentatively, a domesticated version of masculinity. By refashioning the rake she attempts to bring change but not challenge to a patriarchal system that demands women's inferiority. After all, Davys, dressing down rapacious desire, does not offer guidance on how to live without a man but on how to live with one.

NOTES

[1] The majority of critics cited in this paper accept as an indisputable premise that "the reconstruction of women's domestic role [in the late seventeenth century] was accompanied by an even more startling change in men's role" (Trumbach 21). For a particularly in-depth explication of the social forces behind this phenomenon see *Sex and the Gender Revolution* by Randolph Trumbach. In his detailed analysis he argues, most broadly speaking, that "a revolution in the gender relations of Western societies occurred in the first generation of the eighteenth century," which caused "new meanings and the reorganization of long-standing forms of sexual behavior produced among men" (3-4).

[2] For a detailed explanation of the interdependent relationship between the licit and the illicit, the rake and the criminal, see Erin Mackie's *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates.* Tending to "the ways in which the discourses of masculine prestige and criminality were articulated together," Mackie argues that "the superior stylistic mastery that distinguishes the rake from the fop, if only barely and from his own perspective, is the very same thing that, in the literary and historical record, distinguishes the rake from the common criminal" (1, 37).

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Oscar's Will: Wilde's Interpretation of Shakespeare's Sonnets in "The Portrait of Mr. W. H."

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Introduction: Unlocking Shakespeare's Heart

Shakespeare's stock has never seemed higher. Festivals dedicated to his plays, film adaptations, biographies and novelizations of his life, as well as reception histories such as James Shapiro's *Contested Will* (published in 2010), all testify to the ongoing desire to penetrate the mystery of Shakespeare's heart, which the poet describes in Sonnet 45 as a "closet never pierc'd with crystal eyes." The Sonnets in particular continue to excite curiosity. Edward Hubler has stated, "We do not know when the sonnets were written, to whom they were addressed, or if they are autobiographical at all. . . [and] on no other work has more nonsense been written" (Hubler 3). Yet such assessments have failed to eradicate the desire of generations of readers to uncover the identities of the beautiful young man whom Shakespeare praises and rebukes, the dark lady they both love, and the rival poet for whom the young man deserts Shakespeare. Perhaps this has to do with the peculiar sense of intimacy the Sonnets evoke, their ability to engage readers in what seems to be Shakespeare's personal drama of passionate friendship, desire, the pursuit of beauty, and the longing for immortality.

Surprisingly, Shakespeare the man was of little interest to audiences and readers prior to the 19th century. Shakespeare's sonnets received scant attention until the Victorian period, when renewed interest coincided with a burst of scholarly attention to biographical questions about Shakespeare.

The scholar Edmund Malone, whose edition of Shakespeare appeared in 1780, was one of the first to append explanatory biographical notes to the sonnets, such as Sonnet 93, which

begins, “So shall I live, supposing thou art true,/ Like a deceived husband” (93:1). Malone’s note to this sonnet states that the lines “seem to have been addressed by Shakespeare to his beautiful wife on some suspicion of her infidelity” (quoted in Rollins 231). He thus assumes the speaker to be Shakespeare himself, and then points to the prominence of the theme of jealousy in Shakespeare’s work as further “evidence” of Shakespeare’s unhappy marriage. This reading, as well as the fact that it was focused on the sonnets rather than the plays, “signaled an important shift in how Shakespeare was read. Shakespeare was cast not as the detached dramatist who observed human nature but as the engaged poet who observed himself” (de Grazia, quoted in Shapiro 41).

This kind of interpretation has characterized readings of the sonnets ever since, with long lists of candidates for the young man and the dark lady, never more prominently than in the late Victorian period, when multiple editions and interpretations of the sonnets appeared, purporting to unlock their “mystery.” These editions had titles like *The Sonnets of Shakespeare Solved, and the Mystery of his Friendship, Love, and Rivalry* (Henry Brown,1870) and *The Secret Drama of Shakespeare’s Sonnets Unfolded, with the Characters Identified* (Gerald Massey, 1872).

