Attention as Proof of Faith

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Abstract: This essay asks the question: can a poem serve as proof for religious belief? By reading John Donne's devotional sonnets in light of the Pauline letters, the argument unfolds in two parallel directions. First, it shows that in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, the concept of pistis (proof or belief) refers primarily to Christian faith as a self-referential proof. Second, it argues that Donne's poems enact this sense of faith-as-proof by using language as material for attention exercises. The essay concludes by suggesting that the connection that these poems reveal about certainty and attentiveness gives us a way to think about the continuity between early modern devotion and emergent discourses of philosophy.

I

One of John Donne's Holy Sonnets ends with the following couplet: "One short sleepe past, we live eternally / And Death shalbe no more, Death thou shallt dy" (16).[1] I would like to begin by asking a deliberately naïve question about these two lines: what makes the speaker of the poem, whoever he may be, so certain that what he is saying is true? The last line first proclaims some kind of final victory over death, and then turns directly to death and says to its face: "thou shallt dy." On what grounds would, or indeed could, anyone say such a thing? In other words, what is the proof, the evidence behind this proclamation?

A predictable answer would point out that my question is mistaken: poetry does not need proofs at all, because it does not contain propositional statements. The realm of poetry is a hypothetical, invented world; or as Philip Sidney says in the *Defense of Poetry*, the poet "nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth," because

1 All quotations are from Gary A. Stringer, ed., *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne, volume 7, part I, The Holy Sonnets* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). On occasion I have slightly modernised the spelling.

he invents his own world, instead of making statements about what already exists, instead of saying what is already given. On this view the last two lines of "Death be not proud" should be based on nothing but the poem itself; the poem, so to speak, is the only proof of itself, of its final statement.

But, of course, another and equally predictable answer is that on the contrary, Donne's poem does rely on an external proof: the statement that "Death shalbe no more" on this view is an expression of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which the poem paraphrases in the penultimate line's "[o]ne short sleep past, we live eternally." The proof that it relies on, then, is the *faith* of the Christian, their trust in this particular doctrine.

Are these two readings of the poem compatible? It is not immediately obvious how they could be: for a purely poetic reading, the "proof" of the poem's final statement must be the poem itself; but from a Christian perspective, on the contrary, the proof is something external to the poem, it is a Christian doctrine, or rather the faith in it. In fact, when we talk about Donne, who was convinced that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead somehow contained every other Christian doctrine, one might say that the proof of the couplet is Christianity itself.[2]

So far, I have used the term "invention" in the specific poetic sense to refer to the invention of fiction that Aristotle finds central to poetry. But invention in the Renaissance is a more fluid and primarily rhetorical category that ranges from discovery and finding to creation and fiction. It is the first part of classical Aristotelian rhetoric, defined as the process of coming upon the proofs that we need to convince an audience. It might seem that rhetoric could mediate between poetic labour and religious doctrine: on this view, the poem's work would consist in inventing the proofs that would generate faith in a given audience.

But if we turn to Donne's source for the poem, chapter 15 in Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, we find that this rhetorical approach may not be sufficient to resolve the conflict between poetic and Christian evidence. Here is the passage in Paul's letter: ". . . then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"[3]

The end of "Death be not proud" is a close paraphrase of Paul's own proclamation; Donne even follows Paul's move from declaring death's end in third person,

2 "[A]ll the Gospell, all our preaching, is contracted to that one text, *To beare witnesse of the Resurrection*" (Potter and Simpson 4:355).

3 All references to the Bible are to the 1611 King James version.

and then turning to a mockery of death in the first person, directly addressing death. The difference is that Paul's proclamation comes toward the end of an argument, an argument concerned with the resurrection of the dead, and an argument that takes up the whole chapter of Corinthians 15. In other words, in Paul's letter the mockery is framed as a conclusion, raising the obvious question: what evidence does Paul offer for this conclusion, for his final expression of the belief in the resurrection of the dead?

The first and most obvious answer to this question seems to be that Paul's proof is the resurrection of Christ, the subject of much of Corinthians 15. But this is not entirely true: the problem Paul faces in this chapter is that even though the Corinthians already believe that Christ was resurrected, they still doubt the general resurrection.[4] In other words, they accept Christ's resurrection as the object of their faith; what they do not accept is that Christ's resurrection is a proof of the general resurrection. Therefore, what Paul needs to prove is *not* a fact, i.e. the fact of Christ's resurrection, but a *fact as proof*, the notion that Christ's resurrection was not simply a random, individual case, but a sign, a proof of God's will to fulfil the ancient promise of defeating death.

It is in this context that Paul offers an argument that might at first sight appear spectacularly circular: "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised, your faith [*pistis*] is vain . . . . But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." The argument here is not A (Christ is risen), therefore B (general resurrection is going to happen). Instead it is: if you do not believe the resurrection of the dead, then you do not *really* believe Christ's resurrection either, then your faith in Christ's resurrection is in vain—it is uncertain, purposeless, empty, hasty. Ergo: You have to believe that Christ is resurrected *and* that this means he is a first fruits, a proof of the resurrection of the dead.

This explains a curious fact that, to my knowledge, New Testament scholarship has never really accounted for, namely that Paul never uses the word "pistis" in the sense as proof but only in the sense of faith (with one, rather fascinating, exception).[5] In this passage, the two rhetorical senses of *pistis*, proof and faith, are collapsed into

4 "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?"

5 The term "pistis" refers to faith throughout the Pauline corpus. The only occurrence of *pistis* in the sense of proof or assurance that is attributed to Paul is in Acts 17:31: "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

each other: the proof of the resurrection of the dead is not Christ's resurrection as a fact but Christ's resurrection as belief; i.e. the only proof for the final victory over death is faith in the *euangelion* that suggests that Christ's resurrection is proof of God's will to resurrect the dead.[6] In 1 Corinthians 15, the devotion of faith replaces the rhetoric of proofs: the question of *inventio* in Paul's argument is not one of finding available proofs but of inventing one's own faith as proof.

While in Corinthians Paul thus collapses the two rhetorical senses of *pistis*, faith and proof, into one, a unity I paraphrased as "faith as proof," at the same time he also distinguishes between two senses of faith. On the one hand, there is "faith in vain," that is, believing without just reason, authority, proof, certainty. Such faith consists in simply accepting an article of faith without recognising how it is related to other aspects of the *euangelion* as a totality. Paul contrasts this "faith in vain" with the faith that is certain, faith that, so to speak, proves itself. That the advocating of this latter faith-as-proof is the goal of 1 Corinthians 15 is clear from the very beginning of the letter: "I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein yee stand. By which also yee are saved, if yee keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless yee have believed in vain." Faith is vain, unproved, uncertain, unless its subject is "kept in memory," and unless the believer continuously "stands in" the matter of his faith. What I called faith-as-proof, then, is this real or certain faith sustained by the believer's active labour of holding onto it, of standing in it.

II

In the *Meditations*, the sixteenth-century Dominican theologian and devotional author Luis de Granada distinguishes between faith and the thinking, attentive consideration of "the mysteries of our faith":

> the principal matter of this Booke, is of Meditation and Consideration of things appertaining to Almighty God, and of the principal mysteries of the Catholike faith. The very thing that moved me to treate of this matter, was for that I understood, that one of the principall causes of all the evils that be in this world, is the lack of

Interestingly, the context of this passage is Paul's explanation of the *euangelion* to the Greek Epicureans and Stoics in Athens—in other words he appeals to their understanding of *pistis*.

6 In a sense this is precisely what Hebrews 1:11 argues: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

> Consideration; according as the Prophet Jeremy signified, when he said: All the earth is destroyed with desolation, because there is none that thinketh with attention upon the things appertaining unto God. Whereby it appeareth, that the very cause of our evils, is not so much the want of faith, as the want of due consideration of the mysteries of our faith. (2–3)

Donne in one of his sermons makes a similar distinction when he distinguishes "imaginary" or "implicit" faith from the real faith that is supported by cognitive certainty:

> As therefore it is not enough for us, in our profession to tell you, *Qui non crediderit, damnabitur*, Except you beleeve all this, you shall be damned, without we execute that Commission before, *Ite praedicate*, go and preach, work upon their affections, satisfie their reason; so it is not enough for you, to rest in an imaginary faith, and easinesse in beleeving, except you know also what, and why, and how you come to that beliefe. Implicite beleevers, ignorant beleevers, the adversary may swallow; but the understanding beleever, he must chaw, and pick bones, before he come to assimilate him, and make him like himself. (Potter and Simpson 4:7)

Notice that in this passage "implicit" faith does not simply mean faith by authority but any faith held without knowledge of its subject matter and knowledge of how it has come about. Donne's point belongs to Protestant normal science, but the point is precisely to see how a Catholic devotional manual and a Protestant sermon converge to reproduce something like the Pauline distinction between belief, on the one hand, and the kind of certain faith that is sustained by an act of thoughtful attentiveness.

Let me now return to Donne's poetry by suggesting that this is precisely the labour the Holy Sonnets as devotional poems are supposed to perform: the invention of faith-as-proof, the going from imaginary and implicit faith to certain faith-as-proof. For reasons that are beyond the limit of this essay, in Donne's Holy Sonnets this means that the poems are primarily exercises of attention: in them, Donne uses poetry not to imagine the object of faith, but against itself, so to speak, to move away from imagination toward attention, toward attending to the object of faith and to attention as the foundation of certain faith. Donne regularly places doctrine at the end of the Holy Sonnets: the reason, I suggest, is that he uses the poem as the time and space in which the speaker can come to invent the faith-as-proof that allows him to proclaim the doctrine with certainty. These poems are not spontaneous prayers to God,

nor expressions of their author's faith; they are systematic exercises to establish certain faith for the speaker.

A brief example here is from another Holy Sonnet in which the move away from imagination, from images, toward attention, appears particularly clearly within the very first stanza:

> This is my Plays last Scene, here heavens appoint
> My Pilgrimages last Mile, and my race
> Idely, yet quickly run, hath this last pace,
> My Spanns last inch; my Minutes last pointe. (Stringer 5)

One influential reading of this poem is that in this stanza Donne aims to create what is called in the tradition of the Ignatian spiritual exercises a *compositio loci*; i.e. poetry is employed in the sonnet to systematically imagine a soteriologically significant place or situation—here, the moment of death.

At first this seems right: instead of naming "death" as its subject, the poem uses a series of images. But they come very quickly: play, pilgrimage, race replace each other; their transience suggests that they are replaceable, and what is left from them is only two smaller words: "my" and "last," the sort of skeleton of the poem's subject matter: the last of myself.

In fact, there is within the stanza a move away from the images, from imaging the moment of death, to something else: while at first the speaker imagines this "last of myself" in grand theatrical images of climax, by the end of the quatrain these give room to the mere "last inch" and the last instant of the speaker's personal "space and time." The poem moves toward trying to think the last moment without images, measured, so to speak, by the bare temporal and spatial extension of the self, by the extremities of this "me" who speaks.

This entropy works not only on the level of stripping the subject matter from images but also in the stanza's prosodic structure: the poem's movement in the first quatrain is literally self-consuming. From the beheaded rhymes ("appoint" and "point") to the enjambment that gradually shortens its overflow to disappear entirely by the last line, and to the caesuras that undergo an entropic process and find their most neutral, central position by the last line, all the formal poetic institutions participate in the performative movement whereby the poem internalises and produces its initial deixis. It is not just that by the end "my last" is figured by the speaker's body; it is figured by the poem's body; so that attention must look where the poem dictates

it to look: the poetic images of the first two lines are left behind as mere distractions. Or rather, the poem strives to produce the lastness itself, as a minimal chronotopic unit, in order to force attention to attend to this minimal unit. It is as though the poem tried to create, out of its own material of words and images, a trap for attention, a *locus* where attention cannot look anywhere beyond the limits of this "my last."[7]

Let me now return to the poem that I quoted at the beginning of this essay to show how this logic of exercising attention works to produce a faith that is not in vain; how Donne relies on poetry to reproduce a version of Paul's argument. Allow me quote the poem in full here:

> Death be not proud, thou some have called thee
> Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so.
> For those whom thou thinkst thou dost overthrow
> Dy not poore death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
> From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures be,
> Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
> And soonest our best men with thee do go,
> Rest of their bones, and Soules delivery.
> Thou art slave to fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men,
> And dost with poyson, war, and sickness dwell;
> And Poppy or Charms can make us sleep as well,
> And easier then thy stroke, why swellst thou then?
> One short sleepe past, we live eternally
> And Death shalbe no more: Death thou shalt dy.

One way of reading this poem is in terms of a contest between imagination and attention. The poetic address to Death in the first line is also a *prosopopeia*, a figure often called personification, the device of putting face on an abstraction, an absence, often a dead person. Insofar as in this poem Death itself is addressed, Donne's use of *prosopopeia* here is simultaneously paradigmatic and self-reflective. Now, it is standard to think about *prosopopeia* in terms of imagination: when the poet addresses someone who is absent, we think that this address is the product of imagination's labour. And it is true that the poem begins, like every Holy Sonnet, with images and in general with the work of imagination. But how would this work of imagination lead to faith in the resurrection?

7 Note that this is precisely how Francis of Sales defines the function of the *compositio loci*: "Now by means of this imaginary scene we confine our mind within the mystery upon which we intend to meditate, so that it may not wander hither and thither, just as we confine a bird in a cage,

Initially, the poem's strategy is rather direct: it begins by naming three seemingly random properties of Death—pride, might, and dreadfulness—and then proceeds to deny Death each of these qualities in the three quatrains, dedicating one quatrain to each. But while the poem proceeds with this literal imitation of Paul's mockery of death, a paradoxical movement emerges. Death, the speaker claims is not mighty enough to kill, but in fact it is poor death who cannot kill. But when the next few lines proceed to suggest that death is just like sleep except more, it seems that death's very might, its power to kill, has been implicitly restored even as the speaker wanted to deny death's dreadfulness. The same thing happens again in the next two lines: the speaker now turns to taunting death's pride by arguing that death is a servant, a mere slave to the really mighty, ultimately reducing it to the level of "poyson, war, and sickness"—but in in this process death has become base, its dreadfulness has certainly returned again. The thing that is named "death" in the poem seems to behave like a suitcase that is too full: every time the speaker is trying to press down one of death's attributes, the previously taunted attributes return. Each denial provokes death to return still more forcefully in the subsequent quatrain. In other words, while the poem is trying to *pay attention* to Death by focusing on its properties (its dreadfulness, for instance), another quality escapes the poem's attention and thus back into the next quatrain.

How should we account for this odd dynamic of attention and inattention? The answer lies in an Augustinian logic of incarnate attention, which means primarily that the more attention we pay to something, the more distraction our attention generates at the same time; i.e. that distraction is the inevitable by-product of attending itself. Insofar as the fall created the kind of mortal, uncontrollable body that we live in, this continual distraction is in fact a synonym for mortality itself: the "scattering," the distention that Augustine identifies with life in the *Confessions* is life insofar as it is on the way towards death. Donne's poem performs this Augustinian logic with remarkable precision. Throughout the poem, death does not just escape the poem's attention, but it is in fact massively produced by the poem's attention, as the poem's own inattention. This explains why, at first sight at least, by the end the poem seems to produce, not a proof for the resurrection of the body but instead something that seems more like the resurrection of Death: "One short sleepe past, we live eternally / And Death shalbe no more: Death thou shalt dy." Notice that it is here, in the last line, that for the first time the poem turns away from its

or put jesses on a haw so that it remain upon the fist" (qtd. in Brou 97).

initial addressee, a personalised death; and it speaks about death in the third person ("Death shalbe no more"), as if the poem's taunting of death had by now definitely proved that death is going to die. But just as earlier when the denials of death's accidents resulted in the other accidents creeping back into the poem's body, now the ostensible final annihilation of death leads to the complete resurrection of death: as if waking from its own dream, the poem now returns from the apostrophe to face a fully present, personalised and capitalided death, the Death that the poem produced for itself, as its own, personal inattention and Death.[8]

But the poem's victory lies precisely in this final face-off between the resurrected Death and the poem's attention. If throughout the poem death was invoked but always slipped out of attention, it is here in the last line that Death fully returns, as the paradoxical invention of the poem itself, made out of its own body, of its own dialectic of attention and inattention, and yet somehow despite its own intention. It is here that the poem finally succeeds in making Death, that is, its own inattention, the subject of its attention; this act of attending to death as the poem's own inattention that Donne performs a poetic version of Paul's faith-as-proof. In other words: this poem does not simply imagine that death is overcome; instead it attends to Death's death and thereby establishes the possibility of certain faith in the resurrection of the dead.

III

Let me conclude here by making a brief comment on some of the consequences of this reading that extend beyond Donne's poem, or indeed beyond poetry and devotion. By the second half of the seventeenth century, the concept of attention becomes ubiquitous in philosophy and in the sciences: from Malebranche to Robert Boyle, thinkers rely on it in making methodological and epistemological remarks about their systems. This trend is particularly striking in the writings of Descartes, who, having defined truth as "whatever I perceive very clearly and distinctly," goes on to say, "I term clear that which is present and open to an attentive mind" (*Philosophical Writings* 76).[9] It would be easy to miss this and other, similarly brief

8 Helen Gardner observes that all the MSs "agree in giving the second 'death' a capital" (70).

9 The *Principia* states: "I call that perception which is present and manifest to an attentive mind [Claram voco illam, quae menti attendenti praesens et aperta est]" (Descartes, *Principles* 20).

references to attention, were it not for the fact that they return in Descartes's response to one of the objections to the *Meditations*, this time in a more fully articulated form:

> So long as we attend to a truth which we perceive very clearly, we cannot doubt it. But when, as often happens, we are not attending to any truth in this way, then even though we remember that we have previously perceived many things clearly, nevertheless there will be nothing which we may not justly doubt so long as we do not know that whatever we clearly perceive is true. (*The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* 2:309)

Descartes's remarkable and often ignored claim in this passage is that truth is certain as long as we attend to it, whereas the slightest inattention will introduce doubt. In the praxis of Cartesian philosophy, the mere perception of something that clearly and distinctly appears to be true is not in itself sufficient to provide a foundational principle for the entire system; what is also required is the act of attention. Like in Donne's sonnets, attention is key for reaching and sustaining certainty—it is just that for Descartes this certainty is no longer an attribute of faith.

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Materiality, Meaning, and Disbelief

René de Lucinge's *The Beginning, Continuance and Decay of Estates*

ZSOLT ALMÁSI

Abstract: This paper considers and contextualises René de Lucinge's The Beginning, Continuance and Decay of Estates *(translated into English by John Finet, 1606), and argues that this particular work proposes a fascinating strategy to deal with the Turkish threat in Europe. Besides presenting the claims of the work, I approach the work from the perspective of the history of the book. This way, I explore the material aspects of the English version from the paratextual elements to typesetting and decoration, and delineate the pattern that emerges from these elements. I also note that these elements influence the act of reading and interpreting the work.*

The publication of René de Lucinge's *De la naissance, durée, et cheute des estats* seems to have been a success story. This success may be gauged in two ways: its influence can be traced all over Europe and its translations soon appeared in a variety of languages. Its popularity is due to the fact that the book touches upon themes that appealed to readers and intellectuals of the time. Lucinge's book nicely harmonised with the humanist interest in the "Turkish problem" (Bisaha 3),[1] the popular "Crusading ideology" (Constable 6–7),[2] the *topos* of western unity as a means to stop the Turks (Hankins 120), as well as with the fashionable rhetoric of Machiavelli's tenets (Anglo 249–250). Furthermore, Lucinge's work could be utilised paradoxically in the popular anti-intellectual oratory of its time,[3] and also in the debates over

1 See also Hankins, Partrides.

2 See also Cirakman (53). For the detailed analysis of the complex rhetoric of fighting the Turks in Lucinge, see Almási.

3 Vickers writes that "[o]ne recurring debate in this period was whether or not the occupations of the scholar and the soldier were compatible" (578).

the greatness of states (Peltonen 218). The thoroughly documented ways in which Lucinge's work exercised its influence should, however, be regarded from another perspective as well. It should also be considered that Lucinge's ideas appeared in books and the different books may have had different means to tell their stories. In this paper, I provide a historicised reading of Lucinge's work and explore the material aspects of the English translation.

My aim is to discuss the dynamic relationship between the main text, and the paratextual and material aspects of the 1606 English edition of René de Lucinge's *The Beginning, Continuance and Decay of Estates.*[4] The exploration of this dynamism reveals the constant distanciation and unification of the main text and the other aspects of the work. In what follows, I shall demonstrate that the reader is constantly reminded of the difference between Lucinge's original French text translated into English and the English book, and at the same time (s)he is also encouraged to take the work as a whole with a slightly different meaning. For the sake of the exploration of this dynamism, I am going to introduce the semiotic context in which the book signified, then turn to the prefatory material written by John Finet, the translator, and lastly, I am going to shed light on the material aspects, especially on the decoration of the book.

The Beginning is specifically inviting an analysis of this kind, as Lucinge reflects on the material aspect of books, when strategically proposing that the integrity and unity of the Turkish people should be destroyed with books via spreading disbelief in the empire among the Turkish people. He claims that books are to be smuggled into the Turkish Empire to cast doubt on their religion, but all this is to be executed with cunning and caution, for an open attack would not achieve the desired effect. Caution and cunning means in this case that the first impression of books should be misleading. The title of the books should be "coloured, as it doe not at the first discover the intent of the author, but rather that it intice them to peruse it with a certaine curiosity and shew of pleasentness and delight" (X1r). The content of them, harmonising with the title, should be "full of tales and matter fit to moove laughter; yet with some well conveied passage which may by way discover or make them doubt of the fables of their Alcoran" (X1r). Thus, the stylishly printed English

4 All parenthesised references pertain to this edition: René de Lucinge. *The Beginning, Continuance and Decay of Estates. Wherein are handled many notable questions concerning the establishment of Empires and Monarchies*. Trans. John Finet. London: Eliots Court for John Bill, 1606. I used the Newberry Library copy, call number Case J 15. 525.

The Beginning and its contents all open up the exploration of the interplay between the material aspect of the book and its meaning fostering disbelief.

Single Author, Single Meaning?

The exploration of the maintenance and dissolution of the division between main and marginal text, linguistic and visual aspects is fostered by our more nuanced understanding of the historical circumstances of the publication processes in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and specifically, by a focus on what may be termed the culture of printing industry. As Michael Saenger asserts:

> There were not very many printers and publishers in England and the circulation of books had a clear focal point in St. Paul's Churchyard. . . . This unique, temporally specific, and contingent set of conditions allows us to understand Elizabethan publishing and printing as a thriving, coherent, collaborative (and also competitive) microculture. It was a culture of making, selling, and reading books, one which developed its own codes, conventions and genres. (Saenger 6)

What Saenger claims about the Elizabethan circumstances of the book trade is also true about the early Jacobean period. The rules and regulations of the Stationers' Company that governed the publishing industry remained the same in the first decade of the seventeenth century. It is this coherent, competitive and cooperative microculture with its own codes and expectations as far as the decoding of the printed material is concerned that shaped the context in which Lucinge's work signified in England.

One characteristic feature of this context is the monarch's direct or indirect presence in the publishing industry. From the beginning of his reign, James I was concerned about deploying print to foster his politico-religious objectives. Understanding the power of the printed word, as Graham Rees and Maria Wakely argue, James I desired "to define a national culture, and further establish and defend the Protestant religion and the doctrine of divine right through the printed word . . ." (15). Out of these three objectives—a national culture, Protestant religion, and the doctrine of the divine right—at least two seem to be present in Lucinge's work. Firstly, the book seems to foster national ends in so far as the English are supposed to act as facilitators for European unity against the Turks. Secondly, *The Beginning* was dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury, a representative of English

Protestantism.[5] Thus, the book played a significant role in the Jacobean religio-political agenda.

James I's desires seem to be in line with the publisher, John Bill, who was one of the few leading publishers of his own time specialising in the continental book trade. He built his career on the continent as a renowned book collector for Thomas Bodley (Rees and Wakely 102), so it is very likely that he was well acquainted with a large network of continental publishers. Bill's influential continental presence and business contacts were spotted by the Scottish printer, James' favourite, John Norton, and in 1603 the two prominent figures, Norton and Bill established a joint venture to specialise in the foreign book trade to import from and export books to the continent (Rees and Wakely 15). This joint partnership was made even more powerful when James granted the patent to Norton to act as the King's printer in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew (Rees and Wakely 15). Thus, John Bill's name as the publisher of Lucinge's *The Beginning* also meant in this particular context a trademark and a special prestige, associating the book with the Jacobean cultural politics of national ends on the European stage.

It was not only the publisher of *The Beginning* whose name meant much in the print culture of the early Jacobean era but that of the printers, or more precisely, the syndicate of printers running the Eliot's Court Printing House in the Old Bailey (Aldis et al. 131, 204). The printing house was founded in 1584 by Arnold Hatfield, Ninian Newton, Edmund Bollifant, and John Jackson, and when Bollifant died in 1602, Melchisidec Bradwood took his place. This syndicate of printers worked extensively for Norton and Bill, printing such a nice volume as Abraham Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1606) among many other books. It is then a highly prestigious printing house that was responsible for the book, adding extra cultural value to the claims of the book.

This microculture can help us reveal how the meanings of *The Beginning* can be understood historically not as the product of a single author but rather as a product of many hands. In the early modern period, the belief in "an authorial univocality" (Masten 15) is misleading, because the construction of meaning was a much more complicated issue than what can be anchored in a single author. As Sharpe and Zwicker claim, "what we are learning from the new bibliography and from

5 For the relationship between religious debate and print see Bristol and Marotti, especially where they claim that "[b]ooks and pamphlets were also key weapons in the protracted religious struggles of the period" (8).

the history of the book is all the complexities of the book's composition, construction and production and the relation of those complexities to the creation of meaning" (5). In the case of *The Beginning*, the construction of meaning can be seen as the collaborative effort of numerous stakeholders that include René de Lucinge, the author of the French work, i.e. *De la naissance, durée, et cheute des estats*;[6] John Finet, the translator; the employees at the Eliot's Court Press, as the printers; and finally, John Bill, the publisher. All these people contributed to the mode René de Lucinge's *The Beginning Continuance and Decay of Estates* could signify in its own time.

The Beginning, the product of this collaborative effort, gives the impression of a book that aims to live up to the expectations of the printing culture and royal expectations of the time. It is an edition which appeals both to the eye and the purse. The volume appeals to the eye as it is clearly and logically structured: it consists of three pieces of introductory material including John Finet's and Lucinge's dedicatory epistles, Finet's epistle "To the Reader," and the three books of the main text. Finding topics and subchapters in the main text is made easier with the help of the table of contents and running marginalia. Beyond the clear logical structure, the edition further pleases the eye with its beautiful initial letters and headpieces. This handy quarto book with a page height of 18.2 cm, however, does not seem to be all too prestigious, not so much to be bought as an expensive commodity demonstrating the financial status of the owner but rather as a book to be read by many, as the paper used is lightweight without watermark, which suggests a cheaper sort of book.

In this neatly constructed book, the main text provides a strategic analysis of the Turkish threat so as to give expert advice on how the Turks could be defeated. The bitter analysis is presented in three books totalling 39 chapters, in which Lucinge claims that the Turks fight more ardently and fiercely on the battlefield than their Christian opponents, so defeating them requires an understanding of the source of their power. In the First Book, Lucinge treats the Turkish military power on the battlefield in a historical perspective from the establishment of the Turkish Empire. The Second Book explores the reasons for the unity and coherence of the vast Turkish Empire, i.e. it deals with questions of religion and human relations within the empire. In the last book, the chances of defeating the Turks are discussed, where one finds a historical analysis of the battles between 1537 and 1571,

6 René de Lucinge. *De la naissance, dvree, et chevte des estats.* Paris: Chez Marc Orry, 1588. The pager-height is 6.50 in, the letter-size is larger than in *The Beginning*, while initial letters are smaller and less decorated.

during which period Christian unity failed. Lucinge claims here that there are two cornerstones of a possible victory against the Turks: united Christian forces on the one hand and the cunning dissolution of the integrity within the Turkish Empire with the help of disbelief on the other.

The main text, without John Finet's prefatory material and the decoration of the book, would be nothing more than a historically informed, bitter manual written by an expert strategist on how to handle the pressing Turkish threat from the continental perspective. As, however, the paratextual and material aspects of the book are there as well, I am going to devote the rest of the paper to showing how the meaning of the volume is influenced by them.

Finet's Prefatory Material: The English Mission

Prefatory elements of texts have been considered as semiotically significant at least since Gérard Genette's seminal book, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Genette defines the paratext as "fringe," "a zone," a cluster of texts dividing the main text from the world, influencing the reading of the main text.[7] Since Genette's book, many modifications have been introduced and many contributions have been made to his concept of the "paratext," but there seems to be a general agreement that the reading process and, thus, the construction of meaning are directly or indirectly influenced—occasionally even determined—by the texts that surround the main text of a volume.[8] In line with this assumption, firstly, I shall discuss how Finet's "Dedication" fashions what comes after it in the volume.

The Dedicatory epistle displays a certain contradiction in terms of privacy and publicity. As a letter, it seems to be meant to be read by only one person, i.e. by the dedicatee. The expected elements of a dedication, thus, consist in explaining

7 "Indeed, this fringe, always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial or more or less legitimated by the author, constitutes a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction:* a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that—whether well or poorly understood and achieved—is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it (more pertinent, of course, in the eyes of the author and his allies)" (Genette 1).

8 Cf. Sharpe and Zwicker: "Of greater and broader import, address to the reader transforms the text from a site of sovereign authorial intention and meaning to a series of performances that ever complicate the very notions of authorship and meaning" (24); or Saenger: "Marginal texts are no longer of marginal significance. Recent critics have increasingly been alert to the semiotic value of the entire Renaissance book, and not just the previously privileged authorial text" (13).

why the work has been published and dedicated to the addressee, and also of some flattering description of the same person. Though this may well display elements of intimacy, as the dedication becomes part of the published volume, it is made public and addresses the reader as well. It partly serves as a means of advertisement—as Saenger states: "the genre of the epistle dedicatory became, in practice, a new opportunity to address the general readership obliquely, under the pretence of addressing a single aristocrat" (9). So, the reader was, in a way, lured into buying the volume, once there was such a powerful authority associated with it (Saenger 56). And Richard Bancroft, the dedicatee of the volume, was an authority, indeed, as it is clear from the page that presents his titles.

Richard Bancroft, the 74th Archbishop of Canterbury, is represented as a man of spiritual and political authority. The addressee's identity is not only presented but also created in the title of the dedication: "To the most reverend father in God, Richard, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury his Grace, Primate and Metropolitane of all England, and one of his maiesties most honourable priuie councell, &c" (a2r). The dedication is pregnant with meaning in the listing of the titles and the size of the letters. The first part, the largest letters, presents Bancroft first and foremost as a man of spirituality, as a man whose duty is to love his people by offering them spiritual guidance as a father. This is further qualified as one occupying the highest position in the Church of England after the monarch, "Archbishop of Canterbury," "Primate and Metropolitane of all England"—someone who can make use of his talents in a beneficial way by reaching out to many people through his institutional position. The titles so far, however, sound odd, as a work on military analysis and strategy against the Turkish threat can hardly be reconciled with the fact that it is dedicated to a man of individual and institutional religiosity. The last part of the list re-establishes the harmony between addressee and content insofar as the reader learns that Richard Bancroft is also an important member of the worldly establishment as a privy councillor to James I.

Dedicating the book to Richard Bancroft reveals shrewdness on Finet's part, which is corroborated by the circumstances in which the addressee was selected. Finet "served as a gentleman in Sir Robert Sydney's company in the 1590s, after which he entered the employment of Thomas Wilson, secretary to Sir Robert Cecil, the principal adviser of Elizabeth I and her successor James I" (Cerasano and Wynne-Davies 220). Given his political power, one would think that English politics could have been influenced in a much more direct way through Robert Cecil.

Instead of this straightforward and simple way, Finet may have thought that European and English politics could well be affected by someone other than having political power only. In Bancroft's case, political power was completed with spiritual power and a strong vision about the English nation. The archbishop envisioned an England characterised by middle-way, institutionalised Protestantism: far from either Catholics or Puritans. In his struggle, he appealed to James with an argument that rested on the maintenance of kingly authority. As McGrath puts it:

> Richard Bancroft and others set out to persuade James that his monarchy was dependent upon the episcopacy for its future. . . . Without the bishops of the Church of England, there was no future for the monarchy in England. The king's real enemies, the "Papists" and the "Puritans," had a vested interest in destroying his authority. Only a close working alliance with the bishops would preserve the status quo and allow James to exercise his (as he saw it) divinely ordained kingly role in state and church. It was a telling argument, and it hit home. (McGrath 124–125)

Finet clearly chose an appropriate person for the project to fight the Turks: someone who had a more penetrating influence on the world than Cecil and also someone who had a clear vision on how to preserve the state of England. Bancroft was a fine choice for another reason as well. He was not only a man of power and vision but someone who became famous for his understanding the power of media, i.e. print. It was he, then the bishop of London, and John Whitgift, then the Archbishop of Canterbury, who shut down the infamous Marprelate controversy and the war of poets in the 1580–1590s with the "Bishops' Ban" or "Satire Ban" of 1 June 1599 (Bruster 51). These two heated quarrels were articulated through pamphlets and literary works, which in turn materialised via print. Thus, the addressee's fame could have helped the contemporary readers both to place the volume in a religious and political context with an awareness of the power of the printed word, and also to make them buy and trust the book.

Having created a reliable and powerful dedicatee for the volume, the "Dedication" gives a further, though not unrelated, reason for choosing Bancroft. The three ideas (i.e. religious and political power and the awareness of the power of the printing press) become harmonised in a missionary enterprise, as the main theme and focus of the argument is a politico-religious one: Christian unity. It is here that a reader can further see why the Archbishop of Canterbury has been chosen as the dedicatee of the volume. Finet not only wants to mobilise the English against the Turks but

also intends for England to function as the facilitator of Christian unity. He draws the conventional map of the world according to religious divisions and proposes a unified Christendom with the English as inspiration. Consequently, the focus is on Christianity and its fragmentation, and the dangerous energy that came into being with the fragmentation, which in turn should be turned against the common enemy. While this enemy is obviously the Turkish Empire, the Turkishness of the enemy is not so important, as they remain unnamed in the "Dedication."

This silence about the Turks is full of meaning insofar as the emphasis is not on how to overcome the enemy but rather on what the English people should do. This shift of emphasis induced by the silence transforms Lucinge's analysis into something like a missionary statement for the English nation. Lucinge's strategic analysis, thus, should be deployed by the English as a nation led by a charismatic leader who is well-versed and powerful in matters of religion, politics and the press—instead of the Duke of Savoy, who is the dedicatee of Lucinge's French original. This charismatic English leader in turn should not only unite the English nation but the entire Christendom to present a powerful counterpoint to the Turkish threat.

The continental-English dichotomy is also present in the argument for the timeliness of the English translation. Finet claims that the original "hath already put on the habit of three seuerall languages, and if my judgement erre not, our English fashion will not ill become it" (a2v). Lucinge's book was published in 1588, the same year as Michel de Montaigne's *Essais*. The Italian translation came off the press within two years with the title *Dell'origine, conservatione et decadenza degli Stati*.[9] The appearance of this fast Italian rendering of the work also corroborates the early intense interest in it. Its fame is further confirmed by some parts of it appearing in the Italian *Tesoro politico*—a book of political thought widely read at the time without mentioning Lucinge.[10] It makes the case more significant that earlier versions of the *Tesoro* inspired Lucinge to write his own book, and now his meditations found their way into a later edition.[11] This latter *Tesoro* naturally gave a further boost to the dissemination of Lucinge's ideas. The last twist in the relationship between the *De la naissance* and the *Tesoro* is that, because of the popularity of the *Tesoro*,

9 Trans. Girolamo Naselli. Ferrara: Mammarello, 1590. The Italian translation is mentioned by Sarton (233) and Heath (9). As far as the book is concerned, the pages are 15.49 cm high, smaller than those of the *The Beginning*, and the letters are much smaller in the former. The Italian version has a variety of verse prefatory material and an Errata page at the end.

10 For details, see Heath (10).

11 For the history of modifications in the different editions of the *Tesoro*, see Testa.

"it was retranslated into French as an anonymous discourse" (Anglo 10) entitled *Tresor politique* (Paris: N. du Fossé, 1608). In this way Lucinge's work, or parts of it, through Italian transmission, returned to its native soil and language. In the meantime, the Latin translation was also published: *De Incremento, conservatione, et occasu imperium* rendered into Latin by Jacob Geuder der Heroltzberg (Nuremberg: Conrad Agricola, 1603).[12] The almost twenty-year-long translation history of the book, into Italian, from Italian into French and Latin, proves the value of the book, and buttresses the larger contribution of the "Dedication" to the signifying process of the volume, the transformation of Lucinge's strategic analysis of the Turkish Empire into a missionary statement for the English as a nation on a politico-religious ground.

"To the Reader": The Quality of a Book

The re-orientation of the strategic analysis into a missionary statement is concluded in Finet's second contribution to the volume, "To the Reader." Finet seems to claim that the volume is not only one among the many on the book market but a distinguished book and should be appropriated accordingly. The argument is a negative one: he expresses a low opinion about book production in general, and then argues that only valuable books stand the test of time unaffected by fashion and desires.

Finet launches his meditation about books and the vindication of *The Beginning* by stating that book production has reached a peak never seen before: "The World had neuer more Bookes" (b3r). The claim implies that this is not something to be celebrated, it is not an expression of satisfaction that knowledge has become open, that it may reach more and more people and that it would contribute in the long run to the general welfare of the human race. The possessive syntactic structure suggests rather that this is a sad fact: books are possessed but not necessarily used, they are not read and understood but remain externalised possessions. Furthermore, as it turns out later, the increase in number does not entail an increase in quality, so the bitter observation is that this increase does more harm than good. Actually, Finet did not have to explain this anti-book claim in detail, as this kind of observation was part of the intellectual agenda of the early seventeenth century. This bibliophobic, anti-intellectual attitude was so much a part of daily discourse that Francis Bacon in the first book of his *Advancement of Learning* (1605) had to argue against this view.

12 And six years later as *De Augmento, conservatione, et occasu imperium.* Francfort: n.p., 1609; see Heath (28).

In what follows, Finet seems to side with Bacon in that the reason for his negative view on book production relies on the distinction between rhetorical quality and content. He claims that "the true life of a worke, and the sound discretion of a writer, appeare not more in the well handling, then wise choice of subject" (b3r). In this opposition, content appears at the top of the hierarchy, while form is presented as essential but inferior in this comparative structure. In other words, the reception of a book and the writer's circumspection do not lie in the way the topic is handled but appears by the wisdom of the choice. It is not the how but rather the what that counts in this hierarchy.

Finet explores this hierarchical opposition further when he claims that most of the published works "stand rather for ornaments or flourishing differences, then matters regardable or of consequence" (b3r). Thus, the form, the rhetorical quality, is essential, but if exaggerated, if it is nothing but ornamentation and draws fanciful distinctions, it is useless and even harmful. The form should never overshadow the matter discussed, while the latter should be noteworthy and seriously heavy on the one hand, and consequences, practical and useful consequences, should follow from them on the other. This distinction between form and content is similar to Francis Bacon's ideas on the errors of learning, more precisely with the error that Bacon terms "delicate learning," which studies "words and not matter" (139).

Qualifying the criterion which is anchored in reception, as the number of readers and buyers of the book does not in itself secure the quality of the book, Finet introduces another set of oppositions. The quantitative measurement of interest in a book cannot function as a criterion of quality, as readers may judge a book good because of "will," or "appetite," or "the tyrannie of fashion" (b3r). In a Protestant intellectual *milieu*, these three items sounded rather negative, either following from the individual's weakness or from that of the multitude. In a treatise about political strategy the word "tyranny," the worst attribute of a ruler is even more negative. What is opposed to the weakness of the individual and the multitude are "reason" and "time." Although "reason" remains undefined, the opposition is telling. In this opposition, reason seems to signify that faculty of the human mind which is led by the necessity of pure logic uncontaminated by desires.

The argument from reception has a temporal dimension as well, which Finet deploys as a criterion of quality. Finet confidently claims that "one thing I am sure of; time hath discouered their weaknesse, and trueth his concealed daughter is come to light" (b3r). This argument relies on the well-known emblem of *Veritas temporis*

filia (Whitney 54). In Whitney's emblem book "Time" is represented as a naked, winged old man, holding a scythe, who is liberating a kneeling woman, Truth, from her dungeon.[13] Time, thus, as a criterion of quality means that, as time passes, both the virtues and the flaws of a text will inevitably come to light.

As we could see so far, the reader has been prepared to have a fruitful encounter with the main text. The "Dedication" has placed the forthcoming meditation into the best hand, i.e. that of Richard Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, a man of spiritual and political power, someone who is also aware of the power of the print. It has also proved the value of the forthcoming writing and shifted the meaning of the volume from a strategic analysis to an English missionary statement. It is time then that we turn our attention to see to what extent the other material aspects influence the claims of the volume.

The Book as a Physical Object: The Material Aspect

The material aspect of *The Beginning* not only decorates the book but also adds to, influences, and clarifies its meaning. This influence is reached by the way the material aspects of the book, namely the typeface, the headpieces, and the decorated initials level out the visual, and thus conceptual differences between prefatory and main.

It is worth starting the meditation about the material aspects of the work with a possible objection. The prefatory material and the main text are visually divided from each other, and, as a consequence, the prefatory material cannot influence the understanding of the main text; thus, the strategic analysis can hardly turn into a missionary statement. This objection results from the typeface used for the epistles of Finet's "Dedication" and "To the Reader." Most of the text in the volume is in Roman type, but John Finet's introductory writings (the "Dedication" and the "To the Reader") were italicised to distinguish them from Lucinge's "Dedication" and from the main text of the volume. Italics are also used to distinguish quotations in languages other than English; most of the time they are deployed for quotations in Latin. So, seemingly other voices, i.e. those of Finet and also Latin authors,

13 The function of time as a revealer of truth can be found in Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*: "Time's glory . . . / To unmask falsehood and bring truth to light" (ll. 939–940); Cordelia in *King Lear* says: "Time shall unfold what pleated cunning hides" (1.2.280); and in *Twelfth Night*, Viola claims: "O, Time, thou must untangle this, not I" (2.2.40). See also Spurgeon (172) and Turner (5). An illuminating discussion of this topic is provided by Fabiny.

have been distinguished from that of Lucinge via the italic type. This typographical choice visually identifies the two texts as the "original" or main (Roman) and the additional or paratextual material (italics).

This act of orthographical distanciation could be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it may imply that the reader should read the two separately, and thus the prefatory may be disregarded. This interpretation, however, is highly unlikely as the dedication to a powerful person like Richard Bancroft would probably not be simply disregarded. Secondly, it may suggest that the reader is reminded of the fact that the main text, the original work is put into another, new context, so the book as a unified whole is to mean with all the paratextual elements. If we take a look at the typeface and the decorations in more detail, the pendulum swings towards the second interpretation.

The typographic difference between the voices is counterbalanced by the letter type in the main text. The main text contains italic type as well at the beginning of each chapter and book, marking off the synoptic outlines attached to these units of the main text. So, in a sense, the italic type distinguishes in the main text the metatext that is supposed to help the reading process and Lucinge-Finet's words. On the other hand, italics are not used for another metatextual device: the printed marginalia. Using Roman type for what there is on the margins seems to communicate that those notes belong to the authorial voice. As Heath points out, however, this is not the case; the marginalia represents another voice, originating in the Latin translation-edition of Lucinge's work.[14] So in this case, the other's voice is not distinguished from the "original," and this destabilises the opposition between "original" versus "other," main versus marginal.

Elements of decoration, such as the headpieces and the initials, re-establish the link between the voices. There are also other elements of the volume that "orchestrated and modulated the word" (Sharpe and Zwicker 6). The reader finds seven headpieces in the volume and the placement of these ornaments has implications beyond mere decoration. These seven headpieces structure the volume into seven large units (the three pieces of the prefatory material, the contents-page, and the three books of the main text) that, judging by the presence of the decorative elements, seem to have the same weight.

14 As Heath claims: "Il est intérressant de constater que Finet avait sous yeux non seulement le texte français mais aussi la version latine; il reproduit la plupart des notes marginales de ce dernier" (12).

It is not only the economy of the distribution of the headpieces that level out the division between the voices of the work but also the placement of the decorated initial letters. The printer used 42 decorated initials—every chapter begins with one—thus structuring the text into equally important units: three units in the prefatory material, 17 chapters in the First Book, seven in the Second Book, and 15 in the last book. This mechanical distribution of the initials further dissolves the difference between the voices. What further levels out the difference of voices, however, and adds significance to certain units, is the choice of the type of initial used in the work. One finds mostly decorated initials; of the 42 initials only one remains undecorated, and that is the initial letter of Chapter 4 of the Third Book. The decorated initials fall into three groups. The first includes the majority (35), which may be labelled as initials with natural ornamentation. These are the initials that open 33 chapters of the main text, Lucinge's "Dedicatory Epistle," and John Finet's epistle "To the Reader." If there is a pattern here, it points towards the disappearance of the difference between prefatory and main, the texts Finet wrote and those by Lucinge. The remaining six initials are decorated with human figures instead of the natural decoration. Two out of the six, following Plomer's terminology, may be named "black initials," as the background for the human figure and the letter is pitch black (Plomer 96). None of these launch especially outstanding chapters—one opens Chapter 5, the other Chapter 12 of the Third Book—and as both of them are for the same letter, I cannot find any reason for this choice other than mere chance.

In contrast, the next four decorated initials in this group do reveal a pattern. These are called "Eliot's Court Apostolic" initials and open significant chapters. The name originates from the use of this type in the "Eliot's Court" printing house, which in turn are derived from the initials applied by Henry Middleton with the difference that there are more circles in the frame of the original (Plomer 96–97). These initials seem to be special in this volume, as these are the only ones that are framed and that they contain figures who are not only human in general but can be identified. The frames are not only lines but rather strips that have little circles on each side of the frame. What is even more significant here is that these are also "Apostolic," "as each letter shows a figure round whose head was a nimbus, some of which have the emblems of the apostles, but other personages, such as King David, are now and again substituted" (Plomer 96). These initials start four significant chapters, namely John Finet's "Dedication," and Lucinge's three books, thus,

again breaking down the distinction between marginal and main text. Or perhaps they imply that Finet's "Dedication" and Lucinge's three books form an organic unity, i.e. they make sense together.

The "Eliot's Court Apostolic" initials contribute to the signification of *The Beginning*. Firstly, giving further emphasis to the religious layer of the text, it is clearly anthropomorphic figures that launch the claims of the different units of the volume, and what marks these figures is their common activity as people who carry the Word of God, the good news. Even though these figures unanimously carry the Word of God, the images reveal some differences among them. The First Book opens with a haloed man keeping the cup of transubstantiated wine, above which a dove represents the Holy Spirit. The next two figures present the Word of God: the first one reading from an open book, while the second is holding in his right hand a closed book. The first initial of the two represents a winged angel who heralds the word of God. In this image, thus, there are transcendental figures instead of the symbolic representation of the divine in the other ones. Instead of the humanly mediated presence of the transcendental, the transcendental appears in its reality, both marking off and linking the opening decorated initial and the text it belongs to from and to the rest of the book. What the four images have in common is the transmission of information, knowledge thus emphasising the technology of publicising, multiplying the word, the power of publicity which in case of a Christian country is something that everybody takes for granted: the power of transmission.

The interrelatedness of the prefatory material and the main text in this case seems even more emphatic if we look at the volumes produced prior to and in the same year by Eliots Court Press. According to Early English Books Online, Eliots Court Press printed one book in 1605 and three in 1606.[15] In these four works, the Apostolic initials are used rather sparingly, as only two books are decorated with them and in both cases, this type of initial is reserved for the main text. In the case of Sarpi's *A full and satisfactory answer*, there is only one decorated initial and no text other than the main one. In Playfere's *Caesaris superscription*, the prefatory epistle "To the Reader" starts with a decorated initial featuring natural motifs, while the main text opens with an Apostolic initial. The other two works contain only initials with natural ornamentation. In all these volumes, the decoration is less intensive than in *The Beginning*, and one cannot really see a pattern enfolding with respect to the interrelatedness of the prefatory material and the main text.

15 Lydiat, and Sarpi, Forset, and Playfere, respectively.

In comparison, the typography and decoration of *The Beginning* seems to be designed to contribute to the meaning of the text.

Conclusion

The Beginning offers a fascinating case study for exploring the material aspects of a book that influence its meaning. I have argued that the main text of the volume cannot be cut off from the microculture for which it was devised and in which it came into being. With its textual, paratextual, and material aspects, the volume, signified in its own world, created expectations, influenced the reading process and the process of the constitution of meaning: it also thematised and made use of destabilising the hierarchies of main and marginal, linguistic and visual. With the dynamic relationship of these oppositions the volume implies that meaning is not the product of an author but the product of the collaborative effort of author, translator, printer, and publisher whose cooperation is not necessarily orchestrated into the creation of a single meaning.

I have also argued that seemingly unrelated factors line up to contribute to the semiotic context of this book. Firstly, I have situated the book in the wider context of James I's attitude to the new technology of printing for his political and religious objectives. Secondly, I have shown that the publisher of the volume, John Bill, could also be seen as somebody whose fame and activity as a distinguished publisher harmonises with James's purposes. Thirdly, I have discussed how the distinguished printing house, Eliot's Court contributed to Bill's enterprise. Fourthly, I have argued that the translator's prefatory material recontextualised Lucinge's work insofar as John Finet dedicated the volume to Richard Bancroft, a man of religious and political power, and also as a man who understood the power of the printed word. Also, Finet shifted the claim of the book from the Turks to the English nation as a facilitator of Christian unity so as to disintegrate the Turkish unity with the help of spreading disbelief among the Turks. Then, he shaped the readerly appropriation of the work arguing for its value via placing it in the publishing industry. Fifthly, I have explored the way the typefaces (italics and Roman), the headpieces and decorated initials shaped the relatedness of the prefatory material and the main text.

Taking all these five factors into account we could, thus, see that the volume as a volume wavers between layers of meaning. *The Beginning* as a book acts as a historico-strategic analysis to stop the Turkish threat and also as a consciously designed

artefact furthering English ambitions on the Continent. This wavering of meaning, this act of decentralising the process of signification comes into being only because the book is and was not a container of authorial information but a product on and for the market, creating its meaning and use according to the customs and rules of the market.

What remains to be explored for a nuanced and historicised understanding of Lucinge's influence is the delineation of the way the original and the other translations signified as books. This exploration may well include an account of the material aspects of these books, such as the paratextual, physical, and visual elements. The account of these material aspects, moreover, should be treated in their relatedness to the main text of the work. In this way we could better understand different national, publishing, and political agendas on the one hand, and early modern political philosophy, publishing practice in the context of book history on the other. This research, however, remains to be conducted at a later time.

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Milton's Selfie

A Speculative Flight of Fancy

MIKLÓS PÉTI

Abstract: "Fixe heere," a curious fragment by the young Milton, has been interpreted by critics as an emblematic piece expressing the poet's pervasive sense of belatedness. In my "speculative flight of fancy," I propose a different reading, one that finds a general sense of anticipation and adventure in Milton's couplet.

"Fixe heere yee overdaled sphears
That wing the restless foote of time."
(John Milton)

Milton, like his contemporary Rembrandt, was a master of the self-portrait. Coleridge famously suggested that he "attract[ed] all things and forms to himself, into the unity of his own grand Ideal" (Leonard 2:89), and the series of stylised self-representations underpinning his work seem to testify to this talent eloquently. Whether in verse or prose, whether confiding to a friend or declaiming publicly, whether in English, Latin, or Greek, Milton always finds time to portray himself, often explicitly but sometimes only indirectly or by the merest puzzling hints. Who would not wonder whether Milton identifies more with L'Allegro or Il Penseroso? Who would not relish, sometimes with a pinch of salt, the series of self-representations in the (Latin and English) polemical prose? Who would believe the invocations of *Paradise Lost*, or the character of Samson, the richer if completely dissociated from the figure of Milton? The list could go on endlessly, but the significance of Milton's images of himself is apparent in the fact that both critics advocating Milton's "unchanging mind" and those believing in his "intellectual development"

make ample use of them (Le Comte and Shawcross are two famous examples representing these two positions). Yet the question comes up: should we take every attempt at self-presentation as part of the series of significant and memorable self-portraits?