But it was the late Victorian critic Oscar Wilde who first used the biographical approach to Shakespeare as the foundation for a theory of art, a theory that might be characterized as the first reader response criticism, in his unique narrative “The Portrait of Mr. W. H.” Reader response criticism is commonly thought to have originated in the psychoanalytic criticism of the 1960s and 1970s, but I believe it can be traced back to Wilde. Focusing on the reader’s experience, it posits that a work’s meaning only emerges through the reader’s engagement with it. In a sense, reader response criticism asserts that the interpreter is a collaborator of the artist,

imprinting his or her personality on the work, without which the work cannot have its full realization.

This idea lies at the heart of "The Portrait of Mr. W. H." Wilde uses this fictional tale to dramatize his belief that the meaning of art arises from a dramatic dialogue between artist and reader or critic, a dialogue that constitutes a kind of passionate friendship whose offspring or "child" is the work of art itself. Wilde's encounter with Shakespeare's Sonnets serves not only to unlock their meanings, but to explain why Shakespeare continues to be read and watched, and reinvented by successive generations.

Overview of "The Portrait of Mr. W. H."

Oscar Wilde originally published "The Portrait of Mr. W. H." as an essay in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1889. Later, he revised the text making it almost twice as long as the original. However, the revised version never saw publication after the breakup of the publishing company that had contracted to bring it out, and the legend is that the manuscript was stolen from Wilde's home in Tite Street (Schoenbaum 322). It was only rediscovered in the early 20th century and printed in its long version in 1921 in an American edition.

"The Portrait of Mr. W.H." bears a number of similarities to the much longer novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which was published less than two years later. In "Portrait of Mr. W. H.," an unnamed narrator is shown a mysterious Elizabethan portrait of a beautiful young man by his older friend Erskine. The young man in the portrait is feminine, fair-haired, and elegantly dressed, his hand resting on a book that bears the famous inscription "to the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets. . .Mr. W. H." In a corner of the picture is written in "gold uncial letters" "Master Will Hews." Erskine tells the narrator that the painting was a gift from his friend Cyril

Graham, an aristocratic and effeminate young man who in college specialized in playing Shakespeare's female roles. Cyril had formed a theory that W.H., the dedicatee of the Sonnets, usually associated with the young man the poet loves and urges to marry, was in fact Willie Hughes, a boy actor in Shakespeare's company. Shakespeare nursed a passion for Willie Hughes, and for him he created his great female roles. In an obsessive search to uncover evidence of his theory, Cyril discovered the portrait in a Warwickshire farmhouse, and thus convinces his friend Erskine of the truth of the theory. Together, they pore over the sonnets, and "Willie Hughes became as real [to them] as Shakespeare himself" ("Portrait" 42).

However, the portrait turns out to be a forgery commissioned by Cyril in order to substantiate his theory, and when confronted by Erskine with evidence of the forgery, Cyril commits suicide.

At this point the story shifts gears, as the unnamed narrator, who has listened to this tale, is inspired by Cyril's obsession to his own passionate commitment to penetrating the mystery of the Sonnets. The narrator studies them obsessively and finds evidence in every line that the sonnets are about an actor named Will Hughes and celebrate the power of the stage. The narrator writes to Erskine, expressing his own faith in the theory, and Erskine is again "converted" to a belief in the reality of Willie Hughes. The narrator then inexplicably loses interest in his theory, saying, "It seemed to me I had given away my capacity for belief in the Willie Hughes theory of the Sonnets. . . by finding a perfect expression for a passion, I had exhausted the passion itself" ("Portrait" 94). Having given his belief away to Erskine, he learns that Erskine too has died, a supposed suicide like Cyril. At the end of the narrative, the narrator learns that Erskine in fact died of tuberculosis, and "forged" his death as Cyril forged the portrait. The narrator keeps the portrait of Mr. W. H., enjoying its effect on his friends, and concludes, "Sometimes, when I look

at it, I think that there is really a great deal to be said for the Willie Hughes theory of Shakespeare's sonnets" ("Portrait" 103).

"The Portrait of Mr. W. H." thus presents its reader-response theory both through an extended analysis of the Sonnets, and through a narrative that might be called a "drama of readership." The meaning of the Sonnets is verified and given life by the belief each reader brings to it: Cyril, the narrator, and finally Erskine. These readers, indeed, unwittingly reenact the passionate relationships between two men that are the Sonnets' subject. Their willingness to die for the Sonnets (even if it is a forged death) confirms their construction of its meaning.