The lines "Fixe heere yee overdaled sphears / That wing the restless foote of time" were first discovered and published in the "Introduction" to *Milton's Commonplace Book*, by Alfred J. Horwood. They are in Milton's hand on the back of a letter from Henry Lawes (written probably around April 1638) notifying Milton of his enclosed passport (a letter from the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports). The letter (now in the British Library, Add MS 36354, f. 1v) is in rather bad condition having apparently been used, according to Horwood "as blotting paper in the course of making entries" in the Commonplace Book (xvi). In the lines in question, the meaningless "overdaled" is amended to "overdated" by most editors, antedating the word's first occurrence (also by Milton) in the *OED* (s.v. "overdated"). According to the editors of the Columbia edition, the couplet "may be a fragment of a larger intended poem" (Milton, *The Works* 18:356), and Barbara Lewalski and Estelle Haan concur: "this enigmatic pair of lines was possibly the start of a poem, apparently never finished" (Milton, *The Complete Works* cxlvii). What complicates the picture is that they are also "undated" and "their context is unclear" (Corns 122).

Since we have no knowledge of the lines' provenance, purpose, or use, critics have largely had to fall back on speculation. As a consequence, possible dates for the couplet slightly vary according to its interpretation. Willa McClung Evans finds in Milton's lines echoes of Eternity's song in Thomas Carew's masque *Coelum Britannicum* (set to music and the part of Eternity played by Lawes in 1634), and conjectures that "in the midst of packing his trunks and preparing his affairs for a year or more of foreign travel" the busy young Milton must have felt under time pressure and expressed with these lines the wish for some breathing space (149–151).[1] Mother Mary Christopher Pecheux, by contrast, finds the fragment informed by the iconography of *kairos* (Latin *occasio*), citing both ancient and early modern sources (visual as well as verbal) for the strange creature with winged feet, and even identifying some artworks, including a choir screen in the Basilica of Torcello representing

1 The lines in Carew's masque are: "Be fix'd your rapid Orbes, that beare / The changing seasons of the yeare / On your swift wings, and see the old / Decrepit Spheares growne darke and cold" (Carew 259). Alternatively, Evans proposes, the news of "Carew's sudden death [in] that May of 1638," presumably reaching Milton at around the time of his travel, might have prompted this idiosyncratic recollection of Eternity's song (152). This is, however, clearly wrong, since Carew died in March 1640; could Evans have thought of his mother, Alice? Cf. Nixon.

Time mounted on wheels, as Milton's possible source (205). She argues that the origin of the lines might be Milton's experience of this Venetian piece—or they could perhaps be a quick rendition of the 12th stanza of Antonio Francini's tributary ode to Milton, which the poet must have heard in Venice, and which he later prefixed to the 1645 poems (206–207).[2] At any rate, Pecheux dates the fragment firmly during the 15 months of Milton's stay abroad: "what my imagination refuses to conjure up," she confesses, "is Milton in his study in England just happening to write on a stray piece of paper which there was no reason for him to have immediately at hand" (208). John Kerrigan, while acknowledging Pecheux's insight concerning the iconography of the lines, puts them into a different context. Focusing on Milton's Nightingale sonnet and reflecting on how the poet's significant anxiety, a sense of personal belatedness and unused talent, changes through his *oeuvre*, he singles out the two lines as emblematic of the "pressure of occasion" the Italian journey presented. Kerrigan argues that the lines "catch Milton's sense that he must surely be younger than he is, but are precipitated by an alarm that, as he begins another preparation, he might already have missed his time." Accordingly, he interprets "overdated" (against the *OED*'s "outdated; obsolete") as belated (113). Although Kerrigan does not identify an approximate date for the lines, from this point it can be inferred that he would probably put them before the start of Milton's continental journey. More recently, Nicholas McDowell has made the same case more positively: "In April 1638, just before he left for Italy, Milton jotted down two lines on the back of the letter from Lawes which enclosed his passport." Following Kerrigan, McDowell finds in the couplet anxiety about belatedness, "the obsession with the poet's time," but also an acknowledgement of indebtedness to Lawes yet untainted by Milton's later, more ambiguous attitude to the cavalier songwriter (253–254).

To add to the line of speculations, I would propose yet another interpretation drawing on, but also going beyond, the insights cited above. Undoubtedly influenced by the iconography of *kairos* (either through the recollection of Carew's masque or from some other source), Milton's lines seem to steer clear from any of the concrete artworks (or occasions) Pecheux mentions (cf. the claim by Campbell and Corns that "he had no particular interest in the visual arts" [103]). It is also remarkable that they are free from any conscious expression of belatedness when read completely

2 The text of Francini's stanza is the following: "Non batta il Tempo l'ale, / Fermisi immoto, e in un fermin si gl'anni, / Che di virtù immortale / Scorron di troppo ingiuriosi a i danni; / Che s'opre dogne di Poema o storia / Furon gia, l'hai presenti alla memoria" (Fletcher 1:220).

out of context—after all, it is the spheres that are overdated, not the speaker. Indeed, the idea of belatedness seems to be created by critics' efforts to contextualise these lines in Milton's *oeuvre*, rather than in his life; such interpretations read the couplet in the light of Doctor Faustus's plea: "Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven, / That time may cease, and midnight never come!" (scene 14, ll. 65–66). But Milton, at the age of 29, is certainly not expecting to "have one bare hour to live;" instead, he is probably eager to "settle [his] studies . . . and begin / To sound the depth of that [he] will profess" (scene 1, ll. 1–2). What greater occasion for this than the continental tour in which he (and his family) has invested both materially and intellectually; which will give him a chance to break away from home; and for which he has just received official permission, one, furthermore that will allow him to visit Rome, a city forbidden to most English travellers at this time, but which, for Milton, was associated primarily with the culture of classical antiquity (Evans 150; Milton, *The Complete Prose* 1:338)?

The lines, therefore, seem to me to register a heightened sense of occasion, not without some earnest excitement. They reflect Milton's instant exhilarated reaction to the removal of the last obstacle before his tour: well-packed and well-attended, the young gentleman is now ready to depart, let time stand still for a moment to witness this thrill. Naturally, the poet's precocious knowledge about time's swift-footedness appears in the course of the couplet, but that does not seem to be more than a formulaic afterthought. The imperative "Fixe heere" is what is in strong focus here: because, for once, he will not stop for the World, the young Milton wants the World to stop for him. This sentiment might also contain a modicum of self-satisfaction: after producing a masque performed with great success and publishing a pastoral elegy unrivalled by his contemporaries, Milton might feel that he is about to reap the well-deserved reward of his labours. It is only natural that such emotions should be prompted by a letter from a fellow artist, who worked with him on his greatest project (*Comus*) so far. Lawes undoubtedly did a great favour to Milton by securing him the passport, but what seems to be on Milton's mind, as he is jotting down the couplet hastily, is a sense of wonder at the fruit their collaboration is about to yield.

Granted, this reading of Milton's lines does not make them nearly as complex as the interpretations quoted above suggest (cf. Kerrigan 113). My aim is not to deny that complexity but to call attention to the possibility of a less complicated reading. Whereas Evans reads the couplet as a tribute to Lawes and/or to Carew, Pecheux sees it as an indirect record of cultural influence, and Kerrigan and McDowell find

in it vestiges of a young artist's self-portrait, I would argue that these lines simply celebrate the present occasion, the promise of the approaching journey, which Milton captures with the image of *kairos*, and the discourse on time available to him and his contemporaries. As such, the couplet can somewhat anachronistically be compared to present-day selfies rather than the elaborate self-portraits of the type Rembrandt and Milton himself used to compose. Selfies celebrate the present moment and create a "disposable monument" to the subject in the here and now. They might well become profound, sophisticated, or stylised, but in contrast to self-portraits, they are not the product of a prolonged creative process (cf. Wender). Milton's "selfie" is of course different from modern-day selfies not only because of the (social) media and technology involved in the latter but also in the fact that it avoids direct self-representation. The "snapshot" or rather "soundbite" of the couplet is, however, as "deictically indexical" as any selfie and through its performative imperative does show us a "self, enacting itself" (Frosh 1621)—what is more, in dimensions fully compatible with Milton's ambitions. Selfies are expected to be shared and although we do not know what Milton did with these lines, the striking similarity of Francini's ode might suggest that at least the theme must have been on his mind through his Italian travels.[3] Furthermore, the letter's placement in Milton's Commonplace Book means that, at least after the poet had lost his sight, others had easy access to it.[4] Here we might also note with interest that the couplet is among the most curious of Milton's works to be posted, "grafittified," and tweeted in this our present age.[5]

In April 1638, after he had received his passport, Milton took note of the elated moments of preparation or departure on the nearest scrap of paper available to him. The subjective experience reflected in that note was nicely counterbalanced on the same piece of paper by Lawes's letter, a reminder of the realities and minutiae of travel. The sheet, perhaps accidentally, became the blotting paper in his Commonplace Book. Is it too much to imagine that, before 1652, Milton occasionally caught sight of and mused on this old document?

3 Thus prompting a rethinking of Pecheux's contention that it was Francini who influenced Milton (see above). On the contrary, might Francini's ode be a rendering of some version Milton's couplet? Milton, at least, does talk about "some trifles which I had in memory compos'd at under twenty or thereabout" delivered in "the private Academies of Italy" (*The Works* 3:235–236). Might these "trifles" have included an improvised rendering (in Latin or in Italian) of a more fresh composition?

4 On the Commonplace Book, see Hanford and Poole.

5 See, for instance, "Overdated Spheres" (lemonlustre, *Flickr*), "Fix here . . ." (Jordan, *h2g2*), and "Fix Here . . ." (@MymiAom, *Twitter*), the latter, significantly, accompanied by a selfie.

Later in his life, could he have remembered, perhaps with melancholy, the wish to stop time and the world when composing Adam's reflection, uttered just before the start of his exile, on how at the end of "this transient World" time will "stand fixt" (*PL* 12.554–555)? However that may be, the letter and the couplet must have brought to his mind "what he was, [and] what is" (*PL* 4.25),[6] as well as sombre recollection of a time in his life when, definitely not "overdated" in either sense of the word, he was quite literally setting out to fresh woods and pastures new. In 1638, as a young man preparing to embark on the adventure of a lifetime after years of study, he must have anticipated immense creative tension from the interaction of modernity and antiquity in his enterprise. After all, he was about to see and experience both one of the most "overdated" and one of the most modern cultures of Europe; in the light of this venture, the world he was about to leave (which included to a large extent the solid stuff of his studies as well as his earlier works) might also have seemed quaintly "overdated." His possession of an already vast knowledge about the world of antiquity and now the opportunity to put that knowledge to modern use put him far ahead of most of his contemporaries, indeed, to a vantage point from where it is possible to reflect on how the "overdated spheres . . . wing the restless foote of time." As he was jotting down "Fixe heere," Milton might well have felt the world was all before him.

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6 Cf. his musings on "an age too late" together with the poet's "Years" in *PL* (9.44–45).

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Disguise and Belief in Milton's *Paradise Regain'd*

BENCE LEVENTE BODÓ

Abstract: What we see can confirm our preconceptions, act as proof for what is doubtful. Yet, belief is strongest when it does not require visual, tangible, or any kind of proof. Milton's later epic dramatises the threefold temptation of Christ in the wilderness, exploring the beliefs of Christ, the Tempter, and even the reader. In the spiritual battle of the two characters, the pictures that the words paint give much of the epic grandeur, as the poem investigates the reliability of the visual. In this process Satan's disguises try to capitalise on the cultural connotations of clothing, while Christ stands in naked honesty.

As the blind poet sings of the regained Paradise after the lost one, his epic creates a world of intellectual and spiritual debate, where the emphasis is on the power of words and not on the images they conjure up. The importance of words is highlighted, for example, in how they leave impressions of "much amazement" (*PR* 1.107) and in the idea that one should live by the "word / proceeding from the mouth of God" (*PR* 1.349–350). Visions and illusions light the way of Satanic temptation. Satan, the father of lies, is said to work with "strange Parallax or Optic skill / of vision multiplied through air" (*PR* 4.40–41); his words are colourful, they paint many pictures. The aspect of Satan's visual temptation that I would like to consider is a matter of clothes, particularly disguises, as they stand in contrast to how little is revealed about the appearance of Jesus. While Jesus offers the naked testimony of his body and soul, Satan brings two disguises for the temptation that reflect elaborate ways of life.

More than half a century ago, Jackson I. Cope passingly commented on the lack of Jesus' visual presentation, simply stating that "we never *see* Christ" (507, emphasis added). Cope noticed this peculiarity when discussing the difference

between the aesthetics of time and place in Milton's two epics about Paradise. The case of this visual difference has not yet been discussed in Milton criticism in the detail it deserves, which the present paper aims to amend. In terms of visuality, I concentrate on Satan's disguises and the presentation of Jesus. Disguises add a further layer of meaning to ordinary clothes, as they recontextualise the connotations that clothes already have. When it comes to how clothing produces meaning, I think along the lines of Chiara Battisti's idea where clothes themselves allow for a performance of identity that is negotiated between the individual and society as opposed to the interior covering of skin that stands for the "uniqueness of being" (102). Disguises hijack this mechanism and forcefully break the honesty of the discourse and its semiotic reliability while capitalising on its workings. This operation is further complicated by the fact that the reader is aware of the wearer's malicious intent. Pride as Satan's chief deadly sin fits here comfortably, as it centres on projected image and its perception by others. In general, Milton's approach to the characterising power of clothing agrees with the tendency of the seventeenth century when it comes to the symbolism of clothing in utopias and dystopias. As Peter Corrigan observes about the literature of the period, "clothing in imaginary communities is usually coded in such a way that all the social distinctions relevant to a particular society are clearly indicated through apparel" (18).

Clothing in Literary and Milton Criticism Today

Focusing on clothing in literary criticism is a considerably new approach. Margaret D. Stetz specifically identifies the year 2006 as the turning point that brought "material analysis to literary studies, by means of attention to dress" within the academic community (63).[1] In today's Milton criticism, Stephen B. Dobranski advocates a similar approach, inspiring the exploration of how "Milton's animist materialism affects his depiction of material objects" (349). Dobranski argues that by "examining the cultural context of things in the poem, we may discover that they possess greater, more spiritual significance, than has been previously thought" (349).[2] Cultural context can be a considerably broad term: one could approach a text while finding

1 Somewhat earlier, in 2000, Elizabeth Currie already indicated that there is a lack in literary studies that place vestiture in their focus (158).

2 While in Dobranski's writing "the poem" refers to *Paradise Lost*, it is quite natural to extend his observation to *Paradise Regain'd* as well.

the relevant cultural context in an attempted reconstruction of the author's historical *milieu*, or by stating that, in case of objects that still surround us, we should understand their cultural context in terms of the reader's time. While Dobranski treats the "matter of hair," that is the arrangement and length of hairlocks as their seventeenth-century connotations inform and guide the world of *Paradise Lost,* his agenda also heralds the study of vestiture in Milton's works. In the cases of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd*, there are very few studies that address this issue. Edward C. Jacobs looks at how various scenes of dressing and redressing in *Paradise Lost* create a "melancholic awareness" of the two expressions' "proleptic power" signalling the first pair's fall (43). In the 1970s, Michael Lieb explored how paying attention to the cultural context of mundane objects that appear in *Paradise Regain'd* can have a bearing on our understanding of Milton's works. While Lieb's work connects the language of materiality with theological bearings in the light of Milton's poetic texts, and thus exemplifies exactly the type of inquiry that is of use to Milton criticism today both in its findings and its spirit,[3] the study seems to have been forgotten. Lieb's work (1970) is not referenced, for example, in Jacobs' essay (2017), and it also eluded my attention when I was writing my study of the symbolism of clothing and its semiotics of sin in *Paradise Lost*.[4]

The Wardrobe of the Regained Paradise

Satan is first disguised as "an aged man in Rural weeds" (1.314), but this costume fails the Tempter. Yet the failure fuels a second attempt as he returns in a more elegant attire: "Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad / As one in City, or Court, or Palace bred" (2.298–300). Apart from the two disguises, other articles of clothing appear in the epic, though these pale in comparison to the disguises in terms of narrative importance and their roles in the temptation. In a vision Satan creates, the "light armed Troops" of the Parthian Empire wear "coats of Mail and military pride" (3.311–312). As part of the last temptation, praetors and proconsuls hasten in "robes of State" (4.64), while emissaries from remote territories of the Roman empire travel the Appian Way in "various habits" (4.68).

The clothes of *Paradise Regain'd* are ahistorical as they describe attires that cannot be linked to a historically specific moment. Apart from the chainmail, they are

3 For the line of Milton criticism that I name above, see Dobranski, Abecassis, and Edwards.

4 See Bodó, "These Robes Were Made for Sin."

clothes that cannot be identified with specific garments of well-defined periods. For example, even today's judicial wear (especially in Anglo-Saxon cultures) could be described as robes of state. Yet, if the reader limits the chronological classification of these garments to fall, for example, between 100 B.C. and the seventeenth century of Milton's time, our understanding of the poem's visuality is not advanced. In fashion history, there is a significant difference between a first-century, seventeenth-century, and a twenty-first-century robe in terms of their material, tailoring, arrangement, typical use, and consequently of cultural and symbolic connotations. Milton's text does not offer anything specific about these items that could bring into motion specific historical connotations of apparel. Here no such characteristically seventeenth-century garments appear as for instance the vest did in *Paradise Lost* (11.241).[5] Although Milton's *Paradise Regain'd* was written in the seventeenth century, it portrays events that are associated with the Biblical times of the first century, dressed in a language that reaches to esteemed sources of literature written in various cultures at various times. The historical diversity of the texts brought into the fold by Milton's allusions throughout the poem, together with the universality of the theme of his epic (Jesus' threefold temptation in the wilderness) within the Christian context both suggest that the epic aspires to timeless appreciation and understanding. In other words, the associations that one might have at any historical moment should be relevant for the analysis of the text.

In contrast with *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regain'd* calls more attention to the act of dressing than to the particularity of specific garments. For example, the poem recalls that Jesus at the age of twelve stood "[b]efore the Altar and the vested Priest" (1.257). In the beginning of book 2, Mary's troubled thoughts are metaphorically "clad" in sighs (2.65). Satan's second disguise also emphasises this, rather than the specificity of one garment (2.298–300). Also, as Satan tempts the fasting Jesus with a richly-laid table, in the background "[t]all stripling youths" are described, "richly clad, of fairer hew, / Then *Ganymed* or *Hylas*" (2.353–354). This emphasis on being dressed as opposed to the particularity of specific garments would suggest that the general idea of the representation of the self through clothes is closer to the central themes of the epic.

The three temptations of Christ in the wilderness are presented as a kind of preparation for Christ's final victory. The Father sends Christ to lay "down the rudiments [o]f his great warfare" to "o'ercome Satanic strength" by "Humiliation and strong

5 For more on the appearance of the vest in *Paradise Lost*, see Bodó (111–112).

Sufferance" before "conquer[ing] Sin and Death the two grand foes" for which he becomes human (*PR* 1.157, 158, 161, 160, 159). Christ's assumption of human form or nature became a diverse theological question, mostly referred to as kenosis that tangentially connects to the presentation and representation of the self through clothing. Lieb explores how the language of the Church Fathers describes the kenotic experience, that is, the incarnation and self-emptying of Christ, in terms of dressing and clothing. He also shows that Milton used this language of the Church Fathers, for example, in his poem on circumcision, where Christ "emptied his glory, ev'n to nakedness" (Milton, *The Complete English Poetry* 20). Here, I wish to present a list of the most relevant examples. As the following quotations are often the result of citations within citations even reaching back to Latin originals through the works of several translators and scholars, I quote them for the purposes of this paper directly from Lieb's study:

1. For Hilary of Poitiers, Christ's becoming a man is achieved through changing "his bodily fashion."
2. Origen approaches the topic saying that it was "veiling of the splendors and brilliancy of deity."
3. For Cyril of Alexandria, kenosis was "the acceptance of a human vesture."
4. For St. Augustine, Christ invests "himself with humanity as with a veil."
5. J. B. Lightfoot writes that "the Son 'emptied' or 'stripped' himself in his kenosis."
6. Even John Calvin writes in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* that Christ is "clothed with our flesh" and that Christ allows "his divinity to be hidden by a 'veil of flesh.'" (Lieb 55–59)

Vestiture can become a potent vehicle for the metaphoric language of incarnation, as it builds on the common experience of augmenting oneself with an artificial material to change one's public appearance and image. The particulars of the experience of dressing do not necessarily conflict with the divine mystery but expose the anthropocentricity behind the human conception of such divine operations as kenosis. As a garment, human nature becomes secondary to the divine, it becomes attachable and detachable. It is something that does not change the entity to which it is applied, but it changes its perception. The metaphor of dressing reveals that, even though in Genesis, God creates man in his own image (*KJV* 1:26), divinity is as far from humanity as clothes are from having a soul. But Milton understood that clothing is also a channel for human interactions where social structures are realised. This is visible in how he described the vestiture of the archangel Michael in *Paradise*

Lost, saying that "th'Arch-Angel soon drew nigh, / Not in his shape Celestial, but as Man / Clad to meet Man" (11.238–240).

Clothing as a cultural product both in its materiality and its meanings operates historically and in the present at the same time. In today's Western civilisation, as in Michel de Montaigne's time, meanings of clothing emerge within the community of their users. In 1575, Montaigne in his short essay, the "Origins and Motives of the Custom of Wearing Clothes," discusses the capacity of clothes to represent such societal relations as the perception and contextualisation of professions, thus abandoning the position that the only purpose of clothing would be protection form the unpleasantness of the elements (15–16). It is far from being certain that Montaigne was the first intellectual to diverge from a purely utilitarian concept for the wearing of clothes; yet, such collections of fashion theory as *Fashion Foundations—Early Writings on Fashion and Dress* start with Montaigne's essay.

In the Christian context of *Paradise Regain'd*, clothes and the very act of dressing have also been long associated with the Fall of mankind. The first time vestiture appears in the King James Bible it results from shame felt upon breaking union with God.

> . . . she [Eve] took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. (*KJV*, Gen 3:6–7)

Clothes are not only connected to sin for Adam and Eve but also to the all-seeing eye of God. As the pair notices that God is walking in the garden, they continue with the secretive behaviour that previously lead them to create clothes, and God reveals his knowledge of their transgression while commenting on this issue:

> And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? (*KJV*, Gen 3:9–11)

In seventeenth-century thought, clothing functioned as the reminder of Adamic guilt and shame: "Adam's shame was never so great, declared John-Francis Seanult, 'as when he forced to cloth himself, the skins he wore were the apparel of a penitent'" (Almond 199).

Yet in Milton's writings, clothes can also stand for righteousness. Lieb argued that the "negative or positive overtones of investiture depend upon the essential relationship between form and attire. This relationship also comments on moral stature. When Milton is describing a virtuous character, for instance, form and attire correspond gloriously" (Lieb 354). As Lieb observes, this is the case in Milton's 23rd sonnet, beginning with the line "[m]ethought I saw my late espoused saint," in *A Mask*, and on occasion in *Paradise Lost.* But when it comes to disguises, "attire attempts to hide . . . form, with the result that investiture debases rather than glorifies" (354).

Satan's Disguises

Disguises are ever-present tools of Satanic temptation both in *Paradise Lost* and in *Paradise Regain'd*. They enrich the imagery of the epic by communicating Satan's deceptive nature. While *Paradise Regain'd* mainly takes place in the wilderness, the linguistic ornaments of the text present a vibrant visuality. As Satan approaches Christ for the first time with the intention of tempting him, he does not appear as a fallen celestial being, but as

> . . . an aged man in Rural weeds,
> Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray Ewe,
> Or wither'd sticks to gather; which might serve
> Against a Winters day when winds blow keen,
> To warm him wet return'd from field at Eve,
> He saw approach, who first with curious eye
> Perus'd him, then with words thus utt'red spake. (*PR* 1.314–320)

The narrator reads quite a lot into Satan's disguise, which is unsettling but not alien from the Miltonic treatment of clothes. In *Paradise Lost*, for example, it is most significantly in a vision given to Adam by the archangel Michael that clothes are directly interpreted. In *Paradise Regain'd,* Satan's first disguise is described as "[r]ural weeds." The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites Milton's *Paradise Lost* in connection with the vestimentary meaning of "weeds," marking a word that denotes a "garment, or garb, distinctive of a person's sex, profession or life" (*OED*, *s.v.* weed, n.2.). While in *Paradise Lost* (3.479), "weeds" appeared with the meaning of clothes that are the characteristic garments of the Dominican order, here a similar function is visible, but instead of a particular profession or vocation, "weeds" point to the hardships

of rural life, maybe even a kind of humbleness associated with it. The weeds refer to something that a shepherd would wear. Clothes fulfil one of their functions that has perhaps not changed since their emergence. This function is to express, reflect, and embody social relations. The view that clothing is not (only) about a functional protection against the elements may be banal and obvious, but its academic contextualisation deserves mention. Alex Franklin, for instance, investigates this topic with a Heideggerian phenomenology in mind, arriving at the conclusion that we do not express "our individuality, our authentic selves through our clothing choices—as myriad ad campaigns would have us believe—[but] we are in actuality expressing our inauthentic 'they-selves'" (85).[6] Obviously, there is intentionality on Satan's part in appearing in the rural weeds as an aged man, but this intentionality plays on a common understanding of clothes expressing social, political, and economic status. Still, clothes infer meaning according to two opposing dynamics: they can either give material presence to underlying instances that are there, or they modify these instances by being contradictory or different to them.[7]

As the narrator presents Satan's first disguise, he gives little information concerning the actual shape that Satan assumes, instead he concentrates on interpreting it for the reader. We only learn that he is "an aged man in Rural weeds, / following" Christ. The amount of information that the narrator infers forms the motions of Satan, and his disguise is significantly more than what is expected. It goes beyond the ordinary reach of deductive reasoning. The elaborate interpretation of the "aged man disguise" suggests a position that accepts garments and gestures as capable conveyers of, essentially, an entire way of life. The struggles of life in the harsh winters of the wilderness are engraved in the clothes and movements assumed by Satan.

Satan's disguise works also as a parody. The Biblical allusion to Christ as a shepherd puts Satan's disguise into an ironic perspective as the Tempter chooses the same vocation to be associated with his disguise that his mark will assume for himself as the head of humankind. The narrator's comment that this diabolic shepherd might be on a "quest of some stray Ewe," resonates also with the image of Christ as the Lamb of God. While an ewe usually refers to a female sheep and Christ appears as masculine in the epic (and in the Christian tradition as well) the playfulness need not be lost

6 Franklin uses the term "they-selves" in a sense that emerges from her reading of Heidegger's *Being and Time* (85). Cf. Heidegger (167).

7 Peter Corrigan offers similar hermeneutics of clothing in the conclusion of his book on the symbolism of clothing in English utopian and dystopian literature (155–156).

because of the lack of didactically precise equivalence. The capacity for parody in Satan's disguise does not end here.

Lieb observed that Satan's first disguise also parodies some conceptualisations of kenosis.

> C. A. Patrides mentions the . . . view of such writers as Gregory of Nyssa, in whose *Oratorio chatechetica* we find the idea that Christ, through "a kind of deceit and trickery," disguised himself as man, so that he could catch Satan unawares (133–134). Although Milton does not expressly accord with that concept, he does reflect [on] . . . the patristic interpretation of Christ's *kenosis* as an *occultatio Dei* [the covering/hiding of true divine nature in the process of incarnation]. Thus, in "The Passion," he celebrates Christ's assuming man's form in these terms: "what a Mask was there, what a disguise!" (19). . . . Divinity takes human form (metaphorically disguises itself) in order to reveal itself to human understanding. Unlike Christ . . . , Satan . . . disguises in order to deceive, but . . . [he becomes] "undisguised" through the scrutiny of Christ. (353–354)

Lieb contrasts Satan's disguise with Christ's vestiture of a human form in a way that brings forth a semiotics of clothing that was very much present in *Paradise Lost* as well. The semiotics that Milton developed in his grand epic for the first attire that mankind wore was one of change. There, the presence of clothes signified a new-found absence of innocence, and consequently clothing revealed an ontological change in its wearers. While the nature of Christ's human form/body is not directly addressed in *Paradise Regain'd*, Lieb brings compelling evidence for its relevance in face of a disagreeing academic climate (342–354). Although Lieb considers it to be somewhat "grotesque" to conceptualise the human appearance of Christ as a mask, such an approach provides an illuminating perspective on how Christ sees through the Satanic disguise at the end of their first repartee:

> He [Satan] ended, and the Son of God reply'd.
> Think'st thou such force in Bread? is it not written
> (For I discern thee other then thou seem'st)
> Man lives not by Bread only, but each Word
> Proceeding from the mouth of God . . . ? (*PR* 1.346–350)

The text does not reveal what gave Satan's disguise away—or what was particularly conspicuous in his language. As Miklós Péti's note concisely summarises in the new, 2018 Hungarian translation of *Paradise Regain'd*, the critical tradition does not agree

whether Satan and Christ recognise each other at this point (as the old enemies from the War in Heaven, as described in book 6 of *Paradise Lost*), or if they just deduce the other's identity. As Péti comments, the line, "[f]or I discern thee other than thou seem'st," could also be interpreted as Christ's "bluff" to get Satan to confess his identity (48n102). Satan's alleged initial reason for approaching Christ, having seen his baptism, was exactly the same: to find out who Christ is. This symmetry in the will to recognise the other is at its height a few lines later, when Christ ends his argument concerning the patriarchal precedents of fasting with the lines, "[w]hy dost thou then suggest to me distrust, / Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art" (1.355–356). From the sinful perspective of Satan's pride, the Son's human form is not just a clothing of the flesh but a disguise. And the most deceiving one of those. This could be understood as Milton chiding literal believers of kenotic thought but could only be a way to show Satan's apostasy. If we take inspiration from Milton's other writings, like "The Nativity Ode," it could also be that Christ's disguise of the human form, a benevolently conceptualised disguise that was assumed as the Son of God gave up his godhead to save mankind, gave him the ability recognise other, inferior disguises. What makes the choice between these interpretations challenging is the lack of textual evidence, the fact that the epic connects Biblical and fictional texts, assuming a familiarity with them, and that Milton's epics are also spiritual texts: readers have an understanding of the characters' identities and attach significance to them according to their beliefs and their views on the separation of fiction and theology.

After Satan's first disguise fails, he attempts to disguise himself for a second time:

> When suddenly a man before him stood,
> Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
> As one in City, or Court, or Palace bred,
> And with fair speech these words to him address'd. (*PR* 2.298–301)

The second disguise also builds on social connotations attached to clothing. The fact that Satan now assumes the guise of a wealthier social cluster does not alter the underlying methodology, nor does the disguise more successfully mislead Christ. Milton's word choice is revealing, as it also brings to surface the difference between truth and assumption. A disguise that is described as "seemly" can easily bring associations of seeming, especially with Milton, whose writings often use wordplay, even between languages (for example between Latin and English).

As the etymology of both words goes back to the Old Norse form of *soemr*, "fitting, becoming," "seeming" strengthens a sense of a false underlying content, and the seeming of this fairer clothes also emphasises the falsehood of his fair speech.

Christ's Appearance

As opposed to the proposed descent from the Heavenly throne in *Paradise Lost*, in *Paradise Regain'd* the reader finds Christ already clothed in a human nature. As Christ appears in the epic, virtually nothing is told of his appearance:

> . . . but him [Jesus] the Baptist soon
> Descri'd, divinely warn'd, and witness bore
> As to his worthier, and would have resign'd
> To him his Heavenly Office, nor was long
> His witness unconfirm'd: on him baptiz'd
> Heaven open'd, and in likeness of a Dove
> The Spirit descended, while the Fathers voice
> From Heav'n pronounc'd him his beloved Son. (*PR* 1.25–32)

The perspective of the narration here places the reader as one of the gathering. We, as members of the flocking mass that gathers around John the Baptist, only see Heaven open and the Spirit in the shape of a dove but not the Son of Man himself (*PR* 1.18–32). The lack of visual detail, in comparison to the second description is striking, especially taking into consideration that the narrator here becomes Satan:

> I saw The Prophet do him reverence, on him rising
> Out of the water, Heav'n above the Clouds
> Unfold her Crystal Dores, thence on his head
> A perfect Dove descend, what e're it meant,
> And out of Heav'n the Sov'raign voice I heard,
> This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd.
> . . . . . .
> Who this is we must learn, for man he seems
> In all his lineaments, though in his face
> The glimpses of his Fathers glory shine. (*PR* 1.79–85, 91–93)

At the second iteration, the reader sees with Satan's eyes, with a gaze that pierces into the realms of the transcendental yet misses the accurate identification

of the object of its gaze with the Son whose "fierce thunder drove [the devilish crew] to the deep" (*PR* 1.90). Both iterations present a gathering: first the baptism, and later the council of the fallen angels listening to Satan's most visual testimony. The first resembles the situation of someone in a line far removed from the main event being only told what is happening at the front. In contrast, Satan's compelling rhetoric creates the illusion of experiencing the events directly. There is space even to contemplate the glow of a face. The difference between the two descriptions is clear, though the referential reliability of the second might be suspect, the narrator being the biblical "Father of lies" (*KJV*, John 8:44) for whom lying is sustenance and food (*PR* 1.429). While the rich visual details of Satan's description tempt the reader to believe him, the failure of the Satanic reading of Christ to recognise the full power of divinity in the incarnate Christ should stand as a warning for the belief in the visual. In a Platonising vein, Satan distinguishes between Christ's outward appearance, "his lineaments" and his real substance. The word *seems* brings to surface a duality, as it can denote a purely logical approach to a subject and also an understanding derived from visual experience. The first meaning of "seem" (denoting the logical relationship) had already been heavily ingrained in the English language by Milton's time, but the fact that Satan continues his account with deductions based on an ocular observation suggests that his approach to meaning is visual. Satan thus places trust in two opposing approaches to meaning with one breath. On the one hand, he regards form as the necessary expression of content (the sight of the Father's glory indicates its actual underlying presence); on the other hand, he also mistrusts the relationship between form and content (saying that the lineaments may be human, but that does not necessitate that he is).

The contrast is quite clear, while in *Paradise Lost* the symbolism of clothing was an intricate system that revealed moral character and ontological change, in *Paradise Regain'd* the visuality of clothing is never to be trusted, never to be believed: it is a tool of deception and show (mostly of status and social power). While Christ's assumption of human nature was also described metaphorically as putting on clothes in theological sources available to Milton, he avoids this language in *Paradise Regain'd* together with any description of Christ's physical appearance, making clothing chiefly into a matter of disguise. Ultimately, these disguises become the catalysts of recognition, as Christ's divinity in his human nature unfolds in the face of Satanic temptation.

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Trouble in Paradise

Misbehaviour and Disbelief in *The Isle of Pines*

SAM GILCHRIST HALL

Abstract: Viewing utopias and histories as two sides of the same fantasy enables an interpretation of Henry Neville's The Isle of Pines *(1668) that reads it as both a caustic commentary on the problems inherent in monarchical government—especially when an absolute sovereign is dissolute—and a profoundly self-critical utopia. It is primarily through its complex and, at times, parodic intertextuality with* Exodus *that this text offers an ironic commentary on the notion of paradise itself, a beguiling no-place, located in the dimmest recesses of the past, which continues to inspire blueprints for a better world.*

History and Utopia in *Exodus*

"Utopia too must have a history."
(H. G. Wells)

At first glance, the connection between histories, commonly considered to be factual accounts about what actually happened, and utopias, fantastical fictions about what could come to be in a no-place (*ουτοπία*), seems tenuous at best. On closer inspection, however, they are not without some common ground. Utopias are commonly modelled on the ur-fantasy of an ideal state in the distant past—a Golden Age in a paradise, where, as Kurt Vonnegut put it, "everything was beautiful and nothing hurt" (155)—and writing history also involves, if not active nostalgia, then at the very least an envisaging of a place and time other than the one in which we now find ourselves. Furthermore, it is surely more than a coincidence that this seemingly paradoxical relationship is clearly identifiable in *Exodus*, which—as memory and

a promise, history and utopia—is a progenitor of both historical and utopian writing, recording as it does the Israelites' flight from Egypt, the story of Passover and the revelation of Mosaic Law, while promising their eventual inhabitation of "a land flowing with milk and honey" (*KJV, Exodus* 13.5), free from foreign oppression and, crucially, people of other races and faiths.

Furthermore, as an unequivocal act of historical self-assertion, *Exodus* founds Israel. Justifying the actions of the present by recourse to hereditary privilege, like most early modern—and, indeed, a considerable number of modern—histories, it opens with a clear assertion of historical precedence; the Israelites were in Egypt long before the current Pharaoh came to power: "And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt *already*" (*KJV, Exodus* 1.6). Whether one takes its events metaphorically or literally, *Exodus* clearly offers the history of a sort, but it can also be considered as a utopian text. Not only does it depict a Promised Land but also—more importantly for the purposes of this article—it is the originary text of the Law. And although it may seem obvious that an ideal state would not need any laws, it is basically impossible to design a practicable society without them. Indeed, presumably for this reason, utopias are characterised by a preoccupation with legislation and prohibition, which distinguishes them in the strict sense from "the other four models of an ideal society . . . Abundantia, Moralia, Millennium and Naturalia" (Avilés 225); "utopianism," argues J. C. Davis, is "primarily concerned with institutional perfection. An improvement in the moral behaviour of man may be seen as resulting from this but man's moral perfection is not a prior assumption" (174). Thus, Ralph Robinson's 1551 English translation of More's *Utopia* bills its Second Book as "containing the description of Utopia, with a large declaration of . . . all the good laws and orders of the same island" (Bruce 49).[1] Paradoxical as it may seem, early modern utopias are more concerned with legal reform than with simply "dreaming on things to come" (Shakespeare, Sonnet 107.2).

Leaving aside, for the moment, the remarkable formal affinities between early modern utopias and *Exodus*—most notably, their shared predilection for genealogies and lists of prohibitions, to which we shall return—the content of utopian texts from this era seems to be inspired, implicitly and explicitly, by this biblical narrative in particular. In his 1652 pamphlet, *The Law of Freedom on a Platform; or, True Majesty Restored*,

1 The A and B texts of the original read simply: "Raphaelis Hythlodei sermo de optimo Reip. statu, per Thomam Morum. Liber secundus."

the leader of the Diggers, Gerrard Winstanley, makes a series of legislative proposals for a radically egalitarian post-revolutionary polity that clearly view the dramatic events of the 1640s and 1650s and the Regicide, not in terms of difference, as what we might term an epistemological break, but as an analogue to past events. "God hath honoured you," writes Winstanley in his opening epistle to Oliver Cromwell, "with the highest honour of any man since Moses's time, to be the head of a people who have cast out an oppressing Pharaoh. For when the Norman power had conquered our forefathers, he took the free use of our English ground from them, and made them his servants. And God hath made you a successful instrument to cast out that conqueror, and to recover our land and liberties again" (523). Not for nothing, it seems, is the alternative title of his text, which calls for the levelling of sovereignty on a psychological, social and metaphysical level through common ownership and tilling of the land, *True Majesty Restored*. For Winstanley, Cromwell was quite literally the new Moses. History was pregnant with utopian possibility and the brave new world of the Commonwealth was nothing other than the fulfilment of what had been promised to the Israelites.[2]

Indeed, arguably the most common plot device in utopian fiction as a whole also seems to hail from *Exodus*: namely, the fortunate shipwreck. For instance, the heroine of Margaret Cavendish's *The Discovery of the New World Called The Blazing World* (1666) finds herself alone on uncharted seas (after her kidnappers have frozen to death), where she is discovered by the inhabitants of a new world, talking animals, who take her to their emperor, whom she eventually marries (2–3); after this she debates at length with these animals about their systems of law, sovereignty, and, most importantly, the different areas of knowledge pursued by the various creatures. The trope of the fortunate shipwreck, rendered in the most perfunctory way possible by Cavendish, recalls—perhaps unconsciously—the equally unlikely narrative about the infant Moses in *Exodus* (2.1–10). This trope recurs twice in *The Isle of Pines* and a host of other texts that would come to be known as Robinsonades. Moses's mother puts him in a rudimentary raft of rushes and floats him down the Nile and rather than being eaten by crocodiles or simply drowned, the abandoned boy is discovered by the Pharaoh's daughter and is subsequently brought up in the royal household, despite her father's eugenic edict, ordering the murder of the first-born male

2 With extensive reference to *Daniel*, Antonis Liakos provides a cogent account of the relationship between "the role of history within imagined utopian societies, and the place of utopia in the background of historical thinking" (20) in a special edition of *Historein*, devoted to history and utopia.

children of the Israelites to hinder their proliferation (*KJV*, *Exodus* 1.16).

This particular similarity points to a more general one between biblical narratives and utopias, which is that they call for a certain suspension of disbelief, a suspension of disbelief that enables history in its original etymological sense—it comes from the Ancient Greek for "inquiry" (*ἱστορία*)—to be written.[3] In other words, through a series of improbable events, a hypothetical situation is constructed, which enables inquiry into complex topics, such as the fraught relationship between law, idolatry and sovereignty, for whether the events such narratives record are plausible or practicable is almost beside the point. Rather, what matters is the ways in which such situations tell us about the institutions, discourses, and ideas of our own world. Ultimately, texts that inquire demand inquisitive readers and the pamphlet form in which the *Isle* was originally published likewise demanded readers that were "engaged, critical, and questioning, and—like political actors—accustomed to confronting potentially-deceptive surface appearances and speakers" (Stillman 151–152), readers that would consider the first ruler of the Isle of Pines, who is pathologically incapable of self-reflection, a profoundly disturbing sovereign, even of an imaginary land.

Written by a republican in exile after the Restoration and published in 1668 under the pseudonym of Cornelius Van Sloetten,[4] Henry Neville's *succès de scandale* offers, as many of its critics have observed (Mahlberg 1–7, Stillman 147–175), a caustic critique of the Stuart regime, which suggests that sensual pleasure is more important to the restored king and his cronies than the national interest. And although its explicit representation of its sovereign designing a new legal system is ostensibly consistent with the utopian genre's fixation on legal matters, this article argues that the shifting ironies occasioned by Neville's engagement with—or, rather, inquiry into—*Exodus* serve to problematise the possibility of a "law-based utopia" (Avilés 225) by bringing to the surface contradictions that have been tacit in notions of both utopia and paradise since their respective inceptions.

Misbehaviour

> To teach thee that God attributes to place
> No sanctitie, if none be thither brought
> By men who there frequent, or therein dwell. (Milton, *Paradise Lost* 836)

3 See *OED* "History" n. 1.

4 This probably recalls the word "slut;" Bruce also notes that "[p]ines may be an anagram of 'penis,'

Framed within the Sloetten's letter, certified by two letters addressed to "a credible person in Covent Garden" (190), the content of George Pine's testimony about his shipwreck on an uninhabited island, which is read to the sailors by his Grandson, the current sovereign, William, recalls *Exodus*, at least in so far as it relays the story of the population of an ideal country, a land of plenty. After a description of how he systematically and repeatedly impregnated the four women with whom he was shipwrecked, the polyamorous Pine continues to describe how he divided up his enormous family into tribes. While Amy Boesky (155–166) and Stillman (155–157) have convincingly shown that an archetype of Pine was Noah—he too had a rebellious son, Ham—not least because of the *Isle*'s focus on law, it is also necessary to examine its parodic intertextuality with the next book of the Bible, *Exodus.*

Marrying off half-brothers and sisters, Pine, like any self-respecting Old Testament Patriarch, divides up his kingdom between these tribes, an action which creates territory and, therefore, private property in paradise, while keeping him as supreme ruler over all of the inhabitants. In the ensuing twenty years, this professional "bookkeeper" (Bruce 194) attempts the occasional census and this "numbering [of] his people" (Hardy 102–103) is even illustrated on the original pamphlet's frontispiece, presumably as a key event in the narrative:

> I summoned them to come to me, that I might number them. Which I did, and found the estimate to contain, in or about the eightieth year of my age, and fifty-ninth of my coming there, in all, of all sorts, one thousand seven hundred eighty and nine. Thus praying God to multiply them, and send them the true light of the gospel, I last of all dismissed them. For being now very old, and my sight decayed, I could not expect to live long. I gave this narration, written with my own hand, to my eldest son, who now lived with me, commanding him to keep it, and if any strangers should come thither by chance. (Bruce 200)

Not only does Neville's narrative, like many other utopian narratives and Robinsonades, record the inhabitation and population of a new land by a people whom chance (or fate) has forced out of their original country, but it also offers a satirical history of this island and a genealogy of its people. Astonishingly, rather than attempting to create a legacy of any sort by actively engineering the future of his society, Pine, who seems concerned only with the physical aspects of existence,

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but 'pine' also signified 'punishment,' 'suffering' (especially the suffering of hell), and (as a verb) 'to lose one's vitality or vigour,' as well as 'to languish with desire' (as it still does)" (xxxvii, xl).

simply counts his subjects and then gives up. Indeed, he recurrently emphasises his good physical health and that of his wives and offspring: "none of the children, for all the hardship we put them to, were ever sick" (Bruce 198). And this must surely have seemed truly Arcadian at a time of high infant mortality, as would the cornucopian fruitfulness of the island and his "consorts" (Bruce 197), almost like a return to Eden or a fulfilment of God's promise to the Jews: "I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land" (*KJV*, *Exodus* 22.25–26). After all, despite their dire circumstances, "the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them" (*KJV*, *Exodus* 1.7)—like the English stranded in paradise.

It is, however, the very material plentitude of the island and complete lack of legislation that inculcates the lawless lust, for which this text became notorious: "Idleness and a fullness of everything begot in me," writes George, "a desire for enjoying the women . . . and custom taking away shame (there being none but us), we did it more openly, as our lusts gave us liberty" (Bruce 197–198). Without the necessity of working for survival, the islanders live for sensual pleasures alone. And as the population increases, this very sexual licence, which was tabled as a real social possibility by certain radical sects during the Commonwealth period, results in anarchy; as Pine's grandson, William, moralises: "in multitudes disorders will grow, the stronger seeking to oppress the weaker, no tie of religion being strong enough to chain up the depraved nature of mankind" (Bruce 201). This echoes Glaucon's contention in the *Republic* that humans are naturally unjust and it is only fear of injury from the law that prevents them from murdering, robbing and raping with impunity (*Republic*, 360e). And even a return to paradise, Neville adds, would not alter this depressing fact.

After dividing the remarkably fertile inhabitants into four tribes, Pine's eldest son's command of law and order completely dissipates, partly due to a lack of religious instruction: "the sense of sin being quite lost in them, they fell to whoredoms, incests, and adultery" (Bruce 201). Without fear of punishment and the sense that they are held accountable to law, the islanders fail to confine themselves within "the bounds of any modesty, but brother and sister lay openly together; those who would not yield to their lewd embraces, were by force ravished, yea, many times endangered of their lives" (Bruce 201). The shift from sexual (im)morality to social chaos that William Pine narrates to the sailors is also found in *The Law*

of Freedom's discussion of what constitutes true freedom. "Others [i.e. the Ranters]," observes Winstanley, "say: It is true freedom to have community with all women, and to have liberty to satisfy their lusts and greedy appetites. But this is the freedom of wanton unreasonable beasts, and tends to destruction" (*Works* 2:528). From this point of view, George Pine's society would have been doomed from the outset precisely because it is without laws to curb the appetites of its strongest member. As Van Sloetten himself observes: "where the hedge of government is once broken down, the most vile bear the greatest rule" (Bruce 207–208).

Eventually, Henry Pine violently suppresses the dissenting factions on the island, the worst of whom is "John Phill, the second son of the Negro-woman" who "proved guilty of divers ravishings and tyrannies committed . . . was adjudged guilty of death, and accordingly was thrown down from a high rock into the sea" (Bruce 202). After murdering his own brother in a vigilante-style lynching and summarily pardoning of the other wrong-doers, the island moves towards a much more conservative vision of utopia. After the insurrection, he lays down six laws that are, essentially, condensed versions of Mosaic Law, albeit with some significant differences, and appoints himself, despite the absence of any legal training whatsoever, as another Moses, the supreme judge of his people (see *Exodus* 18.26):

> 1. That whosoever should blaspheme or talk irrelevant of the name of God should be put to death.
> 2. That who should be absent from the monthly assembly to hear the Bible read, without sufficient cause shown to the contrary, should for the first default be kept without any victuals or drink for the space of four days, and if he offend therein again, then to suffer death.
> 3. That who should force or ravish any maid or woman should be burnt to death, the party so ravished putting fire to the wood that should burn him.
> 4. Whosoever shall commit adultery, for the first crime the male shall lose his privities, and the woman have her right eye bored out; if after that she was taken again in the act, she should die without mercy.
> 5. That who so injured his neighbour by laming of his limbs or taking any thing away which he possesseth, shall suffer in the same kind himself by loss of limb; and for defrauding his neighbour, to become servant to him, whilst he had made him double satisfaction.
> 6. That who should defame or speak evil of the Governor or refuse to come before him on a summons, should receive a punishment by whipping with rods, and afterward be exploded [*sic*] from the society of the rest of the inhabitants. (Bruce 202–203)

Paradoxically, when we design a utopia we envisage the house of our dreams, but more often than not end up furnishing it with the same old furniture. Even designs for a perfect society must have laws. A common complaint in early modern utopias is not that laws exist in the first place, but rather that the current legal system is overly complicated, a Babel-like confusion of words which is exploited for profit by lawyers and judges, breeding corruption and injustice. Given, however, that the Isle is, once again, on the brink of anarchy until the Dutch sailors lend their firepower to Pine's grandson to quell a second uprising, it is clear that Henry's nostalgic return to Old Testament Law is woefully inadequate for maintaining a peaceful society—as it is in *Exodus* itself, for the Israelites break God's Law by committing idolatry and face obliteration as a consequence.

Related to this is the idea expressed that the legal system of this world is overly harsh; even taking its complex structural ironies into account, More's *Utopia* remains a design of a racially homogenous and fairly authoritarian society, characterised by the existence of a slave class, continual surveillance and draconian limits on freedom of expression and movement. Nonetheless, in the First Book, Hylothoday, impressed by the utopian legal system, explicitly argues against capital punishment for theft, pointing out that in addition to being corrupt and otiose, such laws are far harsher than the "ungentle and sharp" (Bruce 26) Laws of Moses, for these "punished theft by the purse, and not with death," yet were "given to bondmen, yea, and them very obstinate, stubborn, and stiff-necked" and written long before "the new law of clemency and mercy" (Bruce 26).[5] Henry's laws are, in contrast, somewhat stricter than those of Moses.

It is no exaggeration to claim that on the Isle of Pines, the rule of law is decidedly dystopian. While some of Henry's proscriptions reflect the common early modern punishments for crimes against property and person, others are even harsher than those criticised by the relatively illiberal Hylothoday. Rather than the dubious

5 The term "stiff-necked" is added to the original text by More's first English translator, Robinson, presumably to emphasise the intransigence of the Israelites, but this term would subsequently come to be used in the *Geneva Bible* (1599) and the *King James Bible* (1611) to describe the stubborn persistence of idolatrous practices among the Jews (e.g. *KJV*, *Exodus* 33.5); it is a mirror translation from the *Vulgate*'s "Dixitque Dominus ad Moysen: Loquere filiis Israel: Populus *durae cervicis* es: semel ascendam in medio tui, et delebo te. Jam nunc depone ornatum tuum, ut sciam quid faciam tibi" (*Exodus* 33.5, emphasis added). More's original reads simply: "Denique lex Mosaica, quanquam inclemens et aspera (nempe in seruos, et quidem obstinates, lata), tainen pecunia furtum haud morte mulctauit" (Fronde 62–63).

logic of revenge, characteristic of Old Testament Law—the logic of "eye for an eye" (*KJV, Exodus* 21.26–27)—Pine's laws are over the top. Transgressions are punished spectacularly and excessively. The punishment for rape, for instance, is being burnt alive with "the party so ravished putting fire to the wood that should burn him" whereas—rather nauseatingly—in the Old Testament the offender may either marry the victim or compensate her father at the going "bride price" (*Exodus* 22.17).[6] In *Exodus*, one is accountable for the sin of blasphemy at the end of time—"the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (22.7)—but on the Isle it is punished by death. Likewise, no punishment for breaking the Sabbath is detailed in *Exodus* and while it once suggests that one should follow the advice of parents and elders, *Exodus* neither specifies the punishment for not doing so, nor does it contend that one should be entirely beholden to earthly authority.

In fact, in the state of exception or anomia (*ἀνομία*) with which *Exodus* opens, in which the Pharaoh has ordered the death of the first-born males, the only possible option is to ignore earthly law: Moses's mother and the midwives side-step the unjust command of a tyrant and the flight of the Jews from Egypt is itself an act of civil disobedience, a refusal to believe in the absolute authority of an unjust governor. Tellingly, moreover, the commandment that is most conspicuously absent from Pine's prohibitions is the one that is most recurrent in the Old Testament: the injunction against idolatry (*KJV, Exodus* 20.4–5).[7] And it is hard not to interpret this absence—especially given the fact that Pine assumes sovereignty and breaks the Old Testament rules against pre-marital sex and polygamy (*KJV, Exodus* 22.17)—as a thinly veiled critique of the dissolute rule of the recently restored Charles II, who was, likewise, the head of the church and judiciary on his island.

Pine, after all, even describes the four women with whom he arrives on the island as his "consorts" and while this might simply serve to characterise him as upwardly mobile (Stillman 163–164), it should not be forgotten that the word "consort" was used specifically to describe "[a] partner in wedded or parental relations" and is usually "[u]sed in collocation with some titles, as *queen-consort*, the wife of a king" (and is, for this reason, very seldom used in the plural); as a verb, it did not always simply mean "to accompany" but also held overt sexual connotations, as it does to this day.[8] This ambiguity perhaps serves to help foreground what Stillman describes

6 See also *Deuteronomy* 22.28–29.

7 See also *Ezekiel* 6.1–5; *Deuteronomy* 4.15–31 and 12.29–32.

8 Cf. *OED consort* n. definitions 1 and 3; *consort* v. definition 2.

as the "sharp contrast between George's sexual potency as a father in peopling his island and his impotence as a statesman in organising his people" and clearly offers an implicit "critique of England's current and future monarchs" (165).

This, in turn, implicitly links Charles II's notorious sexual licence with idolatry. And as David Hawkes has shown, such licence is considered a form of idolatry, for "the pursuit of fleshly pleasures . . . indicates a misconstrual of the *telos* of the human being. To be carnal is to forget that the body is a means to a spiritual end" (58). In other words, lechery means delighting in the visible and objective world (the old furniture) at the expense of spiritual and invisible (the new house). Perhaps this is why Pine's decidedly one-dimensional embedded narrative focuses, both in his self-presentation and his representation of his relationships with others, entirely on objective facts, rather than reflecting on what he (or the people with whom he had relationships) thought or felt. Certainly, absolutist monarchs like the Stuarts and the Pines not only demanded a form of veneration that verged on idolatrous because they consider themselves "[t]he deputy elected by the Lord" (*Richard II* 3.2.53), but also total allegiance, in spite of the fact that *Exodus* itself clearly implies that such unconditional faith is due to God alone.

Disbelief

In the history of the island that Pine's grandson narrates, the gulf between what could have been and what actually happened is vast. Although the islanders could have lived without alienation from nature and their own labour and could have fashioned a radically egalitarian new society—just as the Radical sects who met with the Grandees at the Putney Debates in 1647 sought to do—Pine retains a monarchical system of government, in which the head of state is also the supreme judge and chief spiritual leader. For Stillman, the rebellions on the Isle are in the main part caused by the simple fact that the inhabitants do not feel themselves to be enfranchised "citizens" (159), but merely subjects. "George's familial relations," he adds drolly, "represent the Utopia of a patriarchal accountant" (155).

Certainly, the grubbiest piece of furniture left over from the Old World is the segregation of the black inhabitants of the island and the murder of John Phill, events that have, naturally, received considerable critical attention (see Jakka 220–222; Stillman 163–165; Boesky 162–171). Although these actions and the way in which the "depravities of the Phills," who are the cause of both insurrections, "are ascribed

to racial mixing" (Jakka 220) and have been contextualised within the Stuart legislation for maintaining racial purity in the colonies (Boesky), it is worth recalling what *Exodus* has to say about this subject, particularly given its emphasis on the punishment for idolatry. God's promise to the Israelites is the following:

> I will drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: but ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: for thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God. (*KJV*, Exodus 34.11–14)

In both texts, the racial Other is driven out. In Neville, this is because the mixed-race inhabitants of the island revert to savagery without the direct rule of a white Christian man, whereas in the Old Testament the other tribes must be driven out from the promised land because of their adherence to idolatrous practices. Crucially, however, the Jews are the chosen people not because they are intrinsically morally superior to the pagans, but because God and Moses establish strict concordance, governing their lives and religious practices. "There must be suitable Laws," wrote Winstanley in his design for a post-revolutionary polity, "for every occasion, and almost for every action that men do" (*Works* 2:528). With enough legislation, it seems, utopia can indeed be reached in this world.

Pine's initial response to the island is that "this place, had it the culture that skilful people might bestow on it, would prove a paradise" (197) can only be interpreted as a witheringly ironic characterisation of this quintessent embodiment of *homo economicus*. This accountant is unable to conceive of a world without labour—he even describes his polyamorous relations with the women more in terms of his methodology for the fertilisation of his "consorts" than sensual pleasures. Crucially, moreover, he fails to realise that paradise cannot be improved by culture, for it is *per definition* already perfect.

The word "paradise" actually hails from the Old Iranian (via Ancient Greek) word for "enclosure"[9] and the purpose of an enclosure is, of course, to keep some people (or animals) in and others out. In this respect, Paradise has always been exclusive. The Promised Land is not, after all, promised to all, but only to the law-abiding

9 My thanks to Professor Miklós Péti of KRE for pointing this out to me in connection to *Paradise Lost*. The *OED* provides a detailed etymology of the word.

Israelites and such a land remains a beguiling concept precisely because we are outside of it. George's odd comment is later echoed by Van Sloetten, who, during his survey of the island, observes that "had but nature the benefit of art added unto it, it would equal, if not exceed, many of our European countries" (Bruce 205). Once again, this appears to be somewhat ironic, since the European inhabitants of the island—like most English expats—are decidedly artless. Despite the astonishing abundance of their location, they retain only the most basic form of culture: they do not cultivate the land, remain illiterate, but do have a form of country dancing and, of course, Henry's six rules for life.

The problem remains, however, that the genocides of the twentieth-century—nearly all of which were, to some extent, committed in the name of one utopian ideology or another—were not abhorrent perversions of the utopian ideal, but have been a constitutive feature of this very ideal since its inception in *Exodus*. This fact rather begs the question: should we strive after utopia? And this pressing question, with which Neville himself seems profoundly engaged, is best answered by recourse to the great philosopher of utopias, Ernst Bloch, who observes in a debate with his friend and colleague, T. W. Adorno, that the "essential function of utopia is the critique of what is present" (12). As the presentation of a series of measures for a better (or even perfect) society, *The Isle of Pines*—in contrast to *The Law of Freedom*—is clearly intended to be taken with a very large pinch of salt. Rather, its latent utopian potential lies in the way it offers an ironic parable of how paradise is all too easily lost—especially if we fall back on the old order of things. Indeed, it is precisely because of its disenchanted standpoint, forged through its ironic engagement with *Exodus*, that *The Isle of Pines* can be said to display the basic utopian drive for an alternative reality. Utopian thought, responds Adorno to Bloch's observation, lies "essentially in the determinate negation [*bestimmte Negation*] of that which merely is and, by concretising itself as something false, it always points at the same time to what should be" (12).

By offering an inquiry into the relationship between idolatry and tyranny, *The Isle of Pines* critiques "what is"—i.e. Restoration England. Yet what is still more significant is the ways in which this text's parodic intertextuality with *Exodus* demonstrates the dangers inherent in this ur-text utopian thought; leaving aside, for a moment, explicit designs for a happier society, many day-dreams themselves have a dangerously utopian structure. For instance, a militant vegan's hope that might be something along the lines of "in an ideal world there would be no omnivorous

humans" is not so terribly different from the idea that "in an ideal Israel there will be no Amorites." And while undoubtably utopian, such ideas are also exclusive because they are predicated on the eradication (or, at least, the conversion) of a particular group.

The kind of negation to which Bloch and Adorno refer is "determinate," by which they mean it does not offer merely a denial of reality, but a form of negation that depicts aspects of reality, in order to open up the possibility of an alternative and, therefore, hold at arm's length the limitations of this world. *The Isle of Pines*, after all, is testament to the unfortunate fact that it is all but impossible to conceive—at least, in practical terms—of a completely new world-order, free from oppression, alienation and pain. Nonetheless, the notion that we should simply assume that "what is present" is the best of all possible worlds offers a form of quietism that is abhorrently uncritical. Without a doubt, it is the unlikely or even seemingly impossible hope that things could be other than how they are that effects real social change—be it the Arab Spring or the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. For these reasons, it is necessary to suspend our disbelief in utopia, but this does not necessarily mean we should forget that utopia too has a history.

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From Character to Nature

Pope's "Ruling Passion" and Hume's "Predominant Inclination"

DÁNIEL TAKÁCS

Abstract: This paper discusses the theory of passions of Alexander Pope (1688–1744) and David Hume (1711–1776). It focusses on two phrases: "ruling passion" by Pope and "predominant inclination" by Hume. This study attempts to demonstrate that Hume used his term with a similar meaning to that of Pope. The importance of the passions in the conduct of human life, according to these authors, involves a sceptical attitude towards the capabilities of reason. This paper attempts to show the manifestations of this attitude in Pope's satires on human characters and in the characterisation of a false philosopher and philosophy by Hume.

In this paper, I will follow two different lines of thought. One is a philosophical and—so to say—theoretical line, the other a historical and literary one. The theoretical line of thought concerns the empirical epistemology of eighteenth-century British philosophy. The central figure here will be David Hume. As for the literary line of thought, I will focus on the features of a literary genre: character writing, or—to use a more specific name—"character Sketches."[1] These features have their origin in ancient times, and the history of the genre leads through the Renaissance and Classicism. The main figure here, in whose artistic works the tendencies and different features of the genre meet and sometimes oppose each other, will be the Augustan poet and satirist, Alexander Pope.

I connect the philosophical and the literary through the term "sceptical" or "scepticism," which I use to designate not a theory of epistemology but an empirical *attitude* manifested in the movement of thoughts. In connection with this attitude, I am able

1 For a concise definition of the genre, see Bowley.

to delineate a problem which is relatively common with Hume and Pope.[2] The problem is that through the lens of such a sceptical attitude, the human capability of reason *par excellence* loses its power and gives way to the instincts and passions of the individual. When the principles of reason collapse, the moral theorist needs to invent new guidelines to construct a coherent conception of morality. What is important to note here is that in the works of Pope and Hume this is not just a theoretical or epistemological problem. The sceptical attitude towards reason leads the sceptic to the terrain of disbelief concerning traditional moral virtues.[3] Before I proceed to the detailed analysis of the Humean theory of passions and Popean satirical character writing, I would like to make some preliminary remarks on the phrases "ruling passion" and "predominant inclination." When Pope uses the term "ruling passion," he uses it consistently—which certainly does not mean that his *theory* of the "ruling passion" would be coherent. In the works of Hume, on the other hand, the terminology is inconsistent: he uses the phrase "ruling passion" in his autobiographical essay, "My Own Life," but before that, in his theoretical writings, he uses the term "predominant inclination" in a more or less similar way. In addition, his *Treatise* has at least two or three alternative phrases for this "predominant inclination"—including "predominant passion," "prevailing affection," and "prevailing passion." Hume also does not have an explicit theory upon which we could thread these terms, but that does not mean that we could not extract a coherent line of thought from his writings, one that has a remarkable connection with Pope's terminology and the problem of the human character in general. I have chosen for the title of this study "predominant inclination," because Hume mostly uses this term and because this is the phrase which is present in all three treatises by Hume that are discussed here. In what follows, I outline Pope's theory of a "ruling passion" and how it connects to the tradition of character writing. I will then proceed to the Humean theory of passions and the characters of philosophers.

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2 In his book, Fred Parker outlines the intellectual history of this "sceptical attitude." The author discerns a close similarity between Humean and Popean scepticism. Although on a different level and focusing on different concepts, I would also emphasise this similarity in my study.

3 There are numerous tendencies underlying this claim. From the fifteenth century onwards, the religious movement of the reformation criticised the authority of the Catholic Church, the synods, and the Pope, concerning the truth of faith and, indirectly, the ethics of a community. This had an enormous impact not just across the continent but in England, too. Fideism—for example, Pascal—criticised the attempts to create a universalistic, reasonable faith with the help of natural theology.

I

In 1730, Pope told one of his friends, Joseph Spence, that he has a "New Hypothesis" about a prevailing passion of the mind, "which continues till death" (qtd. in Boyce 105). After this episode, the hypothesis appeared in three poems, in the *Essay on Man*, and in the first and second epistles of the so-called *Moral Essays*. Although Pope called it a "New Hypothesis," "ruling passion" was neither a completely new term nor an original theory. As for the theory, there is the probability of the influence of Horace, Montaigne, Bacon, Dryden, and Young. As for the term itself, some less-famous writers before Pope—the Earl of Roscommon and Matthew Prior—had used it in their writings, albeit only very rarely and accidentally (Boyce 105–114). Maynard Mack's statement could be paradigmatic here: "There is nothing original about the conception, which was of course implied in humoral psychology and medicine, in the dominant humour of dramatic theory, in the Theophrastian character, and elsewhere . . ." (210). Or take Benjamin Boyce: "The farther one investigates Pope's use of the idea of a ruling passion, the less significant it appears to be" (108). Boyce here suggests that we should not overestimate the idea of "ruling passion" in the context of Pope's *oeuvre*, because Pope himself did not hold it too seriously (110). From a somewhat different perspective, Maynard Mack argues that we could find the proper place and meaning of the concept when we take into consideration the other great ideas and motives of Pope's poems. Thus, Maynard Mack treats "ruling passion" in connection with the Popean theory of the divine providence in *An Essay on Man*.[4] In this study, I focus on the aspects of the term that connect it with a somewhat less manifest though serious dilemma, namely the problem of human character. In this respect, Pope could rely on a more or less well-defined tradition, on that of character sketches.[5]

The reasoning human mind—so goes the fideist argument—is not capable of conceiving the essence or attributes of God. The authority of some classical moralists, such as Seneca, Cicero, Epictetus, or Epicurus, who in their theories built heavily on the autonomy of will and the understanding capacity of reason, started to crumble, thanks partly to a revival of sceptical pyrrhonism. The philosophy and psychology of scientific empiricism from Bacon to Locke criticised the rationalistic systems of Descartes, Malebranche, or Hobbes. For the first, second, and third points, see Popkin.

4 "God's direction and supervision of ruling passion is therefore a phase of Pope's theodicy as well as of his ethics" (Mack 211).

5 There is a difference between character writing and literary *portraits*. Usually we consider the portrait as the description of a single person, while character writing as a depiction of a type of person.

The origin of character writing or character sketches is obviously the *Characters* of the Greek Theophrastus. While the genre was not popular in the Middle Ages, it was revitalised by French and English authors at the end of the Renaissance as a short prosaic description of a specific human type, mostly incarnations of vices or virtues. The Greek term "χαρακτήρ" (*kharaktḗr*) means an engraved mark and, in the case of Theophrastus' *Characters*, it should be understood in a psychological-rhetorical manner. The pieces of Theophrastus always begin with a short definition of a given type, which is followed by a list of the typical actions and sayings of this character. So, Theophrastus suggests that we can identify certain characters when we know their customary expressions, especially oral expressions. It is remarkable that in English instances of the genre, for example, in Joseph Hall's *Characters of Virtues and Vices* or John Earle's *Microcosmography,* this rhetorical focus shifts to the depiction of actions predominantly. In his *Les Caractères,* the most well-known artist of this genre, the French La Bruyère transforms neutral description into an aphoristic, satiric form.

The variants of "character writing" and its revitalisation in the mid-seventeenth century induced speculations about the proper means and rules of the genre. Certainly, these speculations could not remain intact from the flourishing new psychology, namely the theory of passions of Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, or Hutcheson. It is from this perspective that we can understand the project of Henry Gally, who in his 1725 *A Critical Essay on Characteristic-Writings*, criticising La Bruyère's irregular method, writes that "[t]he under Passions may, by their various Operations, cause some Diversity in the Colour and Complexion of the Whole, but 'tis the Master-Passion which must determine the Character" (34). There are two demands manifested in this quotation: firstly, the demand of the proper portrayal of a dramatic or fictive persona; and secondly, the accurate presentation of a human person's psychological constitution. At this moment, the literary and scientific demands intersect in a single genre, and the phrase "master-passion" has a central role in this. According to Gally, an artist cannot present the proper outline of a character

When we read Pope's poems, we can find wonderful satirical portraits of contemporaries and also numerous excellent generalisations of human behaviour. Again and again, it is quite difficult to categorise this or that section of a poem. It would be very interesting indeed to collect and categorise the Popean character sketches and portrayals, but in this study the aim is not the investigation of various forms of Popean character writing but the delineation of a specific problem, namely the questions related to the term "ruling passion."

if he or she is not able to detect the psychologically determinable "master-passion" underneath the accidental motives of an actual or fictitious individual. So, in Gally's "master-passion," we have the antecedent of the Popean "ruling passion." But we should also notice an important difference: in the case of Pope, instead of speaking about an explicit scientific demand, we should speak about a less consistent, although more comprehensive sceptical attitude.

The subtitles of the two epistles in which Pope explicitly deals with the psychology of human characters are *Of the knowledge and characters of men* and *Of the characters of women.* In the second epistle, *Of the characters of women*, Pope touches on an important issue concerning the roles of women in contemporary society, but there is only marginal space for the concept of "ruling passion." In a short section of the poem, Pope presents his demeaning opinion about women:

> In men various ruling passions find;
> In women two almost divide the kind;
> Those, only fixed, they first or last obey,
> The love of pleasure and the love of sway. (207–210)

Beside these lines, there are no other occurrences or even references to the term "ruling passion" in this poem.

The most vigorous theory of "ruling passion" emerges in the first epistle, *Of the knowledge and characters of men*, addressed to Sir Richard Temple. The compound, "characters of men" is connected here to the tradition of character writing. Character writing has common tenets with the writing of satires and it poses the very problems which manifest themselves through Pope's sceptical attitude. We have three problems that come together in Pope's satirical epistle. The first is a rhetorical one: how can we portray single persons who stand as examples of types of persons, or, conversely, how can we portray specific characters who resemble real persons? The second question is theoretical: how can we know other individuals and ourselves? The third is moral: is there any constant motive of the will that can be an effective basis for morality? All these questions are relevant to the conception of "ruling passion."

We find hardly any paradigmatic character sketches in Pope's *oeuvre*. Certainly, there are portrayals of characters in his satires, but he tends to characterise specific individuals. So, the *Epistle to Lord Cobham* is a mixture of an artistic theory of characters and a satirical portrayal of actual people. The general argument

of the epistle was obviously influenced by Montaigne's sceptical masterpiece, entitled *Of the inconsistency of our actions.* Pope, following Montaigne's meditations, doubts whether there are any means to grasp the essential motives of human nature. We cannot learn it from books or from "some general maxims" (219). We cannot learn it from observing other people, and—which is a more serious problem—we cannot learn it from inspecting ourselves: "That each from other differs, first confess; / Next, that he varies from himself no less" (174–176). There is no room for strict speculations of moral philosophy. The ruling principles of reason—as we will also see in the case of Hume—have little impact on the real motives of a human individual:

> On human actions reason though you can,
> It may be reason, but it is not man:
> His principle of action once explore,
> That instant 'tis his principle no more. (25–28)

Or later: "In vain the sage, with retrospective eye, / Would from the apparent *what*, conclude the *why*" (99–100, emphasis added). Neither education nor customary behaviour can explicitly show us a person's inward reality. Pope answers to this seemingly insoluble riddle that there is a "ruling passion" beneath the surface of human phenomena. When this clue is once found, it unravels all the rest: "Search the Ruling Passion: there, alone, / The wild are constant, and the cunning known; / The fool consistent, and the false sincere" (174–176). In the epistle, Pope mentions some living examples of this passion. One example is the Duke of Wharton, whose ruling passion is the lust for praise; another is Sir Charles Duncombe, whose ruling passion is the lust for property.

There is another important peculiarity of a "ruling passion" that Pope emphasises in *An Essay on Man*: in a way that might remind us of the Freudian death drive, not only does it last until death, in some cases, it impels us despite a deadly threat:

> As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath
> Receives the lurking principle of death;
> . . . . . .
> Through life 'tis follow'd, even at life's expense. (133–134; 171)

While we can only suppose the exact relation of reason and "ruling passion" in the *Moral Essays*, in the *Essay on Man*, there is an explicit line of thought.

According to this, reason cannot control the "ruling passion," and in unfortunate cases it even makes it worse. "Reason itself but gives it edge and power; / As Heaven's blest beam turns vinegar more sour" (147–148). Furthermore, there is a characteristic relation between this master passion and minor passions: the master passion always swallows other minor passions.

It is quite obvious that in the *Essay on Man,* this conception of "ruling passion" is more consolidated and integrated than in the first *Epistle.* After reading the *Moral Essays,* we could easily conclude that for Pope, a "ruling passion" is a disaster or fate of nature. Human persons reveal consistency only through following their ambivalent inclinations and vices. Contrary to this, in the *Essay on Man* Pope recommends that we should respect our "ruling passion" not as an enemy but rather as a friend. In that case, reason has the potential not just to strengthen but to refine the "ruling passion," and we also realise that this very passion is the hidden energy of virtues: "The surest virtues thus from passions shoot, / Wild Nature's vigour working at the root" (183–184). This means that the appearance of a "ruling passion" is not a sign of a demonic fate of human lives, a blind spot among our basic motives, but a sign of nature's true energy in human psychophysiology. Furthermore, in the theodicy of *An Essay on Man*, this force of nature is the manifestation of the Almighty's divine plan. The conclusion could be that in his *Moral Essays*, Pope exploited the subversive, satirical potential of "ruling passion," showing how ridiculous human striving can be, and how easily we can uncover a certain person's hypocrisy and dullness, whereas in the *Essay on Man,* focusing upon the critique of "reason's pride," Pope built a somewhat ambivalent but positive system of relations between man, nature, and God.[6] What is shared by the two works is the recognition of the predominance of irrational motives of human behaviour, and the contradictory, sometimes chaotic forces influencing the will.

II

Pope's notion of the "ruling passion" may have been an influence on Hume's idea

6 I say "somewhat ambivalent," because it is clear that the philosophical argument of *An Essay on Man* is in many respects incoherent. For example, one of the most important theses of the poem is that man should confine his range of interests only upon himself, because spheres beyond the human are unknowable. Indeed, the whole perspective of the poem contradicts this thesis, because it is a beyond-human, cosmic—so to say—divine perspective.

of a "predominant inclination."[7] Unlike Pope, Hume did not articulate an explicit theory of "predominant inclination" or of "ruling passion." He uses the former term two times in his autobiographical essay, "My Own Life." In this essay, Hume wrote that throughout his life there was "a passion for literature, which has been the *ruling passion* of my life, and the great source of my enjoyments" (par. 3, emphasis added), and at the end of the essay, he asserts that "[e]ven my love of literary fame, my *ruling passion*, never soured my temper . . ." (par. 21, emphasis added). These sections convey the impression that Hume did not use the term in its own right, as an indication of a theory, but utilised it in drawing his own character. But in his earlier, philosophical writings, Hume used the phrase "predominant inclination" in a somewhat similar meaning as Pope had used his term. As I show in the following sections, the usage of the phrase "predominant inclination" for Hume signals the emergence of important questions regarding the character of philosophers, the activity of philosophy, and the relation between passions and reason in human nature. Here we could find the scepticism which is in some respect similar to that of Pope.

In his *A Treatise of Human Nature,* in connection with his radical empiricist method, Hume inverts traditional dualism: instead of guaranteeing or legitimating the knowability of things, the faculty of reason must confine its machinations to probabilistic propositions about facts of nature. In Hume's opinion, the privilege called "knowledge" must abandon its supposed certainty and its desperately needed logical necessity, and transform itself to "belief." Hume, following Locke and at the same time radicalising his empiricist method, attempted to trace back every working of the mind to its empirical origin. So, Hume states, there is not a single idea in the mind that has not been a sensuous impression before, which means that impressions always have priority to ideas (*Treatise* 7–9). Presumably the most fundamental consequence of this genealogy of mind is the impossibility of demonstrating *a priori* principles, as well as the impossibility of the basic principle of reason, namely the necessary causal inference. Hume does not claim that we should not speak about cause and effect, but demonstrates that there is no necessary connection between them. The connection between cause and effect is not an absolute necessity but an empirical probability, which means that it is based on customary association. We do not infer from cause to effect logically, but we believe in this connection through

7 I have not found any clear indication of direct influence, although if we consider the popularity of Pope's *An Essay on Man* immediately after its release in 1733, we have a reason to suppose that it had an impact on Hume.

the affirmation of repeated cases. Naturally, in Hume we are not dealing with just any old "belief." As a definite principle of the connection between impressions and ideas, and after that, between ideas and ideas, it is a fundamental presupposition of any meaningful human experience. The most important thing to note here is that belief is not a logical but a sensitive relation between impressions and ideas: ". . . belief is more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cogitative part of our natures" (123). In this perspective, the ontological status of reality itself gets a sensitive and even emotional character. We *believe* that something is real when we *feel* that the idea of that impression is strong enough in comparison to other ideas: "An idea assented to *feels* different from a fictitious idea, that the fancy alone presents to us: and this different feeling I endeavour to explain by calling it a superior force, or vivacity, or solidity, or *firmness*, or steadiness" (68).[8]

This is the epistemological framework that Hume elaborates in the first chapters of the *Treatise*, before moving on to other topics, to the passions and morality. In the chapters called *Of liberty and necessity* and *Of the influencing motives of the will*, Hume argues that the will itself is not a metaphysically autonomous agency of reason but an impression of a specific working of the mind (257–268). In addition, Hume states that this "working" is neither initiated nor determined by reason. The agents with determining efficacy here are the emotions, passions, and inclinations of the mind. Hence the famous statement: "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them" (266).

This is the framework for Hume's thinking about the passions and this is also where we should try to insert the phrase "predominant inclination." As I have already pointed out, there is no hint of a systematic theory of "predominant inclination" in Hume's works. In the *Treatise*, the phrase appears only once, in the chapter called *Of the causes of the violent passions* (268). In this case, the term

8 This statement is, of course, an oversimplification of Hume's argument, but I think it serves perfectly the purpose of this study. We could say that Hume did not really make such a straightforward proposition concerning the ontological status of reality. His account has two aspects. The first is the basic distinction between ideas and impressions. According to Hume, in most cases we can easily differentiate between ideas and impressions, and we feel impressions more strongly than ideas. Surely, this distinction is in itself not a guarantee of the reliability of the outside reality at all. Hence, we have the second aspect: at the end of the first book of *Treatise,* Hume denies all philosophical arguments intended to prove the permanent existence of outside reality (121–164). What subsists for Hume despite this scepsis is an ordinary inclination or instinct of reality. We could say with Freud—a reality principle. These two aspects motivate the statement above.

"predominant inclination" designates an inclination, which "became a settled principle of action" (268). It is important to note here that, in connection with the ideas on the fallibility of reason, Hume states that reason cannot govern the human will, and the various passions have a much more significant role in human behaviour. Hume differentiates between violent and calm passions, and writes that we should not call calm passions weak, but, on the contrary, they are calm because they basically determine our whole life, and we are not even aware of them. In this sense, this "predominant inclination" can be a flow of calm passion, without sensible agitation, yet it has the strongest effect on our actions.

In the *Treatise,* besides "predominant inclination," Hume uses the terms "predominant passion," "prevailing affection," and "prevailing passion" to designate the passion which assimilates other minor passions into itself. These are only relative terms, designating passions which overrun the others in a given moment. "It is a remarkable property of human nature, that any emotion, which attends a passion, is easily converted into it…" (269). Although human persons can simultaneously possess or can be possessed by many different emotions, these do not extinguish each other, but at that given moment fuse into a dominant passion and strengthen it. As we have seen, the Popean "ruling passion" had this inherent characteristic, and it is also an important feature of the Humean "predominant inclination."

There is a more explicit usage of the term in the essay entitled "The Sceptic." Hume wrote this essay at the time of finishing his *Treatise*, along with other three essays, namely "The Epicurean," "The Stoic," and "The Platonist." The questions in these essays are not so much theoretical as practical ones about the methods and perspectives of good life (Immerwahr 307–327). The persona of "The Sceptic" starts with criticising "the decisions of philosophers upon all subjects" (Hume, *Essays* 95). One of the main arguments against philosophers is that when they speak about good life, they take *their own* perspectives and desires of life as fundamental for every other person. And that is a serious mistake.[9] As Hume writes:

> In that case they are led astray, not only by the narrowness of their understanding, but by that also of their passions. Almost every one has a predominant inclination, to which his other desires and affections submit, and which governs him, though, perhaps, with some intervals, through the whole course of his life. (*Essays* 95)

9 The question which essay represents the standpoint of Hume is an interesting one; again, see Immerwahr (307–327).

We can see here that the two meanings of the term, which in the *Treatise* were still vaguely distributed between different signifiers, now unite: a ruling inclination which subordinates to itself the other minor inclinations and a "predominant inclination" that governs someone through his or her whole life.

The important thing is that a criticism of dogmatising philosophy, present throughout the essays, becomes most acute and elaborate in "The Sceptic." There are two other complaints in this essay against the one-sidedness of the thinking activity of philosophers. The first is that their abstract argumentation is so remote from the life of ordinary passions that these argumentations would be completely artificial and useless. The second is that when these argumentations accidentally succeed, they extinguish not only the harmful passions but also the benevolent ones. What we need here, according to the sceptic, is a sort of economy between the passions and reasoning. We do need reasoning in order to expose our latent inclinations, not to strengthen but to moderate them. But we do need a capability of abandoning reason when its processes are overactive, strengthening only pride and imperiousness.

We can observe the same economy in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* which—in Hume's intention—is a concise version of the *Treatise.* In it, Hume writes:

> The passion for philosophy . . . seems liable to this inconvenience, that, though it aims at the correction of our manners, and extirpation of our vices, it may only serve, by imprudent management, to foster a predominant inclination, and push the mind, with more determined resolution, towards that side which already *draws* too much, by the bias and propensity of the natural temper. (*Enquiry* 40)

We cannot single out a clear definition of "predominant inclination" in this passage either. However, shortly after this part, Hume speaks about a "more refined system of selfishness." So, it can easily happen, according to Hume, that the morality of the dogmatic philosopher, instead of being refined and harmonised through the practice of philosophical reasoning, hardens into an unconscious "predominant inclination," which could even be plain selfishness. As a matter of fact, in "The Sceptic" and in the *Enquiry*, Hume draws the outlines of the character of a false philosopher. This philosopher aims at reforming the ordinary customs and superstitions of mankind, but he is not aware of his "superstition" regarding the capability of his own reason. The false philosopher will develop a form of pride of his reasoning capacity, and that will eventually be a hypocrisy, because the philosopher certainly cannot achieve a complete reformation of human customs.

What is more, it will be hypocrisy against himself, because the philosopher, seemingly following just the principles of his own pure reason, actually relies on an unconscious motive of his character, namely a "predominant inclination," and just strengthens it (Livingston 23–35).

We should conclude that in the works of Hume, "predominant inclination" is an irrational, very effective passion or inclination that has a leading role in the whole course of an individual's life. It is not sure whether it is—to use Humean terminology—a direct passion like grief, fear, desire, or an indirect passion like pride or humility. We do not know whether it is a single passion, the ruling and typical passion of an individual, like selfishness, or whether there are many different predominant inclinations within one person. It is also possible that a "predominant inclination" is more like a natural temper, like in Galen's humour theory. It is quite clear, however, that there is a relationship between the problem of "predominant inclination" and the sceptical attitude of philosophy. As we have already seen, this sceptical attitude, according to Hume, calls for a moderate economy of the soul. We call into question the rigid principles of metaphysics, firstly, in order to disclose the passion of pride beneath the abstract argumentation, and secondly, in order to relate more flexibly to the flow of our own human nature. This relationship involves a further step, namely the suspension of doubt when it reaches an exaggerated scale and a return to the customs and natural inclinations of everyday life. As Hume summarises in the *Treatise*: "A true sceptic will be diffident of his philosophical doubts, as well as of his philosophical conviction; and will never refuse any innocent satisfaction, which offers itself, upon account of either of them" (273).

III

In the sceptical attitude of the spirit of the eighteenth century, and by the unsettlement of the traditional basis of virtues, there emerges the ethical and psychological problem of the consistency of human behaviour and the consistency of the self of an individual. The emergence of the phrases "ruling passion" and "predominant inclination" signals this need of a generalising yet exact terminology concerning humanlike behaviour. The construction of new moral systems that replace the old ones is a common method, especially when we are dealing with systems of seventeenth-eighteenth-century philosophy. Before Pope and Hume, Thomas Hobbes was perhaps the most radical figure in this revision of morality.

Hobbes tried to develop a universally valid system to understand the psychological motives of human individuals. His key terms were the partly rational, partly instinctual "self-interest," and the emotion of fear.[10] The Popean and Humean act of thinking will be more sceptical, and the problem will be more complex than to coerce it into a rationalistic system. In Pope's satires, we are confronted with the question: what makes the *essential difference* between man and man if we consider the rank of the capabilities of reason only after the rank of affections and passions? This question is naturally connected to the artistic challenges of expressing and delineating different emotions and feelings through character sketches (see Rogerson 68–94). In Hume's treatises and essays, there is a detailed analysis of human customs, reasoning, and passions—an analysis that eventually involves the character of the philosopher and the very act of philosophising. It concludes that it is a false philosophy that singles out just one or two homogeneous motives of human nature and takes them as universally valid. In these contexts, the "predominant inclination" will designate a central passion of the soul which can be different from individual to individual, but which can determine and motivate the whole life of a person.

It is important to note here that, when we compare the theories of Hume and Pope, we should not treat them as closely similar; rather, we should conceive of them as analogous. This distinction is necessary because there are considerable differences concerning the resolution of scepticism. When Hume offers us a moderate practice of meditation, an inward refinement and retirement to natural instincts, Pope offers us a rhetorical, satirical method, first to expose the vices, showing the chaos of human activity, then to rely on a theodicy in which chaos is but the surface of nature's divine, pre-stabilised order.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of these Humean and Popean terms is their dark aura of the irrational. They demonstrate the scepsis through which the great paradigm of enlightenment, the reformation of cognition, turns upon itself and reveals its irrational basis. In Cassirer's view, there is a steady inclination to treat the aspirations of eighteenth-century Enlightenment from the simple perspectives of, for example, the rising freedom and dignity of humanity or the autonomy

10 The question whether in human nature the sociable instincts or the instincts of self-interest play the dominant role had central importance in the first half of the eighteenth century. We encounter this very dilemma when we read the sentences of the introduction to *An Essay on Man*, where Pope tried to "[steer] betwixt the extremes of doctrines seemingly opposite" (Pope, "The Design").

of the reasoning mind (93–134).[11] Or take one of the epithets of the eighteenth century, the "century of philosophy": the Popean and Humean disbelief in the faculties of reason discredit not only the almightiness of philosophy but also the philosopher as a character. This means that philosophising and theorising in Pope's satires and in Hume's philosophy are not matters of choosing between different theoretical doctrines. Rather, philosophising is a matter of appropriate psychological character, inclination, and passion. The scepticism that follows from this position is far from being a sort of nihilism or cynicism. Disbelief in reason opens up the ways of nature.

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11 MacLean provides a great example of this somewhat misleading perspective when he writes with a kind of indignation that "[n]o aspect of Eighteenth Century thought is so astonishing as the popularity of this antirational conception of ruling passions which thus sets the intellect aside to leave us at the mercy of our passions" (47).

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The Modernity of *Measure for Measure*

The Politics of Spinning Shakespeare

VERONIKA SCHANDL

Abstract: This paper looks at two twentieth-century rewritings of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: *one by Bertolt Brecht, who in 1933 wrote a parable-play on contemporary German social politics entitled* Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe (The Roundheads and the Peakheads), *and one by Charles Marowitz, who in 1975 finished his* Variations on Measure for Measure, *a play re-written after, and partly as a reaction to, his unjust arrest for shoplifting and vagrancy. As the contexts of their birth also indicate, both plays called upon* Measure for Measure *to reflect on the nature of justice and its relation to politics, but, aside from their political stance, the two dramas differ largely in the way they work with Shakespeare's text. Indeed, one could argue that if we take the "fidelity to Shakespeare's text" as the gauge of our imaginary spectrum of adaptations, they, at first glance, seem to occupy almost the opposite ends: while Brecht distances himself from the original almost completely, Marowitz relies on the play's text closely, only to concoct from its pieces a surprisingly different ending. However, this essay wishes to argue that, in spite of their different textual approaches, the two* Measure for Measure *spinoffs are alike in several aspects.*

One does not have to argue long for the problematic nature of *Measure for Measure*, since the play is one of those three—or, in some understandings, four—plays in the Shakespearean *oeuvre* which, with their loose endings and unsettling structural difficulties, spurred the invention of a new generic term—that of the problem play, or problem comedy. Probably written for the Globe audience, but definitely performed at court in 1604, the play has been handed down to us in only one version, the already amended text published in the 1623 Folio. Its lack of publication in quarto format might suggest a lack of success on the stage, corroborated by the dearth of productions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Yet

the Folio text, altered by Middleton, already reveals that it is precisely its problematic nature that makes the play intriguing and challenging material for later rewriters.

The list of adaptations goes back to the Restoration, when two versions, William Davenant's *The Law Against Lovers* (1662) and Charles Gildon's *Measure for Measure; or, Beauty the Best Advocate* (1700), turned to Shakespeare's play. The nineteenth century saw Richard Wagner's opera, *Das Liebesverbot*, and Alexander Pushkin's poetic tale, *Angelo,* both based on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure.* Still, neither in these adaptations nor in the still heavily cut "restored" Shakespearean text that was staged well into the second part of the twentieth century, did the play have much success in the theatre. It did not fail to stir up scholarly discussions though—questions concerning its genre, its authorship, or its political and social aspects have intrigued readers from Coleridge to Wilson Knight. However, it took the much altered theatrical and social climate of the post-Second-World-War era for the play at last to become successful in performance as well. Directors, intrigued by the silences the play leaves to be filled, starting with Peter Brook in 1950, who reinterpreted the social context of the comedy, and followed by John Barton, who, challenging Brook, took the play in a much darker direction, all over the world have successfully managed to rethink the comedy for new audiences. Often presented as a social commentary on contemporary issues, *Measure for Measure* in the twenty-first century is one of the more popular Shakespeare pieces in production.[1]

The reading of Shakespeare's play as a piece reflecting on contemporary conditions is also what links Bertolt Brecht and Charles Marowitz and their versions of *Measure for Measure*. Brecht and Marowitz are two playwrights, two directors with strong visions of the theatrical, as well as two politically engaged theatre makers with a love-hate relationship with William Shakespeare and the kind of theatre his plays traditionally came to be associated with. Both turned to Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* to challenge these traditions: Brecht in 1933, when he wrote a parable-play on contemporary German social politics entitled *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe* (*The Roundheads and the Peakheads*), first presented in 1936, and Marowitz in 1975 with his *Variations on Measure for Measure*, a play re-written after, and partly as a reaction to, his unjust arrest for shoplifting and vagrancy. As the contexts of their birth also indicate, both plays called upon *Measure for Measure* to reflect upon the nature of justice and its relation to politics, but, aside from their political stance, the two dramas differ largely in the way they work with Shakespeare's text. Indeed, one could argue

1 For the productions of the play, see Hampton-Reeves.

that if we take the "fidelity to Shakespeare's text" as the gauge of our imaginary spectrum of adaptations, they, at first glance, seem to occupy almost the opposite ends: while Brecht distances himself from the original almost completely, Marowitz relies on the play's text closely, only to concoct from its pieces a surprisingly different ending. However, this essay wishes to argue that, in spite of their different textual approaches, the two *Measure for Measure* spinoffs are alike in several aspects.

I

In 1931, Brecht began to work on the first version of *Roundheads and Peakheads*,[2] fulfilling a request from the director of the Berliner Volksbühne, Ludwig Berger, who wished to present modernised adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. Berger was famous for his un-Reinhardtian take on Shakespeare, rejecting a realistic presentation of Shakespeare's plays, as well as being "a strict reformer who would no longer permit Shakespeare to be adapted to the stage but demanded that the stage be adapted to Shakespeare" (qtd. in Hortmann 75). Maybe this is the reason why the adaptation was never finished. The collaboration with the Volksbühne resulted instead in something far more intriguing: a genuine play that exhibits all the characteristics of Brechtian epic theatre and relies on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* for inspiration. Although it was neither one of Brecht's most popular plays (it was staged just once in the playwright's lifetime, in 1936, in Copenhagen) nor a frequent presence on the world stage,[3] *Roundheads and Peakheads* deserves special attention for the way it appropriates Shakespeare's *Measure.*

Brecht, who famously said that "Wir können Shakespeare ändern, wenn wir ihn ändern können" (Brecht, *Werke* 23:395),[4] engaged in rewriting Shakespeare all his life. His interest in *Measure for Measure* was spurred by the play's engagement with power and morality:

> *Measure for Measure* is seen by many as the most philosophical of Shakespeare's works, but it is without doubt his most progressive play. It demands the aristocracy to be measured by other measures than they themselves would like to be measured by.

2 I use the edition based on the Copenhagen stage version: Brecht, *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe.* The English translation in Brecht's *Collected Plays* relies on the later version of the play that Brecht revised for inclusion in his collected works.

3 For a post-WWII stage history of the play, see the information in Brecht, *Die Rundköpfe.*

4 "We can change Shakespeare, if we can change him"—that is, if we are able to actually change him.

> And it shows that they cannot expect their subjects to follow a moral code they themselves do not adopt. (Bahr 200, my translation)

In his rewriting he wished, therefore, to follow the same "fortschrittlichen Standpunkt" ("progressive standpoint") that Shakespeare, whom Brecht characterises as the great writer of humanism (Bahr 200), also stood for.

Brecht's idea of a "historisierende Theater" (*Werke* 22.1:209) demanded that the general questions raised in *Measure for Measure* about the conflicting concepts of justice, love, and sacrifice be repositioned in a historically recognisable, contemporary context, which in turn would encourage the spectators to view the events of the play more critically and recognise the relevance of the stage events to their own lives. Therefore, Brecht used the Shakespearean play as raw material for a parable on social injustice and the hazards of racism. The ruler of his stage kingdom leaves in order to avoid introducing harsher financial measures in his land—among others a new tax on salt—which would be necessary to circumvent the country's financial bankruptcy.[5] Fearing that the peasants already revolting in the south would start a revolution which would overthrow his government, he follows the ingenious guidance of his advisor, Escaler, to appoint to power his opponent, Iberin, who runs on a right-wing agenda of racial segregation. He does so in the hope that Iberin's divisive politics would break up the union of the peasants and enable him to rule undisturbed. With this plot change, Brecht catapults the events of *Measure for Measure* into the early 1930s of his Germany, focusing on two vital contemporary issues: the financial and political deprivation of the working and peasant classes as well as on the growing influence of Nazi propaganda.

One could argue that no Shakespeare play would have provided Brecht with better opportunities to model contemporary German relations than the first scene of *Measure for Measure*, since the Duke's (in Brecht's play the Deputy Regent's) resignation and Angelo's (Iberin's) swift rise to power uncannily resembles Hindenburg's handover of the Chancellor's seat to Hitler.[6] In the several versions of the play, one can see how Brecht tried to approximate his play as a more pointed allegory based on these current events (Bahr 235). Still, one cannot fail to notice Brecht's endeavour to appropriate the Shakespearean storyline as well. The combination of the two main structural

5 The land is no longer Vienna, but Yahoo, echoing both Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* in its name and a South-American country in its social structure.

6 The similarity is even more uncanny if we take it into account that Brecht finished the first version of the play (by January 1933) before the actual "Machtübergabe" on 30 January 1933.

driving forces results in a play which is not, according to Julie Sanders' definition, truly an adaptation—that is, a commentary on a source, a "simpler attempt to make texts 'relevant' or easily comprehensible to new audiences and readerships" (19), since Brecht only very loosely follows Shakespeare's plot, and by filling the gaps of his source text, he references his contemporary reality instead of some previous historical literary antecedent. Neither is it, however, an appropriation—"a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product or domain" (26)—since the organisational principle of the plot is still *Measure for Measure*; indeed, the effort to be relevant but also to resemble the source results in a rather complicated plotline.

Brecht's way of spinning Shakespeare's play is probably closest to a jazz musician's way of following a given tune but also improvising around it, at the same time, providing the closest and the furthest means of adaptations. For instance, we do have the scene where the Duke decides he should leave for a while to hand over the uneasy job of fixing the economy to someone else, but here the Duke is surrounded by advisers who taint his original ideas and persuade him to put a politician in charge who is knowingly a politically divisive character. The echoes of Shakespeare's first scenes are still heard in the background, but a new layer of racial politics is added to its theme, enriching and diverting it at the same time.

The result of this technique is something unique: a play which contains all the characteristic features of Brechtian epic theatre—alienation effects presenting themselves in songs, posters, signs, and a distancing of actor and character; a historicising of the subject matter as well as an introduction of narrative elements and the display of the theatrical stage apparatus—but is at the same time a retelling of a Shakespeare play, fitting into the line of the most successful later reinterpretations of *Measure for Measure* by bringing the play closer to current political events. That Brecht succeeded in modernising the topic of the play is well demonstrated in the difficulties the drama faced in publication: although already in galley proof in 1933, it was banned and its copies were destroyed, so it only appeared in 1959. This delay in publication also gave Brecht the opportunity to refocus the play. He added a Prologue, which set the tone of the later versions, and emphasised the double focal points of "Rassentheorie" and the deprivation of the poor.

In the Prologue, the actors put on costumes which would later determine their social status, as well as a head mask, which in turn would establish their race, the other factor determining their fates. According to the racist theory presented

in the play, Iberin, the new ruler of Yahoo, insists that the people of the country born with a peakhead (the Czuchs) are a race inferior to those born with a roundhead (the Czichs). They, therefore, are prosecuted and deprived of their human rights. The Prologue demonstrates how both one's body and social status can be fatally determining factors in one's life under an oppressive regime, but also how these arbitrary, yet richly connoted traits can be used and abused by oppressive demagogy.

Brecht also clearly sees how a theory of race can be used by those in power to establish scapegoats for their political mistakes. The same way the Jews were blamed for the decline of European civilisation by Nazi propaganda, the Czuchs are blamed for the financial miseries of Yahoo. They are described as lazy and morally corrupt, bereft of the Czuchish virtues of hard work and honesty. This demagoguery successfully divides the peasants in the play, making them forget their financial plights, while it is also successful in blackmailing the peakheaded aristocrats into financing the regime's war against the rebellious forces.

Aside from highlighting the potential threats of a racially prejudiced regime, Brecht aims at denunciating the corruption of the ruling classes and the church as well as the hopelessness of the peasants. Developing the social critical potentials already there in *Measure for Measure*, in two trial scenes the play delineates how those in power twist the law to enforce their own agendas, while using propaganda and doctrinal brainwashing to camouflage real social problems. One of the protagonists of the play, Callas, the peasant, a mixture of Shakespeare's Barnadine and German Volkshero, Michael Kolhaas, goes to town to force his landlord to cancel the taxes he is no longer able to pay. In a show trial, Iberin fools him by appealing to his previously non-existent Czichish race consciousness, which makes him forget his class and the very reason he started the process in the first place. With a false feeling of pride, he eventually ruins his chances for social betterment, and, in the second trial of the play, is pushed into financial deprivation with no hope of getting out of it. His fate exemplifies one of the morals the play intends to teach—that class solidarity only works among the rich, who protect their privileged status through fire and water. This axiom is appropriated for the members of the clergy in the play, too, who are solely interested in financial and not spiritual gains. They negotiate Isabella's prize to enter the convent as if bargaining for a horse, and later, indeed, they start a law case to get the two horses Callas takes from his landlord, to secure his family's survival. Instead of being a moral institution, for them the church is a covert means of enriching themselves, a means of accumulating wealth in the name of the Lord.

In order to be able to criticise these social anomalies, Brecht changed the focus of Shakespeare's play. While *Measure for Measure* is interested in Isabella's and the Duke's story, Brecht brings the lesser characters to the forefront of his work. The main character of the play is, thus, Nanna Callas, the daughter of a peasant, who was sold at an early age as a concubine to her landlord, and is now living in a brothel in town. As a character, she is an amalgam of Shakespeare's Julia (being the former mistress of the play's Claudio figure, de Guzman) and Marianna (since she is forced to sleep with Iberin's right-hand man, in Isabella's place), her character is magnified to that of a *raisonneur.* Her fate exemplifies the destinies of the socially deprived that have no possibilities to escape deprivation. She is abused not only by her landlord, de Guzman, but even by her Madame, Mrs Cornamontis, who sells her off for good money to sleep with Iberin's deputy in Isabella's place, claiming that, since she is already blemished, one more atrocity would not much alter her situation. Nanna's disposition about the twists of fate she has to go through is summed up in the phrase she keeps repeating: "Ich bin skeptisch" (46).

Her stance is Brecht's stance, since the disbelief in the possibility of social progress is the final message of the whole play. Nanna sums up how, while the landlords feast upon their ultimate victory over the peasant army, they wish that the disturbances the poor have caused them in the past would be just temporary nuisances, which would now pass:

> Und so sitzen sie denn und essen
> Und wünschen uns zu vergessen.
> Wir stehen mit leerem Magen
> Und hören sie sagen:
> Vielleicht vergeht uns so der Rest der Jahre?
> Vielleicht vergehen die Schatten, die uns störten?
> Und die Gerüchte, die wir kürzlich hörten
> Die finster waren, waren nicht das Wahre.
> Vielleicht das sie uns noch einmal vergessen.[7] (108)

While Nanna becomes the heroine of the play, Isabella is her antithesis. In Brecht's depiction she embodies the individualistic self-centredness of the rich and privileged.

7 "And so they sit down and eat / And wish to forget us. / We are standing here with an empty stomach / And hear as they say: / Maybe the rest of the year will be like this? / Maybe the shadows that disturb us will disappear? / And the rumours that we heard the other day / That were so sinister, are not true. / Maybe they will forget us once again" (my translation).

While Brecht keeps certain aspects of her character (for instance, her insistence on the strictness of the convent), he distorts others to caricature. Isabella in the play thus becomes the satiric representation of bigotry and false spirituality. As Nanna explains, for her to become a nun is a choice of necessity—since she is a peakhead, she cannot get married to avoid the harshness of the law, she can only buy her freedom by becoming a nun and choosing a life of leisure out of the limelight (92). She is so focused on achieving this goal that she literally forgets to save her brother. It is not by chance that instead of a Lucio figure, in Brecht's play she is accompanied by ruthless and relentless lawyers.

While the focus is shifted, Brecht's play ends in a way that can almost be read as Shakespearean, since by the end of the play many of the vicissitudes the characters had to go through turn out to be pointless experiments, the aim of which was to cement the rule of the privileged and the defenselessness of the poor.

The Marxist teaching about the loss of class-consciousness resulting in the downfall of the working classes is a somewhat predictable message, at least according to Charles Marowitz, who criticises Brecht for choosing plays "which are already predisposed to his own ideology" (*Marowitz Shakespeare* 8). While Marowitz rejects Brecht's Marxist position, the two plays have more in common than first meets the eye.[8] Both turn to Shakespeare with a clear political agenda in mind, and to communicate this, they both cut all the comic plot elements from *Measure for Measure* that enable to have a happy ending. When it comes to characters they both expand the role of the church, employ *raisonneur* characters to be mouthpieces of authorial commentary and emphasise the oppression of the underprivileged, especially the women. Although they do handle the Shakespearean text differently, these similarities do link their interpretations.

As Guido Almansi establishes, the way in which Charles Marowitz adapts Shakespeare resembles the Renaissance practice of a *centone*, "a literary genre which exploited lines of poetry from the classics in order to tell different stories from the ones of the ancient poets" (95). If we used a musical metaphor, where Brecht is a jazz artist, improvising around the Shakespearean theme, Marowitz's works would be remixes of Shakespeare. Indeed, Marowitz's own definition of what he does comes very close to the job of a *centonista*, or the remixer, since he claims that rewriting is not only an opportunity, but a task a contemporary playwright should not fail to take on.