There are obvious parallels between "The Portrait of Mr. W.H." and Wilde's more famous novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* published less than two years later. Both works "include[s] a picture, allusions to 'Platonic' love and homosexual infatuation, and a theatrical context" – the actor Willie Hughes "is refashioned in the Sybil Vane plot of *Dorian Gray*" (Breuer 59). Like "The Portrait of Mr. W. H.," *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is deeply influenced by the Sonnets, in fact shares their central themes: an artist falls in love with a beautiful young man; that love leads to the hope that "beauty's rose might never die" (expressed in Sonnet 1), and to the "war with Time" expressed in so many of the Sonnets. *Dorian Gray* is full of verbal as well as thematic borrowings from the Sonnets, as when Lord Henry says to the beautiful young Dorian, "Time is jealous of you, and wars against your lilies and your roses" but "what the gods give they quickly take away" (*Dorian Gray* 24, quoted in Breuer 61). Sonnet 19 in particular can be seen as the source of Dorian's fateful wish to remain forever young. In Sonnet 19, the poet pleads to Time: "O, carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,/ Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen;/ Him in thy course untainted do allow/ For beauty's pattern to succeeding men" (19: 9-12). Dorian expresses the same wish: "If it were only the other way! If

it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old!" (*Dorian Gray* 28). This wish is granted through the mediation of art (Breuer 61): for Dorian, by a magical painting that ages while he does not; for Shakespeare's young man, by the "eternal lines" that immortalize him.

Both texts use the motif of forgery as a way of embodying the reader's interpretive power to shape the meaning of art. In "The Portrait of Mr. W. H.," Cyril invents an external verification for his belief about the meaning of the Sonnets. In *Dorian Gray*, the work of painting is a "forgery" or artifice in being an imitation of the living original. But the painting also serves as an expression of Dorian's interpretation of himself; while he "forges" the appearance of a normal life, the painting changes to express his moral degeneration and growing self-loathing.

Finally, both texts describe passionate encounters between an older artist and a younger man. Shakespeare's love affair with Willie Hughes in the sonnets is like Basil Hallward's passion for Dorian Gray, a passion that foreshadows Wilde's own relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas (whom he met the year *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was published), the "Bosie" for whom he in some sense destroyed himself. As Wilde writes, the Sonnets "had suddenly explained to me the whole story of my soul's romance. . . Strange, that we knew so little about ourselves, and that our most intimate personality was concealed from us! Were we to look in tombs for our real life, and in art for the legend of our days?" ("Portrait" 93).

It is interesting to note that Wilde had always seen his relationship to books as a kind of Platonic passion, not only in its eroticism, but in its implication that Art, the world of Form, was superior to Life and provided the inspiration for our feelings. In *Oscar's Books*, Thomas Wright describes Wilde's "passionate boyhood affair with literature: he had loved it, he remarked, 'to

excess'" (Wright 36, quoting Wilde's letters). His favorite figures from literature were Julien Sorel, the hero of Stendhal's *The Red and the Black,* who suffers from an obsession with Napoleon from reading too many books, and the similarly literature-obsessed Lucien de Rubempré of Balzac's *Lost Illusions* (Wright 57). Wilde said, "A steady course of Balzac reduces our living friends to shadows, and acquaintances to the shadows of shades. Who would care to go out to an evening party to meet Tomkins, the friend of one's boyhood, when one can sit at home with Lucien de Rubempré?" (Wright 59, quoting Wilde, *Reviews* 19).

Willie Hughes: The Sonnets' "Young Man" as Actor

Returning to "The Portrait of Mr. W.H.," why is it so important for the narrator, and for Wilde, to prove that Shakespeare addressed the sonnets not to an aristocratic patron, but to a young actor named Willie Hughes? (It turns out that this theory Wilde claimed to have invented was lifted from the 18th century scholar Thomas Tyrrwhit.) "Who was that young man of Shakespeare's day who, without being of noble birth or even of noble nature, was addressed by him in terms of such passionate adoration that we can but wonder at the strange worship, and are almost afraid to turn the key that unlocks the mystery of the poet's heart?" ("Portrait" 40).

A number of important readings of the Sonnets and of Wilde's interpretation of them, have seen the key to the mystery as the poet's homosexuality, an identity that he points to but cannot fully reveal. I won't be able to address these readings in this paper, though they too suggest that the stage player becomes a key means by which the artist reveals and conceals his hidden identity.

The young man has usually been identified as one of Shakespeare's erstwhile patrons. In *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare,* Stephen Greenblatt confidently

identifies the young man of the early sonnets as Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton, who didn't want to get married, and was the dedicatee of Shakespeare's two published narrative poems, "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece." He describes a painting "recently. . . discovered that is thought to be a portrait of Southampton at the time that Shakespeare's procreation sonnets were probably written" that shows remarkable similarities to Shakespeare's verbal description of the "long ringlets, the rosebud mouth, the consciousness of being 'the world's fresh ornament' (1.9), the palpable air of a young man in love with himself, and, above, all the sexual ambiguity" of the young man (Greenblatt 231). Greenblatt also suggests that William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke (another favorite candidate for the young man) served as a model for some of the later sonnets.

It is interesting to note that we don't know how Southampton's family name was pronounced, but it may have sounded like "rose-ly", which would lend support to the identification of Southampton as "beauty's rose", as a play on the patron's name.

Wilde, however, quickly dispenses with this theory, taking us through an elaborate succession of close readings designed to make it impossible *not* to accept his version of the young man. First, he points out that the initials W. H. cannot refer to an aristocratic patron (who would not have been referred to as "Mr."). Besides, Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton (the dedicatee of Shakespeare's erotic narrative poems "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece") was not good-looking enough to be described as "beauty's rose" and in any case, was already in love with Elizabeth Vernon (whom he married in 1598) and therefore in no need of persuasion to marry ("Portrait" 38-39).

More important, he sees the addressee as on a social plane equal to that of Shakespeare, contrary to the common belief that the young man is his social superior. As evidence, Wilde

looks to sonnet 25, which begins, "Let those who are in favour with their stars/ Of public honour and proud titles boast,/ Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumphs bars,/ Unlooked for joy in that I honour most" and ends, "Then happy I, that love and am beloved,/ Where I may not remove nor be removed" (25: 1-4 and 13-14). Since the speaker denies being "in favor with [the] stars," he could not be claiming the love of someone of high social status; and further, the final couplet insists on the equality of the two lovers, both in heart ("I love and am beloved") and in social position ("I may not remove nor be removed").

Finally, hiding in plain sight in the Sonnets, Wilde discovers the very name of the young man: Will Hughes. Sonnet 20, a love poem to a man who looks like a woman yet is "A man in hue, all hues in his controlling" puns on the young man's last name, as do sonnets 67 and 82 ("Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue"). The sonnets that play with the terms "use" and "usury" provide further clues to the young man's name, including the aforementioned sonnet 20, which concludes "Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure." Wilde further claims that the later sonnets that pun on the poet's Christian name "Will," actually refer to *two* Wills: himself and Will Hughes. Sonnet 135, at the center of the dark lady sequence, reads, "Whoever hast her wish, thou hast thy Will,/ And Will to boot, and Will in overplus" (135:1-2). The excess of Wills only makes sense in the context of the narrative of Shakespeare as jealous lover of both the dark lady and a young man called Will. The dark lady, sexually entangled with both men, thus has an "overplus" of three Wills: her own, and the two men named Will.

Drama as the Immortal Art

However, Wilde's most "revolutionary" claim about the Sonnets arises from his identification of the young man as a stage actor. For, if the young man is an actor, then the

immortality that Shakespeare bestows in the sonnets is not that conveyed through writing, but the paradoxical immortality of performance. The Sonnets' "eternal lines," conventionally understood as lines on the printed page, refer rather to the playwright's script—thus an immortality constantly being reinvented, remade, and changing with each performance and each role. Like the relationship of artist to reader, the relationship between playwright and actor demands that the work of art be understood as dynamic and open.