8 In the essay I use the 2009 edition of the play, reprinted in *The Marowitz Shakespeare*.

In an unusual metaphor, he likens the relationship of source text and its adaptation to a hamburger:

> When a playwright like Shakespeare provides us with the meat, it is almost a contemporary prerogative for us to add the potatoes, the onions and the relish. Our job is to retrace, rediscover, reconsider and reample the classics—not simply regurgitate them. I rethink therefore I am—said Descartes, or at least he should have. ("How to Rape Shakespeare" 15)

Mixing up Shakespeare's text, Marowitz made collages (of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*), as well as what he called *Variations* (of *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*), or we could say remixes which closely follow the Shakespearean original up to a point but result in altered endings. Marowitz's idea that theatre works best on the basis of suspense and revelation ("How to Rape Shakespeare" 17) pays well in the case of Shakespeare, whose plays attract audiences with certain expectations about what they were about to see. Marowitz's *Variations* aim to shock them while disrupting these expectations by expounding one of the possible subtexts of the originals, which in Marowitz's words through reconditioning the text "become a dramatically acceptable reverse-truth" (*Roar* 97). Like a modern director, as he rewrites the plays and makes them more concrete ("How to Rape Shakespeare" 21–22), Marowitz presents *his* readings of the source texts, readings which almost always are reflective of contemporary political topics. The idea of reinterpreting Shakespeare with a contemporary political consciousness links him very much to Brecht, even if Marowitz is somewhat uneager to see these connections, and even if the end results could not be more different.

In both cases, we can see writers with strong visions of the theatrical at work. The difference in the plays is a result mostly of the different theatre they imagine. While Brecht's rewriting carries a certain measure of predictability in itself, since from the Prologue onwards it aims at demonstrating Marxist and anti-Nazi doctrines, the success of Marowitz's version relies heavily on the unpredictability of its outcome. Although Marowitz rejects Brecht's method, describing it as "reduction" and "oversimplification" (*Marowitz Shakespeare* 9), he also admits that "[i]n a theatre, one cannot put on the stage a kind of multifaceted resonating chamber called a 'classic' and allow all members of the public to draw their own conclusions from it. The artist proceeds from conclusions he has already drawn—from his reading of the text" ("How to Rape Shakespeare" 22). In the case of *Measure for Measure,* one of Marowitz's

preconceived notions comes very close to Brecht's assumption that "it is perhaps the most modern play in the classical repertoire" (*Roar* 103).

This modernity, according to Marowitz, is shown in how the play reflects on the unjust nature of law, not only in an abstract sense but also to our contemporary understanding of it, since we live in a society "where Watergate-styled corruptions are often the rule and not the exception" (*Marowitz Shakespeare* 21). Recognising the moral ambiguities in Shakespeare's play—as opposed to the old-fashioned morality of its source, Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*—Marowitz wishes to come down on one side, condemning the hypocrisy of those in power, and the phony ceremoniousness of the representatives of the law in the play: "I wanted the audience to be angry with the Duke, Escalus and Angelo in a way that Shakespeare's narrative would never permit," he confessed (*Marowitz Shakespeare* 21). To be able to do that, he must take the play in a darker direction—that is, to deprive it of a happy ending.

Strangely, the way he achieves it also implies a surprising amount of fidelity to Shakespeare's *Measure.* Except for a short insert from *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (214), all lines in the play come from *Measure for Measure.* Although rearranged from the first scene onwards, for the first half of the play, they closely follow the actions of the source text. So much so that even the puzzling gaps of *Measure for Measure* are not filled by Marowitz—i.e. we are given no reasons for the Duke's leave, except for maybe a few hints that he has a drinking problem. What we have instead is the introduction of the Bishop's character, using lines delivered by others in the original, whose appearance emphasises the increased role of the clergy in Marowitz's version, as well as a more intricately drawn power structure surrounding the Duke's abrupt leave. With the exception of Lucio, Marowitz cuts all the bawdy characters of the Viennese underworld from his play, an omission which deprives the Duke's departure of its moral ground and creates an almost suffocatingly closed onstage world, consisting mostly of the moneyed elite of Vienna.

Lucio is the sole character who is a remnant of the Viennese underworld. Since he only represents the other side of the coin, his role is magnified to a *raisonneur* figure, the "only character that would break through the fictional framework and address the audience directly" (*Roar* 87). Much of his text is a verbatim quotation from his lines in Shakespeare, yet he addresses not the disguised Duke, who is cut from the play, but the audience, resulting in a more open criticism of the workings of Viennese law. His lines communicate what Marowitz found crucially relevant in Shakespeare's play: that "the Law does not mete out justice. . . .

Behind its austere facade, compromises, deals and plea-bargains mock the evils perpetrated on innocent victims" (*Roar* 102). This description pointedly sums up Marowitz's *Variations*, since like Brecht's play, this adaptation deals with revealing how class-solidarity only works among the rich and, as a consequence of this, how the poor are powerless to vindicate their rights.

Marowitz returns to the plot of Shakespeare's source, Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra,* deletes the bed-trick and has Isabella ravished by Angelo. Playing with audience expectations, however, he seemingly leaves some getaway possibilities open for her, for instance, a dream sequence, in which we might hope for Isabella's close escape, just to get all doors slammed in our faces in the last scene, in which we witness Isabella becoming the helpless victim of male violence. The play exists in two versions, one of which ends on a similar banquet of the rich as we have seen in Brecht's play, during which the men jokingly enumerate the several women they took advantage of. The second version, published in Marowitz's *Roar of the Canon*, emphasises this kind of gender-based oppression even more. In this, Isabella is cornered by the four leading men of the play (the Duke, Angelo, Claudio, and Lucio) just to be served to the Duke as his new concubine. Her fate here echoes that of Brecht's Nanna's, with the conclusion that if women become the playthings of men, they lose their ability to fight against them.

Both Brecht and Marowitz dramatise violence against women. This is a topic that is absent, or just a never-fulfilled looming possibility in Shakespeare's play. It seems that, despite their different artistic stance, as well as the decades between them, both adaptors saw women as the most vulnerable and underprivileged segment of society. In both plays, it is women who lack class solidarity and a legal voice, the difference being that in Brecht's understanding, money can buy authority for women, as in the case of Isabella, but that comes at a price. She has to abandon her family as well as her chances of having a family and has to place herself under the custody of men (her lawyer and the priests). Marowitz sees no escape for women. His is a world where male gender solidarity overrides even class divisions, since at the end of his play, Lucio also joins the pact of men in rejoicing over the exploitation of women. To focus on socioeconomic and gender inequality, both plays modify the emphases of the Shakespeare play. They equally stress the oppressive power of the church and of the wealthy, who by the end of the plays unstoppably crush powerless individuals. While in Brecht's case this message is complicated by a racial doctrine, Marowitz's main interest lies in socio-economical inequalities.

Measure for Measure has been one of the great Shakespeare discoveries of the twentieth century. The relevance of its inherent political topics made it a favourite among leading directors and audiences alike. Brecht's virtuoso jazz like improvisations on the Shakespearean themes on the one hand and Marowitz's playful remixing of Shakespeare's text on the other both prove that the play is a rich source of influence for politicised rereading.

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Shakespeare's Momentary Lapses of Reason

The Paradox and the Absurd

IVAN NYUSZTAY

Abstract: In Shakespearean drama reason at times falters and becomes ineffective in coping with the events. Its limits appear as temporary but dramatic reminders of the necessarily curbed scope of human understanding. Instances of 'reasonless' and meaningless phenomena abound in the plays and present themselves mostly in the forms of paradox and the absurd. In the selective recourse to paradoxes in Shakespeare, this article will focus on the tragedies—together with a potentially tragic instance in a chronicle play—which most blatantly expose the limits of reason. I believe that these momentary lapses demonstrate recurring structures of containment characteristic of Shakespeare. Demonstrating the ways paradox and the absurd are contained in Shakespearean drama also entails an overview of the fundamentally different handling of these concepts in the Theatre of the Absurd.

The question whether reason in Shakespeare is the "be-all and the end-all," like the deadly blow for Macbeth,[1] is a tempting one. The characters are mostly cogitating subjects who form judgements logically, guided by their common sense. Macbeth strives to decipher the prophecies, contemplates the murder, and ruminates about his suitability for the purpose. In the great monologue, Hamlet ponders a series of succinct alternatives regarding life and death and carefully weighs them with his analytic mind. At other moments, however, reason falters, becomes vulnerable and abortive. I believe that these shortcomings of rational enquiry are most clearly perceivable when we look at the ways in which Shakespeare probes its limits. The apparently 'reasonless' and meaningless phenomena that thus present themselves call for a discussion of the Shakespearean paradox and the absurd.

1 ". . . that but this blow / Might be the be-all and the end-all" (1.7.4–5).

It goes without saying that this article cannot do full justice to the staggering variety of paradoxes in Shakespeare. Instead, I will focus on those instances in the tragedies which most poignantly capture the limits of reason. Moreover, in these investigations I also address the question of how paradox and the absurd are contained in Shakespearean drama, and, accordingly, how they are to be distinguished from their respective counterparts in the Theatre of the Absurd.

Although there is a plethora of absurdities in Shakespearean drama, we find only three occurrences of the word "absurd" in the plays. In *Henry VI Part I*, the Duke of Alençon is clearly bewildered by the suggestion that Charles the Dauphin place himself as viceroy under King Henry to restore peace in France, "[t]his proffer is absurd and reasonless" (5.3.137). In attempting to thematise the implications of a rather complex term, we are here compelled to resort to a no less complicated term, "reasonless." For what is meant exactly by reason is unclear. In Alexander Schmidt's *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, the word could refer to the "rational faculty and power of the mind," as well as "fairness" or "justice," not to mention "argumentation," "satisfaction," and finally, "cause" (945). Since the latter is specified, i.e. the restoration of the peace, it can be ruled out, which leaves us with the alternatives. The plan of Charles' submission to the King, while simultaneously retaining his dignity and authority, is deemed both by Alençon and the Dauphin to be meaningless, irrational. Moreover, Charles also claims that he already owns "more than half the Gallian territories," and is considered a "lawful king;" therefore, the promise of advancement through submission could also culminate in losing everything. In light of this reaction, "reasonless" seems to denote both senselessness and unfairness. The absurd, then, is here linked to an unthinkable self-surrender, the character's fear of becoming no more than his own shadow: "Must he be then as shadow of himself?" (5.3.133).

Alençon's question, marking the potential disintegration of identity, echoes throughout Shakespeare's works, mostly in the tragedies. Perhaps the most well-known instance of this existential crisis is in *King Lear*:

> KING LEAR: Who is it that can tell me who I am?
> FOOL: Lear's shadow. (1.4.221–222)

Hamlet's dangerous introversion, the obsessive mourning of his father's death, merits Claudius' similarly worded remonstrance: "Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven, / A fault against

the dead, a fault to nature / To reason most absurd" (1.2.101–103). Hamlet's grief and withdrawal, as well as his "antic disposition" constitute a threat to Claudius since they curb the scope of surveillance. To him Hamlet is not himself but his own shadow, as it were, although it remains precarious under what preconditions he would consider Hamlet self-identical. Claudius' nostalgic image of a Hamlet who is entirely himself dates back to a time well before the play starts, to the era of King Hamlet's kingship, and thus remains a matter of utter conjecture to the spectator/reader. Turning the tables, the plot seems rather to focus on what Claudius' present self-image is, and what it has to do with the past self, the perpetrator of fratricide. Later, in the scene of attempted confession and self-laceration, he is temporarily divided with himself and the words of disapproval addressed to Hamlet above, shower back on him: "O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven" (3.3.34).

The senses play an important role also in Hamlet's rather equivocal outburst on power and flattery addressed to Horatio, in which he gives vent to his embittered disillusionment: "No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp" (3.2.60). Harold Jenkins associates the "candied tongue" with an "obsequious dog" whose servile licking is likened to "the flatterer's sugary words." Indeed, the image cluster of dog and candy is one of Shakespeare's favourites, claims Jenkins, falling back on Caroline Spurgeon's *Shakespeare's Imagery*. Hamlet here refers to the two sycophants, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, whose petty but portentous mission he has just unravelled, and lashes out at their unconditional genuflection to the King. What is even more important here, however, is that the pomp is absurd, i.e. insipid, as the corresponding footnote tells us.[2] It has lost all savour for Hamlet since his father's untimely death and the rather tactlessly timed ceremonial inauguration of Claudius.[3]

A different kind of ceremony provides the context for the absurd in *Antony and Cleopatra*. After the lost final battle, as the victorious Octavius Caesar is approaching, the heroine fears being publicly humiliated in Rome, when exhibited as an "Egyptian puppet." The future is foreboding:

> The quick comedians
> Extemporally will stage us and present
> Our Alexandrian revels; Antony
> Shall be brought drunken forth; and I shall see

2 Cf. Alexander Schmidt.

3 The pejorative qualifier in the adjectival phrase, "absurd pomp," dovetails with Shakespearean epithets like "painted" (*AYL* 2.1.3; *Timon* 4.2.36) or "vain": see Jenkins fn.

> Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
> I'th'posture of a whore. (5.2.215–219)

To Iras' retort that she would rather blind herself, Cleopatra responds affirmatively: "Why, that's the way / To fool their preparation and to conquer / Their most absurd intents" (5.2.223–225). The danger of being thus caricatured and debased is dreaded since, once again, the self is to be presented as someone else. There is a crucial discrepancy between Cleopatra's self-identity—the image she entertains of herself (the respectable queen of Egypt, her "greatness")—and the external identification through caricature. Yet, the caricature is not entirely unreasonable. Cleopatra does acknowledge the grounds for misrepresentation, the revels in Alexandria during the war, when surely they had neglected their pressing duties. The play brings to the fore this historical ambiguity concerning the ways victors represent losers. Furthermore, the "absurd intents" also mirror the Shakespearean theatre itself. The comedians who stage the hero and the heroine distort reality as Shakespeare reshapes his fundamental source, Plutarch.[4] But this is not the only self-reference in this quote. The lines including "squeaking Cleopatra boy" are given to a boy actor playing the heroine. The "squeaking" is contrasted to the queen's "greatness" a boy presumably cannot render. As Wilders reminds in the corresponding footnote, Shakespeare at this point "shows extraordinary boldness,"questioning the competence of his own actor. In other words, this is hardly less than an absurd intent itself. To conclude, the daunting double image of the self so characteristic of Shakespearean drama is easily detectable in Alençon's unthinkable self-surrender, in Hamlet's "dangerous" introversion and corresponding disillusionment, as well as in Cleopatra's fear of misrepresentation.

A number of critics have examined the phenomenon of the absurd in Shakespearean drama. According to Robert Hapgood, the best way to scrutinise Shakespeare's vision of the world is by placing his plays in the context of the Theatre of the Absurd (144–145).[5] Similarly, Anne Paolucci makes the daring claim that, in a sense, Shakespeare is the predecessor of dramatists like Camus, Ionesco, Beckett, or Albee (231). No doubt there are numerous episodes, dialogues, and reflections in Shakespeare apart from the excerpts discussed above

4 Cf. John Wilders' introduction to the Arden edition (57).

5 Edward Bond also affiliates Shakespeare with the absurdists when castigating him for being too Beckettian (Bulman 67).

that could be labelled "absurd," even though the term is not mentioned. One may gloss as absurd Hamlet's "antic disposition," Lear's confused and incoherent meanderings on the heath, Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking, or the often hardly intelligible blabbering of the Fools, to mention but a few.

Yet the sixteenth-seventeenth-century understanding of the term should be differentiated from the vision espoused by the twentieth-century Theatre of the Absurd. Disregarding this telling discrepancy, Paolucci argues that the absurd of the Theatre of the Absurd is "very old and very central" (234). Accordingly, she discovers identical paradoxical extremes in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Albee's *Tiny Alice* which "produce a Sophoclean irony" (231). Insisting on "the tragic dimension in Albee," these extremes include darkness and light, freedom and predestined fate, "what Spinoza calls insight into necessity" (238–239). In *Hamlet*, "action dissipates into a series of isolated confrontations" in which the hero "emerges as a double image," i.e. in the course of the play two incompatible selves materialise as Hamlet forgets the ghost's command and is eventually spurred to action by Claudius' move. In the apparent irreconcilability of the two images, Paolucci glimpses "that dissolution of character which is the trademark of the absurd" (236). In this analysis, dissolution and dividedness appear to be equivalent dramatic phenomena. The latter, however, designates a fundamental transformation of character specific to tragic drama and in no way a complete dissolution.[6] The character is split precisely, because it adheres to a goal that can only be achieved in the world through ultimate acquiescence and self-surrender. It is divided because it cannot dissolve. Contrary to absurd drama, the insistence on an ideal triggers a chain of events that lead to the final annihilation. Although the key notions in Paolucci's text—paralysis, scepticism, and the desire for certainty—capture Hamlet's state of mind rather accurately, the play as a whole does fit into the tradition of the Elizabethan revenge play. In the same way, instances of the absurd in Shakespeare are subsumed by a comprehensive, meaningful framework, such as history, cultural traditions, or a Christian world-view. But then, classical tragedy always depended on, even confirmed, such modes of containment. One may all too easily label Ajax's slaughtering the sheep instead of Ulysses, Heracles's slaying his own children, or Oedipus' self-blinding as "absurd," forgetting that the corresponding mythology provides a cogent framework of explanations for these incidents. In the Theatre of the Absurd,

6 According to Robert Bechtold Heilman, dividedness already appears in Aristotle's prescriptive statement in *Poetics*, that despite being a good man (superior to us), the hero commits an error (12–13).

however, we find the Camusian variant of the absurd which resists containment: it is rigorously and consistently subversive, self-sufficient and unresolvable.[7] Or as Ionesco famously contended, "[a]bsurd is that which is devoid of purpose . . . Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost: all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless" (Esslin 23). On these grounds I contest the respective contributions of Jan Kott, Martin Esslin, and Neil Cornwell to the understanding of the notion of the absurd, since in these insightful and indispensable undertakings we find a blend of the Shakespearean and the Camusian variants.

John Schwindt's essay on the emergence of the absurd in the sixteenth century also starts from paradox, although in a rather different sense. Schwindt derives the Shakespearean absurd from Luther's dialectical theology, which replaced the "optimistic Catholic theology of similitude," and was instead based on hardly reconcilable "paradoxical oppositions" (2). The well-known binaries include nature and grace, man and God, and most notably, reason and faith. The human condition that crystallises from these paradoxes is tragic, says Schwindt, and unjust both in Shakespeare's and Luther's world, "and can be endured only by an abandonment of reason and an awakening of faith" (4). Reason should be discarded, because it lacks the competence to understand an unfathomable world.[8] Indeed, as we are somewhat later told, "God seems cruel, unjust and insane to human reason, Luther argues, because human reason is blind, deaf, senseless, godless, and sacrilegious" (8). For Luther, the source and sanction of the paradoxical is the cross, since when most revealed in Christ, God remains most hidden in the foolishness, the suffering and the shame of the cross (5). Luther's (and Shakespeare's) God is an absconding God who is bound neither by human justice, nor by the scripture, and whose will is unlimited, free from natural law, free from revealed law, and free from reason (6–7). In contrast with Erasmus, who insisted that Christian doctrine is incompatible with the absurdity of a hidden God who elects and reprobates arbitrarily, and who is neither reasonable, just, nor good, Luther repeatedly asserts that God's works and words are beyond and even against reason. As a consequence, Luther champions the Christian as an "absurd hero who constantly confronts

7 Cf. Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays.* In his adoption of the myth, Camus suspends the mythological context and explanation.

8 By contrast, although sceptical both of the usefulness of reason and "the posturings of theology," Montaigne did not advocate the abandoning of reason so much as its keeping at a distance from faith (Copenhaver and Schmitt 255).

absolutely impossible things" (8–9).[9] The conclusion is familiar: we need to believe in God precisely because God seems unjust and inscrutable. Thus, the Lutheran doctrine appears to be the precursor of Kierkegaard's *credo quia absurdum*, which, in turn, is a famous misquote from Tertullian.[10] The Christian response to the absurd for Luther, then, is faith. It is in faith that the absurd is dissolved and annulled, or as Schwindt has it, *endured*.

It remains unclear how Luther's remedy is to be applied to Shakespearean drama. The paradoxical oppositions Schwindt uses to shed light on the human condition in the sixteenth century are markedly Luther's, not Shakespeare's. In Shakespeare, nature is contrasted with art, honour, or the supernatural rather than with grace; man is opposed to women, boys, or virginity rather than to God; and reason is at variance with madness or the absurd, rather than with faith. Indeed, in vain do we seek in the plays an endorsement of faith as an antidote for the absurdities. Moreover, although the hidden God becomes paradoxical for Luther when juxtaposed to the painful presence of the cross, in Shakespeare's works it is hard to find such an explicit contrast.

Despite their major differences from Luther, Shakespearean paradoxes also represent the limits of reason. In *Macbeth,* we enter a world of hurly-burly, where the final military confrontation is foreshadowed and mingled with the internal conflict by "the battle's lost and won" (1.1.4). On top of it all, after the weird sisters' hackneyed keynote of "[f]air is foul, foul is fair" (1.1.11) in a play riddled with paradoxes, it becomes rather taxing to interpret the prophecies. Macbeth's first words, as he enters the stage confirm this primordial onset of judgemental confusion: "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" (1.3.38).[11] Only later in the course of action does it crystallise that the fulfilment of hopes is achieved through a regicide that will eventually lead to Macbeth's dividedness and downfall. What seemed fair for Macbeth, the realisation of his ambitions, turns out to be foul in the aftermath, when he proves to be "infirm of purpose," i.e. incapable of mastering the consequences. As a castrating gesture, Lady Macbeth snatches the bloody daggers from him after the deed. This move, together with the desire to be "unsexed,"

9 This runs contrary to what Francis Bacon claims about the use of human reason in religion: "God vouchsafeth to descend to our capacity, in the expressing of his mysteries in sort as may be sensible unto us; and doth graft his revelations and holy doctrine upon the notions of our reason, and applieth his inspirations to open our understanding, as the form of the key to the ward of the lock" (211).

10 The original being: "It is certain, because impossible" (Harrison 339).

11 And similarly, "[t]his supernatural soliciting / Cannot be ill, cannot be good" (1.3.130–131).

and her remorseful sleepwalk centre the question of responsibility and fuel discussions of complicity in the play. Moreover, in Macduff's frenzied heralding of the murdering of Duncan, "[c]onfusion now hath made his masterpiece!" (2.3.65), we find the repercussion of the initial hurly-burly.[12] This echo accentuates the importance of paradoxes throughout, as does the fact that the witches' prophecies are not confined to Macbeth's career prospects. The future of Banquo is also rendered precarious, since he is to become "[l]esser than Macbeth, and greater," "[n]ot so happy, yet much happier," and he "shalt get kings, though [he] be none" (1.3.65–67). These paradoxes are riddles similar to those of the Delphic oracle and are resolved as those were—in time. Macbeth is faced with the truth in the weird sisters' prevarications only before his fall, "Macduff was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripp'd" (5.8.15–16). It is a timely recognition, and a painful one to be sure, in harmony with the precepts of pure tragedy, as it comes too late: "And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd / That palter with us in a double sense" (5.8.19–20).

However, equivocating paradoxes are unravelled in time not only in plots dominated by prophecies. It is only after a certain while, when discarded by Regan and Goneril, that Lear starts to understand his folly and the confines of his authority. The meeting of the two forsaken old men in act 4 is the scene of ripened insights and illuminated self-lacerations. Reminiscent of Oedipus, Gloucester's clairvoyance comes with blindness ("I stumbled when I saw" [4.1.19]), and in his ramblings Lear begins to show "reason in madness" (4.6.173). Lear has been unreasonable with the exiling of Cordelia, and he will repeatedly acknowledge this as such through the prism of a maddening dividedness: "I am a very foolish fond old man / . . . / Pray you now, forget and forgive. I am old / And foolish" (4.7.60, 84–85). The limits of reason here are marked off by madness, and vice versa, the limits of madness are demarcated by the occasional flashes of reason. For both Gloucester and Lear, the contradictions are reconciled in time as the new selfhoods materialise.

Hamlet's madness is to some extent akin to Lear's in that it is punctuated by reason, or, as Polonius has it, *method*: "Though this be madness, yet there is method / in't" (2.2.205–206). Needless to say, the pretended madness, the plan to "put an antic disposition on" (1.5.180) is to be distinguished from Lear's genuinely frantic disposition. Hamlet is more calculating, methodical, analytic. The disillusioned Lear seeks to be loved and forgiven; the disillusioned Hamlet abandons love and never forgives.

12 In his prophecy the Fool in *The Tragedy of King Lear* also warns of the great confusion awaiting "the realm of Albion" (3.2.91–92).

In his bitter diatribe launched against Ophelia, Hamlet explains why honesty should "admit no discourse" to beauty,

> . . . for the power of beauty will sooner
> transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the
> force of honesty can translate beauty into his
> likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now the
> time gives it proof. (3.1.11–15)

Jenkins glosses the word paradox as "a thing contrary to received opinion or rational explanation," while Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor take it to refer simply to an "absurd statement." What is more interesting for the present undertaking, however, is the established correlation between "paradox" and "proof" through *time*. In a nostalgic retrospection, Hamlet idealises the past when his Father was the King, his mother a faithful wife, and Ophelia an honest lover. The idea that beauty can no longer have "commerce" with honesty shows Hamlet's general disenchantment with women, including his mother of course, in the world of celebrated usurpation and polished duplicity. For him, in the present, even beauty is deceptive: "I have heard of your paintings well enough. God / hath given you one face and you make yourselves / another" (3.1.144–146). Beyond the obvious allusion to false identities adopted by characters throughout the play, these "paintings" also remind us of the "borrow'd robes" of Macbeth (1.3.109), and Lear's "lendings," and the call "come unbutton here" (3.4.101). It is Hamlet's assumed prerogative to penetrate the disguises and to hold "the mirror up to nature" (3.2.22). Thus, the opposition of beauty and honesty fits into the more comprehensive dichotomy of nature versus disguise, and therefore, once again, harmonises with patterns of dividedness and the double self, characteristic of the Shakespearean paradox and the absurd.

Arguing that the underlying contrasts and paradoxes above are fundamentally different from those of Luther is not trying to belittle the relevance of the latter's doctrines to Shakespearean drama. Elsewhere I have argued that Luther's and Calvin's doctrines of corrupt human nature and inherent deprivation, as well as the *deus absconditus* and predestination provide some of the indispensable coordinates for Shakespearean tragedy. Still, the latter seems to dispense with faith along with the promise of an afterlife, the possibility of redemption or election which would preclude a fateful and cathartic ending (Nyusztay 47–62). Instead, as I tried to point out, the paradox and the absurd in Shakespeare are resolved in time.

By contrast, in the Theatre of the Absurd there is no such containment, since "time has stopped" (Beckett 36). Samuel Beckett's words are *illuminating* at this point:

> The destiny of Racine's Phèdre is sealed from the beginning: she will proceed into the dark. As she goes she herself will be illuminated. At the beginning of the play she has partial illumination and at the end she has complete illumination, but there has been no question but that she moves toward the dark. That is the play. Within this notion clarity is possible, but for us who are neither Greek nor Jansenist there is not such clarity. The question would also be removed if we believed in the contrary—total salvation. But where we have both dark and light we have also the inexplicable. The key word to my plays is 'perhaps.' (*Critical Heritage* 220)

These thoughts can also be applied to Shakespearean tragedy, despite the fact that the idea of tragic illumination is derived from Greek drama and Jansenism. Shakespeare's tragic heroes are also illuminated while proceeding into the dark. Macbeth and Hamlet are enlightened about their weakness and finitude (the latter also about Claudius' sinfulness); Lear comes to understand what he has lost by exiling Cordelia. In the above quote, the word "illumination" occurs three times, while the term "clarity" occurs twice, which underlines the importance of these phenomena as organic features of classical and neoclassical drama. The Shakespearean paradox and the absurd, as I have tried to point out, inform these structures of containment.

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Within and Without the Border: On Géza Kállay's Last Book

(Review: *Mondhatunk-e többet? Nyelv, irodalom, filozófia.* Budapest: Liget Műhely, 2018)

TAMÁS PAVLOVITS

I am reading the book of a friend. I am reading essays about language and the relationships among language, literature, and philosophy. I am enthralled by the style, I am immersed in the world of the writer's idiosyncratic learning and thinking, I am introduced to literary intertextualities and philosophical reflections. I am fascinated by what I am reading; questions, counterarguments, further problems occur to me, one after the other. All the more reason to pick up the phone and call my friend and say: "Hey, I've read your book, and, there are no two ways about it, it is really amazing! It is engaging, I've learnt a lot from it, and I have lots of questions, comments, refutations. We need to meet up to talk it over. We need to think about and discuss the possibilities of a metaphysical reading of Shakespeare, the limits of language, or the moral responsibility of intellectuals today. You opened up new trails to explore the relation of literature and philosophy, we would need to widen these into paths. When are you free?" My friend died unexpectedly more than a year ago, and his book came out posthumously. The talk needs to be postponed (perhaps for ever), my enthusiasm remains stuck in me, and so is the desire to think together. The best I can do is to write down my impressions of the book.

Géza Kállay was professor at the School of English and American Studies at ELTE, his main area of research being English Renaissance Literature and Shakespeare. He started out as a linguist, teaching at ELTE's Department of Applied Linguistics for two years. He had an intense relation to philosophy on many counts, he ran a course together with László Tengelyi, he translated

one of Tengelyi's books into English.[1] Moreover, thanks to a Fulbright grant, he studied with Stanley Cavell at Harvard. The two of them also became friends. In the course of his life, Kállay acquired an enormous literary and philosophical learning, immersed in both the Anglo-Saxon (analytical) and the Continental (existentialist and phenomenological) traditions of philosophy. Beside Shakespeare's work, his main professional interest lay in exploring the relationship of literature and philosophy. This interest is the earmark of his last volume as well.

The title of the volume is *Mondhatunk-e többet? Nyelv, irodalom, filozófia* (Can We Say More? Language, Literature, Philosophy). The title is not meant to suggest that the author has exhausted the subject. Although the volume is a substantial addition and perhaps capstone to an *oeuvre* of more than 10 books and 150 papers, the question refers to the limits of language. "Can we say more?" is a philosophical question *par excellence*, asking if one can say more than one can say in words. What can be expressed in language, and is there anything that limits the act of saying and the possibility of saying something? The articulation of this problem comes from one of Géza Kállay's favourite authors, Ludwig Wittgenstein. According to Wittgenstein, the world is not a composite of things but a composite of facts. Language can only make *statements* about facts intelligibly; therefore, the "reality" beyond factual statements is not part of the world. As the boundaries of the world and language are the same, one cannot and should not talk about any "reality" beyond the world.

The essay "Can We Say More?" compares Wittgenstein's theory of language in *Tractatus* with Camus's *The Stranger* (*L'Étranger*). Kállay points out specific similarities between Camus's literary language use and Wittgenstein's language philosophy. The protagonist, Mersault only makes statements, while the "reality" beyond those statements, like human emotions or ethical values (not to mention theology), are not to be attributed meaning at all. It appears that Mersault speaks according to Wittgenstein's early linguistic imperative. As Kállay points out, however, not even the text of the *Tractatus* itself fulfils its own expectations, as it continually crosses the strict boundary between language and "reality" set up by itself. Incidentally, this is exactly the way Camus uses language in *The Stranger*. Boundary crossing is produced not by the semantic or syntactic but pragmatic dimension of these texts. As Kállay writes: "You need not talk about ethics: you need to perform it, embody it, make it happen" (291). So, in Kállay's reading these texts are

1 Tengelyi, László. *The Wild-Region of Life History*. Trans. Géza Kállay. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2004.

balancing on the border of the sayable and the non-sayable, and this ability to balance gives them potential. They become fascinating at the point where they do not fulfil Wittgenstein's language imperative any more. In the whole volume, Kállay is involved in finding more about the "additional" quality literary and philosophical texts share compared to what they actually say.

All the essays of the volume attempt to disentangle some non-sayable additional quality in literary and philosophical texts through analysing connections between literature and philosophy. More specifically, Kállay reads literary texts through philosophy and supplements philosophical reflections with literary examples. Whilst doing this, he crosses the disciplinary boundaries of literary and philosophical inquiry continually. He keeps asking what differentiates literature from philosophy and what links them. He locates the link in the non-sayable "more" he detects in both.

The first two sections of the volume make up a book within the book, because all the essays here deal with Shakespeare. The titles situate the texts in a philosophical context at the outset: "Shakespeare: Space and Time" or "A Metaphysical reading of Shakespeare." Had this part appeared separately, it would have made an excellent Shakespeare monograph. Had it been published in English, it would surely become an indispensable piece of the interpretative trend that reads Shakespeare in a philosophical context, which is surveyed in detail in "Metaphysical reading of Shakespeare: Emmanuel Levinas, Macbeth, and contemporary Shakespeare criticism" (158–160). The two chapters are composed of nine readings that concentrate on the dramas *Macbeth* (which had been translated by Kállay into Hungarian recently),[2] *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Richard II*, and *Richard III* and philosophical works by Kierkegaard, Lévinas, László Tengelyi, Wittgenstein, and, of course, Stanley Cavell.

Kállay poses the question why one needs philosophy to comment on a literary text. He suggests that there are several ways to explicate the relation between literature and philosophy through Shakespeare's texts specifically. Firstly, one can study the impact of late Renaissance philosophy on Shakespeare. Secondly, one can claim that an additional level of significance to the texts can be articulated through philosophical arguments. And thirdly, one can study how diverse philosophers reflect on Shakespeare. Kállay's essays combine the second and third approaches. Stanley Cavell's *Disowning Knowledge: In Six Plays of Shakespeare* (Cambridge University Press, 1987) is a major influence on his work, and he also analyses the layers of meaning implicit in Kierkegaard's, Lévinas', and Tengelyi's references to Shakespeare.

2 Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. Trans. Géza Kállay. Budapest: Liget Műhely, 2014. Web. 25 Feb 2019.

At the same time, he reinvests the philosophical considerations into his literary analyses and unearths ideas related to the philosophy of language, ethics, existential philosophy, and phenomenology in Shakespeare's texts. His analyses show how complicated and complex the relations between philosophical and literary discourses are. The two areas are not related like two countries: rather, their borders meet and then separate, they sometimes merge into each other, and sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the two at all. The link between them is the additional "more" they articulate and this makes them mutually dependent on each other.

In the second part of the volume Shakespeare appears only rarely. The third section, entitled "The burden of storytelling" consists of diverse essays: literary theory, philosophical commentary on the *Tractatus*, a literary exegesis of Kosztolányi's *Skylark*, and the essay on the Wittgenstein/Camus connection. The last section is called the "Responsibility for the Word." The title itself refers to that something "more" added to a certain language use. When one speaks, one has to be able to tell the reason why one speaks about something, and why one does not speak about something else. Speaking or remaining silent carries an ethical dimension in itself. There are two essays on language philosophy in the section: one on Saussure and one on directions in language philosophy in general. Both are concerned with the problem that language denotes more than it appears to. Although language is acquired in a community, the system of linguistic signs is passed on to us as ready-made, it has its distinct semantics and syntax, yet language also opens up the play of infinite jest for each of its users. The significance of literary and philosophical discourses may be that through their conceptual frames, poetics, and creativity they expose a concealed potential of language, they are able to articulate contents beyond predetermined syntactic or semantic categories.

The final essay, called "The higher law: Emerson and Fugitive Slaves" functions as a fitting conclusion to the book. In relation to Emerson, Kállay writes about the ethical responsibility of intellectuals for—and their obligation to—people in need who are subject to obvious injustice. In one of his speeches Emerson addresses an ambiguity inherent in US political, legal, and social structures since the second part of the eighteenth century: whilst the Declaration of Independence clearly states that all men are created equal, in the Southern states of the country the institution of slavery remains the basis of the economy. This ambiguity sheds light on an obvious injustice that confronted all US citizens with a choice. Emerson argues that in this decision one needs to respect a "higher law": the law of conscience

that safeguards freedom, equality and human dignity against slavery. Géza Kállay is aware that this argumentation does not only sound naïve today but also sounded naïve to some at the time it was articulated. Already then, it could only resonate with those who had already been convinced of human goodwill and the possibility of change. That is why he asks twice about the point of referring to this law in a speech that argues for the abolition of slavery. What is the point of talking about justice, freedom, and goodwill in a community in which self-interest, injustice, and evil obviously triumph?

In the conclusion of this essay, Kállay summarises the whole volume, answering the question whether one can say "more":

> . . . honest words still have some power for some. Despite your numerous doubts about the justice of your own words, despite your knowledge of the fragmented nature of your speech, some of what you say can be communicated if it is formulated comprehensively, concisely, clearly, and there will always be someone who will hear it. Freedom, compassion, goodwill, and truth are not only words but can become thoughts, actions, and realities. (351)

So, language points beyond itself, it tells more than it says, and that additional "more" belongs to the sphere of ethics: it is act and action. In literary and philosophical texts, one will find not only descriptions of possible worlds or theoretical representations of the real world but a peculiar additional quality, as they create culture and provide instruction in how we are to live a life worth living. This additional quality links literature and philosophy.

Contributor Details

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Preface

ANDRÁS KISÉRY
Issue Editor

Like our previous, 2018/1 issue, the present one also originates in the May 2017 conference on Disbelief, organised by the Early Modern English Research Group, a graduate student collective at the Department of English Studies, Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Budapest. As the conference brought together two fields, Renaissance and Romanticism, the members of EMERG: Bence Levente Bodó, Zsolt Bojti, Ágnes Bonácz, and Gergő Dávid, were joined by Kristóf Kiss and Orsolya Komáromi as coordinators. The six of them did much of the heavy lifting, from conceiving the event to taking care of practicalities. They were supported by the two project leaders, Géza Kállay, for the Renaissance, and Andrea Timár, for Romanticism. Andrea Timár edited the collection of papers that emerged from the Romanticism panels of the conference.

The Renaissance volume should have been edited by Géza Kállay, who passed away suddenly in November 2017. Géza was not only the faculty sponsor of EMERG and a mentor of a long list of doctoral students working on Shakespeare, English Renaissance literature, drama, and the intersections of literature and philosophy, but also the organiser of several major research projects at ELTE and beyond, including, as Principal Investigator, a Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) Grant for a five-volume history of English literature that involves virtually everyone in the field who writes in Hungarian. Beyond his formal, official roles, he was also the central figure of several overlapping circles and networks of friends, students, and colleagues. He was a contagiously inquisitive mind, a scholar whose contribution to his field is only partially captured by his essays, books, and translations of Shakespeare. These give a sense of the substance, the propositional content of his thinking—those who spent long hours talking to him, whether in the seminar room, in his office, at a restaurant, or at home, over coffee, dinner, or a beer, or watched him perform or lecture, also witnessed the exuberance and capaciousness of his intellect, and benefitted from his ability to conjure up a community around

a shared interest, whether it was one we brought to him, or one he helped us discover. His gift was to help us believe that thinking about it mattered like nothing else.

Although it can no longer bear his imprint, this collection is also a product of his energy and generosity. Of our contributors, Bence Bodó, Gergő Dávid, Balz Engler, Márta Hargitai, Dániel Takács, and Eszter Török were among the presenters of the conference. Some of Géza's friends, former students, and colleagues, including Zsolt Almási, Sam Gilchrist Hall, David Scott Kastan, Ivan Lupić, Dávid Marno, Ágnes Matuska and Karen Kettnich, Iván Nyusztay, Miklós Péti, Veronika Schandl, and Erzsébet Stróbl, are joining here the conference presenters.

Renaissance notions of disbelief and belief remain the main focus of our collection. Márta Hargitai and Gergő Dávid explore questions of faith, trust, and belief in Marlowe's plays, David Scott Kastan shows the extent and the limits of religious inclusion in Shakespeare's Venice, while Balz Engler considers the willingness of *Othello*'s audience to suspend their disbelief. Dávid Marno attends to the problem of faith as it is highlighted by the phenomenon of religious poetry, Bence Levente Bodó reveals how clothing and disguise serve as vehicles of deception in *Paradise Regain'd,* and Sam Gilchrist Hall identifies the Mosaic underpinnings of seventeenth-century utopianism. Other contributions range more widely, although their concerns also intersect with aspects of religion, faith, and the divine. Erzsébet Stróbl surveys the use of the Judgement of Paris in Elizabethan representation, Eszter Török traces the metamorphoses of the Muse in Shakespeare's *Sonnets,* whereas Ágnes Matuska and Karen Kettnich invite us to look at *A Midsummernight's Dream* in the context of sixteenth-century theatricality. Ivan Lupić establishes counsel as a central trope of Renaissance dramatic subjectivity, Zsolt Almási uses the paratexts and typography of an early seventeenth-century translation to reveal its religio-political connotations, Miklós Péti exposes Milton's early poetic fragment as a moment of self-reflection, and Dániel Takács identifies a link between Pope's and Hume's notions of the passions and human character. The collection is rounded off by two essays about twentieth-century perspectives on Shakespeare: Veronika Schandl writes about Brecht's and Marowitz's versions of *Measure for Measure,* while Iván Nyusztay compares Shakespearean and Camusian conceptions of the absurd. Our volume concludes with Tamás Pavlovits's review of a posthumous collection of Géza's essays.

We dedicate this issue to the memory of the journal's former editor-in-chief, Géza Kállay.

Queen Elizabeth and the "Judgement of Paris"

ERZSÉBET STRÓBL

Abstract: The antique story of the Judgement of Paris was adapted to the language of courtly praise of royal women in sixteenth-century England. Absorbing the early modern interpretation of the tale as the praise of a balanced life (triplex vita), the motif lent itself well to the flattery of Queen Elizabeth appearing in the genres of poetry, pageantry, drama, and painting. However, within the Elizabethan context, the elements of the myth were slightly transformed in order to fit the cultural and political needs of the court. From the mid-1560s onwards, the elaboration of the theme became part of a broadening classical discourse within the praise of Queen Elizabeth, and the introduction of a fourth goddess, Diana, from the early 1580s foregrounded the emergence of her Virgin Queen cult. Furthermore, the tale of the Judgement of Paris represented a synthesis of the flattery of female excellence and the growing popularity of the pastoral tradition in English literature which highlighted the conceit of praising Elizabethan England as the land of a new Golden Age.

At Queen Elizabeth's visit to Oxford in 1566, Magdalen College welcomed the sovereign with an oration by Master Henry Bust, who also wrote two verse compositions for the occasion that are preserved among the manuscripts containing the poems of scholars presented to the Queen. In his second piece of tribute, Bust celebrates Elizabeth as the paragon of beauty, might and wisdom:

> Juno jactat opes: quid ni prudentior illa
> Est Pallas prudens: non opulenta tamen.
> Sic Venus (Alma Venus) regni virtutis egena est.
> Omnia sunt tua, tu Juno, Minerva, Venus.[1]

1 "Juno boasts wealth: yet why is she not wiser? / Pallas is wise, but not wealthy. / Likewise, Venus (kindly Venus) lacks royal virtue. / All these qualities belong to you: you are Juno, Minerva, and Venus" (Goldring et al. 1:567, 602).

37 years later, upon the death of Queen Elizabeth, the same Bust, now a Doctor of Medicine, had his poem published among the eulogies for the Queen. The work invokes the same classical motif for praise that he had used for the young Queen at Oxford:

> Te vivam & Iuvenem, Regno, virtute, decore,
> Tres cecini Phrigias exuperasse Deas.
> Te nunc defunctam dijs omnibus, atque deabus
> Præfero, quos, vel quas prodiga Roma parit.[2]

The words of Bust span the period in which the Queen was flattered by the device of placing her into the classical myth of the Judgement of Paris. Its expansion from simple poetic flourish to full-blown drama and its constant recurrence marks the age, which preferred elaborate and witty devices, the conscious abandonment of disbelief, and drawn-out lengthy conceits in royal flattery to the more straightforward and realistic representation of monarchs.

While Queen Elizabeth's qualities were often complimented in her earlier reign, her first figures of praise centred on religious images of true kingship, Biblical typology, and Christian Virtues. For instance, the very first public display of the 25-year-old monarch—her Entry into London preceding her Coronation in 1559—aligned her with the medieval and early modern concepts of godly kingship. The second pageant at Cornhill applauded her as representing Pure Religion, Love of Subjects, Wisdom and Justice, while later on a device used the metaphor of the *veritas temporis filia* to propagate a Protestant religious stance and the Old Testament figure of Deborah to establish a feminine royal image (*The Passage* B2v, C2v, D3v). Her public speeches throughout her reign included Biblical allusions, and her name was associated with several editions of prayers and prayer books (Stróbl, "Prayers" 284).

It was not until the mid-1560s that the language of classical myth started to appear in her discourse of praise. Parallel with the development of the pastoral tradition in poetry and drama, the Queen's flattery immersed the elements of pagan mythology. Helen Hackett points out that the conscious switch from Christian to classical tropes in these years had a significant role in setting the country's religious affiliation apart from the continental Catholic hagiographic examples (235–236).

2 "I sang, when you were alive and young, that you surpassed / The three goddesses of Phrygia in your realm, virtue, and glory. / Now you are dead, I hold you superior to all the gods and goddesses / Which Rome, so prodigal, brings forth" (Goldring et al. 4:532, 721–722).

However, the application of the elements of antiquity also mirrored the spirit of new learning which became part of the royal discourse and the pride of the English in their country. The following study aims to analyse how the theme of the Judgement of Paris changed within the Elizabethan context, and in what forms its elements were absorbed by the queen's public processions, pageantry, and representations in poetry, drama, music, and painting. Reflecting political and religious challenges, the issues of succession to the throne, and the reality of the ageing Queen, the tale remained a constant source of inspiration for the adulation of the monarch and in its adapted forms became a significant trope to celebrate England's female sovereign.

The Judgement of Paris Theme

The Judgement of Paris achieved its importance in Greek mythology as it explained the cause of the Trojan War. By the end of Classical Antiquity, the stock elements of the often reworked and expanded story were in place. With the background setting of the royal marriage of Peleus and Thetis attended by the Olympian gods, it centred on the awarding of an apple as a prize of beauty—in some versions with the label "To the Fairest"—thrown by the uninvited goddess of strife, Eris among the goddesses Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite to spark discord. Instead of a decision made by the court of gods, the power to judge was transferred to the Trojan prince Alexander/Paris, who lived disguised as a shepherd on Mount Ida. Led by Hermes to this pastoral setting, the goddesses offered gifts to Paris in return of a favourable judgement: Hera, the kingdom over all men; Athena, strength and military victory; and Aphrodite, the love of Helen, the most beautiful woman. However, Alexander/Paris's judgement in favour of Aphrodite not only insulted the other two deities but also set the events of the Trojan War in motion.[3]

This story acquired a moralizing message from very early times onwards. For instance, the Hellenistic author Athenaeus in his *Deipnosophists* associates it with an allegorical content: "And I for one affirm also that the Judgement of Paris, as told in poetry by the writers of an older time, is really a trial of pleasure against virtue. Aphrodite, for example—and she represents pleasure—was given preference, and so everything was thrown into turmoil" (qtd. in Ehrhart 14). In the sixth-century writings of Fulgentius, the three goddesses were already depicted as signifying

3 The theme's development during Antiquity and the Middle Ages is outlined in the studies of Young, Ehrhart, Stinton, and Damisch.

the three alternative ways of life offered to man. In his *Mythologies*, he set up a hierarchy of the different forms of human life: the contemplative, that is, the search for knowledge and truth, represented by Athena; the active, accumulating worldly riches and possessions, signified by Hera; and the voluptuous, seeking after lust, personified by Aphrodite. The tragedy of Paris was the flawed decision to choose the sensuous way of life instead of the contemplative, representing the most desired mode: "But the shepherd Paris . . . did a dull and stupid thing and, as is the way of wild beasts and cattle, turned his snail's eyes towards lust rather than selected virtue or riches" (Book 2.1). This allegorical interpretation became the norm for the next thousand years (Ehrhart 26).

Maintaining this interpretation of the myth, twelfth-century adaptations transformed the judgement into a medieval dream vision, in which Paris the knight fell asleep during a hunt—in some versions next to a well—and encountered the three goddesses in a dream.[4] These accounts often incorporated elements of the fairy-tale tradition, specifying the day of the events as Friday or the first of May, and including a hunt for a stag and featuring witches instead of goddesses, as, for instance, in Robert Mannyng's *Chronicle* of 1338. By the late Middle Ages, the Aristotelian positive interpretation of the active life challenged the negative view which surrounded the figure of Hera, yet the negative bias against the life form represented by Venus did not change until the fifteenth century.

A drastically new reading of the tale of the Judgement of Paris was offered by the Florentine Neoplatonist, Marsilio Ficino, who thought that Paris's fatal mistake was not that he chose Venus but that he selected only one form of life instead of finding the golden mean and mixing all three kinds of life in equal proportion. Adapting the story to the praise of the life of Lorenzo Medici, Ficino cited the myth to adumbrate the desired fusion of all three ways of life represented by the individual goddesses:

> No reasonable being doubts, that there are three kinds of life: the contemplative, the active and the pleasurable. And three roads of felicity have been chosen by men: wisdom, power and pleasure. . . . Our Lorenzo, however, instructed by the oracle of Apollo, has neglected none of the Gods. He saw the three, and all three he adored

4 The tradition first appeared in *De Excidio Troiae Historia* by Dares of Phrygia and was popularised by Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* (ca. 1155–1160) and later found its way into the influential book *Historia destructionis Troiae* (1287) by Guido delle Colonne.

> according to their merits; whence he received wisdom from Pallas, power from Juno, and from Venus grace and poetry and music. (qtd. in Wind 82)

The interpretation of Ficino not only emphasises the equal importance of the goddesses and the life forms they symbolise but also gives an added justification to the hitherto disdained goddess, Venus, by listing not just one but three of her gifts, which denote not voluptuous pleasure but forms of artistic excellence.

In England, the accounts of the Trojan War appeared in various medieval manuscripts as the belief of the Trojan descent of the British was widespread.[5] Most of these adaptations followed their continental counterparts in assimilating fairy-tale-like elements and transforming the story into a dream vision. However, in the sixteenth century, the new courtly need to use themes from classical mythology for the praise of princely virtues ushered in a novel use of the tale as a device of Tudor flattery. Furthermore, within the English context it became associated with ways of compliment female royalty, especially Queen Elizabeth I, in whose long reign of 45 years the motif acquired its own insular embellishments.

Adaptations for the Praise of a Royal Consort

As the Judgement of Paris motif became widespread in early modern Europe, a number of princely triumphs used its theme in *tableaux vivants* to honour the virtues of female royalty. A unique example of this is the 1496 entry of Joanna of Castile into Brussels. The three goddesses and their gifts were identified with Joanna, who thus appears as the "ideal and universal princess" sharing these with her husband and granting them to her people (Legaré 185). This royal entry is also exceptional as it is recorded in a manuscript illustrated by 63 watercolours; thus, it also offers a visual image of the Judgement of Paris scene which was acted out by real women in the nude (Legaré 183). The illustration shows a late medieval dream vision with Paris lying on the left and the three women in a garden with a fountain on the pageant stage flanked by Mercury on the right (Fig. 1). Although the captions accompanying the picture explicitly claim that Joanna unifies the three gifts of the deities, the illustration places Juno in a central position. While Venus is shown from the back

5 *Seege of Troy* (early fourteenth century), *Gest Historiale of the Destruction of Troy* (ca. 1375), *The Laud Troy Book* (1343–1400), John Lydgate *Troy Book* (1468–1471), Raoul Lefèvre *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, translated by William Caxton and printed as the first book in England in 1473.

and is about to leave the scene through a half-opened door, Juno, the wife of Jupiter, the overseer of childbearing and marriage, directly faces Paris, as an appropriate allusion to the position of Joanna of Castile. Pallas, the goddess associated with wisdom, is depicted as a future promise, moving towards Paris.