Once the young man is understood as an actor, many of the Sonnets reveal new meanings. A number of Sonnets describe the young man's "falseness," the disparity between his beautiful exterior and his tarnished interior. For Wilde, this doubleness is the very nature of the stage-player. Sonnet 93, which begins, "they that have power to hurt and will do none," is usually seen as describing the moral ambiguity of the young man's superior social status. Yet Wilde points out that men who "Do not do the thing they most do show,/ Who, moving others, are themselves as stone" (93:2-3) are stage actors. The actions they play do not correspond to their inner selves, yet this very alienation from their true identity allows them to "move others."

Wilde asserts that acting, "that strange mimicry of life by the living . . . contains sensuous elements of beauty that none of the other arts possess. . . It is the Drama only that. . . uses all means at once, and appealing both to eye and ear, has at its disposal, and in its service, form and colour, tone, look, and word, the swiftness of motion, the intense realism of visible action" ("Portrait" 64). Thus drama contains the other arts. But further, the actor is able to express the ambiguity that for Wilde is at the heart of art—the sexual ambiguity of the boy actor is merely one example of Wilde's belief that "the true world was the world of ideas, and that these ideas took visible form and became incarnate" in the multiple roles of the actor ("Portrait" 66).

This very duality, indeed multiplicity, in the young man's identity, is what Shakespeare celebrates in the Sonnets. The immortality he proposes to confer on the young man is not (or not merely) that he is "written" onto the page of a book of poems that will continue to be read. In fact, Wilde claims that "Shakespeare was more or less indifferent" to the Sonnets, which he refers to as his "slight Muse" (38:13; quoted in Portrait 56). Wilde's narrator claims, "Upon the other hand, he was extremely conscious of the high artistic value of his plays, and shows a noble self-reliance upon his dramatic genius" ("Portrait" 56). Rather, the young man will embody, through the roles that he plays, Shakespeare's passion for him and for the beauty that he incarnates. And long after both he and Shakespeare are dead, he will live in the eyes of spectators who see those roles re-enacted.

Wilde reinterprets some of Shakespeare's most famous lines to refer not to lyric poetry but to acting. For example, Sonnet 55 speaks of immortalizing the young man through verse: "Not marble nor the gilded monuments / Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme, / But you shall shine more bright in these contents / Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time . . . 'Gainst death and all oblivious enmity/ Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room/ Even in the eyes of all posterity" (55:1-4; 9-11). These lines are usually taken to refer to the lyric poem, a monument that will outlast the young man's unswept tomb. The wordplay on "pace forth" and "your praise shall still find room" is frequently taken to refer to the feet and stanzas of the sonnet. Yet Wilde points out that the rooms, the pacing, and most important the "eyes of all posterity" refer more obviously to the actor, the "walking shadow" pacing on the stage before the eyes of the audience.

Thus Will Hughes achieves a double immortality. As the actor, he re-lives what the playwright has created, he is both substance and shadow (Sonnet 53). He is the source of the

plays, because Shakespeare's love for him has inspired the playwright; but as actor, he is also the "shadows" or roles, the costumes and false hair, the daily reenactment, of Shakespeare's fiction.

Conclusion: The Love Affair Between Actor, Reader and Artist

"The Portrait of Mr. W.H." thus paints a rich and layered picture of the nature of art. Its narrative provides a model for the active—even erotic—relationship between artist, reader and artwork. The true reader falls in love with the text, as Wilde writes in a climactic moment of "The Portrait of Mr. W.H.": "I felt as if I had been initiated into the secret of that passionate friendship, that love of beauty and beauty of love, of which Marsilio Ficino tells us, and of which the Sonnets, in their noblest and purest significance, may be held to be the perfect expression. Yes: I had lived it all" ("Portrait" 91-92). A work of art thus should not be understood as a static substance, but through the analogy of performance: a dynamic interplay between substance and shadow, between what the artist created and what the actor, or the reader, makes of that creation. "Art is valuable," writes Rachel Ablow, "precisely because it can make us experience not just our beliefs but our pains and pleasures as if they were not entirely our own" (Ablow 181). "Life has been your art. . . Your days have been your sonnets", says Sir Henry Wotton of Dorian Gray (*Dorian Gray* 207). If we allow Wilde's words to seduce us, we can learn to perform our own part in keeping the Sonnets alive.

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