Seven years later, the Edinburgh entry of Margaret Tudor, bride of James IV of Scotland and daughter of Henry VII of England, also included the scene about the competition of three goddesses, thereby introducing the Burgundian tradition into the British context. The connection between the Tudor and the Aragon-Castile houses was tightened in 1501 when Catherine of Aragon, the sister of Joanna, arrived in England as the bride of Prince Arthur, son of Henry VII. It is thus conceivable that the iconography of the Castilian princess's entry served as an example to Margaret Tudor's royal procession into Edinburgh in 1503. In the very brief description of John Leland, the figure of Venus among the three deities is emphasised: Paris is given the "Apyll of Gold, for to gyffe to the most fayre of the Thre, wiche he gave to Venus" (Leland iv.289). As Gordon Kipling points out, the pageant's focus is on the king rather than on the consort. The choice of Paris parallels the right choice of James IV of Margaret as his bride and does not compliment either the king or the queen with the three gifts of the goddesses but singles out Margaret simply as more beautiful than Venus (Kipling 263).

The next Tudor triumph in which the Judgement of Paris story appeared was the 1533 coronation entry of Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII, the mother of Queen Elizabeth. Here the motif already signified the concept of the *triplex vita*, not highlighting one gift but emphasising the even value of all gifts and complimenting the bride as the bearer of all. The text of the shows was written by two humanist scholars, John Leland and Nicholas Udall, and three out of the six pageants had a classical theme instead of the traditional elements of previous triumphs (Anglo 247–260). Tracey Sowerby claims that this "overt classicism" was "intended to display England's cultural credentials," and wanted to impress "with the scale of England's artistic achievement" (387, 389). Certainly, the reception of the bride included the most musical performances among the Tudor entries, and it contained a profusion of both English and Latin poems. The scene of the Judgement of Paris also tapped into the classical vein of the new learning that was gathering momentum in England in the early sixteenth century. In addition to celebrating the Queen,

the coronation entry also hailed the country as a new Golden Age: "*Aurea nunc tandem sunt saecula reditta nobis.*"[6]

The Judgement of Paris pageant was acted out in English, thus enabling the spectators to easily engage with the story of awarding the Golden Ball. In this account, Paris does not commit the fatal mistake of choosing one goddess. He makes a good decision by noticing the fourth lady, Anne Boleyn, whom he deems to be the "Most worthie to have it of due to congruence, / As pereles in riches, wit and beautee" (Goldring et al. 5:40). Although there is a slight discrepancy in detail between the description of the show and the surviving text of the pageant, both draw attention to the praise of Anne Boleyn as representing all qualities of the goddesses. The general account of the day's happenings mentions a physical object symbolising these united qualities: a "bale of golde devise devyded in thre/ signifeing iij giftes whiche these iij goddesses gave to her/ that is to saye wysedome riches and felicitie" (Goldring et al. 5:14). In contrast to this, the text of the performance leaves the ball with Venus, and—acknowledging Anne's excellence—promises her a greater reward, an imperial crown she would be wearing as the wife of King Henry:

> The golden ball
> of price but small
> Have Venus shall
> The fair goddesse,
> Because it was
> To lowe and bace
> For your good grace
> And worthynes. (Goldring et al. 5:41–42)

This version makes Anne's worthiness contingent on her position as the king's consort. The performances that precede and follow the Paris scene also salute Anne as the bearer of a future heir to the throne and thus lessen the effect of her praise:

> Anna ita multa queas per saecula viuere felix,
> Henrico gratissima Regi.
> Anna ita laeta queas fuluam gestare coronam,
> Et patriam mox prole beare.[7]

6 "The Golden Age has returned to us at last" (Goldring et al. 5:39, 57).

7 "Anne, may you live happily for many generations, / Most dear to King Henry, / Anne, may you be happy to wear the golden crown / and soon bless your country with a son." (Goldring et al. 5:31, 54).

As opposed to this, in the panegyric of Queen Elizabeth, all flattery offered to her had to accommodate the fact that she was not a consort but the sole Monarch of her country.

Queen Elizabeth's Early Flattery

The myth of the Judgement of Paris surfaced again in the mid-1560s as part of the courtly discourse urging Queen Elizabeth I to marry. One of the biggest issues after Elizabeth Tudor ascended the throne in 1559 was to settle the question of the succession to the crown with a favourable marriage. The problem became especially acute after Elizabeth's near fatal bout of smallpox in 1562, after which successive parliaments petitioned the Queen to make a decision on the matter. While Elizabeth censured her parliaments not to "direct the head in so weighty a cause" (*Elizabeth I* 96), the indirect advice of her subjects found an outlet in the shows and entertainments presented to her and her court. The ancient story of the choice between the gifts of the goddesses lent itself well to such a discussion of the blessings of marriage. The device also fitted well into the emerging courtly pastoral tradition. The old moralising interpretation that denounced Paris's choice of Venus as symbolising sensuous love and lust, gave way—as in her mother's coronation entry—to the pastoral allegory where love became equated with the aesthetic qualities of poetry, music, and art. However, the Queen had to be addressed as a sovereign of her country, not just as a desirable bride but as a mighty and prudent monarch. The choice of either Venus, the goddess of love, or Juno, the goddess of marriage, had to be compounded with qualities that foregrounded the flattery of Elizabeth as the rightful ruler with virtues fitting a king. Thus, panegyrists of this period used figures to synthesise the various virtues represented by the deities and also foregrounded the aspect pertaining to marriage.

One of the earliest occasions in which the Queen was complimented with the device of deserving the golden apple of the classical myth was a marriage oration acted out at Lincoln's Inn in 1566. The Inns of Court together with the two universities were the institutions where students received a fully humanistic education by the 1560s, and which contributed the most to the literary output—especially of drama—of its generation (Winston 41). The topical issue of the succession question also infiltrated the themes of the revels staged at the Inns, and the topic of the competition of Juno and Diana became a frequently used allegory, featuring,

for instance, in a masque staged at Gray's Inn in 1565 (Winston 196–198). A year later, the Lincoln's Inn performance of a marriage oration by Thomas Proud at the wedding of Frances Radcliffe, the sister of the Earl of Sussex, was inspired by the Judgement of Paris myth, yet it harked back to a medieval tradition in its frame story of being a dream vision and in its "recitative" form of a lengthy speech that served as an embellished explanation to the maskers' costumes, gift giving, and an excuse for the following dance (Pincombe 351). Its old-fashioned form of a dream in which goddesses send presents to the bride interestingly mixes with the new attitude towards the praise of Venus and her beauty with nearly a hundred lines devoted to her blazon within a poem of 593 lines. Venus is the first to send her gift to the bride: the golden apple she once received from Paris. However, while the commission is being carried out faithfully by the orator, he excuses himself, as a more beautiful woman—the Queen whose presence was not expected at the wedding—should have really deserved the prize. Thus, Elizabeth is the rightful claimant of the golden apple solely on the basis of beauty and is directly associated with Venus and love. Yet, for the first time in the Elizabethan context of the story, a fourth goddess, Diana appears, whose beauty is described as more active than that of Venus: it is "full of blude," as "huntynge kept here coloure good," and "exercise preservethe healthe" (Pincombe 337). Her inclusion—although some aspects of the panegyric allude to the royal guest—is not likely to be a direct reference to the Queen, as she sends a surprising present: a naked picture of herself.

A few months later, the Queen visited Oxford, another centre of learning, where her reception included shows, dramatic performances, academic lectures, and disputations, as well as poems written to her in Latin and Greek. Her progress to the university was part of an important task to secure the religious allegiance and political loyalty of her scholars, but her entertainment was also used by her hosts to offer counsel on the issues of marriage and succession (Keenan 98). However, the Latin poem written by Henry Bust, who welcomed the Queen at Magdalen College on the fourth day of her visit, makes no allusion to this question. The verse flatters the Queen as a monarch of exceeding virtues, possessing royal dignity, wisdom, and beauty and calls her a fourth goddess as well as the only goddess (*dea sola*), applying a truly classical trope of praise. The use of such superlatives based on Roman mythology was neither problematic nor sacrilegious within the boundaries of academia. Yet, when it became more widespread in the 1580s, it aroused anxieties both in the Reformed and Catholic religious circles. For instance, the printer of *A Revelation of the True Minerva* (1582)

—the play of Thomas Blenerhasset for the Inner Temple—took specific pains to soothe the sensibilities of his readers about any reference to the Queen as a goddess. In the play's introduction to the "gentle reader," he set out to clear up certain points that "may induce thy doubtfull minde into divers iudgementes" and explained to the godly Protestant readers: "when any one whom the heathen for his worthinesse woorshipped as a god is rehearsed, not the man, but the virtue which made him of so great estimation is to be regarded" (Blenerhasset). On the part of Roman Catholic critics in 1588, Cardinal William Allen attacked the Queen for her "excessive praises that her favourers and flatteres now give unto her" and for "too much delytinge in the peoples praises & acclamations, and for not giving glorie to God" (Allen B5r). The Oxford scholars, though, had no reservations about applying the language of pagan myth to their sovereign.

In 1569, Hans Eworth also used the theme as his topic for the allegorical portrait of the Queen, which was supplemented on its frame by a Latin poem claiming that Elizabeth exceeded the virtues of the deities: "*Adfuit Elizabeth Iuno perculsa refugit / Obsupuit Pallas erubuitq[ue] Venus*."[8] The oil painting (Fig. 2)—known as *Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses*—goes beyond this simple conceit, by focusing attention on the central figure, Juno, who seems to be beckoning towards Venus, who is not blushing for shame, but who is seated calmly with Cupid amid white and red roses, the symbols of the Tudor dynasty. The canvas not only flatters the Queen by placing her on an elevated platform above the plane of the allegorical landscape with the prize, the golden ball/orb in her hand, but at the same time urges her towards the blessings of love and marriage. The composition of the canvas also recalls the setting of early Elizabethan drama in private halls, where not only the theatrical action of the stage aspires for the attention of an audience but also the royal presence of the monarch who is flattered in a language as fictitious and imaginative as the stage performance.

John Lyly gives a new twist to the story in his Latin poem "Iovis Elizabeth" published as part of *Euphues and his England* (1580) which introduces a second contest among the three goddesses for the possession of Queen Elizabeth, a nymph of "divine majesty" (Scragg 356). Instead of a human, the decision is given to Jupiter who keeps Elizabeth to himself—"*Elizabetha mea est*"[9]—as she possesses a majesty similar to Jove's might. While the earlier allegory remained explicitly feminine,

8 "Elizabeth then came, And, overwhelmed, Queen Juno took flight: / Pallas was silenced: Venus blushed for shame" (qtd. in Strong 65).

9 "Elizabeth is mine" (Scragg 357).

the panegyrist, by introducing Jupiter with whom Queen Elizabeth was identified, created a masculine, kingly identity for her. The conceit managed to unite the feminine attributes signified by the three goddesses with the masculine principle of supreme authority. This slight change of emphasis hints at the shift in the language of flattery of some courtiers who by this time strongly disputed the relevance and appropriateness of the marriage of their 47-year-old sovereign. As marriage negotiations were proceeding with Francis, Duke of Alençon between 1579 and 1581, the voices of opposition to it mounted and discussions about the dangers of any match compared to the possible advantage of the Queen bearing an heir to the throne tilted public opinion towards favouring a single Queen rather than a married one.

In Lyly's *Euphues and his England*, "Iovis Elizabeth" is emphasised by setting it apart from its context by various formal features: the change of language from English to Latin, the change of its genre from prose to poetry, and the change of its typeface from black letter to Roman type (Lyly 125–126). Furthermore, the poem is not a single unit: the first 36 lines relating the events of the contest and the judgement are followed by two lines set apart as the concluding pith. Although there is no illustration added, its structure is very similar to the verse lines that appeared in contemporary emblem books in which a general idea or concept was set out by means of an image, a descriptive verse, and a motto. As the poem is appended to the treaties "Euphues' Glass for Europe" outlining the excellence of England and her Queen, it may be interpreted as an emblem functioning as a cumulative allegory of the country and her monarch. As Lyly's eulogy of Elizabeth in the "Euphues' Glass for Europe" contains the most varied figures of speech current for the praise of the Queen, the placement of the Judgement of Paris tale in such privileged position in the work signifies that in 1580 the motif was still relatively rare. Also, its separation from the descriptive praise of the Queen shows that Lyly realised the theme's dramatic capabilities which were fitter for an isolated poetic flourish than a straightforward eulogy. George Peele's choice within a few years to work the tale into a five-act play could have been influenced by similar incentives.

Diana and the Later Years

During the later reign of Queen Elizabeth, the Judgement of Paris trope was extended with a fourth goddess, Diana, to suit the emerging Virgin Queen cult that aimed to justify Elizabeth's unmarried status. Diana, the virgin goddess of the hunt

and the Moon, was only one classical figure whose feminine attributes praised Elizabeth in early shows. In the 1566 masque of Tomas Proud, Diana was used for generally complimenting the virtue of chastity, but in the mid-1580s, it was specifically associated with Queen Elizabeth. By the last decade of the century, Diana had become a central element of the courtly praise of the Queen, resulting in such extravagances as laying out an artificial pond in crescent form for her visit at Elvetham in 1591. In France, the analogy of flattering a queen by calling her Diana/Phoebe/the Moon as the consort of the king/Phoebus/the Sun was in full swing during most of the sixteenth century, encompassing the reigns of Henry II and his three sons, Francis II, Charles IX, and Henry III, and it was even applied to flatter the mistresses of the king (Berry 44). However, in England, the Diana motif emerged as a praise of virginity, a parallel to Elizabeth's female court, emphasising the combination of majesty and femininity. For instance, in the late 1590s, it was this context that inspired the plaster frieze representing Diana and her court in the woods surrounding the royal court-of-arms in the High Great Chamber of Hardwick Hall.

The Arraignment of Paris (1584) by George Peele represents the possibilities of adapting the Judgement of Paris theme to a full-blown play. The mode of transformation of the tale into royal panegyric is well exemplified by Peele's case, as he wrote a lengthy poem about the same subject during his years at Oxford. *A Tale of Troy* (ca. 1579) is markedly inspired by the university context, as Paris's description, both as a simple shepherd and as one who next to piping songs "weth his wits on bookes" (B1r), alludes to the new literary interest in the pastoral. The condemnation of Paris's choice of Venus—while following the medieval moralizing outlook—also hints at the lewd morals of students, the topic of many contemporary works:

> led away with ouer vaine conceite,
> And surfeiting belike on pleasures baite,
> As men are wont to let the better goe
> And choose the worse . . . . (B1v)

Compared to this, *The Arraignment of Paris* is conceived in a very different vain: neither Paris nor his choice is condemned, the ancient dispute of the goddesses is resolved through the twist in the plot where the pastoral setting of shepherds turns into the Elizabethan world of royal pageantry, and a fourth goddess, Diana appears.

Peele's drama works on many layers: the idyllic pastoral world of shepherds reflecting fashionable forms of courtly entertainment (solo songs and dancing); the mythical

story of the Judgement compounded with early modern pageant-like devices representing the gifts of the gods (a Tree of Gold, a masque-like military march, and a vision of Helen singing an Italian madrigal); the scholarly defence of Paris of his choice in the mode of a university disputation with the result of the Gods acquitting Paris; and the layer of Queen Elizabeth's cult language in which the new judgement is handed to Diana, who chooses the Queen. The role of Diana is central throughout the play: the play's first act is set in the woods of Diana, the quarrel of the goddesses occurs in the bower of Diana, and the role of being the judge in the quarrel of the goddesses is assigned to Diana. It is in the final act that Diana refers to a "peereles nymphe" that governs "an ancient seat of kinges, a seconde *Troie* / Ycompast rounde with a commodious sea: / Her people are ycleeped [called] Angeli" (A3r). The description not only promotes the virtues of Elizabeth but also the excellence of the whole country, which she calls *Elizium*. England appears as a place where the Golden Age of ancients has returned, a country "[u]nder the clymate of the milder heaven," where "seldome lights *Ioves* angrie thunderbolt," and "whystling windes make musick 'mong the trees" (A3r). The praise of the Queen unites the humanistic trope about the equal possession of all the gifts of the three goddesses and the Queen's virgin/Diana cult:

> In state Queene *Iunos* peere, for power in armes,
> And vertues of the mind *Minervaes* mate:
> As fayre and lovely as the queene of love:
> As chast as *Dian* in her chast desires. (E3r–v)

The instruction within the text specifies that "a figure of the Queene" should appear as Diana starts her monologue and there is a further reference to "the state being in place" as the Sisters of Fate enter, and then three more times the presence of the Queen is indicated: the Fates lay down their gifts "at the Queenes feete," Clotho explicitly "speaketh to the Queene," and at the end of the play Diana "delivereth the ball of golde to the Queenes owne hands" (E3r, E4r–v). As the title page of the published text states, this pastoral was "presented before the Queenes Maiestie" so the instructions could have indicated a shift of attention from the stage towards the Queen's throne and an active involvement of Elizabeth in the plot of the play. Such interaction of Queen Elizabeth with the actors of a pageant was quite common; for instance, she was drawn into the plot of the shows at her coronation entry when delivered an English Bible in 1559 (*The Passage* C4v). She was also

well aware of the theatrical nature of her appearances and remarked in her speech of November 1586, "for we princes, I tell you, are set on stages in the sight and view of all the world duly observed" (*Elizabeth I* 194). As the seating of the Queen was very often on the stage itself, *The Arraignment of Paris* was easily transformed into a pageant-like performance, a stylised tribute to Elizabeth, resulting in one of the wittiest devices of flattery of its age.

Peele's *The Arraignment of Paris* sets the ancient myth in a world of art, poetry, and grace with a profusion of songs and song forms scattered throughout the play. It echoes the atmosphere of Spenser's novel collection of eclogues, *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579), and the work's significance partially derives from its positioning of the Judgement of Paris theme as an integral part of this new literary approach. Furthermore, the theme's combination with the pastoral tradition contributed to the emerging patriotic discourse of the English in the 1580s—ensuing from the increasing threat of Catholic Spain—which resulted in the praise of England as a new Golden Age and her monarch as the patron of this learning. Two years before the quarto of the play was printed, but perhaps contemporary with its performance at court, the Hungarian scholar Stephen Parmenius of Buda published a Latin poem *De navigatione* (1582) which included a similar encomium of the Queen's virtues and her country's academic excellence as proofs of the recurrence of the fabled Golden Age (Stróbl, "A Vision" 207–215). It was also this equation of the Queen with learning that prompted Queen Elizabeth's flattery in George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589). In the first chapter of the first book, under the heading "What a Poet and Poesie is, and who may be worthily sayd the most excellent Poet of our time," the Queen is flattered with the conceit of uniting the gifts of the *four* goddesses:

> But you (Madam), my most Honored and Gracious . . . your selfe being already, of any that I know in our time, the most excellent Poet. Forsooth by your Princely purse-favours and countenance, making in maner what ye list, the poore man rich, the lewd well learned, the coward couragious, and vile both noble and valiant. Then for imitation no lesse, your person as a most cunning counterfaitor lively representing *Venus* in countenance, in life *Diana*, *Pallas* for governement, and *Iuno* in all honour and regall magnificence. (C1v)

By the late sixteenth century, the pastoral setting, the leisurely life of shepherds—their singing, piping, and lovemaking—served as a means to represent, idealise, comment on, or even criticise the court. It became a learned language

of disguise as its poetical conceits were not perceived as a threat or challenge to the status of the established order. It was also a suitable medium—as Louis Montrose argues—for the "well educated but humbly born young men" to advertise themselves and to sharpen their pen in the courtly exercise of writing in the pastoral mode (433). By the 1590s, the Judgement of Paris theme had lost its fresh appeal and served young talents as a poetical exercise to show off their skill to a wider audience. Both Richard Barnfield's *Cynthia* (1595) and Francis Sabies's *Pan's Pipe* (1595) belong to this category where the application of the classical trope and cult-like, formalised praise of the Queen are embedded in the wider context of shepherds and their pastoral trappings.

Barnfield's *Cynthia* is an experiment to call attention to its author by exploiting the possibilities inherent in the genre and—at least in its verse form—imitating one of its greatest exponents, Edmund Spenser. In his introduction to the readers, Barnfield acknowledges his debt to the author of *The Faerie Queene*: "Thus, hoping you will beare with my rude conceit of *Cynthia*, (if for no other cause, yet for that it is the first imitation of the verse of that excellent Poet, Maister Spencer, in his *Fayrie Queene*)" (A3v). Francis Sabie also used his poem as a kind of debut, and in his foreword "to all youthfull Gentlemen, or Apprentises, favourers of the diuine Arte of sense-delighting Poesie," he asked for encouragement: " . . . my sole and humble request is, that you would not forthwith proceed in condigne iudgement against me, but with the wise Faustus conceale your opinion, which doing, you shall animate, otherwise altogether discourage a young beginner" (A2r). Thus, in both pieces the function of the Judgement of Paris motif is formal, lacks originality, and openly exploits the value of imitating earlier, well-received literary works.

Barnfield's poem used the old convention of a dream vision in introducing his theme. The poet narrator is summoned to the arraignment of Paris's judgement, the new arbitrator is Jove, and the apple is awarded to Queen Elizabeth, whose encomium directly reflects the influence of Spenser:

> In Westerne world amids the Ocean maine,
> In compleat Vertue shining like Sunne,
> In great Renowne a maiden Queene doth raigne,
> Whose royal Race, in Ruine first begun,
> Till Heavens bright Lamps dissolve shall nere bee
> In whose faire eies Love linckt with vertues been,
> In everlasting Peace and Union.

> Which sweet Consort in her full well beseeme,
> Of Bounty, and of Beauty fairest Fayrie Queene. (B4v)

The Diana context is introduced by placing Paris's judgement occurring on a hunt with Diana, though no further elaboration of the motif is made. Surprisingly, amid the classical context, Barnfield finishes the praise of the Queen on a Protestant note calling her "A second *Iudith* in Ierusalem" (B5r).

A similar religious overtone is detectable in Sabie's work. The third eclogue in his *Pan's Pipe* employs the convention of the song contest among shepherds, where Thestilis's ode tells the story of the three goddesses. The object of the competition—as in John Lyly's "Iovis Elizabeth"—is not the golden apple, but the deities vie for the possession of Eliza (Queen Elizabeth). Paris is not mentioned; the judge of the dispute is Jove, who claims Eliza for himself. However, in the description of Eliza's virtues, Sabie turns to a Protestant rhetoric creating a rather motley assembly of different figures to flatter the Queen. Jove acknowledges God's grace in Eliza's excellence ("Oh what great and huge miracles Iehovah / Aiding, she hath wrought here" [D4r]) and calls her a new Moses ("That Moses which her people through the sea led . . . with *manna, nectar,* manie yeares she fed us" [D4r]). Sabie even references topical issues, such as the aggression of the "Spanish armies" and the threat of the "Romish Prelate" (D4r).

Sabie's work offers an additional comment on the theme of Paris's Judgement. It includes a second "judgement" scene, where the old shepherd, Faustus is asked to determine which song of the shepherds was the best. Yet Faustus, instead of making a choice, dismisses the idea of a competition altogether: "But which of you made best harmonie, for me to tell you, / Were but a needlesse thing, t' wold breed but brauling among you / Then let this suffice, you have al three pip'd very wel now" (D4v). Faustus not only fails to choose Elizabeth's panegyric as the best song but his attitude is critical about the concept of arbitrating. His non-decision pronounces a judgement on the material he has listened to, on the insignificance, the light and trivial nature of the songs, which included also the flattery of the Queen.

Conclusion

The motif of the Judgement of Paris became a prominent device of royal flattery in Elizabethan England and remained a continuous source of inspiration for

courtly entertainment. As panegyrists of Queen Elizabeth applied the theme again and again in their courtly discourse, the changes of the details highlight the shift in the political agenda and literary taste of poets and dramatist. Though springing from a common ancient source, each adaptation thus represented an individual case with a topical agenda.

In 2012, a new portrait of the Queen appeared on the art market that reworked the 1569 oil canvas by Hans Eworth *Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses.* The watercolour, attributed to the miniaturist Isaac Oliver (Fig. 3), followed the composition of the earlier work but introduced slight changes of detail, thus altering the previous interpretation of the classic tale. Working more than twenty years later, perhaps around 1590, the painting is significantly different in its aesthetic and programme.[10] While the later work preserved the previous canvas's masque-like composition—the allegorical environment and the courtly hall are placed next to each other—it is more pastoral with an emphasis on an open countryside, illustrating a Golden Age. By adding one more lady-in-waiting and increasing the size occupied by the Elizabethan figures, the historical and fictitious worlds became equated through their balanced treatment. The work also emphasises the majesty of Queen Elizabeth as a single ruler by placing a halo-like portable canopy above her head and by expanding the size of the golden ball and the golden surface of her dress. Therefore, though using an early work to copy, this depiction reflects the contemporary tropes of praise in the last decade of Elizabeth's reign.

While capturing the imagination of several generations of courtly panegyrists, the mode and application of the allegorical tale varied during the long reign of the Queen. Adopting a Humanistic discourse where beauty was as commendable a quality as intellectual skills and worldly power, it developed into a means to praise not only the Queen but also her country. Whereas in the early years, the emphasis given to the individual goddesses varied according to the courtly agenda whether to promote the idea of the marriage of Elizabeth or not, in the later years, as Elizabeth's marriage possibilities were waning, a fourth goddess, Diana was introduced to flatter the ageing unmarried Queen's "eternal" virginity.

10 For a detailed study on the subject see Hackett.

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FIGURES

Fig. 1. *Joanna of Castile's Entry into Brussels, 1496* © Kupferstichkabinett. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, MS 78 D5, fol. 57.

Fig. 2. *Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses*, 1569, by Hans Eworth. Windsor Castle (RCIN 403446) Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2018.

Fig. 3. *Queen Elizabeth I* ("Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses"), c. 1590, attributed to Isaac Oliver Portrait Gallery (NPG 6947) © National Portrait Gallery, London.

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Misbelief, Marlovian Promises, and Planets

GERGŐ DÁVID

Abstract: The paper argues that Marlowe presents a sceptical worldview on religious and social conduct in his plays. However, his scepticism does not affect his views of the natural world, which is represented by the planetary influences. The ability to exert one's will over the world is called into question and substituted by the deterministic power of the planets. The paper is concerned with the idea of promises in terms of human interaction from various perspectives, such as religious and political points of view. Both religious and secular promises are either void or turn on themselves. In my reading of Marlowe's plays (The Jew of Malta, Doctor Faustus, Tamburlaine Parts I and II), *notions of promises and scepticism are strongly intertwined, which might help us understand why Marlowe's works are seen as the products of a cynical mind with atheistic traits.*

Virtually all critical work on Christopher Marlowe mentions his atheism, subversiveness and strange sense of humour. His alleged atheism is usually discussed in connection with Richard Baines' infamous letter, Thomas Kyd's extorted accusations, and his cruel and/or defiant characters, such as Tamburlaine, Faustus and Barabas. However, "atheism" is a slippery term: as David Riggs convincingly argues, atheists in Marlowe's time were those "who rejected the immortality of the soul, the existence of heaven and hell, and the operations of Providence" (46). Marlowe's characters seem to have an ambiguous relationship with all of these, and Baines' letter also suggests dissent from contemporary orthodox beliefs, even though it is very likely to have been written in bad faith: since his protagonist died under very dubious circumstances, it was in his best interest to make a scapegoat of Marlowe, whom no one should pity or mourn. Marlowe's subversiveness is also

often paired with theories about his supposed homosexuality and it is examined with respect to his surprisingly sympathetic treatment of Edward II or his apparent obsession with characters who turn social norms and conventions upside down. Marlowe seems to be a playwright who resists easy categorisation and his sense of humour serves as useful illustration for that. He has been described as a "writer singularly devoid of humour" (Dowden 108), as a person with no "particle of real humour in him" (Hudson 115), and according to some, a sense of humour was definitely not his "strong point" (Ward 119), and when it is still granted, it is often described as "coarse" ("Unsigned Article" 191), "scatological" (Hopkins 107), "mordant" (Honan 274), or "sardonic" (Deats 195). The varied perceptions of his sense of humour serve as indicators of his mixture of comic and tragic genres, but also of his mocking treatment of serious subjects. This paper claims that these observations are not without justification and the impression that Marlowe scholars get has to do with the playwright's treatment of free will, which stems from a basically sceptical attitude and pervades Marlowe's *oeuvre*. It is this Marlovian scepticism—sometimes infused even with cynicism—that seems to reinforce our notions about Marlowe being a subversive atheist with a derisive sense of humour.

Firstly, I shall clarify how the terms scepticism and misbelief are used here. Marlovian scepticism seems to me a mixture of Pyrrhonian scepticism, characterised by anti-dogmatism and the suspension of judgement concerning knowledge, and modern scepticism, understood as "thoroughgoing doubt about unproven and especially nonmaterial claims" (Lehrich 75). Dramas usually investigate cultural values, language, and how these relate to social practice as well as reality. However, Pyrrhonian scepticism's tendency to suspend judgement is not present in all the plays of the period. Marlowe's plays are different in this respect, because Pyrrhonian seems to be an adjective applicable to him and all his plays. However, Pyrrhonism leaves ample space for beliefs which Marlowe also questions in his plays.[1] From this questioning stems our perception of him as an atheist.[2] Similarly to his sense of humour, his scepticism and atheism are impossible to fit into a single unified category, since they are essentially mixed and do not always necessitate the *complete* lack of beliefs—either in a spiritual sense or in a practical sense (that is, believing others).

1 According to Christopher Lehrich, "many Renaissance sceptics can be labelled 'fideists'" (75). Therefore, while Renaissance scepticism is not incompatible with fideism, Marlowe's scepticism is.

2 As Michael Hunter claims, "atheism" was used in a variety of ways, from denoting a disbeliever in the modern sense to someone who did not conform to the beliefs held by a given community

Marlowe's scepticism can be observed in relation to three major topics: religion, politics and social conduct. When these topics emerge in Marlowe's texts, one has to realise that they are often treated in key dramatic situations in which promises are made by misbelieving—often sceptical and cynical—characters. "Misbelief" in this essay is understood as misplaced and/or erroneous belief. Being in a state of misbelief with respect to promises is also a prevalent feature of Marlowe's plays. The title of this essay suggests that promises are treated in some special way by Marlowe, hence the adjective Marlovian. My understanding of a Marlovian promise is quite simple: it is a promise not intended to be kept and one which ironically turns into its own parody.[3] Calling this kind of promise Marlovian is justified by the large number of such promises. J. L. Austin, the father of speech-act theory, called promises similar to these "hollow," and the act of promising is considered to be a case of "abuse," as opposed to cases when I am, for example, not in a position to promise at all. In the latter cases, the promise "misfires" and it is "void," "empty," "without effect" (Austin 16). We must see that in the case of Marlovian "hollow" promises, the one who promises—in Austin's words—"*does* promise: the promise here is not even void, though it is given in *bad faith.* His [the person's, *her*] utterance is perhaps misleading, probably deceitful and doubtless wrong, but it is not a lie or a misstatement (to the effect that he does intend to do something)" (Austin 11). What that "something" is remains equivocal until action backs up one of the meanings of that promise.

The word "misbelief" appears in *The Jew of Malta* three times in some form at crucial points. The term is attached to the protagonist Barabas himself, his daughter Abigail, and the Turks. In the first instance, Friar Jacomo confronts Barabas: "Barabas, although thou art in misbelief / And wilt not see thine own afflictions, / Yet let thy daughter be no longer blind" (1.2.353–355).[4] From a Christian point of view, Barabas is a misbeliever, because he clearly acts on certain beliefs, but these beliefs are not what the Christians consider true. In this respect, the Friar is in double-misbelief,

(e.g. Catholics, Machiavellians, Epicureans, or even Elizabeth I), that is, atheism might have been a simple term of abuse or a serious theological charge. The widely recognised characteristics of atheists are also applicable to Marlowe and his characters: openly promoting atheism by questioning orthodox views, scornfulness, scepticism, Machiavellianism, anti-clericalism, just to mention a few.

3 For example, Faustus misbelieves that magic can promise earthly riches and glory, and to his immense dissatisfaction they *only* guarantee exactly that and not what he really needs. In the final scene of *The Jew of Malta,* Barabas believes Ferneze's equivocal "Take what I promised thee" and is killed by his own device.

4 All quotations from Marlowe's plays are from Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays.*

because Barabas believes in exactly what the Friars turn out to be after—money. Marlowe seems to efface the differences between Christian and Jew, which points to religious relativism—and potentially the kind of broad sense of atheism mentioned earlier. However, the Friar is also in misbelief in a more practical sense concerning both Abigail and Barabas, who happen to deceive him in that very moment. Even though he calls attention to the blindness of Abigail, he does not recognise his own blindness, which is one of the many ironic occurrences in the play that lay the foundation for the notion of Marlowe's sardonic humour. The second occurrence of the word "misbelief" appears when Ferneze breaks his promise to those "barbarous, misbelieving Turks" (2.2.45). Here, too, the word is used to justify the speaker's hostility towards the Other. Furthermore, Barabas and the Turks are linked together through the same concept, which is not accidental, since Jews and Turks were rumoured to be financially complicit (Siemon ix). Misbelief appears for the third time in a remarkably different context, because now it is Abigail who calls *herself* a misbeliever: "My sinful soul, alas, hath paced too long / The fatal labyrinth of misbelief, / Far from the Son that gives eternal life" (3.3.63–65). The difference is twofold: on the one hand, stylistically, it appears in a more poetic form (loaded with vivid imagery of the separation of light and darkness) than the previous two, which evokes sympathy towards the speaker as the audience gains insight to her inner conflict. On the other hand, the word is used by the speaker to describe herself, which distinguishes her from the other characters, who cannot recognise their own misbeliefs. With the help of these differences, Abigail is elevated above the rest of the characters. However, before we mistakenly slip into idealizing her, it should be mentioned that she remains complicit with her father's previous actions by concealing them—only her impending death prompts her to reveal *some* of the truth—and by withholding the Christian virtue of forgiveness. The contents of the letter are not revealed to the audience, but it is quite probable that she does not fully reveal her own part in stealing the money. The Friars seem to learn about Barabas' wealth when they confront him, so Abigail might have remained silent about her involvement in those matters. Even her conversion falls under suspicion since it does not issue from genuine belief but from her disappointment in everyone else ("I perceive there is no love on earth, / Pity in Jews, nor piety in Turks" [3.3.47–48]); it can be taken as her revenge on her father. To emphasise the ambiguity around her, we might even hear

a slightly distorted "beguile" in her name.[5] Her name elicits further irony, as it means "the father's joy." Once again, we witness Marlowe using his frequently employed strategy of effacing differences between religious denominations—here Christians and Jews—by showing a quasi-virtuous Jew joining the hypocritical Christians.

Misbelief serves as an indicator of different factions that treat each other with contempt. However, misbelief also gives rise to scepticism, since it is obvious that the Other—who is apparently in misbelief from the perspective of one faction—might share different values and convictions.[6] Therefore, the Others—in this case the Jew and the Turks—are a potential threat. When Abigail renounces her faith, she becomes a misbeliever from Barabas' perspective and turns into a source of danger for him: "For she that varies from me in belief / Gives great presumption that she loves me not" (2.4.10–11). This passage shows that her religious conversion translates into other domains of everyday life, notably that of the father-daughter relationship, which implicitly challenges patriarchal authority. Now we can see a stereotypical Marlovian feature: the defiance of social norms presented in a way that amuses and captivates the audience, thus turning them into accomplices—even if they disapprove of the transgressive action.[7]

Marlowe also battles current social norms on another front. He undermines the belief in the power of words by making all his characters break their promises. The first time a promise is mentioned in the play, it has to do with religion:

> Thus trolls our fortune in by land and sea,
> And thus we on every side are enriched.
> These are the blessings promised to the Jews,
> And herein was old Abram's happiness. (1.1.101–104)

Unsurprisingly, the religious promise mentioned by the Jew is conceptually connected to material riches and treasure. It seems more than an early modern stereotype

5 I am grateful for this suggestion to Professor Tzachi Zamir. The modern pronunciation of the name is not very far from the early modern pronunciation of "beguile" /bɪˈgəıl/ as given by David Crystal (51).

6 These values and conventions are always suspect from an outsider's perspective; however, the dramatic form encourages the audience to examine their own sets of beliefs. In the atmosphere of early modern England, ridden with political and social anxieties, the questioning of the conventional social norms and values might be taken as a further example of Marlowe's subversiveness.

7 Although Abigail's conversion is darkened by the aforementioned reasons, it probably seems virtuous to a modern audience. However, disobeying the patriarch was considered to be a more serious

about the covetous Jew; religion is presented with materialism side by side from the very beginning and, therefore, it is shown to be a hypocritical institution. Not only are the Jews and Turks ridiculed but also the Christians. In addition to Ferneze's overall Machiavellian policies, the whole of Christianity is discovered to be a scheming political institution by no other than Machiavelli himself: "Though some speak openly against my books, / Yet will they read me and thereby attain / To Peter's chair" (Prologue 10–12). The honesty of the nuns and the humility and simplicity of the friars are also called into question throughout the play. It seems that there is no place for genuine belief or trust in Marlowe's Malta. Trust is undermined early on in the play:

> It is no sin to deceive a Christian,
> For they themselves hold it a principle
> Faith is not to be held with heretics.
> But all are heretics that are not Jews. (2.3.310–313)

Even though these are the words of Barabas, they contain the opinion of the Christians who seem to act according to this principle in their dealings with the Turks.[8]

With broken promises, misplaced belief in religion and hypocritical social conduct—the symptoms of a world in crisis and of Marlovian scepticism—it is difficult to find reassurance, stability and fixed points to which one could cling. The underlying reason for the instability of these concepts is their strong reliance on monetary value. Barabas' belief is based on the divine promise of treasures, his love for Abigail manifests itself in her ability to take back his wealth, Ferneze's promises always involve some kind of payment (the tribute to the Turks, the bag of money offered to Barabas in the last act), and Lodowick identifies Abigail with a diamond which can be bought or sold, like a slave at the market. Concepts, ideas, feelings, even people may be given a price tag, which is best exemplified by Barabas' joyful exclamations when Abigail throws his treasures out of the window:

> O my girl,
> My gold, my fortune, my felicity,
> . . . . . .
> O girl, O gold, O beauty, O my bliss! (2.1.46–47, 54)

transgressive act—similar to treason on a domestic scale—at the time.

8 The same principle is followed by the Christians in *Tamburlaine The Great, Part II*, 2.1.33–41.

However, as money changes hands, these values are deflated by the exchange itself, thus they become unstable and fluctuating. The didactic and orthodox moral is that believing in promises made over monetary transactions is misbelief with tragic results. However, true to the Marlovian sentiment, there is no alternative moral framework offered. Ferneze wins the game not because he has the moral high ground but because he is the more successful Machiavel and his final hypocritical moralisation—"let due praise be given / Neither to fate nor fortune, but to heaven" (5.5.122–123)—identifies him as the Prologue's Machiavel.

A similarly unstable world is shown in *Doctor Faustus*. At the beginning of the play, a similar promise is introduced: "O, what a world of profit and delight, / Of power, of honour, of omnipotence / Is promised to the studious artisan!" (1.1.55–57). Like in *The Jew of Malta*, the idea of a promise is associated with earthly pleasures, such as power, honour, profit and delight. However, this play sounds the depth of another matter. Whereas *The Jew* focused on these as strictly material, fiscal aspects of promises, *Faustus* is more concerned with intellectual self-prostitution and—more importantly from our point of view—religious promises. Although Barabas mentions the Biblical promise to "old Abram," the vast majority of the promises in *The Jew* is made by people. In *Faustus*, the promises are not made by anyone, rather Faustus takes those promises granted by magic or by Mephistopheles.

In *The Jew of Malta* we have already seen Marlowe pointing out the fissures in society and its hypocritical practice as strategies inherent to politicised religion. In *Faustus*, however, an even more overtly sceptical voice is heard. First of all, supernatural agency is represented as an oppressive, malicious power. The Prologue's famous lines allude to the malevolent nature of the heavens: "And melting heavens conspired his overthrow" (22). However, it is important to note that the heavens might not mean the Christian heaven but the celestial spheres. Thus, Marlowe obscures the difference between the religious and the astronomical, proto-scientific concepts. Later on, it becomes clear that Faustus is determined to fall: the "stars that reigned at [his] nativity, / Whose influence hath allotted death and hell" (5.2.81–82) for him are responsible for his downfall and not only is he conspired against, but he also tries to further his own damnation. Benevolent divine agency is notably under-represented in the play: the only good characters seem powerless and are not heeded by Faustus, since he fails to listen to the Good Angel. The Old Man's advice is also ignored. Divine agency is presented as a Machiavellian force engaged in a contest for Faustus' soul that seems to be a matter of supernatural warfare for power.

Strictly speaking, what is at stake is not Faustus' bliss but his worth as an addition to the kingdom of either God or Lucifer. It is explicitly revealed by Mephistopheles that Lucifer's purpose in obtaining the soul of Faustus is to "[e]nlarge his kingdom" (2.1.40). The distinction between the spiritual and the secular realm disappears in the play.

The description of the relationship between Faustus and Mephistopheles highlights the ambiguous nature of their relationship in which it is unclear who the servant is. The pact ensures that Mephistopheles must serve Faustus, but it is apparent throughout the play that Mephistopheles is the master, primarily on the grounds that he is the one who can perform the tricks and "miracles." This ambiguity further obscures the issue of responsibility, that is, whether it is Faustus who is liable for his fate or outside forces. However, Marlowe's treatment of the subject is not entirely unique. A few years later, King James discusses the same conundrum in his *Daemonologie*: "How can that be true, yt any men being specially adicted to his [i.e. the Devil's] service, can be his commanders?" (bk. 2, ch. 3). This question about the contest for power might be rhetorical for James, but for Marlowe, such a mixture of raw political power and religion fits his cynical Machiavellian view on religion. The cynicism is further amplified with the introduction of bartering, as if transcendental values could be treated as commodities. Similarly, the mercantile nature of drawing a pact and exchanging one immaterial thing—a soul—for a material thing—earthly pleasures—is another trait similar to *The Jew of Malta*. Just as Barabas thinks that anything can be converted to money, Faustus holds that his soul might serve as a commodity which can be exchanged for anything—knowledge, power, treasures and love: both of them are in misbelief. However, Marlowe gives a further twist to the issue by presenting misbelief, again, as doubled. After all, since the deal is made, it *is* possible to exchange a soul for mere earthly pleasures. The deal is a bad one for Faustus, but the fact that it is possible further diminishes the distinction between the spiritual and the earthly.

Both heaven and hell are depicted as places strongly resembling the world in which Faustus lives and the otherworld becomes nearly indistinguishable from the magician's world. Heaven is described as a place which "was made for man" (2.3.9–10) and both possible interpretations of the ambivalent references to hell suggest that Faustus is already in hell. Mephistopheles' words—"Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed / In one self place, for where we are is hell, / And where hell is must we ever be" (2.1.121–123)—suggest a psychological

interpretation of hell as a state of mind rather than a geographical location. However, the first person plural sounds as if Mephistopheles were already including himself and Faustus in hell, thus implying that Faustus is already in hell together with Mephistopheles. It would mean that hell is on Earth, but this seems absurd to Faustus and he calls it into question ("How? Now in hell? / Nay, and this be hell, I'll willingly be damned here. / What? Walking, disputing, etc.?" [2.1.128–139]).

With external conditions being so overwhelmingly powerful, it is logical to accept his damnation as a result of predestination, since the Prologue's deterministic approach and his final tragic recognition that the stars reigning at his nativity doomed him confirm the idea. Whether these stars signify the heaven of the Christian God or the heavens of the astronomers, in either case, a Christian audience should feel uneasy and reflect on their (mis)beliefs. If the stars serve as the metaphor for God or the manifestation of his will in nature, then it means the complete lack of one's agency over one's fate. If the stars simply mean planets that can control one's humoral constitution, then it is possible—with strong willpower—to counteract these forces; however, this interpretation eliminates—or at the very least ignores—the necessity of God and Divine Providence.

The evidence suggesting the deterministic power of celestial influences is present in some of Marlowe's other works as well. Most prominent of all are the *Tamburlaine* plays. Before the discussion of *Tamburlaine*, however, we should turn to the issue of celestial bodies. One literary example reflecting on the nature of astrology is King James' *Daemonologie*, which calls attention to the pitfalls of this branch of science. He posits that astrology can be divided into two parts: lawful and unlawful. Lawful astrology describes the course of seasons, the weather, the planetary influence on diseases and the motions of the planets. Unlawful astrology, however, stems from trusting "so much to their influences, as thereby to fore-tell what common-weales shall florish or decay: what persones shall be fortunate or vnfortunate," and Christians are forbidden "to beleeue or hearken vnto them that Prophecies & fore-speakes by the course of the Planets & Starres" (bk. 1, ch. 4). In my reading, Marlowe voices an opinion which states the opposite, yet again, voicing a potentially subversive point of view, and further obscures the roles of free will, Providence, and nature.

As we have already seen, the heavens and the stars condemn Faustus; he is destined—yet due to his excessive pride also determined—to fall. The promises made

by Mephistopheles and Lucifer always fall short.[9] Despite Faustus' protestations, he cannot stop the "ever-moving spheres of heaven" (5.2.60). A similar recognition—which also comes too late—is discovered by Abigail in *The Jew of Malta*: "My sinful soul, alas, hath paced too long / The fatal labyrinth of misbelief, / Far from the *Son* that gives eternal life" (3.3.63–65, emphasis added). Aside from the fact that son is a homophone of Sun, the context also allows association with the star. After all, the labyrinth was built by Icarus' father who instructed his son not to fly too close to the Sun. However, he was also instructed not to fly too far from it, lest he gets caught in the waves. The Icarian imagery also relates her to Faustus, the crucial difference is that Abigail descends too low, while Faustus attempts to ascend too high.[10] Barabas also curses his own "fatal birthday" (1.2.193), the "partial heavens" (261), and the "luckless stars" (260) which oppose him. I do not mean to deny the differences in morality between Faustus, Abigail, and Barabas: Faustus and Abigail recognise their own sins, Barabas does not. They, however, share the same position in the sense of being unable to alter their fate. The fact that their fate is presented through planetary influences and not solely by concepts of Christian morality suggests a sense of predestination by natural forces rather than God. The only character who reckons with the heavenly spheres instead of opposing them is Tamburlaine.

When Tamburlaine appears, we see him talking to Zenocrate and describing his future empire in terms of a classical reference to the Sun: "Measuring the limits of his empery / By east and west as Phoebus doth his course" (Part I 1.2.38–39). Through this imagery, Tamburlaine shows that he recognises the limiting powers of celestial bodies that encompass his empire, but at the same time, he is also undaunted by them. Tamburlaine trusts the heavenly powers and often identifies himself with them. His tenets deny what later King James writes about in his *Daemonologie* because Tamburlaine claims: "fates and oracles of heaven have sworn / To royalise the deeds of Tamburlaine" (Part I 2.3.6–7). In contrast with Faustus, Tamburlaine finds hope and assurance in the "stars that reigned at [his] nativity" (Part I 4.2.33), because his "smiling stars gives him assuréd hope" (Part I 3.3.41–42). At the same time, the play resembles both *Doctor Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta* in its treatment of Christians as hypocrites.

9 Even the promise of damnation is deceptive, since it is not in the power of Lucifer or Mephistopheles to damn Faustus. Faustus is promised something he would receive anyway. The underlying belief that one can further one's damnation is also presented as misbelief.

10 In *Faustus,* the image of Icarus is evoked in the Prologue with the heavens "melting" his "waxen wings" (21–22).

Frederick advises Sigismond to break his Christ-sanctified oath about the truce with the Turks: "Assure your grace 'tis superstition / To stand so strictly on dispensive faith" (Part II 2.1.49–50). However, religion is derided in Marlowe's works as "but a childish toy" (Prologue 14) in *The Jew*; in *Faustus*, hell is just a "fable" (2.1.127), and questions about men's souls are just "vain trifles" (1.3.62). Faustus "confounds hell in Elysium" (1.3.60), but in the Marlovian world, hell seems to be confounded in heaven: "hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed / In one self place" (2.1.120–121), says Mephistopheles, as it has been mentioned previously. However, Orcanes, King of Natolia and enemy of Tamburlaine, describes God with strikingly similar imagery:

> He that sits on high and never sleeps
> Nor in one place is circumscriptible,
> But everywhere fills every continent
> . . . . . .
> May in His endless power and purity
> Behold and venge this traitor's perjury! (Part II 2.2.49–51, 53–54)

By presenting God and Hell in the same terms, Marlowe risks atheism. Even though the Christians are defeated, divine intervention seems to be absent, since Orcanes invokes every major divine influence, including Christ, God, Mahomet, and Jove, which empties out the referents of these names and makes them sound insignificant. The absence of divine retribution is further highlighted in *Tamburlaine*: despite the fact that Tamburlaine feels "distempered" after burning holy books, the last scene makes it clear that the cause of his illness is a lack of natural heat and humidity. Such imbalances in the bodily humours could have been influenced by the planets and the doctor points out that "this day is critical" (Part II 5.3.91), that is, astrologically disadvantageous. Once again, it seems that the planetary influences have the most prominent effect on the protagonists' lives.

Thus, in the final analysis, it seems that in the *Tamburlaine* plays, just as much as in *The Jew of Malta* and *Doctor Faustus*, the fate of the respective protagonists is sealed from the beginning by planetary influences. However, Tamburlaine's death is remarkably different from the death of Faustus and Barabas. The Jew and the scholar die desperate and miserable without the hope of salvation. Not accidentally, they are also blind to planetary influences that govern their lives.

Barabas misbelieves in a divine promise of riches and Christian ethics.[11] Faustus is also in misbelief when thinking that he possesses the free will to bring about his own damnation. Tamburlaine, however, seems to reckon with the powers of the stars from the very beginning. He is the only protagonist who has enough time to care for his own funeral, to appoint an heir and to say goodbye to his family and friends. More importantly, he is the only one dignified enough to die without cursing, struggling, or bargaining for one more hour. Furthermore, he even hints at his own immortality:

> But sons, this subject, not of force enough
> To hold the fiery spirit it contains,
> Must part, imparting his impressions
> By equal portions into both your breasts;
> My flesh, divided in your precious shapes,
> Shall still retain my spirit though I die,
> And live in all your seeds immortally. (Part II 5.3.168–174)

It is unsurprisingly Marlovian that a warrior with probably the highest death-count deserves the most peaceful and dignified death.[12] In a world where human action is governed or thwarted by inaccessible non-anthropomorphic powers, the commonplace wishful thinking, which claims that everyone deserves according to his merit, is impossible—it may even be ridiculously naïve.

The imagery concerning the dominance of celestial bodies and their influence underlines the contrast between the oppressive force of the heavens on the one hand and the insignificance and weakness of human action and free will on the other. The turbulent and unstable human domain seems chaotic and the characters inhabiting this world are fragile and mutable. They live their lives in a state of misbelief, thinking that they can exert their will upon the outside world. In contrast, the planets exert an immutable deterministic influence on these tragic heroes,

11 Alan Warren Friedman characterises Barabas as selfish, naïve, and conservative. In his reading, "Barabas returns the governorship to Ferneze's corruption and misrule because of his continuing, childishly naïve trust in Ferneze as embodying social authority and true Christian morality, his conservative hope of restoring the old order and his need to return to the inner-directed, selfish life he knew at the play's beginning" (158).

12 Warren D. Smith claims that Tamburlaine is not the amoral and bloodthirsty villain he is generally perceived to be. Smith also cites examples of the hero's magnanimity and chivalry. Furthermore, Smith asserts that Tamburlaine could have been perceived with sympathy on the stage as "a fully acceptable hero to the Elizabethan audience" (160).

two of whom—Faustus and Barabas—try to counter these powers but their struggle is futile. Marlowe's plays show that the human condition is essentially tragic and that the only way to find redemption—like in the case of Abigail and Tamburlaine—is to recognise these tragic limitations and to bear them with dignity. The Marlovian "world-view" is sceptical about the potency of human actions and might be deemed deterministic, naturalistic, or fatalistic—or somewhere along these lines. Therefore, seeing Marlowe as a kind of atheist, who discards an anthropomorphic, benevolent deity in favour of a chaotic world governed by an impenetrable, natural, yet neutral force, is justified.

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From "Resolute" to "Dissolved"

Tracking Faustus's Decision

MÁRTA HARGITAI

Abstract: Marlowe's Doctor Faustus *has a lot to offer when interpreted in the context of belief and disbelief. From the beginning, Faustus repeatedly reminds himself that he should be resolute, but at the end of the play, he wishes above all to be like beasts whose souls are soon dissolved in elements—he, however, is convinced that his soul "must live still to be plagued in hell." This certainty of the existence of hell is the end-point, something we have not only expected but known from the beginning, when Faustus casually and mockingly calls hell a fable. In this paper, I discuss various aspects of the play's belief-disbelief spectrum, as well as that of fixity and change. I focus on Faustus's changes of belief-states arguing that he only dismisses old beliefs so that he can find a final saving belief and he only changes to reach a final state where he will need to change no more. The paper suggests that, in a way, he accomplishes both goals, but it is not exactly the way he imagined or hoped for.*

At the beginning of the play's action, Faustus seems to be rather determined to "try the uttermost magic can perform." Valdes ensures Faustus that "these books, thy wit, and our experience / Shall make all nations to canonise us . . ." (1.1.121–122),[1] and that he will have omnipotence under one condition: "If learned Faustus will be resolute" (1.1.135). Faustus's answer comes perhaps too soon,

1 Unless otherwise stated, all citations from the A-text of *Doctor Faustus* come from the Revels edition of *Doctor Faustus. A- and B-texts (1604, 1616)*, edited by David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. I accepted Bevington and Rasmussen's opinion that "the critical verdict has swung strongly in favour of the A-text in recent years" (ix). *Tamburlaine*, *Edward II*, and *The Jew of Malta* are cited from Bevington and Rasmussen's *Doctor Faustus and other plays*, and *The Massacre* from Romany and Lindsey's *Complete plays*, by act, scene, and line numbers. The poems are quoted from Orgel's edition.

"Valdes as resolute am I in this / As thou to live" (1.1.136–7). When Faustus tries to conjure up Mephistopheles and draws a circle holding a book, he encourages himself saying, "Then fear not Faustus, but be resolute, / And try the uttermost magic can perform" (1.3.14–15). At the end of the play, however, he wishes above all to be like beasts, whose souls are soon dissolved in elements, although he is convinced that his soul must live "still to be plagued in hell" (5.2.112):

> All beasts are happy, for when they die,
> Their souls are soon *dissolved* in elements,
> But mine must live still to be plagued in hell.
> Curst be the parents that engendered me.
> No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer,
> That hath deprived thee of the joys of heaven.
> —The clock striketh twelve.—
> O, it strikes, it strikes! Now, body, turn to air,
> Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell.
> Thunder and lightning.
> *O soul, be changed into little water drops,*
> *And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found!*
> My God, my God, look not so fierce on me! (5.2.110–120, emphasis added)

The trajectory of his life was already flash-forwarded in the Prologue:

> So soon he profits in divinity,
> The fruitful plot of scholarism graced,
> That shortly he was graced with doctor's name,
> Excelling all whose sweet delight disputes
> In heavenly matters of theology;
> Till, swoll'n with cunning of a self-conceit,
> His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
> And melting heavens conspired his overthrow.
> For, falling to a devilish exercise,
> And glutted more with learning's golden gifts,
> He surfeits upon cursed necromancy;
> Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,
> Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss.
> And this the man that in his study sits. (Prologue 15–28)

The parabola shape of Icarus's rise and fall is projected onto Faustus's fall, later to be related to Lucifer's fall as rebel angel. The Icarus-parallel can also be detected

at the end of the play, where Faustus's wish to be a waterdrop among myriads in the sea might recall Icarus's plunge in the sea, thereby drawing a sophisticated parallel between hell and the sea (maybe as a possible momentary reconciliation of fire and water),[2] indirectly commenting upon the impossibility of hiding and finding refuge in the sea—and by extension in nature or anywhere in the universe.

"Homo, fuge" (2.1.77), i.e. "Fly, O Man," is in itself a paradox: an inscription momentarily envisaged to be solidifying on Faustus's arm. It is doubly paradoxical, indeed, as the letters are formed by his blood—reliquified by Mephistopheles—suggesting that Faustus should escape instead of standing by Satan's side. Although the inscription appears on his arm in act 2, it only dawns on him at the last moment (when "the clock striketh twelve," 24 years later) with all its weight of finality that there is nowhere to escape. This paradoxical tension between a desire for fixity and the eagerness and anxiety to change underlies the whole action of the drama. My contention in this paper is that this fixity can be related to belief while change may correspond to disbelief.

Initially, *resolute* in the play means what it meant around 1500: "determinate, decided, absolute, final" (*OED* III.6). This is the usual meaning to be found elsewhere in Marlowe's works, e.g. in *Edward II*, *The Massacre at Paris*, and *The Jew of Malta*. The underlying notion behind the phrase, however, is only to become explicit at the end of the play, where Faustus wants to be *dissolved* in the elements. There, the early fifteenth-century meaning of *resolute* to mean "dissolved" (*OED* a. I.1) returns.[3]

This reading seems to be confirmed by the same meaning of *resolve* appearing in *Tamburlaine Part I,* where Cosroe complains to Menaphon:

> Ah, Menaphon, I pass not for his threats.
> The plot is laid by Persian noblemen
> And captains of the Median garrisons

2 Cf. what Pinciss and Lockyer write about the Renaissance world view, that beside the optimistic, "comforting, tidy and logical" beliefs "other views of the universe were being heard ever more loudly, and these postulate nothing so permanent, rational, and optimistic. Fortune was ever fickle, change could be chaotic as well as orderly, humanity had fallen and all things beneath the moon were subject to decay. Eden was lost like the Golden Age of classical myth that was followed by an Age of Iron. The four elements might be held in balance, but they were always ready to resume their permanent opposition, fire with water and earth with air. These, according to some, were as irreconcilable as matter and spirit" (2).

3 Also "of loose structure;" "friable" (*OED* a. I.2) and "morally lax, dissolute" (*OED* a. I.3).

> To crown me emperor of Asia.
> But this it is that doth excruciate
> The very substance of my vexed soul:
> To see our neighbours, that were wont to quake
> And tremble at the Persian monarch's name,
> Now sits and laughs our regiment to scorn;
> And *that which might resolve me into tears,*
> Men from the farthest equinoctial line
> Have swarmed in troops into the Eastern India,
> Lading their ships with gold and precious stones,
> And made their spoils from all our provinces. (Part I 1.2.109–122, emphasis added)

The word is used in the same meaning in Tamburlaine's praise of Zenocrate's beauty:

> Ah, fair Zenocrate, divine Zenocrate!
> Fair is too foul an epithet for thee
> That, in thy passion for thy country's love,
> And fear to see thy kingly father's harm,
> With hair dishevelled wip'st thy watery cheeks,
> And, like to Flora in her morning's pride,
> Shaking her silver tresses in the air,
> Rain'st on the earth *resolved pearl in showers.* (Part I 5.1.135–142, emphasis added)

The English word *resolute* comes from Latin *resoluere*; *luere*, perhaps derived immediately from the Greek *luein*, "to lose" appears in Latin mostly as "*soluere,* to 'detach, set loose or free'" (Partridge 1859).[4] So, from his initial resoluteness (i.e. his determination), at the end of his life, Faustus wants something very different: to be lost in the universe, something the word *resolute* used to mean earlier; all this a result of his loose, negligent, morally or religiously lax, i.e. *dissolute* nature.

Although this meaning of dissolute was never linked to *resolute* or *resolve*, *dissolution* does stem from the same root as *resolute*, and it frequently resurfaces in the literature of the period with very rich connotations. In one more literal sense, it signifies an ending or dismissal (as in the *dissolution of monasteries*), separation into parts, melting,[5] liquefying, or disintegration, therefore, death. It derives from the Latin

4 Partridge adds, "*so* – is a variant of the privative or separative *sē*-"; the Sanskrit word is "'lunati' meaning 'he cuts off,' *lavís, lavítram,* a sickle" (1859). "The IE root, clearly, is **lū* – or **leu* – (both with vowels now long, now short), to detach, set free" (Partridge 1859).

5 Cf. Falstaff in *Merry Wives of Windsor,* "Think of that, a man of my kidney—think of that—that am as subject to heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw: it was a miracle to 'scape

dissolutus (meaning "loosed," "taken asunder on all sides," "prodigal," "lascivious," "too indulgent," and also "cleared from," "dissolved," cp. Dumesnil 402–403). According to the Middle English Dictionary, *dissolucion* meant 1. laxity in behaviour or in the observance of religious rites or practices; frivolity, dissipation, dissoluteness; 2. disintegration, weakening of the body. *Dissolute* (adj.) in ME signified 1. of persons: morally or religiously lax or negligent, frivolous, lascivious; of conduct: immoral, licentious; of actions: unruly, unrestrained; 2. feeble, weakened, severed, disrupted, absolved, free (from trouble). *Dissolven* (v.) meant a, to break up or dissolve (a solid) to (a liquid), liquefy; b, (of a solid) to break up or melt; c, (of dew) to evaporate; of a cloud: to break up, vanish. Kurath adds that the term was also used figuratively (1166).

The consistency of *dissolved* (5.2.111) with "O soul, be changed into little water drops, / And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found" (5.2.118–119) is thus established—the fabric woven tight with the multiple meanings of the term recalling the original meaning of *resolute.* Here, we can find an organic and meaningful frame established in the play-text between the last wish for change (*dissolved*) and his initial desire to be *resolute*, thereby relativising his original wish for permanence, fixity, and finality.

Turning something solid, like his body, into liquid can hardly be the real solution, although it did work once before: when Faustus's blood congealed, Mephistopheles offered, "I'll fetch thee fire to dissolve it straight" (2.1.63), i.e. he volunteered to liquefy Faustus's coagulated blood. Thus, whereas the congealing blood is obviously a divine portent, the devil's volunteering to dissolve Faustus's blood stands for diabolical dissolution, and by extension, I argue that it confirms the basic opposition between the two ways Faustus could choose: God's or Lucifer's.

As Bevington and Rasmussen point out in their comment on Faustus's desperate words, Marlowe provides no solid ground of meaning for his protagonist, "even the Christian assurances that seem so absolute in the world of the play—eternal joy and felicity, pardon, penitence—dissolve before his eyes and leave in their wake an angry God stretching out his arm and bending his ireful brows" (*Doctor Faustus* 40).[6] In his reply to the third scholar urging him to call on God, Faustus laments:

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suffocation" (3.5.105–107).

6 "The stars move still; time runs; the clock will strike; / The devil will come, and Faustus must be damned. / O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down? / See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament! / One drop would save my soul, half a drop. Ah, my Christ!

> On God, whom Faustus hath abjured? On God, whom Faustus hath blasphemed? Ah, my God, I would weep, but the devil draws in my tears. Gush forth blood instead of tears, yea, life and soul. O, he stays my tongue! I would lift up my hands, but see, they hold them, they hold them! (5.2.29–34)

In this late expression of grief and regret, the idea of diabolical dissolution is revisited, inverted, and used against itself: tears, a natural bodily fluid that is supposed to be flowing when in agony, is "drawn in," or stopped by diabolical machination, which is a "common sign of spiritual reprobation" (*Doctor Faustus* 193). That this reverberation is not accidental is corroborated by the images of the second half of the passage: the wish for his blood to flow repeats the motif of making his congealed blood run again to be able to sign the pact. Finally, at the end of the passage, the inversion of the contrast between fixity standing for God and change symbolising Satan is brought full circle in the picture of Faustus's tongue being tied and his arms being held by devils, proving the deceptive nature of his earlier resolution.

Bevington and Rasmussen note that *resolute* is as important a word for Faustus as it was for Tamburlaine, and that his repeated pleas to be resolved of ambiguities will only result in his disintegration and dissolution (40). Bevington and Rasmussen also cite McAlindon's astute point in his discussion of *Doctor Faustus* that *resolute* in one sense means its antonym. McAlindon adds that "fundamental to Faustus's conception of himself as a heroic individualist is the belief that he will uncover truths from the rest of mankind: at his command, servile spirits will 'resolve' enigma and mystery" (129).[7] McAlindon concludes that "the truth, of course, is that the spirits resolve nothing of importance (129), adding that just before signing the pact, "resolute Faustus is [now] married to the spirit of change and dissolution" (130).

Bevington and Rasmussen cite *The Damnable Life*'s description of "[h]ow Doctor Faustus set his blood in a saucer on warm ashes," "which evidently suggests the stage action that Marlowe has in mind, though that source says nothing about Mephistopheles bringing the fire and only implies that the blood coagulates," and quote Greg, who concludes that this is "certainly no earthly fire, that will

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/ Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ! / Yet will I call on him. O, spare me, Lucifer! / Where is it now? 'Tis gone; and see, where God / Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful brows! / Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me, / And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!" (5.2.75–85).

7 Cf. "*Resolve* me of all ambiguities" (1.1.77–79); "And then *resolve* me of thy master's mind" (1.3.99–100); "*Resolve* me then in this one question" (2.2.63).

liquify coagulated blood" (141). Bevington and Rasmussen also call attention to the "pattern of dissolution" ending in the B-text "in a literal dismemberment of Faustus's body by devils" (40).

Considering the context of the occurrences of the word *dissolve* and its derivatives in Marlowe's other works, it is perhaps safe to say that *dissolution* can be used both as a synonym for death and the end of the world. *The Massacre at Paris* starts with Charles's blessing:

> Prince of Navarre, my honourable brother,
> Prince Conde, and my good Lord Admiral,
> I wish this union and religious league,
> Knit in these hands, thus joined in nuptial rites,
> *May not dissolve till death dissolve our lives* . . . (1.1–5, emphasis added)

It is soon followed by the Queen Mother's aside: "Which I'll dissolve with blood and cruelty" (1.25). This repetition clearly emphasises the importance of the phrase while at the same time highlights its dual connotations of human and cosmic destruction. The collocation "death dissolve our lives," confirms on several plains that death is dissolution, disintegration; moreover, death itself plays an active role in liquefying life.

In his translations, Marlowe also uses the word *dissolve* twice—once in *The First Book of Lucan*:

> So when this world's compounded union breaks,
> Time ends, and to old Chaos all things turn,
> Confused stars shall meet, celestial fire
> Fleet on the floods, the earth shoulder the sea,
> Affording it no shore, and Phoebe's wain
> Chase Phoebus, and enraged affect his place,
> And strive to shine by day and full of strife
> *Dissolve the engines of the broken world.* (73–80, emphasis added)

Here, in place of "[d]issolve the engines of the broken world," in the original Latin text we find "totaque discors machina divolsi turbabit foedera mundi" (79–80). More closely, "the whole discordant machine will overturn the laws of a universe ripped apart" (translation by Roche 59), which shows that Marlowe's choice

of words recalls the first line's image of *conpage solute,* i.e. the structure of the cosmos being completely dissolved.

In his translation of Ovid's Elegia XV in *Book I of Amores*, Marlowe writes,

> What age of Varro's name shall not be told,
> And Jason's Argos and the fleece of gold?
> Lofty Lucretius shall live that hour
> That *nature shall dissolve this earthly bower* (21–24, emphasis added)

whereas Ovid's original ran as follows: "carmina sublimis tunc sunt peritura Lucreti, / exitio terras cum dabit una dies," more closely, in Showerman's translation, "[t]he verses of sublime Lucretius will perish only then when a single day shall give the earth to doom."

Although I am not at all qualified to discuss classical-philological subtleties here, it seems evident to me that Marlowe could have used other words and phrases than *dissolve* in his translations. If he chose this word out of many other possibilities, it might indicate that he may have been impressed by the end-of-the-world, cataclysmic connotations of the word to be used in his own works as well.[8]

This is the meaning of the word also used by Mephistopheles in *Doctor Faustus*:

> FAUSTUS. First will I question with thee about hell.
> Tell me, where is the place that men call hell?
> MEPHIST. Under the heavens.
> FAUSTUS. Ay, but whereabout?
> MEPHIST. Within the bowels of these elements,
> Where we are tortur'd and remain for ever:
> Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscrib'd
> In one self place; for where we are is hell,
> And where hell is, there must we ever be:
> And, to conclude, *when all the world dissolves*,
> And every creature shall be purified,
> All places shall be hell that are not heaven. (2.1.119–129, emphasis added)

8 Interestingly, Shakespeare uses the same idea in *The Tempest*: "And, like the baseless fabric of this vision, / The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces, / The solemn temples, the great globe itself, / Ye all which it inherit, shall *dissolve* / And, like this insubstantial pageant faded, / Leave not a rack behind" (4.1.151–154).

Bevington and Rasmussen gloss, "Mephistopheles' description draws on 2 Peter iii.10–11: 'the elements shall melt with heat . . . all these things must be dissolvd,' and Daniel xii.9–10: '. . . till the end of time. Many shall be purified, made white, and tried'" (144). This nicely dovetails with a sermon by John Donne from 1630, *Death's Duel*, in which he writes about his own death.[9] Donne proclaims that, until Christ's second coming, no man is exempt from the rule that one's flesh is to see corruption, and experience dissolution of body and soul. At that moment, though, we shall see a mystery, he ensures us, when "we shall all be changed in an instant, we shall have a dissolution, and in the same instant a redintegration, a recompacting of body and soul, and that shall be truly a death and truly a resurrection, but no sleeping in corruption" (Donne 406). Faustus is not to survive until then; therefore, he can only be one of us who "die now and sleep in the state of the dead;" therefore, "we must all pass this posthume death, this death after death, nay, this death after burial, this *dissolution after dissolution*, this death of corruption and putrefaction, of vermiculation and incineration, of dissolution and dispersion in and from the grave . . ." (Donne 408, emphasis added).

Marlowe, I argue, is perhaps presenting in Mephistopheles' "when all the world dissolves, / And every creature shall be purified, / All places shall be hell that are not heaven," the image of *dissolution after dissolution*, which Faustus cannot skip, although he wishes to experience such death and resurrection, a reintegration (Donne's *redintegration*) of body and soul, but just like Macbeth, he cannot "jump the life to come." *Dissolution*, *solution*, *absolve*, *resolute*, and many other words stem from the IE **lū–* or **leu* – "to detach, set free" (Partridge 1859).[10] Does Faustus's wish to be transformed into small waterdrops and to be lost in the sea mean that he hopes for *absolution* (from sin), *release or detachment* from Satan? Will his *solvency* (also from **leu*) or fluidity

9 Previously Donne expounded: "And if no other deliverance conduce more to his glory and my good, yet he hath the keys of death, and he can let me out at that door, that is, deliver me from the manifold deaths of this world, the omni die, and the tota die, the every day's death and every hour's death, by that one death, the final dissolution of body and soul, the end of all. But then is that the end of all? Is that dissolution of body and soul the last death that the body shall suffer (for of spiritual death we speak not now). It is not, though this be exitus à morte: it is introitus in mortem; though it be an issue from manifold deaths of this world, yet it is an entrance into the death of corruption and putrefaction, and vermiculation, and incineration, and dispersion in and from the grave, in which every dead man dies over again. It was a prerogative peculiar to Christ, not to die this death, not to see corruption" (Donne 406).

10 Other words stemming from the same root include *solve*, solvable, solvate, *solvency*, solvent (adj, hence n)

save him, or will it prove fatal? Would he or his sin (or both) be cleared, filtered, liquidated, liquefied, or melted (perhaps recalling Icarus's wings once again)? Is it death that is being described here or a new life to come? Would the problem be *solved* with this new *solution* (Faustus merging with water), or would that mean that he wishes to be left, abandoned, liquidated, and therefore, annihilated? Would the case be thereby closed, or would it be the beginning of another alliance, this time not with Satan but with God?

We cannot be entirely sure of the answers to these vexing questions, but perhaps it is worth stopping here to recall Ovid's metamorphosed characters, who keep their human mind and soul. These characters continue suffering on the basis that both authors seem to experience a gap between mind and body, therefore, making it possible to postulate that, although the body can change—either gradually decay or radically metamorphose—the mind does not transform substantially.

Mythological references abound in Marlowe's play; let me now recall only two characters who metamorphose in Ovid as well, Semele and Arethusa:

> Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
> When he appeared to hapless Semele,
> More lovely than the monarch of the sky
> In wanton Arethusa's azured arms . . . (5.1.106–109)

Bevington and Rasmussen note that "Semele urged her lover, Zeus or Jupiter to appear to her in his full splendour as a god. When he did so, she was consumed by lightning, thereby becoming (for some Renaissance mythographers at least) the emblem of presumptuousness punished by divine fury" (191). As we can see in Ovid (iii.316–396), Juno gulls the credulous Semele not unlike how Mephistopheles gulls Faustus in Marlowe's play, the "poore sielie simple soule" that he was;[11] as the scholar also presumptuously believed that he can play god or that he can be God's or Satan's equal, and as such he can be master of Mephistopheles. As a consequence, he will finally be consumed by everlasting

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and soluble, solute (adj, hence n), *solution*: cf the cpds *absolve*, absolvent, and absolute (whence absolutism, absolutist), absolution—dissoluble, *dissolute*, dissolution, *dissolve*, dissolvable, dissolvent—insoluble, insolubility, insolvent (whence insolvency)—irresoluble, irresolute, irresolution—resolute, resolution, resolve (v, with pa resolved; hence also n), resolvent (Partridge 1858).

11 "And she poore sielie simple soule immediately on this / Requested Jove to graunt a boone the which she did not name" (Ovid: Bk. III.360, trans. Golding).

fire in hell, comparable to the lightning that struck Semele—despite his penultimate utterance, in which Faustus pledges to burn his books instead, a burn for a burn. However, this conventional form of abjuring magic comes manifestly too late (cf. Bevington 197).

It is easy to see why Arethusa is mentioned next by Marlowe. "The nymph fled from the river god Alpheus, whose lust she had awakened by bathing in his stream, and was transformed by Artemis into a fountain, adding that the story was sometimes allegorised into the soul's pursuit of truth" (Bevington 191). As Arethusa's case proves in Ovid,[12] there's no escape from God's love; and as Faustus would later learn, there is no escape from his wrath either: Arethusa would be taken by Alpheus whether or not she be transformed into waterdrops and by analogy we could argue that Faustus would not be much better off either should he be turned into waterdrops. "Every metamorphosis," concludes W. C. Carroll, "is partly a loss," a version of death; "the ultimate change that awaits us all," and thus metamorphosis can be used as a synonym for death (26). It is as foolish to ask for dissolution into waterdrops in a Christian framework as to wish for transformation into a non-human shape in an Ovidian metamorphic world.

So, from believing that Hell is a fable and the conviction that the joys of Heaven are not to be hoped for, cf.

> What, is great Mephistopheles so passionate
> For being deprived of the joys of heaven?
> Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
> And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess. (1.3.85–88)

he eventually arrives at the exact opposite: the poignant certainty of hell and the heart-felt frustration of being deprived of the joys of heaven,

> And what wonders I have done, all Germany can witness, yea, all the world, for which Faustus hath lost both Germany and the world, yea, heaven itself—heaven, the seat of God, the throne of the blessed, the kingdom of joy—and must remain in hell for ever. Hell, ah, hell for ever! Sweet friends, what shall become of Faustus, being in hell for ever? (5.2.21–26)

12 "A chill colde sweat my sieged limmes opprest, and downe apace / From all my bodie steaming drops

He, however, never questions the terms of the deal, "[f]or vain pleasure of four-and-twenty years hath Faustus lost eternal joy and felicity" (5.2.39–41). In the end, one of his final lines also reiterates the anguish of deprivation, "[n]o, Faustus, curse thyself. Curse Lucifer, / That hath deprived thee of the joys of heaven" (5.2.114–115).

Faustus's oscillation as to what to believe in, heaven or hell, can also be seen to be drawn in the coordinates of belief and disbelief; the play-text thus opens up a range of perspectives on scepticism as well. The word *belief*, however, is never used, neither is *disbelief* or *disbelieve*. *Believe* is, but it only appears three times, in much the same context, always used by the Duke and Duchess of Vanholt, e.g. in the Duke's "[b]elieve me, Master Doctor, this merriment hath much pleased me" (4.2.1–2). Yet the play, at least on one level, is about this: about the trajectory from the initial disbelief of hell to the conviction that only Hell exists, or as Helen Gardner puts it, "from doubt of the existence of hell to the belief in the reality of nothing else" (104).

The question, however, is if this belief is any better than the initial doubt. The word *belief* ultimately seems to originate from the PIE **leubh-*, whose English meaning is "to care for, love" (Pokorny 1908). According to Pokorny, OE *leaf* originates from this PIE root and its derivatives include OE līefan, ä-líefan "allow," and gelīefan "believe" (1908).

Faustus deliberates before signing the pact with his own blood:

> Now, Faustus, must thou needs be damned,
> And canst thou not be saved.
> What boots it then to think of God or heaven?
> Away with such vain fancies and despair!
> Despair in God, and trust in Beelzebub.
> Now go not backward. No, Faustus, be resolute.
> Why waverest thou? O, something soundeth in mine ears:
> 'Abjure this magic, turn to God again!'
> Ay, and Faustus will turn to God again.
> To God? He loves thee not.
> The god thou servest is thine own appetite,
> Wherein is fixed the love of Beelzebub.

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did fall of watrie hew. / Which way so ere I stird my foote the place was like a stew. / The deaw ran trickling from my haire. In halfe the while I then / Was turnde to water, that I now have tolde the tale agen. / His loved waters Alphey knew, and putting off the shape / Of man the which he tooke before bicause I should not scape, / Returned to his proper shape of water by and by / Of purpose for to joyne with me and have my companie" (v.716–789).

> To him I'll build an altar and a church,
> And offer lukewarm blood of new-born babes. (2.1.1–14)

So, if God does not love him, he will love, i.e. believe (in) Beelzebub instead. The phraseology of the above passage in the play-text is most interesting: the god to be served is inside oneself, where there is also the love of Beelzebub fixed. This emphasis on a fixed place is revealing: something permanent should be found in an ever-changing soul, best represented by its own changing appetite, which now craves this, then something else, etc. This fixity is further emphasised by the image of building an altar and a church, and the blasphemy is completed with the satanic black mass offer of the blood of new-born babes.

Ironically, however, the new-born babe can be seen to be Faustus himself: newly born in Satan; he is just about to offer his own blood to Lucifer. This sacrifice of Faustus taking his own blood, therefore, metaphorically suggests the idea of suicide. *Lukewarm* likewise anticipates his own congealing blood, obliquely confirming that blood is a liquid that normally keeps flowing, and thus it is also contrasted to the permanent settlement of Beelzebub in the church that Faustus promises to build.

Belief and disbelief thus seem to go hand in hand, but the question is why the belief in something automatically triggers the disbelief of its opposite. Why not doubt both? Why does Faustus end up accepting the reality of hell and give up on the chance to get to heaven?

At the beginning of act 2, scene 1, Faustus speaks to himself: confirmed that he is damned and cannot be saved, he warns himself against thinking about God and heaven, calling them vain fancies and despair. Then he continues:

> Despair in God and trust in Beelzebub.
> Now go not backward. No, Faustus, be resolute.
> Why waverest thou? O, something soundeth in mine ears:
> 'Abjure this magic, turn to God again.' (2.1.5–8)

Despair is another one of the key-words of the play, a theme on which Helen Gardner has beautifully elaborated. Let me briefly recall the etymology of the word here: *de* – "without" and *sperare* "to hope." So, when Faustus exclaims, "[d]espair in God, and trust in Beelzebub," he commands himself to give up hope in God and believe (in) Satan instead. Why one must lead to the other is not entirely clear, though: for practical reasons, for material gain, for dramaturgical/theatrical purposes, it is clear;

but why does losing ground on one side necessarily lead to fixing our position on the other extreme?

Maybe the real question is not why this is the case, but what it tells about the world of Faustus, and by extension, Christianity itself. In such a world, you must choose sides, as remaining neutral is not an option. For someone full of doubt and disbelief, however, it might seem tempting to try to overcome this dichotomous way of thinking, defying set norms and trying the utmost this kind of logic can perform.

Taking this logic to its extreme, however, seems to prove self-defeating: Faustus decides to sign the pact with Lucifer out of fear of losing his trust in Beelzebub. It is as if he forces himself to do the more daring thing to avoid a lesser problem: his emerging doubts. When you give up or lose hope, it means that you no longer have faith in something, but can you *order* yourself to lose hope as implied by Faustus's imperative, "[d]espair in God and trust in Beelzebub?"

Doubts (from PIE root **dwo* – "two") are exactly what he does *not* need, what he wants to get rid of forever; and since God has never offered such firm ground for him as God never appeared to him, never reassured him, never answered his questions, he has only one chance to find this solid basis he so sorely requires: Lucifer. And for this new fixed position to gain he would give anything, no matter the price.

The problem with this is that by doing so, he marries himself "to the spirit of change and dissolution" (cf. McAlindon 130). McAlindon could be right again: the first time Faustus manages to conjure Mephistopheles, he appears too ugly to attend on him, so as a probable anti-Catholic joke, he charges the devil to return as an old Franciscan friar. This shapeshifting, Russell argues, identifies the spirit with the traditional Devil (61); therefore, if Faustus wants to change, he inevitably needs to follow Lucifer. Note that Faustus first refers to Beelzebub, then conjures Mephistopheles, who leads him to Lucifer; i.e. even the representatives of Evil change.

In the play-text, there is further confusion as to who is Mephistopheles' lord, Lucifer or Beelzebub, which may be owing to the fact that in the Bible (Matt xii.24–28, Mark iii.22–26, Luke xi.15–20) the names *Satan*, *Lucifer* and *Beelzebub* are all used for the chief devils (Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* 129). Bevington and Rasmussen also refer to Robert West, who claims that demonology generally ranks devils when they are tempting and overthrowing souls but dissolves such distinctions when the soul is taken off to damnation (129).[13]

13 Russell also points out that Mephistopheles' name, which appears first in the 1587 Faustbook, seems to be "a brand new coinage," the chief elements being Greek *me-*, "not;" *phos*, *photos*, "light;"

The unholy trinity of Satan, Lucifer, and Beelzebub, however, is very different in nature from the Holy One, as the three-person God and the three personifications of Evil symbolise two very different notions: God stands for constancy and permanence, whereas Satan represents change, division and dissolution.[14]

So, if Faustus despairs—the exact reason is very ambiguous: is it God's power in general or God's power to forgive Faustus's sin that he cannot trust?—he has no hope for constancy either. His predisposition to change, therefore, necessarily pushes him towards Satan.

When he starts to disbelieve God, he begins to *un-love* him.[15] Belief and disbelief are not absolute antonyms: disbelief does not simply mean the lack of belief. Like resolute meaning both determined, solid and fixed *and* dissolute, dissolved, broken into its parts; belief and disbelief are dialectically mutual and often oscillating points of view even within the soul of one man, every man, Everyman, or Faustus. He *un-loves God, loves apart, loves another.*

In the final estimation, however, belief seems to win albeit only by subverting morality play anticipations: convinced that he has forfeited his salvation once and for all, he finally overcomes his doubts and accepts his eternal stay (fixity) in hell. This, however, is only possible for him by continuing to disbelieve in the *power* of heaven. So, although in the final hour he does acknowledge (believe in) the existence of both heaven and hell, he only trusts in the power of the latter, thereby relativizing God's omnipotence, postulating that His redemptive power is limited.

Yet, belief seems to be stronger in another and more general sense as well: disbelieving might very well mean that you do believe, just in something else, in another

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philos, "lover," probably an "ironic parody of Lucifer, 'lightbearer'" (61). That the servant should be parodying his master is yet another sign that Satan is divided against Satan.

14 As we read in *The Geneva Bible*, "[t]hen was brought to him one possessed with a devil, both blind, and dumb, and he healed him, so that he which was blind and dumb, both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this that son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man casteth the devils no otherwise out but through *Beelzebub the prince of devils. But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself, shall be brought to naught, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. So if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom endure?*" (Matt 12.22–26, emphasis added).

15 The word *disbelief* is a Latin-Germanic mixture; the prefix originating from PIE **dis* – "apart, asunder, in two" (Partridge, 3904). Partridge adds that "the general meaning is 'separation,' as in dismiss; hence, deprivation, reversal, negation . . ." then comments that "the Greek *dis* means twice, doubly, double" (3904), and Pokorny calls *dwis* – "twice" and *dwis* – "divided, asunder" identical in numerous old languages (788).

(direction). If you are sceptical, you likewise do *believe* in or entertain the possibility of simultaneous truths. In this manner, I hope that at least some of the readers of this paper will allow for the possibility of a truth or some truth in what has been presented above.

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The Personae of the Muse in the Fair Youth Sonnets

ESZTER TÖRÉK

Abstract: The figure of the Muse in Shakespeare's sonnets, seemingly inconstant in its depiction, on a closer inspection, is revealed to be the signifier of a number of different entities, ones that are somewhat removed from concepts usually associated with the nine mythical Muses of Classical antiquity. These "personae," or in other words, various manifestations or appearances of the Muse function in markedly different ways from each other and reveal the workings or the modus operandi of the Poet with regard to his endeavour of eternalising the Fair Youth's beauty. The words of the Muse in sonnet 101 raise questions about the representational powers of pen vs. pencil, invoking the Renaissance paragone of poetry and painting, which leads to a number of enquiries concerning mimesis, invention, style, and Platonic realism. In my paper, I shall examine the forces and circumstances that shape the figure of the Muse, as well as what those forms could represent, in hopes of illuminating the poetic process of eternalisation in verse.

When reading the sonnets of Shakespeare, one might feel that there is an inconsistency in the way the figure of the Muse is presented in these poems. After all, the Muse denotes different people and concepts in different pieces. In several sonnets, it appears to be feminine while it also has an unequivocally masculine form. At certain points, we see it depicted as the epitome of what a Muse is supposed to be—an endless source of inspiration—but there are instances where it is silent and insufficient. Moreover, the hierarchical relationship between the Poet and the Muse seems to be shifting throughout the sequence as well. The one thing that the various appearances of the Muse have in common is that they are all a desacralised version of a mythical or archetypal figure. The aim of this paper is to shed some light on the forces and circumstances that shape the figure of the Muse, and to identify the various personae, or in other words, the various forms or appearances

of the Muse, as well as what those forms could represent. In doing so, we might reach a deeper understanding of Shakespeare's view of the process of poetic creation, especially with regard to the eternalisation of the Fair Youth's beauty.

There are altogether ten *Muse sonnets* which are relevant to the subject matter of this essay. If we read the sequence in a linear fashion, the first poem that we ought to mention is sonnet 21, where the Muse denotes another poet who is "stirred by a painted beauty to his verse."[1] In the following lines, the speaker objects to both the rival's choice of subject but also to his manner of writing that entails "using something potentially sacred as a mere rhetorical ornament," which is deemed to be superfluous and untruthful by the Poet (Burrow 422). We also encounter instances where the Muse refers to the Poet's body of work as in the first line of sonnet 82 ("I grant thou wert not married to my Muse"), and alternatively his skill or purported lack thereof as in sonnet 32: "'Had my friend's Muse grown with his growing age, / A dearer birth than this his love had brought, / To march in ranks of better equipage . . . .'"

The figure of the Muse becomes considerably more intricate in sonnet 38:

> How can my Muse want subject to invent,
> While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
> Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
> For every vulgar paper to rehearse?
> O give thyself the thanks, if aught in me
> Worthy perusal stand against thy sight,
> For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
> When thou thyself dost give invention light?
> Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
> Than those old nine which rhymers invocate;
> And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
> Eternal numbers to outlive long date.
> If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
> The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

The complexity of the poem, Helen Vendler claims, is a result of the fact that "the concept" of the Muse is "immediately made problematic by being doubled" (198). The two figures are "my Muse," appearing in the opening line, and the "tenth Muse" in line 9. The Poet's disparaging attitude towards the Muse of the first line

1 Unless otherwise indicated all quotations from the Sonnets are from Burrow.

and of the nine mythical Muses is quite palpable in the poem, as well as a criticism of those *rhymers* who call upon their aid. The nine Muses originating from classical antiquity and, more precisely, from Greek mythology are sister goddesses, each of them being a representative of a particular branch of art, but their importance and how they function may vary in respective pieces. For instance, William Franke notes that the bard seems markedly more autonomous in Homer's *Odyssey* than in the *Iliad* where he exhibits a "total dependence" upon the Muse (2). Yet, despite such variations, traditionally, the Muse is a source of inspiration, one that provides information upon the subject which is treated by the poet, and it is also "what we would understand to be [the poet's] own imagination," but in a way that is interlaced with a sense of divine revelation (Franke 3).

Interestingly, in subsequent sonnets the Muse appearing in the opening line of sonnet 38 will stand for notions that are similar to those that the mythical Muses usually stand for, and at certain points she will also be distinctly feminine. However, she is considered to be insufficient or inappropriate by the Poet for wanting to *invent* a *subject* other than the Fair Youth himself. Thus, she and the mythical muses are superseded by the addressee of the poem, the young friend, who "give[s] invention light" and is, therefore, established as the *tenth Muse*. Consequently, the Muse transforms into a masculine figure. Parallel to this transformation, another one seems to begin, which might be even more pivotal than its counterpart: the *tenth Muse* does not refer to the "spirit of inspiration within [the Poet]," as it is put by Vendler, but "the Muse is externalised and named as the friend" (199). By that, the Poet "locat[es] aesthetic worth, *and* poetic essence, in the object itself" (Vendler 200). One might expect the female Muse after its denunciation by the Poet to simply disappear not only from this particular poem but also from the entire sequence. Yet, her reappearance in the couplet as "my slight Muse" suggests a more profound link between her and the Poet than one which could be so readily dissolved. The question arises: Where does the inspiration come from? If it comes from the Fair Youth, then what is the function of the Muse in the first line of sonnet 38? If the creative spark derives from the masculine Muse, then why do we see the feminine Muse re-emerge later only to be dragged down? Furthermore, how is the feminine Muse different from the mythical Muses, and what is it that calls for such a distinction?

In order to find answers to these questions, we must work with a wider scope. The following sonnet in the sequence, where the Muse makes an appearance in some shape or form, is sonnet 78. The opening lines of the poem elaborate on the ideas

which were introduced in sonnet 38 when the Muse manifests itself in the Fair Youth ("So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse / And found such fair assistance in my verse"). His *fair assistance* makes up for the deficiencies of the feminine persona that appeared in the sonnet previously discussed, so much so that by the time we reach the couplet, the idea of "thou art all my art" emerges with full force. This phrase (and what it suggests) is analogous with the idea that the Poet is in need of an external source of inspiration in order to create. Moreover, the poem juxtaposes the speaker with the rival poet(s) whose "style" is merely "mended" by the Youth's influence, while the Poet is indebted to the friend for his advancement from "heavy ignorance" to "learning," which enables him to write in the first place. Burrow draws our attention to the fact that both of these words "had wider and stronger senses in the sixteenth century than they do now: *learning* implies achieved mastery in all the arts and in what we now call sciences; *ignorance* connotes not simple lack of knowledge but lack of all cultivation" (536). Thus, a certain dependence is implied.

The same idea is expressed in the middle of the second quatrain of sonnet 79 but with a fascinating twist:

> Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent
> He robs thee of, and pays it thee again.
> He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word
> From thy behaviour; beauty doth he give
> And found it in thy cheek; he can afford
> No praise to thee but what in thee doth live.

Although, in the context of the whole sonnet the excerpt above seems to refer to the rival who is presented as more eloquent, and for whom the "sick Muse" i.e. the friend abandons the speaker, the passage seems to be applicable to the Poet as well, as we will see in later sonnets ("The argument all bare is of more worth / Than when it hath my added praise beside" [Sonnet 103]). The conceit of theft in the poem reinforces the idea that inspiration and artistic merit comes from something or someone other than the Poet himself. What makes this imagery stand out is its dynamics. The theft here is not a linear action but a circular one that, in its cyclicality, captures a property that might be said to be inherent to the nature of all arts. But what does it tell us about the art of the Poet? All we know at the moment is that the Poet takes something from the Fair Youth, then does something to what was taken away (essentially a poem is written), and then gives something back.

But what are those *somethings*? We must identify the figures of the participants and of the elements of this exchange, be they passive, active, or abstract if we aim to understand the Poet's *modus operandi*.

Yet this *modus operandi* is apparently derailed when in sonnet 85 we read: "My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still." With this poem, the Fair Youth as the Muse vanishes from our sight, and he is ostensibly replaced by the feminine Muse. This is the first sonnet in the sequence that explicitly refers to this persona as a female entity (although one might consider the first line of sonnet 82 as indicative of the Muse's gender as well), and it is also the first poem to introduce the theme of the silent Muse, which will be a leitmotif later on. Silence and passivity will be associated with the feminine form of the Muse—and on a closer inspection with the poet himself—as opposed to the masculine persona who assumes a more agentive behaviour. However, it is important to point out that silence here does not yet have a negative connotation ("Then others for the breath of words respect; / Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect" [Sonnet 85]).

Sonnets 100, 101, and 103 form an interesting triad and bring a distinct change in tone. The Muse is depicted as a figure that is seemingly oppressed, insufficient, silent, and passive. In sonnet 100, she is described with adjectives such as "forgetful" and "resty," and she is asked to give an account of why she will not speak, as illustrated by the first two lines of the poem: "Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long / To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?." These two lines also imply that the feminine Muse is dependent on the Fair Youth, just the way the Poet was dependent on him in sonnets 78 and 79.

The poem also suggests that the Muse would be capable of being agentive. Vendler calls our attention to the fact that the Muse "can *speak* of a subject; *sing* to an audience; *survey* a visual object; *be a satire to* a disagreeable event; and *give fame*" (426). Additionally, words like *might*, *fury*, and *power*, complemented by what we see in the third quatrain and the closing couplet, show the Muse as a figure that has the potential to be an appropriate opponent of Time, the ultimate antagonist in the entirety of the sequence ("Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life, / So thou prevent'st his scythe and crooked knife" [Sonnet 100]). This detail has great significance, since it seems that the Poet's main objective in the sonnets is to secure some sort of enduring form for the Youth, to find a way of eternalizing his beauty. Hence, it is not just the Poet and the feminine Muse who are dependent on the Fair Youth, but the Youth himself also depends on the feminine Muse.

The Muse and the Fair Youth are "locked in a mutual deal: either she 'lends light' to 'that which gives thee all thy might,' or she and her subject both fall into obscurity" (Roessner 366).

This element of dependence is further amplified in sonnet 101. In this poem "not only the Muse" but also abstract ideas, such as "'truth and beauty' as well, depend upon the friend," writes Roessner (366). In the second quatrain of the sonnet, the Poet demands the Muse—who was thus far silent—to answer him in the following lines:

> Make answer, Muse, wilt thou not haply say
> 'Truth needs no colour with his colour fixed,
> Beauty no pencil beauty's truth to lay,
> But best is best if never intermixed?' (Sonnet 101)

On closer inspection, however, we might notice that it is not the Muse who answers the Poet's question but the Poet himself, imagining what she would say. Her words seem to constitute a mere hypothetical utterance. The Poet's overbearing behaviour culminates in the closing couplet: "Then do thy office, Muse, I teach thee how, / To make him seem long hence, as he shows now" (Sonnet 101). This is the complete reversal of the conventional invocation-scenario.

The roles and identity of the Muse and the Poet are completely blurred by this point. The Poet hinting at his own silence in sonnet 102 ("Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue"—although here the feminine pronoun signifies Philomel, not the Muse) and his desperate exclamation of inexpressibility in sonnet 103 ("O, blame me not if I no more can write!") are analogous to the inadequacy and silence of the Muse in the previous poems. The difference is that it is the Poet who is scolded now, and he is scolded by the Youth, thus the power relations change to their polar opposite (the Youth being a Muse himself).

We have examined these poems in order to delineate the personae of the Muse. To conclude what we have established so far, we can claim that it is possible to interpret the feminine Muse as the personification of the internal struggle or strife of the artist, a certain kind of self-doubt of the Poet, which fits the modesty *topos* that is present in a number of sonnets. This would also legitimise the feminine Muse's existence and explain the necessity of a clear distinction between the mythical muses (who are in a sense both an internal and an external source of inspiration) and the Poet's feminine Muse. The idea that this persona is an integral part of the Poet is supported by the words of sonnet 100, where *pen* and *skills* belong to her,

rather than to him ("Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem, / And gives thy pen both skill and argument"). By contrast, the masculine Muse (or the Fair Youth) denotes a purely external source of inspiration.

Despite the fact that the consistency in the capabilities of these two personae according to their gender is quite striking, and that there is an obvious preference for the male Muse throughout the sequence, we must note that this preference is not gender based. The feminine Muse is deemed insufficient not because of her sex but because she represents something that the Poet does not believe in. The Poet simply regards the external Muse as superior to the internal Muse, who happens to be feminine as a result of the prevalent literary conventions of Muse portrayals. This *dis/belief* in an internal source of inspiration is the organising force which shapes the figures of the two personae of the Muse. The question that ensues is the following: What does all of this tell us about the process of poetic creation and the eternalisation of the Youth's beauty?

Turning back to sonnet 101, with special attention to the *words of the Muse* (which, as we have demonstrated, are a part of the Poet's inner monologue) could be the key to the issue at hand. These are the lines to reconsider:

> 'Truth needs no colour with his colour fixed
> Beauty no pencil beauty's truth to lay;
> But best is best if never intermixed'?

At first glance, the Muse's imagined utterance might be quite perplexing because it purports to contradict everything that the sonnet sequence stands for. The beauty of the Fair Youth is praised in almost every poem and the Poet is driven by a "preservation fantasy," as put by Aaron Kunin (99). But the devil is in the detail, of course. The word to focus on is "pencil." As Burrow notes, "*Pencil* and *pen* are traditionally opposed as representatives of fine art and poetry respectively in a formalised debate about the rival merits of the sister arts known in the Renaissance as a 'paragone'" (412). He also adds that the basis of such an opposition is that the *pen* is considered to describe the "inward," while the *pencil* "depicts the outward" (412).

The Poet's critical attitude towards the sister arts, particularly his stance regarding the art of painting, is a recurring theme in the sonnets. The first poem which illustrates this phenomenon is sonnet 16:

> Now stand you on the top of happy hours,
> And many maiden gardens, yet unset,
> With virtuous wish would bear your living flowers,
> Much liker than your painted counterfeit . . .

Here the painted counterfeit refers to the Poet's writing rather than painting *per se*; however, he does not completely discourage the poetic representation of the friend. In sonnet 101, following the words of the Muse, he expresses quite the opposite: "Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb? / Excuse not silence so, for 't lies in thee / To make him much outlive a gilded tomb." What he seems to criticise, based on what we see above, is the ineffectiveness of mimetic poetry, especially when it is set against the only genuine mimesis fashioned by Nature: procreation ("And you must live drawn by you own sweet skill" [Sonnet 16]).

The issue is later revisited during the course of the rival poet sonnets. The Poet criticises his rivals in the closing couplet of sonnet 82 with the words: "And their gross painting might be better used / Where cheeks need blood: in thee it is abused." He is eager to distinguish himself from them in the first two lines of the following poem: "I never saw that you did painting need, / And therefore to you fair no painting set" (Sonnet 83). Painting here primarily refers to an excessive use of linguistic ornaments (or makeup, thus signifying false beauty), but the fact that the Poet expresses his views in these terms is quite revealing. Thus, the word *painting* in the sonnets will bear a negative connotation in most cases. However, if one is unable to effectively preserve the Youth's beauty through mimesis, in descriptive poetry, but should also keep to "plain words" (Sonnet 82) when treating the friend as the subject of a poem, then what is it that one ought to do? Sonnet 84 might answer our question:

> Let him but copy what in you is writ
> Not making worse what nature made so clear,
> And such a counterpart shall fame his wit,
> Making his style admired everywhere.

Although the Poet characterises the poetic process as *copying*, what he copies is not visual nor something that is external—an imagery that echoes what we read in sonnet 79.

The reason behind this phenomenon has possibly much to do with the Poet's urge to eternalise the Fair Youth's beauty. What makes that an exceptionally difficult task is that it is not just the Fair Youth and his body which is transitory and mutable in its character but also beauty as a concept. What we perceive as aesthetically pleasing or beautiful shifts not only along on a diachronic and a spatial axis but also varies from one individual to another.

However, it is intrinsic to paintings that they have an already materialised form, one that the spectators cannot alter. For instance, Sandro Botticelli's painting *The Birth of Venus*—not unlike the sonnets—intends to capture something or someone that is supposedly eternally beautiful. Yet Venus's beauty in Botticelli's painting might be regarded as quite fragile, because what we get is a definition of beauty, with which we might not agree. Therefore, the *pencil* has the potential to capture beauty, but it is the *pen* that is capable of disclosing its essence ("beauty's truth to lay" [Sonnet 101]). Though the sonnets addressed to the friend do not express an anxiety concerning changing standards of beauty, the very first Dark Lady sonnet does: "In the old age black was not counted fair, / Or if it were it bore no beauty's name; / But now is black beauty's successive heir" (Sonnet 127).

Consequently, representing a particular materialisation or instance of beauty by painting or mimetic poetry is inadequate when one's aim is to make the Fair Youth "much outlive a gilded tomb" (Sonnet 101). Also, from what we have ascertained, it seems that only an abstract idea can be truly eternal; therefore, the Poet has no choice but to recreate the Fair Youth according to that. Caporicci draws our attention to the fact that the "poet's scepticism towards the mimetic possibilities of a verbal representation based on a visual approach to reality, leads, if not to a general rejection of the Petrarchan kind of praise, at least to a limited presence of actual physical descriptions" (6). This would explain the lack of blazons when it comes to the entirety of the sequence. The blazon which was "one of the standard elements in sonnet sequences in the 1590s" served as a visual catalogue of the beloved's beauty, often verbally dissecting his/her body, and focusing on its parts separately (Burrow 592). If we, again, expand our scope and take into account the Dark Lady sonnets as well, we will see that sonnet 130 is a *contre blason*. The only blazon-like poem among the Fair Youth sonnets is sonnet 99, but the description that is present in the poem regarding the features of the friend is quite vague and dubious. Even if we examine all 126 sonnets, it is rather challenging to find any physical attributes which would distinctly belong to the friend. We never get to know anything about the colour of his

eyes or the shape of his lips. The fact that he is continuously called fair in the sonnets might imply that his hair is blonde, but there are passages which could contradict even that ("And sable curls all silvered o'er with white" [Sonnet 12]).

We find similar arguments in Sir Philip Sidney's theoretical work *The Defense of Poesy*: "Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow, in effect, into another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature . . ." (par. 10). Sidney also argues that poets "to imitate borrow nothing of what is, hath been, or shall be; but range, only reined with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be and should be" (par. 16). The emphasis here is on poetic invention and the power of verse to recreate the object, rather than just reflecting on it. But how does the Poet take the beauty of the Fair Youth and make it *anew*, into *forms such as never were in nature*, forms that *may be* and *should be*?

The answer lies in sonnets 68 and 106. Sonnet 68 opens with the lines: "Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn, / When beauty lived and died as flowers do now." Kaula points out that the young friend's "symbolic status is further enlarged through his being identified metaphorically not only with the objects of highest prestige in the corresponding planes of being, such as the rose, gold, jewel, sun, and kingship, but also with time values of the mythic variety" (46–47). The friend is juxtaposed with the fleeting beauty that simply "lived and died," which implies that the Youth might be able to defy death, and with death, also time. We see the same theme from the second quatrain onwards in sonnet 106:

> Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
> Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
> I see their antique pen would have expressed
> Even such a beauty as you master now.
> So all their praises are but prophecies
> Of this our time, all you prefiguring . . .

John D. Bernard notes that the "friend is defined as the archetype" of "divine beauty" (81). He is a figure who in a way always existed and always will exist. Similarly, Schalkwyk states that the Poet introduces the Fair Youth as the ". . . standard by which we measure what beauty is, by which beauty gets its name" (261).

Following that line of thought, it is clear that to "praise the young man by a standard of beauty taken from some other paradigm or standard of reference is either

to empty the words of all meaning . . . or, by subordinating the young man to a higher standard, to diminish his status, to insult him" (Schalkwyk 261). Sonnet 18 embodies Schalkwyk's theory perfectly. To the question in the first line ("Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"), the answer is ultimately no. In a way, such a comparison would degrade the Fair Youth. He never appears through similes being like the rose or like the Sun. He is the rose, he is the Sun. The Youth seems to have an omnipotent presence that transfuses anything and everything that is beautiful, because he is Beauty itself. The question could only ever be answered with a yes if it were rewritten as "Shall I compare a summer's day to thee?", but then we would not be reading Shakespeare, would we?

The conceptualisation of the Youth's beauty in such a manner recalls notions of Platonic realism, i.e., a belief in the existence of universals or, more specifically, ideal forms (as opposed to nominalism, which is the doctrine of particulars). Thus, the friend is presented in the poems as the ideal form of Beauty. Intriguingly, the rare occasions when painting or drawing receives a positive connotation or, at least, remains neutral, often coincide with instances where the painted picture functions as a particular exemplifying the friend as the Platonic ideal. The following lines of sonnet 98 illustrate the idea well: "They were but sweet, but figures of delight / Drawn after you, you pattern of all those." The same idea is elaborated in sonnet 53:

> What is your substance, whereof are you made,
> That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
> Since every one hath, every one, one shade,
> And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
> Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
> Is poorly imitated after you.
> On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
> And you in Grecian tires are painted new.

John W. Velz in his monumental work Shakespeare and the Classical Tradition refers to a paper by Sidney Lee in which Lee concludes that the "references to [the Fair Youth's] beauty as a 'shadow' show that Shakespeare knew the Platonic belief that the phenomenal world is only a reflection of ideal reality" (360).

The friend's status as an abstraction and an archetype is reinforced by the textual idiosyncrasies present in the sequence. Certain words and expressions are used to such an extent in order to "describe" the Youth that they function much like

epithets in the poems, denoting him. The three most common ones are *fair*, *sweet*, and various forms of the word *beauty*. If we only count the instances in which these words refer to the Youth, then *fair* appears 29 times, while *sweet* has 41 occurrences, and *beauty* has 54 altogether. Moreover, out of these three words two are synonymous with each other, namely *beauty* (or *beauteous*) and *fair*. This sense of underlying repetitiveness is acknowledged in sonnet 105 by the Poet as well, in a poem that appears to be reminiscent of an *ars poetica*:

> Therefore my verse, to constancy confined,
> One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
> 'Fair, kind, true' is all my argument,
> 'Fair, kind, true' varying to other words;
> And in this change is my invention spent,
> Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.

Bernard argues that the Poet "is engaged in a search not merely for the moral truth of his friend, a search doomed to failure, but for a style that may attain a constancy beyond the material and moral vicissitudes of human existence" (77). The relevant rhetorical concept which thus far remained undiscussed, but might be linked to the style hinted at by Bernard, is invention. The first appearance of the word in the sequence is in sonnet 38 ("How can my Muse want subject to invent"), where invention adheres to "its usual sense in sixteenth-century rhetoric," meaning "to find out (pre-existing) matter for a poem" (Burrow 456) and "topics to be treated, or arguments to be used" (Burrow 456). In later sonnets, on the other hand, the emergent sense of the word "to compose as a work of imagination or literary art" tends to intermingle with the word's primary connotation, often superseding it. This is what we see happening, for instance, in sonnet 76, which is, in many ways, analogous to sonnet 105:

> Why write I still all one, ever the same,
> And keep invention in a noted weed,
> That every word doth almost tell my name,
> Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?
> O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
> And you and love are still my argument;
> So all my best is dressing old words new,
> Spending again what is already spent . . . (Sonnet 76)

Since the Poet keeps returning to the same argument or subject—the Fair Youth—the primary connotation of invention gradually loses its significance by becoming redundant. Thus, invention comes to be associated with a different type of creativity, one that is concerned with "dressing old words new," which leads to the genesis of the Poet's personal, recognisable style—indicative of both him and the Youth.

To conclude, we ought to revisit the imagery of sonnet 79. As we have established, the two participants of the exchange that materialises in the poem as a conceit of theft are the Fair Youth and the Poet. The Fair Youth, who also happens to be the masculine/external Muse, acts much like a catalyst in a chemical reaction. The potential is in the Poet, but he declares that some sort of input is essential. This is the very root of his self-doubt or dis/belief that is personified in the figure of the feminine/internal Muse. However, this dependence is mutual, since it is only the Poet who is capable of eternalising the friend's beauty. We have also shown that mimetic or descriptive poetry is incompatible with the Poet's pursuits. Instead of reflecting the friend's beauty, the Poet abstracts it. This is one of the elements that contribute to the Youth's enigmatic quality.

Consequently, the Youth being represented as an Idea/l is deprived of individuality, and thus becomes a template of beauty. This might also lead us to a reading of the sonnets in which he is not recreated after one particular person but could be seen as an "amalgam of more than one man," or, alternatively, might stand for anyone or anything that has ever been close to the heart of the Poet (Muir 122). This is well illustrated in the following extract:

> Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,
> Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,
> Who all their parts of me to thee did give;
> That due of many, now is thine alone.
> Their image I loved I view in thee,
> And thou (all they) hast all the all of me. (Sonnet 31)

The focus is not necessarily on who is loved but rather on the fact that the Poet loves. If we look at it this way, then the Poet's main objective is not the eternalisation of someone or someone's beauty. In this case, his aim is to capture something that is eternal in its own right—*Beauty*—and to exhibit his admiration of it.

It might seem to be slightly problematic to associate these poems with the art of painting after everything that has been said. The sonnets in their essence are nothing like paintings after all. Yet reading them is much like painting a picture. The minds of the readers are like canvases and as readers we are prompted by the abstractions which are offered to create our own images—our own particulars. We are never given a definition of beauty, only the idea of it is ever presented. The "worth" of the Fair Youth "inheres not in the accidents of age or sin but in a metaphysical essence accessible to the loving imagination alone" (Bernard 77). This is the reason why the Youth, the Poet, and the sonnets are eternal, because the poems do not limit the loving imagination of the audience.

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Puck's Broom and the Ontology of Play

ÁGNES MATUSKA & KAREN KETTNICH

Abstract: In this paper, we explore the ways Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream *stages its own status as theatrical fiction, then analyse the subtle web of fiction and reality it creates, and the ways it incites the audience to take part in this network. The most intriguing instances of the play's undertaking of relating fiction and fact are the ones which hold out promises of illuminating the transition between the two. After presenting some important instances of such transition, or, in the play's own terminology; "translations," this paper will deal in particular with Puck's closing speeches, with a special focus on a puzzling reference to his broom as well as to his sweeping. By focusing on the potentially diverse functions, and even more importantly, on the rich dramatic heritage of Puck's broom, we will examine what more general things it tells us about the ways theatrical fiction and the audience's reality interact.*

"[T]ales-within-tales do not deliver the thing itself.
Instead they please by harnessing
the powers of fabrication proper to the signifier."
(Catherine Belsey)

The metaphor equating life and theatre, or life and stage, was a central one in Elizabethan England, and with its proliferation on stage, the meaning of the trope became even more kaleidoscopic than earlier. Lynda Christian gives a detailed description of the diverse Hellenistic uses of the topos, including Stoic and satiric, as well as the medieval decline in its use, preceding its renaissance revival and dramatic rise in uses and interpretations, various and contradictory meanings ranging from the vanity of human life to manifold optimistic understandings. Diverse renderings of the topos certainly characterised Shakespeare's age as well,

including Shakespeare's *oeuvre* itself, even within a single play. The widely known version in *As You Like It* at the beginning of Jacques' monologue suggests a melancholy understanding of the *theatrum mundi* compared, for example, to Rosalind's creative and performative use of roleplay—a theatrical *enactment* of the topos rather than a literal citation. A central reason for the diversity of the use of the theatre metaphor can be found in the fact that a long-established theatrical figure suddenly appears at a new medium, the public theatre, giving way to surprising and new meanings that are difficult to control. The topographically liminal position of theatres outside the city walls reflects *their* indefinite ideological status. As Stephen Mullaney states, the Elizabethan playhouse was

> . . . dislocating itself from the confines of the existing social order and taking up a place on the margins of society. Erected outside the walls of early modern London in the 'licentious liberties' of the city, the popular playhouses of Elizabethan England occupied a domain that had traditionally been reserved for cultural phenomena that could not be contained within the strict or proper bounds of the community. (vii)

The self-representation of theatres explores this rich and controversial ground. The pretence involved in acting that is required to present a dramatic narrative on stage could at most be true in a *poetic* sense, but it also necessarily harboured the potential of remaining mere illusion, void of any substantial reality or an acceptable *raison d'être*.[1] Elizabethan theatre is famous for its boldness in addressing contemporary topical issues, and it certainly did not leave out the discussion of its own status as theatre either; metadramatical references abound in the plays of this era, revealing the anxiety around, or the potential function of, theatrical play.[2] Plays-within-plays are just one example of metadramatic references, which may function, apart from their embeddedness within the actual dramatical context, as more general illustrations of the function and nature of play within the social context that, in turn, gives to theatrical play a hostile rejection or a friendly embrace. This same question, the function of theatre, becomes the actual concern of the play metaphor in this age: Once the appearance of the play metaphor is associated with a theatrical context,

1 The debate between puritan opponents of theatre and fiction in general on the one hand and the supporters on the other reflects the main concerns of this debate, the presentation of which is not our major concern here. For further reading see Barish and Matuska.

2 See, for example, Hornby, Calderwood, and Righter.

its explanatory value shifts from illuminating the meaning of *life* as *vanitas* to saying something about the power of *theatre*.

A central theme, if not the crux of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is specifically about this power: the relationship between imagination, dream, fiction and play on the one hand, and their opposite that is needed to delineate them on the other: reality. While the only reality considered by the traditional understanding of the play metaphor would be God's everlasting one, accessible to humans after exiting their mortal coil, the play metaphor enframed by self-referential play allows for a more suspicious, and also a more flexible understanding of what makes reality real.[3] "Translation" between the realms of fictions and facts works both ways, as happens several times in the play. It seems that a central interest of the play is not only to explore this relationship and the potential power of fiction but also to confront the audience with differing contemporary ideas about this matter. As Catherine Belsey points out, "fiction gives us unique access to [the uncertainties of everyday life] in that, unlike everyday life, it crystallises incompatible or conflicting attitudes in texts. Culture in all its dissonance is thus made available for inspection" (97). In our analysis of relevant aspects of the play, we would like to suggest what we see to be the conflicting attitudes regarding the ontology of fiction—and specifically theatrical fiction—presented by the text, as well as what seems to be the text's preferred attitude.

The rehearsal and the play of Bottom and his company, and their anxiety over the audience's improper response to their playing, brilliantly summarise the multiple perspectives informing the contemporary meaning of theatrical play. As Jackson I. Cope points out, the way the mechanicals think about the effect of their play reveals "the radically double nature of the dramatic experience" (223). Bottom offers a seemingly naïve solution to the problem of scenes that may seem displeasing and frightening to the female members of their audience (such as the lion or the death of the lovers) by stressing their theatrical, illusionistic aspect:

> . . . Pyramus
> is not killed indeed; and for the more better assurance,
> tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but
> Bottom the weaver. (3.1.17–20)[4]

3 For a detailed overview of the traditional connection between dream and theatre see Cope, who includes an impressive visual example expressing the relationship between theatre and dream in a drawing by Michelangelo entitled *Il Sogno* (25).

4 References to Shakespeare's plays are from the *Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*.

As Cope reveals, Bottom's opinion shares remarkable characteristics with ideas of notable thinkers about the nature of theatre, being both illusionistic and anti-illusionistic at any given moment,[5] since it involves the presence of the actors *at the same time* both as their everyday selves and as the characters they impersonate, very much in the manner that Bottom wishes to make clear by suggesting that the lion's skin should cover Snug only to the extent he is visible below. So, the undoubtedly ridiculous efforts of the mechanicals to eliminate the absurd possibility of their audience being unaware of the conventions of dramatic fiction can also be read as stressing the inevitable double quality of actors on stage, lending their physical bodies to act also as media to represent the respective characters they play. Importantly, however, the questionable illusory quality of what is represented through the medium of the body is given a further twist in this play. In case we accept the invitation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to establish a metaphorical relationship between supposedly illusionistic visions seen in dreams on the one hand and stage on the other (most explicit in Puck's epilogue, to be discussed below), we realise that dreams and, consequently, plays in this drama are anything but presented as unreal. Rather, the opposite is true. Such a perspective is revealed by Cope as well when he points out in connection with Bottom's transformation into an ass that his vision, "like all the dreams of *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* is true both literally, and . . . symbolically" (224).

A counter-argument, allowing no substantial reality to products of imagination's fancy, is presented by the authoritative figure of the duke, Theseus, in his speech about lovers and madmen. Still, although Theseus seems to be ridiculing the lovers' stories as "more strange than true," as fantasies empty of any solid reality, his harsh opinion of fables and the tricks of imagination is undermined not only by the dramatic irony rooted in the audience's awareness of the larger context of what has actually happened in the woods but also by the ambiguities of the speech itself. Somewhat contrary to his contempt towards the whole group of poets, lovers, and madmen, Theseus in the end does present a view of the poet as creator when he describes his pen as something that turns things unknown into "shapes, and gives to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name" (5.1.16–17). This formulation

5 Cope points out that Bottom's opinion in comparable to Ortega y Gasset's observation on the "dual being" of an actress and her playing Ophelia: "the stage and the actor are the universal metaphor incarnate, and this is the theater: visible metaphor" (219, 223).

resonates with Philip Sidney's similar argument in favour of poetic imagination in his *Defense of Poesy*:

> Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect into another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature, as the heroes, demigods, cyclopes, chimeras, furies, and such like. So as he goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit. (Alexander 8–9)

Theseus, however, displays an ambiguous attitude, revealed in his shifting opinion of the mechanicals' play, ridiculing their clumsiness, as well as initially embracing the honesty of their effort. While we watch the inset play and listen to the increasingly hostile remarks of the courtly audience, we may discover that the function of the inset is interestingly layered. As Madeline Forey notes, the craftsmen's worry over the audience's incapability of distinguishing play from reality reflects the Puritans' fear of fiction being too convincing (326). Yet, the larger play curiously gives much credit to such fears in presenting not only the magic of the fairies transforming the everyday—Demetrius, for example, will continue living as being transformed by the magic flower—but also in accounting for supposed visions, be they theatrical or nocturnal, as truth. Thus, no matter how ridiculous the mechanicals' production may seem, their initial fear, namely the creative potential of fiction, is rather embraced than criticised, and it will be their own hostile audience who will seem ridiculously unimaginative in their lack of appreciation and their unwillingness to participate and play the proper audience of a play which is justly described as "very tragical myrth." Theseus and his court are not endorsing the play of Pyramus and Thisbe the same way we, the audience are invited to take the play by Puck in his closing speeches. Also, the courtly audience seems to be missing more than just the epilogue of the inset play, the bridge that makes sense of the play-world, when they opt for skipping it, since they also miss the fun of playing.

In Puck's penultimate speech, at the end of his "[n]ow the hungry lion roars" (5.1.365) monologue, in which he describes the enchanted hour of the fairies which has come, he tells us that "I am sent with broom before / To sweep the dust behind the door" (5.1.383–384). The significance of Puck's lines is ambiguous. If, while watching the play, the audience thought that they were witnessing a midsummer night's dream, now they are confused: according to Puck,

now is the moment that the fairies, who "following darkness like a dream" (5.1.380) begin to frolic. It seems the dream and the play are just about to begin. This, too, is suggested by the fact that Puck is sent *before* the group: his task, to sweep behind the door with his broom, seems to prepare the site for the midnight blessing revelry of the fairies. The "hallow'd house" (5.1.382) he is talking about, the site of the feast, would conjure the notion of the site of revelry, a stage of a play, even if he were not on stage, possibly sweeping. The actual stage, curiously, is just about to become empty, now that the fairies—and the actors—are saying their good-byes. So, what exactly is Puck cleaning at the end of the performance and what is he cleaning for? May the answers to these questions illuminate the transition of one play-world to the other, or play-world into reality?

Similar to the confusing status of Puck's cleaning *before* the arrival of the fairies at the end of the play, his broom has generated some controversy. Puck's attribute of the broom is less ambiguous than its specific use at the end of this play; a tract entitled *Robin Goodfellow: His Mad Pranks and Merry Jests* published in 1628 actually pictures him with a broom. Several possibilities arise in interpreting the function of Puck's broom and his reference to sweeping. While Wendy Wall argues that Puck "play[s] the role of housewife" (67),[6] Douglas Bruster links Puck's broom to characters that can be considered as his dramatic ancestors: devils, vices, and tricksters, a group of characters of questionable morality, sometimes comically evil, sometimes playfully subversive, who would establish contact with the audience, and thus would not belong entirely to the mimetic reality of the play but would participate more actively in the audience's reality of watching a play by using direct address or reflecting on the situation of playing, as well as taking active part in creating the play-world. Actors playing Vices would be present on stage in a similar way to Snug's lion: their selves as actors would shine through the character they played. Puck displays several attributes of this tradition of dramatic characters epitomising acting and dramatic disguise, most prominently through his references in the "merry wanderer of the night" (2.1.43) speech, playing all sorts of things from a filly foal through a roasted crab to a three-foot stool. Bruster calls attention to the fact that sweeping was not merely the business of housewives: Puck as a sweeper in a playhouse may stage the normally off-stage duties of the boy actor, whose task, among others, is to clean up the stage

6 Wall's larger claim is that "*Dream's* pastoral magic both allowed for the gentrification of popular ritual and broadcasted the elite humanist male fantasy of returning to domesticity"—that household sphere which occupied a "vexed but critical place in the cultural imagination" (106).

(56–57). Anyone who has been to the theatre and remained through the interval or after the show's conclusion will no doubt be aware that stages need sweeping. This, however, does not solve the riddle of why, at the end of the play, Puck still seems to sweep at the beginning of another *before* the fairies enter. Further evidence, also from Bruster, marks the broom as a ritualistic talisman rather than merely a domestic tool or stage-hand implement. As Bruster points out, Puck is performing a task often seen among the devils of the English Mummers' plays, which, though they were recorded much later, appear to contain elements which go back to the early modern period and before. In several instances, devils sweep at the end of performances, both to collect money from the audience and to clear the stage.

Little Devil Doubt, for example, comes in with a broom and asks the audience threateningly for money:

> In come I, Little Devil Doubt,
> I you don't give me money
> I'll sweep you all out

or

> Money I want and money I crave;
> If you don't give us some money
> I'll sweep you all to the grave.[7]

This second example also appears in the Cinderford, Gloucestershire Mummer's Play, perhaps spoken by Beelzebub (Tiddy 162).

In Bruster's words, "[s]uch devils invoke sweeping at the ends of their plays as a ritualistic way of indicating the gathering up of money and the ordering of the performance space" (54). While the examples perfectly illustrate the use of the broom as a tool with which either money is gathered, or the ungrateful audience is swept to the grave, there is no direct and specific reference to cleaning or clearing the stage ritualistically, nor that this gesture marks the end of the game. In a way, though, it does interrupt the flow of the plot by establishing an economic

7 This is cited as it appears in Brody (60). In Tiddy's text of *The Mummers' Play*, Devil Doubt speaks similar lines to these in the Belfast play, and, though it is unclear who the speaker is, the following lines appear in the Malvern, Worcestershire play: "In comes I little bibble and funny / I am the man to Collect the money / Money I wount money I crave if you dond [sic] give me money / I'll sweep you to the grave" (233).

relationship between the audience and the play, thus ushering back the viewers, if only temporarily, to their everyday reality. With or without broom, collecting money, however, does not necessarily come at the end of the play: one can think of the well-known passage in *Mankind* when the Vices gather money *before* the chief attraction, the appearance of Titivillus, the devil (Somerset, ll. 459–462). It is true, though, that very little remains apart from a Christmas song after Devil Doubt enters in the Derbyshire Mumming Play (John 181–193). Thus, on the one hand, Bruster's reference to "the ordering of the performance space" is rather indirect, while on the other, although Puck's sweeping occurs at the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it is clear that he is ordering not *after* but *before*: if his sweeping suggests a sweeping connected to ordering a play-space, a stage, it is a ritualistic preparation rather than a closing, which we do not find in the examples of sweeping devils.

The missing link may be offered by Infidelitas, a Vice character who appears in John Bale's *Three Laws*. After the good characters have all been introduced, at the beginning of the second act, Infidelitas, the playfully corrupt and tricky gamester, enters singing the following: "Brom, brom, brom, brom, brom. Bye brom bye bye. Bromes for shoes and powchrynges, botes and buskyns for newe bromes / Brom, brom, brom" (A6r). Infidelitas enters as broom-seller, a labourer traditionally known to sing and himself a feature of ballads, such as "Hey, Bonny Broom-Man," as were his wares and the plants of which they were fashioned.[8] Firstly, then, Infidelitas' song about the broom may imply a web of musical connections to popular culture. Furthermore, if the song Infidelitas sings is indeed the one included by Thomas Ravenscroft in his 1611 collection to which it bears a striking similarity, it appears that Infidelitas only knows part of the lyrics and improvises around the portion of the song that is significant to his action in the play, and thus is more obviously connected to the group of semi-dramatic characters, playing their actor selves as well as the dramatic character at the same time, mentioned above. In addition to Infidelitas' scripted improvisations of the ballad's lyrics,

8 For the Broom-man as a singer, see the following verse from Thomas Ravenscroft's *A Brief Discourse*: "The Broom-man maketh his liuing most sweet, / with carrying of broomes from street to street: /. . . Who would desire a pleasanter thing, / then all the day long to doe nothing but sing" (D4r). The tune of "The Bonny Broom" and the Scottish "Broom of Cowdon Knows" were repeatedly recycled into new popular ballads. Wording very similar to Infidelitas' song appears in a song in Whythorne (1571, Ii3v), in Wilson (1584, D4r), as well as Ravenscroft's *Melismata* (1611), in which it appears: "Brooms for old shoes, Pouchrings, Bootes and Buskins, will yee buy a-ny new Broome?" (Dr).

as Thora Balslev Blatt points out, though "the lines are evidently meant to be sung, . . . Bale leaves it to the actor to supply the missing notes in the staves above the lines" (69).

It is possible to see a connection between his entry crying broom and the typical entry of actors crying "make room"—again in a semi-dramatic fashion. Actors crying "broom" and "room" both imply the idea of clearing the space, and the sound of the two words is so similar, they may be even confused. The Vices in *Mankind* call for room when they are about to sing their Christmas song: "make room, sirs, for we have to be long" (Lester, l. 332), "stand aroom, I pray thee" (l. 631), "out of my way sirs" (l. 695), and cry for the audience to "make space" at several points in the play (e.g. l. 474 and 612). *The Enterlude of Youth* (1557) features the title character, pushing in, "aback fellows, and give me room / Or I shall make you avoid soon" (A1v), and *Cambises'* Ambidexter enters telling his audience to "stand away, stand away!" (A4v). As Robert Weimann puts it, "the traditional call for 'room' rang out again and again, but not from the lips of all the actors: those who impersonated the virtuous and pious figures never indulged in this kind of audience address" (102–103).

An initial answer to what these examples of Vices may be sweeping for is literally stage space—room to perform in the crowded inn yard or Tudor hall. But further space must be created in the minds of the audience. Peter Brook famously opens his book on the theatre, *The Empty Space*, with the statement: "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage" (9). What Puck seems to be engaged in is *turning* the space into a stage, as well as the other way round: connecting the world on stage with what is considered to be the off-stage reality of the audience—and he knows he needs their help. As the above examples of the craftsmen's play show, doing it in a way that it is meaningful for the audience does not always happen easily, particularly in case the audience is not ready to lend for play the "empty space" in their minds.

George Chapman hints at this function of the stage broom in *The Gentleman Usher* when a broom-seller, Pogio, is the first character presented in the second one of the play's two mask-like entertainments.[9] Pogio lauds the broom in comically hyperbolic terms and finally concludes: "And so we come (gracing your gracious Graces) / To sweepe Care's cobwebs from your cleanly faces" (ll. 247–248).

9 This example also may offer Renaissance evidence connecting the broom to Mumming rituals, as the introductory "pedant" figure says his cast, including the "broom-man," present themselves, "without mask or Mumming" (203), perhaps implying that one might naturally connect the broom-man to a Mummers' performance.

Part of the work of theatrical entertainment, then, is to negate external concerns. True engagement with performance requires a clearing away of distracting worries, the cobwebs of care. Of course, what is connected to such sweeping is the Classical ideal of purgation and catharsis through theatre—although that sweeping happens at the end of the play rather than at the beginning. As Peter Brook puts it, "the act of theatre is a release. Both laughter and intense feelings clear some debris from the system" (137). But a similar, initial release, a disposition for accepting what is offered by a play, is also required.

Returning to what we have called earlier "the missing link," found in Bale's play, Infidelitas' broom is thus not simply a pedlar's item for sale but indeed the instrument of a "ritualistic ordering of the performance space" on more than one level. Soon after his entry, as it is proper for the legerdemain of creating play-worlds of a Vice, the director of a troupe, he is to conjure Idolatry and Sodomy, mirroring the scene in which God previously summoned his helpers (in the 1538 version of the play). But Infidelitas is sweeping to clean the stage for a broader game, the whole play itself. This notion becomes the more interesting if we bear in mind that, according to a reconstruction of the doubling scheme of the play, Bale, the author played not only the Prolocutor, the prologue to his play, but Infidelitas as well.[10]

Infidelitas ultimately yields his presence in the play to another kind of ritualistic conclusion, as his "brom, brom, brom" gives way to a "credo, credo, credo"—and devilish improvised ballads succumb to ritualised Catholic chant, equally devilish according to Bale's Protestant agenda.

As for Puck's ritualistic sweeping, his ordering of theatrical space makes several promises relating to his broom. Positioned as he is on the threshold of the house and forest, Puck is a bridge between the domestic hearth and all wilderness wolves and hungry lions which might, as in the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, tragically part the lovers within. As he promises, armed with his broom, "not a mouse / Shall disturb this hallow'd house" (5.1.381–382).

He is also positioned, as we can glean from his description of the time of night with its screech owls, shrouds, and gaping graves, at Hamlet's "witching time of night"[11] and perhaps it is significant to keep in mind that the association of brooms

10 For the doubling scheme see Happé (156). The idea that Bale played the Vice is also supported by White (2).

11 *Hamlet*: "'Tis now the very witching time of night / When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out Contagion to this world" (3.2.390–392).

with witchcraft long predates the days of Harry Potter. According to Reginald Scot, witches were believed to dance with brooms in their rituals (F2v); Thomas Beard's *Theatre of God's Judgements* from 1597 tells briefly of a Faustian Friar who gives his soul to the devil and flies on a broom (H7v–H8r); and Henry More's *Modest Enquiry Into the Mystery of Iniquity* in 1664 equates "witches" with "besom [broom] riders" (P3r). Similarly, Puck, positioned on the threshold between play-creation and play-conclusion, uses the broom not only as a real and metaphorical tool of sweeping away anything that may be threatening to the play to come but also as a means of supernatural transport. Though not sweeping the audience across the boundary of life and death as Little Devil Doubt threatens to sweep unpaying playgoers to the grave, he sweeps the audience across the boundaries of play-world and reality, dream and waking. Interestingly, however, by this point the audience may be unsure about the exact number and the hierarchy of the real and fictional worlds that are inferred here, and through which they may have a free passage, as if flying on a broom. The difference is clear enough between the miraculous reality of the fairy creatures and the Athenians, as well, as well as between the latter and the ridiculed play-world of Pyramus and Thisbe. It is ambiguous, however, where the event (or play?) belongs that Puck prepares with his sweeping—Puck, who is the only go-between connecting not only the different groups of characters within the play, but us, the theatre audience with the world of the play (most obviously through the epilogue). What magic hour is approaching, and how are we to take the fairies who are to arrive and to frolic? Although they had a clear function in regard to the fates of the Athenians, what duty can they have once the plot has ended?

By the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Puck has stage-managed the Vice-like antics of the night in the forest—the "accidental" application of the love-juice to Lysander rather than Demetrius and the spontaneous conjuring of the ass-head for Titania's induced cravings. The play has been largely his creation, and so is, to read the epilogue, the promise of a future play. Making up with his own epilogue for the epilogue of the craftsmen's play rejected by Theseus, he is offering us two options: we may either imagine that what we saw was not real, just a dream, or endorse the play by participating in it as a willing and accepting, clapping audience—contrary to the ungracious way Theseus and his court behaved in a similar situation. Taking the play as a "mere dream," however, is a tricky and questionable option, since throughout the play, dreams proved to be true, while the dream-world of the fairies seemed to be the most powerful of all. Three times

in the epilogue Puck, remaining alone onstage with his Vice's broom, promises to "mend," "make amends," and "restore amends" with future theatrical fantasies. These lines possibly refer to the audience forgiving the company for the "weak and idle theme" of the play—true, we have to have an empty space for play in our minds to accept the creative potential of fiction that Sidney, too, is talking about, to accept it as a major theme of a whole drama. They can also mean that in case we pardon them, if we accept their questionable state of being as "not real people," be they shadows, fairies, or actors, they will mend not only by ceasing to be questionable entities, but also that they, with their magic powers, will be able to mend whatever is to be set right in our world. The promise of future "mendings" is already at the threshold, waiting for our endorsing clapping hands, since, as we have seen, the plot ends, but Puck, with his broom, has started his preparations for the fairies to enter.

Puck's broom thus, as the broom of a chief playmaker, paradoxically and with a magical sweep, is both ending and beginning the play. He connects not only the appearance of the fairies at the end of the play with the appearance of the actors at the beginning of it but also the idea of the theatre and the "hallow'd house," thus perpetuating the magical, dream-like atmosphere of the play and blurring the boundary between stage magic and the charm of fairies. As the Vice-like director of the game, he is also urging us to "make room," pleading for a playground, as well as an open mental space, in the imagination of the audience, where such plays and dreams can be perceived. At the same time, he is also teaching the early modern audience how to behave, how to take a play, and how to endorse it with their consent. Quite importantly, he is also introducing a relatively new interpretation of the theatre metaphor as well, namely, that life understood as theatre is not necessarily referring to the *vanitas*-tradition, condemning everything as vain in this unhappy theatre of life, remote from the everlasting divine reality, but rather that theatre, in its shadowy, fictitious state, can present the power that shapes the world. This explicit reference to the role of the audience in participating in the process of the construction of social reality through the fiction of theatrical play is very much in line with early modern ideas about readership, the role of the audience in theatre, as well as the formation of a public discourse.[12] Thus, apart from the fact that Puck's broom reminds us on several levels of earlier cultural and theatrical traditions, such as magic, stage devils, and trickster Vices, and their characteristically close

12 On the idea that contemporary audiences, rather than remaining passive consumers, took an active part in producing and shaping the meaning of plays they watched, see Whitney.

relation to members of the public, it also includes an appeal for the future as well. It refers to the play that is just about to begin, as if in a *theatrum mundi*, starting when the audience leaves the theatre and enters the world where it remains in their power to use the same broom for purposes they think fit. This is why the craftsmen's play-within-a-play is made ridiculous to the extent any theatre can be, since it enacts an insufficient knowledge of the social code defining a play's function.[13] The function of the play, ultimately, will be realised by its audience. Their fear, just like the fear of Puritans, was not unfounded: the audience may indeed embrace the creative potential of fiction. Just like the way the broom can be read as a tool marking the continuity between the fairy world and the real one, so, too, the version of the theatre metaphor the whole play suggests is the continuity between stage and audience reality, as well as the reality of theatres at the liminal territories of the city and the rest of London. Shakespeare's play is part of a contemporary social discourse, it positions itself both as an audience and active performer within it and celebrates, interestingly, not only playing but what it presents: the type of reality infused with playing. The really interesting question perhaps targets the decision of the audience, the drive that leads them—once they embrace their power in inaugurating world-views with their applause at the end of plays—to support a new version of the play metaphor and, thus, a new perspective of their own reality.

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13 Bate reads this inset play as Shakespeare's parody of his own habit of literary borrowing and adapting (41).

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The Gnomic Self

Counsel and Subjectivity in Shakespearean Drama

IVAN LUPIĆ

Abstract: This essay discusses the links between counsel and subjectivity in the context of early modern English drama, with particular reference to Shakespeare's Hamlet *and* Romeo and Juliet. *Drawing on Foucault's notion of the gnomic self, which he recovers from the ancient philosophical tradition, it asks what kind of subjectivity emerges from situations of counsel in which remembered knowledge, in the form of sententiae, is supposed to act as a transformative force in the subject of advice.*[1]

A remarkable curiosity distinguishing one of our most eloquent and influential treatments of selfhood in early modernity, Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, is the fact that it is not a book about counsel.[2] For Greenblatt, the Renaissance self is fashioned under conditions that include, among others, submission to an external authority and a relation to the Other that "always involves some experience of threat, some effacement or undermining, some loss of self." Most importantly, "self-fashioning is always," he writes, "though not exclusively, in language." Out of these encounters emerges a self that is essentially "an artful construct," to be studied alongside the variety of ideological discourses that participated in its shaping without necessarily eliminating its own power to form (9).

As I will argue in what follows, the best word to describe this process in the context of the Renaissance is, in fact, counsel. It is the word to which Renaissance

1 Since its submission to the journal, this essay has been incorporated into the author's forthcoming monograph *Subjects of Advice: Drama and Counsel from More to Shakespeare*, to be published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 2019. András Kiséry deserves thanks as its enthusiastic getter and David Scott Kastan as its only begetter.

2 For the outstanding status of Greenblatt's book see the recent comments by Kearney.

subjects themselves would turn when considering how they are fashioned and how they participate in the fashioning of others. Greenblatt's account of how the self is fashioned in the period identifies the same distinctive attributes that characterise the period's heavy reliance on counsel in both the construction of identity and the performance of roles individuals are expected to take in the world. To take counsel is to submit willingly to an authority outside the self while retaining the sense of agency and independence. It means reaching out to another person while entertaining the possibility that what we are told will not support but undermine us. It is an activity that always, and exclusively, happens in language, but whose chief aim is a decision that will lead to action and an engagement with the world. To take counsel is not to follow counsel mechanically and relinquish responsibility; to take counsel is to be reminded that the self is work in progress, fashioned and maintained through repeated challenges to one's own wisdom. To take counsel is not to be merely subjected to advice; it is to become an active subject of it.

We come much closer to the recognition of counsel as a central force in the history of subjectivity in the work of Michel Foucault, who is regularly seen as an important influence on both Greenblatt and new historicist scholarship more generally. However, the extent of Greenblatt's conversation with Foucault on the topic of selves, subjectivities, and identities in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* is naturally limited to Foucault's earlier work.[3] Foucault's late work, in which he goes beyond the techniques of domination that largely underpin his historical accounts in *Madness and Civilization* as well as *Discipline and Punish* in order to consider more systematically the techniques of the self, was in fact evolving just as Greenblatt published his study.[4] It is perhaps not entirely surprising that three decades later, in Greenblatt's *Shakespeare's Freedom*, a book that explicitly returns to issues of subjectivity, Foucault goes unmentioned. The change of critical climate and the withdrawal of theory from the centre of the academic stage have resulted in new figures of intellectual authority and in different explanatory frameworks. Nevertheless, we need to acknowledge that Foucault's late work continues to offer

3 When one considers the specific mentions of Foucault in Greenblatt's book, one is in fact forced to admit that the connection between Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* and Foucault's work more generally is characterised by obliqueness, skepticism, and a tendency to dismiss.

4 The third volume of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, entitled *The Care of the Self*, was published in French in 1984 and in English two years later. Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* was published in 1980. It will be noticed that the account that follows departs from Lorna Hutson's assessment that the argument of Foucault's late work "locks neatly into the historical thesis of *Discipline and Punish*" (65).

valuable and provocative commentary on the questions of both self and freedom in early modernity.

The Howison lectures Foucault delivered at Berkeley in 1980, where he had already been a visitor twice (in 1975 and in 1979), are entitled "Truth and Subjectivity."[5] Their topic is the emergence of specific types of techniques associated with the government of one's own life in both the ancient philosophical tradition, especially Epicureanism and Stoicism, and in early Christian thought. According to Foucault, if we are to understand how people are governed in the modern world, we need to consider together techniques of coercion and techniques of the self within the larger framework of governmentality. The term encompasses the governing of people in a state, a city, or a household, but also the conduct of one's own life and the work one undertakes, often with the assistance of another person, in attending to oneself, or taking care of the self (all of these meanings are active in Thomas Elyot's *The Book Named the Governor*, to take a familiar Renaissance example). In techniques of the self, be they pagan or Christian, truth plays an important role, but Foucault's principal aim is to identify the different relationships that exist between truth and subjectivity in these two traditions of thought. The "gnostic" self of Christianity is under an obligation to discover and verbalise the hidden truth of the self, typically through an act of confession; the "gnomic" self of Greek and Roman philosophy does not reveal a hidden reality, but instead allows truth, in the form of remembered knowledge, to become a force united with the will, leading to a transformed way of living. While consultation and confession are already constitutive of the gnomic self, their function is not to reveal a secret reality but to allow *gnomē* (in Latin, *sententia*, "a brief piece of discourse through which truth appeared with all its force") to act within the subject (Foucault, "About the Beginning" 209–210). The chief role in this process of releasing the force of the truth is played by the counsellor, who by means of discourse and through the art of persuasion assists the memory of the advisee—"and memory is nothing else than the force of the truth when it is permanently present and active in the soul" (225).

5 The lectures, delivered at Berkeley in the same year in which *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* was published, were recorded and can be accessed online: http://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/mfaa. The summary that follows is based on the recording as well as the published version (Foucault, "About the Beginning"). These ideas are developed further in a series of lectures Foucault delivered during the remaining years of his life; see Foucault, *Government*; *Courage of the Truth*. On the practices of *parrhesia* in the context of early modern England, see Colclough. See also Foucault, *History of Sexuality* (vol. 3, 37–68); *Ethics*; *Subjectivity and Truth*.

It is significant that in attempting to recover the gnomic self from the ancient philosophical tradition Foucault turns to Seneca as his primary source. The text he chooses, *De tranquillitate animi* ("On Tranquility of Mind"), is found among Seneca's moral essays, but it is in fact an imperfect dialogue, an incomplete scene of counsel in which Serenus solicits advice from Seneca, and Seneca responds by sending Serenus a long letter in which he provides an abundance of advice on different aspects of life. The point of this advice is to remind Serenus of the precepts with which he is already familiar, to help him remember them and translate them into a way of living. According to Foucault, Seneca uses "persuasive arguments, demonstrations, examples" not in order to discover a secret truth hidden inside the soul of his disciple, but in order to explain "to which extent truth in general is true." In other words, in this game (the term is Foucault's) between Seneca and Serenus, truth is defined as "a force inherent to principles" that has to be "developed in a discourse" ("About the Beginning" 209). Despite the length of Seneca's discourse, however, this scene of counsel is incomplete: we never hear back from Serenus, and so we never learn whether Seneca's counsel proved efficient. It is only in Seneca's plays that subjects of advice are given an opportunity to respond to the counsel they are given, by practicing themselves the art of rhetoric, and it is only in Seneca's plays that we witness the consequences of truth when it is remembered by those whose subjectivity is at stake. The various precepts offered by Seneca to Nero in *Octavia*, one of the most influential Senecan plays in the early modern period, are matched by precepts offered by Nero in response; where precepts are offered through equally persuasive arguments and examples, one begins to wonder what exactly happens to truth.

This is an important complication that presents itself when we attend to subjectivity and counsel in Renaissance contexts. As Joel B. Altman observes in his book-length study of Shakespeare's *Othello*, Renaissance humanism promoted "a fundamentally rhetorical sense of self" (*The Improbability of Othello* 20). This rhetorical consciousness that pervades the period is directly related to the dictates of the humanist educational program and the importance of rhetorical training in the humanist classroom.[6] Within this program, distinctions between truth and flattery are as central as they are increasingly impossible to maintain. This is exactly why

6 In an earlier study, Altman suggested that a mind trained to argue on both sides of the question (*in utramque partem*), the practice that defined the rhetorical education of the Renaissance classroom, becomes capable of "a great complexity of vision" (*The Tudor Play of Mind* 3). This vision Altman sees

Hythloday, the champion of plainly spoken truth, is annoyed by More when they discuss the issue of counsel in *Utopia*. Handling the matter "wyttelye and handesomely for the purpose" and presenting it "with a crafty wile and a subtell trayne" might dull the edge of truth and deprive it of its transformative force (F6v–F7r). As in the course of the sixteenth century dissembling in the conduct of politics becomes less a matter of essence and much more a matter of degree, the exercise of plain speech can no longer escape the possibility of being perceived as a form of bad counsel.[7]

For students of literature, the striking potential of flattery to grow into truth is neatly captured in the gradually changing conception of the figure of Echo from Ovid's episode of Narcissus and Echo in *The Metamorphoses*, one of the foundational literary texts in discussions of subjectivity and its transformations over time. Whereas in the late Middle Ages, particularly in the influential interpretations of Boccaccio, Echo is seen as the symbol of absolute flattery—repeating, indiscriminately, everything that is said—in mid-sixteenth-century England she begins to assume a more questionable shape. Thomas Howell, an early translator of Ovid's tale into English, appends to his 1560 translation a long moralisation of the tale in which, despite the obvious indebtedness to Boccaccio, Echo is implicitly made to speak for a new and different generation of subjects. Echo is not simply the voice of flattery; Echo is the voice of good counsel. The paradox, indeed, is the point. The tragedy of Narcissus consists in his obsessive focus on himself and thus his inability to hear the voice of the other, represented by Echo. Counsel works, we could extend this logic somewhat, not by complete opposition but by appearing to echo the person counselled while introducing somewhere along the way its crucial difference.

Good counsel, like Echo, is here made to resemble our own words, but the meaning these words carry has changed significantly. It is as if we have come up with the words ourselves; it is as if we have discovered something in ourselves that is true and familiar but that we never knew existed. The realisation, unfortunately, may be an act of self-deception. Just as we have convinced ourselves that

realised in certain kinds of Tudor plays, which turn out to be "essentially questions and not statements at all" (6). While Altman's study obviously informs my thinking about plays, my understanding of the problem is less essentialist and more historical in orientation: even the most rhetorical of Renaissance plays (such as *Gorboduc*, or George Buchanan's biblical dramas) were often made out to be statements, which did not stop them from continuing to be questions.

7 Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), for instance, distinguishes between three kinds of deceit: small, medium, and large; or dissimulation, deception, and perfidy. Of these, the first is to be encouraged, the second tolerated, and only the last condemned. See Burke 485.

we are agents, in full charge of the situation, we become actors ruled by the seductive accidents of language. The point is brought home poignantly in the final act of John Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*. As Antonio and Delio are engaged in conversation, the echo from the ruined walls of the abbey reminds Antonio of his late wife's voice. "Hark," says Delio, "the dead stones seem to have pity on you / And give you good counsel." Antonio is unmoved: "Echo, I will not talk with thee, / For thou art a dead thing." To which Echo responds: "Thou art a dead thing" (5.3.36–39).

Who is alive and who exactly dead here? Whose self is affirmed and whose undermined? As truth and flattery, as the voice of the self and the echoing voice of the other, counsel is clearly crucial, but what role it plays in the history of the Renaissance subject is a question that early modern scholarship has not yet answered. There have been attempts, since the publication of Greenblatt's influential study, to think about Renaissance subjectivity from other perspectives, but counsel has not played a prominent part in them.[8] In *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*, Michael C. Schoenfeldt rightly points to Foucault's later work as the more relevant framework for considering subjectivity in the early modern period. What interests him, however, is "the way that individual subjectivity, and individual liberty, is secured through the individual's exercise of self-discipline" (13).[9] Similarly inspired by Foucault, the more recent studies by Cynthia Marshall and James Kuzner come somewhat closer to the versions of subjectivity explored here. Marshall operates with the concept of violence, but in her work violence is not a force that consolidates or discovers the subject but a force that potentially shatters and disperses it. Unlike Greenblatt's self-fashioned subjects, who are artfully in control, Marshall's subjects are volatile, conflicted, and unstable, "paradoxically affirmed in . . . moments of self-cancelling or shattering" and "simultaneously pulled toward opposite extremes of dissolution and coherence" (14). Marshall sees these emerging subjects in opposition to the familiar humanist narratives of development, autonomy, and control, but when we study Renaissance subjects of advice we realise that it is the contradictions within the humanist project

8 Elizabeth Hanson offers an adversarial model, defined by "the hostile discovery of another's innermost being," most notably through scenarios of torture. Understandably, she is influenced by Foucault's earlier work, especially *Discipline and Punish*; see Hanson 8–10, 24–54, the quoted phrase at 1.

9 Schoenfeldt takes embodiment as the analytical starting point: "In early modern England, the consuming subject was pressured by Galenic physiology, classical ethics, and Protestant theology to conceive all acts of ingestion and excretion as very literal acts of self-fashioning" (11).

itself that enable conflicted, unstable, and vulnerable subjectivity. Humanist ideals and humanist results, in other words, are often at odds.[10]

Vulnerability, mostly affective in nature, is the defining characteristic of Kuzner's "open subjects," who are imagined in terms of bodies and their passions. "Selves are vulnerable in constitution," Kuzner argues, "incapable, on their own, of fully mastering either the passions threatening to undo them from within or the violence threatening from without" (18). Open subjects are contrasted with bounded, discrete selves; they are "opened up to a broad spectrum of the experience of vulnerability, from more mild forms—such as being captivated by another's seductive arguments, or sharing another's suffering—to more intense ones, such as draining the self of agency or allowing personal boundaries to be violated and changed" (Kuzner 4). One's subjection to others' seductive arguments, which Kuzner sees as a mild form of vulnerability, can, however, prove to be the source of one's undoing.

Subjects of advice are not mildly but intensely vulnerable, because, in choosing to be counselled, they make themselves available to the government of others. A succinct representation of this problem is found in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, in which the two principal figures of counsel apparently derive from the two traditions of thought Foucault focuses on in his discussion of truth and subjectivity: the Friar is a counsellor associated with Catholic confession; the Nurse is a typical counsellor figure found in Senecan tragedy. Neither conforms to the type, however, and their function in the play is not to embody distinctive theories of counsel in relation to subjectivity. Rather, both are used to highlight the position in which subjects of advice find themselves when they turn to their counsellors for help. Juliet's case is especially instructive because it shows us how Shakespeare dramatises the threat to subjectivity once it binds itself to counsel. When Juliet hears that Romeo has been banished, she immediately turns to the Nurse for advice, figuring her subjectivity as tender and malleable: "Comfort me, counsel me. / Alack, alack, that heaven should practise stratagems / Upon so soft a subject as myself" (3.5.209–211). But Juliet proves tough enough to reject quickly the Nurse's suggestion to marry Paris and forget Romeo. Instead, she goes to Friar Laurence "to make confession and to be absolved" (3.5.234). Yet the confession turns out to be just another solicitation of advice. "Give me some present counsel," she exclaims (4.1.61), threatening to commit suicide if her urgent request is not satisfied. The Friar's counsel is presented in dramatic

10 For a fully developed argument along these lines, focused on the humanist classroom, see Grafton and Jardine.

terms as a special potion that will literally suspend Juliet's subjectivity. Juliet's great speech ("I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins, / . . ." [4.3.15–58]), in which she envisions the possibility of dashing her brains out "with some great kinsman's bone" (4.3.53–54) when she comes to life again among the dead bodies interred in the family vault, offers a vivid depiction of the subject's struggle in deciding whether or not to submit to counsel.

In this, Juliet is far from being alone. How counsel travels and what it does to subjectivity is dramatised by Shakespeare most memorably in the character of Ophelia, the daughter of one of the best-known counsellors in early modern English drama. While the most revealing dramatic links between subjectivity and counsel in *Hamlet* are to be sought in Ophelia, the play's principal subject of advice, this cannot be meaningfully accomplished without first considering Polonius, the play's chief counselling agent. "A foolish prating knave" is how Hamlet describes Polonius after killing him at the end of Act 3. "I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room" (3.4.213), Hamlet tells Gertrude, and then stops to pass judgment on Ophelia's father while carefully placing his own mother on each side of the pronouncement:

> Mother, good night. Indeed, this counsellor
> Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
> Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
> Come sir, to draw toward an end with you.
> Good night mother. (3.4.214–218)

The judgment is harsh but not inaccurate; the situation macabre but not without humour. Most still, most secret, and most grave is one of Hamlet's characteristic pun sequences. Here is the model counsellor, typified not by garrulity but patient silence, ready to listen rather than just talk, able to keep counsels (the word is synonymous with secrets in the period), and always serious. Literally, however, here is a motionless, heavy body hiding behind an arras. The best Polonius is clearly a dead Polonius—the best counsellor, a dead counsellor.

Hamlet's post-mortem judgment of Polonius, and by extension his judgment of what constitutes a good counsellor, has been interpreted as Shakespeare's own. In a recent study of the question of counsel in *Hamlet*, Shakespeare's Polonius is understood to be both an ineffective humanist and a crafty Machiavellian, while Horatio is promoted, instead, as the vehicle of good counsel in the play because it is Horatio who relates the lessons of history just as books would do: without ornamentation,

without dissembling. Horatio is thus to be seen as embodying the most recent political ideas, especially those of Justus Lipsius, who in his *Six Bookes of Politickes*, translated into English in 1594, concludes that the best counsellors are the disembodied voices of books and "treaties of histories" (14). In other words, the dead. Without their bodies, authors cannot dissemble.[11] One would want Lipsius to go back to his Ovid and read again the tale of Narcissus and Echo from *The Metamorphoses*. It is not an accident, as I argued above, that the disembodied Echo has been understood over the centuries both as the voice of flattery and as the voice of good counsel.[12]

The more interesting thing about Lipsius' invocation of counsel and history is that it occurs in a chapter primarily concerned with memory. It is this word that takes us directly to the world of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and its preoccupations with counsel. Hamlet's triumph over one silent body, that of Ophelia's father, can be read as an expression of the wish for another body, that of his own father, to be silent. When the Ghost appears to Hamlet for the first time, revealing the murder and urging revenge, his closings words are "[r]emember me" (1.5.91). The response it prompts is not easy to interpret. "Remember thee?" (1.5.97), and Hamlet asks, and goes on to assure the Ghost that his memory will from now on allow room for nothing else:

> Yea, from the table of my memory
> I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
> All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
> That youth and observation copied there,
> And thy commandment all alone shall live
> Within the book and volume of my brain,
> Unmixt with baser matter: yes, by heaven!
> O most pernicious woman!
> O villain, villain, smiling damnèd villain!
> My tables—meet it is I set it down
> That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
> At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark. [*Writing*]

11 Paul, "Best Counsellors" (652). Lipsius attributes the thought to Alphonsus Siciliae (Alfonso the Magnanimous).

12 Paul further argues that by the turn of the seventeenth century the humanist counsellor (focused on precepts) and the Machiavellian counsellor (focused on abusing rhetorical skill) are dislodged by a third option: "Counsellors would be simply mouthpieces for the lessons of history, given without rhetorical ornamentation or consideration of interest" ("Best Counsellors" 652). All of these versions of counsel, in my view, coexist and overlap throughout the sixteenth century. Lipsius' Ciceronian sentiment, that all examples are dark until learned authors cause them to shine (*Sixe Bookes* 14), instead of constituting a solution describes the essence of the problem.

> So uncle, there you are. Now to my word:
> It is 'Adieu, adieu, remember me.'
> I have sworn't. (1.5.98–112)

The scene is an early and clear sign that the promise Hamlet makes is unlikely to result in immediate action. Hamlet's memory is figured as a writing table from which all knowledge—gained from both books and experience—will be erased, to make room for the Ghost's injunction. But as soon as this decision is made, Hamlet is reminded first of his mother, then of his villainous uncle; the only action he does take is to locate his actual writing tables and to record in them the hardly profound observation that there are dissemblers in the world.[13] "There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave / To tell us this" (1.5.125–126), we are tempted to say. Hamlet's obsession with the commonplace brings him dangerously close to the wisdom of Polonius, for it is exactly this kind of commonplace wisdom that Polonius dispenses as he advises his son Laertes how to behave in France, using the same figure that Hamlet will use in the encounter with his dead father: "And these few precepts in thy memory," Polonius says, "look thou character" (1.3.57–58). What follows is a series of commonplaces based on a number of familiar proverbs: "Neither a borrower nor a lender be, / For loan oft loses both itself and friend, / And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry" (1.3.75–77).[14]

Commonplaces are an inevitable part of the Renaissance science of counsel, and Shakespeare employs them in *Hamlet* to create meaning across different levels of the drama. To begin with, the play's principal advisor literally embodies a Renaissance commonplace, with a name like a remembered, twice-told tale: in the first quarto edition Ophelia's father is not called Polonius, but Corambis. Appropriately, the name lends itself to both Greek and Latin etymologisation. Two Latin words are featured here, *coram*, meaning before, in front of, and *bis*, meaning

13 There is a suggestive parallel in earlier morality drama. After being counselled by Mercy at length, Mankind speaks the following lines: "Now, blessed be Jesu, my soul is well satiate / With the mellifluous doctrine of this worshipful man. / The rebellion of my flesh, now it is superate. / Thanking be God of the cunning that I can. / Here will I sit, and title in this paper / The incomparable estate of my promition. [*Sits and writes*]" (*Mankind* lines 311–316, in *Three Late Medieval Morality Plays* 20).

14 As Jason Powell observes, "Hamlet is more innately comfortable with the impulse to advise and to commonplace than he is with the command to revenge." Throughout the play, he struggles "under the burden of conflicting fatherly instructions and advice" (Powell 164, 177). Powell offers a detailed analysis of the confusion of fathers in the play (the Ghost, Polonius, Claudius) and stresses the importance of the long-standing tradition of fathers' advice to sons.

twice. Whenever we encounter Corambis we are to understand that he will give us nothing new, or that whatever he gives us, he will give it to us again. He always appears in the form of things remembered. The Greek etymon is even more damning: *crambe*, with its popular variant *corambe*, is Greek for cabbage, and the word is found most commonly in the Latin saying that *crambe bis posita mors est*, that cabbage twice served, or twice cooked, is certain death (as it was, we might observe, for Corambis).[15] The word is also used to describe a style characterised by excessive repetition. In *Certain Notes of Instruction*, George Gascoigne warns his reader that he may use

> the same Figures or Tropes in verse which are vsed in prose . . . but yet therein remembre this old adage, *Ne quid nimis* [Nothing in excess], as many wryters which do not know the vse of any other figure than that whiche is expressed in repeticion of sundrie wordes beginning all with one letter, the whiche (being modestly vsed) lendeth good grace to a verse, but they do so hunte a letter to death that they make it *Crambe*, and *Crambe bis positum mors est*. (36)

It is not without interest that the Polish humanist Wawrzyniec Grzymała Goślicki (Laurentius Grimaldus Goslicius), whose treatise on counsel argues for moderation and the practical kind of philosophy familiar from More's *Utopia*, might have been chosen by Shakespeare, some scholars at least believe, as the model for his counsellor figure in *Hamlet* characterised by repetition and excess (Polonius, the Pole).[16] It is not without interest, either, that Shakespeare might have chosen as his model for Corambis a figure associated with new developments in Renaissance political thought at the end of the sixteenth century: the figure of Justus Lipsius himself. It will be immediately obvious to anyone who opens Lipsius' *Six Bookes of Politickes* that his text is stitched together mostly from quotations of other authors, all of whom are dutifully listed in the margins. A leading historian of Renaissance political thought rightly describes Lipsius' *magnum opus* as "not so much a treatise as an anthology of quotations from classical writers"; Montaigne memorably styled it "this learned and laborious tissue" (Burke 485).

In fact, when Polonius is advising Laertes how to behave in France, Shakespeare seems to be borrowing directly from one of Lipsius' published works. His *Epistola de peregratione Italica* was adapted and published in English as early as 1592 under the title *A Direction for Trauailers*, "enlarged for the behoofe of the right honorable

15 For further discussion, see Falk.

16 For an extensive survey of critical opinion, see Bałuk-Ulewiczowa.

Lord, the yong Earle of *Bedford*, being now ready to trauell." In the book, the young Earl of Bedford is instructed to observe three golden rules: "Frons aperta, lingua parca, mens clausa. Be friendlie to al, familiar to a few, and speake but sildome. In countenance be as courteous as you can, and as your state will beare; in talk as affable as you shall see cause; but keepe your minde secret vnto your selfe, till you come to those whose heartes are as yours" (Lipsius, *Direction* C3v). Compare this with the words of Polonius:

> Give thy thoughts no tongue,
> Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
> Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
> Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
> Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel. (1.3.59–63)

And further: "Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice; / Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment" (1.3.68–69). If Corambis/Polonius is made up of both Goślicki and Lipsius, two writers on counsel rarely discussed together, we should consider to what extent it is possible neatly to map Shakespeare's *Hamlet* onto the landscape of early modern political thought.[17] Instead of thinking about the play as tied to specific ideological moments or engaged in a direct dialogue with the most recent developments in Renaissance political thought, we need to consider how competing ideas about counsel travel across genres and time, refusing to be fully contextualised and inviting us, instead, to consider the possibility that the foolish and the wise (the old and the new) inhabit not just the same play but the same character. The question of character must be central to any account of the relationship between drama and counsel in early modernity.

It is in Ophelia that drama and counsel meet most memorably because they meet most tragically. More than any other character in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, more even than Hamlet, Ophelia is subjected to the attention and paternalist scrutiny of others. This begins early on, with scenes of counsel in which first Laertes, as her brother, and then Polonius, as her father, direct and admonish her by means of familiar precepts.

17 See Paul ("Counsel and Command" 127ff), for an extensive discussion of Lipsius. Goślicki, on the other hand, is excluded from Paul's survey of sixteenth-century discussions of counsel because of his "largely straightforward restatement of the Ciceronian view of the counsellor seen in Elyot" (114n431). One of the most thoroughgoing recent readings of *Hamlet* from the perspective of reason of state, a doctrine that was in the late sixteenth century increasingly associated with Tacitus (influentially edited by Lipsius), is found in Kiséry (37–88).

The topic of their advice is Prince Hamlet. That many of these commonplaces are meant to be remembered is suggested in the early quarto editions of the play by gnomic pointing printed in the margin.[18] Such inverted commas populate early modern manuscripts and books, at times as handwritten evidence of actual encounters between a reader and a text, at times as typographic evidence of how reader response was guided by an authorial or editorial hand.[19] One of their important functions is to enclose the reader in the book and thus to exert control, to point in a particular direction, to remind that without memory there cannot be self-knowledge. In a striking passage from Petrarch's *Secretum*, Augustine urges Petrarch to mark with hooks (*unci*) such passages in a text that seem to him worthy of remembrance (106, 110). The hooks in the margin will mark the place in the book, but they will also hold the thought in one's memory when the book is no longer at hand. These are the hooks that in the early counselling scenes are meant to hold Ophelia in place.

The commonplaces from the early counselling scenes do not disappear without trace; instead, they emerge as memories that disrupt the self. Ophelia's sense of self is bound up with the counsel she receives from her father and her brother, and in the course of the play this counsel is transformed by Shakespeare into an interconnected series of rich dramatic metaphors. As Margreta de Grazia argues in her discussion of generation and degeneracy in *Hamlet*, when in the scenes of madness Ophelia appears with flowers, these are not just convenient stage props symbolising virginity and wasted youth. While the flower does stand for virginity, it also stands for a particularly memorable passage, a saying, a wise thought. *Florilegia*, literally "gatherings of flowers," were anthologies of such sayings, frequently published in the period (de Grazia 116–17). "And there is pansies," Ophelia says to Laertes, "that's for thoughts" (4.5.175). Laertes' response to this strange gift is appropriately textual, and it is meant to describe Ophelia's distracted self: "A document in madness" (4.5.176). Ophelia's self, propped by both paternal and fraternal advice, is even this late in the play figured as a textual garden, but it is now a garden unweeded and gone to seed, possessed by thoughts that have lost their proper places. The counsel that was meant to constitute Ophelia as a subject erupts as a gathering of disordered memories among which the subject is dissolved.

The dead body of Ophelia adorned with flowers, Ophelia carrying and giving flowers, Ophelia receiving flowers—the insistent dramatic images prompt us to ask

18 For an extensive recent discussion of the issue, see Lesser and Stallybrass.

19 An engaging account of such encounters in the early modern period is provided by Orgel.

how counsel travels through this play and what its transformations mean. In one sense, *Hamlet* is about generation and degeneracy—the question of succession and the future of the state. In another sense, it is about the generative and degenerative power of counsel, of the words we are expected to remember. When we consider issues of counsel in early modern drama, we need to ask how counsel is the stuff of dramatic character, the stuff of dramatic language, the stuff of the play. When Shakespeare turns to counsel, it is not to tell us whether it is good or bad but to show what it does to us, and how it undoes us. In the light of the rich dramatic tradition within which counsel had played such an important role, Shakespeare's engagements with counsel become themselves protracted labours of remembrance.

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Shakespeare and the Limits of Cosmopolitanism

DAVID SCOTT KASTAN

Abstract: The first mention of The Merchant of Venice *appears in 1598, when a publisher announces that he is about to publish "a booke of the Marchaunt of Venyce, or otherwise called the Jewe of Venyce." And the first mention of* Othello *appears in 1622, when another publisher announced his intention to print "The Tragoedie of Othello, the Moore of Venice." Shakespeare, thus, writes two plays whose titles seemingly claim something about the inclusiveness of the Venetian Republic: its ability to allow a conspicuous outsider to be "of" the very city that was known as the most sophisticated, commercial, and cosmopolitan community in Italy, indeed in all of Europe. In each, of course, the character discovers how provisional and vulnerable his existence is. The essay, therefore, looks at how Shakespeare understands the possibilities and challenges of cosmopolitanism, in ways that may help us understand something about Shakespeare's world and perhaps something about our own.*[1]

Though Protestantism in the England in which Shakespeare lived was a state religion and church attendance was mandated by law, it would have been difficult for English people not to know that this religion was but one of many religions in the world. That fact was made clear by the often violent conflicts of Protestants and Catholics, from the sharp divisions within Protestantism itself, and mainly from the growing awareness of a multitude of non-Christian beliefs, as trade and colonization brought Europeans in contact with more of the rest of the world (Harrison, Smith).

But this knowledge did not produce some generous idea of religious difference, some comfortable notion of these multiple religions as evidence that, as Jesus says, "[i]n my Father's house there are many rooms" (Luke 14:2). It is not that a generous

1 Some of the material in this essay appears in chapter 4 of my *A Will To Believe: Shakespeare and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

and inclusive idea of "religion" could not have formed: it just *did not* form. There are indeed many religions, as people increasingly were aware, but only one was thought to be true; that is, only one was thought really to be religion. Those other religions were inevitably seen as a mere "superstition" or a "false religion," and thus not really "religion" at all. An extraordinary history of travel and exploration, written by Samuel Purchas and published in 1613, called *Purchas His Pilgrimage: or, Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in all Ages and Places Discovered*, insists that "the true Religion can be but one." But he admits as his very subject the multiple "other Religions" of the world. These, however, he sees as "but strayings" from the "true Religion," forms of what he calls "irreligious religion" in which "men wander in the dark, and in labyrinths of error" (sig. D4r).[2] Of course, considered in terms of European history, Protestantism was the "straying" from the Catholicism that was the original form of Christianity; but, in any case, irreligious religions clearly do not deserve the noun. It is a paradox: a phrase that is self-contradictory and self-cancelling.

It would still be another 150 years before anyone in the west thought differently about religion: they knew of others but their own was the one true one. Slowly it would change. In 1787, Thomas Jefferson, the third American President and one of the authors of the American *Declaration of Independence*, could say that there are "probably a thousand different systems of religion," and "ours is but one of that thousand." He cheerfully admit that "it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg" (Jefferson 267, 265). That is perhaps what most of us think now, in a world where religion seems more or less optional. But Samuel Purchas did not think this way. No one in Shakespeare's England did.

We are, however, used to seeing Shakespeare in his exceptionalism. We have come to think of him and his values as universal and timeless. We believe that he imagines what has been unimaginable and his imaginings help bring it about. "He wrote the text of modern life," said Emerson (721). But in this case, I am not so sure; or if it is true, it is not in the sense that Emerson intended.

In this essay, I want to think about Shakespeare in relation to the "other religions" that Purchas saw as "but strayings" from the true one, but not, of course, in relation to all of "the thousand different systems of religion" that Jefferson would admit,

2 Here and throughout the spelling of quotations has been modernised.

but just the two, Judaism and Islam, with which Christianity shares a common culture as the Abrahamic peoples of the book.

It does not seem to me an accident that the two plays of Shakespeare that most urgently raise the issue of religion are both set in Venice: The first mention of *The Merchant of Venice* is in 1598, when a publisher announces that he is about to publish "*a booke of the Marchaunt of Venyce, or otherwise called the Iewe of Venyce*." And the first mention of *Othello* was in 1622, when another publisher, Thomas Walkely announced his intention to print *The Tragoedie of Othello, the Moore of Venice. The Iew of Venice* and *The Moor of Venice*: two plays whose titles seemingly claim something about the inclusiveness of the Venetian Republic, the most cosmopolitan city in Italy then, an international trading centre, not unlike modern Shanghai. But it may not be quite as happy a story as this suggests.

The printed title of the 1600 quarto of *The Merchant of Venice* is somewhat less generously cosmopolitan in its imagination of the story:[3] *The most excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice. With the extreame crueltie of Shylocke the Iewe towards the sayd Merchant* (London, 1600). Indeed both plays, with their exotic outsiders, raise complex questions about how (or if) cultures can create forms of community that can successfully include the alien presences that the cultures seem to both to require and resist. They ask if that presence can really be *of* Venice as the play titles say rather than merely resident *in* it.

Venice was widely recognised as the most cosmopolitan of European cities. Thomas Coryate, a seventeenth-century English traveller, almost literalises this in his account of the Venetian marketplace: "a man may very properly call it rather *Orbis* than *Urbis forum*, that is, a marketplace of the world, not of the city . . . Here may you both see all manner of fashions of attire, and hear all the languages of Christendom, besides those that are spoken by barbarous Ethnics" (sig. O7r). Wonderfully cosmopolitan—perhaps, but lurking in that phrase "the barbarous ethnics" is a problem.

It is not a neutral, merely descriptive phrase. "Barbarous" is a word derived from a Greek word meaning "stammering," and it originally meant probably only

3 I am using "cosmopolitan" in a sense derived from the modern social sciences to define a political entity that recognises the rights of individuals above considerations of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. Other forms of the word ("cosmopolitic" and "cosmopolitical") are commonly used in early modern English, usually, however, to refer to individuals without strong "national attachments or prejudices" (OED), though there are usages not cited in the OED where it means something very much like this modern sense. William Barlow, for example, can imagine a "[c]osmopolitical union of humane society" in his *The Navigators Supplie* (London, 1597), sig. b.2r.

that the speaker did not speak Greek, but it quickly came to mean something else, something worse: first it meant foreign, and then it came to mean uncivilised, and then it came almost to mean inhuman. And "ethnic" derives from a Latin word that also means foreign, specifically pointing to a difference of religion. So if Venice was multicultural and cosmopolitan, there was, nonetheless, a recognition that some of the residents could never really be residents *of* the city.

Shakespeare's Venice plays raise this issue explicitly and in ways that are troubling. They engage the question of whether the cosmopolitanism of the city can provide an answer to linguistic, national, or religious difference. Cosmopolitanism is the recognition of the dignity of the individual over any divisive considerations of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. This is not, of course, the place to consider that claim, nor do I want to claim Shakespeare as somehow anticipating this idea.

He does not. But sixteenth-century Venice was a city that embraced difference, perhaps even a city that was defined by it. It was a city of contradictions beginning with its mix of land and sea. It was a living paradox (Platt 57–94, Gillies). And this fact was widely known and celebrated: Venice was a cosmopolitan city that included people from everywhere, which created the context for Venice's international trade and commercial success. But Shakespeare's two Venice plays are more sceptical about what this might mean. The action of both plays might be understood as the discovery of the limits of the City's proud cosmopolitanism by its prominent outsiders, Shylock and Othello.

Let us start by looking at *The Merchant of Venice*. In Britain and America, many people wonder if it should be taught or performed; sometimes they succeed in removing it from classroom syllabi or from the repertory of local theatres, or, less hysterically, they frame the performance in discussions about the problems the play raises in playbills and theatre talkbacks. The source of the anxiety is clear enough. It is the worry that the play is anti-Semitic or could seem so. It is the worry that maybe Shakespeare, whom we habitually celebrate as the voice and guarantor of our best moral and emotional lives, in fact endorses values we have come to find unacceptable or, worse, endorses values that some might *not* find unacceptable.[4]

4 Of course, there are other plays that might suggest the distance between our culture and Shakespeare's complicating our conviction that Shakespeare was "not of an age." *The Taming of the Shrew*, for example, produces a similar concern that Shakespeare might be thought to endorse female submission to patriarchy, but less cultural anxiety surrounds this possibility, maybe suggesting that we find it less offensive to coerce women than Jews.

We have found some predictable ways to ease our anxiety. Often we appeal to the play's subtlety of focus and design. We point, for instance, to the Christian community's inability to live up to its own professed ideals in the play; observe, too, that if Shylock hates the Christians, his hatred is little different from the Christians' no less reflexive hatred of the Jews. And perhaps we insist that there is more than just an *even* balance: as Hazlitt noted in the nineteenth century: "our sympathies are much more often with [Shylock] than with his enemies" (31).

Or, if we refuse that easy sentimentalizing of the role, we can appeal to history. We can tell ourselves (more or less factually) that there were no Jews—at least no outwardly practicing ones—in Shakespeare's England, the Jewish community having been banished by Edward I in 1290. So, if that looks bad for England, thus being the first European country formally to expel its Jewish population and only welcoming them back and allowing them to live openly in their faith about forty years after Shakespeare's death (Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* 55–76), it takes Shakespeare off the hook.

In the absence of a visible Jewish population in his England, we can tell ourselves that, whatever Shakespeare was doing in the play, it could not have been intended as an expression of a social prejudice, or imagined as any kind of hate-speech directed against a particular group of people, nor could it have provoked others, intentionally or otherwise, to violence against them. There were no real Jews there, or at least very few real Jews, and those few were practicing in secret. But even if this is right, that for Shakespeare and his age Jewishness was largely a metaphor rather than a social reality, it at very least demands the question of what to do now, when there are real Jews who might be offended or otherwise affected by a performance of the play.

Or, since history at best seems to offer us only a temporary escape from the difficulty, we can appeal to form: the play is a comedy, we can tell ourselves, not really about Shylock at all, but a conventional romantic plot that seeks to bring the love of Portia and Bassanio to a happy and harmonious conclusion. Shylock in this sense is but a minor character, present in only five of the play's twenty scenes and formally merely an obstacle for the lovers to overcome. The play begins "with usury and corrupt love; it ends with harmony and perfect love," says a distinguished English critic: "And all the time it tells its audience that *this* is its subject; only by a determined effort to avoid the obvious can one mistake the theme of *The Merchant of Venice*" (Kermode 215).

But each of these arguments seems to me in fact to be far *more* determined efforts "to avoid the obvious," each an almost perverse attempt to do something that almost any genuine encounter with the play would seemingly make impossible: that is, each tries to convince us that Shakespeare was not fundamentally interested in the unsettling figure of the Jew. He was.

Often what people say about the play is that the Jew represents a vulgar commercialism, and point to Shylock's confusion of categories: "My daughter! Oh my ducats" the most notable; "oh my daughter! / Fled with Christian! Oh my Christian ducats!" (2.8.15–16). In his grief, he hideously implies the equivalence of his daughter and his money in his value scheme. This is regularly pointed to as the most obvious sign of his moral limitation, and the Christian world has a more humane set of values.

But does it? The world of money, commerce, profit, and wealth in this play is not opposed to the world of romantic desire and fulfilment but in fact is revealed as the very condition of it.[5] Bassanio's suit of Portia begins as only the most recent of his "plots and purposes / How to get clear of the debts" he owes (1.1.133–134). The observation that begins and motivates the romantic action is: "In Belmont is a lady richly left" (1.1.161). And the wooing ends successfully in the same terms: with Portia's "Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear" (3.2.312). "Dear" here, of course, means both expensive and passionately, the unavoidable pun in English revealing how inescapable the economic logic is in Venice. Its commercial language penetrates all of its social and emotional realities.

Christian Venice in fact does not even pretend to be anti-materialistic; it happily admits its commercial activity. It does, however, insist that its economic principles are morally superior to the corresponding principles of the Jewish world. In part the issue is money lending.[6] Antonio "lends out money gratis" (1.3.40) the play says, that is, he does not charge interest, responding to the biblical instruction to "lend, looking for nothing again" (Luke 6:35); while Shylock insists on interest, the Hebrew bible giving him permission: "Unto a stranger though mayest lend upon usury, but thou shalt not lend upon usury unto thy brother" (Deuteronomy 23:20).

Obviously, however, both men are equally desirous of profit in their commercial activity, but they pursue it by different means. Antonio is a merchant,

5 This has become the central insight of modern ironic readings of the play; see, for example, Eric S. Mallin's observation that even at the level of plot "the Jew works as an integral part of the Christian community by providing the necessary economic conditions for romance" (146).

6 See John Drakakis' Introduction to his edition of the play, 8–17, and Jones.

who would thrive by "venture," to use the play's characteristic word for Venetian commercial activity. Venture, the Christians of the play think, is acceptable because there is uncertainty about the outcome; it puts success in the hands of God. Antonio insists that commercial venture is good because, as he says, it is "swayed and fashioned by the hand of heaven" (1.3.89). Shylock is a merchant, but one who would thrive by usury, to use the loaded term for money lending. Usury is unacceptable to the Christians of the play, not merely because of its rate of interest, but because of the certainty of its profits. It avoides any dependence on "the hand of heaven," the avoidance of God's providence, not just in the money earned from the schedule of interest payments but from the insistence upon collateral that ensures that even if the debt is *not* repaid the lender cannot lose.

It is merely on the basis of those differences in what we might call "risk management strategies" that the play world comes to insist that it is the Jew who is the villain, the obstacle to harmony and love, though of course it is of course it is only with the money provided by Shylock to Antonio that Bassanio can woo Portia—and no one ever asks why he needs money to woo her anyway.

"Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?" (4.1.170), asks Portia as she sweeps into the courtroom.[7] It hardly seems a serious question. Could anyone really be uncertain which is which? Is not this precisely the difference upon which the comedy depends? At the level of the plot, the question is intended to do no more than affirm the reality of the Venetian Portia's disguise as the "young doctor of Rome" in "his" seeming lack of local knowledge. Productions have tended to make the question laughable to an audience, and indeed on stage often the assembled Venetians themselves laugh at the sheer absurdity of it, with Antonio standing in the fashionable clothing of a Venetian nobleman and Shylock dressed in whatever is described as his "Jewish gabardine." How could there be a question?

From the first, the scene tries visually to confirm what it will later verbally insist upon: the ethical distinction between gentile and Jew, "the difference of *our* spirit" (4.1.364, emphasis added), as the Duke says, gracious and generous, from Shylock's "Jewish heart" (4.1.79), who would get rather than give, and insists upon the letter of the law rather than its spirit.

7 Among the many critics who have focused on this extraordinary question are Moisan, Shapiro ("'Which is *The Merchant* here, and Which *The Jew*': Shakespeare and the Economics of Influence"), Oz, Halpern (159–226), and Nirenberg.

Portia's question, however, echoes through the play. As much as characters assert the radical difference between the merchant and the Jew, the play itself is far less confident that it can be maintained. In various ways, the play erases the distinction that is insisted upon, and suggests that the Venetians' hatred of Shylock is primarily their psychological strategy for projecting what they should see as evil in themselves outward, "onto an alien Other" (Fiedler 28). What they hate in them is what they are unwilling to face in themselves. And it is worth remembering that Antonio, not Shylock, is the "Merchant of Venice" of the title, and the fact that we so often forget that makes the point of their similarity.

In the play, Jessica can be welcomed into the Christian community. She is the good Jew in the story, though, of course, this really means that she ends up not being a Jew at all. All she needs to do to be included is to give up her faith and find a Christian to marry. The daughter of what the play calls "a faithless Jew" (2.4.38), though of course Shylock has faith, just not *their* faith, is able to "become a Christian, and [Lorenzo's] loving wife" (2.3.21).

But Jessica is not really the difficult case. It helps that she is young, she is beautiful, and that she comes "furnished" with Shylock's "gold and jewels" (2.4.32). It helps, too, that she is eager to accept her new identity ("ashamed," she says, "to be [her] father's child" [2.3.17]), and that she is enthusiastically invited into the Christian community. Shylock is the hard case. He is old, he is unattractive, and he is eager to insist on the same difference that the Christians see between them. What he calls "[t]he difference of old Shylock and Bassanio" (2.5.2) is in his mind as clear as the Duke's sense of "the difference of our spirit" from that of the Jew. And the difference that both insist upon is what prevents Venice from truly being cosmopolitan.

In the trial scene, the Duke first appeals to universal human values, hoping that Shylock will display the "human gentleness and love" that will release Antonio from the vicious bond. "We all expect a gentle answer," (4.1.33) says the Duke. But Shylock, unlike his daughter, is neither "gentle" nor "gentile," the word used by Jews for a Christian. "[B]y our holy Sabbath have I sworn / To have the due and forfeit of my bond" (4.1.35–36). His "our" here is no more inclusive than the Duke's in his phrase: "the difference of our spirit." Both uses of "our" separate and divide rather join. It is the Jews' Sabbath on which Shylock swears, reconfirming his membership in his own "sacred nation" (1.3.44) rather the supposedly cosmopolitan one of Venice.

Jessica is able effortlessly to enter into the Christian community, perhaps proving that there is no religious hatred of Jews in the play; but she is welcomed having

abandoned her father's faith and carrying with her his money. But Shylock cannot be accommodated at all. He is totally absent from the concluding act, and is neither mourned nor even remembered except in Lorenzo's one mention of "the Jew," as he sneeringly refers to his future father-in-law.

Shylock's exclusion is the play's formal acknowledgment of the bitter lesson he learns in the trial about the difference that has everywhere been insisted upon, not least of all by him: the difference between his "our" and their "your," both of which point to lie of a cosmopolitan Venice. This is the difference that plays out in the trial scene, about which there is so much more to say than I will now, a difference that allows Antonio to escape having to pay the forfeit of the pound of flesh Shylock is owed. But it is a difference that undercuts the very idea of cosmopolitanism that Venice insists upon to construct and preserve its commercial advantages. The trial scene reveals that Shylock is an "alien" according to the law, not the Jew *of* Venice at all, just a Jew *in* Venice, marking the limits of the city's claim to equality and justice.

And at the end, if Venetian justice stops short of taking Shylock's life, it does so with two provisions: first, that Shylock not be allowed to disinherit his daughter (his property is to be deeded now "[u]nto his son Lorenzo and his daughter" [4.1.386]); and second, that "[h]e presently become a Christian" (4.1.283).

There is, of course, some mercy here; the court could have demanded Shylock's death. But it has appropriated one half of Shylock's wealth, given it to a son-in-law Shylock must despise, denied Shylock the right to control his own estate, and, perhaps most surprising, insisted upon Shylock's conversion to Christianity. *Maybe* this is an example of Christian mercy. And yet it is difficult for us to hear the sentence this way (Berger 35–37).[8] What is most unsettling to a modern audience is the proviso "that he presently become a Christian."

At the end of the play the Jew will have to convert to Christianity as the condition of the mercy that is offered. Our modern commitment to religious toleration, our confidence that God's house has many rooms, makes it hard to see this as an act of kindness toward Shylock.[9] And yet it is true that sixteenth-century Christians,

8 A. D. Nutall had earlier sensed "a faint smell of patronizing contempt in the very exercise of mercy" (130).

9 Hugh Short is one of the few recent critics to argue that Antonio's proviso is well-intentioned, "opening up the possibility of salvation to Shylock" (210), and that "Shylock speaks the truth when he says he is content" (202).

like some of their twenty-first century brethren, would believe that only by converting can Shylock be saved.

Perhaps Shylock's forced conversion is, if not unambiguously merciful, at least an example of what was then paradoxically called "charitable hatred,"—forcing a conversion as an act of charity. Theologians of various religions insisted that to live in an "irreligious religion," a false faith, was to insure the death of the soul. Martin Luther wrote in his "Preface to the Old Testament" that "such blindness must be . . . compelled and forced by the law to seek something beyond the law and its own ability, namely the grace of God promised in the Christ who was to come" (44). "Compel them to come in," Jesus says (Luke 14:23).

But there is no thought in the play—or even in Luke or Luther—of how such compulsion would work. If conversion needs to be compelled, if, that is, it is to be accomplished against one's will, in what sense is it truly a conversion, which is a transformation of the will that must be, one might say, willingly accepted?

One might wonder, then, how really "charitable" Antonio's request is; the hatred part, we know. It is not an invitation but a requirement, but a requirement that can only be enforced in outward practice—that is, in ways that cannot matter if it *is* intended to save a soul. So what is the point? Here, then, the "difference" of the Christian spirit that the Duke insists upon seems exactly like the Jewish letter. And by the fifth act, the Jew, of course, is gone. Any fantasy of a cosmopolitan Venice is denied by the plot. Shylock does not appear in the fifth act and Jessica the Jew . . . well, she is not one anymore.

Let us look now at Shakespeare's other Venice play: *Othello.* Othello has indeed turned Christian. He is a seemingly a willing convert. Iago discusses Othello's Christianity, noting his "baptism, / All seals and symbols of redeemed sin" (2.3.328–329), though it is not clear what religion he has converted from or what he in fact believes. Othello's origins are as obscure as Shylock's,[10] but, unlike Shylock, who is marginal in Venetian society even if economically necessary, Othello is central, both in the culture and in the plot. He is a celebrated hero, the city's protector against the "Turk," and he is married, although secretly, to a senator's daughter, who is able to see past the racial difference between them. She can ignore the superficial difference of skin coloration to see "Othello's visage in his mind"

10 Iago tells Roderigo that Othello "goes into Mauretania and taketh away with him the fair Desdemona" (4.2.224–225)—perhaps a hint of Othello's origins that are never explained, as Shylock's might be hinted at in his reference to a diamond he bought "in Frankfurt" (*Merchant of Venice* 3.1.76–77).

(1.3.250)—another difference from the comedy in which Portia is unable to do this with the black Prince of Morocco.

In *Othello, religion* is not the social problem; race is—though at least in part that is because religion in *Othello* goes away as the problem precisely because of race. *Othello* relaxes the anxiety about conversion precisely because it keeps *visible* the difference that Jewish conversion eliminates, especially since Judaism's tell-tale mark of difference, circumcision, is invisible to all but the most intimate observers and, of course, a defining sign only for males, part of the reason for the seeming ease with which Shylock's daughter Jessica can be welcomed into the Christian community, and Shylock is excluded.[11] The true sign of Jewish otherness is inside—a difference of spirit, as the Christian world in *The Merchant of Venice* insists—hence the need at some times in history (Nazi Germany for example) to make Jews wear some badge outside to confirm it.[12]

But the badge of *racial* difference is racial difference itself. The prophet Jeremiah asks, "[c]an the black Moor change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" (Jeremiah 13:23), in his warning to the Hebrew people against becoming accustomed to sin, and these proverbial phrases for impossibility echo through early modern England. In Richard Crashaw's poem "On the Baptised Ethiopian" (16), the poet deploys the proverbial claim that you "cannot wash the Ethiope white," but he then denies the claim: "Let it no longer be a forlorn hope / To wash an Ethiope," says Crashaw, because the acceptance of Christ will turn the Ethiope's *soul* "white," and God will then love its "black-faced house."

Othello is similar to Crashaw's "Baptised Ethiope." There is no doubt the play insists upon his blackness. He is referred to as "the thick-lips" (1.1.66) and "an old black ram" (1.1.88) with a "sooty bosom" (1.2.70). It is so central even to his own self-image and imagining that when he tries to find terms to measure the change in his understanding of Desdemona's moral being, the best he can come up with is: "Her name, that was as fresh / As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black / As mine own face" (3.3.388–390).

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11 Jewish law, however, insists, though Shakespeare was unlikely to have known this, that the child of a Jewish mother is Jewish.

12 Fynes Moryson noted that in Prague "[t]he law binds the men to wear red hats or bonnets, and the women a garment of the same color, near blood, to witness their guiltiness of Christ's blood," and that "in all places the Jews long servitude and wonderful scattering is exposed to all Christians for a fearful spectacle and to themselves for a daily remembrance of God's curse laid upon them" (489–490).

It is, however, worth remembering that at least in Shakespeare's theatre you *could* wash an Ethiope white—indeed you had to, with no black actors to take the role (Callaghan). A white actor had to use makeup to play it, and would be washed back to his natural white once the performance ended. It is hard to know how much an early modern audience while watching the play would register this fact. It is hard to know, that is, if the Duke's attempt to reassure Brabantio, "[y]our son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3.288), might be heard as a joke about performance (since the actor playing the role is indeed more fair than black), rather than merely as the recognition of the superficiality of judging by skin colour—though as a theatrical reference it would reinforce the stubborn reality of actual racial difference.

Othello can convert, but he cannot be washed white; only the actor who plays him can. And, even if Othello's soul is so washed, its "black-faced house" is more loved by God than by the citizens of Venice. Othello is embraced when he is needed either to lead a regiment or to serve as a dinner guest, but he can never be fully naturalised as a citizen of Venice—and revealingly he is immediately replaced as the Governor on Cyprus once the Turkish fleet has been destroyed. Othello is a moor, he is *the* moor, an identification even turned into a mocking term of office: "his Moorship," Iago calls him (1.1.32). And that fact makes him inevitably suspect, despite his conversion—or maybe because of it. He never becomes the Moor *of* Venice, only the Moor in it, serving at their pleasure. "*Marrani*," was the word, as an English writer defined it, for "baptised *Iews* or *Moors*," who converted only to escape prosecution and who always remain "utterly opposed" to the Christian religion (Sandys, sig. X2v).

In early modern England, the word "Moor" referred to various people. As Michael Neill notes in the introduction to his edition of the play, it was an ethnographic catchall (115–116). It could be a geographic, racial, or a religious category, referring to the Arabs of Morocco, to dark-skinned Africans, to Ottoman Turks, or to Muslims in general. Though Iago uses the term as a racist insult, Othello is comfortable with whom he is, confident of his total acceptance into Venetian society. He is seemingly at ease with himself as a Christian Moor, a naturalised black European convert, having self-fashioned an identity that is, as he says, "all in all sufficient" (4.1.265), perfect, complete.

But the play reveals he is not "all in all sufficient," exposing cracks in the identity he has so carefully constructed, raising questions both about what he has turned to and turned against. Othello is caught between cultural positions. The very claim

that he is a "noble moor" (2.3.129, 3.4.24, 4.1.256), three times repeated, begins to sound like an oxymoron (all too much like the "gentle Jew" [1.3.73] in *Merchant of Venice*), and, indeed the play is the agonizing history of Othello's inability by force of will to participate in the cosmopolitan harmony that Venice imagines as its own. The Jew who will *not* convert in the comedy is an "alien" in Venice, but so is the Moor in the tragedy who will.

If Venice is a paradox, Othello is a paradox within that paradox, as he himself agonizingly will discover:

> in Aleppo once,
> Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
> Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
> I took by th' throat the circumcised dog,
> And smote him—thus. (5.2.351–355)

He is himself both the "malignant" Turk and, once again, and for a final time, the champion of Venice. This suicidal act completes his terrible journey to destruction but also marks a return to his former dignity. It is he, not Desdemona, who will "turn, and turn, and yet go on, / And turn again"—turn Christian, turn Turk, and turn once more, to try to reconcile the contradictions.

And the scene he recalls is carefully set. Aleppo, today sadly in ruins because of the war in Syria, then played much the same role in the Ottoman empire as Venice did in Christian Europe, as a cosmopolitan trading centre at its edge. In thinking about Aleppo, what Othello recalls in his final moments is not his exotic African past, as he does in his tale that won Brabantio's daughter, but his European present—in the suicidal act becoming again, for one last time, the defender of Venice, executing justice on another who has "[b]eat a Venetian and traduced the state." But of course that means now executing himself.

Othello enacts the paradox that he knows himself to be. He knows he can never be fully naturalised: he cannot be made one with the culture or even one with himself. He is, as the quarto title page says, "The Moor of Venice," but by the end of the play it is clear this marks not some well-integrated social identity but an impossibly divided self.

"And yet how nature erring against himself," Othello begins, as his confidence in Desdemona crumbles in act 3 scene 3, precisely echoing the racist logic of her father in insisting that only by witchcraft could Othello have won his daughter:

"For nature so preposterously to err" (1.3.63). And Iago jumps in right there, recognizing that what Othello has internalised will provide the means to undo him: "Ay, there's the point" (3.3.232).

It is indeed the point: the tragic tipping "point" in Othello's tragic fall from an Othello who was "once so good" (5.2.289). It is the line the makes the "point" about the insufficiency of the identity that Othello has framed for himself; and it is the line that brings us to the "point" at which Venice in its thoroughly conventional understanding of what is natural, reveals itself as so much less cosmopolitan than it imagines itself to be—with devastating implications both for the Jew who underwrites its economic system and the Moor who protects the city.[13]

It is true and no doubt important that Shakespeare does give both Shylock and Othello complex psychologies that makes each more than a stereotype, each a memorable character that demands our sympathy. That is a sign of his generous humanity. But he fails to imagine worlds in which even three-dimensional Jews and Moors can avoid the bitter discovery of how provisional and vulnerable their existence is within the cosmopolitan fantasies of both Venice's Christian theology and its commercial ideology.

But if not in Venice, then where? Certainly not in Shakespeare's England, where Jews would not be readmitted and allowed to live openly as Jews for another half century, and where, in 1601, "Negroes and blackamoors" were ordered to be deported because of the inconvenience of their growing numbers, not least as a result of the fact that "the most of them are infidels having no understanding of Christ or his Gospel."[14]

But also not in Shakespeare's plays. We can read *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* as critiques of Venetian self-regard, but Shakespeare himself too readily reproduces the familiar discourse of privilege and centrality to allow him be the prophetic voice of universal fellowship. In *Macbeth,* a "[l]iver of blaspheming Jew" (4.1.26) is added to the witches' cauldron, but of course this is an ingredient in a witch's recipe. More unsettling are the merely conventional usages. "I am a Jew else, an Ebrew Jew," says Falstaff (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.177) as a validation of the truth of what he has just spoken, and Benedick will define his commitment to Beatrice similarly: "if I do not love

13 William Thomas, in his *History of Italy* (1549) notes that the army in Venice is "served of strangers, both for general, for captains, and for all other men of war, because their law permitteth not any Venetian to be captain over an army by land, fearing, I think, Caesar's example" (78).

14 For the deportation order for "Negroes and blackamoors," see *Tudor Royal Proclamations* (221). On the historical context of the deportation proclamation, see Bartels (100–117); on the complex history of the resettlement of the Jews in England in 1655, see Shapiro (*Shakespeare and the Jews* 58–62).

her I am a Jew" (*Much Ado About Nothing* 2.3.252–253). It is the sheer conventionality of the usage of "Jew" as a synonym for a "liar" or "betrayer" that is disturbing, precisely from the fact that it is not intended as an insult at all.

Turks fare little better; their body parts also find their place in the witches' stew ("Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips" [4.1.29]), and similarly their name becomes a conventional term of contempt. In *Merry Wives*, Pistol calls Falstaff a "[b]ase Phrygian Turk" (1.3.86), outraged by Falstaff's arrogance and ambition. And Moors are "barbarous" and "irreligious," though those are the terms the Roman world of *Titus Andronicus* (5.3.4, 120) uses unsuccessfully to differentiate its own behaviour from that of Aaron. If Shakespeare gives both Shylock and Othello a complex psychology that differentiates Shylock from Marlowe's Barrabas, and Othello from "Aaron the Moor," Shakespeare fails to imagine worlds in which outsiders can be easily welcomed inside, their differences both recognised and respected. But, of course, he never set out to do so.

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Disbelief in *Othello*

BALZ ENGLER

Abstract: Belief and disbelief play an important role in Othello: *between the figures and between the action and the audience. The focus here is on audience reactions. They are notoriously difficult to determine as they are poorly documented. Two general factors apart from historical evidence are used here to sketch them: the difference between reading and attending a performance, and the generic frames suggested by the play: comedy, tragedy and, in Shakespeare's own time, the morality play. Audiences would easily get confused. It may be surprising, then, that* Othello *is the Shakespeare play where the most violent audience reactions are documented. It may be the very confusion produced by it that is responsible for them.*

Coleridge has proved to be a master of coining memorable phrases that summarise concepts, phrases that have gratefully been taken up by critics after him. One of these is certainly "the willing suspension of disbelief," another is Iago's "motive-hunting of motiveless malignity." The two occur in entirely different contexts but we may still ask ourselves whether there is a link between them.

In the following paper, different examples of disbelief in *Othello* will be discussed, with the aim of showing how they affect the audience. The play is full of these: what seems to be black turns out to be white, white black, what seem to be banal objects turn out to be world-shattering, and what seems to be the self-control of the hero turns into wild rage, etc.

The play has been characterised as being about narratives—Othello's narratives that gained Desdemona's love, Iago's diverse narratives about Othello, Desdemona, and Cassio (Hankey 7–9), narratives to be trusted or disbelieved. They work on two levels: as addressed to other figures in the play and as addressed to the audience. Examples of disbelief *within* the play will be touched on, but the focus will be on the relationship between the play and its audience, where two moments play a particular role, Iago's soliloquy at the end of the first act and the killing

of Desdemona in the fifth. This will also mean a return to Coleridge's notion of the "willing suspension of disbelief," which, it should be noted, was not articulated with respect to the theatre but to the relationship between readers and texts in poetry.

At the centre of the play there is the brilliant scene, 3.3, which cannot be discussed in detail here, in which Iago successfully manages to destroy Othello's love for Desdemona, by innuendo mainly in the form of seemingly innocent questions. Othello has accepted what Iago, "this fellow . . . of exceeding honesty" (3.3.262) has told him, when Desdemona enters, and he exclaims:

> Look where she comes:
> If she be false, O then heaven mocks itself,
> I'll not believe't. (3.3.281–283)

He is obviously referring to his belief that outward beauty and perfection of character correspond to each other. Desdemona, on the other hand, does not believe in such a correspondence as she "saw Othello's visage in his mind" (1.3.253) and continues to believe in this perception, in spite of what she has to go through in the play. Iago's disbelief, of which he informs us in his soliloquy at the end of the first act (1.3.382–403), is of quite a different kind. I shall come back to him later on.

But let us turn to disbelief and the audience. Audience response is notorious for being poorly documented, and where it *is* documented in reports and criticism, it shows that it may change in the course of history. As students of literature, we therefore tend to focus on moments when the text seems to determine the expected response, or we may even take it for granted that this is the case throughout. This is so even when we are aware of the historicity of the text.

This makes our lives easier, but it is questionable for at least two reasons: it matters in what medium we encounter the text, on the page or on the stage, and it matters how our expectations shape our understanding of the text, both by what we bring to it and by the frame of encyclopaedic knowledge the text calls up with us. Spectators reared on two-and-a-half centuries of Shakespeare worship will react differently from those in 1604 when *Othello* was first performed. Their reaction will be shaped, for example, by the critical notion promoted by Bradley in his *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) that Shakespeare's tragedies all follow a similar pattern.

Coleridge introduced the formula of the "willing suspension of disbelief" in a very specific context, writing about the way he and Wordsworth defined their roles in the project of *Lyrical Ballads*:

> it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. (Coleridge 314)

He seems to have in mind the experience of a *reader,* a fully focused individual, bending over a book, in a way that William Butler Yeats memorably described as follows: "When a man takes a book into the corner he . . . turns away from a friend" (Yeats 207).

The Romantic critics commenting on Shakespeare's works indeed wrote about what they had *read* rather than what they had seen on stage. Charles Lamb, in his essay "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare, considered with reference to their fitness for Stage Representation" (1811), goes as far as arguing that "the plays of Shakespeare are less calculated for performance on a stage, than those of almost any other dramatist whatever."

> What we see upon a stage is body and bodily action; what we are conscious of in reading is almost exclusively the mind, and its movements: and this, I think, may sufficiently account for the very different sort of delight with which the same play so often affects us in the reading and the seeing. (Lamb 207)

Hence the interest in the psychology of the protagonists, characteristic of critics in the Romantic tradition. Hence also the soliloquizing of the protagonists understood as pure expression, giving us access to a figure's mind.

In the theatre, it is more difficult to create the conditions for a "willing suspension of disbelief" of the kind to which Coleridge refers, for a number of reasons: in addition to the inadequacy of stage-representation criticised by Lamb, there are other factors that make the reactions of spectators different from those of readers. The familiar faces of actors and actresses will challenge the suspension of disbelief. But first of all, spectators' reactions are social rather than individual; they react both to their fellow spectators and to what is presented to them on stage. Unlike readers, who can ponder a passage, spectators are forcefully pulled along. Moreover, in a daylight performance, like at Shakespeare's Globe (both Elizabethan and modern), the visual focus on individual figures does not exist. We should note that the auditoria only began to be darkened in the second half of the nineteenth century,

in a move that may be understood as an attempt to make the spectators' experience more like that of readers.

Apart from these general theatrical conditions, there are dramaturgical features of *Othello* that affect belief and disbelief, and specifically, the mixture of genres: tragedy, comedy, morality. The title of the play suggests one generic frame. All the early texts call it *a tragedy* in their titles. But does it show a tragic hero? Black Othello as a tragic hero has remained a controversial figure—certainly also due to the racism that has been so common in the Western tradition. In early modern drama, black figures are associated with lewdness and cruelty, like Aaron in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. Allegorically, their blackness would connect them with evil, with the devil. Othello is the only black hero in Elizabethan drama—Shakespeare was following his source in Cinthio and made full use of the opportunities it offered. It is not surprising, under these circumstances, that the contrast between Othello's skin colour and the nobility of his mind is thematised again and again in the play. Early on, the Duke reminds Brabantio (and implicitly the audience): "If virtue no delighted beauty lack, / Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3.290–291). Even Iago acknowledges that Othello is "of constant, loving, noble nature" (2.1.272).

In 1693, Thomas Rymer, admittedly guided by neoclassical principles, put it most brutally: "With us a Blackamoor might rise to be a Trumpeter" (Rymer 134), but certainly not a general. In the nineteenth century, in the so-called bronze age of *Othello* production, Othello was given lighter skin (Thompson 31), turning him into a quasi-white person, to make the story of a tragic hero more believable.

But it is not only racist prejudice that questions the credibility of Othello as a familiar type of tragic hero. The ending of the play, for example, is unusual in that the hero's qualities are not celebrated, except in a subordinate clause, "for he was great of heart" (5.2.359), a phrase that might mean "upset" anyway, by a minor figure, Cassio, and the Venetians immediately turn to distributing his possessions (Engler). In other words, for the audience, framing the play as a tragedy has been fraught with problems, not only because of the nature of its hero.

Moreover, the play begins like a comedy, in the tradition of the *commedia dell'arte*: there is a Venetian street scene; there is the figure of the jealous old father (Brabantio, based on Pantalone), there is the mature man marrying a young woman, there is foolish Roderigo, and there is, of course, the clever servant who deceives his master and informs the audience about his plans. But comic elements also appear later in the play.

There is Desdemona's lost handkerchief, which, among other things, led Thomas Rymer to reject the play as a tragedy:

> There is in this Play, some burlesk, some humour, and ramble of Comical Wit, some shew, and some Mimickry to divert the spectators: but the tragical part is, plainly none other, than a Bloody Farce, without salt or savour. (Rymer 164)

There is a third generic element beside tragedy and comedy to complicate framing for the audience: the *morality* play, a form of medieval and Tudor entertainment that pitched allegorical figures such as Vice, Good Deeds, or Death against each other, fighting for the soul of a human being. The Vice figure continued to be popular well into the Shakespearean period. In Shakespeare, figures that still offer elements of the moralities include Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* (a Moor!), Falstaff, Richard III, Edmund in *King Lear*, and Don John in *Much Ado About Nothing*. These figures delight in mischief for its own sake; they tend to be masters of verbal wit and like to offer didactic comment on the action, addressing the audience directly. And they do not really need psychological motivation. The most impressive exemplar is certainly Iago.

Iago's first soliloquy at the end of the first act (1.3.382–403) marks a crucial moment. Iago, so far a comical figure, switching from prose to verse, tells the audience about his motives and his plans. It is in a note on this soliloquy that Coleridge coined the phrase "the motive-hunting of motiveless Malignity" (*Shakespearean Criticism* 1:44). In this speech alone, Iago offers three different motives (he will indicate more later on): he wants Cassio's position, or at least take revenge for not having been promoted himself; he suspects Othello to have slept with his wife, Emilia; and he wants to satisfy his sense of power ("to plume up my will"). He then goes on to explain his plans:

> let's see:
> After some time to abuse Othello's ear
> That [Cassio] is too familiar with his wife.
> . . . . . .
> The Moor is of a free and open nature
> That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
> And will as tenderly be led by th' nose
> As asses are.
> I have't, it is engendered! Hell and night
> Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light. (1.3.392–394, 398–403)

In his soliloquy, Iago suddenly addresses the audience directly, for the first time in the play. He does so in the tradition of the Vice. He invades our space. He claims our confidence, and makes us, willingly or unwillingly, accessories to the crimes he is planning. Our reaction is bound to be both fascination and horror, because of what he has to tell and how he involves us in the action, but also because he crosses the magical line that in the theatre divides the worlds of the audience from that of the stage.

All these elements, the distance inherent in the conditions of theatrical performance (unlike in reading), the unusual protagonist, the changing frames offered to the audience, and the role of Iago as both an agent of the action and a guide of the audience, suggest a self-conscious response by the audience, which continually has to redefine its role. As Ayanna Thompson has argued, the perfect audience of *Othello* should be "not only engaged and thoughtful, but also sceptical and wary" (Thompson 115).[1]

Under these circumstances, it may come as a surprise to learn that *Othello* seems to be the Shakespeare play that has produced the strongest audience reactions,[2] reactions based on members of the audience giving up disbelief. Among the reactions reported there are swoonings, miscarriages, threats and attempted murder. At an 1825 performance of the play, an audience member is reported to have shouted at Edwin Forrest's Iago: "You damn'd lying scoundrel, I would like to get hold of you after the show is over and wring your infernal neck" (qtd. in Hankey 1), accepting and confusing stage and audience realities in an interesting fashion.

But the strongest reactions have been documented for the scene where Othello murders Desdemona (5.2) on the open stage, by smothering her on their marriage bed. The first example comes from 1610:

> But truly the celebrated Desdemona, slain in our presence by her husband, although she pleaded her case very effectively throughout, yet moved [us] more after she was dead, when lying on her bed, entreated the pity of the spectators by her very countenance. (Thompson 41)

1 "While Othello continues to inspire artists, audience members and scholars to re-tell the story as a way to control the play's stories, frames and contexts, it really should inspire a new breed of listener, one who can discern the significance and validity of those stories, frames and contexts" (Thompson 116).

2 "the most conspicuous feature of the play's theatrical life has been [its] extraordinary capacity to swamp aesthetic detachment" (Shakespeare, ed. Neill 8).

Interestingly, Ayanna Thompson alludes to Coleridge when commenting on the passage: "The audience at the Oxford performance willingly suspend their disbelief . . ." (Thompson 41). After all, it was a boy actor who played Desdemona.

The most violent reaction is reported in an article by Stendhal:

> Last year (August 1822) a soldier who was standing guard in the theatre in Baltimore, upon seeing Othello, in the fifth act of the tragedy of that name, about to kill Desdemona, cried out: "It will never be said that in my presence a damned nigger killed a white woman." At the same moment the soldier shot at the actor who was playing Othello and broke his arm. (22)[3]

In both cases from the early nineteenth century, the line between the world of the stage and that of the audience was transgressed, albeit in the opposite direction from Iago's soliloquy at the end of the first act.

How do these reactions go together with what has been said about an ideally sceptical audience? Obviously, the audience member shouting at Iago and the soldier shooting at Othello were confused by conflicting expectations.[4] In their case, the suspension of disbelief was not willing and did not give access to poetic truth, but it was overpowering and the reaction was one of falling back onto one's most primitive attitude.

These are extreme cases. I myself have never felt tempted (or forced) to react like this to *Othello* (in other cases, yes). But I remember a production of the play directed by the German/English director Peter Zadek in 1976, in which Othello was presented like a golliwog, and the first scenes were played as a farce. After an initial revulsion against such a treatment of Shakespeare's tragedy, my defences were broken down, and I could no longer resist laughing heartily, and then, when the mood changed, I noticed how the confusion I had gone through made the experience almost unbearably intense.[5]

Disbelief: the play is full of stories that are difficult to believe, where figures, especially males, are successfully challenged to overcome their disbelief, and where we, as an audience, are tempted to do the same. We are buffeted between different

3 Michael Bristol (157) has not been able to verify the correctness of this report from other sources.

4 Laurie Maguire, in an excellent essay that only came to my attention after completing this essay comes to similar conclusions: "Audience members, I suggest, are responding to the play's own confusion of boundaries" (27).

5 In the course of the performance the black colour on Othello's skin came off.

possibilities. We have to move between different generic expectations, and between the worlds of the stage and the audience. As I have mentioned, Ayanna Thompson has suggested the perfect audience should be "not only engaged and thoughtful, but also sceptical and wary" (Thompson 115). I am not so sure.

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